UNIT 9 – SAPTADHA PRAJNA AND REBIRTH

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Meaning, Definition and types of Saptadha Prajna
9.4 Meaning, Definition and types of Rebirth
9.5 Let Us Sum Up
Check your progress
9.6 Answers to Check Your Progress
9.7 Further Readings
9.8 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- learn the meaning, concept of Saptadha Prajna and its types.
- learn the meaning, concept of rebirth according to Patanjali Yoga Sutra.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

In this unit one gets the understanding of the Saptadha Prajna or the seven forms of illuminations of the consciousness. It also gives the idea of the previous birth and rebirth of the soul as mentioned by Patanjali.

9.3 MEANING, DEFINITION AND TYPES OF SAPTADHA PRAJNA

तस्य सप्तधा प्रान्त भूमिःप्रज्ञा

Tasya saptadhā prāntabhūmiḥ prajñā

Chapter 2 Sutra 27 (P.Y.S.)

-There are seven stages of enlightenment of that purusha. Purusha or the consciousness has seven fold stages of wisdom or prajna.

The consciousness has seven stages of illumination, each one higher than the previous one. Prantabhumi means a particular range or province. It appears

that during the process of vivekakhyati of the purusha or consciousness goes through different stages of experience. Those experiences are contemplative.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (II.27) convey the profound notion of SaptadhāPrajñā, which translates as sevenfold wisdom. Yogis develop higher knowledge by sustained practice (abhyāsa), detachment (vairāgya), and ongoing discriminative insight (viveka-khyāti). These seven levels reflect the total maturity of spiritual wisdom, culminating in emancipation (kaivalya).

Types of Saptadha Prajna are-

1. Realization of what is to be avoided
2. Awareness of the means for that removal
3. Awareness of spiritual evolution
4. Awareness of fulfilment and accomplishment;
5. Awareness of the purpose of experience and liberation;
6. Awareness of the fulfillment of the work of the gunas;
7. Awareness of one's own self, Kaivalya

The first step entails a firm conviction that future pain can and must be averted. The yogi understands that suffering results from ignorance and misidentification with the body-mind complex. This realization strengthens one's desire to permanently forsake the causes of sorrow.

During the second stage, the yogi eliminates the basic causes of suffering, including ignorance (avidyā), egoism (asmitā), attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa), and fear of death (abhiniveśa). Through sustained awareness and effort, these ailments lose their ability to bind consciousness.

The third level is direct realization of cessation (hāna). Suffering no longer exists as a lived experience; the yogi lives in inner freedom, clarity, and calm. This is not intellectual understanding, but rather experiential knowledge.

The fourth level involves the total fulfillment of the means of liberty. Discriminative wisdom, meditation, and ethical discipline have been perfected, leaving no ambiguity or instability on the road. The yogi is firmly rooted in insight.

The fifth level represents the completion of the intellect (kṛtārthabuddhi). The mind has completed its goal of guiding consciousness to the truth. There is no longer a desire for experiences, knowledge, or achievement.

In the sixth stage, the qualities of nature (sattva, rajas, and tamas) no longer bound the yogi. The mind becomes clear and calm, reflecting pure awareness without distortion.

The seventh and last stage is Kaivalya, or ultimate emancipation. Pure consciousness exists in its own essence, free of identification, limitation, and pain. SaptadhāPrajñā symbolizes the completion of the yogic journey and the blossoming of total spiritual wisdom.

Through these seven stages, a higher kind of awareness is developed which is called Vivekakhyati.

9.4 MEANING, DEFINITION AND TYPES OF REBIRTH

Maharshi Patanjali gives various references to have knowledge of the previous birth. This symbolizes that the soul takes rebirth

Knowledge of previous births

संस्कारसाक्षात्करणा त्पूर्वजाति ज्ञानम्॥3/18(P.Y.S.)॥

Samskārasākşātkaraṇāt pūrvajāti jñānam

Samskāra: impression; sākṣātkaraṇāt by direct perception, pūrva previous, jāti: birth: jñānam: knowledge

Meaning- By direct perception of the impressions, knowledge of previous births (arises).

