Chapter 3.

PREREQUISITES OF SAMĀDHĪ

In the last chapter the concept of samādhi was examined and the stages preceding the state of samādhi were mentioned. It behoves us now to explain what qualities one must possess so as to be able to have an actual experience of that state of tranquillity and peace.

This disciplining of the mind is a matter very largely of changing the attitudes and tendencies of the savage mind, and developing a sort of understanding of the nature and working of the mind.

The essence of the whole discipline may be expressed in one word as "chittashuddhi", meaning 'cleanliness of the mind'. One should first know here what makes the mind unclean, or, what are the impurities of the mind. The Yoga view of the impurities of the mind traces the impurities to two sources, namely, the gunas, especially rajo guna and tamo guna, and the kleshas. We have made a reference to the kleshas in passing, in the last chapter. They form one of the most fundamental presuppositions of the science of samādhi. Hence it will be very useful to describing them at some length before proceeding further with the consideration of chittashuddhi.

The kleshas are often called kāshāyas, meaning dirt or impurity, and chittamālas, mala also meaning dirt or impurity. They are said to be present in the mind
since the beginning of life. Metaphysically speaking they are supposed to be in existence in the chitta since the very beginning of creation. The word 'klesha' means pain, and these are called kleshas because they are the root cause of pain experienced by the individual in life. In a sense creation is said to be beginningless (anādi), because there are an infinite number of cycles of evolution and involution that have taken place in the past, and when the first cycle started, it can not be conceived at all. The kleshas are also supposed to be anādi in this sense.

The kleshas may be described as innate or inborn tendencies of the mind. There are five such instinctive tendencies according to Patanjali, which are observed universally among all living beings. They are: (II.3.) avidyā, asmitā, rāga, dvesha, and abhinivesha. No one except the liberated individual is free from the influence of them at any time. The gunas and the kleshas are thus the two most formidable forces which keep all of us bound to the world full of misery and ignorance.

Let us consider the five kleshas one by one. The last one first. Abhinivesha means the desire for the continuance of life, or, in other words, fear of death. This tendency is exhibited by all living creatures. The next two, namely, rāga and dvesha, are like the two sides of a coin. Rāga means liking. Dvesha means hate. Every one of us likes certain
things, persons, situations and ideas, and has a dislike for certain others. Liking is developed for those things which give pleasure, and an opposite feeling develops for against those things which result in pain and discomfort. The objects of love and hate may change from time to time, but the tendency itself is inborn. And it is one of the chief sources of misery in human life.

Asmitā means the ego feeling, or the faculty of self esteem and pride. This has ever been one of the most mischievous factors in human history. But for this, human life would have been much more peaceful and joyful, and many great wars killing hundreds of thousands of men could have been avoided.

Avidyā is the most important among the kleshas. It is said to be the mother or breeding ground of the rest of them. Vidyā means right knowledge. Avidyā is the opposite of right knowledge, which may take various forms, such as, partial knowledge, imperfect knowledge, confused knowledge, or false knowledge. It may also mean lack of knowledge or ignorance. Various schools of Indian Philosophy have, all of them, recognised avidyā as the basic source of misery in human life, but they have emphasised its nature in different ways. In Yoga avidyā is defined as 'mistaking what is impermanent (anitya), un-sacred (aahuchi), miserable (dukkha), and not-self (anātma), for the opposite, i.e., permanent,
sacred, pleasurable, and self'. The set of first four qualities belongs to the prakriti and its evolutes, or in experience, to the world of objects. The second set of qualities belongs to the soul or purusha. Thus avidya in Yoga means a confusion between the nature of the purusha and prakriti, or the soul and other things, such as, the body, and objects of experience.

These five kleshas have four different levels of manifestation, such as, dormant (pracupta), attenuated (tanu), intercepted (vichhinna), and sustained (udara). When an innate tendency is actually expressing itself in one's behaviour and producing its result, it is said to be in the udara state. When it is temporarily smothered by another tendency it is said to be in the vichhinna state. When the tendency is not allowed to manifest itself for a long time, its force gets weakened, and it goes into a state called tanu. It can be revived from such a state under favourable circumstances. When, due to understanding and enlightenment, the tendency is overcome, it recedes into the pracupta state from where it does not revive even in favourable conditions, just as seeds which are burnt do not germinate even when good soil, moisture and heat are available. This is the state which the kleshas attain when one becomes an enlightened person (jivamukta). This is explained beautifully in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (II. 4.) and (II.5.).

If the kleshas and the gunas (especially rajoguna and tamoguna) are the impurities of the mind which
must be washed away for chittaśuddhi to happen, then it may naturally be asked as to what different means there are for achieving it. An answer to this question is the main topic of this chapter.

