

THE PATH TO PEACE AND HAPPINESS

God Is The End Of Our Mind's Cravings.

Without the realization of God there is no other way to achieve true happiness.

Each one of us hankers after happiness. It is the sole object of our mind's cravings and all our efforts are constantly directed towards this end. In order to attain such happiness, however different people take to different means, e.g. some watch television, some go to movies, some play baseball, some get addicted to alcohol, some enjoy sex and little else, while some practicing politics. We take food to live in living there is sense of happiness. We eat to live and live to be happy. But we find that the happiness, which emanates from such sense-object contact as vision, taste and sound, is purely temporary and transitory in nature. It is Ephemeral. We are never fully satisfied with the limited pleasures we derive from it. Nevertheless, our mind keeps flitting about helplessly from one source of enjoyment to another in a futile search for permanent happiness or perpetual peace. But this goal remains beyond reach throughout our lifetime. Ultimately we end up dissatisfied and frustrated. Finally, we are compelled to leave this world with our desires unfulfilled and are reborn in a new place as a new born, only to experience the same cycle which goes on and on life after life. This is our destiny.

Nobody wants sorrows and sufferings but, needless to say, this is the normal phenomena of human life. The scriptures say that sufferings are of three kinds, namely as follows:

- '**Ādhyāmtika**' - referring to sufferings arising out of our body and mind
- '**Ādhibhoutika**' - denoting sufferings inflicted upon us by neighboring creatures
- '**Ādhidaivika**' - meaning those sufferings that are caused by Nature.

These are the three kinds of sufferings that disturb the rhythm and harmony of our lives, rendering it painful and miserable.

So we want happiness but find that such happiness is beyond our reach. Furthermore, we despise all suffering, but find that it is beyond our powers to avoid them. This is the general truth of life.

A few intellectuals, driven by an overpowering desire to find and answer to this dilemma, took great pains and dedicated themselves to the search of this truth. They examined the matter very deeply to explore the possibility of attaining a stage in human life where the mind would be fully satisfied and the destination of perpetual peace and happiness would be reached, a stage where even sufferings and miseries would not be able to perturb the inner peace and composure of our lives. In India, researches have been carried out very earnestly in this field and Indian saints have been completely successful in penetrating into the inner world and discovering *The Truth*. The process is purely internal and may be termed as "Deep Meditation". By this process of deep meditation one is able to attain perfect and perpetual peace. The Indian saints emphasis that it is possible to achieve such a stage in this life, and that their experiences can be shared by anyone who pursues the same path. These saints, very clear in their perception, unanimously announce that there is no other way to perfect peace and happiness except by the realization of the Soul or God.

Self-realization is the only way to reach that destination. It is, in fact, the heart of religion.

Life is a continuous process of struggle. It is a struggle between two opposite cravings, the External and the Internal. External Cravings urge us to be happy through external objects and means. It is called '**samsāra**' (prejudice). On the other hand, the Internal Cravings inspire us to happy, rejoicing in the calmness of the soul. When the External Cravings wins, we get **samsāra**. With **samsāra**, the journey towards perpetual peace is thwarted, and the end result

is frustration. If, however, the Internal Craving wins this struggle, we attain peace. And Complete Fulfillment and Perfect Bliss descend in our life.

Common sense tells us that with others, one must not behave in a manner that would be harmful to one's own self if done unto one, in turn because what is harmful to me is also harmful to others. Therefore we must restrain ourselves in daily life. But Restraint, as we all know, is a concept that coincides with the tenets of all religions. We thus see that a truly religious person cannot hate another person. If he does, he is not religious, what ever else he may be.

The saying, "Love thy neighbor as you love thyself", is a common dictum in all religion. But how can I love my neighbor as I love myself? Yes, I feel the pain that I receive as my own pain. But, surely, I cannot feel your pain as mine? I can't behave with you in the same manner as when I respond to my own pain.

The practice, which enables us to realize that the very soul which is in me also resides inside the body of all other beings on this Earth, is the quintessence of all religious practice. Religion is the mode of conduct by the power and means of which one can not only realize one's own soul, but also realize the existence of manifests itself in various names, shapes and forms in the Universe.

It is this Supreme Soul that resides inside every living being.

Self realization demands a set of sincere, continuous and break-free practices. The greatest rewards in life require the greatest sufferings. Self-realization is the greatest achievement of human life. It requires perseverance, patience and careful practice. To reach this destination, one's determination should be firm. It is understandable that sometimes, one may feel the practice to be tiresome and monotonous. Not only that, one's own skepticism may get in the way as well. But that is not unnatural. The experience of spiritual Realization admits of skepticism coming in at some stage or the other on the route to the grant destination. Sometimes, of course, the mind may try to deceive the practitioner into believing that all this is 'bogus' However, if one goes ahead steadfastly, breaking all the barriers one by one with rock firm determination, one is finally rewarded with success. The determination is there for all of us to conquer, and while it may be truly difficult, it is not impossible to reach. Of course, many desert the journey midway, unable to surmount the difficulties. Asceticism assists the traveler in a great way in coping with the distractions. Therefore, such a long journey should be undertaken only after careful thinking and prudent deliberation. Only if one is sure of his calling. The scriptures say that only when one is completely detached from the desire of enjoying earthly affairs. Only when it becomes truly impossible to extract real happiness from the material enjoyment of life that he is deemed fit to embark upon his spiritual journey. **Patañjali**, the great saint of ancient India, opines in his **Yogśāstra** that by prolonged, continuous and sincere practice, one can achieve a firm, stable position of *realization*. In **Śruti**, it is declared that 'Practice' which is done with proper reverence (**Śraddhyā**), knowledge (**Vidyā**), and conducted in accordance with the proper technique, is powerful enough to shower one with success.

