

## YOGA PHILOSOPHY

The word Yoga is derived from the sanskrit root “Yuj” meaning to join, attach and Yoke, to direct, to use and apply. It also means Union. It is the union of self to universal yoking of all the powers of body, mind and soul to God. It means the discipline of the intellect, the mind, the emotion, which the yoga resuppress. It means a poise of the soul, which enables one to look at life in all aspects evenly.

Yoga is one of the six orthodox system of Indian philosophy. It was collated, co-ordinated and systematized by Patanjali in his classical work, the Yoga-sutras, which consists of 185 terse aphorism. In Indian thought everything is permitted by the supreme universal spirit (Paramatama/God) of which the individual human spirit (Jivatma) is a part. The system of Yoga is so called because it teaches the means by which the Jivatma can be united to or be in communion with the Paramatama and so secure liberation (Moksha). One who follows the Path of Yoga is called a Yogi or Yogini.

The important Philosophy text “Bhagwat Gita” in the sixth Chapter described about the mind, intellect and ahamkara (Self).

**Vivekananda:** The classical definition of Yoga in Bhagavad Gita “Samatvam Yoga Uchyata” i.e. Yoga is to keep the mind balance and equanimous in all vicissitudes of life.

**Swami Aurobindo:** Sri Aurobindo says yoga is a methodical effort towards self-perfection through developing your latent potential on the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual levels. And the most fundamental step you can take toward expanding the limits of your consciousness is to gain mastery over your mind.

### **Veda:**

There are four important Veda's, namely Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samaveda and Atharvaveda. There is no any direct explanation of word yoga in Vedas, whereas the word `dhira`, is mentioned in all Vedas. The meaning of dhira is self-realized. The sitting posture i.e. Asana, the Pranayama, the Mudras, Meditation techniques, the cleanliness Yama and Niyama, the Dharanas are explained in Vedas. The asanas explained in Vedas are mainly for the purpose of meditation. The sun salutation was the part of routine activity during that time. The Pranayama that is told in the Yajurveda, which is practiced during the regular practice, is same as Anuloma Viloma. The various types of meditation techniques are also explained in the Vedas. The practice of mudras is also explained in the Vedas. The Vedas also explain about the Tapas, Vratas and the ultimate aim of them are to attain Moksa (liberation).

### **Upanishad:**

Upanishads are the essences of the Vedas. Among the available Upanishads, 10 are important. The important Upanishads that have explanations about yoga are as follows. The Panchakosha theory is explained in Taittiriya Upanishad is the main theory used in the treatment of diseases through yoga. Kathopanishad explains procedure to attain Samadhi. This Upanishad explains the qualities of soul.

The Kenopanishad, the Ishavasya Upanishad, Shwetashvatara Upanishads are also gives details about yoga.

### **Smrits:**

The Smrits are the texts, which deal about the disciplines that one has to follow in his life. The main smrtis, which give details about yoga, are Manusmrti, Yajnavalkya Smrti, and Harita Smriti. According to the smrtis there are four stages in life, they are:

- 1) Brahmacharya
- 2) Grhastha
- 3) Vanaprastha
- 4) Sanyasa

The Smrtis also give details about the lifestyles that we have to follow during these different stages of life. According to smrtis one has to sit in a seat that is prepared from Darbha (one type of grass) for meditation. The asanas good for meditation are also explained in smrtis.

### **Jainism:**

In the Jainism also yoga is explained. According to Jainism the movement of the mind and body towards the soul is called yoga.

### **Buddhism:**

According to Buddha body is a fit vehicle to get the tranquility of mind. For getting the steadiness of mind the body should become steady at first. The methods of meditation are also explained in teachings of Buddha. According to that there are two types of meditations, Suksma dhyana and Nirhara dhyana.

### **Panini:**

He was a famous grammarian of Sanskrit. He wrote 8 chapters lessons of grammar, Astadhyayi. The usage of word yoga is there in his work.

