CHAPTER VII

DHĀRAṆĀ

VII.1 INTRODUCTION

Dhāraṇā is the sixth stage of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga and first stage of AntaraṅgaŚādhanā, the innerquest. Patañjali describes five stages of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga in Sādhanā Pāda and then starts discussing the last three very important stages in Vibhuti Pāda. In Vibhuti Pāda, Patañjali first shows the aspirant the need to integrate the intelligence, ego and ‘I’ principle. He then guides him in subtle disciplines concentration- Dhāraṇā, meditation- Dhyāna and total absorption - Samādhi. With their help, the intelligence ego and ‘I’ principle are sublimated. This may lead either to the release of various supernatural powers to Self- Realization. Šo one understands the importance of three stages which are dependent on each other. Dhāraṇā is the foundation of remaining two stages. Yoga Upaniṣads also discuss various types of Dhāraṇā which are helpful to understand the concept of Dhāraṇā.

VII.2 GENERAL MEANING OF THE TERM AND GRAMATICAL DERIVATIONS

In the word Dhāraṇā, ‘Dhāraṇā’ is the word from which it is derived. And ‘Dhāraṇā’ is derived from the root - Dhara - √Dhri. It means holding supporting, containing. ‘Dhāraṇā’ also means retaining keeping back (also in remembrance), good memory etc.
But Dhāraṇā is used as technical term in various literature with different meanings:

i) In Kathopaniṣad, Gruhya Sūtra or in Mahābhārata Dhāraṇā means: collection or concentration of the mind joined with the retention of breath. This concept is similarly used in Yogaupaniṣads while describing Dhāraṇā. They emphasis on the retention of breath in state of Dhāraṇā which is also similarly described in Haṭhayoga Pradipika.

ii) In Manu’s law or in Susruta or in Kavaya literature or in Purāṇa etc., the term is used as Dhāraṇam derived from Ṛdhri and meaning is to excercise concentration. This meaning is similar to the concept of Dhāraṇā described in Yoga Sūtra. Patañjali describe Dhāraṇā as the state of concentration. But it also includes the meaning holding or retaining.

iii) Yājñavalkalya also described ‘Dhāraṇam gatah’. It means having composed one’s Self. This meaning is related to Yoga Philosophy. He also describes it as firmess or steadfastness or righteousness.
VII.3 THE MEANING OF DHĀRANĀ IN YOGA SŪTRA:

Patañjali describes Dhāranā as steady thought, retention or holding of the image or idea formed in mind by contemplation or immovable concentration of the mind upon various given objects. Thus Patañjali defines Dhāranā as:

\[ \text{धेशन्द्विविद्वश्व धारणा} \]

It means fixing the Citta on one point or region is concentration or Dhāranā. Here meaning of the root √Dhri to hold is used as fixing that is 'Bandha'. So act of holding the Citta on one particular region is the base of this stage. Therefore the term is used appropriately i.e. Dhāranā which is derived from root √Dhri. Patanjali has given the name to every stage which is related to the nature of that stage. Therefore every name expresses exact relation between the meaning of the term and description of the stage.

For the state of concentration what is necessary? The essential thing is to hold the Citta on particular region. Therefore the word which derived from the root √Dhri which means holding, has to be used, to define the state and that word is Dhāranā. Patanjali is very particular about the terms which has been used as eight stages of Yoga, those terms are self-sufficient for understanding the nature and function of every stage of Astāṅga Yoga. But the term Dhāranā which
is described as sixth stage of *Aṣṭānga Yoga*, in *Yoga Upaniṣads* has not been related to the meaning of *Dhāraṇā* described as in *Yoga Sūtra*. It is totally different. The described *Dhāraṇā* in *Yoga Upaniṣads* is retention of breath joined with concentration of mind on various part of the body. Here the act of retention of breath is necessary for *Dhāraṇā*, which is not at all described in *Yoga Sūtra*. That clearly means that though *Yoga Upaniṣads* describes eightfolds of *Yoga* similar to *Aṣṭānga Yoga* of Pātanjala *Yoga Sūtra*, description on the interpretation of every term is often different from *Yoga Sūtra*. Everywhere in the text it is found that the name of the term given to the particular stage is similar to *Aṣṭānga Yoga* but the description is different. The descriptions in *Yoga Upaniṣads* are closer to *Hatha Yoga* than *Rāja Yoga*.

