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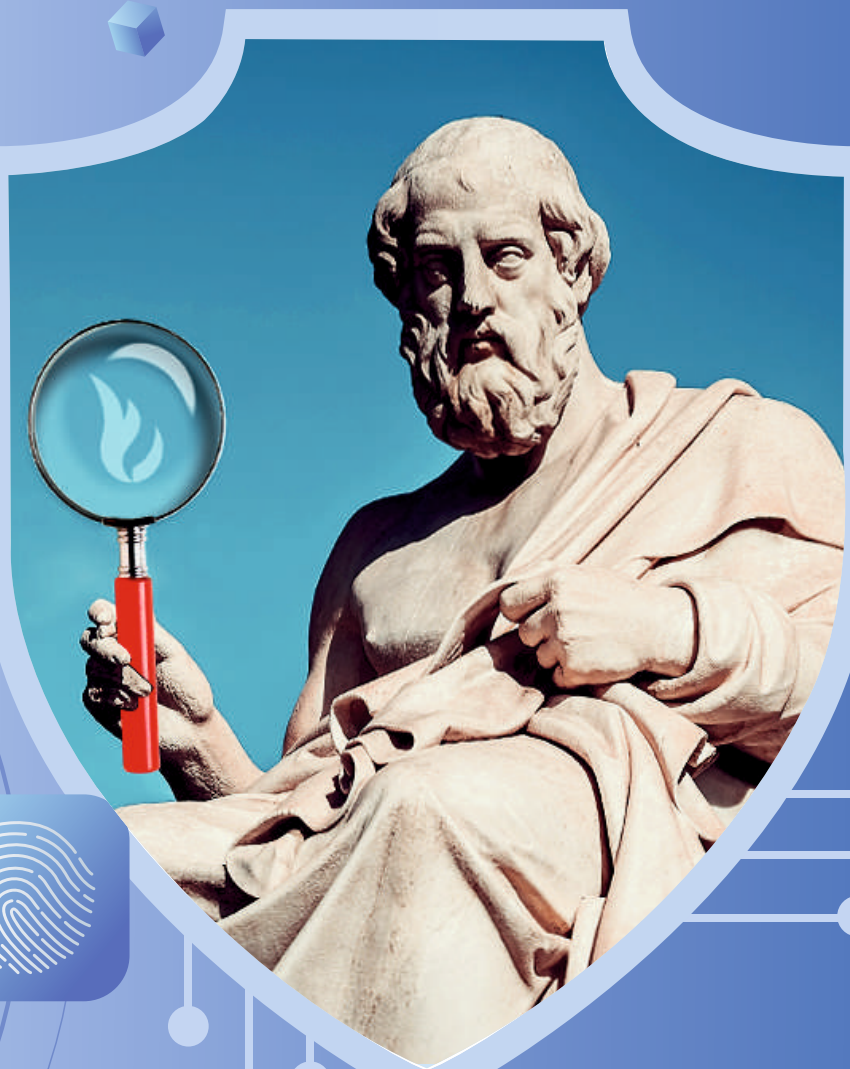
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University

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Yoga Science and Life Philosophy-II

BSCCS-407



Bachelor Of Science (Hons.)
Cyber Security
(BSCCS)

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BSCCS-407

Yoga Science and Life Philosophy-II

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Block-1

UNIT-1: Kriyāyoga (Yoga of Action): Meaning, Components, and Results

Structure of the Unit

1.1 Learning Objectives

1.2 Introduction

1.3 Meaning and Definition of Kriyāyoga

1.3.1 Concept of Tapas

1.3.2 Concept of Svādhyāya

1.3.3 Concept of Īśvara-praṇidhāna

1.4 Result of Tapas

1.5 Result of Svādhyāya

1.6 Result of Īśvara-praṇidhāna

1.7 Fruits of Kriyāyoga

1.8 Summary

1.9 Check Your Progress

1.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, learners will be able to:

• understand the meaning and definition of *kriyāyoga*;

• explain the concept of *tapas*;

• explain the concept of *svādhyāya*;

• explain the concept of *īśvara-praṇidhāna*;

• understand the results of *kriyāyoga*.

1.2 Introduction

In the first chapter of the Yoga-Sūtras, Maharṣi Patañjali explains the nature, types, and results of *samādhi* for advanced aspirants with a concentrated mind. He also presents *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* as the principal means for controlling mental modifications. However, individuals with an outward-oriented and distracted mind are unable to directly follow this path.

In society, most people remain deeply involved in worldly objects, desires, and attachments. Such individuals possess a restless and distracted mind. For them, it becomes extremely difficult to directly practice *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* for the cessation of mental fluctuations. Therefore, for these practitioners, Patañjali introduces *kriyāyoga* in the Sādhana Pāda as a preparatory path.

Kriyāyoga provides a gradual and practical method through which attachment and aversion are reduced step by step. As attraction toward objects decreases, the mind slowly becomes steady and inward-oriented. A person whose mind is scattered cannot recognize the true nature of the Self. To guide such practitioners toward Yogic discipline, Patañjali begins the practical path of *kriyāyoga*. Before introducing the limbs of aṣṭāṅga yoga, he first explains *kriyāyoga* as a simple and effective means for purifying the mind.

1.3 Meaning and Definition of Kriyāyoga

Kriyāyoga is a practical Yogic discipline prescribed by Patañjali for aspirants whose minds are outward-oriented and disturbed by attachments and aversions. It provides a gradual path for mental purification and prepares the practitioner for deeper Yogic practices. Patañjali defines

kriyāyoga as a combination of three disciplines that work together to reduce mental impurities and cultivate inner steadiness.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः ॥ १ ॥

IAST

tapaḥ-svādhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ || 1 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tapaḥ = austerity or disciplined effort

svādhyāya = self-study or study of sacred texts

īśvara-praṇidhānāni = dedication or surrender to Īśvara

kriyāyogaḥ = Yoga of action or practical Yogic discipline

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Kriyāyoga consists of austerity, self-study, and dedication to Īśvara.

Explanation

Patañjali defines *kriyāyoga* as a Yogic discipline composed of three essential practices—*tapas*, *svādhyāya*, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna*. These practices are designed to purify the mind and gradually reduce attachment, aversion, and egoism. *Tapas* develops discipline and endurance, *svādhyāya* promotes self-awareness and understanding, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna* cultivates surrender and humility.

Together, these three practices function as a preparatory path for aspirants who are not yet capable of intense concentration or renunciation. By practicing *kriyāyoga*, the practitioner weakens mental impurities and prepares the mind for higher Yogic practices, including meditation and *samādhi*. Thus, *kriyāyoga* serves as a practical foundation for spiritual progress in daily life.

1.3.1 Concept of Tapas

Tapas is the first and most fundamental component of *kriyāyoga*. In Yogic philosophy, *tapas* refers to disciplined effort undertaken for purification of the body and mind. It does not merely indicate physical hardship, but includes conscious self-regulation, endurance, and commitment

to practice. Through *tapas*, the practitioner develops strength, stability, and control over habits that disturb mental steadiness.

In the context of *kriyāyoga*, *tapas* functions as a means to weaken mental impurities such as laziness, indulgence, and carelessness. Regular observance of discipline—such as regulated food, regulated conduct, and perseverance in Yogic practice—helps the practitioner overcome inertia and develop determination. As impurities are reduced, the body and mind become more receptive to Yogic discipline.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *tapas* should be practiced with awareness and moderation. Excessive or unbalanced austerity can disturb both body and mind, whereas disciplined and purposeful effort purifies them. When practiced correctly, *tapas* strengthens willpower and prepares the practitioner for self-study (*svādhyāya*) and dedication to Īśvara (*īśvara-praṇidhāna*). Thus, *tapas* plays a crucial role in establishing the foundation of *kriyāyoga*.

1.3.2 Concept of Svādhyāya

Svādhyāya is the second important component of *kriyāyoga*. In Yogic philosophy, *svādhyāya* means self-study as well as the study of sacred texts. It involves regular reflection upon one's own thoughts, actions, and tendencies, along with disciplined study of Yogic scriptures. Through *svādhyāya*, the practitioner develops self-awareness and gains insight into the nature of the mind.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *svādhyāya* is not limited to reading scriptures mechanically. It requires understanding, contemplation, and application of the teachings in daily life. By studying Yogic texts and reflecting upon their meaning, the practitioner gradually recognizes inner weaknesses, habits, and attachments. This awareness becomes the basis for self-correction and mental purification.

Svādhyāya also helps in cultivating discrimination and right understanding. When the mind is repeatedly exposed to Yogic knowledge and introspection, confusion and ignorance begin to diminish. As a result, the practitioner develops clarity of purpose and strengthens commitment to Yogic discipline. Thus, *svādhyāya* serves as a bridge between disciplined effort (*tapas*) and dedication to Īśvara (*īśvara-praṇidhāna*), supporting steady progress on the path of *kriyāyoga*.

1.3.3 Concept of Īśvara-praṇidhāna

Īśvara-praṇidhāna is the third and final component of *kriyāyoga*. In Yogic philosophy, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* means dedication, surrender, or complete offering of one's actions and efforts to Īśvara. It signifies an attitude of humility and trust, in which the practitioner performs all actions without ego and attachment to results.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* does not imply passive resignation or blind belief. Rather, it is an active and conscious orientation of the mind toward a higher principle. Through this practice, the practitioner gradually reduces egoism (*ahaṃkāra*) and cultivates inner balance. When actions are performed with a sense of dedication, mental agitation caused by expectation and fear is reduced.

Īśvara-praṇidhāna also supports acceptance of success and failure with equanimity. By offering the fruits of actions to Īśvara, the practitioner develops emotional stability and mental purity. This attitude complements *tapas* and *svādhyāya* by softening rigidity and intellectual pride. Thus, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* completes the framework of *kriyāyoga* and prepares the practitioner for deeper Yogic practices.

1.4 Result of Tapas

Tapas, when practiced regularly and with proper understanding, produces significant positive effects on both the body and the mind. In Yogic discipline, the primary result of *tapas* is purification. Through disciplined effort and self-control, physical impurities and mental weaknesses are gradually reduced.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *tapas* strengthens willpower and determination. As the practitioner learns to endure discomfort and regulate habits, laziness and carelessness are overcome. This disciplined approach leads to increased steadiness of the body and clarity of the mind. When bodily restlessness and lethargy are reduced, the practitioner becomes more capable of sustained Yogic practice.

Another important result of *tapas* is the development of inner strength and resilience. Regular observance of discipline helps the practitioner face difficulties without frustration or withdrawal. This mental firmness supports further practices such as *svādhyāya* and *īśvara-praṇidhāna*. Thus, *tapas* acts as a foundational force that purifies, strengthens, and prepares the practitioner for higher stages of *kriyāyoga*.

1.5 Result of Svādhyāya

Svādhyāya produces deep psychological and intellectual transformation in the practitioner. One of its primary results is the development of self-awareness. Through continuous study of Yogic scriptures and reflection upon one's own thoughts and actions, the practitioner begins to clearly recognize inner tendencies, habits, and limitations.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *svādhyāya* leads to purification of the intellect. As understanding deepens, ignorance and confusion gradually diminish. The practitioner gains clarity regarding the purpose of life and the nature of Yogic discipline. This clarity strengthens discrimination (*viveka*) and guides conduct in daily life.

Another important result of *svādhyāya* is inner orientation. When the mind repeatedly engages with Yogic knowledge and self-reflection, outward distractions lose their hold. Faith in the Yogic path increases, and confidence in practice becomes firm. Thus, *svādhyāya* refines understanding, purifies thought, and supports steady progress in *kriyāyoga*.

1.6 Result of Īśvara-praṇidhāna

Īśvara-praṇidhāna, when practiced sincerely, produces profound mental and emotional transformation. The foremost result of this practice is reduction of egoism. By dedicating actions and their results to Īśvara, the practitioner gradually loosens attachment to personal success, failure, praise, and blame. This attitude brings inner calm and balance.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* helps the practitioner accept situations with equanimity. When actions are performed without expectation of reward, mental agitation caused by desire and fear diminishes. This leads to emotional stability and purification of the mind. The practitioner develops trust and surrender, which reduces anxiety and inner conflict.

Another important result of *īśvara-praṇidhāna* is inner surrender that supports concentration. As ego-centered striving weakens, the mind becomes more receptive and steady. This inner softness complements the discipline of *tapas* and the clarity of *svādhyāya*. Thus, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* plays a crucial role in harmonizing effort, understanding, and surrender within *kriyāyoga*.

1.7 Fruits of Kriyāyoga

Kriyāyoga, as a combined practice of *tapas*, *svādhyāya*, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna*, produces comprehensive transformation of the practitioner. When these three disciplines are practiced together, they gradually purify the body, mind, and intellect. The scattered and outward-oriented mind becomes steady, disciplined, and inward-looking.

According to the Gujarati SLM, one of the chief fruits of *kriyāyoga* is the weakening of mental impurities such as attachment, aversion, and egoism. As these impurities diminish, disturbances of the mind reduce, and clarity of awareness increases. The practitioner becomes capable of self-control, right understanding, and emotional balance.

Kriyāyoga also prepares the practitioner for higher Yogic practices. By reducing restlessness and cultivating discipline, self-awareness, and surrender, it lays the foundation for the practice of aṣṭāṅga yoga. Thus, *kriyāyoga* serves as a practical and effective path for gradual spiritual progress, especially for those engaged in worldly life.

1.8 Summary

In this unit, *kriyāyoga* was explained as a practical Yogic discipline prescribed for aspirants with an outward-oriented and restless mind. The meaning and definition of *kriyāyoga* were discussed with reference to its three components—*tapas*, *svādhyāya*, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna*. Each component was explained in terms of its concept and significance in daily Yogic practice. The results of *tapas*, *svādhyāya*, and *īśvara-praṇidhāna* were discussed separately, highlighting their role in purification of the body, mind, and intellect. Finally, the combined fruits of *kriyāyoga* were explained as reduction of mental impurities, development of inner steadiness, and preparation for higher Yogic practices. Overall, the unit emphasized *kriyāyoga* as an accessible and effective path for gradual spiritual progress.

1.9 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the meaning and definition of *kriyāyoga*.
2. Describe the concept of *tapas* and explain its results.
3. Explain the concept and significance of *svādhyāya*.
4. Describe *īśvara-praṇidhāna* and explain its role in *kriyāyoga*.

5. Discuss the fruits of *kriyāyoga*.

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by *kriyāyoga*?
2. Name the three components of *kriyāyoga*.
3. What is *tapas*?
4. What is *svādhyāya*?
5. What meant by *īśvara-praṇidhāna*?

(C) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. *Kriyāyoga* consists of _____, _____, and _____.
2. Disciplined effort for purification is known as _____.
3. Study of Yogic texts and self-reflection is called _____.
4. Dedication of actions to Īśvara is known as _____.
5. *Kriyāyoga* prepares the practitioner for _____ yoga.

UNIT-2: Kleśa (Five Afflictions): Nature and Classification

Structure of the Unit

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Pañca Kleśa (Five Afflictions)

2.4 States of the Kleśas

2.5 Description of the Kleśas

- 2.5.1 Avidyā
- 2.5.2 Asmitā
- 2.5.3 Rāga
- 2.5.4 Dveṣa
- 2.5.5 Abhiniveśa

2.6 Summary

2.7 Check Your Progress

2.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, learners shall be able to:

• understand the concept of *kleśa* in Yogic philosophy;

• identify the five *kleśas* explained by Patañjali;

• explain the states in which *kleśas* operate;

• understand *avidyā* as the root cause of other *kleśas*;

• describe each *kleśa* with its psychological and ethical implications;

• relate the concept of *kleśas* to human suffering and Yogic practice.

