CHAPTER IV

PATANJALI'S ASHTANGA YOGA AND

HOLISTIC HEALTH

Holistic Approach of Patanjali's System

Patanjali's system of yoga seems to have been based on scientific and keen observations made by the great seer (Maharishi Patanjali) himself. He must have observed that the reason alone cannot uproot the miseries and dispel ignorance, because working in the surface level of consciousness, it cannot cope with the permanent dispositions (samskaras) of the mind. It needed the whole man to rise up and awake and fight against the dispositions and permanent tendencies of the mind that are obstructive to his best welfare. The discrimination (viveka) between cit and Jana, between spirit and matter, can only result from infinite expansion
of the physical and mental sides of life (i.e. surface consciousness). All such expansion, he must have observed, comes from methodical exercise and regulated control of all faculties and powers—potentially hidden in the individual man. His system, therefore, seeks to apply his knowledge of the factual truth, e.g. that methodical and regulated exercise alone can yield expansion. Thus, he, successfully, gave practical shape to the theoretical notions of spirituality—the religious aspect. In order to fulfil this requirement, the system advocates regulated conduct, regulated exercise of the body and its vital processes, the methodical control of the will and slow but steady and gradual growth of reason, as the indispensable preliminaries in the form of Bahiranga Yoga and higher practices of Dharana (Concentration) Dhyana (Meditation) and Samadhi as Antanranga (Internal) Yoga to the full and perfect spiritual development. It is emphasized that the physical, the moral, affective (Emotional and Social) and the intellectual sides of life are developed simultaneously through adherence to the prescriptions and
injunctions laid down in daily routine so as to attain all-round progress. Regulation and control do not suppress, but expand and these are the only ways of expansion (of microcosmic consciousness to the macrocosmic level) and development of personality.

Patanjali’s system is suited to those in whom reason (Intellectual faculty) has not yet so well established as to have natural supremacy over lower rung entities (Physical, Moral, Emotional). It may be considered as only preparatory discipline to the attainment of Jnana by those who, by way of their nature, are guided by reason. Samkhyaists and Vedantins are decidedly philosophical type of people who adopt ‘reason’ alone, directly to have tattva-jnana (knowledge of the Reality ands Truth of the Entire Existence).

Patanjali’s Yoga as Experimental Science and an Independent Psycho-spiritual Discipline

Patanjali’s system may very well be described as the science of mental discipline, that too of experimental nature. Its
ultimate goal is to attain perfect control or inhibition of the modifications or modes of consciousness (Chittavritti) and this is to be obtained gradually and in different degrees in the varying forms of processes included in the scheme. Each process, through repeated attempts as day-to-day routine, attempts at emptying the consciousness of modifications at whatever level. Thus, a permanent disposition towards inhibition becomes established, and spontaneity is attained in this direction (P.S.Y. I:18). The process of control (Nirodh), initiated at the conscious level in the beginning, passes through the subconscious level as a result of indirect effect of the Bahiranga yoga practices and concludes with achievement of superconscious state. As an ordinary man does not know anything about such a potential state of being, this is called 'Unconscious State' by the modern psychologists. The prescription of a practice has been done with a particular purpose and after defining and describing the nature of the practices and procedures of each practice, mentions its effects. This shows that he himself must have experimented with all such practices and got the results
that were verifiable through keen observation and personal experience of those who practiced them methodically. This every process has its attendant result, and the gain of desirable result indicates that the process has been successfully performed and completed and that the Sadhaka has made himself fit for the next higher step. The results naturally follow from the successful accomplishment of the process and, as such, demonstrate the utility and efficacy of the processes themselves. The claim that Patanjali's system is an experimental science is not at all exaggeration as it undertakes to demonstrate the results of the disciplinary practices at every step. The results of practices generate confidence in the mind of the Sadhaka as to the infallibility of the system and thus encourage him in his arduous and difficult task of attaining the goal of self realization.

The mention of miraculous powers (Vibhutis) by Patanjali in the 4th and last chapter of his sutras evidently proved that these powers follow from the perfection of the processes prescribed by him in his discipline. However, he has mentioned that these
powers are by themselves not of much spiritual value and it is possible to attain the highest spiritual realization without these powers. Hence, he has advised the Sadhakas not to be allured by the pleasures and glories of these powers as these may likely prove to be hindrances in his spiritual progress. The description of such powers in his treatise shows that his techniques are experimentally tested and result oriented and it is hoped that the time is not far when many of the such claims will be proved right by the modern scientists.

**MODERN VIEWS ON HEALTH**

Health is perceived as a multidimensional process involving the well-being of the whole person in the context of the environment. The definition of health which confines it to physico-psycho-socio fields (dimensions) is incomplete and inadequate. Health is an integral concept which comprehends the totality of our being. True health must include not only physical fitness but also the simultaneous psychological and spiritual well-being. In a broader perspective, the physical body of the human
being is not important as emotional, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Mind draws its power from the spirit, transmits it to all the body organs, and ensures their rhythmic and coordinated functions. Qualitative (spiritual) values of life like non-attachment etc do possess health enduring capacity in eliminating symptoms of mental and physical stress and strain (stress and coping). The 'perfect functioning' approach to health conceptualizes health:

(i) **Biological**: As a state in which every cell and every organ functions at optimum capacity and in perfect harmony with the rest of the body;

(ii) **Psychologically** - as a state in which the individual feels a sense of subjective well-being and of mastery over his environment;

(iii) **Socially** - as a state in which the individual's capacities for participation in the social system are optimal and

(iv) **Spiritually** - as a state in which an individual human being has an inherent urge for or is conscious of qualitative values of life
which makes him transcend animal instinct behavior for the realization of higher truths of life and existence.

**Health, Fitness and Performance**

Being physically fit does not necessarily mean being healthy or being able to perform highly skilled event. Health and performance are separate qualities: One can suffer from cancer yet be fit for strenuous activity; one can be unfit for hard work and unhealthy and be superior performer in fine skill events. Fitness relates to a task; it does not describe a state of health. Diabetic persons have been tennis champions. Individuals with heart disease have become successful distance runners. Victims of cancer continue to perform well in early stages of the disease. In such instances the pathological condition has not become a limiting factor in the performance of work. It is not until the disease becomes debilitating that it affects fitness.

Health and fitness are relatively inseparable. They have a part and whole relationship. If we consider health as a state of well being, then fitness (as part) contributes to attain this state.
We can conceive of a ‘health and fitness’ continuum on which one extreme point towards left could be considered as ‘death’ or zero point and the other on the right as ‘Maximum’. The maximum point is as relative one and not the absolute and one’s position at this point at a given moment can be determined by many contributing factors some of which are heredity and others environmental, and some of the factors are uncontrollable but many of them could be controlled to some extent. It must be recognized that many factors affect a person’s position on his health and fitness continuum and that one may never know exactly what his position is. An individual’s position on the continuum thus represents relative health and fitness which has always chances of being up and down, increase or decrease, and a part of our temporal existence.

Indian Views on Health and fitness

The Indian classical approaches have shown the whole course of spiritual discipline and have taken into account even the smallest thing that is of any help in the matter. Knowing fully well that
spirituality is a thing of deepest consciousness, they still prescribed certain physical and physiological courses of training, because they never forget that spiritual consciousness and its realization were but the unfolding of the spirit embodied in the human form. The finite (Human form) unfolds its latent infinitude gradually, but as it has assumed a body and is rather imprisoned by the same, its growth and development presupposes a similar development of the body also (Upanishad- apayayantu mamangani....). All sound development of the physical, mental, intellectual, moral and intuitive sides of life has been considered necessary for genuine spiritual realization and therefore, Indians have emphasized all of these aspects. They always prefer to follow the gradual course, the line of nature's own development and growth, rather than any artificial and abrupt method. The whole object of their disciplinary practices (Sadhana) is to aid nature rather than to cripple or obstruct her by overstraining or by attempting to go against her.
The body is an instrument for the expression of sakti/oorja or energy, and as such, the more perfect the instrument and fitter the organism, the better will it express the sakti which is now hidden or latent in it. All energy is nature's own, and the exercise and development of the instrument or the vehicle can only help to evolve or manifest (but not create) the latent energy. All acquisition and attainment in life presupposes proper equipment, and the first equipment for a thorough development as is involved in spiritual progress and realization should be a health and fit body, so perfectly attuned to the physical and spiritual laws that it is not ruffled by any passing breath of passions or lower emotions, so well regulated and balanced, so well controlled, coordinated and disciplined that it will bear with perfect equanimity the buffets of life's rude shocks which assail the body and the mind at every turn of life. The value of having a disciplined body and mind need not to be either under-estimated or over-estimated by a person who wants self-realization—these are his priceless assets helping him in every situation of life.
The physical and physiological disciplines are necessary in order that the body may be strictly under the control of the mind and may not offer any resistance when the mind wants to meditate. The Achara- the physical and physiological disciplines, regulation of food, and breath etc., - only make the vehicle or the organism fit through which the experience of the absolute is to be gained. Thus, ancient Indians recommended the joining of kriya(action) with bhavana - (meditation), the supplementing of intellectual process (Meditation) by physical and physiological exercises. Physical and physiological processes are of the preparatory nature helping to make the body and the vital processes, fit for the higher processes and are not possibly meant to be independent methods of realization.

