3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to give a description of Yoga as a philosophy associated with the school of Samkhya as the practical method for achieving the understanding of the self. Its importance lies in the fact that it is the discipline necessary for the pure subject to recognize itself, and separate itself from the empirical reality with which it is confused. In this unit we shall try to give you the meaning of the word ‘Yoga’. Since Yoga is defined as the cessation of the modification of chitta, this unit also covers chitta and its vrittis. Again, Yoga also advocates control over the body, the senses and the mind. This involves eight stages and the same is explained in the unit as Ashtanga yoga. Finally, it gives a brief study on the theism or the place of God in Yoga. Thus by the end of the unit you should be able:

- To have sufficient understanding of Yoga and its meaning;
- To know about the five kinds of modifications of the chitta;
- To interpret eight stages or Ashtanga marga of Yoga;
- To comprehend the place and nature of God in Yoga;

3.1. INTRODUCTION

The word ‘Yoga’ literally means ‘union’, i.e., spiritual union of the individual soul with the Universal Soul and is used in this sense in the Vedanta. Bhagavad Gita defines Yoga as that state than which there is nothing higher or worth realising and firmly rooted in which a person is free
from all pains and misery. But according to Patanjali, who is the traditional founder of the Yoga system, Yoga does not mean union but spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses and mind and through right discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti. The Yoga-sutra of Patanjali is divided into four parts. The first is called samadhi-pada which deals with the nature and aim of concentration. The second, sadhanapada, explains the means to realize this end. The third, vibhutipada, deals with the supra-normal powers which can be acquired through Yoga. The fourth, kaivalyapada, describes the nature of liberation and the reality of the transcendental self.

Yoga is the practical path of realisation of the theoretical ideals of Samkhya Philosophy. The Samkhya Philosophy emphasises the attainment of knowledge by means of study, concentration and meditation. The Yoga presents a practical path for the realisation of the self. It tells us the way by following which the self can be realised. Yoga admits all the three pramanas accepted by Samkhya, i.e., perception, inference and scripture. The Sadhana of Yoga is necessary for the study of Samkhya Philosophy. Thus Yoga system of Patanjali, is a complement of Samkhya. Its epistemological theories are based on the ground of Samkhya’s metaphysics. Hence, it is rightly said that the Yoga system is the natural complement of practical discipline to achieve the Samkhya ideal of kaivalya. Yoga includes moral restraints, and spiritual imperatives, as well as the exercises (asanas) designed to withdraw consciousness from the senses, focus the mind and ultimately achieve meditation in which the self is completely and transparently understood. The total and absolute restraint of the mental functions constitutes the Yogic trance. With this restraint the mind empties itself of all contents, it becomes still. The senses then do not receive the messages coming from the external world. In the 21st century the philosophy and practice of Yoga is becoming increasingly popular in the West also.

3.2. MODIFICATIONS OF CHITTA

As has been already pointed out the chitta, inspite of being material, seems to be like living due to the reflection of self in it. It is these changes in the chitta which are known as its vrittis or modifications. These modifications are due to ignorance and their result is the bondage. These modifications are five types which are as follows. i) Pramana: By being outside, through the sensation, the chitta attains the form of objects, this is known as pramana. ii) Viparyaya: The false knowledge of any thing is known as Viparyaya like that of rope-snake. iii) Vikalpa: This is the knowledge in which the object which is known does not exist like that of a hare’s horn. iv) Nidra: The modification of the chitta which is the substratum of knowledge of absence of anything is known as nidra. But this stage should not be conceived as the total absence of knowledge because after arising from sleep the person has consciousness that he slept well. Hence sleep is also a modification. v) Smriti: Smriti or memory is the recollection of past experience through the impressions left behind.

3.3. CHITTA BHUMI

There are five levels of mental life (chitta bhumi). The difference in the levels are due to the predominance of different gunas: i) Ksipta: The lowest level is called ksipta or restless, because the mind here is restless due to the excess of rajas and is tossed about like a shuttle cock between different sense-objects. ii) Mudha or torpid: The mind here has the predominance of tamas and tends towards ignorance, sleep and lethargy. iii) Viksipta or distracted: Here sattva predominates,
but rajas also asserts itself at times. This differs from kshipta stages because due to the preponderence of sattva sometimes there is temporary ceasing of the modification of chitta in this stage. iv) Ekagra or concentrated: The stages of chitta when it is fixed on one subject. The mind here is entirely dominated by sattva and rajas and tamas are subsided. v) Niruddha or restricted: The fifth and the highest level is called Niruddha. Here the mental modifications are arrested, though their latent impressions remain. The first three levels are not at all conducive to Yogic life. Only the last two are.

