Chapter 2.

CONCEPT OF SAMĀDHI IN PATANJALI'S YOGASŪTRA.

Samādhi is the eighth part, and to be sure, the highest part of the system of Indian thought called āshtāṅga- Yoga. Indian thought which is traditionally referred to as darshana or tattva-jñāna, is divided into two main groups, respectively called the āstika and nāstika darshanās. The āstika are those who take the Vedas to be the final authority in philosophical matters, while the nāstika do not entertain any such view about the Vedas. Charvaka, Jaina, and Baudhā, are the foremost schools of nāstika mātā. The principal āstika darshanās are six, and so they are often spoken of as the shad-darshanās. They are: Mīmamsa, Vedanta, Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, and Vaisheshika. Each one of these orthodox schools has its book of authority called Sūtra, which, in addition to explaining the basic doctrines of the school, refutes other views in the course of establishing the views of its own. All these sūtras, it is believed, were composed by the sages after the death of Buddha and before the birth of Jesus Christ.

The author of the Mīmamsa sūtra was Jaimini, and that of the Vedanta sūtra, Badarayana. The Sankhya sūtra, it is said, was written by Kapila. But the sūtra which we now have, bearing that name, seems to be of a very late origin (probably sixteenth century A.D.). It
is believed by many thinkers that the original sūtra of Kapila is lost. But there is another very old text of the Sankhya system, called Sankhya karika, which is regarded as the most authoritative book of the Sankhya system. Its author was Ishwarakrishna.

The Yoga sūtra is ascribed to Patanjali. It is believed to be written in the second century B.C. Gotama was the author of the Nyaya sūtra, while the Vaiseshika sūtra has Kanada as its author.

The word sūtra in Sanskrit means a thread. In philosophical discourse it means a short precept or aphorism. All the sūtra books mentioned above are so called because they contain very short, concise, technical sentences. Each of these sūtra books has a favourite theme which it elaborates. Mimamsa sūtra has dharma or duty as its favourite theme. Vedanta sūtra has propounded the doctrine called 'Brahmakārānavāda', which means brahman is the cause of the universe. The speciality of Sankhya is the twenty-five categories forming the universe. Nyaya is mainly a theory of logical thinking, while Vaisheshika is an exposition of the atomic theory of the universe. And Yoga, with which we are most intimately concerned in this work, has the concept of samādhi as its choicest topic.

Patanjali's Yogasūtra is a book having four chapters. The very first chapter is called samādhi-pāda, or the chapter dealing with samādhi.
In his commentary of the very first sūtra of samādhi-pāda, Vyasa has affirmed that Yoga means samādhi, which is a quality of the mind belonging to all its stages. There are different words used in Yoga for the mind, such as, chitta, buddhi, manas, and antahkarana. Antahkarana means an internal organ. Man has in all thirteen organs. Ten out of them are called external organs. They are: the five karmendriyas or organs of action, and the five jñānendriyas, or organs of knowledge. The five organs of action are: hands, feet, organ of speech, anus, and the sex organ. The five organs of knowledge are: the organs of sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste. These five are called the doors through which the internal organs communicates with the external world.

The internal organ is made of three segments, namely, manas, buddhi, and ahāmkarā. Manas is the segment which is called ubhaya-tmakā because it has a double contact, that with the external organs and the buddhi. Buddhi is the segment which receives impacts gathered by the manas. The manas is said to go out through the door of any sense organ, reach an object of experience, assume its form and thus grasp it. The manas itself gets modified or affected by the object in this process, and this modification is submitted to the buddhi, which has the function of receiving a modification from the mind, understanding it, judging it on the basis of its comparison with stored impressions of past experience, coming to a decision,
and storing every new experience in the form of samskāras. Ahamkāra is the segment supplying the ego feeling or the awareness of one's own being or individuality. The antahkarana is usually called chitta, this word standing at times separately for the segments of manas, buddhi, and so on, and also collectively for the three of them.