2.2 Introduction

In Yogic philosophy, human suffering does not arise without cause. According to Patañjali, the root of all suffering lies in certain mental afflictions known as *kleśas*. These *kleśas* disturb the mind, bind the individual to ignorance, and give rise to actions that result in pleasure and pain. As long as these afflictions remain active, the individual continues to experience suffering and bondage.

Patañjali explains the nature of *kleśas* in the Sādhana Pāda of the Yoga-Sūtras. Understanding the *kleśas* is essential because they form the psychological foundation of bondage. Yogic practice aims not only at controlling mental modifications but also at weakening and ultimately removing these afflictions. This unit explains the five *kleśas*, their states, and their detailed nature, thereby providing insight into the causes of human suffering and the need for Yogic discipline.

2.3 Pañca Kleśa (Five Afflictions)

In Yogic philosophy, *kleśa* refers to mental afflictions that disturb the mind and give rise to suffering. These afflictions cloud understanding, influence behaviour, and bind the individual to the cycle of pleasure and pain. Patañjali identifies five such *kleśas* that function as the fundamental causes of bondage and suffering.

IAST

avidyā-asmitā-rāga-dveṣa-abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ || 3 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

avidyā = ignorance

asmitā = egoism or sense of “I-ness”
rāga = attachment
dveṣa = aversion
abhiniveśa = clinging to life or fear of death
kleśāḥ = afflictions

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)
Ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life are the five afflictions.

Explanation

Patañjali clearly enumerates the five *kleśas* that afflict the human mind. Among these, *avidyā* is considered the primary and foundational affliction, while the remaining four arise from it. *Avidyā* leads to incorrect understanding of reality, which in turn gives rise to *asmitā* (egoism). From egoism emerge *rāga* (attachment to pleasure) and *dveṣa* (aversion to pain). *Abhiniveśa*, the fear of death or intense clinging to life, arises from deep-rooted ignorance and instinctive self-preservation.

These five *kleśas* do not merely exist as abstract concepts; they actively influence thoughts, emotions, and actions. They shape desires and fears, motivate behaviour, and create the conditions for suffering. As long as the *kleśas* remain active, the individual remains bound to ignorance and dissatisfaction. Therefore, Yogic practice places great emphasis on understanding, weakening, and ultimately removing these afflictions.

2.4 States of the Kleśas

The *kleśas* do not remain active in the same manner at all times. Patañjali explains that these afflictions operate in different states depending on the mental condition of the individual. Understanding these states is essential for recognizing how suffering arises and how Yogic practice gradually weakens the *kleśas*.

IAST
prasupta-tanu-vicchinna-udārāṇāṃ kleśānām avasthāḥ || 4 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)
prasupta = dormant or latent

tanu = attenuated or weakened
vicchinna = interrupted or temporarily inactive
udāra = fully active or expanded
kleśānām = of the afflictions
avasthāḥ = states or conditions

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)
The afflictions exist in dormant, attenuated, interrupted, and fully active states.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that the *kleśas* function in four distinct states. These states describe the degree to which afflictions influence the mind and behaviour.

The **prasupta** state refers to the dormant condition of the *kleśas*. In this state, afflictions are not actively disturbing the mind, but they exist in a latent form as potential tendencies. For example, attachment or aversion may not be consciously felt, yet they remain stored as impressions that can become active under suitable conditions.

The **tanu** state indicates that the *kleśas* have been weakened. Through Yogic practice, self-discipline, and awareness, the intensity of afflictions is reduced. Although they still exist, their power to disturb the mind is considerably diminished. This state reflects progress on the Yogic path.

The **vicchinna** state refers to the interrupted condition of the *kleśas*. In this state, an affliction may be temporarily suppressed due to favourable circumstances or conscious effort. However, it is not permanently removed and may reappear when conditions change.

The **udāra** state represents the fully active condition of the *kleśas*. In this state, afflictions dominate the mind and strongly influence thoughts, emotions, and actions. This is the most disturbing state, leading directly to suffering and bondage.

By understanding these four states, the practitioner can assess inner progress and recognize the importance of sustained Yogic practice for weakening and ultimately dissolving the *kleśas*.

2.5 Description of the Kleśas

2.5.1 Avidyā (Ignorance)

Avidyā is regarded as the most fundamental of all *kleśas*. Patañjali describes it as the root cause from which the other afflictions arise. In Yogic philosophy, *avidyā* does not merely mean lack of information; it refers to a deep-seated misunderstanding of reality. Because of *avidyā,* the individual fails to perceive things as they truly are and instead forms distorted notions about the self and the world.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ॥ ५ ॥

IAST

anityāśuci-duḥkha-anātmasu nitya-śuci-sukha-ātma-khyātir avidyā || 5 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

anitya = impermanent
aśuci = impure
duḥkha = painful
anātmasu = non-self
nitya = permanent
śuci = pure
sukha = pleasurable
ātma = self
khyātiḥ = perception or cognition
avidyā = ignorance

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Ignorance is the perception of the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasurable, and the non-self as the self.

Explanation

Patañjali defines *avidyā* by identifying four fundamental misconceptions that govern human experience. The first misconception is perceiving the **impermanent (*anitya*) as permanent (*nitya*)**. Objects, relationships, and conditions that are constantly changing are mistakenly

regarded as lasting and reliable. This misunderstanding leads to attachment and disappointment.

The second misconception is perceiving the **impure (*aśuci*) as pure (*śuci*)**. The body and material objects, which are subject to decay and impurity, are viewed as inherently pure. This distorted perception strengthens desire and indulgence.

The third misconception is perceiving the **painful (*duḥkha*) as pleasurable (*sukha*)**. Experiences that ultimately lead to dissatisfaction and suffering are initially mistaken for sources of happiness. This error causes repeated pursuit of pleasure despite its long-term consequences.

The fourth and most subtle misconception is perceiving the **non-self (*anātman*) as the self (*ātman*)**. The body, senses, and mind—which are changing instruments—are identified as the true self. This false identification gives rise to egoism and fear.

According to the Gujarati SLM, these four forms of misperception together constitute *avidyā*. As long as *avidyā* persists, the other *kleśas—asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa*, and *abhiniveśa*—continue to arise. Therefore, Yogic practice places great emphasis on removing *avidyā* through right knowledge, discipline, and meditation

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2.5.2 Asmitā (Egoism)

Asmitā is the second *kleśa* and arises directly from *avidyā*. In Yogic philosophy, *asmitā* refers to egoism or the sense of "I-ness" that results from incorrect identification. It is the mistaken identification of pure consciousness with the instruments of perception, such as the intellect, mind, and senses.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

दृग्दर्शनशक्त्योरेकात्मतेवास्मिता ॥ ६ ॥

IAST

dṛg-darśana-śaktyor ekātmatā iva asmitā || 6 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

dṛg = the seer (pure consciousness)

darśana-śaktyoḥ = the power of seeing (intellect or mind)

eka-ātmatā iva = as if identical
asmitā = egoism or “I-am-ness”

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)
Egoism is the apparent identity of the seer and the power of seeing.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *asmitā* arises when the seer (*dṛg*), which is pure consciousness, is mistakenly identified with the instrument of perception (*darśana-śakti*), such as the intellect (*buddhi*). Although consciousness and the mind are distinct, *avidyā* causes them to appear as one. This false identification gives rise to the sense of “I” and “mine.”

According to the Gujarati SLM, *asmitā* leads the individual to believe that thoughts, emotions, abilities, and experiences belong to the true self. As a result, pride, possessiveness, and self-centredness develop. This ego-based identification strengthens attachment and aversion, thereby sustaining suffering.

In Yogic practice, recognition of *asmitā* is essential because it lies at the root of many psychological disturbances. By cultivating discrimination between the seer and the instruments of perception, the practitioner gradually weakens egoism. Thus, overcoming *asmitā* is a crucial step toward inner freedom and clarity.

2.5.3 Rāga (Attachment)

Rāga is the third *kleśa* and arises as a consequence of pleasurable experiences. In Yogic philosophy, *rāga* refers to attachment or attraction toward objects, experiences, or situations that have previously produced pleasure. This attachment binds the mind to repeated pursuit of enjoyment and becomes a source of continued suffering.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)
सुखानुशयी रागः ॥ ७ ॥

IAST
sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ || 7 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sukha = pleasure

anuśayī = that which follows or remains latent

rāgaḥ = attachment

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Attachment is that which follows pleasurable experience.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *rāga* develops when pleasurable experiences leave latent impressions (*saṃskāras*) in the mind. These impressions give rise to desire for repetition of similar pleasurable experiences. Over time, the mind becomes conditioned to seek pleasure and avoid discomfort, leading to dependence on external objects and situations.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *rāga* does not arise independently; it is rooted in memory of pleasure. When pleasure is experienced, attachment follows naturally unless restrained by awareness and discrimination. This attachment strengthens the cycle of desire and dissatisfaction, as pleasure is temporary and cannot provide lasting fulfillment.

In Yogic discipline, recognition of *rāga* is essential because attachment disturbs mental equilibrium. By cultivating detachment (*vairāgya*) and right understanding, the practitioner gradually weakens *rāga*. As attachment diminishes, the mind becomes freer, calmer, and more capable of sustained Yogic practice.

2.5.4 Dveṣa (Aversion)

Dveṣa is the fourth *kleśa* and arises from experiences of pain or suffering. In Yogic philosophy, *dveṣa* refers to aversion, hatred, or resistance toward objects, situations, or persons that have previously caused discomfort. Just as attachment (*rāga*) follows pleasure, aversion follows pain and becomes deeply rooted in the mind.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥ ८ ॥

IAST

duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ || 8 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

duḥkha = pain or suffering

anuśayī = that which follows or remains latent

dveṣaḥ = aversion or hatred

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Aversion is that which follows painful experience.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *dveṣa* develops when painful experiences leave latent impressions (*saṃskāras*) in the mind. These impressions give rise to a tendency to avoid or resist similar experiences in the future. Over time, this tendency becomes a strong psychological pattern, influencing thoughts, emotions, and behaviour.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *dveṣa* is closely connected with memory of pain. When the mind recalls suffering, aversion naturally arises toward its perceived cause. This reaction strengthens fear, anger, and hostility, disturbing mental balance. Like *rāga*, *dveṣa* binds the individual to repeated emotional reactions and prevents inner peace.

In Yogic practice, understanding *dveṣa* is essential for cultivating equanimity. Through awareness, self-discipline, and detachment, the practitioner gradually weakens aversion. When reactions of hatred and resistance are reduced, the mind becomes calmer and more receptive to Yogic discipline.

2.5.5 Abhiniveśa (Clinging to Life / Fear of Death)

Abhiniveśa is the fifth and final *kleśa*. In Yogic philosophy, *abhiniveśa* refers to deep-seated clinging to life and the instinctive fear of death. This affliction operates at a very subtle level and is considered one of the most persistent forms of ignorance, affecting all living beings.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

स्वरसवाही विदुषोऽपि तथा रूढोऽभिनिवेशः ॥ ९ ॥

IAST

sva-rasa-vāhī viduṣo’pi tathā rūḍho’bhiniveśaḥ || 9 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sva-rasa-vāhī = flowing by its own force (instinctive)

viduṣaḥ api = even of the learned

tathā = similarly

rūḍhaḥ = deeply rooted

abhiniveśaḥ = clinging to life or fear of death

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Clinging to life, which flows instinctively and is deeply rooted, exists even in the learned.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *abhiniveśa* is an instinctive affliction that arises naturally and operates without conscious reasoning. Unlike other *kleśas*, it does not require intellectual misunderstanding to function. Even individuals who possess knowledge and discrimination are influenced by this deep-rooted fear of death and attachment to existence.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *abhiniveśa* manifests as fear of loss, fear of death, and intense desire for self-preservation. This affliction binds the individual to anxiety and insecurity, reinforcing attachment to the body and life circumstances. Because it is instinctive and deeply embedded, *abhiniveśa* is particularly difficult to overcome.

In Yogic practice, awareness of *abhiniveśa* is essential for cultivating fearlessness and inner freedom. Through sustained practice, discrimination, and deep meditation, this clinging gradually weakens. When *abhiniveśa* is overcome, the practitioner moves closer to liberation, free from fear and attachment.

2.6 Summary

In this unit, the concept of *pañca kleśa* was explained as the fundamental cause of human suffering according to Yogic philosophy. The five *kleśas—avidyā, asmitā, rāga, dveṣa,* and *abhiniveśa—*were discussed in detail. It was explained that *avidyā* is the root affliction, from which the other *kleśas* arise. The four operational states of the *kleśas—prasupta, tanu, vicchinna,* and *udāra—*were examined to show how afflictions function at different levels of intensity. Each *kleśa* was then described individually, highlighting its nature, causes, and

psychological impact. Overall, the unit emphasized that understanding and weakening the *kleśas* is essential for reducing suffering and progressing on the Yogic path.

2.7 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the meaning of *kleśa* and describe the five *kleśas* according to Patañjali.
2. Discuss the four states of the *kleśas* with suitable explanation.
3. Explain *avidyā* as the root cause of other *kleśas*.
4. Describe *asmitā* and explain how it arises from ignorance.
5. Explain the nature of *rāga* and *dveṣa* with reference to pleasure and pain.
6. Explain *abhiniveśa* and discuss why it is considered deeply rooted even in the learned.

(B) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. Ignorance is known as _____ in Yogic philosophy.
2. Attachment that follows pleasurable experience is called _____.
3. Aversion that follows painful experience is called _____.
4. The four states of the *kleśas* include *prasupta*, *tanu*, *vicchinna*, and _____.
5. Fear of death or clinging to life is known as _____.
6. Avidyā leads to the perception of the impermanent as _____.

UNIT-3: Methods of Overcoming Kleśas

Structure of the Unit

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Means for Removal of Kleśas

3.4 Results of Kleśa-based Karma

3.5 Vipāka (Fruits) of Karmāśaya

3.6 Pleasure and Pain for the Discriminative Person

3.7 Summary

3.8 Check Your Progress

3.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, learners shall be able to:

• understand the Yogic methods for removal of *kleśas*;

• explain the relationship between *kleśas*, karma, and *karmāśaya*;

• understand the concept of *vipāka* as the result of past actions;

• explain the threefold fruits of karma as birth, lifespan, and experience;

• understand the Yogic view of pleasure and pain from the standpoint of discrimination;

• relate Yogic ethics to daily conduct and spiritual practice.

3.2 Introduction

In the previous unit, the nature and structure of the five *kleśas* were explained in detail. It was shown that *avidyā* is the root affliction from which egoism, attachment, aversion, and fear of death arise. As long as these *kleśas* remain active, they give rise to actions that bind the individual to suffering. Therefore, understanding how these afflictions are weakened and removed becomes essential for Yogic progress.

In the Sādhana Pāda, Patañjali explains not only the nature of *kleśas* but also their practical consequences. The *kleśas* motivate actions (*karma*), and these actions leave latent impressions that accumulate as *karmāśaya*. These stored impressions produce results (*vipāka*) in the form of birth, lifespan, and experiences of pleasure and pain. Thus, human suffering is seen as a continuous chain beginning with ignorance and extending through action and its consequences.

This unit explains the Yogic methods for removal of *kleśas*, the nature of karma and *karmāśaya*, and the fruits of actions. It also presents a distinctive Yogic insight: for the discriminative person, even pleasure is a form of suffering. Through this analysis, the unit highlights the ethical and psychological foundations of Yogic practice and prepares the learner for deeper understanding of liberation.

3.3 Means for Removal of Kleśas

Patañjali explains that the *kleśas* operate at two levels—subtle and gross—and therefore require different methods for their removal. The Yogic approach does not attempt to suppress afflictions forcefully; instead, it weakens them systematically through understanding, discipline, and meditative practice.

