UNIT 2: INTRODUCTION TO PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRA II

UNIT STRUCTURE

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2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to

- Know the meaning and definition of Yoga
- Understand the purpose of Yoga
- Understand the nature of Consciousness.
- Understand the Path of Liberation.
- Know the practical implications of Yoga.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, you have learnt about origin of Maharishi Patanjali, history of that philosophical time. You must also have been able to acquire a brief history of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and their commentaries. Now in this present unit you will study about the subject matter of Patanjali Yoga Sutras as well as the definition, purpose and nature of yoga as defined by Maharishi Patanjali in his book Yoga Sutra.

The subject matter of the Patanjali's Yoga Sutra is the systematic study and practice of Yoga as means to achieve self-realization and liberation. It outlines

the philosophy, principles, and practices required to quiet the mind and experience the true nature of consciousness. This framework provides a holistic approach in understating and transcending human consciousness.

2.3 BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THE YOGA SUTRAS

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra presents yoga as a process of mental discipline aimed at the cessation of mental modifications, leading to liberation and inner peace. Its purpose is to transcend human suffering by realizing one's true self, and its nature emphasizes practice, discipline, and self-control as integral to spiritual progress.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra is a great treatise that outlines the art and science of Yoga meditation for self-realization. It is built on a foundation of Samkhya School. The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is a short technical manual on the vast subject of yoga and it is mainly a compilation of much more oral tradition. Patanjali divided his Yoga Sutra into four chapters or padas: Samadhi Pada, Sadhana Pada, Vibhuti Pada and Kaivalya Pada which comprises 196 aphorisms (sutras), each addressing a specific aspect of the yoga path. Below is a summary of its core subject matter:

1. Samadhi Pada (Chapter on Contemplation)

Samadhi Pada describes the result of yogic practice and consists of 51 sutras. This chapter introduces the philosophy and purpose of yoga, defining it as the cessation (nirodha) of the fluctuations (vrittis) of the mind. Thus, this chapter deals with the concepts like as follows –

- The nature of consciousness and its disturbances.
- The types of mental modifications that prevent spiritual clarity.
- The practice of abhyasa (persistent effort) and vairagya (detachment) as essential for stabilizing the mind.

- The eight stages of samadhi (absorption), ranging from focused meditation (savikalpa) to ultimate union with pure consciousness (nirvikalpa).

At first this chapter discuss the nature of Samadhi, its classification, sub-classification, the characteristics of all these concepts have been analysed. The sutras–

1-2: Explain the nature of Chitta (mind) and its stages.

3-11: elaborate upon the five types of *Vrittis* or fluctuation; *Pramana, viparya, vikalpa, nidra and smriti.*

12-16: Explain the means for restraint of Vrittis – *Abhyasa and Vairagya* i.e. practice and detachment; methods of restraining fluctuations.

17-22: Illustrate how to attain *Samprajnata* and *Asamprajnata* samadhi through control over Vrittis and purification.

23-29: Define the alternative methods of attaining Samadhi through *Ishwar-Pranidhana* (devotion to God), its fruits, self-realization, and the absence of obstacle in the yogic path.

30-32: define Yoga Antaraya and their remedies. The nine types of Yoga Antarayah i.e. *Vyadhi, Styana, Samsaya, Pramada, Alasya, Avirati, Bhrantidarsna, Alabdhabhumikatva, Anavasthitatva*,

33-36: Explains the methods to keep the mind calm, pure and steady; *Maitri, Karuna, Mudita, Upeksa*

37-43: Explains Samprajnata Samadhi (Samapatti) and its types

44-50: Define the result of Samapatti

51: Explain Asamprajnata Samadhi.

2. Sadhana Pada (Chapter on Practice)

This section emphasizes the practical disciplines necessary for self-purification and spiritual growth. It is consisting of 55 sutras and outlines two form of yoga –

- The Kriya Yoga path (discipline, self-study, and surrender to the divine) as a preparatory practice.
- The Ashtanga Yoga or Eightfold Path, which includes:
    1. Yama (ethical restraints).
    2. Niyama (observances).
    3. Asana (physical posture).
    4. Pranayama (breath control).
    5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses).
    6. Dharana (concentration).
    7. Dhyana (meditation).
    8. Samadhi (absorption).

These steps aim to purify the body, mind, and spirit for spiritual enlightenment. Given below are the specific Sutras along with their content in brief –

1-2: Kriya Yoga and its results are mentioned here.

3-9: Mentioned the five afflictions (Kleshas), such as *Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesa, Abhinivesah*,

10-11: Methods for the eradication of afflictions and their seed impressions.

12-14: KleshamulaKarmaashata (root tendencies of afflictions) and their results.

15-16: Mentioned nature of sorrow and its cessation for the wise.

17: Causes of sorrow – association of the Drashta (seer) and the Drishya (seen)

18-19: the nature of Drashta and its distinctions.

20-21: The nature of Drishya and its emergence for the Drashta.

22: When and for Whom Drishya Arises and Dissolves

23-26: The connection between the seer and the seen, its cause, the cessation of the cause, and the method to achieve it.

27: The seven types of ultimate wisdom (prāntabhūmiprajñā).

28-32: The results of practicing yoga and a detailed description of the importance of the eight limbs of yoga.

33-34: The process of contemplation and the methods to overcome distractions.

35-45: The practice of the restraints (yama) and observances (niyama) and the fruits attained upon achieving their completeness

46-48: The characteristics of yoga postures (āsanas), their mastery, and their benefits.

49-53: The characteristics of breath control (prāṇāyāma), its types, and its benefits.

54-55: The characteristics of withdrawal of the senses (pratyāhāra) in yoga, and the results obtained through its mastery.

3. Vibhuti Pada (Chapter on Powers)

This chapter consists of 56 Sutras and explores the supernatural powers (siddhis) that arise from advanced yoga practice, such as heightened intuition, mind-reading, and mastery over the elements. While fascinating, these powers are seen as distractions from the ultimate goal of liberation.

The text highlights the importance of maintaining detachment to avoid being ensnared by these abilities.

1-4: The characteristics of three yogic practices—concentration (dhāraṇā), meditation (dhyāna), and absorption (samādhi)—and their technical definitions as per the scriptures.

5-6: The results of mastering these practices and their application at various levels.

7-8: The external and internal aspects of the eightfold path of yoga.

9-13: The types of mental modifications (citta-pariṇāma) and their explanations.

14-15: The causes of transformation in mental states related to virtue (dharma) and differences in transformations.

16-35: The three transformations related to virtue (dharma), along with their applications in various contexts, and a detailed description of the various powers (vibhūtis) attained through self-restraint (samyama).

36: These powers are understood or said to be attainments from the perspective of the stage of distraction, but from the perspective of Samadhi, all these powers are obstacles for the seeker.

37-48: With the success of the practice of self-control, a mysterious power manifests in the purified mind, through which the Yogi gains victory over various objects and situations; a description of such diverse

49-50: The opportunity to attain the state of liberation (Kaivalya). Upon achieving such a state, the coverings of attachment and ego are removed entirely.

51-53: The emergence of discriminative knowledge (Viveka Jnana) and its definitive outcome owers.

4. Kaivalya Pada (Chapter on Liberation)

The final chapter discusses the nature of liberation (kaivalya), achieved when the practitioner transcends ego and realizes the pure, unchanging consciousness (Purusha). It is consisting of 34 Sutras and covers concepts like
- The distinction between the mind (chitta) and the self (Purusha).

- The dissolution of karmic imprints (samskaras) and the attainment of absolute freedom from worldly attachments and cycles of birth and death (moksha).

- Liberation is marked by unity with universal consciousness and complete independence from material existence.

Along with the directive of the mind's independent nature, the description of Kaivalya (liberation or Moksha) should be understood briefly in the following manner:

1-3: Other means for attaining perfection (Siddhi).

4-6: The origin of thoughts formed from individuality (Asmita) and the cessation of other thoughts.

7-9: The actions of a Yogi and a non-Yogi, and the results (Vipaka) of those actions.

10-11: The eternal impressions (Anadi Vasanas) and the opportunity for their absence.

12-14: The past and future forms of Dharma, their qualities, and their essence.

15-17: The paths of the mind (Chitta) and the object (Vastu) are distinct. The mind serves as a means of knowledge, and the object is the subject of knowledge.

18-19: The knower of the object is the enlightened being (Baddha Purusha). However, when the observed or the outcome transforms, the mind does not recognize it.

20-21: When the mind and the observed become one simultaneously, the grasping becomes faultless, leading to purity (Amānya).

22-23: Through the self (Atma), the mind (Chitta) is inspired, and through the connection of self and mind, all knowledge is comprehended.

24-28: The mind is used for the self, but it is not required for one who has realized the ultimate truth (Tattvajna).

29-32: For the self-realized individual, there is the attainment of absorption (Samadhi), the absence of afflictions (Kleshas) and actions (Karmas), the cessation of worldly attachments, and the conclusion of the transformations of the Gunas (qualities).

33-34: The establishment of the pure essence of consciousness (Chetan Atmatattva) leads to liberation (Moksha) or Kaivalya.

Sage Patanjali was a true genius who was more scientific than most scientists and more logical than most logicians. His use of words was precise and economical, each verse has methodical arrangement thatserve specific purpose.

2.4 DEFINITION OF YOGA, PURPOSE AND NATURE OF YOGA

Yoga has been defined in different ways in various scriptural texts. The word yoga originated from Sanskrit root *yuj*, which means to add, combine or unite. In the context of yoga, it signifies the union of the individual soul with the divine. While different paths of yoga represent this union in various ways, the ultimate goal remains the same – oneness with the cosmic energy of God.

The literature on yoga is vast, with numerous texts written from the era of the Vedas and Upanishads to modern times. However, Maharishi Patanjali has described yoga as "*Yogah Chitta Vritti Nirodha*" (P.Y.S 1/2) in his Yoga Sutras, which translates to "the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind." It means that yoga is the practice of stilling the mind, calming the distractions and disturbances that arise within the consciousness, allowing one to experience a higher state of awareness and connection.

Definition of Yoga as defined in Yoga Sutra:

Yoga is defined as "stilling the fluctuations of the mind (consciousness)". But what are these fluctuations? They can be understood as waves rising and falling in the ocean – just as the sea is never still, our mind constantly generates a stream of thoughts and emotions. These mental fluctuations can bring either pleasure or sorrow, creating a restless state of consciousness.

Based on their manifestation, the sage Patanjali identities five types of vrittis (mental modifications): *Pramana* (valid knowledge), *Viparyaya* (misconception),*Vikalpa* (imagination), *Nidra* (sleep), and Smrti (memory). These vrittis are further classified into two categories: *Klista* and *Aklista*.

- *Klista*vrittis are those that cause sorrow and pain. They disturb the mind, hinder spiritual progress, and create obstacles on the path of yoga
- *Aklista*vrittis, on the other hand, are beneficial. They do not cause suffering and are supportive of a yogic lifestyle.

For a practitioner of yoga, it is essential to identify these vrittis and work towards calming or overcoming the *klista* tendencies through disciplined yogic practices, ultimately leading to a tranquil and balanced mind.

Yoga is the path to a perfect life. It is a method that influenced every aspect of human nature. Yoga represents a comprehensive system through which the unity of the soul and the divine is realized. By attaining this knowledge, the union between the divine and the soul is achieved.

Purpose of Yoga

The primary purpose of yoga, according to Patanjali, is to attain *kaivalya*, or *liberation*, which is the state of ultimate freedom from the bondage of the material world and the cycles of suffering (samsara). This is achieved by cultivating self-awareness, self-discipline, and a deep understanding of the true nature of the self, which is separate from the body and mind. The purpose is not just physical health, but spiritual evolution and inner peace.

Nature of Yoga

Patanjali presents yoga as a systematic and disciplined approach for attaining self-realization and mastery over the mind. It includes Ashtanga Yoga (the eight limbs of yoga), which serve as guidelines for living a meaningful life and achieving mental clarity. These are:

1. Yama (ethical disciplines)
2. Niyama (observances)
3. Asana (physical postures)
4. Pranayama (breath control)
5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses)
6. Dharana (concentration)
7. Dhyana (meditation)
8. Samadhi (absorption or enlightenment)

These practices work together to help an individual transcend the limitations of the ego and achieve union with the divine or ultimate reality. Yoga is thus seen as both a philosophy and a practice, focusing onharmonizing the mind, body, and spirit for the purpose of spiritual growth and inner peace. The nature of

yoga in Patanjali's system is both practical and transformative, emphasizing discipline and mental control to attain a higher state of consciousness.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1 What is the name of second chapter of Yoga Sutra?
Q2 How many sutras are there in the third chapter of Yoga Sutra?
Q3 In which chapter, the concept of samyam is described?
Q4 List the eight limbs of Yoga stated by Maharshi Patanjali.
Q5 List five chittavrittis.

2.5 LET US SUM UP

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras form the cornerstone of modern yoga practice, offering profound guidance through the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga. These teaching explore the dynamics of both consciousness and unconsciousness patterns, aiming to free practitioners from their habitual entanglements and lead them toward liberation. By engaging with the Yoga Sutras through study, contemplation, and practice, we can find relevance in their philosophical depth and experiential richness.

The subject matter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra revolves around the systematic study of the human mind, consciousness, and the journey toward self-realization through disciplined practice. It highlights the eightfold path (Ashtanga Yoga) as a holistic approach to overcoming mental disturbances, achieving innerclarity, and realizing the true essence of the self (Purusha).By addressing the fluctuations of the mind (Chitta Vrittis) and offering practical tools such as meditation, ethical principles, and self-discipline, the text provides both a philosophical and practical guide to attaining spiritual liberation (Kaivalya).Ultimately, it serves as a timeless manual for transcending worldly distractions and experiencing pure consciousness.

2.6 FURTHER READINGS

1. Karambelkar, P.V. (2017). *Patanjala Yoga Sutra*. KaivalyadhamaLonavla, Pune
2. Saraswati, S. S. (1983). *Four Chapters on Freedom: Commentary on Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Yoga Publications Trust
3. Iyengar, B. K. S. (2014). *Light on Yoga*. HarperCollins Publishers India

2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS.

Answer to Q1 - Sadhana pada

Answer to Q2 - Fifty Six

Answer to Q3 - Vibhuti

Answer to Q4 - Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi

Answer to Q5 - Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smriti

2.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Very Short Questions:

Q1- What is meant by "Yoga" according to Maharishi Patanjali?

Q2- What is the meaning of "Chitta Vritti Nirodha"?

Q3- How many Chapters (Pada) are there in the Yoga Sutra?

Q4- Name any two types of Chitta Vrittis.

Q5- What is the ultimate goal of yoga according to Patanjali?

Short Questions:

Q1- Write a brief note on the subject matter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra.

Q2- Explain the concept of Chitta and its fluctuations.

Q3- What are Klista and Aklista Vrittis? Explain briefly.

Q4 Describe the eight limbs of Ashtanga Yoga.

Q5. What is the role of Yoga of Abhyasa and Vairagya in Practice?

Long Questions:

Q.1 Explain in detail the four chapters (Padas) of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra.

Q.2 Discuss the definition, purpose and nature of Yoga according to Patanjali.

Q.3 Describe the concept of Samadhi and its different types.

Q.4 Explain the five Chitta Vrittis and their impact on the mind.

Q.5 Elaborate on the eight fold path (Ashtanga Yoga) and its importance in achieving liberation.

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