Śraddhyā refers to reverence or a sense of deep faith towards the spiritual texts or towards the advice received from the religious master (Gurudev). There are many amongst us who casually hear out spiritual advice, without listening to them with deep sincerity. They take it merely as a form of temporary entertainment. The advice fails to leave any kind of impact upon their hearts. That means that they lack **Śraddhyā** and the scriptures categorically forbids us to extend any form of advice to persons like them, because they will only end up dishonoring it. For it is mentioned in the Scriptures that **Śraddhyā** is a precondition for the Religious Journey.

Again, it is entirely possible that one may lose his **Śraddhyā** somewhere along the route, after having started the journey in right earnest. The mind may deceive us, it may deign to wander. It is during these moments when the will is weak and our defenses are down, that we are tempted to think that whatever the mind advises is somehow right. And unknowingly

submitting to minds dictates midway, we leave the journey halfway. These are instances when our slavery to the whims of the mind is complete. In the scriptures, the mind which hinders spiritual practice is regarded as the *Satan* (devil). The meditator should be in conscious control of his mind, and should not be deceived by it. The prodigal mind should be subjected to constant and perpetual vigilance. To cross over this barrier, within the domain of which the mind hinders our purpose at every step and attempts to hold us back is the end of our exercise, its goal. That is, to elevate one's own self beyond the reach of the mind's distracting powers is our chief and primary task. Achieving control over the mind and gaining control over all material and worldly concerns is one and the same thing. The achieving of this control over the mind by regular and sincere practice takes time, and even a span of twenty years should not cause impatience. It will have been the most prudent investment of our time on earth. As a matter of fact, patience should be considered our most trusted friend along the journey.

“Śraddhyā, Vīrya, Prajñā purbaka itarasam” - i.e. By means of **Śraddhyā** (reverence or Deep Faith), **Vīrya**, (spiritual energy), **Smṛiti** (remembrance), **Samādhi** (absorbed in meditation) and **Prajñā** (capacity of recognizing the truth by going beyond the surface), one can attain Self-Realization.

Where there is **Śraddhyā**, there is a sense of Eternal and spontaneously earnest submissiveness in the heart in carrying out the commands of the master (Gurudev), or that of the scriptures. By this **Śraddhyā**, meditation can earn us **Vīrya** or Spiritual Energy.

Vīrya is a kind of Energy by means of which the meditator is able to fix or orient his mind towards the definite object of his meditation. Therefore, when the meditator feels strained due to the overwhelming power of **Vīrya**, he is able to overcome the exhaustion in relevant spiritual practices. **Vīrya** thus supplies the necessary assistance and force in the uphill struggle towards spiritual realization.

Next come **Smṛiti**, or remembrance. It is the Chief mental exercise to be performed in this route towards realization. The safely and easiest way to realize God or Soul is **Jap** or chanting the *Sacred Mantra*. The mantra should be learnt from a capable master or Gurudev, who, ideally, will also instill the proper technique of **Jap** in him.

Praṇab (Om) is a sacred mantra. The meaning of *Pranab* is “Welcome To God”. During Chanting, The person meditating should be in such a position that on uttering the **Praṇab (Om)**, the remembrance of God descends upon him instantly and simultaneously. Upon chanting Om, the meditator should remember God (the Almighty who is free from all malice, full of bliss, and is an ocean of kindness), and as the *holy* chant of Om wells up from deep within and leaves one's lips, one must surrender completely to God.

The chanting of Om should be done in accordance with certain age-old rules and rituals. During chanting the meditator should utter the holy syllable of “O...” for only a short time, while for next part of “...m”, an extended and prolonged intonation is required. Also, during the chanting of “...m”, the meditator should think that he is one with, and inseparable from the Almighty. This is regarded as the phase where one is in Indissoluble union with *God - ensconced in His lap*. The mystery of chanting the **Praṇab (Om)** can be visualized in another way, where we draw an analogy and compare the **Praṇab** to a bow and the soul of the meditator to an arrow, while *Brahma* (The supreme Soul, God for the devotee) is the target that one is aspiring to and aiming for. The meditator has to hit the target with perseverance, practice and care. A *careful* mind implies a mind equipped with the power of *continuous* recollection. The practice of *Recollection* is first the ability to detach the body from the mind, and perceive the latter as an independent object. To be able to see it as a separate entity and then, to guard it from being distracted by any kind of ambient desire or lust. What is called Mind is nothing but the continuous waves of our thoughts, and to watch those waves carefully and innocently as an outsider is the true practice of Recollection. In this way, as we watch the waves with passion and keep them under our careful and constant vigil, they gradually grow calm and quiet after some time. The stage is set for the mind to reach its cherished state of absolute *thoughtlessness*. And it is now that the soul reveals its true nature, in all its resplendent glory,

to the meditator. The mind has much power over the sense; our intellect has the power over the mind. We have the power of determination; our conscience can distinguish between what is good and bad. However, none has an independent reality, of its own. All of them are controlled by the soul, and they receive the light of consciousness from it. By surrendering to the power of the soul, one can obtain mastery over the mind. *Chanting the mantra is this surrendering to the soul.*

Spiritual life knows no holidays. It is a continuous process. Without patience and reverence towards faith, one cannot take a single step. Discipline should be maintained throughout the entire journey. If we do not possess **Uṭṭam Śraddhyā**, (Require reverence), we will not have **Vīrya** (Spiritual energy). And without spiritual energy, no one can advance in the practice of Smṛiti. From **Vīrya** comes the power of tolerance. It is vital to the subsequent practice of **Smṛiti**. The practice of **Smṛiti** should be done always, and in every walk of life. It can be practiced in everyday acts like walking, sitting, travelling, lying down etc. Whenever we engage ourselves in any kind of work or activity, we have to be in a position that enables us to perform our external duty while keeping the mantra (i.e. God, Who is the destination of our meditations) in our heart at all times. It is like climbing a greased and oily staircase, where complete concentration is an absolute must; Where we have to be extremely careful at all times. It is a practice where conscious watching of the mind is required at all times, without any lapses. It is only through this practice that one can unlock the power to detect the moments of one's own subconscious distractions. By the helps of this practice, the power of spotting minute deviations of the mind from its primary purpose (God) dawns upon the heart of the meditator, whereupon, whenever necessary, he can check and control his mind from straying and going astray. Moving through this process slowly, the meditator attains a stage where external objects fail to leave any impression in his heart, and the *exercise of Remembrance of the soul (Smṛiti)* will be steady. The better, the more continuous and the more undisturbed the *Practice (exercise) of Remembrance*, the clearer will be the perception of the object of our meditation. The better will be its realization. And when Remembrance finally reaches that elevated plane where it is undisturbed and continuous, it is known as **Samādhi** (Trance).

It is in **Samādhi** that God reveals himself to the meditator.

So by means of **Śraddhyā** (Devoted faith), **Vīrya** (The Power of being able to carry out a practice repeatedly), **Smṛiti** (Remembrance) and **Samādhi** (Eternal assimilation with God), one can enter the chamber of Realization (**Brahmadhām**). Without practice and stoicism, however, no one can enter this stage of perpetual bliss. And yes, It is perfectly possible to attain this stage while living our regular everyday *household existence* as well. However, a definite spell of time (*At least two hours at a stretch*) is necessary, whence the meditation should be practiced in a calm and quiet place, sleepless and without distraction. Without this definite practice, everything will remain mere imagination. It is only by practice that meditation becomes living.

Experience declares that what starts off as mere imagination in the beginning, through practice becomes a reality.

The nature of soul:

The nature of soul is **Nitya**, **Śuddha**, **Buddha** and **Mukta**, i.e. the soul is immortal, imperishable. It does not perish with perishment of body and the birth is not the beginning of the soul, as well. It only changes body like the nest of a bird according to the Karma (deeds). With the changing of the body the unique character of soul does not change. **Śuddha** - means the soul is pure. It is free from all bad qualities. It remains always untouched of all the virtues and sins created by **Karma**. It dwells in the body only as an indifferent seer. He is the innocent spectator of all the deeds. He is the ocean of bliss and no outer restlessness or disturbance can enter into its inner peace. Next **Ātmā** or soul is **Buddha**, it means **Ātmā** is pure knowledge. He is the knower of all occurrence happening in present, past, future as well as he is himself the ocean of wisdom. Nothing can remain unknown from Him. For the disturbances of lusts and

different desires the all pervading knowledge remains hidden to the common man. As much as the desires become submissive or decreasing so the curtain of ignorance begins to remove. The unveiled knowledge becomes all displaying in its full splendor with the absence of all desires and restlessness of mind.

The soul is **Mukta** (emancipated). It is free from all limitations. It is self luminous. He who realizes the nature of his own soul he crosses the barrier of mundane, joys and sufferings. After realization what the realized person desires he gets his desires object then and then. Where he wants to go he can reach instantly. He becomes **Satya-saṅkalpa** (i.e. his desires become true always).

In another way the soul may be described as **sat-cit-ānanda** i.e. it is immortal, everlasting, pure consciousness and the ocean of bliss. It is pure bliss. Realizing its real nature man becomes blissful. Mukti or emancipation means the realization that I am not the mere physical body, I am not the senses, I am not the mind, I am not the intellect, I have no connection with the disturbing waves (thoughts) of mind. I am pure bliss and unveiled consciousness.

The requirements of spiritual realization:

To perceive the true nature of soul some disciplines should be maintained throughout the life. "**yamniyamāsana praṇāyām pratyahāradharanādhyā samādhāyo hastabangani**"- **yama, niyama, āsana, praṇāyām, pratyahār, dhāranā, dhyān, Samādhi** - these are parts of yoga. **Yam-** means restraint. It includes **ahimsā** (non violence), **satya** (truth), **asteya** (non stealing), **Brahmacarya** (sexual abstinence), **aparigraha** (non acceptance). In this **ahimsā** means non-violence to every creature in every respect and every moment. It not only includes non-oppression but also maintaining friendly generosity to all. Without being unselfish no one can be a perfect **ahimsak** (non-violent). To threat someone or to hurt someone by harsh language are parts of **himsā** (violence).

Actually to get rid of oneself from the internal perverted feelings such cruelty, hatred, desire of doing harsh blood thirstiness, aversion which occur in distorted mind, is called **ahimsā**. Here attention should be given on internal feelings, not so much on external deeds. Where there is an idea of welfare the apparent expression of cruelty may not be regarded as **himsā** or violence, such as in controlling the children, the beating or using harsh language by the parents should not be regarded as a crime. It is a duty even it is described in the scripture that one who is completely pure in heart, i.e. free from all cruelty, if by some sudden, un-willful acts of him, his parents die, it must certainly not be regarded as a crime. The purity of the heart is the main thing. It is needless to say who is pure in heart, who is devotee of God, can certainly not harm anybody. He lives only to serve society. Even the minute creatures are completely safe from him. The presence of such person in the society is actually a blessing of God to humanity. **Ahimsā bhūmi** denotes a mental state where the external cruelty or insult done to the devotee fails to disturb the inner peace of the devotee. When the devotee has to face insult without any offence he can not even think to take revenge. He regards the crime done to him as a blessing of God. He takes the insult as a means by which god purifies him, makes him fit for attaining the undisturbed blissful state. In fact emancipation is a state where mundane suffering fails to disturb the inner peace. To conquer this state one has to cross through the thorny path of sufferings. So non-violence is the endurance with a sense of graciousness. If anybody by the help of perseverance makes himself successful enough to attain a state so that even in the pick point of life-risk the sense of cruelty will not occur in mind, that is, if he is in a position that even in the next dangerous period of life he succeeds to maintain peace in mind and get rid of himself from feeling or showing cruelty to other, then even minute creatures will get rid of their cruelty in presence of him. The ferocious animal gives up its envy to him. By means of prolonged endurance the devotees enable to achieve the firm footing of **ahimsā**.

Next comes, **satya** (truthfulness). It demands the restraint of tongue. What one feels, expressing in tongue the feelings as it is, is truth. In using the tongue arbitrarily there is a high chance of using false words. Where truth brings harm to anyone, in that case keeping silence is preferable. Using truth to deceive others is regarded as nasty falsehood. Where there is a

necessity of using word to convey one's feeling to others if the used words are not deceptive, deluded or meaningless to the listener then it may be regarded as true. Again, this word must be used for the benefit of fellow men, if the words are used for calamity to someone then it causes harm and regarded as sin. This kind of so called truth brings sufferings to the user. So, in using truth there is a requirement of judgments.

If one enables to set up himself firmly on the ground of **satya** (truthfulness) he can be successful enough to attain a position where the words uttered by him must come true. If he says to somebody 'Be pious', he must be pious. If he blesses someone 'be happy', he must be happy.

Asteya (non-stealing) - which is not given, which is not obtainable, to occupy that thing unjustly is regarded as **steya** (stealing). Not occupying that thing, even not to allow the mind to aspire after that thing is called **asteya**. If someone comes by something accidentally even the most precious one, it is not desired to occupy this thing as it belongs to someone else. In fact, which is not mine, not to possess this thing even not to have longing for that thing is **asteya**.

If one can attain the firm ground of **asteya** in his mind there is an index of calmness and satisfaction that man feels himself happy and satisfied by offering the most precious things to him. The wealth and gems begin to flow to him from different angles. Man spontaneously offers him the object of their desires. The contentment of heart of the devotee and his greedlessness spontaneously brings to him enormous wealth.

Brahmacarya (control of spiritual vigour) - Restraint of sex by controlling all the sense organs is **Brahmacarya**. Only control of sex organs is not **Brahmacarya**. Recollection of the sexual affairs (**smaraṇ**), description of sexual affairs (**kīrtan**), amorous dalliance (**keli**), viewing with carnal desire (**prekṣaṇ**), amorous talk, lustful determination, continued and determined effort of sexual enjoyment and lastly the enjoyment of sex or copulation- these are eight parts of mating. Strictly abstaining from all these is called **Brahmacarya**. **Brahmacarī** (the spiritual trainee) should be conscious of getting rid of the thoughts concerning enjoyment of sex as soon as it occurs in mind. If anybody finds pleasure in thinking about the sexual enjoyment he cannot maintain **Brahmacarya**. The **Brahmacarī** (celibate) must maintain abstemiousness. Control of food and sleep is necessary for a **Brahmacarī**. "Let my sex organs be dried up" by this firm determination the **Brahmacarī** can succeed in maintaining **Brahmacarya** (sexual abstinence). The unrestricted enjoyment of sex organs results in deterioration of health. Man becomes imbecile. It brings seminal weakness. Even the tree also becomes lusterless after growing fruits. **Brahmacarī** prevents the losing of vigour. By saving the vigour one becomes spirited. The virility enables one to transfer the spiritual knowledge to the heart of the disciple. The advice of unrestrained teacher fails to change the heart of the disciple. In a natural process the semen grows in the body. Restraining it in the body by means of controlling food, sleep, and restraining sexual thought is called **Brahmacarya**.

Brahmacarya is of two kinds. The **Brahmacarya** described above, is Naisthik **Brahmacarya**. And **Brahmacarya** which can be maintained in household life, getting married is termed as Upakurban **Brahmacarya**. The upakurban **Brahmacarī** can get married and produce child. But he should engage in mating with its counter consort only to give birth of a fair soul. After giving birth of the desired children he must restrain himself in other time. He must lead a controlled life. By this kind of restraint also one can attain the desired vigour to grasp sagacity.

The other aspect of **yam** is **aparigraha** (non-acceptance). Attachment to the worldly affairs is main cause of sufferings. So the devotee must shun the lust for worldly affairs. The scripture commands that a man should have the right of worldly affair to that extent by means of which he can maintain himself and his kith and kin. If he stores much or desires much he should be regarded as a thief and it is a punishable offence, it is a sin. One who belongs to many properties but not sacrifices it for benefit of other he must be regarded as a guilty. The devotee wants to reach the climax of self-denial so he should completely abdicate the worldly affair of enjoyment.

If the mind engages too much in thought of worldly affairs, it can not be absorbed in thought of god. So the devotee remains indifferent to earning wealth or storing it. He remains satisfied what he gains from his honest earning. His motto is plain living and high thinking. He never desires much. He only looks for god's blessing so that he realizes Him. As he is self contented he never finds himself dissatisfied. He never feels any want, it is **Aparigraha**.

If one has much property in excess of his needs and denies to distribute it to the needy persons, one proves oneself selfish and merciless. It is an offence. For that reason, the **yogī**, first of all gives up the affinity to the needless earthly enjoyment and then gives up also the desire of acquiring and storing them. He keeps himself satisfied with the objects by which he can maintain his plain livelihood. Those who acquire too much and have a great attachment to these things can not be a **yogī**. The **yogī** may stay within the objects of earthly concerned but he must be indifferent to them. The detachment to the mundane objects has a far-reaching effect. It helps the devotee to a great extent. When the devotee realizes the insubstantiality of earthly objects and as a result, offers no importance to these things. It reveals to him that the assumption of mundane body is also a **Parigraha**, a sense of despicability about the physical body grows in the mind of devotee. He can isolate himself from the body. The detachment enables the yogi to grasp the power of realization. Being freed him from the disturbance of the body he can be in a position to know the affairs of his previous birth. For infatuation created by too much attachment to the present body and mundane objects we have forgotten our previous lives. By practice if one enables to make one's body effortless and static and mind calm and one can have the power of far-sight etc. in the same way if someone becomes completely disinterested to the articles of enjoyment, and detached from the physical body he can have the power of alienating himself (soul) from body and as he enables himself to stay over the mental obsession of body he can have the power of cognition of previous life. It becomes possible by auspicious practice of **aparigraha**.

The other part of **Astāṅga yoga** (eight fold yoga system) is **Niyama**. **Niyama** means regularity, the maintenance of **Niyama** is very essential. The haphazard practice of yoga system can not yield desired success. Regularity should be observed beakless. What should be practiced regularly as the **Niyama**? It includes **śauca, santoṣah tapah, Sradhyāya, Isvara-pranidhana**. This spiritual act should be practiced carefully and earnestly and regularly. Among these, **śauca** means clearing or purification of one's body and mind. Purification of body is **bahyaśauca** and the purification of mind or internal sense is **ābhyantar śauca**. From the attachment of purified objects the vicious feeling grows, which is a hindrance to the manifestation of knowledge. The excited and provocative food incites one to crime. Dirty dresses many often make the mind gloomy. External dirtiness of body fells impression on mind, so cleanliness of body and dressing is necessary in **yogic** practice. To maintain cleanliness in body and shelters and be careful of taking food is essential for a **yogī**. It should also be mentioned that only the caution of taking food is not enough, the yogi should be cautious of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and enjoying something also. Primarily caution should be observed in taking the impure food staffs such as rotten, excited and unhealthy because having entered into the body it irritates the mind and mind becomes restless and excited and the restless and fickle mind is incapable of yogic practice. Similarly, caution must be taken in enjoying forbidden amusement because by this kind of arbitrary enjoyment mind becomes deviated from the spiritual path and engages in corrupted thought, thus external purification helps a great way in purifying the internal states. Taking wine is not beneficial in yogic practice. A man addicted to wine can not be a yogi. Wine make the mind unfit to proceed in yogic path, it makes mind gloomy to realize the subtle and distinctive nature of truth.

Purification of mind and intellect is called **ābhyantarik śauca**. To get rid of slandering, animadverting etc are internal purification. By slandering other, mind becomes vitiated and in befouled mind the devotion of god can not arouse. A slanderous person can not be devotee. So one who wants to be yogi, should first of all, clean his mind by auspicious thought. A spiritual man must want the well being for all ever for his enemy also. Actually the devotee can not have any enemy. Everybody for him is a living manifestation of his adorable beloved god. Thinking the well being for everybody is the main task of internal purity. 'Let everybody be

happy, let my enemy be happy' this kind of auspicious thought enables the mind to be purified. Caution should be observed in the act of purifying the body and mind. It is needed to purify the body for yogic practice. But needless rigidity is not acceptable. It is a disease and this hysterical mania for cleanliness and sanctity gradually becomes an incurable disease. So, caution must be maintained at the beginning. Scientific knowledge of purifying mind and body is preferable, neurosis is not desirable.

Now the result of the prolonged act of the purifying body and mind is being discussed. Through the practice of purification of body and mind a sense of despicableness to the flesh and blood grows and one's own body appears to one as hateful the body of other is also revealed as abominable. It is full of dirt and filth. Apathy and disgust grows to meet sexually with other's body. Thus through the austerity of purification one can get rid of himself from brutal love. The divine love of the yogic is free from sensuousness. The austere ascetic practice of purification removes completely the sex hunger.

Through the observance of purification of internal senses a sense of holiness and pleasantness and divinity grows in the heart. From this sense of holiness mind becomes calm and quiet. From the calmness the power of concentration occurs. By the power of concentration one can overcome sensuousness and fickleness of mind. The power of concentration enables the intellect to grasp the truth.

The other part of **Niyama** is **Santoṣah** (contentment). God is not obtainable by too much hurriedness. He who wants to realize god overnight can not realize Him. Again he who becomes frustrated in practicing austerities within a few days can not realize god. Hurriedness comes from the restlessness of mind. Every best work done to the humanity comes from the cool and calm brain. A sense of contentment brings the calmness of heart. He who aspires too much finds himself always dissatisfied and frustrated. Humanity can gain nothing from him. The devotee keeps himself complacent. But caution must be observed in this context. Self-complacency does not mean laziness, 'I will realize god in time, now it is not right time, I will try when god blesses me'- this kind of idle thought in arduous practice is not actual **Santoṣah**, it is called '**tuṣṭi**' which is a hindrance to the realization. **Santoṣah** is a sense of satisfaction which can be gained through carrying out the duty, **Santoṣah** is the satisfaction which comes from severe austerities and it always encourages the ascetic to pursue doggedly. when we get some desired object we find a kind of satisfaction and the austere ascetic practice of **Santoṣah** is that- by recouring on that feeling of satisfaction we have to bring under control the mind- 'what I have got is enough for me' with this feeling one should pursue on with the feeling of satisfaction and unworriedness. It is the meditation of **Santoṣah**. To avoid the thorn as it is meaningless and impossible to cover the whole earth by leather and it is sufficient to cover one's own feet, similarly if one thinks that 'I will be satisfied if I get all my desired objects' he can never be happy. True happiness comes only from **Santoṣah** i.e. from the realization that 'I have no indigence, god is my soul, I am self-contented, I want nothing but the favourable glance of god'. The complacency comes from the realization of triflingness of mundane enjoyment. From the stable complacency the realization of best happiness dawns in the heart of devotee.

Tapah - Tapah means endurance. As fire purifies the gold so the mundane suffering and disturbances purifies a devotee. Every great man has to face a lot of troubles in his life. Troubles, sufferings and disturbances came to their life as blessings of god. God puts him in the storm of sufferings when He wants to take him close to Him. Without the endurance of sufferings and without undergoing through the trouble no one can be fit for the celestial love of god. Those who is able to keep himself calm amidst the ocean of disturbances actually deserve the title of devotee but whose faith and reverence to god breaks down in the whirlwind of trouble is not true devotee. As through undergoing troubles one can reach the lotus feet of lord, the troubles are always welcomed to the devotee. It is **tapah**. Again **tapah** is the endurance of indomitable flow of sex-urge and anger. It enables the devotee to check this urges. It also includes the endurance of heat and cold; praise and blame. If one carries on austere endeavour neglecting heat and cold he can achieve a power to overcome the

disturbance of heat and cold and can attain a stage when the external factors such as heat and cold can not disturb his inner peace. It is called **Sārīrika Tapah**, (physical endurance). Similarly if one endures the insult and blame, dishonour calmly he can have the power of control over mind. In fact- insult or praise comes through sense organ to the mind and mind becomes restless. The restlessness of mind fells impression on soul and we find ourselves guilty or praiseworthy. Actually the soul is always pure and untouched from the praise or blame. If we endure all the praises and blames calmly we can be indifferent to the mental states and then these states can not disturb us. This is **Manasika Tapah**, (mental endurance). Controlling over the rough, slang and false language and using true and sweet language is **Vacika Tapah** (Verbal endurance). It is verbal austerities. When the body becomes fit for endurance and mind becomes indifferent to the pleasure and pain then the devotee is regarded as the best competent. One may use the power of **tapah** to acquire earthly objects but it is not desirable. Those who becomes agitated by a little of sufferings he can not be a yogi. He who conquers hunger and thirst can continue meditation for a break-less longtime. He who can make his body static by practice can overcome the bodily disturbances in going through meditation. These are very essential in religious austerities. When one can overcome the domination of body over the soul, the covering of body to the soul is lifted up. The heart which is completely independent of bodily trouble by means of will force can conquer the sensual appetites. The yogi directs his will to realize god.

Sradhyāya- It is the study of conclusive books and chanting of sacred mantra, i.e. Pranab etc. The study of the books which are redeemer of the soul decays the thirst for property and riches or worldly pleasure and enjoyment and thus one feels inclination to realize the soul. **Sradhyāya** also includes the silent and repeated recitation of name especially as enjoined by a guru. In the beginning the mind can not be concentrated to chanting (Japa). The chanters begin to chant the mantra and his mind begins to roam here and there frequently. It may happen at the beginning. But by regular exercise gradually mind becomes calm and concentrated and it becomes able to continue the japa (chanting) incessantly and can recollect uninterruptedly. With firm conviction if one wants to view god in order to pay homage, god certainly comes into view. In chanting if one invokes god with an aggrieved heart sometime, and in the next moment, the mind begins to build castles into the air and forgets completely god, though the chanting is continuing in tongue, the desired result can not be achieved.

Īsvaraṇidhāna- God is my soul. I have no independent existence. He is the source of all my deeds. I am a machine in the hands of god. The energy of doing an action appears and disappears as god wills. I have nothing to do. Performing any action keeping this sense firmly in mind is called **Īsvaraṇidhāna**. Offering the heart to the lotus feet of god and considering god as my soul, conceiving myself as a minute part of god, every effort is done by me is actually being done by my god- by this kind of consideration if any one can get rid of all the result of actions done by him to the lord, it is called the dedication of action to god. It is a system of purifying one's soul by means of actions. Here egoism is completely surrendered to god. If a devotee can succeed to surrender to god completely and perform the work as a machinery of god he can cross over the bondage of action. The virtue and vice, pity and sin can not bound him because his self-conceit is completely dedicated to the lotus feet of lord and he always finds a calmness and pleasantness in his heart. He always feels he lives on the lap of god and he is completely of god. He has no separate existence. He is a small dot in the ocean of bliss. From this feeling of difference and non-difference one can realize god. With this realization a deep attraction to god, which is called perfect devotion dawns in the heart of devotee. His life becomes successful. A work done without remembering god in heart can not be dedicated to god and the doer becomes bound by the work.

Śauca, Santoṣah, Tapah, Sadhyāya, Īsvaraṇidhana- these are Niyama. Niyama should be observed daily and timely.

Āsana- It is bodily posture to exercise spiritual practice such as meditation, etc. It is to make the body erect and static to continue meditation Āsana makes the body capable of yogic practice. When one becomes fit to sit in a definite posture, i.e. in a definite Āsana, three hours

at a stretch, motionlessly, then it is regarded that he is efficient on that Āsana. Meditation should be practiced in a static and steady posture. In practice of each Āsana it is advised to keep the backbone straight. It is wanted to keep the head, neck and breast in a straight line. It is also warned that the exercise of Āsana should be practiced freely with spontaneity and with full of ease. In practicing Āsana, if one feels some uneasiness one should not continue the exercise that Āsana. Again Āsana should be practiced daily in a definite time, at a definite place and in a definite posture. The practice of a definite Āsana in a definite duration is more preferable than the haphazard practice.

The other part of **astāṅgayoga** is **Prāṇayām**. **Prāṇayām** is the breathing exercise. It is very useful to concentrate the mind. But it should be practiced in front of an efficient guru or spiritual trainer, otherwise difficult disease may cause. If a devotee continues the japa (chanting) rhythmically **Prāṇayām** will be done spontaneously. So the purpose of practice **Prāṇayām** can be served through the practice of japa systematically. The silent and repeated recitation of definite mantra enjoined by a guru is easier and safer process of **Prāṇayām**. The systematic exercise of japa can serve all the purpose.

Pratyāhār- Without struggle the war can not be won. **Pratyāhār** is the auspicious spiritual struggle. It is a struggle against the sensual appetites. It is a struggle against the mind. When mind can be fixed in a definite object, the senses also become pulled up. But it is very difficult to fix the mind to a definite object for a long time. The mind has been enjoying the sensual pleasure birth after birth and it is habituated in these enjoyments. If one tries to concentrate the mind to a definite object, such as soul or god, it appears to the mind very difficult, apparently impossible. Different senses are habituated in enjoying their respective objects of enjoyment. They have a great affinity to these enjoyments. When the devotee tries to turn them to soul it seems very difficult. The struggle becomes very monotonous. The devotee tries to concentrate the mind to the mantra and the mind begins to roam here and there. Chanting is going on in one hand, the enjoying the imaginary sensual objects such as concupiscence is also going on simultaneously silently. The purpose of meditation becomes futile. The mind is so much habituated in gratification of senses by the enjoyment of senses through birth after birth, when mind becomes free from external enjoyments it begins to imagine its desired objects and begins to gratify its repressed desire even in sleep it enjoys the imaginary sensual objects in dream. To free the mind from every imagination is very hard task and it is **Pratyāhār**. When the senses become aloof from their respective objects of enjoyment the senses become calm and mind becomes capable to concentrate to one and only one point, this absolute inward concentration of the mind is called **Pratyāhār**. To rule over the mind is the hardest task in the world. Through regular practice, patience and perseverance one can be capable of governing the mind. The impure heart is restless heart. As much the mind becomes impure as also it becomes restless in the same proportion. Japa or chanting the sacred mantra cleans out all the impurities of mind. Intellect, favoured by the patience, helps a great way. When mind becomes controlled all the senses easily become under controlled. If willfully we can fix our mind in a definite point the senses automatically pointed to the same direction. The mind is queen of all the senses. If we enable to fix the mind to a spiritual entity then the senses can not grasp the outer objects.

The other way of the practice of **Pratyāhār** is not to give importance to the other thoughts of mind. If we can remain indifferent to those thoughts they become unsubstantial. By practice mind becomes the slave of the devotee and then if the devotee wants to fix his mind to a definite thing he can do so, if he wants to neglect something he also can do that. As the other bees of a beehive follow the queen bee so also the sense, mind, intellect, ego, nature all follow the instruction of an enlightened soul. All become the slave of the soul by means of the practice of **Pratyāhār**. Actually if mind finds more bliss in something than the earthly enjoyment then it spontaneously gives up the attraction of earthly enjoyment and becomes deeply engrossed to that object.

Dhāraṇā- The nature of mind is waving. The waves of thought is called mind. Sometimes the waves become gentle and mild, sometimes they are restless and wild. Observing its different

states the mind is termed in **yogasastra** as **Kṣipta**, **Mūḍha**, **Bikṣipta**, **Ekagra** and **Niruddha**. In **Kṣipta** states (**bhūmi**) mind is completely unable to think something significantly and distinctly, e.g. the child or the boys. Restlessness is their nature. They can not give importance to anything. **Mūḍha bhūmi** is the state, when the mind is completely absorbed in thought of objects of earthly concerned, such as money etc. in this state mind can not engage itself in higher thought such as soul or god. It seeks its satisfaction in earthly enjoyment. But not finding its desired satisfaction in earthly enjoyment it becomes frustrated. As the ultimate result is gloomy the state is termed as **Mūḍha** or moving under an illusion. **Mūḍha bhūmi** is a higher state than **Kṣipta bhūmi** because the mind in **Kṣipta bhūmi** is incapable of concentrating significantly to a distinct object but in this stage the mind becomes able to concentrate on a definite earthly object though it can not yield the desired result of satisfaction. In **Mūḍha bhūmi** the mind engages itself more to the secondary objects, i.e. earthly enjoyments than to the primary, i.e. soul or god. If one pays too much attention to earthly enjoyment he becomes ultimately mad.