In the tradition of Yoga and the Upanishads, there are five sheaths of existence of man. The first and the grossest - the physical frame with which we are all so familiar is called Annamaya kosha. The second subtler sheath is the Pranamaya kosha, featured by the predominance of Pranna, the life principle.
Through, the invisible channels called the Naadis in this sheaths flow the prana.

The next sheath in the order of subtlety are: 1) Manomaya kosha

2) Vijnaanamaya Kosha. 3) Aanandamaya kosha.

In Aanandamaya kosha, a man is healthiest with a perfect harmony and balance of all his faculties. At Vijnaanamaya kosha, there are movements, but are channelised in the right direction. As such, it is in the Manomaya level that imbalance start, say the Yoga texts. Likes and dislikes have come to play at this level. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called ‘Aadhis’. At this stage, there are no symptoms at the physical level. Prompted by the perpetual growth of desires, these mental diseases concealed in us, begin to manifest themselves externally. Gradually, they percolate to the physical frame. Preponderance of Ajnaana (ignorance about one’s real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions as the eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing things at untimely hours, injuries inflicted, association with the wicked, evil
thoughts, etc. These breed physical diseases called Vyaadhis or the secondary diseases.

Ayurvedic Concept of Health

WHO definition falls short of the definition of positive health as given in Ayurveda 2,000 years ago. In addition to physical, mental and social welfare, emphasis is given on moral and spiritual welfare.

The treatment is divided into two parts. The first part is to make the healthy man feel vigorous, that is, positively healthy and the other part is to destroy sickness (C.S. -1-1-4).

In Ayurveda, health is defined as that perfect condition of the whole man

(i) Who has a happy combination of thought, action and speech.

(ii) who has his mind under perfect control of the Atma (Soul).

(iii) who has his intellect clear

(v) who possess knowledge of the soul
(vi) who is devoted to austerities and spiritual practices.

Further, that man is never subjected to any disease (C.S.V. -4).

(i) who has suitable food and habits

(ii) who always acts after proper reflection

(iii) who does not entangle himself in the objects of his senses.

(iv) who behaves equally towards all living creatures.

(v) Who is devoted to truth.

(vi) who is forgiving.

(vii) who serves with humility all those who are wise.

Susrut defines a healthy man as follows:-

(I) who has equilibrium of the three doshas, the nutrient elements.

(ii) who has normal digestion and normal condition of the tissues and excretionary organs.

(iii) who has his mind and senses clear and bright.

The condition of positive health should include, in addition to the healthy condition of the body in the material or the
physical plane, the normal condition, in the mental and spiritual plane as well.

A person who is physically fit may be blind or deaf (senses), he may be stupid and even insane (mentally). If a man is worried by all sorts of entanglements, he cannot be said to be healthy. The most important of all is the spiritual health which depends upon the attitude of the man in relation to the society and the universe. The importance of this cannot be easily understood by those who do not believe in the existence of soul.

**Yogic Approach to Health and Fitness**

While Samkhya and Vedanta seek to control the lower by means of higher, the sense-organs by means of the mind, the mind by means of Buddhi and so on, the yoga proceeds from the opposite direction to get hold of the higher with the help of the lower. It emphasizes moral and social fitness to achieve through the practice of the rules of social (Yamas) and personal hygiene (Niyamas). Then it takes to the physical and physiological fitness followed by sensorial fitness through (pratyahara- withdrawal of senses from their
respective objects). Fitness of mind and intelligence is regulated through last three steps i.e. Dharana, Dhyana, and samadhi of Astanga-yoga leading to discrimination and self realization.

In this way, the progressive fitness programme of yoga runs as follows:

(i) Cultivation of hygienic environment within and without conducive to personal and social peace facilitating spiritual journey.

(ii) Purification and strengthening of the body

(iii) Balancing and strengthening of the vital force (Prana)

(iv) Senses and mind to be controlled and internalized.

(v) Chitta (consciousness) to be calmed and emptied.

(vi) The ego (Ahamkar) must be dissolved

(vii) Intelligence to be reoriented and sharpened.

Astanga Yoga and its relationship with holistic health

Patanjali has described eight steps in the pursuit of the path of his Yoga as mentioned below (P.Y.S. 2:29)

1. Yama (Abstinence)
2. Niyama (Observances)
3. Asana (Postural patterns)
4. Pranayama (Regulation and control of breath)
5. Pratyahara (Abstraction)
6. Dharna (Concentration)
7. Dhyana (meditation)
8. Samadhi (Absorption or Trance).

These are the eight procedural constituents steps of the discipline of Patanjali's Yoga. A person desirous of achieving the full goal on the path of yoga is supposed to practice all these eight successive steps in the sequence and it is postulated that one cannot progress to the stage ahead unless he has mastered the stage behind.

Among these eight steps first five namely - Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara have been graded as Bahiranga Yoga or external yoga practices while the last three steps namely, Dharna, Dhyana, Samadhi are considered as Antaraga or internal yoga. Among these, Pratyahara is actually the link between the
Bahiranga and Antaraga yoga. Even by adequate practice of yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama. Unless these are successively practiced, Pratyahara which essentially is the withdrawal of senses form their respective subjects, one may not be able or fit to undertake the practice of the higher mental practices like Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi. The latter three practices are the integral part of the same process designed to transform the mental being and patanjali describes all the three as a composite entity namely Samyama. First Patanjali's approach of Bahiranga yoga has been discussed as under:

Vahiranga yoga

**Yama (Abstinence or Rules of social conduct)**

The word, Yama literally means control. Thus, this principle requires an individual to control his day-to-day behavior in relation to his environment without which moral behavior is not possible. Though some Upanisads describe ten fold yamas (Tris.U.329, S.U; 14;1:1:3), the yoga system of Patanjali admits the following five yamas or abstinence (P.Y.S.2:30)
1. Ahimsa or Non- Violence
2. Satya or Truthfulness
3. Asteya or non stealing
4. Brahmacharya or Abstention
5. Aparigraha or non- possessionness.

Ahimsa: Ahimsa or non-violence ensures that an aspirant should not injure any living being through body, mind or speech i.e. by action, thought or speech. Ahimsa in spite of being a negative command compels one to avoid physical verbal or mental violence. The non-violence implies non-hatred and as such non-hatred implies love and fellow-felling which are the constituents of the practice of the non-violence. i.e. Ahimsa (P.Y.S. 2:35)

Satya: The observance of non-violence indirectly implies the observance of truthfulness i.e. satya which is the second and most important constituent of yama described by Patanjali (PYS. 2:36)

In contrast to Ahimsa, Satya is a positive command as in this case an individual aspiring for the practice of yoga is required to
Aptuna or non-indulgence is simultaneously a restraint on indulgence in falsehood.

Asteya: Asteya or non-stealing, broadly means non-appropriation i.e. restraint from appropriating the property of other persons for personal use (P.Y.S.2:37). This not only includes physical stealing but also misappropriation of a property in any way and at all times. Asteya is important not only as a means of purification of mind but also as a great medium for reducing social tension and conflict (D.V.U. 1:12).

Brahmacharya: Brahmacharya or continence or non-indulgence in sex refers to non-deviation from Svadharma, the law of one's being. Brahmacharya is not only restrained from sexual activity, however observance of celibacy is an important aspect of Brahmacharya as it purifies a yogi and helps in conserving his energy and keeps him physically and mentally fit, besides playing a significant role in the purification of mind (Py.S. 2:38).
Aparigraha: Aparigraha or non-possessiveness essentially refers to the restraint on a yogi for limiting his requirements. The tendency of possessiveness is the weakness of a common man in the society. This tendency has a relevance to his evergoing requirements. The yogic discipline advocates a man to put limits on these instincts. The principle of non-possessiveness is of great significance as a restraint because yoga itself has been considered as the separation of mental modifications which obstructs the understanding of the nature of the self. The tendency of possessiveness would always produce in desired mental fluctuations. Besides its spiritual role, the principle of non-possessiveness has a great potential which may help the society to grow more and more classless and free from socio-economic conflicts. Such a voluntary and spiritual communion without malice and hatred against, any one could be a great born to the modern society. Thus Aparigraha or the principle of non-possessiveness is not only a method of mental purification but has
a scope of application in social upliftment in the modern world too (PYS. 2:39).

Niyama (Observances Or Rules of Personal Hygiene):

The second step in the practice of Astanga yoga the five fold system of Niyama i.e. cultivation of certain individual virtues. The Niyamas which form the routine code of conduct consist of certain good habits which lead to the development of the total personality of a man and also influence attitude towards spiritual pursuits and facilitate the spiritual progress. The following five factors have been accepted as the fundamental Niyamas (P.Y.S. 2:32).

1) Saucha or purity 2) Samtosa or contentment
3) Tapas or austerity 4) Svadhyaya or self study
5) Ishvar Pranidhana or dedication to the divine.

Saucha: Saucha refers to the practice of purity in every sphere of the bodily and mental activity. Taimini (1961) says that “purification or Saucha is a positive practice. Grossly speaking Saucha consists of physical cleaning of the body externally by
washing and internally by taking pure and suitable food in appropriate quantity and quality. It also consists of maintaining the purity of the mind by avoiding passions like anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy. Further, Saucha also refers to the purity of the intellect which can be achieved by useful studies to procure correct wisdom. Thus, by keeping one's body, mind and intellect neat and clean one can easily progress on the path of spiritual development. (PYS, 2:41).

Samtosa (Contentment): A mind which is not in the state of contentment cannot concentrate and meditate. Discontentment is the root cause of all miseries and it produces all sorts of conscious or unconsciousness conflicts in our mind. Therefore, Asamtosa or discontentment should be always avoided in order to have smooth progress on the path of spiritual attainment (P.Y.S. 2:42).

Tapasa: Tapasa, or austerity refers to the perfection of the sense organs and body. After destruction of impurities by austerities-kayendriya- Siddhi-asuddhi Ksyattapasah (PYS.11 43). It stands for the habit for hearing the arts of life and adaptations to the
sufferings caused by heat and cold, Sun and rain etc. (Sharma, 1965). This involves a Siddhi or perfection of the body and the senses meaning thereby a functional perfection which enables the yogi to use the body for the purpose of yoga without any kind of resistance or hindrance from it (Taimini, 1961). The living body cannot be used as a perfect instrument of consciousness in the presence of the impurity of the body and lack of its control (PYS, 2:43).

Svadhyaya: Svadhyaya or self study consists of developing a habit of devoting regular time to the study of philosophy and spiritual texts, which remained the aspirant that the spiritual Self is the reality. Svadhyaya refers to the union with the desired deity by self study. Though Svadhyaya starts with study of problems relating to spiritual life, its main purpose is to open up a channel between the Sadhaka and the object of his search. The nature of this communication depends upon the make up of the yogi and his deity (CYS.II:44).
Iswarapranidhana: Iswarapranidhana consists of complete surrender to the God and the constant meditation. Isvarapramidhana can lead ultimately to Samadhi. (PYS.II:45).

Asana:

According to Patanjali’s schedule of astanga yoga the Asana is placed as the third step in the practice of yoga. Dhyana-Bindu and yoga-cunamani-Upanisads (Dh.U.41,Y.CH.4.2) where the Sadanga schedule of the yoga has been described Asana is placed as step first because yama and Niyama have been considered as the prerequisite of the practice of Yoga and not as the actual practice of yoga. Similarly, Hithayoga Pradipika also considers Asana as the first step in the practice of yoga (H.PP.a:19). The definition of Asana by Patanjali is ‘ Sthirasukham asanam’ (P.Y.S.2:46). The practice of Asanas have multidimensional roles to play in the practice of yoga and welfare of the mankind, namely 1) relaxation 2) meditation as well as 3) correction and the culture of the physical body. Thus, Asana means seating oneself in comfortable sitting position. However,
in Hatha yoga Yogasana is to assume a certain bodily position in order to encourage various vital organs and glands to function more efficiently leading in turn to an overall development of the body and the mind. As a matter of fact yogasana have been considered as the most inexpensive and convenient method of achieving certain desired effects of the practice of the yoga, namely, the mental and physical development, prevention of aging and disease etc. These asanas can be practiced without causing any undue disturbance in the daily routine of life by anybody irrespective of age, sex, place, climate or any other such factor.

The postures have been described in detail in different texts on Hatha yoga such as Gheranda Samhita, Hathayoga Pradipika, Sivasamhita etc. Various postures appear to have been devised to rehabilitate various parts of the body or to provide appropriately stable and comfortable postures facilitating Dhyana and Samadhi.

The recent scientific studies by many scientists suggest that Asana besides providing suitable body postures conducive for
Dhyana and Samadhi (Meditative asanas) or their role in developing the physique (cultural asanas), the practice of Asanas bring about a number of physiological, biochemical and psychological changes in the body. Among such changes reduction in body height, reduction in rate of respiration, increased chest expansion, increased vital capacity, reduction in blood sugar and serum lipid levels increase in serum proteins, improved adrenocortical functions and certain improved psychological functions viz: performance quotient, Memory Quotient, reduced mental fatigue and reduced neuroticism index accompanied by conforming electrophysiological and neurohumoral changes are notable.

**Pranayama:**

Pranayama is the fourth step-in Patanjali's yoga Sutras (P.Y.S. 2:29). The Pranayama (Prana =breath + Ayama = pause) is concerned with the control and regulation of breath and in a broader sense the control and regulation of the vital force i.e. prana. in Patanjali's concept, basically pranayama consists of
three phases namely 1) Puraka (Inhalation) 2) Kumbhaka (Pause or breath holding), 3) Recaka (Exhalation) (Darshan Up.6:1). The best proportion of time to be allotted to the three steps is 1:4:2 respectively for inhaling, controlling and exhaling the breath. Kumbhaka may be practiced during Recaka phase (Bahya kumbhaka) or in the puraka phase (Abhayantara Kumbhaka). Though Pranayama is primarily a system of breathing exercise, it is practiced in a specified manner and accordingly it yields comprehensive effects including systemic physiological vitalization and psychosomatic relaxation.

The strength of the body is to be gained by means of the various forms of asanas (postural patterns) and regulation of the breath. Thus, the body becomes so well disciplined so as it does not disrupt or distract the mind in its process of concentration and meditation that is being pursued in daily practice.

Further, prana is considered as the primal vital energy and it is so intimately related to the mind that the slightest changes in the one induces change in the other. The breath is regarded as the
index of mind, and the regulation of the same is taken recourse to inorder to regulate the mind. The healthy regulation of breath produces a harmonious circulation which leads to a healthy working corresponding to the harmonious working of the mind.

Yoga systems since earlier times is, broadly divided into two sub divisions- Hatha-Yoga and Rajayoga. The former lays emphasis on the physical processes, while the latter emphasizes on the mental processes of concentration and meditation. In Patanjali's system, there seems to be the combination of both these forms.

Pratyahara:

Pratyahara has been considered as an act of withdrawal of mind from sensory objects meaning thereby an inhibition of the mind from the sensorial perceptions (Mandai Brah. Cl. 1:1:7). Yogattatva, yoga-chunamani and Darsanoupanisads consider Pratyahara as an ability of active withdrawal of the senses from their objects (Y.T.U.68, Y.Ch.4.120; D.4"6:3). The Pratyahara is a process of self-restraint where an individual tries to keep his senses away from their respective objects. In other words, he lives the life of vairagya which is considered to be an essential pre-
requisite for subsequent yogic practices which are mostly higher psychic manipulation. As a matter of fact Pratyahara is a bridge between the Bahiranga and Antaranga phases of Astanga yoga described by Patangali.

It has been remarked that when the senses are introverted, the mind is not distracted by external stimuli, and that the senses so controlled by the mind add to its power of concentration. Thus the restraint of the senses helps the aspirant to progress towards the stage of Samadhi. This gradual march of the aspirant prepares him for the total storage of mental modifications which does not abolish knowledge but makes his knowledge all pervasive as a result of spiritual discipline the five stages of which, have already been described above. These five steps are designated as the outer means (Bahiranga Sadhana) because of their aim of controlling the environment, or the effect of the environment, on the yogi through yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara. These means, however, are not enough to put a full stop to mental modifications. They must be supplemented by the remaining three means of yoga i.e. Dharana (attention), Dhyana (concentration)
and Samadhi (Pure Meditation) which are called the inner means of yoga ( Antaranga Sadhna ) (Sharma-1968)

Antaranga Yoga:

Dharma:

Patanjali describes Dharana as a part of Antaranga yoga and includes it as a constituent of Samyama, a term applied to the composite entity of the three higher practices of Anantaranga yoga namely Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Trisikh brahmanopanisad has considered Dharana as a condition of non-fluctuation (Niscali bhava) of the mind and considers it a means of liberation. Dharana has been considered as an act of localisation of mental being within the five eternal substances of the body (T.S.B.U.133).

Thus Dharana though generally appears to be a mental practice and may be considered as an important aspect of the yoga of mind but the survey of Upanisadic literature presents a varied picture, and over the spectrum of upanisadic statement, it appears difficult to form a consolidated single concept of Dharma. However, for all practical purposes, it appears useful to develop the science of
Dharana in the light of the description available in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Patanjali considers Dharana (concentration) as the act of confining the mind within a limited mental area i.e. the object of concentration (P.Y.S. 3:1). Sharma (1968) interprets Dharana as an act of holding the object of attention before the mind. It is the first step towards Samadhi. During Dharana, the practitioner fixes his mind on some external object which may be either a solid object like the image of a deity or a part of his own body like the tip of the nose etc. As a matter of fact Dharana is a mental exercise which helps a yogi to undertake the subsequent practices namely Dhyana and Samadhi without difficulty. The practice of Dharana and subsequent higher practices can be persuade only by an aspirant who has already perfected Pratyahara preceded by other Bahiranga Yogic practices.

Literally Dharana means concentration, though the English word “concentration” does not fully represent the meaning of the term Dharana as conceived in yoga psychology. In this context, it may be pointed out that according to modern psychology, the mind
cannot be fixed on any object for any considerable time. The mind remains moving even during the highest degree of concentration. The concentration only means the controlled movement of mind within a limited sphere and such a concentration of mind is supposed to yield its remarkable results. On the other hand, according to Indian psychology upon which the science of yoga is based, though concentration begins with the controlled movement of the mind it can reach a state in which all movements or changes stop. In this ultimate stage the mind becomes one with the essential nature of the object concentrated upon and can thus move no further (Taimni, 1968). Thus, Dharana is a type of concentration where the mind is confined within a limited sphere defined by the object which is being concentrated upon. The word, Desabandha means confinement within a territory which allows a limited freedom of movement. The main work in Dharana consists in keeping the mind continuously engaged in the consideration of the object and to bring it back immediately after the connection is broken. The objective is to reduce increasing the frequency of
such interruptions leading to their complete elimination ultimately with complete focussing of the mind on the object.

Dhyana (Meditation):

As mentioned earlier Dharana, Dhyana Samadhi are the developed states of mind and are collectively designated as Samyama (P.Y.S. II:4). Dharana is the process of concentrating the mind in a particular area which is followed by Dhyana when the mental waves attain equilibrium under the influence of Dharna and Samadhi is the state of trance. As a matter of fact Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi are the constituent stages of the same psychic achievement which finally develops into trance or Samadhi, a state of complete relaxation and creative awareness. This is how yoga is considered as the means or method of getting the ultimate awareness or a means of approaching realization of the self by way of an absolute control of mind i.e. Yogah Cittavritti-Nirodhah’ precipitating the yoga.

Inspite of varied descriptions of Dhyana in traditional literature it appears to be a higher mental practice which is
immediate preparatory in contrast to Dharana which is oscillating and of short term. Dhyana is an act of continuous contemplation and consists of fixing the mind on its object without a break. The sutra, ‘Tatra Pratyayaikatanata - Dhyanam’ from the Yogasutras of Patanjali literally means that Dhyana is an uninterrupted flow of the mind towards the object chosen for meditation. Taimni (1968) rightly points out that an aspirant should aim at eliminating the distracting thoughts and should aim at reducing the frequency of such interruptions in a progressive manner. By such an effort when the aspirant succeeds in eliminating the distraction completely and becomes able to continue the concentration on the subject without any interruptions for as long a time as he desires, he is supposed to reach the stage of Dhyana. Thus the essential difference between Dharana and Dhyana is the occasional occurrence of distractions in the mind during Dhyana. The continuity of concentration is the essential measure of the necessary control over the mind and the quality and depth of
concentration. Such qualitative improvement in concentration is an essential pre-requisite for the practice of Samadhi.

Samadhi:

Samadhi is said to be the state of cessation of all the vrttis of the mind (Trishikh Br.U. 155). Yogatattvoupanisad describes Samadhi as a state which is characterized by the equanimity. Patanjali describes that state as Samadhi when there is consciousness only of the object of meditation and not of the mind itself. "Traya eva samadhi mantram nirbhudsama, Swarupasunyamiva Samadhih". This is the last state of the concentration of the mind. This is the climax of the mental manipulation during the practice of yoga. When the state of Dhyana has been well established and the mind becomes able to hold the object of meditation without any distraction, it is possible to know the object much more clearly than in ordinary thinking, but even then a direct knowledge of the object is not obtained and the reality hidden within the object seen to elude the yogi (Taimni, 1968). Thus, the consciousness of the mind itself separates the
consciousness of the yogi and the ultimate truth and thus interrelates with the further progress. It is the disappearance of the self-consciousness which may open the door of a new world. Similar transition occurs when Dhyana passes into Samadhi. Patanjali describes the phenomenon of disappearance of the self-consciousness of the mind as 'Svarupasunyamiva. The mind's own form or essential nature disappearance, as it were. Here 'Svarupasunyam' means reducing the self awareness of all the subjective roles of the mind to the utmost limit. The Dhyana perpetuates into Samadhi with the complete disappearance of the self awareness. With the disappearance of the self-awareness of the mind, a higher consciousness starts operating and the perception of the ultimate reality i.e. the reality hidden behind the object takes place. Here the perceiver, the object of perception and the process of perception become fused in one phase. Thus, Samadhi is only an advanced state of Dhyana, the only difference being the elimination of the self-awareness of the mind during
Samadhi and is considered as one of the eight steps of self-realization

Types of Samadhi:

The different stages of samadhi represent progressive release of consciousness from its limitations and Kaivalya is that state in which it can again function in perfect freedom. The consideration of the distinction between Samprajnata and Asamprajnata samadhi should not be confused with the concept of Sabija and Nirbija Samadhi (PYS 3:1-4; 1:17-18; 1:41; 1:42-50; 1:51; 3:8 4:26-29; 3:9012). Many people use samprajnata and Asamprajnata Samadhi as Synonyms of Sabija and Nirbija Samadhi. Samprajnata Samadhi means samadhi with Prajna while Asamprajnata samadhi is a samadhi without Prajna. Prajna means the higher consciousness operating through the mind with all its stages. In Samprajnata samadhi there is a nucleus in the field of consciousness to which the consciousness is fully directed. In Asamprajnata samadhi there is no such nucleus to draw the consciousness outwards. Thus, as soon as such a nucleus is
eliminated as described by Taimni (1968), the Samprajnata Samadhi begins when the consciousness is completely cut-off from the outer world i.e., the stages of passing through Dharana and Dhyana. In the first stage of Samprajnata Samadhi the
consciousness is centered in the lower mental world and functions through the manomaya kosa. The essential functions of the mind in this stage is denoted by the word, Vitarka. It should be noted that when a person can leave a physical body and functions in the subtle vehicles, he is not necessarily in a state of Samadhi. After mastering the technique of Savitarka and Nirvitarka phase in the first stage, the aspirant practices Asamprajnata Samadhi and withdrawal his consciousness into the next higher plane passing through the clouds which accompanies Asamprajnata Samadhi. Then his consciousness emerges into the higher mental world and functions through the vijnamaya kosa i.e., the causal body. The essential function of the mind working through this vehicle is called Vicara. Now he starts practising Samadhi on this plane, slowly masters the technique of the Savicara and Nirvicara phases.
and again practices Asamprajnata samadhi to free his consciousness from the higher mental plane. The whole cyclic process has to be repeated twice during the last two stages of samprajnata samadhi in order to release the consciousness of the yogi from the extremely subtle vehicles, namely Anandamaya kosa and Atma whose essential functions are Ananda and Asmita. Thus the Vitarka, Vicara, Anada and Asmita are the important characteristics of different stages of consciousness. It is only the stages of Asamprajnata Samadhi have passed and Nirbija is practiced to remove the final and subtlest veil covering the reality, the consciousness of the purusa.

Thus, the Astanga yoga is a comprehensive discipline, its ultimate objective being the realization of the supreme. These eight stages, though in themselves are comprehensive procedure of mental and physical development, they individually form only a step in the practice of yoga in real sense.