### 3.4. KINDS OF KLESAS

In fact the Purusa is the eternally pure and transcendental consciousness. It is the chitta with the reflection of the Purusa in it or the Purusa as reflected in the chitta, which is the phenomenal ego or jiva, which is subject to birth and death and to all painful or pleasurable experiences. There are five kinds of sufferings (klesa) to which it is subject. These are: 1. ignorance (avidya) 2. egoism (asmita) 3. attachment (raga) 4. aversion (dvesa) 5. clinging to life and instinctive fear of death (abhinivesa). The bondage of the self is due to its wrong identification with the mental modifications and liberation. Therefore means to end this wrong identification is through proper discrimination between Purusa and Prakrti and the consequent cessation of mental modifications. It is the aim of Yoga to bring about this result.

### 3.5. ASHTANGA YOGA

Yoga advocates control over the body, the senses and the mind. It does not want to kill the body; on the other hand, it recommends its perfection. A sound mind needs a sound body. Sensual attachment and passions distract body as well as the mind. They must be conquered. To overcome them, Yoga gives us the Eightfold Path of Discipline or the Ashtanga Yoga. The prescribed eight sadhanas to control chitta are the following: 1. Yama, 2. Niyama, 3. Asana, 4. Pranayama, 5. Prathyahara, 6. Dharana, 7. Dhyana, 8. Samadhi.

#### 1. Yama (Self-restrained)

Yama is the control of the body, speech and mind. It means abstention. The Yamas are five which are as follows. i) Non-violence (ahimsa): It is abstention from injury through thoughts, words and deeds. ii) Truth (satya): Truth is to be exact in mind and speech, i.e.; to speak things as they are and to remember exactly as seen, heard and imagined. Thus it is abstention from falsehood. iii) Non-stealing (asteya): It is abstention from stealing. It includes both not taking or stealing another’s property and have even a desire for it. iv) Celibacy (brahmacarya): It is abstention from passions and lust. Brahmacarya is the control of attachment in the enjoyment of the senses. v) Non-possession (aparigraha): Aparigraha requires not to accept any unnecessary things or collect it. It is abstention from avarice. All the above mentioned yamas are necessary for the concentration of chitta.

#### 2. Niyama (Positive rules of conduct)

Another important step in Yoga is Niyama or following the rules of good conduct. These Niyamas are five which are as follows: i) Purity (sauca): Sauca includes external cleaning through bath, pure diet etc. as well as internal purification through sympathy, friendliness,
detachment etc. ii) Contentment (santosa): Santosa means satisfaction in whatever is attained by sufficient and suitable efforts. iii) Right aspiration (tapas): Tapas includes the practice of tolerance of cold and heat. It requires various types of hard practices. iv) Study of Philosophical texts (svadhyaya): Svadhyaya means reading of religious scriptures. It is very much useful in the spiritual advancement. Hence it is a necessary principle of good conduct in Yoga. v) Devotion to God (Iswarapranidhana): The fifth niyama in Yoga is to remember God and to surrender oneself to Him. This helps the aspirant in the practice of Yoga.

The Yoga ethics lays stress on a harmonious relationship between the individual and the society. The positive and negative rules together constitute all that is necessary for a perfect moral life. They are known as Ten Commandments of Yoga. Through them the moral foundation of Yogic discipline is made. After the moral preparation comes the preliminary training of one’s body frame. It consists of three steps- asana, pranayama, pratyahara.

3. Asana
The third step in the advancement of yoga is Asana or posture. It means steady and comfortable posture. Asana emphasizes the importance of correct and comfortable bodily posture before one begins meditation. Patanjali mentions that the posture must be firm, pleasant and easy. The idea is that body must be disciplined to assume a posture which is helpful for concentration. This is the discipline of the body.

4. Pranayama
It means control of breath and deals with regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath. The regulating of breathing process helps considerably to bring the mind under control. The Yogi who systematically practices pranayama is in a position to control the movements of the lungs and also of the heart. For the Yogi, there is no involuntary organ in the body. The true Yogi can even stop breathing and restart it at his will. It is highly conducive to the concentration of mind. But it must be performed under expert guidance. Otherwise, it may have bad after-effects.

5. Prathyahara
It is the control of the senses and consists in withdrawing the senses from their objects. Our senses have a natural tendency to go to outward objects and they perceive the facts of Prakrti. They can be compared to a mirror which is facing the other way reflecting everything except the image of the person that holds it. They must be checked and directed towards the internal goal. It is the process of introversion. The above five steps are called external aids to Yoga (bahiranga sadhana) while the remaining three which follow are called internal aids (antaranga sadhana). The last three steps are stages of mind control and therefore they constitute Yoga proper.