We shall begin our answer by mentioning one of the most outstanding means listed by Patanjali. It is called 'kriyāyoga'. It is defined as (II.1.) 'a discipline formed by tapas, svādhyāya, and ishwarapranidhāna'. Tapa means religious observances like fasting, regulation of diet, and self-castigation in various ways. It helps to increase the quality of rigour in the mind, which is most essential for anyone embarking on a path full of difficulties. Svādhyāya means study of religious literature, which helps to remove confusion of ideas, clarifies the path of Yogic discipline, and increases one's interest and faith in the path undertaken. Ishwarapranidhāna means devotion to God and surrendering completely to God's Will.

Kriyāyoga is a programme recommended to a beginner. It is very rewarding, because it gives rise, as pointed out by Patanjali (II.2.), to two very desirable effects, namely, coming into being of the state of samādhi, and attenuation of the kleshas. It is a programme of training both the mind and body so that the hindrances to samādhi can be overcome. Actually, the three parts which together constitute the training here, are also counted by Patanjali
under the head of niyamas, which form a kind of positive discipline as against the negative discipline of the yamas. The niyamas are five in number, and the three parts of kriyāyoga are also counted as three out of the five niyamas. The reason for doing this is perhaps not very clear, because, in fact, the effects which Patanjali has ascribed to the three parts of kriyāyoga, namely, promotion of the state of samādhi, and destruction of the kleshas, may very well be attributed to any other part of the discipline of Yoga. It seems that Patanjali has taken out three of the niyamas and given them a special status under the name of kriyāyoga, for the fulfillment of the needs of a beginner, who is not to be burdened at the very start with more intricate techniques.

Patanjali has also described the effects separately for each of the three parts of kriyāyoga. For instance about the effect of tapa he says (II. 43), "As a result of tapa impurity is removed, and perfection is achieved in the body and organs". Perfection of the body means a capacity to make the body light or heavy at will, and reaching any place bodily, etc. Perfection of the sense organs means extraordinary capacities to hear or see or smell from great distances, and so on.

Svādhyāya is said to result into communion with the chosen deity (II. 44.), while ishvaraprāni-dhāna is said (II. 45.) to lead to perfection of samādhi.
Kriyāyoga may thus be described as an easy staircase to samādhi. But as it includes devotion to God as one of its necessary parts, it would not appeal to the atheists. It may be asked then, if theism is a must for attaining samādhi. "It does not appear to be so," is our answer to this question. Moreover, God is not regarded as a creator of the universe in Patanjali's Yogasutra. He is only one among the many purushas. But of course, a theist can not believe in any such God, and so, kriyāyoga is of no avail to him.

There are many other means recommended by Patanjali for chittaśuddhi or chittaprasādana, which is a state of steadiness and absence of distracting factors. Normally in the mind of each one of us there are many desires, fears, conflicts, anxieties, emotions, passions, and doubts which keep the mind constantly busy and engaged in useless activity. Such a mind is usually in the kshipta or vikshipta condition whenever it is not in the mōdha state. It can not become steady and peaceful, because it is constantly being pulled away in various directions. When this process of distraction or vikshepa is stopped, the mind can be stabilised in the ekāgra state. This marks the beginning to samādhi. We shall discuss the various approaches to it one by one.

1. Friendliness and other attitudes:--

In life we come across various situations which, according to Patanjali, can be grouped into four classes, such as, i) pleasurable (sukha)
ii) painful (dukkha) iii) virtuous (punya) and iv) vicious (apunya). When we are confronted with these situations, our reactions to them are usually such that a feeling of uneasiness is created in our mind. For instance, if someone gets something very pleasurable, we usually feel envious, especially if we are ourselves deprived of that pleasure. If such a person suffers some loss, we may feel good about it instead of having compassion for him. These are examples of misplaced reactions which create unnecessary tension and bitterness in our mind, which in turn distracts the mind.

If we learn to have appropriate reactions to the four classes of situations, then we can maintain the calm and coolness of mind, which is very essential for samādhi. The appropriate attitudes as mentioned by Patanjali (I.33.) are: friendliness (maitri) for all pleasurable situations involving ourselves and others, compassion (karunā) for pain anywhere around us, appreciation (muditā) for anything exhibiting virtue, and mercy (upekṣā) for the acts of vice. These attitudes are not to be imposed from outside. They should be very natural and immediate reactions. This requires a kind of understanding and enlightenment — stuff of which the state of samādhi itself is a manifestation. Cultivation of these attitudes and making them a part of the very nature of the mind is a very sure way of overcoming distractions and tensions. It is, indeed, one of the most valuable
prerequisites to samādhi.