### **The Epics:**

In the Ramayana and Mahabharata are the two main epics that give the details about yoga. Ramayana consists of 24,000 slokas distributed among seven chapters. The great book of yoga known as Yoga Vasistha was written in this time. In Ramayana the moral disciplines, Yama and Niyama are explained in detail. We can see the definition for Dharma in this book. Mahabharata is another important epic, which gives details about yoga. The Bhagavad-Gita is known as jewel of Mahabharata gives the definition for yoga.

### **Puranas:**

Among the available puranas eighteen are important. Out of these few puranas give details about yoga. The Bhagavata purana explains Bhakti yoga. Linga Purana gives the details about Yama, Niyama and Pranayama. Vayu Purana gives details about Pratyahara, Dharana, and Dhyana.

**Swami Shivananda:** Integration of 3H (Head, Hand and Heart) is Yoga. Head represent to Mind, Hand represent to action and Heart represent to Emotion.

**Patanjali** describe Yoga as a “Chitta Vritti Nirodha”. Chitta means (Mental/Consciousness), Vritti means (Modification/Fluctuations/Pattern) and Nirodha (restraint/Block) which means Restraint of mental modification or to Block the pattern of the mind.

- 1) Mind: (Manas) that is the individual mind having the power and faculty of attention, selection and rejection, it is the oscillating indecisive faculty of mind.
- 2) Intellect: (Buddhi) that is the decisive state, which determines the distinction between things.
- 3) Ego: (Ahamkara) literally that I-Maker the state which ascertains that I-Know.
- 4) Vritti: The word Vritti is derived the sanskrit root "Vrt" means to turn, to revolve, to roll-on so it means course of action, behaviour, mode of being, condition or mental state.

Yoga is the method by which the restless mind is calmed and the energy directed into constructive channels. Patanjali Yoga sutras are neither a philosophical system nor are do they adhere to any one religious bias, not is it Samkhya philosophy rather the Yoga Sutras have many Agamic and Tantric qualities (which are non-religious in origin).

The most systematic method of attaining states of meditation is Raja Yoga, It is not the only method and in fact all other types of Yoga Such as Bhakti (Devotion), Karma (Action), Jnana (Knowledge) yoga etc. Are equally important and all aim at eventually bringing about meditational experiences and ultimately gaining self realization. In fact, all the different systems should be practised as much as possible in conjunction with each other, so that they don't oppose each other.

Raja Yoga is explained in the Yoga Sutras, Written by the ancient Yogi Patanjali some time before the birth of Christ. Raja Yoga is for every person, Whatever his/her nature. It starts with the very basic requirements for higher Spiritual life. It begins by moulding a person's character in the way necessary for spiritual progress.

## CHAPTER - 1

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### ASHTANGA YOGA / RAJA YOGA

Patanjali described the path of Raja Yoga/Ashtanga Yoga into eight Stages/Limbs, starting from the basic rules of character change in the individual and ending into four stages, culminating in self-realization. The first five stages are the preparatory practices and stages six to eight are the higher stages.

- I. Yama (Social Code)
- II. Niyama (Personal Code)
- III. Asana (Posture/ States of being)
- IV. Pranayama (Control of Prana, life -force, cosmic energy)
- V. Pratyahara (Withdrawal of the Senses)
- VI. Dharana (Persuasion)
- VII. Dhyana (Meditation)
- VIII. Samadhi ( Transcendental Consciousness)

The first four practices are Bahiranga (External) Yoga and the last four are Antranga (Internal) Yoga. The inner and higher practices become easier to perform when the external and preliminary practices have been developed to a reasonable degree of perfection.

#### **I. Yamas (Self restraints & Ethics):**

These are five in number. Yama and its compliment Niyama, represent a series of "right living" or ethical rules within Yoga. These are a form of moral imperatives, commandments, rules or goals. Every religion has a code of conduct, or series of "do's and don'ts", and the Yamas represent one of the "don't" of Yoga. These rules seek to remove all emotional disorders from the individual. It does not take much thought to realize that these topics cause most of our guilty feelings, inner conflicts and general mental disturbances. The way to tackle the symptom is to root out the cause. In this way the mind will be rendered more peaceful and ready for the higher practices.

Yama is the very foundation of Yoga, without which the superstructure of Yoga cannot be built. Practice of Yama is really the practice of Sadachara (right conduct). The noble eightfold path of Buddhists deals with the practice of Yama only. In every religion you will find this to be the foremost.

Yama means self-restraint, self-control and discipline. The yamas comprise the "shall-not" in our dealings with the external world as the Niyamas comprise the "shall-do" in our dealings with the inner world.

#### **1. Ahimsa –(Non-Violence):** Compassion for all living things.

The word ahimsa literally mean not to injure or show cruelty to any creature or any person in any way whatsoever. Ahimsa is, however, more than just lack of violence as adapted in yoga. It means kindness, friendliness, and thoughtful consideration of other people and things. It also has to do with our duties and responsibilities too. Ahimsa implies that in every situation we should adopt a considerate attitude and do no harm.

Ahimsa is not causing of pain to any creature in any way, at any time, in thought, word and deed. The other restraints that follow have their origin in this. These are meant to make this restraint perfect. You will not be benefitted much by taking to the practice of the other four restraints without the practice of Ahimsa. Giving up of animal food also comes under Ahimsa, because it is not obtainable without Himsa (Violence) of some kind.

As one evolves the practises the higher stages of meditation, the less one wants to hurt anyone, and the more one will feel compassion towards everything and everyone, including so-called enemies. Yet at the same time a highly evolved person will do his duty (Dharma) even if it means harm to others.

## **2. Satya – (Truth): Commitment to Truthfulness**

Satya means "to speak the truth," yet it is not always desirable to speak the truth on all occasions, for it could harm someone unnecessarily. We have to consider what we say, how we say it, and in what way it could affect others. If speaking the truth has negative consequences for another, then it is better to say nothing. Satya should never come into conflict with our efforts to behave with ahimsa. This precept is based on the understanding that honest communication and action form the bedrock of any healthy relationship, community, or government, and that deliberate deception, exaggerations, and mistruths harm others.

Speaking truth is the most important qualification of a Yogi. In Hitopadesa you will find if truth and one thousand Asvamedha Yajnas are weighed in a balance, truth alone will outweigh. In Mahabharata also we find: The four Vedas on the one side, well studied together with their Angas and Upangas are far outweighed by truth alone on the other. Such is the importance of truth.

God is truth. He can be realised by speaking truth and observing truth in thought, word and deed. Truthfulness, equality, self-control, absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self-possession, and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness, are the thirteen forms of truth.

Some persons hold that lie, that is calculated to bring immense good, is regarded as truth. Suppose an unrighteous king has ordered a sage to be hanged without any cause. If the life of this sage can be saved by uttering a falsehood, the falsehood is only truth. These are limited by circumstances. According to Sutra II-31, these restraints should not be limited by class, time, space and circumstances, if one wants to practise them perfectly. By speaking truth always in all circumstances, the Yogi acquires Vak Siddhi. Whatever he thinks or speaks, turns to be true. He can do anything even by mere thought.

## **3. Asteya-(Honesty and non-theft): Non-stealing**

Steya means "to steal"; asteya is the opposite-to take nothing that does not belong to us. This also means that if we are in a situation where someone entrusts something to us or confides in us, we do not take advantage of him or her. Non-stealing includes not only taking what belongs to another without permission, but also using something for a different purpose to that intended, or beyond the time permitted by its owner. The practice of asteya implies not taking anything that has not been freely given. This includes fostering a consciousness of how we ask for others' time for inconsiderate behavior demanding another's attention when not freely given is, in effect, stealing.