**VII.4 DESCRIPTION OF DHARANA IN YOGA UPANIŚADS**

In various *Yoga Upaniṣad* *Dhāraṇā* is described e.g. *AmṛtNāda, Darśana, Yoga Cuḍāmaṇi, Yogatattva* and *Śaṇḍilya*. Somewhere it is only defined and not discussed in detail or somewhere one gets detail discussion but not the definition. *Yoga Upaniṣads* explain *Dhāraṇā* more in a practical way and also elaborate the process of it. But all those descriptions are based on the experience or the practice; therefore it is very difficult to follow these descriptions. In *Yogatattva* or in *Śaṇḍilya Upaniṣad* the seer describes various kinds of *Dhāraṇā*, but
does not mention the method of performing it. The seer describes every detail about Dhāraṇā which is based on experience, but cannot be understood by reading these descriptions. It is stated that when one reaches up to the stage of Dhāraṇā through practice of Yoga then only he should perform these types of Dhāraṇā. But the meaning of Dhāraṇā is not clearly described. Thus it is very difficult to accept these description as it is. In some Upaniṣads like Amṛt Nada or Yoga Cuḍāmaṇi they try to give the definition of the term but it is not crystal clear like the definition of Dhāraṇā described in Yoga Sūtra.

1) Yoga cuḍāmanupaniṣad describes it as:

धारणाभिषे: मनोधेर्य याति बौद्धत्वम् अद्भूतम्।

By Dhāraṇā i.e. firmly fixing the mind he attains mental fortitude.

The seer further says:

प्रत्याहारशिष्टके न जायते धारणा युभा।

With twice six Pratyāhārās is generated auspicious Dhāraṇā. Here one observes that the seer describes Dhāraṇā which is based on Pratyāhāra, so it is clear that for the attainment of Dhāraṇā one has to withdraw one’s sense organs from the objects then only mind will turn inward. Therefore through the practice of Pratyāhāra one attains control of mind which establishes the state of Dhāraṇā. The seer describes further, that through Dhāraṇā one achieves mental fortitude ‘Manodheirya’ with the result of
control of mind attained in Pratyāhāra. Hence the seer describes that, Dhāraṇā is end result of Practice of Pratyāhāra. Thus Dhāraṇā gives the confidence and steadiness of mind which is the end result of mind control attained in Pratyāhāra. This is a different attitude of describing Dhāraṇā. One more thing is not described clearly; that is 'twice six Pratyāhāra'. What is the meaning of this given duration of Pratyāhāra? The seer doesn’t explain anything about it; because it is assumed that his pupils know it. This may be depended upon the duration of Prāṇāyāma; Because the seer first describes that twice six Prāṇāyāma establishes Pratyāhāra and then twice six Pratyāhāra leads to Dhāraṇā etc.10

So whole process of increasing the duration of practice of Prāṇāyāma leads to further stages of Yoga. In Yoga Cintāmaṇi it is clearly stated that when the practice of Prāṇāyāma increases one attains Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi one by one.11 In some other literature also as said elsewhere in the work Dhāraṇā is mentioned as collection or concentration of the mind joined with the retention of breath. Similarly in Yoga Upaniṣads like Yoga tattva or Yoga Cūḍāmaṇi etc., the rentention of breath is the base of attainig later stages of Yoga.
II) *Yoga tattvopaniṣad* describes four stages of Yoga based on the intensity of the practice, they are as follows:

अरम्भाय घटावै तथा परिचयः स्मृतः ।

निष्पत्तिभैतिकवस्था च सर्वाङ्गपरिकीर्तिता ॥ १२

Ārmbha, Ghata, Paricaya and Nispatti: these are the four stages or *Avasthā* of Yoga. And these stages are attained through increasing of the practice of *Yoga* as prescribed in the *Upaniṣad*. And when the aspirant attains it Ghajāvasthā then the stage of familiarity will be reached by frequent practice. Here the seer describes about the vital air and rention of breath and then describes about Dhāraṇā. So it is clearly stated in this *Upaniṣad* that the stage of familiarity i.e. *Paricya Avasthā* is the foundation of Dhāraṇā and when one attains that state, on will practise Dhāraṇā. In this stage of familiarity the seer says the vital air, intimately associated with the agni by means of the *Yogin*’s effort will then enter along with the fire, the Suṣumnā Nādi without any obstruction. Along with the vital air the Citta (mind of the Yogin) will also enter the great path through the Suṣumnā door. When the Citta (mind) of the *Yogin* enters the Suṣumnā along with the vital air, at this stage is attained what is known as the *Paricayavasthā*. And then the seer describes Dhāraṇās of the
five Brahmins in the regions of the five element where retention of breath is compulsory. So in Paricayāvasthā vital air is along with Suṣumnā enters the great path; then the Yogi reaches to Niṣpatti stage when the Prāna reaches the Brahmārandhra. In the commentary of Hathayogaprādipika it is described that, if Prāna remains in Brahmārandhra for five Ghaṭikās or two hours it is Dhāranā. So according to that after the stage of Niṣpatti one will attain the further stages of Yoga. But actually in Yogatattvapaniṣad Dhāranā is described only after Paricayāvasthā and not after Niṣpatti Avasthā. And also prescribed that one should practice Dhāranā for at least five Ghaṭikā and should hold the breath on various region of very element in the body. So Yogaupaniṣad also describes practice of Dhāranā for two hours by retention of vital air on various region in the body and not retention of breath in Brahmārandhra; because that is the final state. Again in Haṭhyoga Pradipika Paricayāvasthā is described, in this third stage, a sound like that of a drum that is heard in the Ākāśa (between the eyebrows). Then the Prāna reaches the Mahāsūnya which is the seat of all siddhis. Hence the description of Paricyāvasthā is different from the description of Yogatattvapaniṣad, but in both the cases the Prāna reaches the ‘Mahāsūnya’ or Mahāpatha. So some
description of Ḫaṭhayoga Pradīpika and Yoga tattvapaniṣad is similar but in some points through both of them describe similar stages the actual description is different. The duration prescribed for Dhāraṇā is similar but region of retention of breath described differently. Or it is not clearly stated in both the texts.

VII.5 DESCRIPTION OF DHARANA IN FIVE ELEMENTS

Darśanopaniṣad, Yogatattvopaniṣad and Śaṅdilyopaniṣad describe Pancabhutesu Dhāraṇā i.e. Dhāraṇā on five elements. In that description of Dhāraṇā in Yogatattva the seer gives details about the place or region of the body where one should hold the breath for two hours. Then describes about the respective element of that part of the body. And also the description about the deity, five Bijamantra shape, colour, the power attained after concentrating on those points. The description is as follows:

भूमिरापोजसंजये वायुराकाष्ठभृति पञ्चकः
वेषु विशाल देवाणां धारणा पञ्चधोध्वयति ।

The Earth, water, fire, Air and Ether: these form the five-fold group of elements. Dhāraṇā of the Deity (Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Isvara and Sadasiva) in the five is said to be of a fivefold character.

i) Prthivi-Tattva Dhāraṇā: From the foot on to the knee is said to be the region of Prthivi (the earth), Prthivi is quadrilateral, is of
yellow colour and of the character of the syllable ‘Laṁ’. Having forced in the vital air in the region of Prthivi, along with the Lakara or the syllable ‘Laṁ’ meditating on the four-faced ‘Brahma’ with the four arms and of the colour of gold, one should hold the vital air for five Ghaṭikās i.e. two hours. By doing so he will attain the conquest of Prthivi. From the Prthivi - yoga there will be no death for the Yogan. 17

ii) *Apa-tattva Dhāranā*: From the knee on to the anus is said to be the region of water. Water is crescentic and is of white colour. The syllable ‘Vaṁ’ is said to be its seed. Forcing the vital air along with Vakara or the syllable ‘Vaṁ’ through the region of water, calling to mind the God Nārāyaṇa, with four arms, wearing the crown of the bright white colour of crystal the Acyuta with the silk-robe, the Yogan should hold the vital air for five Ghaṭikās. On doing so he is rid of all sins. Then there is no fear for him from water and he will not find a watery grave. 18

iii) *Agni - Tattava Dhāranā*:

From the anus on to the heart is said to be the region of fire. Fire is triangular, is of red colour and takes its origin from Rephaksara or the syllable ‘Ram’. Forcing the vital air radiant with the syllable ‘Ram’ into the region of Fire, calling to mind God Rudra, with
the three eyes, the bestower of boons, shining like the young ora of the Sun with his body entirely besmeared with ashes and full of grace, the Yogin should hold the vital air for five Ghaṭikās. On doing so he is not scorched by fire. Even if he should enter a pit full of fire, his body will not be affected\(^9\).

iv) \textit{Vāyu - Tattva Dhāraṇā}

From the heart on to the middle of the eyebrows is said to be the region of Air. Air is Śaṭkoṇa is of a black colour and manifested in the Yakāra or syllable ‘Yam’. Forcing the vital air through the aerial region along with the radiant syllable ‘Yam’ the Yogin should meditate on the all-knowing Īśvara facing all directions, as having his stand there and hold the vital air for five Ghaṭikās. On doing so he move through ethereal space like Air. For the Yogin there will be neither death nor fear from the aerial element\(^{10}\).