The idea underlying these maitri and other attitudes is that since human life is fundamentally a matter of relationship between the mind of the individual and the outer world, and since there is very little that we can do under many circumstances to influence the outer world, we should try to control or modify the mind so as to establish a smooth relationship. And this often works out to be very beneficial, because by having right attitudes we can avoid many tensions, conflicts, and painful results.

2. Forcible expulsion and retention of air (prāna) :-

This is a remarkable means of silencing the mind mentioned by Patanjali (I. 34.). It is based on the principle that prāna is the driving force of all activity in the body and mind, and hence, if prāna is made inactive by what Patanjali calls pracohardana and vidhāranā, then the indriyas and the mind could be silenced automatically. This principle is very extensively used in Hathayoga, in the various practices of prānāyāma. For example, it is said in the Hathayogapradipika (II. 2) that "the mind moves only so far as the air is moving inside the body, hence, movement of the air is stopped for making the mind silent".

We shall explain this principle thoroughly while discussing the role of prānāyāma in making the
mind steady and peaceful. Patanjali has here mentioned a special technique of prāṇāyāma involving rapid exhalations (prācchārdana) and holding of breath (vīdihāranā).

3. States of mind called vishayavati and jyotishmati:

These are special states of the mind which come about as a result of concentration on the seats of the sense organs in the body, such as, tip of the nose or tongue, top of the skull, the heart lotus, and so on. Patanjali has declared that (I. 35 and 36.) such concentrations lead to stability of the mind in the state of samādhi.

4. Concentration on the mind of a person who has conquered passions and afflictions:

Patanjali calls such persons the vēṣtarāga persons (I. 37.). Such persons may be rare in any society at any time. But they provide an excellent support for the mind of the sādhaka. By concentrating the mind on the essentials of the vēṣtarāga nature of that person (who may be living or dead), the sādhaka's mind itself gets purified, and thus capable of being steady in the state of samādhi. Examples of such persons are: Shuka muni, Lord Mahavira, Lord Buddha, the sage Vasistha, and so on.

5. Concentration on a perception in dream or sleep:

Sometimes in dream or sleep we have a very intense experience, which may be visual, tactile, or auditory. For instance there may be perception of some beautiful and colourful vision, or of God, or some sage or
else there may be an experience of hearing some most absorbing note or tune, or there may be the solution of a philosophical problem, and so on. By concentrating the mind on any such experience of dream or sleep, the mind, says Patanjali (I.38.), is purified and made steady.

6. Concentration (dhyāna) on any other object of choice:

The same result, that is, stability of the mind, can be achieved by concentrating the mind on any other object (I.39.) that one may like. This is recommended by Patanjali for those who do not have an experience of the former states mentioned above. And there may be many such aspirants. To them Patanjali's advice is that they should try to concentrate the mind in dhyāna on any available object of choice, material or otherwise. When the mind once learns to be steady anywhere, it can be made steady anywhere else.

This fact is expressly stated by Patanjali (I.40.) by saying that such a mind which has got the experience of being steady and concentrated on any object, can in due course and with sufficient practice develop the capacity to settle in concentration on any object, small or big, from the smallest atom to the largest of the most extended things, e.g., the sky.

A mind that has obtained such mastery of concentration is in the state called kaheenavritti. It can easily be placed like a precious gem in a complete communion (tādātmya) with any object, resulting in samādhi.
All these six means recommended by Patanjali are, however, open to one very serious objection, namely, that while there is no difficulty in accepting them as means to making the chitta full of prasāda and thereby fit to be in the state of samādhi, these means themselves are somewhat akin to what is supposed to be their goal, because they all involve concentration, and thus the means here is required to have the goal itself in some measure. Thus all this amounts to saying that 'for achieving the state of samādhi one should practise samādhi itself'. These means of chittaprasādana, it may be pointed out, show how we can master the 'whole' by proceeding bit by bit, mastering the parts of that whole one by one.

Patanjali has mentioned other important prerequisites to samādhi. In fact, out of the eight parts or techniques of his system of ashtāngayoga the first seven parts may be considered as means to the eighth part, which is samādhi. We have already discussed the sixth and seventh parts, namely, dhāranā and dhyāna, which, together with samādhi form the antaranga of Yoga. The first five parts which constitute the bahiranga or outer aspect of Yoga have, apart from their separate specific goals, one goal in common, and that common goal is the state of samādhi. It would be important to consider these five parts one by one with a view to see how they contribute to the fulfillment of that common goal.
Patanjali has clearly stated in the very beginning of the discussion of the five bahirangas of Yoga (II.28.) that by their practice the impurities of the mind go on diminishing and the luminosity of true knowledge increases progressively until a state is reached in which ultimate knowledge of the nature of the soul shines forth. That state of highest knowledge is called viveka-khyāti. Of course, this is true of all the eight āngas including samādhi. But, as shown by Bhoja, a commentator of Patanjali's Yogasutra, (II. 29.) "the three antarangas directly result into samādhi, whereas, the bahirangas are helpful to samādhi in an indirect way by removing the obstacles called vitarkas."