The third restraint is in abstaining from theft. The pilfering nature should be completely annihilated. One should be satisfied with what he gets through honest means. Besides actual illegal appropriation, taking away the property or things of others, the very thought of any such gain should not enter the mind. Hoarding money is really theft. You should not keep anything more than the actual necessity. Eating more than what is really necessary is also considered as theft. When a man has powerful Indriyas and uncontrolled mind, he wants many things for his own sensual enjoyment. If he could not get the objects of enjoyment and satisfy his desires, then the pilfering nature enters his mind. By constant thinking, he does the actual theft. Therefore the real cause for theft is too many desires and in-disciplined Indriyas. To abstain from theft, one should slowly curb desires and discipline the Indriyas and control the mind. In this Sutra it is assured that when you completely give up the evil habit of theft, then the desired thing and all kinds of wealth will come to you by themselves.

#### **4. Brahmacharya (Sense control):**

Brahmacharya is used mostly in the sense of abstinence, particularly in relationship to sexual activity. Brahmacharya suggests that we should form relationships that foster our understanding of the highest truths. Brahmacharya does not necessarily imply celibacy. Rather, it means responsible behaviour with respect to our goal of moving toward the truth. Practicing brahmacharya means that we use our sexual energy to regenerate our connection to our spiritual self. It also means that we don't use this energy in any way that might harm others. If semen is preserved by the observance of Brahmacharya, and transmuted into Ojas Sakti, the spiritual and intellectual power will increase.

This is the fundamental qualification of an aspirant. Brahmacharya is the most important virtue for self-realisation. Brahmacharya is purity in thought, word and deed. The very idea of lust should not enter the mind. No Yoga or spiritual progress is possible without continence. In the Gita you will find the importance of Brahmacharya in the IV and VIII chapters. Since I have already given in my book Practice of Brahmacharya, various effective methods for getting established in Brahmacharya, I will pass on to the next Sutra. .

#### **5. Aparigraha – (Non-Possessiveness):**

Aparigraha means to take only what is necessary, and not to take advantage of a situation or act greedy. We should only take what we have earned; if we take more, we are exploiting someone else. The yogi feels that the collection or hoarding of things implies a lack of faith in God and in himself to provide for his future. Aparigraha also implies letting go of our attachments to things and an understanding that impermanence and change are the only constants.

Aparigraha is freedom from greed or covetousness. One should not try to keep or try to get in possession anything beyond the very necessities of life. Gifts from others affect the mind of the receiver. As people are extremely selfish, they make presents with various motives. These motives affect the receiver. The mind of the receiver becomes impure by receiving gifts. A student of Yoga should, therefore, avoid gifts. Attachment, and the anxiety which accompanies attachment, are obstacles to knowledge. Freedom from attachment will result in knowledge of the whole course of our journey. Who was I? How was I? What is this? What shall I be? How shall I be? In this shape comes to him the knowledge of his own experience in the past, present and future. He becomes independent and free. His mind becomes pure. Everything becomes quite clear to him. He gets a memory of past life also

The Yoga Sutra describes what happens when these five behaviours outlined above become part of a person's daily life. Thus, the yamas are the moral virtues which, if attended to, purify human nature and contribute to health and happiness of society.

## **II. Niyama (Personal Observation):**

Niyama means "rules" or "laws". These are the rules prescribed for personal observance. Like the yamas, the five niyamas are not exercises or actions to be simply studied. They represent far more than an attitude. Compared with the yamas, the niyamas are more intimate and personal. They refer to the attitude we adopt toward ourselves as we create a code for living soulfully.