(a) Removal of Subtle Kleśas

Subtle *kleśas* are those that remain in a latent or attenuated form. Although they may not be actively disturbing the mind, they continue to exist as potential tendencies. Patañjali explains that such subtle afflictions are removed through a process known as *pratiprasava*.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

ते प्रतिप्रसवहेयाः सूक्ष्माः ॥ १० ॥

IAST

te pratiprasava-heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ || 10 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

te = those (kleśas)
pratiprasava = involution or return to the cause
heyāḥ = to be removed
sūkṣmāḥ = subtle

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The subtle afflictions are removed by involution into their cause.

Explanation

Patañjali states that subtle *kleśas* are removed by *pratiprasava*, which means reversing their process of manifestation and dissolving them back into their cause. This process does not involve external action but requires deep insight and discrimination. Through sustained Yogic practice, the practitioner retraces the development of afflictions back to ignorance and gradually dissolves them at their source.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *pratiprasava* is a subtle inner process that becomes possible only when awareness is refined. As discrimination increases, ignorance weakens, and the latent seeds of affliction lose their power to manifest. Thus, *pratiprasava* represents a higher method suitable for advanced stages of Yogic practice.

(b) Removal of Manifest Kleśa-vṛttis

Manifest *kleśas* appear as active mental modifications (*vṛttis*) such as desire, hatred, fear, and ego-based reactions. These gross afflictions disturb the mind directly and therefore require a more immediate method for their removal.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

ध्यानहेयास्तद्वृत्तयः ॥ ११ ॥

IAST

dhyāna-heyās tad-vṛttayaḥ || 11 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

dhyāna = meditation

heyāḥ = to be removed

tat-vṛttayaḥ = those mental modifications

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The manifest mental modifications are removed by meditation.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that the active expressions of *kleśas* are removed through *dhyāna*. Meditation calms the mind, reduces reactivity, and brings clarity to awareness. When the practitioner observes mental modifications with steadiness and non-attachment, their intensity gradually diminishes.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *dhyāna* does not suppress thoughts forcefully. Instead, it weakens their hold by sustained attention and inner stillness. As meditation deepens, the gross manifestations of *kleśas* subside, making it possible for the practitioner to work on the subtler levels through *pratiprasava*. Thus, both methods together form a complete Yogic strategy for removal of afflictions.

3.4 Results of Kleśa-based Karma

Patañjali explains that actions (*karma*) do not arise in isolation. They are motivated by the *kleśas*, and therefore the results of actions are also conditioned by these afflictions. As long as *kleśas* remain present, actions performed under their influence continue to bind the individual to the cycle of suffering.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

क्लेशमूलः कर्माशयो दृष्टादृष्टजन्मवेदनीयः ॥ १२ ॥

IAST

kleśa-mūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛṣṭa-adṛṣṭa-janma-vedanīyaḥ || 12 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

kleśa-mūlaḥ = rooted in afflictions

karmāśayaḥ = storehouse of actions

dṛṣṭa = seen (present life)

adṛṣṭa = unseen (future lives)

janma = birth

vedanīyaḥ = to be experienced or felt

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The storehouse of karma, rooted in the *kleśas*, gives rise to experiences in this life and future lives.

Explanation

Patañjali states that actions performed under the influence of ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and fear leave impressions that accumulate as *karmāśaya*. This *karmāśaya* functions as a reservoir of latent tendencies that determine future experiences. Because it is rooted in the *kleśas*, it perpetuates the cycle of action and result.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *karmāśaya* produces results in two ways. Some results are experienced in the present life (*dṛṣṭa-janma*), while others manifest in future lives (*adṛṣṭa-janma*). The nature of these results depends on the ethical quality of actions. Actions motivated by purity and discipline generate favorable outcomes, whereas actions driven by ignorance and selfishness produce suffering.

Thus, as long as *kleśas* remain active, *karmāśaya* continues to accumulate and produce experiences. Yogic practice aims to weaken the *kleśas*, thereby preventing the formation of new *karmāśaya* and gradually exhausting existing impressions. This understanding highlights the ethical responsibility of actions and the importance of inner purification in Yogic life.

3.5 Vipāka (Fruits) of Karmāśaya

The accumulated impressions of actions, known as *karmāśaya*, do not remain inactive. Patañjali explains that these impressions inevitably produce results, which are called *vipāka*. These results determine the conditions under which an individual lives and experiences the world.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

सति मूले तद्विपाको जात्यायुर्भोगाः ॥ १३ ॥

IAST

sati mūle tad-vipāko jāti-āyur-bhogāḥ || 13 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sati = when it exists

mūle = at the root (kleśas)

tat-vipākaḥ = its result

jāti = birth or species

āyuḥ = lifespan

bhogāḥ = experiences of pleasure and pain

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

So long as the root exists, the fruits of karma are experienced as birth, lifespan, and enjoyment or suffering.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that as long as the root cause—namely the *kleśas*—remains present, *karmāśaya* continues to produce results. These results appear in three forms: *jāti*, *āyuḥ*, and *bhoga*. *Jāti* refers to the type of birth or species into which an individual is born. *Āyuḥ* denotes the duration of life, and *bhoga* refers to the experiences of pleasure and pain encountered during life.

According to the Gujarati SLM, these three aspects together define the overall life experience of an individual. Ethical and disciplined actions (*puṇya karma*) contribute to favourable birth, longer lifespan, and pleasant experiences, while unethical actions (*apuṇya karma*) result in

unfavourable conditions, shorter lifespan, and suffering. Thus, life circumstances are not accidental but are shaped by past actions rooted in mental afflictions.

This understanding highlights the Yogic view that liberation cannot be attained merely by modifying external conditions. As long as the *kleśas* persist, *karmāśaya* continues to generate *vipāka*. Therefore, Yogic practice focuses on removing the root causes rather than merely seeking pleasurable experiences.

3.6 Pleasure and Pain for the Discriminative Person

Patañjali presents a distinctive Yogic insight regarding pleasure and pain. From the ordinary standpoint, pleasure is sought and pain is avoided. However, from the standpoint of Yogic discrimination (*viveka*), even pleasure is ultimately a source of suffering. This perspective arises from deep understanding of the nature of experience and its consequences.

(a) Pleasure and Pain as Results of Karma

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

ते ह्लादपरितापफलाः पुण्यापुण्यहेतुत्वात् ॥ १४ ॥

IAST

te hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ puṇya-apuṇya-hetutvāt || 14 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

te = those (experiences)
hlāda = pleasure
paritāpa = pain or distress
phalāḥ = results
puṇya = virtuous action
apuṇya = non-virtuous action
hetutvāt = because of being caused by

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Experiences result in pleasure or pain because they arise from virtuous or non-virtuous actions.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that experiences of pleasure (*hlāda*) and pain (*paritāpa*) are the fruits of past actions. Actions rooted in ethical conduct and discipline (*puṇya*) give rise to pleasurable experiences, while actions rooted in ignorance and misconduct (*apuṇya*) produce painful experiences. From the ordinary perspective, pleasure is regarded as desirable. However, Yogic philosophy urges deeper examination of the nature of pleasure itself.

According to the Gujarati SLM, pleasurable experiences are temporary and dependent on external conditions. They inevitably change, giving rise to dissatisfaction and craving. Thus, even pleasure carries the seed of future suffering. This understanding encourages the practitioner to cultivate detachment rather than attachment to pleasant experiences.

(b) Why Pleasure is Suffering for the Discriminative Person

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

परिणामतापसंस्कारदुःखैर्गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः ॥ १५ ॥

IAST

pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ || 15 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

pariṇāma = change or transformation
tāpa = anxiety or distress
saṃskāra = latent impressions
duḥkhaiḥ = by suffering
guṇa-vṛtti = activity of the qualities (sattva, rajas, tamas)
virodhāt = because of conflict
ca = and
duḥkham eva = only suffering
sarvam = all
vivekinaḥ = for the discriminative person

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

For the discriminative person, all experiences are suffering due to change, anxiety, impressions, and conflict of the qualities.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that the discriminative person (*vivekī*) perceives suffering even in pleasurable experiences. This is because pleasure is subject to constant change (*pariṇāma*), which creates instability. It also gives rise to anxiety (*tāpa*), as one fears the loss of pleasure or desires its continuation. Moreover, pleasurable experiences leave impressions (*saṃskāras*) that generate craving and future dissatisfaction.

Additionally, experiences are shaped by the conflicting activities of the three *guṇas*. This inherent conflict (*guṇa-vṛtti-virodha*) prevents lasting peace. According to the Gujarati SLM, the discriminative yogī understands that no experience conditioned by the *guṇas* can provide permanent fulfillment. Therefore, even pleasure is recognized as suffering when viewed through the lens of wisdom.

This insight does not promote pessimism but encourages liberation from attachment. By recognizing the limitations of pleasure and pain, the practitioner cultivates detachment and strives for freedom beyond conditioned experience.

3.7 Summary

In this unit, the Yogic process for removal of *kleśas* was explained in a systematic manner. It was shown that *kleśas* operate at both subtle and gross levels and therefore require different methods for their removal. Subtle afflictions are removed through *pratiprasava*, while manifest mental modifications are removed through *dhyāna*. The relationship between *kleśas*, karma, and *karmāśaya* was explained, highlighting how actions rooted in afflictions accumulate as latent impressions and give rise to experiences in present and future lives.

The concept of *vipāka* was explained as the fruits of *karmāśaya*, expressed in the form of birth (*jāti*), lifespan (*āyuḥ*), and experiences (*bhoga*). The unit further explained how pleasure and pain arise from virtuous and non-virtuous actions. Finally, a distinctive Yogic insight was presented: for the discriminative person, even pleasure is experienced as suffering due to change, anxiety, latent impressions, and the conflict of the *guṇas*. Overall, the unit emphasized

ethical responsibility, inner purification, and the need for discrimination as essential elements of Yogic practice.

3.8 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the Yogic methods for removal of *kleśas*.
2. Describe the concept of *karmāśaya* and its relation to *kleśas*.
3. Explain *vipāka* and discuss its three forms—*jāti*, *āyuḥ*, and *bhoga*.
4. Why does Patañjali state that even pleasure is suffering for the discriminative person?

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by *pratiprasava*?
2. How are manifest *kleśa-vṛttis* removed?
3. What is *karmāśaya*?
4. What is meant by *vipāka*?

(C) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. Subtle *kleśas* are removed through _____.
2. Manifest mental modifications are removed by _____.
3. The storehouse of actions is known as _____.
4. The fruits of karma are called _____.
5. For the discriminative person, all experiences are _____.

Block 2

UNIT-4: Prakṛti and Puruṣa

Structure of the Unit

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Heya (That which is to be eliminated)
4.4 Heya-Hetu (Cause of Heya)
4.5 Nature of Prakṛti (Dṛśya)
  4.5.1 Guṇas and their Functions
  4.5.2 States of Prakṛti
4.6 Nature of Puruṣa (Draṣṭā)
4.7 Saṃyoga (Conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti)
4.8 Hāna (Cessation of Suffering)
4.9 Means of Hāna (Viveka-khyāti)
4.10 Seven Stages of Prajñā
4.11 Summary
4.12 Check Your Progress

4.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, learners shall be able to:

• understand the concept of *heya* as explained in Yogic philosophy;

• identify the cause (*heya-hetu*) of suffering;

• explain the nature and purpose of *prakṛti* (*dṛśya*);

• distinguish clearly between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*;

• understand the concept of *saṃyoga* as the cause of bondage;

• explain *hāna* as cessation of suffering;

• understand *viveka-khyāti* as the means of liberation;

• describe the seven stages of Yogic *prajñā*.

4.2 Introduction

In the Sādhana Pāda, Maharṣi Patañjali presents a systematic analysis of human suffering and its complete cessation. After explaining the nature of *kleśas* and their consequences, he now turns to a deeper philosophical examination of suffering itself. This analysis follows a method similar to medical science, in which disease, its cause, cure, and state of health are explained in a logical sequence.

According to Yogic philosophy, not all suffering is to be eliminated. Past and present suffering have already manifested and cannot be undone. What is to be eliminated (*heya*) is future suffering—suffering that has not yet arisen but can be prevented through right understanding and practice. This unit explains what constitutes *heya*, what causes it, and how it can be permanently removed.

To clarify this, Patañjali examines the nature of *prakṛti* (the objective world) and *puruṣa* (pure consciousness), and explains how their conjunction (*saṃyoga*) leads to bondage and suffering. The unit then explains *hāna*, the complete cessation of suffering, and identifies *viveka-khyāti*—discriminative knowledge—as the means to liberation. Finally, the seven progressive stages of Yogic *prajñā* are described, marking the culmination of spiritual insight.

4.3 Heya (That which is to be eliminated)

In Yogic philosophy, it is essential to clearly identify what is to be eliminated in order to attain liberation. Patañjali explains that not all forms of suffering fall within the category of *heya*.

Only that suffering which has not yet arisen is considered fit to be eliminated through Yogic practice.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

हेयं दुःखमनागतम् ॥ १६ ॥

IAST

heyaṃ duḥkham anāgatam || 16 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

heyaṃ = that which is to be eliminated

duḥkham = suffering

anāgatam = that which has not yet come (future)

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Future suffering is that which is to be eliminated.

Explanation

Patañjali makes a precise and important distinction by stating that *heya* refers only to future suffering. Past suffering has already been experienced and cannot be undone. Present suffering is already manifest and must be endured with understanding. However, future suffering has not yet arisen and can be prevented through right knowledge and disciplined practice.

According to the Gujarati SLM, this distinction reflects the practical and realistic nature of Yogic philosophy. Yogic discipline does not aim at escaping responsibility for past actions, nor does it deny present experience. Instead, it focuses on removing the causes that lead to future suffering. By eliminating ignorance and its consequences, the practitioner prevents the recurrence of pain.

This understanding shifts the emphasis of Yogic practice from complaint and regret to responsibility and insight. When future suffering is recognized as *heya*, the practitioner becomes motivated to understand its causes and adopt the appropriate means for its cessation. Thus, the concept of *heya* forms the starting point of the Yogic path toward liberation.

4.4 Heya-Hetu (Cause of Heya)

After identifying future suffering as *heya*, Patañjali proceeds to explain its cause (*heya-hetu*). In Yogic philosophy, suffering does not arise randomly. It has a definite cause, and unless that cause is removed, suffering will continue to arise in the future.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः संयोगो हेयहेतुः ॥ १७ ॥

IAST

draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoḥ saṃyogo heya-hetuḥ || 17 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

draṣṭṛ = the seer (puruṣa)

dṛśyayoḥ = of the seen (prakṛti)

saṃyogaḥ = conjunction or union

heya-hetuḥ = cause of that which is to be eliminated

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The conjunction of the seer and the seen is the cause of future suffering.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that the root cause of suffering is *saṃyoga*, the conjunction of *puruṣa* (the seer) and *prakṛti* (the seen). In their true nature, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are entirely distinct. *Puruṣa* is pure consciousness, while *prakṛti* consists of the mind, senses, body, and the objective world. Suffering arises when the seer mistakenly identifies with the seen.

According to the Gujarati SLM, this conjunction is not a physical union but a cognitive confusion. The seer begins to identify with mental modifications, bodily conditions, pleasure, pain, and actions. As a result, consciousness appears to be affected by experiences that actually belong to *prakṛti*. This false identification leads to bondage and repeated suffering.

The explanation emphasizes that as long as *saṃyoga* persists, future suffering will continue to arise. Therefore, liberation does not depend on changing external circumstances but on removing this mistaken identification. By cultivating discrimination between the seer and the

seen, the practitioner gradually dissolves *saṃyoga* and prevents future suffering. Thus, understanding *heya-hetu* becomes essential for achieving *hāna*, the cessation of suffering.