When samādhi, as pointed out earlier, is said to be a quality of the chitta in all its stages, the question arises as to how many stages there are in which the chitta may happen to be. Vyasa calls these stages chittabhoomis, and says that they are: excessively unstable stage (kṣhīpta), confounded stage (moodha), distracted stage (vikṣhīpta), concentrated stage (ekāgra), and completely stopped and absorbed stage (niruddha). Although samādhi is a quality of the chitta in all these stages, it does not mean that it manifests itself in all of them. Only the last two stages of ekāgra and niruddha make for its manifestation. The first three stages are experienced by all of us in daily life.

The difference between these stages is explained on the basis of the three gunas. Everything in the world except the soul is supposed to have the three gunas ingrained in its nature in varying degrees. The three gunas are respectively called sattvaguna, rajoguna, and tamoguna. Sattvaguna is said to give rise to knowledge, understanding, brightness, lightness, softness, peace, absorption, virtue, and
happiness. Rajoguna results into activity, instability, violence, envy, and so on, while Tamoguna is said to produce inertia, darkness, heaviness, ignorance, and the like. This doctrine of trigunas is a fundamental basis on which the Sankhya and Yoga view of the world stands. It is explained in detail in Sankhyakarika (12 and 13).

The three gunas are always present together in any thing, like the wick, oil, and flame of a lamp. But their proportion may go on changing so that one of them may predominate by suppressing the other two.

The chitta is also made of the three gunas, and its various stages come into being according to varying proportions of them. The kshipta stage is a product of preponderance of rajoguna, the moodha stage being produced by an excess of tamoguna. The vikshipta stage has both rajoguna and tamoguna in a dominant position. In the ekagra stage, both these gunas are suppressed by sattvaguna. That causes, as Vyasa tells us, the impurities of the mind (kleshas) to be washed away, the binding effects of past karma to be slackened, thereby leading the chitta further to the fifth stage called niruddha, which liberates or emancipates the individual from misery in life, and from the cycle of rebirths.

Samādhi as a quality of the mind is manifested only in the ekagra and niruddha stages. In the former it is samādhi of concentration or samadhi
while in the latter it is samādhi without concentration, or samādhi of no return.

For the former type of samādhi Patanjali has used words like sampranyāta Yoga, samprajnyāta samādhi, sabīja samādhi, and samāpatti. As compared to this, the samādhi of no return is described by him as nirbīja samādhi, asamprajnyāta samādhi, asamprajnyāta Yoga, or dharma-megha samādhi. Every one of these names has its own significance. For instance, sampranyāta means a state in which some object is known, and that is the object of concentration. Sabīja means having some support, which is the object of concentration. Asamprajnyāta is the opposite of samprajnyāta, and means a state in which there is no particular object on which the chitta may be concentrated. Similarly nirbīja is the opposite of sabīja, which also indicates the absence of an object of concentration.

The word samāpatti is perhaps used by Patanjali as a synonym for sabīja samādhi. It is derived from the root 'samāpad' which means to get or attain to, to complete or accomplish. Thus 'samāpatti' means a state in which the chitta completely unites with an object of concentration.

What is the difference between samāpatti and samādhi, one may ask. If both the words mean the same thing, then why should there be two words used to indicate one and the same state? Economy of words, is, indeed, a very special characteristic of the sūtra books. So there must be some
difference between the meaning of the two words, samādhi and samāpatti. The difference is that the word samādhi has a wider application than the word samāpatti, in as much as it is applied to both sabīja and nirbīja samādhīs, whereas, samāpatti is never sabīja or nirbīja; it is necessarily sabīja only. Thus it may be said that samādhi indicates a whole of which samāpatti is only a part, although it is quite a large part. Thus whenever there is an object taken for concentrating the mind upon, whether the object may be gross or subtle, material or abstract, the state of concentration may be called samāpatti, samprajñyāta yoga, or samprajñyāta (or sabīja) samādhi.

Or else it may be said that samāpatti covers only the ekāgra stage of the chitta, while samādhi covers both the ekāgra and niruddha stages. Within the ekāgra stage the two words have one and the same meaning, but outside it, in the niruddha stage the word samāpatti has no application at all.

This brings us to the definition of samāpatti. Patanjali has defined samāpatti in the first chapter of the Yogasūtra (I.41.), and has then described its varieties and their nature (I. 42-46.), and how ultimately a constant study of samāpatti of the finest type leads to the state of nirbīja samādhi (I.47-51.). It would be to our advantage here, in order to make the concept of samādhi clear, to go through a thorough discussion of what Patanjali has said about samāpatti. First of all, the definition as given by Patanjali.
To understand the definition clearly it is necessary first of all to clarify the terms Patanjali has used for defining samāpatti. These terms are: 1) Ṛsheenavṛtti, 2) abhijāta mani, 3) grahīta, grāhana, and grāhya, and 4) tadanjanatā. We shall explain these terms in a reverse order.

Samāpatti is defined as a state called tadanjanatā of the chitta, which means a state of perfect contact of the chitta with an object of experience and a subsequent modification or affection (uparāga) of the chitta, which is termed a vṛitti, or pratyaya, or bodha. The chitta is supposed to have power or capacity to reach any object, past, present, or future, and material or otherwise. But when it grasps an object and assumes its form, the vṛitti arising in the chitta may be clear or blurred, depending upon the impurities present in the chitta, due to the traces of past experience. The objects which the chitta can thus grasp, are divided under three categories, namely, grahīta, grāhana, and grāhya.

Grahīta means the soul or puruṣa. Grāhana means the thirteen indriyas or senses, including five cognitive senses, five motor organs, and three internal organs. Grāhya means that which can be accepted or experienced by the sense organs. It includes ten elements, namely, the five maha-bhūtās, namely, earth, water, fire, air, and space, and their five
subtle forms called *tannātrās*, which are, *ahabda tannātra* which is the subtle form of space, *sparaha tannātra* which is the subtle form of air, *roopa tannātra* which is the subtle form of fire, *rasa tannātra* which is the subtle form of water, and *gandha tannātra* which is the subtle form of earth. Thus in these three categories are included twenty-four out of the twenty-five *tattvas* or basic elements recognised by Sankhya and Yoga.

In Patanjali's definition *samāpatti* is defined as *tadanjanatā* on any object belonging to one of the three categories of *grahaīta*, *grahana*, or *grāhya*. We have already explained these terms. Patanjali gives an example to make his definition clear. The example is of *abhijāta mani*, i.e., a precious gem. The example is given to explain the fact that when the *chitta* becomes purified like a precious gem by the washing away of its impurities, it can behave like a gem, that is to say, just as a gem shows the colour of anything in its vicinity as if it is its own colour, similarly the *chitta* can show in itself, in the form of *vṛitti*, *pratyaya*, or *bodha*, all the qualities of an object, thereby bringing forth complete or higher knowledge of the object into consciousness, whenever the *chitta* is directed to that object, and it happens to stay on the object ( *tatstha* ) awhile.

But the *chitta* of all of us cannot usually be compared to an *abhijāta mani*, because there are many impurities accumulated in it. Unless these are removed from the
chitta, its grasp of the object and the resultant uparāga remains unclear and distorted. Thus the knowledge of the object arising in the chitta is incomplete. The removal of impurities from the chitta and thus to make it pure like a crystal (mani), is something very essential for the state of saṃāpatti to come into being. It is achieved in the state called kaheenavṛitti.

Vṛitti, as we have already seen, means anything that happens in the mind, a thought, emotion, imagination, experience, idea, and so on. Our minds always present an unceasing play of vṛittis. We are always thinking about various things, persons, and ideas, belonging to the past, present, and future. These vṛittis arise out of traces of past experience, called vāsanās, and each vṛitti, in its turn, strengthens the vāsanā which has given birth to it. Thus there is a continuous cycle in our minds of the vāsanās and vṛittis. This process distracts the mind and makes it unsteady. Such a mind can not concentrate and be steady unless it is properly trained to be silent by an understanding of the process of desire which keeps it constantly moving after objects of enjoyment.

If such a training is successfully carried on it results into a state of the chitta which is devoid of vṛittis. That state is called kaheenavṛitti. Patanjali has mentioned it as the pre-requisite to the state of saṃāpatti.

We are now in a position to state Patanjali’s definition of saṃāpatti in its complete form. His śūtra (I.41.)
may be translated into English as follows:

"When the chitta becomes kaheenavritti and thereby pure like a precious gem, its steadiness and deep absorption into any object belonging to the three categories of knower, known, and means of knowledge, is the state of samāpatti."