Niyama is the second accessory of Yoga. It is the practice of purity, contentment, mortification, study and worship. Patanjali Maharshi mentions these five observances under Niyama. According to Sandilya Rishi, Tapas, Santosha, Astikya, Dana, Isvara Pujana, Siddhanta Sravana, Hrih, Mati, Japa and Vrata come under Niyama. Through the practice of Krichara and Chandrayana Vratas, in accordance with Sastric injunctions, one purifies himself. His body gets emancipated. The sins are destroyed. The Indriyas are controlled. The passion-nature of the mind gets subdued. This is Tapas. Contentment with whatsoever one obtains of its own accord without effort is Santosha. Astikya is firm, unshakable belief in the existence of God, in the words of the Guru, in the truths inculcated in the Vedas and the merits or demerits of actions stated in the Vedas. Dana is the distribution of money, cloth, food, grains, etc., earned lawfully at the sweat of the brow, with faith, to deserving persons without expectation of fruits and without the idea of agency. Isvara Pujana is the worshipping of Lord Hari, Siva, Krishna or Rama with pure love, intense faith and single-minded devotion. Siddhanta Sravana is the enquiry into the right significance of Vedanta. It is the study and reflection of the nature of Brahman and the right significance of 'Tat Tvam Asi' Mahavakya.

Hrih is the feeling of shame one experiences when he does certain actions which are not in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas and rules of society. Mati is the faith in the paths prescribed by the Vedas for the attainment of God-consciousness or Self-realisation. Japa is the repetition of the Mantra into which one is duly initiated by the Guru or spiritual guide and which is not contrary to the rules of the Vedas. Vrata is the regular observance of or refraining from the actions prescribed or prohibited by the Vedas. The practice of Krichara, Chandrayana Vratas come under this heading. Krichara Vrata is fasting for 12 days. The observer of the Vrata drinks only some water. Many sins are destroyed by the practice of this Vrata.

### **1. Sauca - Purity:**

The first niyama is sauca, meaning purity and cleanliness. Sauca has both an inner and an outer aspect. Outer cleanliness simply means keeping ourselves clean. Inner cleanliness has as much to do with the healthy, free functioning of our bodily organs as with the clarity of our mind. Practicing asanas or pranayama are essential means for attending to this inner sauca. Asanas tones the entire body and removes toxins while pranayama cleanses our lungs, oxygenates our blood and purifies our nerves. "But more important than the physical cleansing of the body is the cleansing of the mind of its disturbing emotions like hatred, passion, anger, lust, greed, delusion and pride."

### **2. Santosa - Contentment:**

Santosh is essential to develop the ability to withstand daily program without being deeply affected, to be contented no matter what circumstances beset one. Santosa, modesty and the feeling of being content with what we have. To be at peace within and content with one's lifestyle finding contentment even while experiencing life's difficulties for life becomes a process of growth through all kinds of circumstances. We should accept that there is a purpose for everything - yoga calls it karma – and we cultivate contentment 'to accept what happens'. It means being happy with what we have rather than being unhappy about what we don't have.

You will find in Yoga Vasishtha that Santosha, Santi, Vichara and Satsanga are the four sentinels at the door of Moksha. If you have Santosha, the other three will come by themselves. Santosha, contentment, is one of the important virtues for an aspirant. Riches and poverty are not counted by the amount of wealth one keeps. A king, if he keeps too many desires and if he wants more, is considered to be a beggar. A beggar, if he is contented with what he has, is really a king. From contentment comes real happiness. If a man has no contentment, his mind will be always wandering. It will be impossible to do concentration and other Yogic practices. Therefore contentment should be developed by all aspirants.

### **3. Tapas – Austerity:**

Tapas is intended to strengthen the willpower, by undergoing small austerities such as fasting, maintaining a vow of silence for few hours and so on. This can help to discipline the Mind.

Tapas refers to confront and handle the inner urges without outer show. Literally it means to heat the body and, by so doing, to cleanse it. Behind the notion of tapas lies the idea we can direct our energy to enthusiastically engage life and achieve our ultimate goal of creating union with the Divine.

Tapas helps us burn up all the desires that stand in our way of this goal. Another form of tapas is paying attention to what we eat. Attention to body posture, attention to eating habits, attention to breathing patterns - these are all tapas.