In **Bikṣipta bhūmi** the mind becomes capable to concentrate to a spiritual entity for a short duration. It can meditate though the duration is very short. For a short period it can concentrate to an object and in the next moment it becomes restless and begins to roam here and there. It is a higher stage than the **Kṣipta** and **Mūḍha bhūmi** because it feels some necessity of meditation or realization of god, i.e. it becomes initially spiritual. The man belongs to this **bhūmi** admits the importance of spirituality. But for the lack of practice he finds his inefficiency to concentration. So the nature of **Bikṣipta** mind is that sometime it can concentrate to the object of meditation and next it becomes restless. Distraction of mind is the nature of this **bhūmi**. In the word **Bikṣipta Citta** there are two words- **Bikṣep** and **Citta**- **Citta** means the seat of remembrance and **Bikṣep** means distraction. So when in exercise of concentration the repeated recollection of a definite spiritual object is distracted frequently then it is called **Bikṣipta Citta**.

The next stage is **Ekagra bhūmi**. The devotee of this stage can concentrate bitterly to a definite spiritual object. The intellect in this stage becomes pin pointed. And by practice mind becomes gradually calm and earns the capability to absorb in thought of god firmly.

The **Niruddha bhūmi** is the absolutely thoughtless state of mind.

Dhāraṇā is the austere practice which can be done in **Bikṣipta Citta**. The ability of fixing and placing the mind in an orderly and acceptable duration in a definite place of body such in between the two eyebrows, is called **Dhāraṇā**. The serenity of mind to a definite place of the body can be possible by austere practice. The serenity of mind by means of which one can call back all the senses from their respective objects of enjoyment and can fix itself in a definite spiritual entity and finds bliss in this practice is **Dhāraṇā**. In the beginning the duration of **Dhāraṇā** is very short. In this stage mind should be fixed to a definite image of god or to definite sacred sound such as **Pranab Dhyān**- when through the help of practice, the duration of **Dhāraṇā** increases and the serenity of mind can stay undisrupted for a longer duration it is called **Dhyān**. The undisrupted thought of god for an acceptable duration is **Dhyān**. When the other thought comes under control and can not enter in the continuous flow of thought of god then it is **Dhyān**. **Dhyān** is the continuous flow of thought like undisrupted streamline flow of oil. **Dhāraṇā** is current of thought like the falling of honey which falls drop after drop, disrupted but **Dhyān** is flow of oil which continues ceaselessly. The difference between **Dhāraṇā** and **Dhyān** is that **Dhāraṇā** is disrupting and **Dhyān** is undisrupted stream of thought.

Samādhi- In **Dhyān** there exists three knowledge of three entities. They are- **Dhyān** or the knowledge of the act of meditation (i.e. the knowledge that I am meditating), secondly the **dhyātā** or the knowledge of subject or doer (such as the subject, I, who is doing the act of meditation) and thirdly **dhyeya** or the object of meditation, such as the knowledge of lord whom I worship. The knowledge of these three different entities remain present in the heart of the meditator in **Dhyān**. But when mind completely absorbs in meditation the knowledge of **dhyātā** (doer) and the knowledge of **Dhyān** (the act of meditation) completely abolish. Only the knowledge of **dhyeya** (my Lord, whom I worship) exists then it is called **Samādhi**. In this

stage the doer so much absorbs in thought of god that he completely forgets himself and his acts. **Samādhi** is termed as **Savikalpaka Samādhi** when the knowledge of **dhyeya** (the god) exists in the heart of devotee and the **Samādhi** termed as **Nirvikalpaka Samādhi** when the knowledge of **dhyeya** (image of god) also abolishes from the heart of meditator and only the intuition of pure bliss persists. In this stage the devotee realizes that the whole universe is the expression of supreme bliss. There is nothing but supreme bliss. He himself is a small dot of ocean of supreme bliss. He is no other separate existence but bliss. Even the minute creatures are also the expression of supreme bliss. And thus the devotee realizes the sameness in every object. It is god realization.

Thus the **Aṣṭāṅgayoga** includes **Yam, Niyama, Āsana, Prānāyām, Pratyāhār, Dhāraṇā, Dhyān** and **Samādhi**. These are the eight steps towards god realization. The mastery over external sense organs is called **Yam**. The mastery over internal organs such as mind, intellect etc is called **Niyama**. To make the body fit for yogic (austere) practice is called **Āsana**. Mastery over breathing to concentrate the mind is called **Prānāyām**. To call back all the senses and mind and intellect from external mundane enjoyment is **Pratyāhār**. To fix the mind to a definite spiritual entity such as on the image of god or **mantra** in a distinct place of body such as, in between two eye brows is called **Dhāraṇā**. To keep the mind motionlessly in the lotus feet of god or self is called **Dhyān** and lastly to be completely merged into the beloved (god or brahma) is called **Samādhi**.