4.5 Nature of Prakṛti (Dṛśya)

After explaining *saṃyoga* as the cause of suffering, Patañjali now describes the nature of *dṛśya*, that which is seen or experienced. In Yogic philosophy, *dṛśya* refers to *prakṛti*—the entire objective world, including the body, senses, mind, and external objects. Understanding the nature of *prakṛti* is essential for dissolving mistaken identification with it.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

प्रकाशक्रियास्थितिशीलं भूतेंद्रियात्मकं भोगापवर्गार्थं दृश्यम् ॥ १८ ॥

IAST

prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlaṃ bhūta-indriya-ātmakaṃ bhoga-apavarga-arthaṃ dṛśyam || 18 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

prakāśa = illumination or clarity
kriyā = activity
sthiti = stability or inertia
śīlam = having the nature of
bhūta = elements
indriya = senses
ātmakaṃ = consisting of
bhoga = experience or enjoyment
apavarga = liberation
arthaṃ = for the purpose of
dṛśyam = the seen (prakṛti)

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The seen consists of the elements and senses, has the nature of illumination, activity, and stability, and exists for experience and liberation.

Explanation

Patañjali defines *dṛśya* as that which is composed of the five elements and the sense organs. It possesses three fundamental qualities—illumination (*prakāśa*), activity (*kriyā*), and stability

(*sthiti*). These correspond to the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti*: *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. All objects and experiences arise from the interaction of these *guṇas*.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *prakṛti* exists for two purposes: *bhoga* (experience) and *apavarga* (liberation). Through *bhoga*, the individual experiences pleasure and pain, learning about the limitations of worldly existence. Through *apavarga*, *prakṛti* serves as a means for the seer to gain discrimination and ultimately attain liberation.

The explanation emphasizes that *prakṛti* itself is not the cause of bondage. Bondage arises when the seer identifies with *prakṛti*. When *prakṛti* is properly understood as an object of experience rather than the self, it becomes an instrument for liberation. Thus, understanding the nature of *dṛśya* is essential for dissolving *saṃyoga* and preventing future suffering.

4.5.1 Guṇas and their Functions

In Yogic philosophy, *prakṛti* operates through three fundamental qualities known as *guṇas*. These *guṇas* are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. All mental, physical, and experiential phenomena arise from the interaction of these three qualities. Understanding their nature and functions is essential for comprehending both bondage and liberation.

According to the Gujarati SLM, **sattva** is the quality of clarity, light, and harmony. It is associated with knowledge, purity, balance, and calmness. When *sattva* predominates, the mind becomes clear and capable of discrimination. This quality supports understanding, wisdom, and inner peace. In Yogic practice, the cultivation of *sattva* is considered essential for developing insight.

Rajas is the quality of activity, movement, and restlessness. It is responsible for desire, ambition, effort, and change. When *rajas* dominates, the mind becomes restless and outward-oriented. Although *rajas* enables action and progress, excessive *rajas* leads to agitation, attachment, and dissatisfaction. Thus, *rajas* binds the individual through constant activity and desire.

Tamas is the quality of inertia, darkness, and resistance. It produces ignorance, lethargy, confusion, and heaviness. When *tamas* prevails, clarity is obscured, and the individual becomes inclined toward negligence and inactivity. *Tamas* binds the mind through ignorance and lack of awareness.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that these three *guṇas* are always present together, but in varying proportions. Their continuous interaction governs all experiences. Bondage arises when the seer identifies with the activities of the *guṇas*. Liberation becomes possible when the practitioner understands their functioning and remains established in discrimination, without identification. Thus, knowledge of the *guṇas* forms a crucial foundation for Yogic insight.

4.5.2 States of Prakṛti (Viśeṣa, Aviśeṣa, Liṅga-mātra, Aliṅga)

After explaining the *guṇas* and their functions, Patañjali describes the various states through which *prakṛti* manifests. These states represent different levels of evolution and expression of the objective world. Understanding these states helps the practitioner recognize how experience arises and how liberation becomes possible.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

विशेषाविशेषलिङ्गमात्रालिङ्गानि गुणपर्वाणि ॥ १९ ॥

IAST

viśeṣa-aviśeṣa-liṅga-mātra-aliṅgāni guṇa-parvāṇi || 19 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

viśeṣa = specific or differentiated
aviśeṣa = non-specific or undifferentiated
liṅga-mātra = merely marked or subtle principle
aliṅgāni = unmanifest or without mark
guṇa-parvāṇi = stages or levels of the guṇas

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The stages of the *guṇas* are the specific, non-specific, merely marked, and unmanifest.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *prakṛti* functions through four evolutionary states. These states represent progressive levels of manifestation from the gross to the subtle.

The **viśeṣa** state refers to the fully differentiated and manifest level of *prakṛti*. It includes the gross elements, the sense organs, and their objects. This is the level at which ordinary experience takes place. Pleasure, pain, and worldly activities occur predominantly in this state.

The **aviśeṣa** state refers to the undifferentiated but still manifest level. It includes subtle elements such as the tanmātras and the internal faculties that have not yet assumed gross form. This state represents a subtler level of experience than the gross world.

The **liṅga-mātra** state refers to the subtle principle in which only the mark of differentiation remains. It is associated with *mahat* (cosmic intellect) and *ahaṃkāra*. At this level, *prakṛti* exists as a potential for manifestation rather than as fully formed objects.

The **aliṅga** state is the unmanifest condition of *prakṛti*. In this state, *prakṛti* exists in complete equilibrium of the *guṇas*, without differentiation or activity. This is the primordial state from which all manifestation arises.

According to the Gujarati SLM, bondage arises when the seer identifies with any of these states of *prakṛti*. Liberation occurs when the practitioner understands these states as objects of experience and remains established in the awareness of *puruṣa*. Thus, knowledge of the states of *prakṛti* supports discrimination and the dissolution of *saṃyoga*.

4.6 Nature of Puruṣa (Draṣṭā)

After explaining the nature of *prakṛti* (*dṛśya*), Patañjali describes the nature of *puruṣa*, the seer (*draṣṭā*). In Yogic philosophy, *puruṣa* is pure consciousness, distinct from the body, senses, and mind. Understanding this distinction is essential for removing mistaken identification and attaining liberation.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

द्रष्टा दृशिमात्रः शुद्धोऽपि प्रत्ययानुपश्यः ॥ २० ॥

IAST

draṣṭā dṛśi-mātraḥ śuddho’pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ || 20 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

draṣṭā = the seer

dṛśi-mātraḥ = pure seeing alone (consciousness)

śuddhaḥ api = though pure

pratyaya-anupaśyaḥ = appears to follow mental modifications

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The seer is pure consciousness alone, yet appears to perceive mental modifications.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *puruṣa* is nothing but pure seeing (*dṛśi-mātra*). It is intrinsically pure (*śuddha*) and unaffected by change. However, due to *saṃyoga* with *prakṛti*, it appears as though *puruṣa* experiences thoughts, emotions, pleasure, and pain. In reality, these experiences belong to the mind (*citta*), not to consciousness itself.

According to the Gujarati SLM, this apparent experience occurs because consciousness reflects the activities of the mind, much like a clear crystal reflecting surrounding colours. Although the crystal remains unchanged, it appears coloured. Similarly, *puruṣa* remains pure but appears to be involved in mental activities.

This misunderstanding leads to bondage. When the practitioner recognizes that thoughts and experiences are objects seen by consciousness—and not attributes of the self—the false identification weakens. Thus, understanding the nature of *puruṣa* as distinct from *prakṛti* is essential for dissolving *saṃyoga* and preventing future suffering.

4.6 (continued): Purpose of Dṛśya (Prakṛti)

After explaining the nature of *puruṣa* as the seer, Patañjali clarifies the purpose of *dṛśya*—the seen or *prakṛti*. This clarification is necessary to understand why experience continues and how liberation becomes possible.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तदर्थ एव दृश्यस्यात्मा ॥ २१ ॥

IAST

tad-artha eva dṛśyasya ātmā || 21 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tat-arthaḥ = for that purpose (of the seer)

eva = indeed

dṛśyasya = of the seen (prakṛti)

ātmā = nature or essence

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

The very nature of the seen exists for the purpose of the seer.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *prakṛti* exists entirely for the purpose of *puruṣa*. Its function is to provide experience (*bhoga*) and to serve as a means for liberation (*apavarga*). Through experience, the seer comes to recognize the distinction between itself and the seen. Thus, *prakṛti* is not meaningless or accidental; it plays an essential role in the journey toward liberation.

According to the Gujarati SLM, bondage arises when experience leads to attachment and identification. Liberation arises when experience leads to discrimination and detachment. In both cases, *prakṛti* functions as an instrument. Therefore, *dṛśya* exists not for its own sake, but entirely for the sake of the seer.

Why Prakṛti Continues After Liberation

A question naturally arises: if *prakṛti* exists for the seer, what happens to it when liberation is attained? Patañjali addresses this question clearly.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

कृतार्थं प्रति नष्टमप्यनष्टं तदन्यसाधारणत्वात् ॥ २२ ॥

IAST

kṛtārthaṃ prati naṣṭam api anaṣṭaṃ tad-anya-sādhāraṇatvāt || 22 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

kṛtārtham prati = with respect to the fulfilled one (liberated puruṣa)
naṣṭam api = though destroyed
anaṣṭam = not destroyed
tat-anya-sādhāraṇatvāt = because it is common to others

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Though it ceases for the liberated one, it does not cease for others, because it is common to all.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that when liberation is attained, *prakṛti* ceases to function for that particular *puruṣa*. For the liberated individual, the purpose of *prakṛti* has been fulfilled, and therefore it is as if *prakṛti* no longer exists. However, *prakṛti* does not cease absolutely, because it continues to function for other beings who have not yet attained liberation.

The Gujarati SLM clarifies this point with practical reasoning. Just as a teacher continues to teach even after one student has learned the lesson, *prakṛti* continues to operate for other *puruṣas*. Liberation is individual, not collective. Therefore, *prakṛti* remains active until each individual seer attains discrimination and freedom.

4.7 Saṃyoga (Conjunction of Puruṣa and Prakṛti)

Having explained the nature of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, Patañjali now defines *saṃyoga* more precisely. This concept lies at the heart of Yogic bondage, as it explains how pure consciousness comes to appear bound by experience.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

स्वस्वामिशक्त्योः स्वरूपोपलब्धिहेतुः संयोगः ॥ २३ ॥

IAST

sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ svarūpa-upalabdhi-hetuḥ saṃyogaḥ || 23 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sva = own
svāmi = master (the seer)
śaktyoḥ = of the powers
svarūpa = true nature
upalabdhi = realization
hetuḥ = cause
saṃyogaḥ = conjunction

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Conjunction is the cause for realization of the true nature of the powers of the seer and the seen.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *saṃyoga* is the conjunction of the power of seeing (*puruṣa*) and the power of being seen (*prakṛti*). Through this conjunction, both the seer and the seen come to be known in their respective forms. Although *saṃyoga* is the cause of bondage when accompanied by ignorance, it also plays a role in the process of liberation by enabling experience and discrimination.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *saṃyoga* should not be understood as a physical union. It is a cognitive association arising from ignorance (*avidyā*). Because of this association, consciousness appears to be affected by the activities of the mind. When discrimination is absent, *saṃyoga* results in suffering. When discrimination arises, the same conjunction becomes a means for recognizing the distinct nature of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

Cause of Saṃyoga

Patañjali now identifies the root cause of this conjunction.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तस्य हेतुरविद्या ॥ २४ ॥

IAST

tasya hetur avidyā || 24 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tasya = of that (saṃyoga)

hetuḥ = cause

avidyā = ignorance

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Ignorance is the cause of conjunction.

Explanation

Patañjali clearly states that *avidyā* is the sole cause of *saṃyoga*. Because of ignorance, the seer fails to recognize its own pure nature and mistakenly identifies with the seen. This misidentification leads to bondage, suffering, and repeated experience of pleasure and pain.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that when ignorance is removed through discrimination and Yogic practice, *saṃyoga* automatically dissolves. There is no need to forcibly separate *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*; they were never truly united. The appearance of union exists only due to ignorance. Therefore, removal of *avidyā* becomes the central task of Yogic discipline.

4.8 Hāna (Cessation of Suffering)

After explaining *heya* (future suffering) and its cause (*saṃyoga* arising from *avidyā*), Patañjali now defines *hāna*, the complete cessation of suffering. This concept represents the goal of Yogic practice and the state of liberation.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तदभावात् संयोगाभावो हानं तद्दृशेः कैवल्यम् ॥ २५ ॥

IAST

tad-abhāvāt saṃyoga-abhāvo hānaṃ tad-dṛśeḥ kaivalyam || 25 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tat-abhāvāt = from the absence of that (ignorance)
saṃyoga-abhāvaḥ = absence of conjunction
hānam = cessation or removal
tat-dṛśeḥ = for that seer (puruṣa)
kaivalyam = liberation or absolute independence

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

From the absence of ignorance arises the absence of conjunction; this is cessation, which is liberation for the seer.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *hāna* occurs when *avidyā* is completely removed. With the removal of ignorance, the false conjunction (*saṃyoga*) between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* automatically ceases. This cessation is not the destruction of anything real, but the dissolution of a false appearance created by ignorance.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *hāna* is synonymous with *kaivalya*, the state of absolute independence of *puruṣa*. In this state, consciousness abides in its own true nature, free from

identification with the mind, body, and external objects. Pleasure and pain no longer bind the seer, because experience is no longer mistaken for the self.

The explanation emphasizes that *kaivalya* is not a state created by practice; it is the natural condition of *puruṣa* revealed when ignorance is removed. Yogic practice removes obstacles rather than producing liberation. Thus, *hāna* represents the culmination of the Yogic path, where future suffering is permanently eliminated.

4.9 Means of Hāna (Viveka-khyāti)

After explaining *hāna* as the complete cessation of suffering, Patañjali now identifies the means through which this cessation is achieved. Liberation does not occur through ritual, belief, or intellectual speculation alone. It arises through a specific form of knowledge known as *viveka-khyāti*.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

विवेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः ॥ २६ ॥

IAST

viveka-khyātir aviplavā hānopāyaḥ || 26 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

viveka = discrimination
khyātiḥ = clear knowledge or insight
aviplavā = uninterrupted or unerring
hāna-upāyaḥ = means of cessation

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Uninterrupted discriminative knowledge is the means for cessation of suffering.

Explanation

Patañjali states that *viveka-khyāti*—clear and continuous discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*—is the direct means of *hāna*. This discrimination is not momentary or intellectual. It is stable, irreversible, and free from confusion (*aviplavā*). Once such discrimination arises, ignorance cannot return.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *viveka-khyāti* is the culmination of sustained Yogic practice. Through repeated observation, discipline, and meditation, the practitioner gradually gains insight into the distinct nature of the seer and the seen. When this insight becomes firm and uninterrupted, false identification dissolves automatically.

The explanation emphasizes that liberation is not achieved by suppressing experience but by understanding it correctly. When the seer is clearly recognized as distinct from the mind and its modifications, *saṃyoga* ceases. Thus, *viveka-khyāti* functions as the decisive instrument that removes ignorance and establishes the seer in its own true nature.

