Brief summary for Tuesday 29th November (6.7 - 6.9 session)

We must thank all our teachers for their contribution to what has been written below. These are things we have learned and heard from other gracious souls whose teachings are expressed in our own words/understanding.

If you missed part 80, check out the notes here.

You can find all the previous notes here.

In this chapter 6, Krishna is briefly taking us through the regulations and disciplines for practice of yoga and will now share something about the nature of yogic attainment. In the next three verses (6.7 - 6.9), Krishna describes the symptoms of a person with a controlled mind and who is on the yogarudha (advanced) platform where steady meditation is possible.

In 6.7, Krishna says a person who has conquered or mastered the mind and is thus peaceful is poised in realisation of the Supreme Soul. They commune with the Supreme Person in their heart, deeply absorbed in yogic trance. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, joy and grief, honor and dishonor, respect and disrespect, praise and ridicule, happiness and unhappiness are all the same to him. They have neither attraction nor aversion to any of these; they are indifferent to external conditions. In other words, they are situated in samadhi in all conditions of duality, being devoid of attachment to objects.

All the practices of yoga are for the purpose of stilling or arresting the mind. Even our external actions are to let us move in a way that we can eventually sit. So the central focus is to control wavering movements of the mind. Krishna has described that a person who has conquered their mind is their own best friend, having become detached from sense impulses. Evidence of the mind's friendliness is what Krishna is now describing,

referring to someone who has successfully traveled the path of yoga and is firmly established in their spiritual nature.

When the mind is conquered, free from fluctuations and is calm, one can truly absorb themselves in the self and the Supreme Self. Such an awakened person remains serene and peaceful within in all situations, meditating on the atma or soul, and for some yogis, the Supreme soul established in his or her heart. They are established in spiritual knowledge and have transcended all dualities.

Krishna uses the word samadhi (*samāhitaḥ*) for the first time in this chapter. It means yoga attainment or absorption of the mind; fixed mind. He did refer to it by using the word yoga in verses 3 and 4 though. We saw the term initially come up in chapter 2, verse 44 where Krishna told Arjuna that those too attached to sense objects cannot experience samadhi. Then in verse 2.54, Arjuna used the term when asking his question about the characteristics of someone who has attained samadhi. Then it came up again in chapter 4 in relation to the sacrifices that different practitioners become absorbed in to attain Brahman (4.24-29). Now again Krishna will elaborate on the concept of samadhi, giving the characteristics of someone who has attained it, as well as different types of samadhi.

An important takeaway point for us, given how often Krishna refers to it, is that these techniques of fixing the mind are also important for devotees, even though they may take a different form on the path of bhakti. We shouldn't skip over these concepts like it is a different path. It is a different path in some senses, and all that can be realized in other paths can also be realized in bhakti, but the concept of having a mind fully absorbed in transcendence is an important one as this is our goal, to be fully absorbed in Krishna.

Another interesting point about this verse is that it is the first time we find the term Paramatma in the Gita. The concept has been brought up before at the end of chapter 5, but the term sarva-loka-mahesvaram (the Supreme

Lord of all planets) was used there. Atma means body, mind, or soul, and Para means great, so Paramatma is the Supersoul.

Some commentators say that the term here does not refer to the Supreme Controller, but rather, the individual soul or atma who is great due to coming to a higher stage of yogic attainment through their intense practice. This is certainly a valid interpretation, but many other commentators, including Srila Prabhupada in his purport, emphasize the meaning to refer to the Supersoul, the Lord seated in everyone's heart.

As we have discussed, the Paramatma is the object or focus of the astanga-yogi's meditation. So this understanding of the term makes sense in the context. Paramatma is not the focus of the devotees, yet it is still important for devotees to understand something of the Paramatma and what our connection with Him is. We have an entire treatise by Srila Jiva Goswami called Paramatma Sandarbha, so it is not a topic ignored by our teachers. We should not think that He is not of interest to us.

In bhakti, we are seeking a connection with Bhagavan of course. We already have a connection with Paramatma, but we are actually seeking to break it, or you could say, extend it, because Paramatma is a partial manifestation of Bhagavan. He has been described as being the size of the thumb, with 4 arms and a beautiful complexion, standing on the lotus of everyone's heart. Everyone has different sized thumbs though, so it is figurative for the sake of mediation.

Paramatma is in the heart though, as well as inside every atom. Vishnu means "all pervasive." He presides as the soul of the universe in the macrocosm, and in the microcosm, is the overseer or oversoul of our individual bodies, directing our wanderings in this universe. We are in the world and so are identified with the Paramatma feature. Yogis are encouraged to meditate on Him and visualize Him. For the sake of fixing the mind, an object is given, but the object is not arbitrary. We don't just meditate on anything to fix the mind, like a cockroach for example.

Paramatma is the Lord of the heart in a general sense in terms of tattva (philosophical truth). But if we have real greed for bhakti, especially in higher stages, the Lord of our heart is the Lord of the heart. We are appreciative of all aspects of divinity, but want to make distinction to extol the virtues of Krishna bhakti in particular and the intimacy with the Godhead it affords us. In feeling, the Lord of our heart will be our specific Lord. There is the famous picture of Hanuman tearing open his chest and we see Sita-Rama there in his heart. They have taken the place in his heart and replaced Paramatma. Mahaprabhu also was crying to find Krishna, and when he heard Krishna is in his heart, he tried to tear open his chest. Sri Gadhadhara had to look after him. The point is, our ishtadeva, or cherished divinity, will sit in our heart.

Our ability to acquire, possess, and enjoy the facilities of the world is dependent on the sanction of the Paramatma who is standing by as a witness. But we want to remove the worldly things that are presided over by the Paramatma from our hearts. He is a little removed from us. If we want to enjoy material life, He says "OK, go for it, here is the facility." If we want to forget Him, He makes it possible. We are very dependent on him and very connected to him in regards to our desires of this world. Caitanya Mahaprabhu out of his magnanimity is helping us get away from that. We see in his 4th verse of Siksastakam, which is said to represent the stage of Ruci (taste), Mahaprabhu says goodbye to the Paramatma and the taste for this world.

Our source is very connected to Paramatma as He is the source of the jivas in this world. The eternal associates are manifested from Balaram and Radha for the purpose of rasa or relationship in the spiritual world. Maha-Vishnu, our source, is an expansion of an expansion of Baladeva. It is said that the one becomes many. Vishnu manifests His joy and these are the jivas. So it said this world is also a lila of sorts. It is titled Srsti-lila, or the lila of creation. The souls manifest in this creation are Nitya-baddha, that is, since time without beginning, have been circling in samsara (the cycle of birth and death).

This is happening all the time at different levels. At night, the world begins to close down and each day a different cycle starts. It is the same at the death of the body. And on a macro level, the universe is dying or closing and then remanifests again. Desire moves the world. We have desire, and so we wake up in the morning and have something to do. When the body ends, we still have desire. The vehicle has run out of gas, but we still have some place to go and so need another vehicle, so there will be another birth. Then all vehicles run out of gas and Vishnu gets tired and goes to sleep. The universes go back into Him until He wakes up again and the cycle starts over. This is how Bhagavatam depicts the nature of this world. It is coming and going, coming and going, forever with no beginning.

The whole process never comes to an end, but it can come to an end for you and I, each of us, individually. This happens through the intervention of Bhagavan who comes as avatar, and acts in a way to attract us so we can meet our source. We went into these topics somewhat in the 4th chapter. We have a connection with Paramatma, but we want to remove that connection, remove Him from the heart and put in Radha-Krishna. Through guru-parampara we get our focus, and apply ourselves in such a way that the world comes out of our heart. Once the world that the Paramatma resides over comes out of our heart, why should He remain there?

Astanga yoga is a sophisticated science to perceive subtle energies and fix the mind. But one cannot perceive even the Paramatma without His grace; without some bhakti. If He wants to be seen then nothing will stop us seeing Him. Of course we don't want to see Him, we want to serve Him. A little bhakti takes us as far as we want to go in yoga, but how much more if we fully connect to bhakti, the source of love. Srila Prabhupada sometimes said "work now, samadhi later." Through practical selfless service, the world will come out of the heart and there will be no place for Paramatma. Then the world of Goloka will come into our heart.

We have some connection with Paramatma and it is significant, but should be understood by the bhakta through love. He is understood, respected as a partial manifestation of Bhagavan or Divinity, but is not the focus. He is

the exclusive focus of the yogi. We are more concerned with Bhagavan and His form, qualities, and lila. It is important to understand the distinction between Paramatma and Bhagavan, and fix our ideal and act accordingly. In a shopping mall, we have a map that shows us where we are and where we want to go. We can't just jump there. There is a method for serving Krishna, which His agent the guru engages us in. Through the eyes of service we see Krishna. This is darshan. Then within the heart we will see Syamasundara, with the eyes of love, just as Brahma-samhita describes.

A lot more can be said on the topic of Paramatma but we will come back to it in future sessions, even within this chapter.

In verse 6.8, Krishna says that one who is internally self-satisfied by the force of their scriptural knowledge (jnana), wisdom, and direct realisation (vijnana), who are always situated in divine consciousness unaffected by material transformation, are steadfast and sense controlled, they see a piece of earth, a stone and gold equally. One fixed in this way is said to be a yogi in the true sense of the term, having attained perfection.

Krishna speaks of the benefits of victory over the senses in this verse, and the characteristics and superiority of a spiritually enlightened person who is established in yoga is being elaborated on. They have no attraction for any object, being free from hankering, always situated in the true nature of their selves and remaining detached from all mundane objects. The mind is content with knowledge concerning the real nature of the self, as well as its difference from material nature.

Seeing a piece of earth, a jewel, or gold equally means seeing them as the same substance in different states of transformation. Krishna is specifically speaking of equal vision in relation to inanimate objects. A person who sees like this has complete indifference to material existence by realized knowledge of the Supersoul.

The mind is satisfied because of such a person's jnana (knowledge) and vijnana (realisation). The mind tends to be whimsical so it is not easy to maintain a satisfied mood. One who has brought it under full control is

eligible to give up niskama-karma-yoga and sit down and meditate. One who is self-satisfied within has no need for external material stimulus and are free from agitation. Such a person has nothing to acquire and nothing to reject.

Jnana is knowledge which has been received from instruction. What one realizes by hearing and reflecting on the Vedic scriptures. Vijnana is intuitive realization arising from perception. It means illumination and realization; direct perception of the atma or soul. It is said that Shiva has said "that which common people are aware about the Supreme Lord is known as jnana or knowledge and that which the self-realised are transcendentally aware of is known as vijnana." Vijnana in special persons can also be transcendental perceptions of the Vedic scriptures.

Krishna is emphasizing that accompanying spiritual knowledge from the Vedic scriptures, there must be personal realization also. This will occur naturally when one is relieved of all doubts and after adequate reflection and introspection. In his purport, Srila Prabhupada emphasizes this point, that book knowledge without realization of the Supreme Truth is useless. He quotes a verse from the Padma Purana given in the Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu (1.2.234):

“No one can understand the transcendental nature of the name, form, quality and pastimes of Sri Krishna through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, quality and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him.”

The awareness of the Supreme Lord Krishna as the controller, maintainer and energiser of all creation can be known as jnana or knowledge. Special realization and illuminations about confidential topics concerning Krishna is vijnana or transcendental awareness. A distinction is made by the upanishads about the various types of knowledge. Reading scripture, it may be possible to become aware of the Brahman, but it cannot bestow

moksha (liberation). It must lead to vijnana where there is actual cognisance of the atma and the Supreme. The scripture gives transcendental perceptions and illuminations when Krishna is the goal to be realized by that study, and not when they merely give jnana or knowledge. In other words, a service attitude in approaching Krishna is vital, even when we approach through our studies.

In verse 6.9, Krishna speaks of a higher stage to the yogi who has equal vision for earth, rocks and gold, in which one sees the animate world with the same equal vision. The superior yogi is one who looks equally on a close friend, an associate, a well-wisher, a relative, colleague, an indifferent or neutral person, a mediator, and an enemy, and who is thus equal in his dealings with everyone, whether they be saints or sinners, friend or foe.

In the previous verse, a yogi with equal vision was described, but among yogis, one who sees with equal vision even friends and enemies, the envious and well wishers, saints and sinners, and all those in between, are more highly situated than those who see inert matter equally.

We have seen the word suhrt come up before, meaning one who is a well-wisher by nature. They do good without consideration of return. Mitra is one who performs welfare work or does good out of affection. Ari refers to one who is violent or a killer. A foe or enemy. Udasina is someone who is neutral in times of conflict or honor; they are indifferent to quarreling parties and side with nobody. Madhyastha is the mediator who tries to resolve conflict between two opposing parties. They are the well-wisher of both sides. Dvesya is the person who is envious, hateful and acts harmfully. Bandhu means a relative. Sadhu means a saintly person or follower of dharma. Papesu refers to a sinful or irreligious person, the follower of adharma.

The person who sees all of these with an equal mind, seeing them all alike (sama-buddhih meaning they have the sameness of view), is considered to be a most distinguished and excellent person. Their mind is not engaged with the question of who one is and what they do. They have strength and

clarity of mind and are able to look in equanimity upon all. Visisyate means they excel. They are superior to one who only looks upon dirt and gold equally, the best among all those established in yoga. It is more difficult to see these different persons equally than to view pebbles and gold equally, but if one is able to achieve this platform, their meditation becomes uninterrupted.

When we recognise Krishna to be the essence of all, then we see the value in all, because all is part of Krishna. Consequently we lose the inclination to condemn others for their actions, for we know that Krishna permits all to act as they desire without condemnation. That said, the sama, meaning equitably disposed to all, does not mean that advanced yogis excuse criminal behavior or abstain from addressing wrongs but that they respond to wrongdoing with compassion rather than vengeance.

This verse is comparable to Krishna's description of the impartial vision of the wise in verse 5.18:

"The humble sages, by virtue of true knowledge, see with equal vision a learned and gentle brāhmaṇa, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a dog-eater [outcaste]."

The difference here though is that the people the yogi is to see equally are those with whom one is personally involved—like the people with whom Arjuna has to fight. The verse describes the most advanced stages of the yogarudha platform. It is difficult for even great sages to give up family attachment, yet Krishna is recommending the yogi be equal to family members, friends and enemies. They must also understand that attributes such as compassion, magnanimity and righteousness are bestowed by the grace of the Lord, and it is not possible to possess them otherwise. Essentially all embodied beings are of the form of consciousness devoid of any defect. They are fundamentally and essentially the same.

Arjuna is quite overwhelmed by what it means to be a yogi as well as a devotee. To see friends and enemies equally. We may relate to them

differently, but see them equally. See the soul in everyone but also their condition as well and relate accordingly. The point is, we should know what is the ideal and reflect on these things. When we see ourselves not seeing equally, we should check ourselves.

This gradation discussed in terms of equal vision will be described by Krishna more near the end. It is very characteristic of yoga and jnana. Interestingly though, while it is also there to some degree in bhakti, there is also a particular discrimination or bias in bhakti. For example, we may have a bias for Krishna or Rama, or toward a particular practice within bhakti (some for hearing, some for chanting, etc). It is variegated in comparison to the realization sought after by the yogi and jnani comparatively.

While equal vision is not absent from the devotee, a devotee is more characterized by an apparent inequality. Ultimately not so, because he or she sees everyone equally in relation to Bhagavan. Here in the 6th chapter, Bhagavan is not really in the picture. He reciprocates with people differently according to how they approach, as we saw expressed in the 4th chapter.

Srila Prabhupada was once pressed as to whether he was sama-darshana. Prabhupada answered, I may be or I may not be. But what you are asking about is my qualification. My qualification is I am serving my guru fully. This is my qualification. The point being, someone may be a sama-darshana, but not necessarily an emissary for bhakti. The real qualification is I am a servant of my guru. This is the antithesis of the material ego.

It can be hard to grasp as bhakti is very subtle. There is a stark difference between the enjoyer and the servant. The Vaishnava is more down to earth than the yogi, more accessible, but therefore is also said to be very difficult to understand. It is easier to become a sama-darshana than to get a serving ego.

Sama-darshana do not have borders, they see all as the same. So the Kumaras, who are sama-darshana, when they came to the gate of Vaikuntha and weren't allowed in, they thought the residents must have

material consciousness, not letting us in. The story of them cursing the gatekeepers can be read in the 7th canto of the Srimad Bhagavatam. Narayana came out and said I have offended you, because He identifies with the residents of Vaikuntha, and what they had done He felt He had done. The Kumaras could understand that these residents were very dear to Narayana, in a dynamic sense as being one with them. A dynamic sense meaning a sense of love.

The point is, it is fuelled by a certain type of bias. Narayana is also affected by this bias. It is said to be His most wonderful quality: Bhakta-vatsala. He is prone to His devotees. This is love psychology.

Hanuman was once called by Krishna, who sent Garuda to come pick him up. Hanuman said "I'll be there in a minute." Garuda was perplexed as he was told Hanuman is a great devotee, yet he wouldn't hop right on his back to be taken to Krishna in Dvaraka. He tried again but Hanuman responded, "I'll be there in a minute." Garuda went back and Krishna sent him again but told him to say that Rama wants to see Hanuman. When Garuda expressed this to Hanuman and said "Hop on and I'll take you," Hanuman said no and jumped away. Garuda was still bewildered. As Garuda was flying back, he saw Hanuman coming back that way. He had already been to see Rama (Krishna was manifesting as Rama in Dvaraka) and was returning before Garuda had even come. So we see the intensity of devotion and the bias in the particular type of love.

There is an equality of vision included in bhakti though. For example, devotees of Mahaprabhu do not see anyone as fit or unfit for bhakti. It is distributed widely. Sometimes we may seem to discriminate, but only because we know someone is unfit to take advantage of it to a certain extent in a certain circumstance. For example, we might not let the dog come into the class in the temple because he won't be able to take advantage of it (and may cause a distraction), but we do give the dog prasadam. It is a dynamic equanimity. It is more static in jnana and yoga, whereas we find a fuller expression of it in bhakti than in those paths.

Ultimately, one pointedness of mind is what Krishna is driving at, and we want to develop that one pointedness in our own bhakti practice.

In summary of these verses, if the mind is made a friend (as described in verse 6.6.), the following symptoms develop, as the realizations deepen and grow, in the following sequence.

1) One becomes completely neutral to all material existence and dualities (6.7).

2) One sees all objects equally, from pebbles and stones to gold (6.8).

3) One is fully satisfied by jnana and vijnana (6.8).

4) In the more advanced stage, one sees all people equally, no matter their relation to us (6.9).

Having now explained the nature of yogic attainment in brief, Krishna will next, in texts 10 - 32 explain the practices involved in achieving yoga-samadhi. These practices of astanga-yoga will be explained first in the perfected stage and then the beginning stage. Samprajnata-samadhi is mental absorption wherein one's thoughts are concentrated on one object). This leads to the perfection of asamprajnata-samadhi, the mental stage in which all thought is restrained. We will focus on texts 6.10 - 6.12 next time.