6. Dharana
It is fixing of the mind on the object of meditation. Here the mind is steadied by making all our thoughts flow in single unbroken channel. Ordinarily the mind is easily disturbed. It passes from objects to objects in a matter of seconds. The mind is to be tied to a particular object in order that it may become steady and unmoving. Any object like the tip of the nose or the mid point of the eye brows or the image of the deity may be chosen for meditating upon in this stage. The mind must be steadfast like the unflickering flame of a lamp.
7. Dhyana
It means meditation and consists in the undisturbed flow of thought round the object of meditation. It is steadfast contemplation without any break. When the process of thought is continuous, it is called dhyana. Meditation is always about something. That something gets fixed in the mind through meditation. Dhyana culminates in Samadhi.

8. Samadhi
It is the final step in Yoga. It means concentration. Here the mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation. In dhyana the act of meditation and object of meditation remain separate. But here they become one. It is the highest means to realize the cessation of mental modifications which is the end. It is the ecstatic state in which the connection with the external world is broken and through which one has to pass before liberation. Here the spirit is lifted above the world process and is restored to its original stage. Samadhi is of two kinds: Conscious or samaprajnata and supra conscious or asmaprajnata. In the former consciousness of the object of meditation persists, in the latter it is transcended. The former is Ekagra and the latter is Niruddha. In the former, the mind remains concentrated on the object of meditation. The meditator and the object of meditation are fused together, yet the consciousness of the object of meditation persists. This state is said to be of four kinds. i) Savitarka: When the chitta is concentrated on a gross object of meditation like the tip of the nose or the mid-point of eyebrows or the image of the deity. ii) Savichara: When the chitta is concentrated on a subtler object of meditation like the tanmatras. iii) Sananda: When the chitta is concentrated on a still subtler object of meditation which produces joy, like the senses. iv) Sasmita: When chitta is concentrated on the ego-substance with which the self is generally identified. Here we have conscious ecstasy where individuality persists.

Asamaprajnata samadhi is the supra-conscious concentration where the meditator and the object of meditation are completely fused together and there is not even consciousness of the object of meditation. Here no new mental modification arise. They are checked (niruddha), though the latent impressions may continue. If the fire is restricted to a particular fuel, it burns that fuel alone; but when the fuel has been completely burnt, the fire also lies down. Similarly in conscious concentration, the mind is fixed on the object of meditation alone and modification arises only in respect of this object of meditation. But in supra-conscious concentration, even this modification ceases. It is the highest form of Yoga which is divine madness, perfect mystic ecstasy difficult to describe and more difficult to attain. Even those who attain it cannot retain it longer. Immediately after a very short time, the body breaks and they obtain complete liberation. Asamaprajnata or Nirbeeja (attributeless) samadhi is the highest form of samadhi in which the distinction between the knower, knowledge and the known, disappears. In it there are no klesas or attributes. Hence, it is known as nirbeeja or attributeless samadhi. This form of samadhi is also divided into two subtypes, which are i) Bhava Pratyaya Samadhi: Samadhi is disturbed due to ignorance. Bhava means ignorance. Ignorance means seeing the self as non-self. In this form of samadhi only the samskaras of the passions remain. Thus the ignorance is not absolutely destroyed at this stage due to which even after the attainment of this stage the beings have to return to the world again. ii) Upaya Pratyaya: In this type of samadhi the ignorance is absolutely destroyed due to arousal of prajna. In it all the klesas are annihilated and the chitta becomes established in true knowledge. This is the samadhi of the Yogis. It breeds the pleasure of the chitta, concentration, knowledge etc.
Yoga is the steadiness of the mind, with the annihilation of the mental states, into a particular type of graduated state leading to self realization. Yoga generates certain supra-normal powers. But they should be avoided and attention should be fixed only on the liberation which is the end of human life. The ideal is Kaivalya, the absolute independence and eternal and free life of the Purusa, free from Prakrti.

Check your Progress – I

Note: Use the space for writing the answers.

1. Bring out the nature of the various levels of mental life as expounded by Yoga Philosophy.

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2. Explain the eightfold path of the Yoga system. What is its goal?

