Chapter 5.

SAMĀDHĪ: A STATE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL PERFECTION

After having discussed so far what the state of samādhi is, and what are the requirements to be fulfilled so as to make that state come into being, we shall now, in this chapter, explain that state in actual application in daily life. We have already distinguished between two states which are both called 'samādhi'; namely, the state of conscious effort to concentrate the mind, which is a means or a tool, and the state which does not come and go, which is the end or goal of all spiritual effort, i.e., the state of unmūlī, or sahājā, or the state of emancipation in this very life. This latter state is what we shall be concerned with mainly, in this chapter.

We begin with a very splendid discussion of that state of samādhi between Arjuna and Lord Krishna as mentioned in the Bhagavad-gītā (11.54-72). It forms one of the choicest passages of the Gītā held in very high esteem by all thinkers in the world. Following is a free rendering of the shlokas. When Lord Krishna declared to Arjuna that the state of Yoga of equanimity would be attained when the intellect becomes steady in a state of samādhi, Arjuna asked,

"How does such a person, whose mind has become
completely still in the state of samādhi, behave in life? What are the indications of his state? How does he talk and sit and go? Please tell me, Oh Lord Krishna!!"

Lord Krishna's answer to this question is rather lengthy and descriptive. It is very useful for all students of samādhi to remember it for all times.

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna,

"When one gives up all the desires and remains ever contented, he becomes a 'sthita-prajña'. He is not filled with grief in painful situations, nor does he entertain wishes in pleasurable circumstances. His mind is always free of desire, fear, and anger. He loves all, having no feeling of hate for any one or any thing. His senses are withdrawn like the organs of the tortoise. His senses are under the full control of his mind. He is above love and hate. So his mind is always full of 'prasāda', i.e., happiness. He keeps awake where all other beings sleep, while he is without any interest where all other beings are active. Indeed, he is never disturbed by the events of life, just as the ocean is not disturbed by the incoming water of the rivers. He has no attachment, no ego. So he attains eternal peace, he ever lives in a state called 'the state of Brahman', which is not disturbed even by death. There is never a return from that state of brahma-nirvāṇa."

This is not the only place in the Gita
where

the behaviour of a person who has attained to samādhi is described. We have various descriptions of such a man of samādhi made given by Lord Krishna. For instance, he is called 'sarvabhootanite ratah' in chapter V, verse 25. That means deep interest in the well-being of everyone. In the VI chapter (verse 29.) he is called 'sarvatra samalarshanah', meaning "one who looks equally upon everyone".

In chapter XIV (verse 24), he is called a gnanita, i.e., a person who has transcended the three gunas, and is described as one "who gives the same value to pleasure or pain, good or mud, likes or dislikes, and honour or dishonour".

In the last chapter of the Gita (XVIII.49.) such a master of samādhi is said to attain 'naishkarmya-siddhi' or the art of behaving without being blemished. This idea of doing one's duty without getting affected by the consequences, is perhaps the essence of the whole teaching of the Gita, and is what is called 'the message of karma-yoga' which the Gita wants to spread throughout the world of human beings.

We shall consider the psychological aspects of the behaviour of a man of samādhi as brought out in the references from the Gita mentioned above. It is our contention that when one attains to samādhi the effects of it are not limited to that person only. Moreover, as that state does
not happen to be temporary and remains for ever, once it is there, the effects of it are evident always. The 'sthitaprajña' influences the surroundings simply by his presence. And this is true of every piece of his behaviour in every day life.

We also want to contend that samādhi in the above sense also signifies a state of psychological perfection. In what way this perfection manifests itself, is a problem which will attract our attention here.

Samādhi, it may be pointed out in the very beginning, liberates us from ignorance. Ignorance here is removed, not through gaining knowledge of the world, knowledge which is given in schools and colleges, but by gaining the knowledge of the self, called ātmajñyāna. It means being able to understand any situation 'as it is', and overcoming the unconsciously formed habit of looking at ourselves and the world through beliefs gathered in the process of conditioning. Cessation of conditioned thought and activity, is thus the first mark of samādhi.