Tapas, the mind, speech and Indriyas are purified. Fasts and all religious observances that are laid down in Dharma Sastras and the rules of Yama and Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, etc., come under Tapas. In Gita Chapter XVII, the three Slokas from 14 to 16 describe three kinds of Tapas, viz., Tapas of body, speech and mind. Psychic powers are the eight Siddhis, Anima, Mahima, etc. All these Siddhis can be acquired by the steady practice of Tapas. Manu says: He whose speech and mind are pure and ever carefully guarded, obtains all the fruits that are obtained by means of Vedanta. By the performance of Tapas, all Klesas (afflictions) and impurities can be destroyed.

### **4. Svadhyaya – Self study:**

The fourth niyama is svadhyaya. Sva means "self" adhyaya means "inquiry" or "examination". Any activity that cultivates self-reflective consciousness can be considered svadhyaya. It means to intentionally find self-awareness in all our activities and efforts, even to the point of welcoming and accepting our limitations. It teaches us to be centred and non-reactive to the dualities, to burn out unwanted and self-destructive tendencies.

Svadhya is the study of scriptures such as the Gita, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, etc. The study should be done with concentration. You should understand what you have studied and try to put in your everyday life all that you have learnt. There will be no benefit in your study, if you do not exert to live up to the teachings of the scriptures. Svadhya includes also Japa, the repetition of Mantras. By constant study and its practice in daily life will lead one to have communion with God.

### **5. Isvarapranidhana – (Self - Surrender):**

Isvarapranidhana means "to lay all your actions at the feet of God." It is the contemplation on God (Isvara) in order to become attuned to god and god's will. It is the recognition that the spiritual suffuses everything and through our attention and care we can attune ourselves with our role as part of the Creator. The practice requires that we set aside some time each day to recognize that there is some omnipresent force larger than ourselves that is guiding and directing the course of our lives.

The self-surrender should be free, perfect, unconditioned and ungrudging. Then the Samadhi will come by itself. This Pranidhana is further dealt with in Sutra I-23.

### **III. Asana( Postures-States of Being):**

According to Patanjali's Yoga Sutra Yogasana. means "Shtiram Sukham Aasanam", means 'that position which is comfortable and steady.

According to Yogic Scriptures, it is said that there are 8,400,000 asana. Which represents the 8,400,000 incarnations every individual must pass through before attaining liberation from the cycle of birth and death. These asana represented a progressive evolution from the simplest form of life to the most complex: that of a fully realized human being.

Of these few hundred, only the eighty four most useful will be discussed in details. Through their practice, it is possible to side step the Karmic process and bypass many evolutionary stages in one lifetime.

Patanjali Maharishi does not lay much stress on either Asanas or Pranayama. He has not mentioned about Kundalini also in any of the Sutras. Hatha Yogins have developed Asanas and Pranayama as a separate branch of Yoga later on. They pay much attention to Asanas and Pranayama to open the Kundalini. Hatha Yoga is a physical Yoga. Raja Yoga is a mental Yoga. Where Hatha Yoga ends, there Raja Yoga begins. Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga cannot be separated. They are interdependent. Asana is the third Anga/part of Raja Yoga.

#### Asana according to classical text:

Patanjali Yoga Sutras: "Shiram Sukham Aasanam" means 'That position which is comfortable and steady'.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika (1:17), Prior to everything, asana is spoken of as the first part of hatha Yoga. Having done asana, one attains steadiness of body and mind, freedom from disease and lightness of the limbs.

Svetasvatara Upanishad (II-8), you will find: Keeping the upper parts, the chest, neck and the head erect and equal to the other parts of the body, subduing within the heart the senses together with the mind, let the wise by the raft of Brahman cross over all the fearful torrents of the world.

Gita (VI-13) it is mentioned: Let him firmly hold his body, head, neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose, and not looking around.

#### **IV. Pranayama (Control of Prana, life force, Cosmic Energy):**

Pranayama is comprised of two roots: “Prana” and "ayama”. Prana means Vital force/life force and ayama means: extension or expansion. So pranayama means: “extension or expansion of the dimension of Prana/Life force”.