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3.6. PLACE OF GOD IN YOGA

The Samkhya in its original form is atheistic. The difference between the Yoga and Samkhya is that while the former asserts a place to God, the latter does not. The Yoga therefore is described as the Samkhya with God. Yoga accepts the existence of God. Iswara is only one of the many objects on which Yogis can concentrate their mind. The only purpose of Iswara is to do good to his devotees. Thus God in Yoga has only practical importance. The meditation on God or pranava helps in the concentration of chitta. According to Patanjali, Iswara pranidhana helps in the attainment of samadhi. Thus in the old Yoga philosophy not much theoretical importance has been attached to God. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan has also supported this view. According to him, the God of Yoga is not the summum bonum of life. Patanjali himself did not consider God as necessary to solve the problems of the world. But the later Yogis have taken also a theoretical interest in Him and have tried to prove His existence as necessary philosophical speculation. Patanjali defines God as a special kind of Purusa who is always free from pains, actions, affects and impressions. He is eternally free and was never bound nor has any possibility of being bound. He is above the law of karma. He is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. He is perfection incarnate. He is the purest knowledge.

Devotion to God is one of the surest means of obtaining concentration. Patanjali thus makes devotion to God as one of the aids of Yoga. The proofs advanced for His existence are: (1) the Veda tells us that God exists (2) the law of continuity tells us that there must be the highest limit of knowledge and perfection which is God (3) God is responsible for the association and
dissociation of Purusa and Prakrti (4) devotion to God is the surest way of obtaining concentration and thereby liberation. By disinterested devotion the yogi becomes eligible for the grace of God. Surrender to God is one of the important principles of Yoga. This conception of God is certainly different from that of the Upanishads. In the Upanishads, God is the Saguna Brahman, who is the very soul of the entire Universe. But in Samkhya Yoga, God is only a particular Self, Purusa Visesa.

God of Yoga is not the creator, preserver or destroyer of this world. He is only a special Purusa. He does not reward or punish the souls. Innumerable Purusas and Prakrti, all eternals and absolutes, are there to limit Him. He cannot grant liberation. He can only remove the obstacles in the upward progress of the devotees. Directly He has nothing to do with the bondage and the liberation of the Purusas. Ignorance binds and discrimination between Prakrti and Purusa liberates. The end of human life is not the union with God, but only the separation of Purusa from Prakrti. Devotion to God is only a step to this ultimate liberation. Though according to Patanjali, Iswarapranidhana is a means to attain samadhi, the later yoga philosophers considered it as the best means because God is not only an object of concentration but also He removes the impediments from the path of aspirants and makes the path of yoga easy. By meditating on God with one pointed mind, the intellect is purified and all the impediments are destroyed. The aspirant realises his self through Iswarapranidhana.

3.7. EIGHT SIDDHIS

According to Yoga philosophy, the Yogis attain various siddhis by the practice of the path of Yoga. These powers are mainly of eight types and hence called Ashta siddhi or Ashta Aisvarya:

1. Anima- This is the power to become small like atom and so to disappear.
2. Laghima- This is the power to become light cotton and so to fly away.
3. Mahima-This is the power to become big like mountains.
4. Prapti-This is the power to secure whatever is desired.
5. Prakamya-This is the power by which all the impediments in the will are removed.
6. Vasitwa-This is the power by which all the living beings can be conquered.
7. Eshitwa-This is the power by which one attains absolute mastery on all physical objects.
8. Yatrakamavasayitwa-This is the power by which all the desires are fulfilled.

The above mentioned eight siddhis can be used according to the wish of the Yogi. But in the Yoga philosophy the pursuance of the path of the Yoga for the attainment of these powers has been vehemently decried because that results in misleading the aspirant from the path of Yoga. The ultimate end of the Yoga is not the attainment of these powers, but the realisation of Moksa. Thus, Yoga is a combination of practical physical development and discipline with a mystical objective which is its ultimate purpose. This co-ordination of a system of thought with a programme of daily life exercises is based on physiological psychology as well as religious philosophy.

3.8. LET US SUM UP

In this Unit our attempt is to provide a clear idea of Patanjali’s Yoga system which enables one to attain Kaivalya. Since it is the cessation of the modifications of chitta, chitta vruttis are dealt in detail. The kinds of klesas to which Purusa is subjected to, are also given. The eight limbs of Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga which leads to self-realization is discussed. As this system is attaining more and more importance these days each step of Yoga is given with
detailed explanation. In the concluding part of the unit, the theism of Yoga, i.e., the nature and place of God is also discussed.

### Check your Progress – II

**Note:** Use the space for your answers.

1. What is *Samadhi* according to Patanjali? How can it be attained?

2. What is the place and nature of God in Yoga philosophy?

### 3.9. KEY WORDS

- **Kaivalya:** Absolute independence and eternal and free life of *Purusa*, free from *Prakrti*.
- **Chitta vritis:** Modifications of *chitta* or *manas*
- **Chitta bhumi:** Different levels of mental life due to predominance of different gunas.
- **Klesas:** Sufferings to which soul is subjected to.

### 3.10. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES