
YOGA AND MEDITATION IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA: A STUDY OF DHYANA YOGA

*Pramila Rani Sahu

Faculty, Department of Yoga & Consciousness Andhra University, Visakhapatnam.

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*Corresponding Author: Pramila Rani Sahu

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Faculty, Department of Yoga & Consciousness Andhra University, Visakhapatnam.

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines yoga and meditation in the Bhagavad Gita, with a focus on Chapter 6, Dhyana Yoga (The Yoga of Meditation). The study explores meditation as a practical discipline for self-realisation and inner transformation. It highlights the integration of Karma, Jnana, and Bhakti Yoga, and emphasises that true yoga involves equanimity and detachment from the fruits of action. The teachings of Lord Krishna on meditation—including posture, mental focus, and discipline—are analysed for their relevance to mental stability and spiritual growth.

The paper discusses the challenges of mind control and emphasises *abhyasa* (practice) and *vairagya* (detachment) as essential tools for mastery. It outlines the stages of meditation: concentration (*dharana*), then ultimate absorption (*samadhi*), and describes the qualities of a true yogi. The study concludes meditation in the Bhagavad Gita is not just a spiritual exercise, but a comprehensive way of life that promotes psychological well-being, emotional balance, and ultimate liberation (*moksha*). These teachings remain relevant in modern society for inner harmony and stress management.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Meditation, Dhyana Yoga, Bhagavad Gita, Self-realisation, Atman, Brahman, Mind Control, Abhyasa, Vairagya, Equanimity, Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Dharana, Samadhi, Moksha.

INTRODUCTION

The Bhagavad Gita stands as one of the most profound and influential texts in Indian philosophy. It is a dialogue between Lord Krishna and Arjuna set on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, addressing moral dilemmas, duty (*dharma*), and the path to self-realisation.

Among its eighteen chapters, Chapter 6—Dhyana Yoga—provides a systematic exposition of meditation as a means of achieving inner peace and spiritual awakening.

Yoga, in its philosophical sense, signifies the union of the individual self (*Atman*) with the universal consciousness (*Brahman*). The Bhagavad Gita presents yoga not merely as a physical discipline but as a holistic path integrating action, knowledge, and devotion. Meditation (*dhyana*) is emphasised as the most effective method to discipline the mind and attain this union. This study focuses on understanding meditation as described in Chapter 6 and its relevance in both spiritual and practical dimensions of life.

Objectives of the Study

1. To analyse the concept of Dhyana Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita
2. To understand meditation as a means of self-realisation
3. To examine mind control through *abhyasa* and *vairagya*
4. To study the stages and disciplines of meditation
5. To evaluate the relevance of meditation in modern life

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited to the philosophical analysis of Chapter 6 of the Bhagavad Gita. It does not include empirical or experimental research. Interpretations are based on selected classical and modern commentaries, which may vary across philosophical traditions.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study is confined to meditation practices described in the Bhagavad Gita. It does not include comparative analysis with other religious or scientific systems of meditation. The focus remains on spiritual and philosophical aspects.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative and descriptive research methodology. Primary data is obtained from the Bhagavad Gita, particularly Chapter 6. Secondary sources include classical commentaries and modern scholarly works.

The approach includes:

- Textual and philosophical analysis
- Interpretation of key concepts
- Analytical study of meditation practices

Concept of Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita

The Bhagavad Gita presents yoga as a comprehensive discipline integrating Karma Yoga (action), Jnana Yoga (knowledge), and Bhakti Yoga (devotion). True yoga is defined as equanimity (*samatva*), where an individual remains balanced in success and failure.

Krishna emphasises that renunciation does not mean abandoning action but giving up attachment to its results. A true yogi performs duties selflessly while maintaining inner calmness. Thus, yoga becomes a state of mental equilibrium and spiritual awareness.

Dhyana Yoga: The Path of Meditation

Dhyana Yoga emphasises meditation as the central practice for self-realisation. It involves withdrawing the mind from external distractions and directing it inward toward the Self.

Krishna outlines clear guidelines for meditation:

- Choosing a clean and peaceful environment
- Sitting in a stable and comfortable posture
- Keeping the body aligned
- Fixing the mind on a single object or the Divine
- Practising regularly with discipline

Meditation is both a physical and mental process requiring concentration, patience, and dedication. It purifies the mind and leads to inner tranquility.

Control of the Mind

The Bhagavad Gita recognises the restless nature of the mind. Arjuna compares it to the wind, which is difficult to control. Krishna acknowledges this challenge but assures that the mind can be mastered through *abhyasa* (constant practice) and *vairagya* (detachment).

A controlled mind acts as a friend, guiding the individual toward liberation, whereas an uncontrolled mind becomes an obstacle, leading to suffering. Meditation plays a crucial role in disciplining the mind and developing mental clarity.

Discipline and Moderation

Moderation is a key principle in Dhyana Yoga. Krishna advises against extremes in food, sleep, and activity. A balanced lifestyle supports effective meditation.

- Neither overeating nor fasting is recommended.
- Proper sleep is essential.

- Balanced daily activities maintain mental stability.
- This teaching highlights that yoga is not an escape from life but a balanced way of living.

Stages of Meditation

The Bhagavad Gita outlines the progressive stages of meditation:

1. **Preparation** – Self-discipline and control of senses
2. **Dharana** – Concentration on a single object
3. **Dhyana** – Continuous meditation
4. **Samadhi** – Complete absorption and unity

These stages reflect the gradual journey toward self-realisation.

Qualities of a True Yogi

A true yogi possesses:

- Self-discipline
- Detachment
- Equanimity
- Compassion
- Inner peace

Such a person perceives the same divine presence in all beings and remains unaffected by external circumstances.

RESULTS

The study reveals that meditation:

- Promotes mental peace and reduces stress
- Enhances emotional stability
- Leads to self-realization
- Encourages compassion and a universal outlook
- Guides toward liberation (moksha)

DISCUSSION

Dhyana Yoga offers a holistic framework integrating physical discipline, mental control, and spiritual awareness. Its emphasis on practice and detachment makes it highly relevant in modern life, especially for managing stress and achieving psychological balance. The

integration of meditation with daily activities makes the teachings practical and applicable to contemporary lifestyles.

CONCLUSION

The Bhagavad Gita presents meditation as a transformative path leading to self-realisation and liberation. Dhyana Yoga emphasises discipline, balance, and control of the mind as essential elements.

Through consistent practice, individuals can overcome mental disturbances and achieve inner peace. The teachings remain timeless, offering a pathway from restlessness to harmony, from ignorance to wisdom, and from individuality to universality.

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