v) \textit{Ākāśa - Tattva Dhāraṇā}

From the middle of the eyebrows on the end of the crest of head is said to be the region of Ākāśa or Ether. Ether is of the circle shape and is smokey and is manifest bright as Hakāra the syllable ‘Ham’. Forcing the vital air in the region of Ether along with the syllable ‘Ham’, the Yogin should meditate on the great god Śāmkara of the form of the Bindu, of the form of Ether, the
Sadasiva of the colour of clear crystal and holding the crescent on his head, with five faces with a pleasing feature, with ten arms and five sets of three eyes equipped with all weapons an decked with all jewels. With one half of his body shared by Uma, bestowing boons and the prime cause of all causes. By holding the vital air in Ether there will surely accrue for the Yogin the power of moving through ethereal space. Wherever he might remain, he cerives immense Bliss\textsuperscript{21}. Thus the accomplished Yogin should perform the five Dhāraṇā-s. The yogin will acquire a strong body and there is no death for him. The Yogin of mighty intellect is in no way harmed, even Brahmā should meet with dissolution. This is the highest achievement of the Yogin who performs five Dhāraṇā-s.\textsuperscript{22}

\textit{(Vide Table No. VII.1 & Diagram No. VII.1 & VII.2)}

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>The region of element</th>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>Colour</th>
<th>Bijā/Syllable</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Deity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Prithivi</td>
<td>From the foot on to</td>
<td>quadrilateral</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Lam</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
<td>Brahma</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the knee</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vam</td>
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<td>Narayana</td>
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<td>2) Āpa</td>
<td>From the knee on to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Ram'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rudra</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Agni)</td>
<td>the anus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Yam'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Īśvara</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Tejas</td>
<td>From the anus on to</td>
<td>crescent</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>'Yam'</td>
<td></td>
<td>Śāmkara</td>
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<td></td>
<td>the heart</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>'Ram'</td>
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<td>4) Vyāha</td>
<td>From the heart on to</td>
<td>triangular</td>
<td>red</td>
<td>'Hre'</td>
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<td>the middle of the</td>
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<td>eyebrows</td>
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<td>5) Ākāśa</td>
<td>From the middle of</td>
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<td>Smoky</td>
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<td>of Head</td>
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Note: Five Chāticas menas 2 hours.
Diagram No. VII. 1
DHÄRAṆĀ OF THE FIVE BRAHMANS IN
THE REGIONS OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Note: Described in YogaTattvopaniśad.
VII.6 DHARANA IN THE ATMAN

In some other Yoga Upanisads like Amrtinada, Kṣurikā, Darśana and Sândilya another kind of Dhāraṇā is described i.e. Dhāraṇā in the Ātman.

i) Amṛtinadopaniṣad describes Dhāraṇā as:

मन: संकल्पकं ध्यात्वा संक्षिप्त्यात्मनि बुध्मान् ।
धारित्वत् यथात्मानं धारणा परिकर्षिता ॥ २३

When a wise man regarding his mind as full of Samkapla (desires) merges it into his Ātman and is absorbed in the Contemplation of the Supreme Self that is known as Dhāraṇā.

ii) Kṣurikopaniṣad uses the word ‘Dhāraṇam’ and not ‘Dhāraṇā’ and the meaning of this word is to excercise Concentration the seer also relate the Kṣurikā as a knife of Dhāraṇā for the proper attainment of Yoga, by cutting asunder one’s ignorance, the knot of the heart etc., on attaining which these will be no rebirth for one, who has accomplished Yoga.

iii) Darasanopaniṣad describes this Dhāraṇā in the Ātman as:

साक्षाद्वत्मनि संपूर्णे धार्येत् प्रणवे मनः
इन्द्रियाणि समाहत्य मनसात्मनि हृदयेत् ॥ २५

One’s mind should retain, the Avaykta, the indefinable, the non-
sentient entity, the prime cause of all in the *Praṇava*, which becomes actually, full in the Ātman and withdrawing the senses along with the mind one should unite with Ātman.

Here in this *Dhāraṇā* the Yogi is trying to identify soul with supreme soul and even the external object with the soul. *Dhāraṇā* is the foundation of *Dhyāna*. So when one starts concentrating mind on the Supreme Self then it leads to meditation the mature state of *Dhāraṇā* where the Yogi meditate upon the transcendent *Brahman*. Therefore though five kinds of *Dhāraṇā* described before which on related to give elements in the body.

The seer describes Ātmani *Dhāraṇā* or Ātmani Mohodhāraṇam which is the *Dhāraṇā* of inner quest and it is necessary for process of meditation. So *Yoga Upaniṣads* describe *Dhāraṇā* from gross objects to subtle object. i.e. Five sthulabhutas which are expressed in the body upto the Ātman.

iv) Similarly *Śāndilyopaniṣad* describes *Dhāraṇā* on the gross form to subtle form i.e. stablizing the external *Ākāśa* in the *Daharākāśa* Ether of the heart. stablizing the five *Brahmans* in the five elements and stabilizing the mind in the Ātman. When one should concentrate on object of gross from then only one should meditate upon on the deity with form. And when one concentrates on the


Atman then meditates on the Atman. Because when concentration matures the state of meditation begins. Therefore object of concentration and meditation should be one and the same, because continuous practice of concentration leads to state of meditation.