The bahirangas are five in number.

They are: yama, niyama, āsana, prānāyāma, and pratyāhāra. Each one of these parts has both bodily and mental aspects. In yama, niyama, and pratyāhāra the mental aspect is more predominant than the bodily aspect, while in āsana and prānāyāma the reverse is the case. We shall now discuss them one by one.

Yama:

The sanskrit word "Yamah" means controlling, curbing, or restraining. As a means to samādhi, yama indicates a negative sort of discipline which involves putting curbs on the natural vicious tendencies of the mind, and stopping the mind from certain acts which are opposed to samādhi. The five tendencies to be curbed are; violence, falsehood, theft, indulgence in sex, and accumulation of objects of enjoyment. These vicious tendencies are curbed by
abstaining from the acts which follow as a result of these vicious tendencies. Thus the yamās are various kinds of abstinences which help the mind to overcome the animal nature or animal instincts. We are born with the animal instincts. And they obstruct the way to samādhi. Had it not been so, then all of us could easily go into the state of samādhi.

Yama, it may be said, is the opposite of an evil tendency or an animal instinct. It indicates a negative sort of discipline, concerned more with what "not to do". The names of the yamās mentioned by Patanjali are: ahimsā, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, and aparigraha. (II.30.). Ahimsā means abstaining from killing any being. In the strict sense it means abstaining from doing harm to any being by physical assault, by thought, or by speech. Satya means abstaining from falsity or false statements. Asteya is the opposite of accepting what belongs to others, i.e., giving up exploitation of others in all its forms. Brahmacarya, for the beginner means control of the sex desire. For the advanced student of samādhi it means complete abstinence from sex. The last yama indicates the tendency of not gathering things of enjoyment.

Patanjali has emphasised the fact (II.31.) that the practice of yamās must be followed without any exception. In daily life many occasions arise when one may be prompted to justify the slackening of a yama. Patanjali has grouped these occasions into four glasses, such as jāti, desha, kāla, and samaya. Jāti means birth. If a fisherman says that
he will follow the *yama* of *ahimsā* in case of all beings with one exception, that of the fish, because his livelihood depends upon killing the fish, then his practice of *yama* will be restricted or qualified or conditioned by *jāti*. Patanjali would not allow such a qualification or restriction due to any reason whatever. The *yamas* are to be practised, according to him, without the influence of one's birth, the place (*desha*), time (*kāla*), or exigencies (*samaya*). Then it becomes a great vow (*mahāvrata*). For samādhi to come into being, it is essential that the practice of *yamas* should be followed in the form of a *mahāvrata*, without any break.

As a result of *mahāvrata* the student of samādhi becomes perfectly grounded or established in the process of abstinence, which is called the state of *pratisthā* or firm establishment of the *yama*. Patanjali has described various results that follow the *pratisthā* of each of the *yamas*. (II. 35–39.).

Thus, when the *yama* of *ahimsā* is perfected, the mere presence of such an individual causes every creature in his vicinity to give up enmity altogether. (II. 35.). When there is perfection of *satya*, actions and consequences follow according to what the student of samādhi utters. (II. 36.). When *asteya* becomes firmly grounded as a *yama*, all jewels approach the *yogi*. (II. 37.). With the perfection of the practice of celibacy he gets unusual energy (*veerya*).
(II.38.). And the fifth yama, namely, aparigraha, when perfectly stabilized in the nature of the student of samādhi, yields an illumination of the conditions of birth (II.39.).

But to perfect the yamas to such a state is very difficult, and one is apt to falter at many places, on many occasions. These are called vitarkas, or perverse considerations which come in the mind of the student and distract him from the practice of the yamas. These vitarkas instigate the student to follow the path of himsā, asatya, and so on, which are very much in keeping with the animal tendencies with which one is born. If the vitarkas are allowed to have an upper hand, then the student cannot go ahead along the path of samādhi. Hence Patanjali has paid special attention to their discussion, and has recommended a technique called 'cultivation of opposites' (pratipakshabhāavana) for overcoming the vitarkas. We may say that samādhi and the vitarkas lie at the extremities of a continuum, that is to say, they are exclusive of each other. When the vitarkas arise in the mind, samādhi cannot be there, and when samādhi is there, the vitarkas cannot exist in that mind.