Pranayama is the measuring, control, and directing of the breath. Pranayama controls the energy (prana) within the organism, in order to restore and maintain health and to promote evolution. When the in-flowing breath is neutralized or joined with the out-flowing breath, then perfect relaxation and balance of body activities are realized. In yoga, we are concerned with balancing the flows of vital forces, then directing them inward to the chakra system and upward to the crown chakra.

Pranayama, or breathing technique, is very important in yoga. It goes hand in hand with the asana or pose. In the Yoga Sutra, the practices of pranayama and asana are considered to be the highest form of purification and self discipline for the mind and the body, respectively. The practices produce the actual physical sensation of heat, called tapas, or the inner fire of purification. It is taught that this heat is part of the process of purifying the nadis, or subtle nerve channels of the body. This allows a more healthful state to be experienced and allows the mind to become more calm. As the yogi follows the proper rhythmic patterns of slow deep breathing "the patterns strengthen the respiratory system, soothe the nervous system and reduce craving. As desires and cravings diminish, the mind is set free and becomes a fit vehicle for concentration.”

#### Four aspects of Pranayama:

There are four important aspects of breathing:

1. Pooraka (Inhalation)
2. Rechaka (Exhalation)
3. Antar Kumbhak (Internal breath retention)
4. Bahir Kumbhaka (External breath retention)

#### **V. Pratyahara (Withdrawal of the Senses):**

Pratyahara means withdrawal of the senses. The word ahara means "nourishment"; pratyahara translates as "to withdraw oneself from that which nourishes the senses". In yoga, the term pratyahara implies withdrawal of the senses from attachment to external objects. It can then be seen as the practice of non-attachment to sensorial distractions as we constantly return to the path of self realization and achievement of internal peace. It means our senses stop living off the things that stimulate; the senses no longer depend on these stimulants and are not fed by them any more.

In pratyahara we sever this link between mind and senses, and the senses withdraw. When the senses are no longer tied to external sources, the result is restraint or pratyahara. Now that the vital forces are flowing back to the Source within, one can concentrate without being distracted by externals or the temptation to cognize externals.

Pratyahara occurs almost automatically when we meditate because we are so absorbed in the object of meditation. Precisely because the mind is so focused, the senses follow it; it is not happening the other way around.

No longer functioning in their usual manner, the senses become extraordinarily sharp. Under normal circumstances the senses become our masters rather than being our servants. The senses entice us to develop cravings for all sorts of things. In pratyahara the opposite occurs: when we have to eat we eat, but not because we have a craving for food. In pratyahara we try to put the senses in their proper place, but not cut them out of our actions entirely.

Much of our emotional imbalance are our own creation. A person who is influenced by outside events and sensations can never achieve the inner peace and tranquillity. This is because he or she will waste much mental and physical energy in trying to suppress unwanted sensations and to heighten other sensations. This will eventually result in a physical or mental imbalance, and will, in most instances, result in illness.

Patanjali says that the above process is at the root of human unhappiness and uneasiness. When people seek out yoga, hoping to find that inner peace which is so evasive, they find that it was theirs all along. In a sense, yoga is nothing more than a process which enables us to stop and look at the processes of our own minds; only in this way can we understand the nature of happiness and unhappiness, and thus transcend them both.

## **VI. Dharana (Concentration):**

Dharana means Concentration. Which means “to hold the mind at one Points”. This holding or binding of the mind to one point is the concept of dharana. In sanskrit, the word Dharana is derived from the root dhri, which means “Foundation” or base, so that object or concept upon which the mind is firmly based is the actual definition of dharana. In the Yogic tradition, dharana belongs to the internal stages of Raja Yoga which is the path of mental discipline.

Dharana follows the stage of Pratyahara in Which the mind is withdrawal from the external sensory objects and internalized.