Thus Yoga Upanisads have described these various types of Dhāraṇā which increases slowly the maturity level of the Yogan in the practice of Yoga. It is very difficult to begin the concentration process with concentrating upon the Atman; therefore first gross objects are described and then the subtle form of Atman²⁶.

Patañjali describes these parts of the body where the concentration takes place as ‘Desā’ first. And then describes various types of ‘Desā’ but does not call them ‘Desā’ but explain it with Samyama - Dhāraṇā Dhyāna and Samādhi constitute integration²⁷. And that Samyama may be applied in various spheres to derive its usefulness²⁸.e.g. by Samyama on the neval area or Nābhi Cakra the yogi acquires perfect knowledge of the disposition of the human body.²⁹
VII.7 DESCRIPTION OF DHARANA IN YOGA SUTRA

Dhāranā means focus of attention. Focusing the attention on a chosen point or area, within or outside the body is concentration. By it the functions of the mind are controlled and brought to one focal point. Dhāranā is established when the mind learns to remain steady on its own or hold on to an unmoving object. Once mastery of the five stages of Yoga from Yama to Pratyāhāra is achieved, the art of focusing the mind and Citta is undertaken. Therefore Dhāranā is described as sixth stage of Yoga. Because through the practice of Yama and Niyama, the Sadhaka develops emotional stability30. Through Āsana, he keeps his body, the abode of the soul, free from disease31. In Prānāyāma, he learns to stop the dissipation of energy by regulating its flow for proper distribution throughout his body and mind32. Where he achieves the stand still position of body the state of Keval Kumbhaka where the Yogi neither inhales nor exhales33, that is the state, Palanjal describes as proper stage where mind is capable to attain Dhāranā34. Patanjali describes that Prānāyāma removes the veil covering the light of knowledge and heralds the dawn of wisdom, where the mind becomes fit for concentration. Prānāyāma is not only an instrument to steady the mind, but also the gateway to concentration, Dhāranā. Once the new light of knowledge has downed through the practice of Prānāyāma, the mind is fit and competent to move on towards the realization of the
soul. The implication here is clear that the Yogi who had to struggle initially to cultivate the Yogic way of life by self-discipline and study, now finds his efforts into a natural zeal to proceed in his Sādhana. But still Patanjali described one more stage in between Prānāyāma and Dhāraṇā i.e. Pṛtyāhāra which is the fast stage of Bahiranga Sādhana and the primary stage of Antaranga Sādhana. Through Pṛtyāhāra he develops willpower, detaches himself from the organs of senses and acquires clairty of thought35. This is the beginning of culturing the brain. Once he has become different to worldly matters, he is fit to proceed on the inner quest enriching the mind through Dhāraṇā. The mind is ripe and avid for its spiritual quest. So, for Dhāraṇā, all these stages are necessary or once can say prerequisite for Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi. All the eight components of Asṭāṅga Yoga are interwoven, though each is described individually for the sake of convenience. They are subdivided into the external quest, the internal quest and the innermost quest which enable even the uninitiated to learn to concentrate step by step, on concrete form through systematic practice. Having reached maturity and refinement they are able to penetrate their inmost thoughts and feelings.

Concentration otherwise is necessary in every state of Asṭāṅga Yoga or also in life, but here in Yogasūtra Patanjali had defined the state of concentration. Nobody defined it yet so perfectly.
Patanjali defines it as follows:

देशबन्धितत्व धारणा 136

Here Dhāranā is not related to mind but Citta, Patanjali is very specific about the word used in the Sūtra. In Sādhanā Pada after describing the state of Keval Kumbhaka, he says

धारणातु च योज्यता मनसः 137

Here he says ‘mind ‘ is fit for concentration and in the defination Dhāranā he says ‘Cittasya Dhāranā’. So the question arises why he has used two different word mind and Citta? Whether mind and citta are one and the same or he purposefully used different word ‘Mana’ and ‘Citta’? Mana and Citta both of them are components of mind complex or ‘Antahkaraṇa Catuṣṭaya’, i.e. Mana, Buddhhi, Ahamkāra and Citta. So it is now clear that though sometimes, ‘Mana’ and ‘Citta’ is used as mind but they are different, Patanjali uses the word ‘Mana’ in Sādhana Pada to describe the eligibility of mind to attain Dhāranā, there still Mana or mind is attached with external sense organs. So Pratyāhāra is described where Patanjali defines it thus:

स्वविशयास्यपूर्णो वित्तस्यस्वरूपाणु कार इवविन्यागणं प्रत्याहारः 138

Here also the word Cittasya is used. So Citta tries to imitate its own form with the help of withdrawing the senses from their respective object. There the necessary things is to cut off the mind from the
object because without mind one cannot have the knowledge to response
the activity which is done through any of the five senses that has been
already discussed in previous chapter of Pratyâhâra. So in the state
of ‘Pratyâhâra ‘Mana’ is also treated as ‘Indriya’ not external organ
but ‘Antar Indriya’ so that also has to be withdrawn form the ‘Visaya’
and then only Citta tries to imitate its own form. So here lies the
difference between ‘Mana’ and ‘Citta’. Citta is subtle form of
‘Antahkarana’ than ‘Mana’. When Citta does not have any attraction
externally it tries to follow its form but it is not so easy. Therefore
Patañjali adds two steps more to attain the state of oneness, where
again that ‘Svarûpa’ as if becomes void at the state of Samâdhi and
those steps are Dhâraṇâ and Dhyâna.

The Citta who wants to imitate its own form has to be fixed on
certain point and that point is called as ‘Desa’ in the defination of
Dhâraṇâ. Here one gets the answer as to why Patañjali describes
Cittasya Dhâraṇâ and not Manasya Dhâraṇâ. In the state of Pratyâhâra
Mana is already withdrawn from the object and Citta tries to take its
own form; therefore it is necessary for Citta to fix up or engaged on
one point to achieve the state of merging in that form of Samâdhi.
Therefore Patanjali advises to fix the Citta on various ‘Desa’ and
called it as Dhâraṇâ which means to hold or to retain; uptill this stage
he has advised the external limbs to be restrained through first five
stages, mind also is retained in Pratyāhāra, now Citta has to be retained and that state of Citta is called as Dhāraṇā, that means concentration. And when Dhāraṇā matures that becomes Dhyāna and when Dhyāna matures that leads to Samādhi.

Patanjali has designed Aṣṭāṅga Yoga in such a way that one conqures one step which becomes the foundation of the another steps and it is a journey from gross to subtle. In his words from Vīsesa Prakṛiti to Alinga. The Yogi conqures every stage of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga and now the part of controlling Citta has been started from Dhāraṇā. Dhāraṇā is the art of reducing the interruption of the mind and ultimately eliminating them completely, so that the knower and the known become one. Dhāraṇā may be focused on external or internal objects. External object should be auspicious and associated with purity. Internally, the mind penetrates to the soul the core of one’s being. The object is, in reality pure existence.

Sri Vyasa’s commentary on the Sutra of Dhāraṇā indicates certain parts of the body as being suitable for concentration. They are the sphere of the naval (Nabhi cakra), the lotus of the heart (Hṛdaya Pundarika), the centre of the head (Murdhani), the shining light (Jyotisi or Ajana Cakra), the tip of the nose (Nasikagra) and the root of the tongue (Jihvagra). As attention is fixed on these inner points, one gradually becomes engrossed first in oneself and then in one’s soul,
(Ātman). Dhāraṇā is concerned with the elimination of fluctuating thought-waves in order to achieve single pointed concentration which is necessary to attain Dhyāna and Samādhi. If one cannot concentrate on one point his Citta cannot be stabilized and try to become one with that given point. Therefore Patañjali advices to concentrate on various points; then only Citta becomes used to get engrossed into those points when that point is Ātman it will try to merge with that also. But to attain this highest state of ‘Kaivalya’ the Yogi has to practice Dhāraṇā along with Dhyāna and Samādhi. Three together concentrating on the same given point or object slowly and steady when the practice matures one will attain the state of oneness with one’s soul Ātman.

Thus everytime state of concentration is the beginning; when it evoles that becomes Dhyāna and when the object of contemplation shines forth without the intervention of one’s own consciousness, Dhyāna flows into Samādhi. So Patañjali describes that these of them necessary to attain three natural powers or Vibhuti. One cannot meditate without concentrating the mind and without meditation Samādhi cannot be attained. Thus Dhāraṇā is essential factor to attain Samādhi. Dhāraṇā develops and sharpens intelligence, Dhyāna purifies consciousness and Samādhi leads consciousness towards the soul. These three are directly involved in the subtle sheaths of mind, intelligence and consciousness. They directly affect the spiritual path
and therefore called the inner quest. Three of them are essential to attain Vibhuti; therefore are described in Vibhuti Pada and not in Sadhana Pada⁴⁰ although eightfolds of Yoga described in Sadhana Pada. Patanjali explains only first five sages in Sadhana Pada and last three stage in vibhuti Pada.