When it is found that an animal instinct such as violence, falsity, exploitatation, sex, and possessiveness gets an upper hand, cultivation of the opposite tendency should be followed as recommended by Patanjali (II.33.). This pratipakshabhāavana involves pondering over the fact
that the *vitarka*, if allowed to grow, will result into unending pain and lack of understanding, causing a diversion for all times from that path which one has found with great difficulty, i.e., the path leading to samādhi. There is a much more profound psychological significance in Patanjali's description of *pratipakshabhāvāna* (II.33.). He has said that it involves an examination of the *vitarkas* in great details, namely, their three forms like *krita, kārita,* and *anumodita,* and their predisposing factors such as *greed, anger,* and infatuation, together with their endless effect already mentioned above, and the three stages in which they are found, namely, *mild, moderate,* and *vehement.* This leads to the conclusion that violence, and falsity, and so forth, is as condemnable when one instigates another to do it (*kārita*), or approves of it when others do it, (*anumodita*), as when it is done by one's own self. Thus a murderer is not to be looked upon as the only culprit in a murder-case, but those who instigate it and those who approve of it are equally at fault. Such an examination of the *vitarkas* can give the student an insight with which they can be overcome. Hence *pratipakshabhāvāna* is of utmost importance.

There is a peculiar fact about the number of *yamas* as mentioned in different traditional writings. Some of them seem to agree with Patanjali about the names and the number of them, for instance, Vishnu Purana (VI.vii.36.).
In the Markandeya purana (38.16.) the number of yamas is
given as five, but their names are slightly changed. For
instance, instead of satya it uses the word tyāga, while for
aparigraha the word alobha is used.

In many ancient texts like the
Darshanopanishat (I.6.), Trishikhibrahmanopanishat (Mantra, 32.),
Yogayajnyavalika (I.50.), and also in the famous book of
Hathayoga called Hathayogapradipika (I.16.), ten yamas are
mentioned instead of five. These ten include the four yamas
described by Patanjali. In addition to them the list includes
the following: i) dāyā, ii) arjaya, iii) kṣama, 
iv) dhriti, iv) mitāhāra, and vi) shaucha.

These six additional yamas may be
translated into English as i) pity, ii) humility, iii) patience,
iv) self-command, v) moderate diet, and vi) cleanliness of body
and mind.

One yama from Patanjali’s list of five is
missing here, namely, aparigraha. And one of the ten, namely,
shaucha is grouped by Patanjali under the niyamas.

But whatever their names and number, it
is quite evident that the yamas do prepare the ground for
samādhi, because, when the mind forms a habit of restraint of
various kinds, many of its evil tendencies and animal instincts
are automatically dissolved, thereby leading to chitta-shuddhi.
Therefore the yamas are placed in the very beginning of the
eightfold path leading ultimately to the state of samādhi.
Niyama:

Niyama forms the second part of Patanjali's eightfold path to samādhi and kaivalya. The word niyamah in Sanskrit means restraining, checking, restriction, or obligation. While the yamas of Yoga indicate the 'dons', so to say, the niyamas point to the 'do's, or the positive discipline. Patanjali has mentioned five such niyamas. They are: śaucha (cleanliness), santosha (contentment), tapa (observances or austerities), śādhyāya (reading and pondering), and ishwara-pranidhāna (intense devotion to God). We have already discussed the last three of these niyamas under kriyāyoga.

It is quite clear that these qualities, when mastered perfectly, make the mind free of all its impurities, and such a clean mind can easily become 'keśeṇavṛttā'.

A question may be asked here about the relative importance of the yamas and niyamas, that is to say, which of the two is more important. Patanjali has not directly answered this question, but from the fact that he has spoken about the yamas in terms of 'mahāvrata', it seems that in his opinion the yamas should be regarded as more important.

Manu, the ancient Law-giver, has said in his Manuṣmṛiti (IV.204) that the yamas must be practised always, and that one who practises only the niyamas and neglects the yamas meets with failure. This shows clearly that Manu regarded the yamas as more important than the niyamas.
Ancient texts have often mentioned ten of niyamas instead of five. They are given in the Yogayajnavalkya (II.1.) and other texts as follows: i) tapa (austerities), ii) santosha (contentment), iii) āstikya (belief in God, rebirth, and the law of karma), iv) dāna (charity), v) ishwara-poojana (image worship), vi) siddhānta-sravāna (reading and discussion), vii) rūhi (modesty), viii) māti (determination or inclination), ix) japa (repetition of the sacred words) and x) vrata (religious observances).