4.10 Seven Stages of Prajñā

After identifying *viveka-khyāti* as the means of *hāna*, Patañjali explains the progressive development of Yogic wisdom (*prajñā*). This wisdom unfolds in seven distinct stages, marking the gradual dissolution of ignorance and the stabilization of liberation. These stages represent the highest refinement of the Yogic intellect.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तस्य सप्तधा प्रान्तभूमिः प्रज्ञा ॥ २७ ॥

IAST

tasya saptadhā prānta-bhūmiḥ prajñā || 27 ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tasya = of that (viveka-khyāti)
saptadhā = sevenfold
prānta-bhūmiḥ = ultimate stages or grounds
prajñā = wisdom or higher knowledge

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

For that discriminative knowledge, wisdom develops through seven ultimate stages.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that when *viveka-khyāti* becomes firm and uninterrupted, Yogic wisdom unfolds in seven stages. These stages represent progressive freedom from ignorance and bondage. The Gujarati SLM classifies these stages into two broad categories: **four stages of**

liberation related to action (*kārya-vimukti*) and **three stages related to the mind (*citta-vimukti*)**.

(A) Four Stages of Kārya-vimukti (Freedom from Action)

1. **First Stage**
   In this stage, the practitioner realizes that the purpose of suffering has been fulfilled. The causes of future suffering have been weakened, and ignorance no longer produces new bondage.
2. **Second Stage**
   The practitioner recognizes that the *kleśas* have been destroyed at their root. Actions arising from ignorance no longer arise, and the accumulation of new *karmāśaya* ceases.
3. **Third Stage**
   In this stage, past actions lose their binding power. Although impressions may remain due to previous momentum, they no longer produce suffering or future births.
4. **Fourth Stage**
   The practitioner attains complete freedom from action. No new karma is generated, and the cycle of cause and effect no longer binds consciousness.

(B) Three Stages of Citta-vimukti (Freedom of the Mind)

5. **Fifth Stage**
   The mind becomes completely purified and no longer projects ignorance. Mental modifications subside naturally, and clarity becomes stable.
6. **Sixth Stage**
   The mind loses all tendencies toward distraction or identification. Discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* remains constant and unbroken.
7. **Seventh Stage**
   In the final stage, the mind rests in complete quiescence. The seer abides permanently in its own true nature. This stage represents *kaivalya*, absolute independence and liberation.

According to the Gujarati SLM, these seven stages do not arise suddenly but develop gradually through sustained Yogic practice. Each stage represents a deeper level of insight and freedom. When the seventh stage is attained, the purpose of Yogic discipline is fulfilled, and future suffering is permanently eliminated.

4.11 Summary

In this unit, a comprehensive Yogic analysis of suffering and liberation was presented. It was explained that *heya* refers only to future suffering, which can be prevented through right understanding and practice. The cause of such suffering (*heya-hetu*) was identified as the conjunction (*saṃyoga*) of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, arising from ignorance (*avidyā*). The nature of *prakṛti* (*dṛśya*) was examined in terms of its guṇas and evolutionary states, showing how it functions as both the field of experience and the means of liberation.

The nature of *puruṣa* as pure consciousness was clarified, along with the purpose of *dṛśya* and the logic of experience. The concepts of *saṃyoga*, *hāna* (cessation of suffering), and *kaivalya* were explained systematically. The unit emphasized *viveka-khyāti* as the decisive means of liberation and described the seven stages of Yogic *prajñā*, culminating in complete freedom and independence of the seer. Overall, the unit presented a coherent philosophical pathway from suffering to liberation as outlined by Patañjali.

4.12 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of *heya* and clarify why only future suffering is considered *heya*.
2. Describe *heya-hetu* and explain how *saṃyoga* leads to suffering.
3. Explain the nature of *prakṛti* (*dṛśya*) with reference to its guṇas and states.
4. Discuss the nature of *puruṣa* and its distinction from *prakṛti*.
5. Explain *hāna* and *kaivalya* according to Patañjali.
6. Describe *viveka-khyāti* as the means of liberation.
7. Explain the seven stages of Yogic *prajñā*.

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by *heya*?
2. Define *saṃyoga*.

3. What is the purpose of *dṛśya*?
4. What is *viveka-khyāti*?
5. What is meant by *kaivalya*?

(C) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. Future suffering is known as _____.
2. The cause of suffering is the conjunction of _____ and _____.
3. The three *guṇas* of *prakṛti* are _____, _____, and _____.
4. Liberation is achieved through _____ knowledge.
5. The seven stages of wisdom are known as stages of _____.

UNIT-5: Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

Structure of the Unit

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Aṣṭāṅga Yoga – Meaning and Concept

- 5.3.1 Meaning of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga
- 5.3.2 Eight Limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (Overview)

5.4 Yama (Ethical Discipline)

- 5.4.1 Meaning of Yama
- 5.4.2 Five Yamas
  - (a) Ahiṃsā
  - (b) Satya
  - (c) Asteya
  - (d) Brahmacarya
  - (e) Aparigraha

5.5 Niyama (Personal Discipline)

- 5.5.1 Meaning of Niyama
- 5.5.2 Five Niyamas
  - (a) Śauca
  - (b) Santoṣa
  - (c) Tapaḥ
  - (d) Svādhyāya
  - (e) Īśvara-praṇidhāna

5.6 Āsana

- 5.6.1 Meaning and Definition of Āsana
- 5.6.2 Characteristics of Āsana

5.7 Prāṇāyāma

- 5.7.1 Meaning of Prāṇāyāma
- 5.7.2 Process of Prāṇāyāma

5.8 Pratyāhāra
5.8.1 Meaning of Pratyāhāra
5.8.2 Importance of Pratyāhāra
5.9 Dhāraṇā
5.10 Dhyāna
5.11 Samādhi
5.12 Summary
5.13 Check Your Progress

5.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

• Understand the concept and structure of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga as propounded by Maharṣi Patañjali.
• Identify and explain the eight limbs of Yoga in their correct sequential order.
• Explain the nature and types of **Yama** and **Niyama**.
• Understand the meaning, nature, and significance of **Āsana**, **Prāṇāyāma**, and **Pratyāhāra**.
• Develop a conceptual foundation for the inner limbs of Yoga leading toward Samādhi.

5.2 Introduction

In the previous units, various means for the removal of *kleśas* and attainment of liberation were explained, such as *Kriyāyoga*, *abhyāsa*, and *vairāgya*. Maharṣi Patañjali presents Yoga as a systematic, scientific, and practical discipline aimed at the realization of the Self and attainment of liberation (*kaivalya*).

Patañjali's Yogic system is not limited to renunciation or ascetic life alone. It is equally relevant for householders and individuals engaged in worldly responsibilities. Yoga provides practical methods for mental discipline, ethical purification, and spiritual progress suitable for everyday life.

Yoga has its own philosophy and psychology. It is fundamentally a path of *sādhana*—a disciplined method of practice. Through sustained practice, Yoga gradually leads the aspirant from ordinary consciousness to higher states culminating in Samādhi and liberation.

The most significant contribution of Patañjali is the systematic presentation of **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga**, the eightfold path of Yoga. It is called Aṣṭāṅga Yoga because it consists of eight interconnected limbs. These limbs guide the practitioner step-by-step from ethical conduct to the highest meditative absorption.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga begins with **Yama** and **Niyama**, which establish moral and personal discipline. It then proceeds through **Āsana**, **Prāṇāyāma**, and **Pratyāhāra**, which prepare the body and mind. Finally, the inner limbs—**Dhāraṇā**, **Dhyāna**, and **Samādhi**—lead the practitioner toward deep concentration and liberation.

Thus, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga represents the royal path (*rāja-mārga*) for freedom from mental afflictions and realization of the true nature of the Self.

5.3 Aṣṭāṅga Yoga – Meaning and Concept

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is the systematic eightfold path of Yoga propounded by Maharṣi Patañjali. It presents Yoga not merely as meditation, but as a complete discipline of life that integrates ethical conduct, physical discipline, mental control, and spiritual realization. The term "Aṣṭāṅga" literally means "eight limbs," indicating that Yoga is composed of eight interconnected components that together lead the practitioner toward liberation.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga provides a gradual and scientific method for purification of body, mind, and intellect. Each limb supports and strengthens the others. When practiced in the proper sequence, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga leads the aspirant from outward discipline to inward realization.

5.3.1 Meaning of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

The word *Aṣṭāṅga* is derived from two Sanskrit words: *aṣṭa* meaning eight, and *aṅga* meaning limb or part. Thus, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga refers to the Yogic path consisting of eight limbs. These limbs together constitute a complete framework for Yogic practice.

According to Yogic philosophy, human suffering arises due to lack of discipline, ignorance, and uncontrolled mental tendencies. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga addresses these problems step by step. It begins with ethical restraints (*yama*) and personal observances (*niyama*), which purify conduct and attitude. It then proceeds to physical and physiological discipline through *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*. Control of the senses is achieved through *pratyāhāra*. Finally, mental concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and deep absorption (*samādhi*) lead to liberation.

Thus, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is both practical and philosophical. It is meant not only for ascetics but also for householders who wish to live a disciplined, balanced, and meaningful life.

5.3.2 Eight Limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (Overview)

Maharṣi Patañjali clearly enumerates the eight limbs of Yoga in the Yoga-Sūtras.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ॥

IAST

yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo’ṣṭāv aṅgāni ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

yama = moral restraints

niyama = personal observances

āsana = posture

prāṇāyāma = regulation of breath

pratyāhāra = withdrawal of senses

dhāraṇā = concentration

dhyāna = meditation

samādhi = deep absorption

aṅgāni = limbs

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi are the eight limbs of Yoga.

Explanation

The eight limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga are arranged in a logical and progressive order. The first five limbs are known as *bahiraṅga yoga* (external disciplines), as they deal primarily with behavior, body, breathe, and senses. The last three limbs are called *antaraṅga yoga* (internal disciplines), as they deal directly with the mind and consciousness.

Each limb prepares the practitioner for the next. Without ethical discipline, higher Yogic practices become unstable. Without bodily and respiratory control, mental concentration becomes difficult. Therefore, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga emphasizes balanced and integrated development rather than isolated practice.

5.4 Yama (Ethical Discipline)

In Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, *Yama* forms the first and most fundamental limb. It lays the ethical foundation for the entire Yogic path. Without moral discipline, higher Yogic practices cannot be sustained. Therefore, Patañjali places *Yama* at the beginning of the eightfold path.

Yama refers to self-restraint and regulation of behaviour in relation to others. It governs social conduct and ensures harmony between the individual and society. According to Yogic philosophy, ethical purification is essential for mental stability and spiritual growth.

5.4.1 Meaning of Yama

The word *Yama* means restraint, control, or discipline. In Yoga, it signifies conscious regulation of actions, speech, and thoughts. *Yama* is not merely a moral code imposed from outside; it is an inner discipline adopted voluntarily for self-purification.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Yama* is universal in nature. It is applicable to all individuals irrespective of time, place, caste, class, or stage of life. By practicing *Yama*, the aspirant develops self-control, compassion, and inner harmony, which are essential for progress in Yoga.

Patañjali defines *Yama* as a set of five ethical restraints that guide human conduct and prevent harm to oneself and others.

5.4.2 Five Yamas

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥

IAST

ahiṃsā-satya-asteya-brahmacarya-aparigrahā yamāḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

ahiṃsā = non-violence

satya = truthfulness

asteya = non-stealing

brahmacarya = continence or self-restraint

aparigraha = non-possessiveness
yamāḥ = ethical restraints

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)
Non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-possessiveness are the Yamas.

Explanation

Patañjali enumerates five *Yamas* that collectively regulate ethical conduct. These principles restrain harmful tendencies and cultivate moral purity. According to the Gujarati SLM, the observance of *Yamas* reduces mental disturbances and prepares the practitioner for higher Yogic disciplines.

The *Yamas* are not merely moral ideals but practical disciplines that directly influence mental peace. When ethical conflicts are reduced, the mind becomes calmer and more receptive to concentration and meditation. Thus, *Yama* serves as the essential groundwork for the entire structure of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

5.4.2 (a) Ahiṃsā (Non-violence)

Ahiṃsā is the first and most important of the five *Yamas*. It forms the moral foundation of Yogic life. The word *ahiṃsā* literally means the absence of violence or harm. In Yogic philosophy, *ahiṃsā* signifies complete non-injury in thought, word, and action.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *ahiṃsā* is not limited to physical non-violence alone. It also includes non-violence at the mental and verbal levels. Harboring hatred, ill-will, anger, or harmful intentions toward others is considered a subtle form of violence. Therefore, the practice of *ahiṃsā* requires cultivation of compassion, tolerance, and goodwill.

Maharṣi Patañjali emphasizes the transformative power of *ahiṃsā*. When a practitioner becomes firmly established in non-violence, hostility in the surrounding environment naturally diminishes. This indicates that *ahiṃsā* has both personal and social significance. It purifies the mind and creates harmony in interpersonal relationships.

The Gujarati SLM explains that *ahiṃsā* is the root of all other ethical virtues. Truthfulness, non-stealing, self-restraint, and non-possessiveness naturally arise when non-violence is practiced sincerely. Thus, *ahiṃsā* is regarded as the highest moral discipline in Yoga.

For a Yogic aspirant, practicing *ahiṃsā* is essential not only for ethical living but also for mental peace. A mind free from violence and aggression becomes calm and stable, making it fit for concentration and meditation. Hence, *ahiṃsā* occupies a central place in Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

5.4.2 (b) Satya (Truthfulness)

Satya is the second *Yama* and refers to truthfulness in thought, speech, and action. The word *satya* is derived from *sat*, meaning that which is real or true. In Yogic philosophy, *satya* signifies alignment of one's inner thoughts with spoken words and outward actions.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *satya* does not mean merely speaking factual truth. Truth must be expressed with wisdom, responsibility, and compassion. Speaking truth in a manner that causes harm or violence contradicts the principle of *ahiṃsā*. Therefore, *satya* must always be practiced in harmony with non-violence.

Practicing *satya* leads to inner clarity and moral strength. When a person is truthful, the mind becomes free from fear, guilt, and confusion. This mental purity supports concentration and steadiness, which are essential for Yogic progress. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that untruth disturbs the mind and weakens spiritual discipline.

Maharṣi Patañjali highlights the spiritual power of *satya*. When a practitioner becomes firmly established in truthfulness, words acquire the power of effectiveness. Such a person's statements become reliable and trustworthy, reflecting inner integrity.

Thus, *satya* is not merely a social virtue but a spiritual discipline. It purifies the mind, strengthens character, and prepares the aspirant for higher stages of Yoga. Without truthfulness, sustained progress on the Yogic path is not possible.

5.4.2 (c) Asteya (Non-stealing)

Asteya is the third *Yama* and means non-stealing. The word *asteya* literally signifies refraining from taking what does not belong to oneself. In Yogic philosophy, *asteya* extends beyond physical theft and includes subtle forms of dishonesty such as exploitation, deception, and misuse of others' time, energy, or resources.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *asteya* involves cultivating a sense of contentment and respect for the rights of others. Desire to possess what belongs to another arises from greed, insecurity,

and dissatisfaction. Such tendencies disturb the mind and obstruct spiritual progress. By practicing *asteya,* the aspirant develops inner purity and ethical strength.

The practice of *asteya* requires honesty in thought, speech, and action. Even mentally desiring another's possessions or advantages is considered a subtle form of stealing. Therefore, *asteya* demands vigilance over one's desires and intentions. This discipline reduces mental agitation and fosters inner peace.

Maharṣi Patañjali points out that when *asteya* is firmly established, all forms of wealth and prosperity naturally come to the practitioner. The Gujarati SLM explains that this does not imply material gain alone, but also richness of character, trust, and goodwill from others.

Thus, *asteya* is an important ethical discipline that purifies the mind, strengthens moral conduct, and prepares the aspirant for higher Yogic practices. By eliminating greed and dishonesty, *asteya* supports the cultivation of contentment and stability necessary for spiritual growth.