**VII.8 DESCRIPTION OF DHARANA IN JAIN-PHILOSOPHY**

In Jain-Philosophy the author of Jnanarnava describes process of Dhyana by classifying Dhyana into four parts. And amongst them the first part is called Pindasta Dhyana⁴¹. The Pindasta Dhyana comprises the five forms of contemplation Dharanás which have been explained in the following way.

i) The Yogi should imagine a motionless, noiseless and ice-white ocean in Mdhyaloka. In the centre of the ocean he should imagine a finely-constructed, resplendent and enchanting lotus of thousand petals as extensive as Jambudvipa. The centre of the lotus should be imagined as having a pericarp which emanates yellowish radiance in all the ten directions. In the pericarp the Yogi should imagine a raised throne resembling the resplendence for the moon. And therein he should imagine himself seated in a serene frame of mind. He should then firmly believe that his self is potent enough to sweep away all the filth of passions and to demolish all
the *Karmās*. This type of contemplation is called *Parthivi-Dhāraṇā*.

ii) Afterwards the Yogi is required to imagine a beautiful, well-shaped lotus of sixteen petals in the region of his own naval. He should them imagine that such petal is inscribed with one of the sixteen vowels, and that the pericarp of this lotus is inscribed with a holy syllable ‘*Ham*’. Afterward he should imagine that the smoke is slowly coming out of the upper stroke of the holy syllable ‘*Ham*’ and that after some-time the smoke turns itself into flame of fire which burns the lotus of eight petals situated in the region of the heart. After this lotus, which represents the eight kinds of *Karmas*, has been reduced to ashes, the Yogi should imagine a fire surrounding the body. After the body is reduced to ashes, the fire in the absense of anything to burn is automatically extinguished. This type of contemplation is called *Agneyi-Dhāraṇā*.

iii) The Yogi should then imagine the powerful minds which are capable of blowing away the ashes of the body. After the ashes are imagined to be blown away, he should imagine the steadiness and calmness of the wind. This type of contemplation is called
Śvasana-Dhāranā.

iv) The Yogi should then imagine heavily clouded sky along with lightening, thundering and rainbow. Such imagination should culminate in the constant down pour of big and bright rain drops like pearls. These rain drops are required to be imagined as serving the holy function of washing away the remnants of the ashes of the body. This type of contemplation is called Varuni-Dhāranā.

v) Afterwards the Yogi should think over his own soul as great as an omniscient, as bereft of seven constituent elements of the body, as possessed of radiance which is as immaculate as the full-orbed moon. He should, then consider his soul as associated with supernatural features, as seated on the thorne, as adored and worshipped by Devas, devils and the men. After this he should regard his soul as free from all kinds of Karmas, as possessed of all the divine attributes and qualities. This is called Tattvarupavati Dhāranā. With this finishes the practising of the Pindastha-
Dhyāna which leads to the blissful life enduring and everlasting.

VII.9 OBSERVATIONS:

1) Dhāraṇā is sixth stage of Asīṅga Yoga and the position of the term is appropriate. Pantañjali has discussed from Yama to Pratyāhāra the external quest where the Yogī attains the control over external organs as well as internal organs. And the state of Dhāraṇā is described where Yogī deals with ‘Citta’. Once mastery of five stages of Yoga is achieved, the art of focusing the attention on chosen point or area is possible. Because then only the mind learns to remain steady on its own or hold on to an unmoving object. So to reach upto the state of Dhāraṇā all first five stages are necessary and then the process of concentration is possible. If one has attraction in external object, if one cannot control his breath as well as his external limbs, if one doesnot have courage to sustain in the given position for longer time, One’s mind as well as Citta cannot be controlled and hold on to any object. So for concentration all these above things are necessary or there are the prerequisites for the process of concentration. Therefore Yama to Pratyāhāra these five stages are described before Dhāraṇā. External concentration like reading a book or studying any art with full concentration is that simple that concentration is
called Bahya Dhāraṇā. That is required in any stage of life to every human being. But Patanjali does not expect only Bahya Dhāraṇā from the Yogi but the internal concentration or Antar Dhāraṇā. Therefore he defines Dhāraṇā as ‘Desā Bandha Cittasya Dhāraṇā. Here the concentration required on the internal region of the body called ‘Desā’. Thus it is called as internal quest or Antaranga Sādhanā.

2) Yoga Upaniṣads describe Dhāraṇā which includes retention of vital air as the basic part of Dhāraṇā, through which concentration takes place. So this is more or less based on progression in Prāṇāyāma Similar to Hatha Yoga.

3) Patanjali only describes the word Desā but does not give explanation about Desā along with the Sūtra. Yoga Upaniṣads describes those disease in detail Upaniṣads not only pointed out the region of the body but relate those region with particular elements and called that Dhāraṇā as Pancabhutesu Dhāraṇā.