Samskaras are to two types: memory and vasana. Memory is subconscious and vasana is unconscious. When in memory, the samskaras are arranged in a definite order; when in the unconscious, they are not so arranged. The samskaras which are giving rise to the fruits or effects are stored in the form of prarabdha, like sound in a gramophone record. By practis-ing samyama on the impressions that can be seen during the deeper stages of

consciousness, the subconscious as well as the unconscious can be probed. By practising samyama on these samskaras, the yogi can have access to past births.

Memory and impressions (of previous birth)

जातिदेशकालव्यवहितानामप्यानन्तर्यस्मृति संस्कारयोरेकरूपत्वात्॥4/9(P.Y.S.)॥

Jātideśakālavyavahitānāmapyānantaryam smṛtisamskārayorekarūpatvät

Jäti class of birth, deśa place, kāla time, vyavahitānām: sepa rated, apr even, anantaryam sequence, smrtisamskärayoh of memory and impressions, ekarūpatvät because of sameness in form

Meaning- Because memory and impression are the same in form there is a sequence although they may be divided by class of birth, place and time.

When the jiva migrates from one body to another in countless births, there is continuity between the various births and the memory and impressions of all the past births are also continued in this birth. This is because there is an uninterrupted sequence of one personality throughout these incarnations. The present birth is divided from the previous births insofar as it takes place in a different class of birth (jati), in a different place and at a different time, but the births are all of one single jiva.

After departing from the body, when reincarnation takes place in another body, the body, place and time cannot be the same. Moreover, the knowledge of the conscious mind does not link itself with any previous birth at all. It is very difficult to understand the sameness of the two births. This very important topic concerns the theory of transmigration of jivatma. Thus, the memory and impressions being the same in different incarnations, the difference in birth, place and time does not matter.

CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q 1) What is SaptadhaPrajna according to Patanjali

Q 2) How Patanjali describes the concept of rebirth or by adopting the knowledge of the previous birth

Q3) How many types of wisdom are included in SaptadhaPrajna ?

Q4) Is SaptadhaPrajna related to knowledge or action?

Q5) How many types of Samskara?

9.5 LET US SUM UP

- There are seven stages of enlightenment of that purusha. Purusha or the consciousness has seven fold stages of wisdom or prajna.

Types of Saptadha Prajna are-

1. Realization of what is to be avoided
2. Awareness of the means for that removal
3. Awareness of spiritual evolution
4. Awareness of fulfilment and accomplishment;
5. Awareness of the purpose of experience and liberation;
6. Awareness of the fulfillment of the work of the gunas; and
7. Awareness of one's own self.

Through these seven stages, a higher kind of awareness is developed which is called Vivekakhyati.

- Maharshi Patanjali gives various references to have knowledge of the previous birth. This symbolizes that the soul takes rebirth
- Knowledge of previous births-
  संस्कारसाक्षात्करणात्पूर्वजातिज्ञानम्॥3/18(P.Y.S.)॥
- Memory and impressions(of previous birth)-
  जातिदेशकालव्यवहितानामप्यानन्तर्यस्मृतिसंस्कारयोरेकरूपत्वात्॥4/9(P.Y.S.)॥
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✓ 9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q 1. According to Patanjali there are seven stages of enlightenment of that purusha. They are known as Saptadha Prajna. Purusha or the consciousness has seven fold stages of wisdom or prajna.

Answer to Q 2. Maharshi patanjali considers the concept of Rebirth is associated with the previous birth. He puts forward the ways through which previous birth can be understood. By direct perception of the impressions, knowledge of previous births (arises).

When the jiva migrates from one body to another in countless births, there is continuity between the various births and the memory and impressions of all the past births are also continued in this birth. This is because there is an uninterrupted sequence of one personality throughout these incarnations. The present birth is divided from the previous births insofar as it takes place in a different class of birth (jati), in a different place and at a different time, but the births are all of one single jiva.

Answers to Q3. There are seven types of wisdom are included in Saptadha Prajna.

Answers to Q4. Yes**,** Saptadha Prajna related to knowledge or action.

Answers to Q5. Samskaras are to two types' memory and vasana. Memory is subconscious and vasana is unconscious

9.7 FURTHER READINGS

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9.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Q1) What is rebirth?

Q2) Is karma related to rebirth?

Q3) What is the purpose of Saptadha Prajna?

Q4) Name any two types of prajna from Saptadha Prajna?

Q 5) Mention the Saptadha Prajna of Patanjali

Q 6) How is the knowledge of the previous birth is attained a ccording to Patanjali

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