5.4.2 (d) Brahmacarya (Continence / Self-restraint)

Brahmacarya is the fourth *Yama* and refers to continence or disciplined self-restraint. The term *brahmacarya* literally means "conduct that leads to Brahman," that is, behavior that supports higher awareness and spiritual growth. In Yogic philosophy, *brahmacarya* signifies regulation and conservation of vital energy through moderation in thought, speech, and action.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *brahmacarya* should not be understood narrowly as physical celibacy alone. It has a broader meaning that includes control over the senses, moderation in pleasures, and disciplined use of physical and mental energy. Excessive indulgence in sense pleasures leads to dissipation of energy and disturbance of the mind, which hinders Yogic practice.

The practice of *brahmacarya* strengthens physical vitality, mental clarity, and emotional balance. When energy is conserved and directed properly, the mind becomes steady and capable of concentration. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *brahmacarya* supports the development of inner strength and moral stability.

Maharṣi Patañjali highlights the positive outcome of *brahmacarya*. When a practitioner becomes firmly established in self-restraint, great vigor and strength arise. This strength is not merely physical but also mental and spiritual, enabling the aspirant to progress steadily on the Yogic path.

Thus, *brahmacarya* is an essential ethical discipline that purifies conduct, conserves energy, and prepares the practitioner for higher stages of Yoga. Through balanced living and self-control, *brahmacarya* contributes significantly to inner harmony and spiritual advancement.

5.4.2 (e) Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)

Aparigraha is the fifth and final *Yama*. It means non-possessiveness or non-accumulation. The word *aparigraha* signifies freedom from greed and excessive desire for material possessions. In Yogic philosophy, *aparigraha* emphasizes simplicity of life and detachment from unnecessary accumulation.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *aparigraha* does not imply complete renunciation of all material objects. Rather, it advocates possessing only what is necessary for a simple and balanced life. Excessive attachment to wealth, objects, or status creates mental burden and anxiety, which obstruct spiritual progress. By practicing *aparigraha*, the aspirant reduces dependence on external possessions.

The practice of *aparigraha* also includes freedom from psychological possessiveness. Attachment to people, ideas, achievements, or recognition can bind the mind as strongly as attachment to material objects. Therefore, *aparigraha* requires cultivation of inner detachment and contentment.

Maharṣi Patañjali highlights the deeper result of *aparigraha*. When a practitioner becomes firmly established in non-possessiveness, knowledge of past and future lives arises naturally. The Gujarati SLM explains that this knowledge comes from freedom from attachment, which clears the mind and sharpens insight.

Thus, *aparigraha* is an important ethical discipline that fosters simplicity, clarity, and inner freedom. By reducing greed and attachment, it prepares the mind for concentration and meditation, completing the ethical foundation of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

5.5 Niyama (Personal Discipline)

After explaining *Yama*, which governs ethical conduct in relation to others, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Niyama* as the second limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Niyama* refers to personal discipline and inner observances that regulate an individual's life and conduct. While *Yama* focuses on social harmony, *Niyama* emphasizes self-purification and self-development.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Niyama* plays a crucial role in strengthening the moral and mental foundation of the Yogic aspirant. Without inner discipline, ethical restraints alone are insufficient for spiritual progress. *Niyama* cultivates positive attitudes, mental purity, and devotion, which support higher Yogic practices.

5.5.1 Meaning of Niyama

The word *Niyama* means observance, rule, or discipline. In Yoga, it refers to voluntary practices adopted by the aspirant for inner purification and spiritual growth. *Niyama* guides personal habits, attitudes, and inner orientation toward life.

The Gujarati SLM explains that *Niyama* is not imposed externally but is practiced willingly for self-improvement. Through *Niyama*, the aspirant develops cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender to the divine. These qualities purify the mind and prepare it for concentration and meditation.

Patañjali enumerates five *Niyamas*, which together constitute the framework of personal discipline in Yoga.

5.5.2 Five Niyamas

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥

IAST

śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

śauca = cleanliness or purity

santoṣa = contentment

tapaḥ = discipline or austerity

svādhyāya = self-study

īśvara-praṇidhāna = surrender to God

niyamāḥ = personal observances

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Cleanliness, contentment, discipline, self-study, and surrender to God are the Niyamas.

Explanation

The five *Niyamas* guide the aspirant toward inner purification and spiritual orientation. According to the Gujarati SLM, these observances help remove inner impurities and cultivate a balanced and disciplined life. Together with *Yamas*, *Niyamas* form the ethical and personal foundation of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, without which higher Yogic practices cannot be sustained.

5.5.2 (a) Śauca (Cleanliness / Purity)

Śauca is the first *Niyama* and refers to cleanliness or purity. In Yogic philosophy, *śauca* includes both external and internal purity. It emphasizes maintaining cleanliness of the body as well as purity of the mind.

According to the Gujarati SLM, **external purity** involves cleanliness of the body, surroundings, food, and daily habits. Cleanliness of the body supports health and discipline, which are necessary for Yogic practice. A clean environment and pure food contribute to physical well-being and mental clarity.

Internal purity is considered more important than external cleanliness. It involves purification of thoughts, emotions, and intentions. Negative emotions such as anger, jealousy, hatred, and greed are regarded as impurities of the mind. Through self-awareness, right conduct, and disciplined living, these impurities are gradually removed.

The Gujarati SLM explains that the practice of *śauca* leads to clarity of mind and inner balance. When the mind becomes pure, attachment toward the body and sense pleasures decreases. This prepares the aspirant for concentration and meditation.

Thus, *śauca* is an essential personal discipline that purifies both body and mind. By cultivating cleanliness and purity, the Yogic aspirant lays a strong foundation for higher stages of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

5.5.2 (b) Santoṣa (Contentment)

Santoṣa is the second *Niyama* and signifies contentment or satisfaction. In Yogic philosophy, *santoṣa* refers to a state of inner acceptance and peace, irrespective of external circumstances. It is the ability to remain satisfied with what one has, without excessive desire for more.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *santoṣa* does not mean inactivity or lack of effort. Rather, it means performing one's duties sincerely while remaining free from greed, dissatisfaction, and constant craving. Discontentment gives rise to mental unrest, jealousy, and frustration, which disturb inner balance and hinder spiritual progress.

The practice of *santoṣa* cultivates mental stability and emotional maturity. When contentment is developed, the mind becomes calm and less dependent on external achievements or possessions. This inner calm supports concentration and meditation, which are essential for higher Yogic practices.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *santoṣa* leads to happiness that is independent of external conditions. Such happiness is stable and enduring, unlike pleasure derived from material objects. By practicing *santoṣa*, the Yogic aspirant learns to face life's situations with equanimity and balance.

Thus, *santoṣa* is an important personal discipline that fosters inner peace, reduces mental agitation, and prepares the mind for deeper stages of Yoga.

5.5.2 (c) Tapaḥ (Discipline / Austerity)

Tapaḥ is the third *Niyama* and refers to discipline or austerity. In Yogic philosophy, *tapaḥ* signifies conscious effort and self-discipline undertaken to purify the body and mind. The term *tapas* is derived from the root *tap*, meaning "to heat" or "to purify," indicating the process of removing impurities through disciplined practice.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *tapaḥ* does not imply self-torture or extreme physical hardship. Rather, it involves regulated living, self-control, and endurance of minor discomforts for the sake of spiritual growth. Observing regular routines, controlling desires, and practicing moderation in food, sleep, and habits are considered forms of *tapaḥ*.

The practice of *tapaḥ* strengthens willpower and determination. When the aspirant willingly accepts discipline, laziness and negligence are gradually overcome. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *tapaḥ* generates inner strength and prepares the practitioner to face challenges without mental disturbance.

Through *tapaḥ*, both physical and mental impurities are reduced. A disciplined lifestyle leads to clarity of mind and stability of character. Thus, *tapaḥ* plays a vital role in personal purification and supports progress in higher Yogic practices such as concentration and meditation.

5.5.2 (d) Svādhyāya (Self-study)

Svādhyāya is the fourth *Niyama* and refers to self-study or study of sacred and meaningful texts. The word *svādhyāya* is derived from *sva* (self) and *adhyāya* (study), indicating study undertaken for self-understanding and inner growth. In Yogic philosophy, *svādhyāya* includes both intellectual study and reflective self-examination.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *svādhyāya* primarily involves the study of scriptures, philosophical texts, and teachings related to Yoga and spirituality. Such study provides right knowledge and guidance, helping the aspirant understand the nature of the self, the mind, and the path of liberation. It also includes repetition and contemplation of sacred mantras, which purify the mind and focus attention.

The practice of *svādhyāya* encourages introspection. By observing one's thoughts, emotions, and behavior, the aspirant becomes aware of strengths and weaknesses. This self-awareness supports moral refinement and spiritual discipline. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that without *svādhyāya*, Yogic practice may become mechanical or misguided.

Through regular self-study, clarity of understanding develops and ignorance is reduced. *Svādhyāya* thus bridges knowledge and practice, guiding the aspirant toward right effort and correct orientation on the Yogic path. It prepares the mind for devotion and surrender, which are emphasized in the next *Niyama*.

5.5.2 (e) Īśvara-praṇidhāna (Surrender to God)

Īśvara-praṇidhāna is the fifth and final *Niyama*. It refers to surrender or dedication of all actions to Īśvara (the Supreme Reality or God). In Yogic philosophy, *īśvara-praṇidhāna*

signifies offering one's actions, efforts, and their results to a higher principle, without ego or attachment.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* does not necessarily imply adherence to any particular religious belief. Rather, it represents an attitude of humility, trust, and devotion. The practitioner acknowledges the limitations of the ego and recognizes a higher order governing life. This attitude reduces pride, anxiety, and excessive self-centeredness.

The practice of *īśvara-praṇidhāna* helps in dissolving egoism (*ahaṃkāra*), which is a major obstacle in Yogic practice. When actions are performed with surrender, the burden of doership diminishes, and the mind becomes calm and receptive. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that surrender brings inner peace and mental stability.

Maharṣi Patañjali highlights the spiritual importance of *īśvara-praṇidhāna* by indicating that devotion and surrender facilitate concentration and meditative absorption. Through surrender, the aspirant develops faith, patience, and equanimity.

Thus, *īśvara-praṇidhāna* completes the framework of *Niyama*. Along with *śauca*, *santoṣa*, *tapaḥ*, and *svādhyāya*, it purifies the inner life of the aspirant and prepares the mind for the higher limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

5.6 Āsana

After explaining *Yama* and *Niyama*, which establish ethical and personal discipline, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Āsana* as the third limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Āsana* refers to posture or bodily position adopted for Yogic practice. In the Yogic system, *Āsana* serves as a preparatory discipline that enables stability of the body and mind.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Āsana* is not merely physical exercise. Its primary purpose is to prepare the body for prolonged sitting in meditation. A stable and comfortable posture reduces physical discomfort and mental restlessness, thereby supporting concentration and inner awareness.

5.6.1 Meaning and Definition of Āsana

The word *Āsana* literally means "a seat" or "a posture." In Yoga, it refers to a steady and comfortable bodily position maintained with ease.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

स्थिरसुखमासनम् ॥

IAST

sthira-sukham āsanam ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sthira = steady or firm

sukham = comfortable or pleasant

āsanam = posture

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Āsana is that posture which is steady and comfortable.

Explanation

Patañjali defines *Āsana* as a posture that is both stable and comfortable. The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that excessive strain or discomfort contradicts the true purpose of *Āsana*. A posture should be firm enough to maintain steadiness and relaxed enough to avoid tension.

When the body is steady and free from discomfort, the mind naturally becomes calm. Thus, *Āsana* acts as a bridge between external discipline and internal concentration. It enables the practitioner to remain motionless for longer periods without disturbance.

5.6.2 Characteristics of Āsana

According to the Gujarati SLM, a proper Yogic *Āsana* possesses the following characteristics:

- It provides physical stability and balance.
- It can be maintained comfortably for a long duration.
- It minimizes bodily strain and fatigue.
- It supports mental calmness and alertness.
- It prepares the body for higher Yogic practices such as *prāṇāyāma* and meditation.

The SLM further explains that through regular practice of *Āsana*, the practitioner develops physical discipline, flexibility, and endurance. At the same time, attachment to bodily comfort gradually decreases. This helps in overcoming restlessness and distraction during meditation.

Thus, *Āsana* is an essential limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga that harmonizes the body and mind, creating a strong foundation for the subsequent practices of *Prāṇāyāma* and *Pratyāhāra*.

5.7 Prāṇāyāma

After *Āsana*, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Prāṇāyāma* as the fourth limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Prāṇāyāma* refers to the regulation and control of *prāṇa*, the vital life force that operates through the breath. In Yogic philosophy, breath and mind are closely interconnected; therefore, control of breath leads to control of the mind.

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Prāṇāyāma* plays a crucial role in purifying the nervous system and stabilizing mental activity. When breathing becomes rhythmic and regulated, mental restlessness gradually diminishes, making the mind fit for concentration and meditation.

5.7.1 Meaning of Prāṇāyāma

The word *Prāṇāyāma* is composed of two parts: *prāṇa*, meaning vital energy or life force, and *āyāma*, meaning expansion or regulation. Thus, *Prāṇāyāma* signifies the disciplined regulation and expansion of vital energy through controlled breathing.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तस्मिन् सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥

IAST

tasmin sati śvāsa-praśvāsayoḥ gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tasmin sati = after mastering āsana

śvāsa = inhalation

praśvāsa = exhalation

gati = movement

vicchedaḥ = regulation or control

prāṇāyāmaḥ = regulation of prāṇa

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

After mastery of āsana, regulation of the movement of inhalation and exhalation is prāṇāyāma.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that *Prāṇāyāma* begins only after stability in *Āsana* is achieved. Once the body becomes steady, the practitioner regulates the natural flow of inhalation and exhalation. This regulation does not mean forceful suppression of breath but conscious and gradual control.

The Gujarati SLM emphasizes that *Prāṇāyāma* purifies internal channels (*nāḍīs*) and enhances the flow of vital energy. As the breath becomes subtle and controlled, mental distractions reduce, and the mind becomes calm and focused.

5.7.2 Process of Prāṇāyāma

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Prāṇāyāma* involves three primary aspects:

- **Inhalation (Pūraka)** – controlled intake of breath
- **Exhalation (Recaka)** – controlled release of breath
- **Retention (Kumbhaka)** – holding the breath between inhalation and exhalation

These stages of breathing are practiced gradually and systematically. Regular practice of *Prāṇāyāma* strengthens respiratory capacity, balances energy flow, and improves mental discipline.

The SLM clarifies that *Prāṇāyāma* should always be practiced with proper guidance and moderation. Improper or excessive practice may lead to physical or mental imbalance. When practiced correctly, *Prāṇāyāma* prepares the practitioner for the next limb of Yoga, *Pratyāhāra*, by reducing dependence on external sensory stimuli.

5.8 Pratyāhāra

After *Prāṇāyāma*, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Pratyāhāra* as the fifth limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Pratyāhāra* serves as a bridge between the external disciplines (*bahiraṅga yoga*) and the internal disciplines (*antaraṅga yoga*). It marks the transition from regulation of body and breath to mastery over the senses and the mind.

According to the Gujarati SLM, the senses naturally move outward toward their respective objects. This outward movement keeps the mind engaged with the external world and prevents inner concentration. *Pratyāhāra* reverses this tendency by withdrawing the senses from their objects and directing them inward.