4) In this description of Dhāraṇā the seer gives every detail about every element regarding its position in the body, its deity, colour, shape and syllable but all this description has to accept as ‘Agama Pnmāṇa’ because one cannot prove it through practical. These is nothing in the body as such expirient which is described in the
*Upaniṣad* but the seer has described it with his power attained through meditation. So it is based on experience if one does not have trust in this philosophy may contradict these explanations. But for that nobody has answer to make one satisfied. One has to have faith in these literatures who wants to follow the path of Yoga. There is no need for them to prove their greatness, it is our essentiality to learn that technique and experience it.

5) One thing is sure that it requires vigorous, intense practice of *Yoga* as well as following up the rules and regulation very particularly then only one attains these stages of *Yoga* one by one.

6) Everytime in *Yoga Upaniṣads* the benefits are specially mentioned; it is not only for the sake of attracting people but those benefits are the indication for the *Yogi* to give him guideline that he is on the right path. If one attains those powers, one can understand that practice is appropriate and that gives the courage to climb up on higher states.

7) The powers attained through *Dhāraṇā* are so high that one conquers one’s death which gives the *Yogi* the confidence to practice intensely and leads towards total liberation. Because if one does not remain alive one cannot proceed further practice of
Yoga and if one wants the state of ‘Kaivalya’ one has to stay in this world and practice continuously. Therefore the seer has described that through Dhāraṇā on five elements, one will not have fear of death from these element. That means one can easily practice Yoga continuously without the fear of death. And one will get rid off from the cycle of rebirth. Then one will definitely attain the ultimate aim i.e. ‘Mokṣa’

8) That may be the reason why those powers have been described after attainment of Dhāraṇā, because there are two more steps one has to attain i.e. Dhyāṇa and Samādhi, and if one conquer these powers and free from the fear of death at the primary stage of concentration process i.e. Dhāraṇā, then only one can practice advanced Yoga and attain Dhyāṇa and Samādhi.

9) But Patanjali does not describe any power or benefit achieved after Dhāraṇā. He strictly advised to practice Dhāraṇā, Dhyāṇa and Samādhi three together and also makes it compulsory for the Yogi that he should take the same object for concentration, meditation and absorption; then only one will attain certain super natural powers.

10) In Jain Philosophy Dhāraṇā which is described under ‘Pindosthā Dhyāna’ also of five land similar to YogaUpaniṣads. But the given descriptions are different. They are as follows:
A) In yoga Tattvopanisad the seer describes Prithvi tattva Dhāraṇā; similarly here also author describes Pārthivi Dhāraṇā but there is no similarity in the discription of these two Dhāraṇā.

B) In another type of Dhāraṇā i.e. Agneyi Dhāraṇā in Jain Philosophy Yogi should imagine a fire surrounding the body, but Yogatattva Upaniṣad describes Agni tattva Dhāraṇā where the seer says that with the attainment of this Dhāraṇā the Yogi even if will enter a pit full of fire his body will not be affected.

c) In the third type of Dhāraṇā in Jain-Philosophy the author also describes that one should imagine the powerful mind and where the vayu tattva- Dhāraṇā described in Yogatattva Upaniṣad But the author of Jain-Philosophy describe this Dhāraṇā as Śvasana-Dhāraṇā, which is also not similar to Yogatattva Upaniṣad.

D) In the fourth type of Dhāraṇā Yogi imagines heavily clouded sky and that is Varuni Dhāraṇā in Jain Philosophy. Where in Yogatattva Upaniṣad the seer description Apa-tattva Dhāraṇā as second type of Dhāraṇā
E) The fifth type of Dhāraṇā in Yoga Upaniṣad is ‘Ākāśa-tattva Dhāraṇā’ and in Jain Philosophy it is ‘Tattvarupavati Dhāraṇā’, where the Yogi thinks over his own soul as great as a omniscient.

So though Jain Philosophy describes Dhāraṇā of five elements, the nature of the element is different. Though it suggest to imagine them in the body the results are different from Yoga Upaniṣads. Jain Philosophy also describes ‘Ātmāni Dhāraṇā’ as described in Darāsanopaniṣad term that Dhāraṇā as ‘Tattvarupavati Dhāraṇā’.

11) In Sāndiloyopaniṣad in case of Dhāraṇā there is textual mistake, the edition of Adyar publication printed five types of Dhāraṇā and the commentator also has given the tittle ‘Pancavidha Dhāraṇā’. But in Upaniṣad Sangraha by Pandit Jagdisa Sastri it is described as ‘Trividha Dhāraṇā’

i) Stablizing the mind in the Ātman.

ii) Stablizing the external Ākāśa (Ether) in the Daharakasa (Ether of heart)

iii) Stablizing the five Brahmas (Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudara, Isvara and Sadasiva) for them the seer uses the word ‘Pancamurti’, in the five elements Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Ether.

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