Samāpatti is thus a state of knowing or experiencing an object of concentration deeply, grasping, so to say, its essence or substance in a bright, illumined, clear form. The chitta, in that state, is filled completely with an awareness of that object alone, there being no hindrance caused by any other vritti.

This is a state which our ancient seers of the vedic period described as dhyāna. It is what we have called earlier the 'samādhi of return'. It is what Patanjali describes as samprajñyata samādhi.

There are four main varieties of this kind of samādhi. Patanjali has named them respectively as vitarka, vichāra, ānanda, and asmitā. The process of samāpatti is, to be sure, the same in all of them. But the object of concentration is different in each. In vitarka samādhi the chitta is fixed on a gross object which can be experienced by the sense organs. In vichāra samādhi one of the subtle states of the five elements, called tanmātras, forms the object of concentration. Ānanda samādhi has, for the object of concentration, the indriyas or sense organs themselves. And asmitā samādhi is the one in which the sādhaka is aware only of the ego feeling, called ahāmkāra, coming face to
face with the soul or purusha. These four varieties of samādhi are mentioned in the Yogasūtra (I.17.) while describing samprajñyāta Yoga.

We would have to answer one question here, before proceeding further. Patanjali here speaks of four varieties of samādhi. As mentioned earlier, he also has described three varieties of samāpatti, namely grahitā, grahana and grahya samāpatti. If samādhi and samāpatti, as we have argued, are one and the same so far as they indicate a state of concentration on an object, then is there any relation between the two ways of classifying them? And is there any difference between the three classes of samāpatti and four classes of samādhi referred to above?

On scrutiny this question turns out to be very simple. The four varieties of samādhi can be exactly accommodated into the three varieties of samāpatti. Thus the vitarka and vichāra varieties of samādhi are nothing else but grahya samāpatti, ananda samādhi is grahana samāpatti, and samitā samādhi is nothing different from grahitā samāpatti. Thus whether we classify them into three or four categories, in different contexts, the concepts 'samādhi' and 'samāpatti' have only one common meaning.

Now we enter into a more intricate and rather hair-splitting description and classification of samādhi, based on a consideration of the intensity of the
process of concentration involved in it, and the fineness of understanding associated with it.

According to this classification, Patanjali has divided the vitarka samāpatti into two groups. The first he calls savitarka samāpatti (1.42.). This variety has, as its characteristic mark, a mixture of three things which are really speaking separate and very different from each other. These three things are: the word, its meaning, and its idea or knowledge, respectively called shabda, artha, and jñāna.

While one is concentrating upon any object, say, a cow, there are these three things which one may be aware of, either singly or collectively. Thus the word 'cow' is different from the object or animal 'cow'. They have wholly different qualities. For instance, the word is just a sound when spoken, and heard, and just a shape in two dimensions when written. The object cow has a colour, size, shape, and many other qualities which are not shared by the word. Again, the knowledge of the cow that arises in the chitta as a result of concentration has qualities that are different from those of the word and the object.

But although these three elements associated with the knowledge of an object are actually separate and distinct, they are not so in experience of the object in the state of savitarka samāpatti. The experience (bodha or pratyaya) here is that of a mixture in which the three elements appear indistinct.
When one goes on practising the savitarkā samādhi for a length of time on the same object, the role of the word for that object and its idea (vikalpa) goes on diminishing progressively, and only a clear awareness of the object alone goes on filling the chitta completely. This, as Patanjali defines (I.43), is the state called nirvitarkā samāpatti. In it the faculty of concentration becomes intense and pure, there being no mixture of elements, and also the awareness of the fact that one is concentrating is not operating. Thus in this state there is a complete unity between the object and the mind, and thus the knowledge arising in the mind in respect of the object is complete, that is to say, the real nature, substance, or the essence of the object is revealed thoroughly in the state of nirvitarkā samāpatti.

Vichāra samādhi, which differs from vitarka samādhi not in respect of the process involved, but only in respect of the object involved, is also divided into two parts, respectively called savichāra and nirvichāra. Both these varieties have a subtle object (e.g., the tattvās) of concentration, and in that they differ from the vitarka samāpatti, which is characterised by concentration on a gross (sthula) object.

The difference between savichāra and nirvichāra is explained (I.44.) on the same lines.
That is to say that savichāra involves a mixture of the object, its name, and idea in experience while concentrating, while nirvichāra contains pure experiencing of the object alone. This is called the higher perception of the Yogin, or Yogaja pratyakṣa in Indian Philosophy. It is also called samādhi prajñā. Prajñā means intellect. Our intellect is normally dependent on ordinary experience and knowledge derived from it, which may be true or false.

Samādhi prajñā is a special kind of intellect, the higher or superior kind, which is very rare, because very few of us achieve the purity of mind, which is a pre-condition to samādhi prajñā. It is a product of a mastery of the nirvichāra samāpatti. Patanjali has declared (I.47.) that by such a mastery the mind gets very much purified, i.e., devoid of the impurities caused by rajoguna and tamoguna. It results into a state of enlightenment and peace (adhyātma-prasāda), giving rise to the higher kind of intellect, which is called 'ritambhara prajñā', i.e., un-failing intellect, because it never fails to grasp the true nature of an object upon which it is cast. (I.48.).

This higher intellect does not need the help of the sense organs for gaining knowledge. The ordinary intellect which we all have does need such a help. For instance, if we close the eyes, we can not see a thing. But when the higher intellect opens up, it can grasp any object without the agency of a sense organ, and know the whole truth about it.
What should one do after the *ritambhara praṇīṭa* starts functioning? This would be an important question. Patanjali says here (I.50.) that once the higher intellect goes into action, it takes charge of the mental activity of the master of Yoga, and its own influence counteracts the influence of ordinary intellect. This higher intellect should be directed to finer and finer objects. They are two states of samādhi involving objects finer or subtler than those in the *nirvighāra* state. They are respectively called *ananda* and *asmitā* samādhis. In the former, concentration is effected on the sense organs, and in the latter, the ego feeling supplies the support for concentration.

Thus there are in all six varieties of *sabīja samādhi*. They are, we may say, the six rungs of a ladder that ultimately leads to the samādhi of no return.

Our discussion so far may be summarised by saying that samādhi is of two main kinds, and the former kind is subdivided into six types. This gives rise to two further questions: first, how is a passage from the samādhi of the first kind to a samādhi of no return made possible? And then, are there any clear-cut stages leading an ordinary person step by step to a state of samādhi?

We shall take up the second question for discussion first. And here, too, Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtra* will be our main source of information.
The question may be formulated in another way thus: if kaheenavritti state of the mind is a necessary pre-condition to samapatti, then what are the means to attain that state in which the vrittis are put to rest? For an answer to this question, we must first examine what the vrittis are, what their nature is, and how they are overcome.

Vritti, as we have observed earlier, is any activity or modification of the mind. Vyasa has compared the mind to a river (commentary of I.12.) flowing in two directions, either towards emancipation or towards sin. Just as there are waves or ripples on the surface of water, there are vrittis on the surface of mind. These vrittis are divided by Patanjali (I.5.) into two main groups, namely, klishtha and aklishtha. Klishtha vrittis are those which are born out of the afflictions of the mind called kleshas. Aklishtha vrittis are those which arise in the mind after the kleshas are removed from the mind through practice of Yoga.

According to another classification the vrittis are divided into five classes (I.6.), respectively called pramāṇa (knowledge from a valid source), viparyaya (illusory knowledge), vikalpa (mere ideas or word knowledge), nidra (sleep), and smriti (memory). Man's mind at any time is supposed to be a play-ground of one or more of these vrittis.

A vritti may arise from sense experience, in which the chitta gets affected by its contact with an object of experience, or from inference in which a present experience
gives rise to the idea of another experience associated with it. Or a vrittī may arise from testimony or authority of a book or a person, leading to true knowledge.

Many a time our knowledge (or rather our belief) turns out to be false because it is based on confusion or insufficient information. For instance, in insufficient light a rope is mistaken for a snake. This is viparyaya vrittī, or mistaken belief, which can be replaced later on by a true belief when conditions become favourable.

Vikalpa vrittī differs from viparyaya in as much as it is neither true nor false. If it were true, then it would be counted as pramana, and if false, it would be the same as viparyaya. But it is different from both. It purports to signify something, but actually fails to signify anything. For instance, when we say the words 'golden mountain' or a 'winged horse', we apparently are using the words correctly, but actually the words do not point to anything actually existing in the world. Thus vikalpa means a hollow idea created by the use of words in such a way that two ideas which are quite meaningful are connected to form an idea which appears to be meaningful, but is, actually, lacking any meaning.

Sleep is defined as a vrittī in which there is an experience of the absence of things (I.10.). And memory is the revival of the trace of past experienced stored in the mind.
We now come to the question of overcoming the vrittis. The means to this end are, as mentioned by Patanjali, (I.12.) two. They are: abhyāsa, and vairāgya. Abhyāsa means an effort to achieve stability of the mind (sthiti), which is a state undisturbed by the vrittis. Our minds usually present a continuous flow of vrittis of various kinds. They go on arising ceaselessly. While one subsides, there arises another vritti connected with it, and that in its turn give birth to a third one before it dissipates. Thus an unbroken cycle of them goes on. To break this cycle, one needs to practise several things, such as, the external parts of Yoga, called the bahirāngas, and also the esoteric parts, called antarāngas. All these practices constitute what is called abhyāsa. We shall discuss these practices in detail after a while.

Vairāgya is the other means of overcoming vrittis. It is the opposite of rāga. Rāga means liking, attraction, or desire for enjoyment. Vairāgya means the absence of desire. As long as we are caught up in the process of desire, we go on seeking after achievements, pleasures, and ego-fulfillment. Man's whole life may be described as a manifestation of the process of desire. It gives rise to an unbroken chain of vrittis. So if the vrittis are to be overcome, one must go at their source and remove that source itself. That source is rāga, and the way to remove it is vairāgya.

Both these means are to be applied simultane-
ously. Their joint action is very effective in silencing the mind. Vairāgya puts an end to the process of running after various kinds of enjoyment. Abhyāsa can not be practised properly unless such a spade-work is done through vairāgya. Two kinds of vairāgya are recognised by Patanjali. He calls them the lower one and the higher one. (I.15,16.). The lower one marks an absence of the desire for enjoyment of all objects, those which can actually be experienced, like sex, eating, wealth, and riches, as also those which are only heard of, such as, heaven, and the pleasures one gets there.

This lower vairāgya helps to strengthen abhyāsa, which, in turn, is supposed to lead to the higher kind of vairāgya, which is called para-vairāgya. It comes about as a result of enlightenment, or understanding the real nature of the world. It indicates total freedom from the process of desire in its entirety, which is, in itself, the highest state of true knowledge. This ultimately leads to emancipation in this very life, called kāivalya in Yoga terminology.

This brings us to a detailed consideration of 'abhyāsa'. We shall consider the antarāngas first. There are three parts included in this. They are respectively called, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, and samādhi.

Patanjali has defined dhāraṇā (III.1.) as "placing the chitta firmly and without distraction, on any object, called desha". This is the first step of abhyāsa.
"Desha" means a place. The place where the mind is to be kept fixed may be some part of the body like the various chakras or lotuses, or the tip of the nose or the tongue, or the mid point between the eyebrows, or the top of the head, or the flame of light which can be visualised there. Or else it may be some point or thing outside the body, like a picture or an idol or image, and so on.

Fixing the mind on a desha means stopping the natural tendency of the mind to keep on wandering from thought to thought and from object to object. If we just watch the activity of the mind silently for a while, it can be observed that there is a constant chain of thoughts of various kinds going on in it, ceaselessly. There is a constant flow of impacts from the external world gathered by the sense organs and sent by the manas component of the chitta to the buddhi. This experiencing on the part of the buddhi gives rise to a revival of connected samskāras. In them a place is given to the trace of the present experience, when that experience is over. Thus the store of the traces of experience (samskāras) ever goes on increasing.

What happens when the doors of the sense organs are closed, for instance, when we are not seeing or hearing, or tasting, or smelling, or touching anything? It is interesting to note that the mind is still active in
such a state, and the process of revival of past experience still goes on in an undisturbed manner. As pointed out by Bertrand Russell\(^1\), "it is one of the merits of the human mind that it is capable of framing abstract ideas, and of conducting non-sensational thought. In this it is supposed to differ from the mind of animals".

This process of entertaining thoughts in the absence of sensations goes on in the mind with the help of two vehicles, namely, images and words. When the eyes are closed, we still see the events, things, and persons in the form of images. And we also go on talking with ourselves without actually uttering words ahead. But while talking in this way we do make incipient movements of the apparatus of speech, of which we are never usually aware.

It is essential that in the state of dhāranā these two processes of seeing images and talking to ourselves must be stopped completely. Otherwise they keep on distracting the mind and making it wander in various directions. If one succeeds in putting an end to this double process, the state of dhāranā can be experienced.

The mind may be compared to an utterly indisciplined and untrained horse which knows no rest, and whose very nature it is, to have constant instability.

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and turbulence. If you go to catch such a horse, it runs even more wildly. The human mind behaves in the same manner. To try to fix it somewhere without movement is next to impossible. In the Bhagavadgītā (VI.34.), Arjuna has given expression to this difficulty by saying that the mind is exceedingly unsteady, and it is as difficult to control and passify it as to bring the wind under one's control. Lord Krishna has answered this difficulty by declaring (VI.35.) that although there is no doubt that the mind can hardly be brought under control, yet, it is possible to achieve this through abhyāsa and vaɪrāgya.

How is a wild horse brought under control? Obviously, by restricting its movements to smaller and smaller areas, and then training it to move gracefully in a limited area in the required direction. The same is true about the mind also. Its wild nature is first to be changed into sobriety by vaɪrāgya, and then the mind thus sobered is to be trained to remain attached somewhere in a state of poise. This is the essential feature of the process of dhāranā.

In it, the mind is not allowed to transgress the limits of a restricted area called deṣa. This is like tethering a horse or putting it in an area surrounded by a fence or a compound wall. The mind is not pin-pointed in that state of dhāranā; it can move, but not outside the boundary of the deṣa.
The difference between the usual un-controlled state of the mind and dhāranā is that while in the former the movement of the mind is wholly unrestricted, in the latter there is a restriction on it. It is perhaps a difference of quantity, not of quality. But there is a qualitative difference also, because of the presence or absence of vairāgya.

Thus dhāranā is a state of slowing down. It marks a beginning of stability, balance, peace, and understanding. These qualities can be made stronger and more effective with increasing practice.

Dhāranā is a process of knowing, or being aware of, or conscious of. It may be called a process of experiencing. There is an image or a word or an idea, which is entertained in the mind again and again, while all other thoughts are driven out from the mind. What happens in the mind due to its contact with the image or idea, is called bodha or pratyaya. It is the awareness, consciousness or experience of the object of concentration.

In the usual un-controlled state there are a number of pratyayas arising in the mind one after the other, there being no particular connection between them. The pratyayas are many, and the objects, too, are many. In dhāranā, the pratyayas are still many, although their number is considerably reduced. And the variety of object vanished, there being only one object on which the mind is
concentrated. With practice the variety of pratyaya also starts diminishing, because, out of the many pratyayas of the single desha only a few attract the mind more than others. As practice continues, there is a tendency to entertain only one pratyaya again and again. When this starts happening, one is on the threshold of dhyana.

Patanjali has defined the state of dhyana (III. 2.) as 'undisturbed continuity of pratyaya'. There are three factors called 'triputī', at work in this process of dhyana. They are: awareness of one's own existence (dhyāta), awareness of the process of concentration (dhyāna), and awareness of the object of concentration (dhyeya). These three factors have a joint action. They are intermingled in the process of dhyana.

One may very well remember here the definition of savitarkā samāpatti of Patanjali which we have discussed at length earlier, especially the fact that in it there is a mixture of three factors, namely, word, its meaning in the form of the object of concentration, and knowledge or bodha. If we place the two definitions together, then it would be very clear that there is hardly any difference between the two states of dhyana and savitarkā samāpatti.

There is a very apt description of the state of dhyana in the Brihad Yogi Yajnavalkya Smriti (IX. 182.). It is described as a state in which the buddhi
ahamkāra, manas, sense organs, and the object of concentration, are all held together in a stand-still condition.

It is easy to see that this definition of dhyāna applies equally to the state of samāpatti also. It may be pointed out that dhārana brings about a ksheena-vṛtti state, which results into purification of the mind, thereby giving rise to the capacity of the mind to remain associated with an object of concentration without any hindrance of another vṛtti or thought. This capacity is described by words such as uparāga, tādātmya, and tāmāyātā. And this is what is common both to dhyāna and savitarka samāpatti.

What is the difference between dhārana and dhyāna? Both are states of concentration of attention, but the intensity differs. The 'triputi' is present in both. It may be said that dhārana lies mid-way between usual mental activity, and dhyāna. The variety of thoughts is overwhelming in usual mental activity, meagre in dhārana, and absent in dhyāna. The three form a continuous process which goes on narrowing itself. So the difference between dhārana appears to be more of a quantitative rather than qualitative nature. The movement of thought in dhārana may be compared to the running of a bunch of horses over a race-tract, while that in dhyāna is like that movement of a railway enging.

Out of the three inner parts (antarangas) of abhyāsa, we have so far discussed the first two. The third
part, which is the pinnacle of the eightfold discipline of Yoga, has also been discussed in detail in the earlier pages. But it would be interesting to see how Patanjali defines samādhi, the third part of antaranga Yoga, in relation to dhārāna and dhyāna. Patanjali's definition, literally translated into English, would be something like this: (III. 3.).

"That dhyāna itself (tadeva), when the object of concentration alone shines forth into consciousness (arthamātrairbhāsām), and when the awareness of one's own existence vanishes for the time being (swaroopashunyamiva), is samādhi".

This definition of samādhi is very much similar to the definition of nirvitarkā samāpatti (I.43.), which we have already discussed in some details. From this it is clear that here, by the word samādhi Patanjali does not mean the states falling under savitarka and savichāra varieties of samāpatti. Those two states, as we have argued, can be considered under dhyāna.

But then, if dhyāna and samādhi are two different states, how can we, one may ask, and quite pertinentiy so, group some of the varieties of samādhi under dhyāna, without giving rise to confusion? Is there any confusion then, in the Yogasūtra of Patanjali about the states of dhyāna and samādhi?

This question, it may be pointed out with a kind of emphasis, must be answered in the negative. The two
states, if we see them clearly, are not wholly exclusive of each other. On the whole the two states are quite distinct, but at certain points they do show a sort of overlapping. Or we may say that there is a fringe which belongs to both dhyāna and samādhi. And the first two varieties of samādhi, namely, savitarka and savichāra may be said to be border line cases which could be grouped on both the sides. Of course, Patanjali has not at all said all this explicitly. But this is what we can clearly derive from his definitions of samāpatti, dhyāna, nirvitarkā samāpatti, and samādhi.

This whole discussion was initiated in an effort to answer the question if there are any clear cut stages through which one can lead the mind to the state of samādhi. This was the second of the two questions raised on page 32, and our answer, as a result of the discussion so far is, that there are three stages through which a sadhaka can go. But merely pointing to those three stages, as we have so far done, and describing them at some length, bringing out their essential features and distinctive characteristics, is not of much use in itself. Because a person who may be interested in practising the three stages can not start doing dharanā without some preliminary preparation. There are hundreds of examples of persons who have very seriously tried to calm the mind and fix it on some object of concentration, for years, without any success.

Why should dharanā, which is the very
first step in the direction of concentrating and passifying
the mind, be so difficult for most of us? That is because
it requires certain qualities of the mind, which must already
be there. We are not born with them. They need to be very
carefully cultivated. And unless they are there, it is not
possible to steady the mind.

So it is most important while discussing
the concept of samādhi to understand what those primarily
essential qualities are, and how they are cultivated, so that
the mind can learn peace and concentration. We shall discuss
these pre-requisites of samādhi in the next chapter.