5.8.1 Meaning of Pratyāhāra

The word *Pratyāhāra* is derived from *prati* (against or back) and *āhāra* (that which is taken in). Thus, *Pratyāhāra* means withdrawal or drawing back of the senses from external objects.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

स्वविषयासंप्रयोगे चित्तस्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ॥

IAST

sva-viṣaya-asaṃprayoge citta-svarūpa-anukāra iva indriyāṇāṃ pratyāhāraḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

sva-viṣaya = their own objects

asaṃprayoge = non-contact or withdrawal

citta = mind

svarūpa = own nature

anukāraḥ = imitation or following

iva = as if

indriyāṇām = of the senses

pratyāhāraḥ = withdrawal

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

When the senses withdraw from their objects and follow the nature of the mind, it is called pratyāhāra.

Explanation

Patañjali explains that in *Pratyāhāra*, the senses no longer engage with their respective objects. Instead, they follow the direction of the mind. This does not mean suppression of the senses but conscious control over their activity. When the mind withdraws inward, the senses also withdraw, as if imitating the nature of the mind.

The Gujarati SLM clarifies that *Pratyāhāra* helps reduce sensory distractions and external disturbances. When sensory inputs are controlled, mental restlessness decreases, and the practitioner gains inner quietness.

5.8.2 Importance of Pratyāhāra

According to the Gujarati SLM, *Pratyāhāra* plays a crucial role in Yogic practice. Without control of the senses, concentration and meditation are not possible. *Pratyāhāra* protects the mind from being constantly pulled outward by sensory attractions.

Through regular practice of *Pratyāhāra*, the aspirant gains mastery over the senses. Desire and aversion gradually weaken, and the mind becomes inward-focused. This inner orientation prepares the practitioner for *Dhāraṇā* (concentration), which is the next limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

Thus, *Pratyāhāra* marks a significant turning point on the Yogic path. It connects external discipline with inner practice and lays the foundation for deeper mental absorption and spiritual realization.

5.9 Dhāraṇā (Concentration)

After the practice of *Pratyāhāra*, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Dhāraṇā* as the sixth limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Dhāraṇā* marks the beginning of the inner limbs (*antaraṅga yoga*), where Yogic practice becomes primarily mental rather than physical or external. In Yoga, *Dhāraṇā* refers to the disciplined practice of fixing the mind on a chosen object.

The human mind is naturally restless and tends to wander continuously from one thought to another. Without developing concentration, higher Yogic practices such as meditation and samādhi cannot be attained. *Dhāraṇā* trains the mind to remain steady, focused, and attentive.

Meaning of Dhāraṇā

The word *Dhāraṇā* is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhṛ*, which means “to hold” or “to sustain.” In Yogic practice, *Dhāraṇā* signifies holding the mind steadily on a particular place, object, or idea.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)
देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥

IAST

deśa-bandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

deśa = place or object

bandhaḥ = binding or fixing

cittasya = of the mind

dhāraṇā = concentration

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Fixing the mind on a particular place or object is called dhāraṇā.

Explanation

Dhāraṇā involves intentional and sustained concentration of the mind on a chosen object. This object may be external, such as a symbol or image, or internal, such as the breath, a mantra, or a point of awareness within the body. The essential feature of *Dhāraṇā* is the deliberate effort to prevent the mind from wandering.

Through repeated practice, the mind gradually learns to return to the object of concentration whenever distraction arises. Over time, mental restlessness reduces and clarity develops. Although thoughts may still occur, their influence weakens as concentration becomes stronger.

Dhāraṇā prepares the practitioner for *Dhyāna* (meditation). When concentration becomes effortless and uninterrupted, it naturally flows into meditation. Thus, *Dhāraṇā* serves as a crucial bridge between sense control and meditative absorption, guiding the aspirant deeper into the inner path of Yoga.

5.10 Dhyāna (Meditation)

After *Dhāraṇā*, Maharṣi Patañjali introduces *Dhyāna* as the seventh limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Dhyāna* refers to the continuous and uninterrupted flow of awareness toward the object of meditation. While *Dhāraṇā* involves effortful concentration, *Dhyāna* represents a more refined state in which attention flows naturally and steadily.

In Yogic practice, meditation is not an act of thinking or imagining. It is a state of sustained awareness in which the mind remains calm, focused, and undisturbed. Through *Dhyāna*, the practitioner moves closer to inner stillness and clarity.

Meaning of Dhyāna

The term *Dhyāna* is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhyai*, meaning "to contemplate" or "to meditate." In Yoga, *Dhyāna* signifies a continuous stream of awareness toward the chosen object without interruption.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥

IAST

tatra pratyaya-ekatānatā dhyānam ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tatra = there (in that object)
pratyaya = cognition or awareness
ekatānatā = continuity or unbroken flow
dhyānam = meditation

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Meditation is the continuous flow of awareness toward the same object.

Explanation

In *Dhyāna*, awareness remains steadily focused on the object without distraction. Unlike *Dhāraṇā*, where repeated effort is required to bring the mind back, *Dhyāna* flows smoothly and effortlessly. The mind becomes calm, transparent, and deeply attentive.

As meditation deepens, the distinction between the meditator and the object begins to lessen. Thoughts subside, and the mind experiences inner silence and clarity. This state purifies mental impressions and reduces the influence of distractions.

Dhyāna is a direct means of mental purification and self-awareness. It prepares the practitioner for *Samādhi*, the highest limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, in which complete absorption takes place. Thus, *Dhyāna* represents a vital stage in the inward journey toward realization and liberation.

5.11 Samādhi (Absorption)

Samādhi is the eighth and final limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. It represents the highest stage of Yogic practice, in which the mind becomes completely absorbed in the object of meditation. In this state, all mental fluctuations subside, and pure awareness shines forth without obstruction.

While *Dhāraṇā* involves concentration and *Dhyāna* involves continuous meditation, *Samādhi* is a state of complete absorption. It is the culmination of sustained Yogic discipline and the direct means to self-realization.

Meaning of Samādhi

The word *Samādhi* is derived from *sam* (together or completely) and *dhā* (to place). Thus, *Samādhi* means placing the mind completely and perfectly upon the object of meditation.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥

IAST

tad-eva artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tat eva = that alone
artha-mātra = the object alone
nirbhāsam = shining forth
svarūpa = own form (of the mind)
śūnyam iva = as if empty
samādhiḥ = absorption

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

When only the object shines forth and the mind appears as if empty of its own form, it is called samādhi.

Explanation

In *Samādhi*, awareness becomes so completely absorbed in the object that the sense of individuality and mental activity disappears. The mind no longer projects thoughts, images, or distinctions. Only the object of meditation remains vividly present in consciousness.

This does not imply loss of awareness. On the contrary, awareness becomes pure, clear, and undisturbed. The practitioner experiences deep peace, clarity, and insight. In this state, the boundary between the meditator and the object dissolves.

Samādhi is not attained suddenly. It arises naturally through sustained practice of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*, and *Dhyāna*. Each limb prepares the practitioner for this final state of absorption.

Through *Samādhi*, ignorance is removed and true knowledge arises. It leads to liberation (*kaivalya*) by revealing the true nature of the Self. Thus, *Samādhi* represents the ultimate goal of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga and the completion of the Yogic path.

5.12 Summary

In this unit, the concept of **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga** as propounded by Maharṣi Patañjali was explained in a systematic and comprehensive manner. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga presents an eightfold path that guides the practitioner from ethical discipline to the highest state of spiritual realization. The unit highlighted that Yoga is not limited to physical postures but is a complete discipline of life involving moral, physical, mental, and spiritual development.

The unit began with an explanation of **Yama** and **Niyama**, which form the ethical and personal foundation of Yogic practice. These disciplines regulate social behavior, personal conduct, and inner attitudes, thereby purifying the mind and character. **Āsana** was explained as a steady and comfortable posture that prepares the body for meditation, followed by **Prāṇāyāma**, which regulates the vital energy through controlled breathing and stabilizes the mind.

The role of **Pratyāhāra** as withdrawal of the senses was discussed as a bridge between external and internal practices. The inner limbs of Yoga—**Dhāraṇā**, **Dhyāna**, and **Samādhi**—were then explained as progressive stages of mental concentration, meditation, and complete absorption. These stages lead to inner stillness, clarity, and realization of the true nature of the Self.

Overall, the unit emphasized that Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is a gradual and disciplined path. Through consistent practice of all eight limbs, the practitioner overcomes mental disturbances, attains self-control, and progresses toward liberation (*kaivalya*). Thus, Aṣṭāṅga Yoga represents a complete and practical framework for spiritual growth and self-realization.

5.13 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga and discuss its significance in Yogic philosophy.
2. Describe *Yama* and explain the five *Yamas* in detail.
3. Explain *Niyama* and discuss the importance of the five *Niyamas* in Yogic life.
4. Discuss the meaning and characteristics of *Āsana* according to Patañjali.
5. Explain *Prāṇāyāma* and describe its process and significance.
6. What is *Pratyāhāra*? Explain its meaning and importance in Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.
7. Describe *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi* as the inner limbs of Yoga.

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by Aṣṭāṅga Yoga?
2. Define *Yama*.
3. What is *Niyama*?
4. What is the meaning of *Āsana*?
5. Define *Prāṇāyāma*.
6. What is *Pratyāhāra*?
7. Define *Dhāraṇā*.
8. What is *Dhyāna*?
9. Define *Samādhi*.

(C) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga consists of _____ limbs.
2. *Ahiṃsā* means _____.
3. *Śauca* refers to _____.
4. Regulation of breath is known as _____.
5. Continuous flow of awareness toward an object is called _____.

UNIT-6: Aṣṭāṅga Yoga – Vibhūti Pāda

Structure of the Unit

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Dhāraṇā

6.4 Dhyāna

6.5 Samādhi

6.6 Summary

6.7 Check Your Progress

6.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

• Understand the inner limbs (*antaraṅga yoga*) of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.
• Explain the meaning and practice of **Dhāraṇā**, **Dhyāna**, and **Samādhi**.
• Distinguish clearly between concentration, meditation, and absorption.
• Understand how mastery over the mind leads toward higher Yogic realization.
• Develop conceptual clarity about *Vibhūti Pāda* in Patañjali's Yoga system.

6.2 Introduction

In the earlier units, the external limbs (*bahiraṅga yoga*) of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga—namely *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, and *Pratyāhāra*—were explained in detail. These practices prepare the body, senses, and mind for deeper Yogic discipline. Once the practitioner gains control over external behavior and sensory activity, the path opens toward the inner practices of Yoga.

This unit focuses on the **inner limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga**, which are **Dhāraṇā**, **Dhyāna**, and **Samādhi**. These three together constitute the core of *Vibhūti Pāda*. They represent progressive stages of mental mastery, beginning with concentration, moving into meditation, and culminating in complete absorption.

Pratyāhāra acts as the gateway from external to internal Yoga. Through mastery of the senses, the practitioner becomes capable of directing the mind inward. When the mind is withdrawn from external objects, it can be trained to remain steady on a chosen focus. This inner training leads gradually to profound states of awareness.

The practices described in this unit are subtle and inward in nature. They are not mechanical techniques but refined states of consciousness that arise through disciplined practice. Mastery of these inner limbs enables the practitioner to overcome mental fluctuations and move toward direct realization of truth.

Thus, *Vibhūti Pāda* explains the advanced stages of Yogic practice and highlights the transformative power of inner discipline. It shows how control over the mind leads not only to concentration and peace but ultimately to liberation.

6.3 Dhāraṇā (Concentration)

Dhāraṇā is the first of the three inner limbs (*antaraṅga yoga*) explained in *Vibhūti Pāda*. After mastery over external discipline and sensory withdrawal, the practitioner begins the inward training of the mind through concentration. *Dhāraṇā* represents the deliberate effort to fix the mind steadily on a chosen object.

In ordinary experience, the mind is unstable and constantly moves from one object to another. This instability prevents deeper awareness. *Dhāraṇā* trains the mind to remain focused, thereby reducing distraction and mental fluctuation.

Meaning of Dhāraṇā

The word *Dhāraṇā* is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhṛ*, meaning "to hold" or "to sustain." In Yoga, it refers to holding the mind firmly on a particular object or place.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

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IAST

deśa-bandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

deśa = place, point, or object
bandhaḥ = binding or fixation
cittasya = of the mind
dhāraṇā = concentration

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Fixing the mind on a particular place or object is called dhāraṇā.

Explanation

In *Dhāraṇā*, the mind is consciously bound to a single object of concentration. This object may be internal, such as the breath, a mantra, or a point of awareness within the body, or external, such as a symbol or image. The essential feature of *Dhāraṇā* is sustained attention without allowing the mind to wander.

At the initial stage, distractions may continue to arise. However, through repeated practice, the practitioner learns to gently but firmly bring the mind back to the chosen object. Gradually, the duration of focused attention increases, and mental restlessness decreases.

Dhāraṇā is not an end in itself. It serves as the foundation for deeper states of awareness. When concentration becomes steady and uninterrupted, it naturally flows into *Dhyāna* (meditation). Thus, *Dhāraṇā* marks the first step in the inward journey of *Vibhūti Pāda*, preparing the practitioner for higher Yogic realization.

6.4 Dhyāna (Meditation)

After *Dhāraṇā*, Maharṣi Patañjali explains *Dhyāna* as the next inner limb of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. *Dhyāna* represents a more refined and mature state of mental discipline. While *Dhāraṇā* involves effortful concentration, *Dhyāna* is characterized by a continuous and effortless flow of awareness toward the object of meditation.

In *Vibhūti Pāda*, *Dhyāna* is presented as a natural development of sustained concentration. When the mind remains fixed on an object for a prolonged period without distraction, concentration transforms into meditation.

Meaning of Dhyāna

The term *Dhyāna* is derived from the Sanskrit root *dhyai*, meaning “to contemplate” or “to meditate.” In Yogic practice, *Dhyāna* signifies an unbroken stream of awareness directed toward the same object.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

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IAST

tatra pratyaya-ekatānatā dhyānam ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tatra = there (in that object)

pratyaya = cognition or awareness

ekatānatā = continuity or one-pointed flow

dhyānam = meditation

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

Meditation is the continuous and unbroken flow of awareness toward the same object.

Explanation

In *Dhyāna*, awareness flows steadily toward the object of meditation without interruption. Unlike *Dhāraṇā*, where the practitioner repeatedly brings the mind back after distraction, *Dhyāna* involves effortless continuity. The mind becomes calm, focused, and free from disturbance.As meditation deepens, thoughts become fewer and less intrusive. The sense of time diminishes, and the practitioner experiences inner stillness and clarity. This state purifies mental impressions and weakens the habitual tendencies that cause distraction and suffering.

Dhyāna prepares the practitioner for *Samādhi*, the final and highest limb of Yoga. When the continuity of meditation becomes so complete that the distinction between the meditator and the object fades, meditation culminates in absorption. Thus, *Dhyāna* represents a vital stage in the inward progression of *Vibhūti Pāda* and leads directly toward Yogic realization.

6.5 Samādhi (Absorption)

Samādhi is the third and highest of the inner limbs explained in *Vibhūti Pāda*. It represents the culmination of Yogic practice, where the mind becomes completely absorbed in the object of meditation. In this state, all mental fluctuations cease, and awareness remains steady, clear, and undisturbed.

While *Dhāraṇā* involves fixing the mind and *Dhyāna* involves continuous meditation, *Samādhi* is a state of complete absorption. It is not an act performed by effort, but a condition that arises naturally when concentration and meditation become perfected.

Meaning of Samādhi

The word *Samādhi* is derived from *sam* (together or completely) and *dhā* (to place). Thus, *Samādhi* means placing the mind completely upon the object of meditation so that nothing else remains in awareness.

Sanskrit (Devanāgarī)

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IAST

tad-eva artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ ||

Śabda-artha (Word Meaning)

tat eva = that alone
artha-mātra = the object alone
nirbhāsam = shining forth
svarūpa = own form (of the mind)
śūnyam iva = as if empty
samādhiḥ = absorption

Sūtrārtha (One-line Meaning)

When only the object shines forth and the mind appears as if empty of its own form, it is called samādhi.