After Separating the mind from the senses, the mind can go deep. It can create its own world while the senses remain outside. Once we are able to create this differentiation or distinction between the sensory awareness and the mental awareness, then the mind can be directed to go deeper into other states where dharana becomes intense. Dharana, Which is termed as mental concentration, is deepening of mental awareness. As the mental awareness deepens and when there is total absence of sensorial awareness, then dharana take place.

The essential idea is to hold the concentration or focus of attention in one direction."When the body has been tempered by asanas, when the mind has been refined by the fire of pranayama and when

the senses have been brought under control by pratyahara, the sadhaka (seeker) reaches the sixth stage, dharana. Here he is concentrated wholly on a single point or on a task in which he is completely engrossed. The mind has to be stilled in order to achieve this state of complete absorption."

The objective in dharana is to steady the mind by focusing its attention upon some stable entity. The particular object selected has nothing to do with the general purpose, which is to stop the mind from wandering through memories, dreams, or reflective thought by deliberately holding it single-mindedly upon some apparently static object. The objective is to achieve the mental state where the mind, intellect, and ego are "all restrained and all these faculties are offered to the Lord for His use and in His service. Here there is no feeling of 'I' and 'mine'".

When the mind has become purified by yoga practices, it becomes able to focus efficiently on one subject or point of experience. Now we can unleash the great potential for inner healing.

## **VII. Dhyana (Meditation):**

Concentration (dharana) leads to the state of meditation. Meditation is the state of mind. Dhyana means uninterrupted meditation without an object. It is perfect contemplation. It involves concentration upon a point of focus with the intention of knowing the truth about it. The concept holds that when one focuses their mind in concentration on an object the mind is transformed into the shape of the object. Hence, when one focuses on the divine they become more reflective of it and they know their true nature. "His body, breath, senses, mind, reason and ego are all integrated in the object of his contemplation – the Universal Spirit."

The goal of meditation is not unconsciousness or nothingness. It is heightened awareness and oneness with the universe. During dhyana, the consciousness is further unified by combining clear insights into distinctions between objects and between the subtle layers of perception. "We learn to differentiate between the mind of the perceiver, the means of perception, and the objects perceived, between words, their meanings, and ideas, and between all the levels of evolution of nature".

As we fine-tune our concentration and become more aware of the nature of reality we perceive that the world is unreal. "The only reality is the universal self, or God, which is veiled by Maya (the illusory power). As the veils are lifted, the mind becomes clearer. Unhappiness and fear even the fear of death vanishes. This state of freedom, or Moksha, is the goal of Yoga. It can be reached by constant enquiry into the nature of things." Meditation becomes our tool to see things clearly and perceive reality beyond the illusions that cloud our mind.

## **VIII. Samadhi (Union with the Divine):**

The final step in the eight-fold path of Yoga is the attainment of Samadhi. Samadhi means "to bring together, to merge." In the state of samadhi the body and senses are at rest, as if asleep, yet the faculty of mind and reason are alert, as if awake; one goes beyond consciousness. During samadhi, we realize what it is to be an identity without differences, and how a liberated soul can enjoy pure awareness of this pure identity. The conscious mind drops back into that unconscious oblivion from

which it first emerged.

Thus, samadhi refers to union or true Yoga. There is an ending to the separation that is created by the "I" and "mine" of our illusory perceptions of reality. The mind does not distinguish between self and non-self, or between the object contemplated and the process of contemplation. The mind and the intellect have stopped and there is only the experience of consciousness, truth and unutterable joy.

The achievement of samadhi is a difficult task. For this reason the Yoga Sutra suggests the practice of asanas and pranayama as preparation for dharana, because these influence mental activities and create space in the crowded schedule of the mind. Once dharana has occurred, dhyana and samadhi can follow.

These eight steps of yoga indicate a logical pathway that leads to the attainment of physical, ethical, emotional, and psycho-spiritual health. Yoga does not seek to change the individual; rather, it allows the natural state of total health and integration in each of us to become a reality.