The niyamas, it may be observed, are designed to help the mind to disentangle itself from the acts and tendencies which tend to bind it to the world of daily life. Thus freed, the mind can rise up, so to say, or turn back, inside, so that it understands itself in the state of sāmādhi.

Asana:

This part of the eightfold system of Yoga has recently become very popular, so much so, that Yoga, in the popular mind, means mainly the asanas. Asana may be divided into two groups, such as, those which are useful for sitting steadily with a straight back for some time in meditation or the like, and those which are useful for increasing the efficiency of certain organs and functions of the body by arranging the body parts in various ways. Those falling in the latter group have become more popular, because they are found useful in preventing and overcoming many disorders common in our times. But the postures of the first group are
more relevant for the state of samādhi. We shall not discuss here the influence of asanas on health and diseases, although much could be said about it, and has already been said in many recent books. Our main concern is with the influence of asanas on samādhi in particular and on the mind in general. That influence is brought about mainly by the postures of the first group. They are called the meditative postures. Patanjali has defined such a posture in his Yogasutra (II.46.) as 'that which is steady and comfortable'.

Many such postures are in vogue. The more common among them are: swastikasana, padmasana, siddhasana, and bhadrasana. Patanjali mentions two characteristics common to them (II.47.), namely complete relaxation (prayatnasaihillya) and steadying the mind on anything, especially on the symbol of stability, like the divine serpent called Ananta. He also mentions the effect of the practice of postures (II.48.), namely, that the student is unassailed by the extremes like cold and heat, pleasure and pain, and so on.

The meditative postures are spoken of very highly in the texts of Hathayoga. For instance, it is said in the Hathayogapradipika (I.41-42.) that it is possible to attain the highest state of samādhi called unmani simply by a prolonged practice of siddhasana, hence this posture is usually given the foremost position among the postures useful for samādhi.
In the Bhagavadgita (VI.12.) Lord Krishna has explained to Arjuna how a student of Yoga should practise dhyāna and samādhi. He recommends there the use of an asana or posture for sitting. He says (VI.13) that the body, head, and neck should be held straight in that posture, there should be steadiness, and one should keep the gaze fixed on the tip of the nose, not allowing the eyes to move in any direction. This description of a posture suitable for the practice of samādhi is almost the same as that of Patanjali's description mentioning steadiness and comfort as the two important characteristics of a meditative posture.

But why is a posture so important for samādhi, it may be asked. Can one not practise samādhi in a lying down position? The answer to this question is that for the samādhi of no concentration, any posture, sitting or lying or standing would do. But the samādhi involving concentration requires a completely relaxed state of the body and mind, and hence, for it, it is most important to sit down with a straight back and closed eyes, giving up all tension from everywhere in the body and mind.

A relaxed posture brings down the physiological activity of the body to the minimum. Thereby the production of carbon di-oxide in the body is reduced considerably, and so is the need for oxygen. Both these factors help the respiratory process to be considerably slowed down. As said in the
Annapoornopanishad (II.32.), "when the vibrations of breath are progressively slowed down the mind becomes completely silent, giving rise to the state of Nirvāṇa".

Recently many researches have been published wherein it is shown that the state of meditation (and possibly samādhi) is accompanied by various changes in the physiological processes going inside the human body. For instance, a lot of research work has been done in connection with what is called TM, or transcendental meditation. In an exhaustive paper published by Dr. Robert Keith Wallace of the Maharishi International University, it is shown that in the state of TM oxygen consumption and metabolic rate are markedly decreased, respiration is slowed down, cardiac output decreases, blood lactate level comes down, the psycho-galvanic resistance of the skin increases, the alpha rhythm becomes more prominent in the brain waves, and many mental capacities are remarkably improved as a result of practice of TM.

It is believed by many scientists who look upon much of the claims of the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and his followers as sheer propaganda, that most of the effects attributed to the TM technique are really produced by deep relaxation of the body and mind, which can easily be achieved in a meditative posture even without TM.

1. Wallace, Robert Keith, Neurophysiology of enlightenment, 1974, California: (USA), Maharishi International University, pp.48.
A recent study by Joshi+ reports some substitutes for Mahesh Yogi's transcendental meditation. It is reported in this study that Mahesh Yogi stated in a seminar that his transcendental meditation was only a new name for the westerners, given to the age-old method of dhyāna, known very well already in India. This confession on his part seems to be confirmed by the study reported here."