Explanation

In *Samādhi*, awareness becomes so completely absorbed in the object that the sense of individuality disappears. The mind no longer projects thoughts, ideas, or distinctions. Only the object of meditation remains vividly present in consciousness.

This does not mean loss of awareness. On the contrary, awareness becomes pure, luminous, and unobstructed. The practitioner experiences profound peace, clarity, and insight. The distinction between the meditator, the act of meditation, and the object of meditation dissolves.

Samādhi arises gradually through sustained practice of *Dhāraṇā* and *Dhyāna*. It cannot be forced by will. When the mind becomes fully purified and one-pointed, absorption occurs naturally. Through *Samādhi*, ignorance is removed and true knowledge dawns.

Thus, *Samādhi* represents the highest achievement of *Vibhūti Pāda*. It completes the inner discipline of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga and leads the practitioner toward liberation by revealing the true nature of consciousness.

6.6 Summary

This unit explained the inner limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga as presented in *Vibhūti Pāda*. These inner practices—**Dhāraṇā**, **Dhyāna**, and **Samādhi**—represent the advanced stages of Yogic discipline and focus entirely on mastery of the mind. They are called *antaraṅga yoga* because they deal with internal awareness rather than external conduct or physical practices.

The unit first explained **Dhāraṇā**, which is the practice of fixing the mind on a chosen object. Through concentration, mental restlessness is reduced and the mind becomes steady. When concentration becomes continuous and effortless, it develops into **Dhyāna**, or meditation. In this state, awareness flows uninterruptedly toward the object, leading to inner calm, clarity, and purification of mental impressions.

The highest stage explained in this unit is **Samādhi**, the state of complete absorption. In Samādhi, the mind becomes fully absorbed in the object of meditation, and all mental modifications subside. The distinction between the meditator and the object dissolves, and pure awareness remains. Samādhi represents the culmination of Yogic practice and leads to direct realization of the true nature of consciousness.

Overall, the unit emphasized that mastery of these inner limbs is achieved gradually through disciplined practice. Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi together form the core of *Vibhūti Pāda* and guide the practitioner toward higher Yogic realization and liberation.

6.7 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain the concept of *Vibhūti Pāda* and its place in Patañjali's Yoga system.
2. Describe *Dhāraṇā* and explain its role in the practice of inner Yoga.
3. Explain the meaning and nature of *Dhyāna*. How does it differ from *Dhāraṇā*?
4. What is *Samādhi*? Explain its meaning and significance in Yogic practice.
5. Discuss the relationship between *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi* as progressive stages of inner discipline.

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by *Vibhūti Pāda*?
2. Define *Dhāraṇā*.
3. What is *Dhyāna*?
4. Define *Samādhi*.
5. Why are *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi* called *antaraṅga yoga*?

UNIT–7: Integration of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga in Daily Life

Structure of the Unit

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Application of the Eight Limbs of Yoga in Modern Life

7.4 Yoga and Mental Health

7.5 Lifestyle Discipline through Yoga

7.6 Ethical and Spiritual Relevance of Yoga in Contemporary Society

7.7 Summary

7.8 Check Your Progress

7.1 Learning Objectives

After studying this unit, the learner will be able to:

- Understand the practical relevance of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga in everyday life.
- Explain how the eight limbs of Yoga can be applied in modern social and personal contexts.
- Recognize the role of Yoga in maintaining mental health and emotional balance.
- Understand how Yogic discipline contributes to a healthy lifestyle.
- Appreciate the ethical and spiritual importance of Yoga in contemporary society.

7.2 Introduction

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, as systematized by Maharṣi Patañjali, provides a comprehensive framework for personal development that includes ethical conduct, physical discipline, mental control, and spiritual awareness. Although originally articulated in an ancient philosophical context, its principles remain highly relevant in modern life. The increasing pace of contemporary living, mental stress, and lifestyle imbalances have made the practical application of Yogic principles especially significant.

Yoga is not limited to physical postures or occasional practice sessions. It represents a disciplined way of living that promotes harmony between body, mind, and environment. The eight limbs of Yoga—*Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna,* and *Samādhi*—provide a structured path for achieving balance, self-awareness, and inner stability.

In the present context, Yoga contributes not only to physical fitness but also to mental health, emotional resilience, ethical conduct, and spiritual understanding. Its principles can be integrated into daily routines, interpersonal relationships, professional responsibilities, and social life. This integration helps individuals cope effectively with stress, cultivate positive attitudes, and develop a balanced lifestyle.

This unit examines how the principles of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga can be applied in contemporary life. It highlights the role of Yoga in mental health, lifestyle discipline, ethical awareness, and spiritual growth, demonstrating that Yoga remains a practical and meaningful system for holistic well-being.

7.3 Application of the Eight Limbs of Yoga in Modern Life

The eightfold path of Yoga (*Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*) provides a systematic approach for balanced living. Although originally articulated in a classical philosophical framework, its principles are highly applicable to modern life. By integrating these eight limbs into daily routines and social conduct, individuals can cultivate physical health, mental stability, ethical awareness, and spiritual growth.

Yama, the first limb, emphasizes ethical discipline in social interactions. Principles such as non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, self-restraint, and non-possessiveness promote harmonious relationships and responsible social behavior. In contemporary life, these values help reduce conflict, foster trust, and encourage ethical decision-making.

Niyama, the second limb, focuses on personal discipline and inner development. Cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, self-study, and surrender to a higher ideal cultivate inner balance and emotional maturity. These practices support psychological well-being and encourage reflective living.

Āsana contributes to physical health by improving flexibility, strength, posture, and bodily awareness. Regular practice helps counter sedentary lifestyles, reduces physical stress, and enhances overall vitality.

Prāṇāyāma, the regulation of breath, plays a significant role in managing stress and emotional fluctuations. Controlled breathing improves concentration, reduces anxiety, and promotes calmness, making it particularly relevant in fast-paced modern environments.

Pratyāhāra, or withdrawal of the senses, helps individuals manage overstimulation from constant media exposure, digital distractions, and sensory overload. It encourages mindful disengagement and inward awareness.

Dhāraṇā (concentration) enhances focus and productivity, which are essential in academic, professional, and personal contexts. It supports clarity of thought and efficient performance.

Dhyāna (meditation) fosters mental calmness, emotional stability, and self-awareness. Regular meditation reduces stress, improves cognitive functioning, and enhances emotional resilience.

Finally, **Samādhi**, the state of deep absorption, represents the culmination of sustained Yogic discipline. While this advanced state may not be the immediate goal for most practitioners, the progressive practices leading toward it cultivate inner peace, clarity, and balanced awareness.

Thus, integrating the eight limbs of Yoga into modern life promotes holistic well-being. It supports physical health, mental stability, ethical conduct, and spiritual insight, making Yoga a practical and valuable system for contemporary living.

7.4 Yoga and Mental Health

Mental health has become an important concern in contemporary society due to increasing stress, lifestyle pressures, and rapid social changes. Anxiety, depression, emotional instability, and mental fatigue are commonly experienced in modern life. Yoga provides a holistic approach to maintaining mental well-being by addressing both psychological and physiological aspects of health.

Yoga emphasizes harmony between body, mind, and breath. Practices such as *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and meditation help regulate the nervous system and reduce the effects of stress. Controlled breathing calms the mind, improves concentration, and promotes emotional balance. Meditation encourages awareness and helps reduce negative thought patterns.

Regular Yogic practice also improves emotional resilience. It helps individuals respond to challenges calmly rather than reacting impulsively. This contributes to better decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and overall psychological stability.

Yoga promotes self-awareness, which is essential for mental health. Through introspection and disciplined practice, individuals become aware of their thoughts, emotions, and behavioral patterns. This awareness enables constructive change and reduces mental conflict.

Furthermore, ethical principles such as *ahiṃsā* (non-violence), *santoṣa* (contentment), and *svādhyāya* (self-study) contribute to emotional maturity and inner peace. These principles encourage positive attitudes, acceptance, and balanced living.

Thus, Yoga serves as an effective complementary approach to mental health care. It promotes relaxation, clarity of mind, emotional balance, and overall psychological well-being. Regular practice supports a healthy mental state and enhances quality of life.

7.5 Lifestyle Discipline through Yoga

Yoga promotes a disciplined and balanced lifestyle by encouraging conscious regulation of daily habits, behavior, and attitudes. Modern life often involves irregular routines, unhealthy dietary practices, excessive screen exposure, and lack of physical activity. Such patterns contribute to physical fatigue, mental stress, and lifestyle-related disorders. Yogic discipline offers practical methods for restoring balance and promoting overall well-being.

The principles of *yama* and *niyama* form the ethical and personal foundation of a disciplined life. Values such as non-violence, truthfulness, contentment, cleanliness, and self-control foster responsible living and emotional stability. These principles guide individuals toward moderation, self-awareness, and healthy social relationships.

Regular practice of *āsana* supports physical fitness, posture, and bodily awareness. It helps counter sedentary lifestyles and improves circulation, flexibility, and muscular strength. Combined with appropriate diet and rest, *āsana* contributes to sustained physical vitality.

Prāṇāyāma plays a crucial role in regulating energy levels and mental calmness. Controlled breathing improves respiratory efficiency, reduces stress responses, and enhances concentration. It encourages mindfulness in daily activities and supports emotional balance.

Yoga also emphasizes routine and consistency. Establishing regular sleep patterns, balanced nutrition, and mindful daily schedules contributes to long-term health. The practice of moderation (*mitāhāra*) and awareness of bodily needs helps prevent excess and imbalance.

Furthermore, Yogic discipline encourages simplicity, self-reflection, and responsible consumption. These attitudes support sustainable living and reduce unnecessary mental and physical strain.

Thus, integrating Yogic principles into daily life fosters a disciplined lifestyle characterized by balance, health, and awareness. Such discipline not only enhances physical and mental well-being but also contributes to personal growth and harmonious social living.

7.6 Ethical and Spiritual Relevance of Yoga in Contemporary Society

In contemporary society, rapid technological advancement, material aspirations, and competitive lifestyles often create ethical challenges and spiritual imbalance. While material

progress has improved living standards, it has also increased stress, social conflict, and a sense of disconnection. Yoga offers a framework that integrates ethical values with spiritual awareness, thereby contributing to balanced individual and social development.

The ethical foundation of Yoga is expressed through *yama* and *niyama*. These principles encourage non-violence, truthfulness, integrity, moderation, cleanliness, contentment, and self-discipline. Such values are highly relevant today for promoting social harmony, responsible citizenship, and ethical professional conduct. They foster mutual respect, cooperation, and constructive relationships in diverse social settings.

Yoga also promotes self-awareness and inner reflection. By cultivating mindfulness and introspection, individuals become more conscious of their actions, motivations, and responsibilities. This awareness supports ethical decision-making and helps reduce impulsive or harmful behavior.From a spiritual perspective, Yoga encourages exploration of deeper aspects of human existence beyond material achievements. Spirituality in Yoga does not necessarily imply adherence to a particular religious belief; rather, it involves cultivating inner peace, self-knowledge, compassion, and a sense of interconnectedness with others.

Meditation and contemplative practices help individuals develop clarity, emotional balance, and resilience. These qualities are essential for facing contemporary challenges with wisdom and stability. Spiritual awareness also encourages empathy, tolerance, and a broader outlook toward life.Thus, Yoga has significant ethical and spiritual relevance in modern society. It provides practical guidance for balanced living, promotes moral values, and supports inner growth. By integrating Yogic principles into daily life, individuals can contribute positively to personal well-being and social harmony.

7.7 Summary

This unit examined the practical relevance of **Aṣṭāṅga Yoga** in contemporary life and emphasized its role as a holistic system for personal and social well-being. Yoga was presented not merely as a physical practice but as a comprehensive discipline that integrates ethical conduct, mental stability, physical health, and spiritual awareness.

The application of the eight limbs of Yoga in modern life was discussed to show how Yogic principles can guide daily behavior, professional responsibilities, and interpersonal

relationships. Ethical observances such as *yama* and *niyama* support responsible living, while practices like *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* contribute to physical health and emotional balance.

The unit also highlighted the relationship between Yoga and mental health. Yogic practices help reduce stress, enhance concentration, improve emotional resilience, and promote psychological well-being. Through self-awareness and disciplined practice, individuals can manage mental disturbances more effectively.

Lifestyle discipline through Yoga was explained as a means of maintaining balance in daily routines, including diet, sleep, work habits, and social interactions. Yogic principles encourage moderation, regularity, and mindfulness, which contribute to long-term health and stability.

Finally, the ethical and spiritual relevance of Yoga in contemporary society was discussed. Yoga fosters moral values, self-awareness, compassion, and inner peace, which are essential for harmonious social living. Spiritual awareness in Yoga encourages deeper understanding of life and promotes balanced personal development.

Overall, the unit emphasized that integrating Yogic principles into everyday life enhances physical health, mental clarity, ethical awareness, and spiritual growth. Yoga thus remains a relevant and practical system for holistic well-being in the modern world.

7.8 Check Your Progress

(A) Long Answer Questions

1. Explain how the principles of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga can be integrated into modern daily life.
2. Discuss the relevance of Yoga for maintaining mental health in contemporary society.
3. Explain how Yogic discipline contributes to a balanced lifestyle.
4. Discuss the ethical relevance of Yoga in present-day social and professional life.
5. Explain the spiritual significance of Yoga in contemporary society.

(B) Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by integration of Yoga in daily life?
2. How does Yoga support mental health?
3. What is the role of *yama* and *niyama* in lifestyle discipline?
4. How does Yoga help in managing stress?

5. What is the ethical importance of Yoga in modern society?
6. How does meditation contribute to emotional stability?

(C) Fill-in-the-Blanks

1. The eightfold path of Yoga is known as _____ Yoga.
2. Ethical observances in Yoga are called _____ and _____.
3. Regulation of breath in Yoga is known as _____.
4. Continuous meditation practice helps in achieving mental _____.
5. Yoga promotes harmony between body, mind, and _____.

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સ્વાધ્યાયઃ પરમં તપઃ
સ્વાધ્યાયઃ પરમં તપઃ

શિક્ષણ, સંસ્કૃતિ, સદ્‌ભાવ, દિવ્યબોધનું ધામ
ડૉ. બાબાસાહેબ આંબેડકર ઓપન યુનિવર્સિટી નામ;
સૌને સૌની પાંખ મળે, ને સૌને સૌનું આભ,
દશે દિશામાં સ્મિત વહે હો દશે દિશે શુભ-લાભ.

અભણ રહી અજ્ઞાનના શાને, અંધકારને પીવો ?
કહે બુદ્ધ આંબેડકર કહે, તું થા તારો દીવો;
શારદીય અજવાળા પહોંચ્યાં ગુર્જર ગામે ગામ
ધ્રુવ તારકની જેમ ઝળહળે એકલવ્યની શાન.

સરસ્વતીના મયૂર તમારે ફળિયે આવી ગહેકે
અંધકારને હડસેલીને ઉજાસના ફૂલ મહેંકે;
બંધન નહીં કો સ્થાન સમયના જવું ન ઘરથી દૂર
ઘર આવી મા હરે શારદા દૈન્ય તિમિરના પૂર.

સંસ્કારોની સુગંધ મહેંકે, મન મંદિરને ધામે
સુખની ટપાલ પહોંચે સૌને પોતાને સરનામે;
સમાજ કેરે દરિયે હાંકી શિક્ષણ કેરું વહાણ,
આવો કરીયે આપણ સૌ
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
દિવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ...
ભવ્ય રાષ્ટ્ર નિર્માણ

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