The essence of conditioning lies in the formulation of a duality between 'what is' and 'what should be'; between the 'actual' and the 'ideal'. In this duality what is posited as the 'ideal' is merely an idea based on what one has been taught to believe. The pursuit of the ideal and the idea of a change, improvement, perfection ---- all this is born of confusion. Samādhi makes us aware of that confusion.
Gaining knowledge in the class-room or by reading books is not equivalent to removal of that confusion. A person may be very erudite, and may be able to explain intricate philosophical matters very clearly, but he may yet be very far from samādhi. In samādhi the duality between the 'actual' and 'ideal' comes to an end.

Our behaviour is usually guided by two kinds of formulations, as shown by Joshi. They are: 'I am this', and 'I want to be that'. For most of us there is a wide gap between what we think we are, and what we desire to be. In samādhi one comes to know that this gap is created by the mind, by way of conditioning, that in fact the gap does not exist. This understanding puts an end to the process of conditioning and seeking.

An interesting problem arises here. Does one become aware in samādhi or any time after attaining it that ignorance is dispelled? that the bondage which avidyā had created is no more there? This awareness may be there in the beginning. Just as, when we get up from sleep we are aware for a few moments of both sleep and the waking state, but in a few moments awareness of both the states vanishes, and then throughout the day we may not remember that we are awake. In a similar manner the awareness of overcoming ignorance may not

be there in saṃādhi. This problem has been beautifully resolved in the Kena-panishad (II.3.) by saying that,

"One who has come to know (reality in saṃādhi) does not know that he is thus knowing. One who feels that he knows, does not really know. If you are aware of it, then you are not knowing. Knowing is there when there is no awareness of that knowing."

Ignorance and knowledge are relative to each other. Both of them vanish in saṃādhi. Thus, like a man waking from a dream, and remembering the dream-state no more, the man experiencing saṃādhi does not speak about ignorance or knowledge, having overcome ignorance once and for all.

Cessation of ignorance immediately puts an end to effort for achieving and the process of seeking. That effort always arises from the imaginary gap between our idea of 'what is', and 'what should be'. Everyone of us is led astray by this imaginary gap, and we are always seeking something. We always want to be different from what we are. 'We want a change, an improvement.' Or, if we reach a position of choice, then we want it to continue. Thus we are always striving to reach somewhere, to have something, or to be something. Our beliefs, judgements, and desires are always shaping our psychological strife, in which we use the common sense means as well as spiritual and religious means. We ever try to reach the ideal. Thus we are ever seeking. Samādhi puts an end to this strife and seeking.
Samādhi puts an end to all psychological effort, seeking, and becoming, because one comes to realize the futility of the process of achievement, the process of desire. One sees very clearly that in fact there is no duality like 'what is' and 'what should be'. So there being no gap between the actual state and the desired state, all psychological effort to fill the gap ceases. When all reaching and going about comes to an end, what significance would any tool or vehicle have? When a person engaged in finding out something comes to realize that the thing sought after was nothing different from himself, and that it was only mistakenly taken to be separate from him, then would he not at once retire from the activity of seeking and become silent? This is what actually happens in the state of samādhi.

When one crosses the stream of sorrow, i.e., this samsāra, which is traditionally believed by all Indian thinkers of the ancient times to be filled by endless misery, when the other shore is reached, one no longer needs any boat, any book, any guru, and any spiritual effort. Reaching means halting. It is very important to note that in the end, in the highest state, one has to be free of all effort, discipline, method, or the tools which might have been very useful till then. Samādhi, to be sure, brings about this change in one's life.
It would be easy to see on the basis of what has been said so far that samādhi would naturally be a state which is free of disturbance, tension, and misery. One feels one's actual state to be insecure and transient, and proceeds to bring about a state which would be permanent, which would give lasting pleasure and peace. In this process one is inevitably caught up in competition, conflict, and misery. This leads to disparity between individuals, societies, and nations. It breeds fear -- the fear of not reaching, of lagging behind, the fear of disappointment and failure.

Fear has thus become one of the outstanding marks of our present-day society. This is an inevitable result of the process of conditioning and the mad race for achievement. Samādhi stands for abolition of fear in all its forms.

The Yogavasistha (II. 15.2, and 11.) brings out an interesting fact in this matter. It says, "For those who have found the treasure of peace and contentment in the state of samādhi, even the most severe exile on earth is as meaningless as a dry blade of grass. Such an individual may not possess even a penny. Yet he feels richer than an emperor, as his mind is filled with happiness drawn from a total absence of anguish, pain and misery."
How does such a person behave in life?

Even he has to eat and drink. He does have the biological needs. In these respects his behaviour will be like that of an ordinary man. But on the psychological plane he is vastly different. His activity is not goal-directed like that of most of us. He is not motivated in the same fashion as most of us are. His sense organs do work like those of others. But his response to the sensations has undergone total change. He does not refuse to act, or run away from any situation. He may be said to respond to every situation with a kind of 'detached love'.

Just as fire devours everything, hard or soft, dry or wet, living or non-living, and yet remains wholly unaffected by what it has eaten up, similarly, a man of samādhi greets all events and happenings in life with equal love and remains unaffected by the pain and pleasure. He is not insensitive to them. On the contrary, he has tremendous sensitivity to all the happenings around him. He is alive to everything. But the only thing is that he is not shaken, over-powered, or disturbed by the events of life. This, it may be pointed out, is the import of all that Lord Krishna has said about the 'sthitaprajña'.

As he has nothing to achieve nor anything to renounce or run away from, the man of samādhi never becomes nervous in distressing circumstances, and does not have any attachment to pleasurable situations either.
Jñanadeva, the great adept of samādhi has brought out the psychological perfection characterised by the state of samādhi in his book Anubhavamrita (IX.19-20), in a masterly and very apt manner. He says,

"The man of samādhi has his sense organs enjoying the contact with their respective objects of experience. Their response in this reaction is like that of the moon to moonlight (that is to say, if the moon-light falls on the surface of the moon herself) or the ocean to showers of rain. While he goes on speaking whatever his organ of speech may happen to utter, or goes on doing various things, his silent samādhi is never disturbed by that."

The man of samādhi thus exhibits a perfect balance or equipoise between the various factors constituting behaviour in daily life. His mind is never swayed away by conflicting desires like the mind of the rest of us. Our minds are often torn between various desires, and we struggle in the wake of conflicting desires to obtain peace and happiness. The psychological activity of the man of samādhi is never motivated by any vested interest. It is not conditioned by the past, or one-sided. It originates from a perfectly peaceful, passive, and choiceless inner state.

Such an inner state which is free of fear, anguish, and pain, must make a person completely faultless, and ethically perfect. We see that error or sin are the
products of partial or limited knowledge, conditioning, and the cravings. Samādhi puts an end to these cravings and conditioned thoughts. Being free from their binding effect one does not have any more to conform one's behaviour to any pattern or norm. That freedom involves an absence of vice in all its forms, sins, and faults.

It should be noted here that the highly ethical behaviour of a man of samādhi does not mean any practice of virtue or the many 'dons't of religion, or a process of disciplining the mind. It is not the cultivation of opposites. It involves a kind of enlightenment and understanding of the futility of the process of desire, craving, and achievement. Samādhi does not stand for 'putting' the vices down, or struggling with them. It is a state in which vices retire spontaneously without leaving any vestige or trace behind.

Thus samādhi, as a state of psychological perfection, frees the mind from ignorance and conditioning, seeking and strike, from tension and fear, and from faults and sins.

To sum up so far:

We first examined the concept of samādhi, bringing out the various meanings of the word. Samādhi being mainly a state of Yoga, its concept as brought out by Patanjali in his Yogasutra was described in detail. We
then described the means to achieve the state, showing the way or the path of *sadhanā* which one must tread in order to make the state of samādhi an actual experience. Next, a very important path leading to samādhi, namely, the path of the kundalini was explained, and then, in the present chapter, samādhi was described as a state of psychological perfection.

After having described these various aspects of samādhi, we are now in a position to make a comparative study of the tradition of Indian Yoga and the Zen, Sufi, and Christian traditions, so far as the state of samādhi is concerned.