Four substitutes to the TM were studied. They were as follows: 1) Guided relaxation technique of the Indian Yoga Society, 2) Pracchardana and vidharana as mentioned by Patanjali, 3) Pranayama of amuloma-viloma type, and 4) Meditation of the 'pranavajapa' type.

The parameters studied were, respirations per minute, pulse rate, blood pressure, skin resistance, and EEG of the occipito-parietal region of the brain.

The data of this experiment show that the results obtained in case of all the four substitutes to TM are very much similar to those reported by Keith Wallace. A strong point about these substitutes, as pointed out by Joshi, is that "they do not need words like 'his holiness' 'his divine presence', etc., which are redundant in any scientific discourse.

Prānāyāma:

Prānāyāma is the fourth part of the discipline recommended by Patanjali, leading ultimately to samādhi. We shall first see what it means, and then how it leads to the state of samādhi.

There seems to be a sort of confusion prevailing among the commentators about the meaning of the definition of prānāyāma given by Patanjali. We shall attempt at clearing this confusion in order to understand correctly what Patanjali means by prānāyāma, and on that basis, what is the nature of its varieties.

Patanjali's definition, transliterated into English, is as follows (II.49,50, and 51.):--

"Tasminsati svāsaprashvāsayoh gativicchedah prānāyāman!" (II.49.)

"Bāhyābhyantarastambhavrittih deshakālasankhyābhih paridrishto dirghasookshmah!" (II. 50.)

"Bāhyābhyantaravishayakshepi chaturthah!" (II. 51.).

We shall first give the translation of all the terms in these sutras, and then give the meaning of the full sutras, pointing out the differences in meanings as mentioned by various commentators.

Tasminsati — When the asana is perfected.

Shvāsa —— inhalation

Prashvāsa —— exhalation
Shvasaprashvasyayoh -- of inhalation and exhalation
Gati -- movement
Vichchedah -- cutting off

Putting these terms together, the meaning of the sutra would be: "Sitting in an asana, pranayama is the cutting off of the movement of inhalation and exhalation". Here the word 'cutting off' may mean either complete stoppage of the movement of breath, or a modification of its normal movement by lengthening of the time taken by inhalation and exhalation. Vyasa, Patanjali's most authoritative commentator, has taken the first view, while Vachaspati Mishra and Bhoja, the two other commentators have taken the latter view. This difference in the two views plays an important part in the meaning of the next sutra.

Bahya -- external
Abhyantara -- internal
Stambha -- lack of movement
Vrittih -- tendency. This word is to be applied to all the above three words.

Deaha ----- area
Kala ----- duration
Sankhya ----- number of rounds
Paridrishta ----- measured
Dirgha ----- prolonged
Sukshmah ----- subtle
Meaning of the sutra on the basis of these terms will differ according to the two views in respect of the three varieties of prānāyāma mentioned in this sutra, although, regarding the meaning of the latter part there is no difference between the two views. Meaning of that part (which is not controversial) is as follows:—"Prānāyāma, with practice, becomes prolonged and subtle, measured as it is, in terms of area, duration, and number of rounds".

Now we come to the controversial part. According to Vyasa the three varieties of prānāyāma mentioned in the beginning of this sutra are: i) bāhya kumbhaka (which is done after a pūraka), ii) abhyantara kumbhaka (which comes after a pūraka), and iii) stambhavṛtti, which happens by a sudden stoppage of both pūraka and rechaka.

According to Vachaspati and Bhoja, the three varieties are: i) rechaka, ii) pūraka, and iii) kumbhaka.

The difference between the two interpretations is quite crucial, because it pertains to the very meaning of prānāyāma. This difference applies to the next sutra also.

Bāhyābhyantaravāśaya --- external and internal reference
ākāśēci ---- transcending
Chaturthah --- the fourth

All the three commentators of this sutra
seem to be in agreement over one fact, namely, that this fourth variety means kumbhaka, which happens as a result of a mastery of the technique of prānāyāma arising from a practice continued over a pretty long time. They would all translate the sutra as: "The fourth variety of prānāyāma transcends both the external and internal objects."

Perhaps, as shown by Joshi+ , the confusion here among the commentators has arisen out of a failure to understand the term "bāhyābhyantarastambhvṛttih" in the sutra no.50. Instead of taking it to mean that there are three varieties of prānāyāma described in this sutra, we should take this whole phrase to mean one single quality of prānāyāma, namely, that it is made of three components or fluctuations (vṛttis), respectively called bāhya, abhyantara, and stambha indicating thereby the three stages in each round of prānāyāma.

Thus, really speaking, Patanjali is not speaking anything about the varieties of prānāyāma in this sutra. He is rather describing the three stages of each round. The word "vṛtti" here means only a state or condition, or 'being in a particular state'. And there are three such states.

Perhaps the word "chaturthah" has misguided the commentators. This word in sutra 51 means the 'fourth'.

if there is a fourth described in this sutra 51, then it is natural for anyone to think that there must be three things described in the previous sutra. Vyasa and his followers have all thought that there are three varieties mentioned earlier by Patanjali (although they have described these varieties, as we have already seen, in different ways), and so the word "chaturthah" in the sutra 51 explains a fourth variety.

It seems, however, that Patanjali may not be speaking of four different varieties, but only four different states. These first three states, namely, rechaka, pūraka, and kumbhaka together constitute the first variety, and the fourth state, which is exclusive of the first three, constitutes the second variety. If this is true, then it may have to be accepted that Vyasa and his followers have understood the sutras 50 and 51 incorrectly.

Dr. Joshi has argued that this view of his has the backing of the Hathayoga texts, which speak of two varieties of kumbhaka, namely, sahita, and kevala (for instance, see Hathayogapradipika II.71 and 72). Sahita means "together with", i.e., along with pūraka and rechaka. This is the variety, according to Joshi, which Patanjali has mentioned in sutra 50. And kevala kumbhaka (kevala means alone, i.e., without being accompanied by pūraka and rechaka) according to him, is what Patanjali is talking about in sutra 51.
This brings us to the utility of prānāyāma for the state of samādhi. This has been very clearly explained in the hathayogaprādīpīka (II.2.) in the following manner:—

"When the wind is moving in the body the mind also moves. When the wind stops moving, the mind stands still. The Yogi attains a long, stable life. Hence prānāyāma in the form of stopping the breath is practised".

This verse summarises the view of the ancient masters of samādhi in respect of the usefulness of prānāyāma as a means to samādhi. It is not yet known scientifically as to how actually prānāyāma influences the mind. But an explanation offered by Joshi may be quite pertinent in this regard. He states that every round of prānāyāma involving pūraka, kumbhaka, and rechaka, brings into play the inhibitory impulses from the brain cortex which exert an influence on the pneumotaxic centre as well as the lower respiratory centre situated in the medulla oblongata. These impulses flow along hitherto silent paths, and on their way they also influence the thalamus and hypothalamus, which govern many emotional and biological functions of the human organism. It is possibly through the effect on the working of these two important parts of the brain, explains Joshi, that prānāyāma may be influencing the human mind, and silencing it in the state of samādhi.

There is another kind of influence that is said to be exerted by prānāyāma on the silencing of the mind in the state of samādhi. That is through the arousal of the sleeping goddess in man, called Kundalini. It is said to be a power that lies dormant in all of us. Its awakening is said to lead ultimately to the state of samādhi or sahajaavastā. This awakening has been given such a great importance in the tradition of Tantra and Hathayoga, that it will be worth our while to discuss it as thoroughly as possible in a separate chapter. We shall devote the next chapter to that discussion. Before starting it, we must attend to the last, i.e., the fifth of the bahirangas of ashtāngayoga which Patanjali has mentioned next to prānāyāma.

Pratyāhāra:--

The word pratyāhāra means withdrawal or pulling back. It means pulling the sense organs back from the objects of enjoyment. This is described in the Trishikhibrahmanopanishad (mantra-30.) as "the internalisation of the mind". The G. rakshapaddhati (II.22.) defines pratyāhāra as "the withdrawal or pulling back of the sense organs like the eyes etc., from their objects such as rūpa, rasa, and so on".

Patanjali has defined pratyāhāra in more or less the same terms (II.54.). He has said that when the senses are disconnected from their objects, they follow the mind inward, which is the state of pratyāhāra.
The result of pratyāhāra, according to Patanjali (II. 55.), is paramāvashyata, i.e., complete mastery of the sense organs. This means that the sense organs now stop completely their usual activity of distracting the mind and throwing it into the objects of enjoyment. This distraction having stopped, the mind naturally becomes steady and stable, which is a quality most essential for samādhi.

We have so far gone through the various means that are employed by a student of samādhi so as to bring about the desired state of mind called cittaśuddhi which is a precursor to samādhi.

After having discussed so far the concept of samādhi, the nature of the state of samādhi, its various aspects and pre-conditions, we are now in a position to discuss one very peculiar approach to samādhi which the ancient masters of Yoga often followed. That is the approach through an awakening of the dormant force or shakti present in all of us, which is called kundalini.

This is a highly specialized approach which has become increasingly popular in recent times. We shall devote the whole of the next chapter to a detailed description of the kundalini and its relation to samādhi.