

CHAPTER-VII**THE AUXILIARY YOGAS: RĀJA – YOGA AND TANTRA – YOGA****1. THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH OF YOGA: RĀJA-YOGA:**

The yoga which is commonly known as *Aṣṭāṅga*-yoga is also known as *Rāja*-yoga. The sage Patanjali has composed the treatise on *Rāja*-yoga that has come down to us. The spiritual path described therein is so much systematic and infallible that it has prevailed, in one form or the other, over every single scripture of this land. The *Bhāgavatam* also owes a great deal of its methods of *sādhana* to it.

The word '*Rāja*' is derived from '*raj*' (1.U.) meaning to be resplendent, to illuminate, to make radiant, etc.'¹⁷⁴⁶ It is also called a royal road to the Enlightenment; royal because it deals with mind which is the chief of the senses; and is unconquerable (*durjayānām aham manah*).¹⁷⁴⁷

Mind-stuff (*citta*) is the main instrument of this yoga; body, the substitute. Mind exists of the impressions of karma; it extends through body. In order to draw *citta* towards yoga, the senses have to be disciplined. Only the disciplined and withdrawn *citta* can accomplish yoga. There is no enemy other than the uncontrolled mind; its control and establishment in equanimity is the greatest worship of God.¹⁷⁴⁸ Therefore, this yoga is also known as *Mano*-yoga.

Patanjali defines yoga as the total cessation of the modes of the mind-stuff.¹⁷⁴⁹ In the same vein, the *Bhāgavatam* defines yoga as the destruction of the seed of karma and thus calming the flow of mental modification.¹⁷⁵⁰ If one can establish control over speech, mind, vital forces, senses and self, then there is no more involvement in *saṁsāra*.¹⁷⁵¹ If a *sādhaka* is desireless and completely dependent on God, then he is

¹⁷⁴⁶ MMW

¹⁷⁴⁷ XI, 16, 11

¹⁷⁴⁸ VII, 8, 10

¹⁷⁴⁹ RY, 1, 2

¹⁷⁵⁰ VII, 7, 28

¹⁷⁵¹ XI, 16, 42

not defeated in overcoming the obstacles and attains the joy of the self¹⁷⁵² because desireless is deemed the greatest and most efficacious of all means to the final beatitude.¹⁷⁵³ The perfect yogis who conquer their breath, senses and self receive God's grace and are never defeated.¹⁷⁵⁴

In fact, *Rāja*-yoga is not to be taken merely as one of the paths to the realization of God; it is auxiliary to all other paths that strive for the realization, because perfect non-attachment in all respects is the goal of all yogas.¹⁷⁵⁵ It is an inseparable part of *sādhanā*, because it thoroughly deals with the very microcosmic as well as the macrocosmic existence of the individual.

For the attainment of the *Asamprajñāta*, *Nirbīja* or *Nirvikalpa samādhi*, that is, for accomplishment of yoga, eight limbs of yoga have been defined;¹⁷⁵⁶ therefore, the yoga is called *Aṣṭāṅga*-yoga too. The eight limbs are: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. The *Bhāgavatam* too accepts these fully, adds few disciplines to some of them and explains several aspects of Yoga in detail.

It is of utmost importance to note that unlike the *Yogasūtras* of Patanjali, which consider devotion to God as only one of the means, the *Bhāgavatam* puts total emphasis on the dedication of mind to God in the pursuit of yoga considering it as the substance of yoga.^{1757*} The *Bhāgavatam* says, "The Supreme Yoga consists of withdrawal of the mind from all things and concentrating on *Paramātman*."^{1758*} Because *citta* that thinks of the objects becomes attached to those and *citta* that thinks of God is dissolved in him.^{1759*} The Supreme Soul should be contemplated on with the help of yogic practices to be accompanied by other two paths of right knowledge and worship of God's form.¹⁷⁶⁰ In fact, the aim of *sādhanā*, according to the *Bhāgavatam*, is to

¹⁷⁵² XI,28,44

¹⁷⁵³ XI,20,35

¹⁷⁵⁴ III,15,7

¹⁷⁵⁵ III,32,27

¹⁷⁵⁶ III,28,1-12; IV,12,17

¹⁷⁵⁷ XI,23,61*

¹⁷⁵⁸ XI,20,21; XI,23,46*; VII,15,30

¹⁷⁵⁹ XI,14,27*

¹⁷⁶⁰ XI,20,24

enjoy the bliss of *Brahman*. When *citta* becomes utterly pacific and free from all passions and modifications, it enjoys the bliss of *Brahman* (*Brahma sukham*), forever.¹⁷⁶¹

i. & ii. Yama and Niyama:

The yoga enumerates five disciplines each under *yama* and *niyama*. The *Bhāgavatam* gives twelve internal disciplines, including the five enumerated by Patanjali, known as *Yama*: Non-violence (*ahimsā*), truth (*satya*), non-covetousness (*asteya*), solitude (*asaṅga*), modesty (*hrī*), non-accumulation (*asañcaya*), faith in scriptures (*āstikyam*), celibacy (*brahmacarya*), silence (*mauna*), firmness (*sthairya*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), fearlessness (*abhaya*).¹⁷⁶²

The twelve external disciplines known as *Niyama* are: Purity of mind and body (*śauca*), repetition of God's name (*japa*), austerity (*tapa*), offering oblations in fire (*homa*), faith (*śraddhā*), hospitality (*ātithyam*), worship of the Divine (*Mad arcanam*=My worship), pilgrimage (*tirthāṭana*), altruism (*parārtha*), contentment (*tuṣṭi*), service to guru (*ācārya sevnam*).¹⁷⁶³

The *Bhāgavatam* gives sublime definitions of many of these and other spiritual qualities:

Śama is firm settlement of intellect in God; *dama* is control of sense; *titikṣā* is to bear quietly the affliction; *dhṛti* is total control over the palate and the senses; the highest charity (*dāna*) is abandonment of the tendency to harm other beings; *tapa* consists of abstinence of desires; powerfulness (*śaurya*) is the conquest of one's basic nature; truthfulness (*satya*) is vision of oneness; purity (*śauca*) is non-attachment in actions; *tyāga* is *sannyāsa* – the renunciation of worldliness and worldly life; dharma is the desirable wealth; *yajña*, the sacrifice is God Himself; *dakṣiṇā* is spiritual enlightenment; strength (*bala*) is the control of vital energy; the greatest good fortune is sharing God's majesties; the greatest gain is devotion to God; true path is that which directs the *citta*; the pitiable (*kṛpaṇa*) is one without control over senses; the master is

¹⁷⁶¹ VII, 15, 35

¹⁷⁶² XI, 19, 33

¹⁷⁶³ XI, 19, 34

non-attached to *guṇas*, his opposite is the slave.¹⁷⁶⁴

Kapila gives following disciplines for the attainment of liberation:^{1765*} The practice of inward concentration along with the control of mind and senses, faith, devotion to God, equal sympathy for all, abstinence from the exploitation of others, non-attachment, continence, silence, discharge of *svadharmā*, contentment in what one gains legitimately, solitude, moderation in eating, calmness, kindness, self-control, reflection on the distinction between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, dedication of all works to God, seeking after knowledge, abstention from evil ways and company, service of holy men, practice of steady posture suitable for spiritual practice, contemplation on God and His deeds – these and other disciplines must be followed by *sādhaka*.

Along with these qualities and disciplines, *sādhaka* is to engage himself in *svādhyāya* and *sādhusaṅga*. *Svādhyāya* is the study of scriptures accompanied by contemplation of the purport of the scriptures as well as introspection. The one who thus regularly observes disciplines gradually becomes eligible for the *summum bonum*.¹⁷⁶⁶

iii. *Āsana*:

Both, Patanjali and the *Bhāgavatam*, define posture (*āsana*) thus: ‘Posture is that which is firm and pleasant.’¹⁷⁶⁷ The *Bhāgavatam* also says that *āsana* should be comfortable¹⁷⁶⁸ and ‘steady’. If the impulse to mobilize the sense organs is contained, one can gradually divert the mind into spiritual contemplation.

While sitting for worship or meditation, one should select a clean, level and secluded place. One should sit upright with hands in lap and eyes concentrated between the eyebrows, or on the tip of the nose or the heart-lotus; one should try to meditate on God for a long time.¹⁷⁶⁹ Perfection in posture is accomplished through constant practice and determination. It is noteworthy that the concept of *āsana* as found in the *Yogasūtras* and the *Bhāgavatam* has nothing to do with the popular concepts of

¹⁷⁶⁴ XI, 19, 36-44

¹⁷⁶⁵ III, 28, 2-6; III, 27, 6*-9*

¹⁷⁶⁶ VI, 1, 12

¹⁷⁶⁷ II, 2, 15; VII, 15, 31; RY, II, 46

¹⁷⁶⁸ XI, 14, 32

¹⁷⁶⁹ III, 28, 8; XI, 14, 32

āsana. *Āsana* taken as physical exercise in order to enhance longevity is the concept of *Hatha-yoga*; the *Bhāgavatam* categorically asks *sādhaka* not to make the body strong in order to enhance longevity for, body is perishable and any attempt to make it immortal is futile.¹⁷⁷⁰

Patanjali says, ‘Seat being conquered, the dualities do not obstruct.’¹⁷⁷¹

iv. *Prāṇāyāma*:

Prāṇāyāma is restraining of vital energy. *Prāṇāyāma* has three limbs: *puraka* (inhal-ing), *kumbhaka* (retaining) and *recaka* (exhaling).¹⁷⁷² By *prāṇāyāma*, the obstacles arising from three humours (*vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha*) should be overcome.¹⁷⁷³ *Prāṇāyāma* is performed in order to purify the internal being by controlling *prāṇa* – the vital energy of which the subtle manifestation is ‘thought’. An individual inhales and exhales, like breath, numerous thoughts and the impressions of objects outside. By *āsana*, one establishes control over external space; by *prāṇāyāma*, over internal space. Just as breath can flicker the flame, similarly the thought can flicker consciousness (mind-stuff). By controlling breath, one can control thought and purify the restless *citta*.¹⁷⁷⁴ When thoughts are monitored in tune with Yoga, *sādhaka* becomes free from fear of restlessness.

That, *prāṇāyāma* is not merely a physical exercise, is known by the fact that it should be accompanied by the repetition of *Praṇava* (*AUM*). “Like a fine thread of lotus stalk and like a continuous peel of a bell, the mystic Sound (*aumkāra*) is extending from the *Mulādhāra* up. By regulation of *prāṇa*, this mystic Sound should be raised to the heart and made clearly manifest there.”¹⁷⁷⁵

Thus, we observe that *prāṇāyāma* has three aspects: *Adhibhautika prāṇāyāma* comprises of control of physical breath through *puraka*, *kumbhaka* and *recaka*. *Adhidaivika prāṇāyāma* is control of thoughts. *Adhyātmika prāṇāyāma* is constant

¹⁷⁷⁰ XI,28,41-43

¹⁷⁷¹ RY, II,48

¹⁷⁷² III,28,9; VII,15,32; XI,14,33

¹⁷⁷³ III,28,11*

¹⁷⁷⁴ III,28,10

¹⁷⁷⁵ XI,14,34 transl. S.I.

suggestion to consciousness (mind-stuff) with the Divine (*aum*) and subsequent upliftment of the consciousness (mind-stuff) from *Mulādhāra* to *Anāhat*.

Patanjali says, “From that (*prāṇāyāma*) the covering to the light of the *citta* is attenuated. The mind becomes fit for *dhāraṇā*.”¹⁷⁷⁶

v. *Pratyāhāra*:

The *Bhāgavatam* describes *pratyāhāra* as the state of total abandonment of attachments and conquest of senses accompanied by the fixing of mind on the form of God.¹⁷⁷⁷ Patanjali defines *pratyāhāra* as: The drawing in of the organs is by their giving up their own objects and taking the form of the mind-stuff, as it were.¹⁷⁷⁸

Pratyāhāra is not only the withdrawal of organs from the objects but also of the very senses along with mind. Without the mastery over senses all spiritual disciplines like silence, vows, scholarship, austerity, study of scriptures, *svadharma*, preaching, solitude, Mantras and *Samādhi*-yoga are totally futile.¹⁷⁷⁹ God remains unattainable for those without the mastery over senses.¹⁷⁸⁰ The *Gītā* explains *pratyāhāra* with a beautiful analogy of tortoise. Just as tortoise withdraws all its limbs within, a yogi should withdraw his organs and senses into mind.¹⁷⁸¹ The *Bhāgavatam* reiterates the same idea when it says, ‘...by *pratyāhāra* of mind, its tendency to go after sense-objects should be mastered...’^{1782*} For, there is always a danger of relapse into *saṁsāra* until the mind is withdrawn, as in the case of *Saubhari Muni*.¹⁷⁸³ The *Bhāgavatam* as well as the *Gītā* say that by long practice of abstention, the organs turn away from the objects but not the tendencies to enjoy; they draw the mind in the objects by force, in spite of one’s strenuous efforts to hold it.¹⁷⁸⁴

¹⁷⁷⁶ RY, II, 52-53

¹⁷⁷⁷ II, 1, 23

¹⁷⁷⁸ RY, II, 54

¹⁷⁷⁹ VII, 9, 46

¹⁷⁸⁰ X, 72, 10

¹⁷⁸¹ B.G., II, 58

¹⁷⁸² III, 28, 11* transl. S.J.

¹⁷⁸³ IX, 6, 39-52

¹⁷⁸⁴ VII, 12, 7; B.G., II, 60

Sādhaka may be occasionally pestered by the memory of *saṁsāra* in spite of his total discrimination and renunciation but this may be considered only a temporary state as a dream.¹⁷⁸⁵ *Sādhaka* should, nonetheless, be vigilant if the mind while being made to concentrate begins to stray; he should try to bring it back under control by conciliatory method,¹⁷⁸⁶ and through the knowledge of evolution and involution.¹⁷⁸⁷ Once the mind is controlled, it should never be allowed to move away through the yogic practices and reasoning reinforced with *sattva*.¹⁷⁸⁸

vi. *Dhāraṇā*:

According to Patanjali, '*Dhāraṇā* (concentration) is holding the mind on to some particular object;'¹⁷⁸⁹ to the *Bhāgavatam*, it is obviously the concentration on God. The pure mind turns towards yoga. It can conceive of its aim. *Dhāraṇā* is conception of divine thought or image. After conquering posture, vital breath, attachments and senses, one should concentrate on the cosmic gross form of God that is the *Vīrāt*.¹⁷⁹⁰ By such concentration (*dhāraṇā*), the sinful tendencies,¹⁷⁹¹ and the weaknesses of mind – to be drawn out due to *rajas*, or to be dull due to *tamas* – should be overcome.¹⁷⁹²

“Whenever the mind runs away under the stress of desires, a discriminating person should draw it towards the heart again and again, and concentrate it there.

“The mind of an aspirant who practises like this without break, will soon subside in calmness, as the fire that has consumed the fuel.”¹⁷⁹³

Vacaspati Misra, in his explanation to *Yogasūtra* of Patanjali and *Yoga-bhāṣya* of

¹⁷⁸⁵ XI, 13, 35

¹⁷⁸⁶ XI, 20, 19

¹⁷⁸⁷ XI, 20, 22

¹⁷⁸⁸ XI, 20, 20

¹⁷⁸⁹ RY, III, 1

¹⁷⁹⁰ II, 1, 23-25

¹⁷⁹¹ III, 28, 11

¹⁷⁹² II, 1, 20

¹⁷⁹³ VII, 15, 33-34 transl. S.T.

Veda-Vyāsa,¹⁷⁹⁴ quotes the *Viṣṇu P* (VI,7,77-95) while defining *dhāraṇā* thereby expressing its method of concentration on the august form of *Hari*.¹⁷⁹⁵

One should concentrate on one part of the form of the Lord at a time passing from the Feet upwards until *dhee* (intellect) is purified and the part so concentrated upon becomes clearly manifest in the intellect.¹⁷⁹⁶ Repeated practice of *dhāraṇā* on God's form generates devotion in the mind of the yogin.¹⁷⁹⁷ Through *dhāraṇā*, the memory of the Original is regained.¹⁷⁹⁸

vii. *Dhyāna*:

Patanjali defines *dhyāna* as 'an unbroken flow of knowledge in that object (i.e. the object of *dhāraṇā*).'¹⁷⁹⁹ *Dhyāna* or meditation is characterized by the knowledge of what was conceived in *dhāraṇā*. Conception is an ideal state; meditation is the visualization of the idea. Mind here actually reflects the image of the Ideal. Mind, bereft of all tendencies to perform karmas, turns resplendent with *sattva*¹⁸⁰⁰ so as to reflect the infinite as much as possible. The resplendent mind is often known as *citta*. "By practice of *Dhyāna* yogi soon overcomes the erroneous view of the absolute distinction between the seer, the seen and the act of seeing."^{1801*} With the help of *Dhyāna*, man's doubts and non-godly qualities should be overcome.¹⁸⁰²

An aspirant may meditate on the very form of God that he conceived in *dhāraṇā*. With this act of meditation, a yogi transcends the plain of matter and nears *Brahman*.

¹⁷⁹⁴ *The Yoga system of Patanjali*, Harvard Oriental series, [vol.17 transl. J.H.Woods], Delhi, MLBD, 1983. (parenthesis mine)

¹⁷⁹⁵ *ibid.* p.204

¹⁷⁹⁶ II,2,13

¹⁷⁹⁷ II,1,21

¹⁷⁹⁸ II,2,1

¹⁷⁹⁹ RY, III,2

¹⁸⁰⁰ XI,9,12

¹⁸⁰¹ XI,14,46*

¹⁸⁰² III,28,11

“When one has thus established his mind (and intellect) in Me, he visualizes Me in his own self and his self in Me, the Universal Soul, just as (an individual) light is merged with the elemental light”, says the Lord.¹⁸⁰³

The state of meditation is compared with the deep sleep wherein no experience of the material existence prevails. *Sādhaka* should not be tempted either by the *siddhis* that accrue in this state¹⁸⁰⁴ or by the joy that emanates from the knowledge of the Divine. Only when he rises above those attractions, he reaches the Final Beatitude, where Death would not mock at him.¹⁸⁰⁵ He should constantly strive to transcend that state also, because that is not the final state. The final beatitude for yogi is *Samādhi*, that is the realization of *Brahman* or *Bhagavān*.

It may be noted that in tune with the *Gītā*, the *Bhāgavatam* goes as far as saying that meditation determines the next birth.¹⁸⁰⁶ The existential meaning of the idea can be summed up thus: the object of our meditation determines the state of our mind in the time just succeeding the meditation, which may be considered as the next birth. Thus, there are series of ‘lives’ in a single lifetime of man.

a. Phenomenon of ‘HEART’ in meditation:

The reference to ‘Heart’ as the locus of meditation finds place in all yogas – be it *Rāja-yoga*, *Tantra*, *Jñāna-yoga* or *Bhakti-yoga*. According to *Jñāna-yoga*, it is connotative of the centre of consciousness. The *Tantra* refers to it as *anāhat cakra* where the divinity is experienced in the form of Sound. It is, as if, an entrance to the higher plains of consciousness for the *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* that travels from the lower lotuses to the upper ones through the heart-lotus, bringing about a significant change in the spiritual state of a yogi. All yogas refer to the Heart as Lotus – *Hṛtkamal* – whereupon one’s chosen deity (*iṣṭa*) is to be meditated.¹⁸⁰⁷ Some followers of the *jñāna-mārga* meditate upon the thumb-sized *Ātman* (*aṅguṣṭha-pramāṇa*) within the cavity of one’s

¹⁸⁰³ XI, 14, 45 transl. Tagare

¹⁸⁰⁴ XI, 15, 33’ V, 6, 1, 2 & 15; V, 5, 35

¹⁸⁰⁵ III, 27, 30

¹⁸⁰⁶ X, 74, 46

¹⁸⁰⁷ III, 28, 31, 33 etc.

heart.¹⁸⁰⁸ A *bhakta* meditates and worships his Lord God as seated upon the lotus of his heart. Though the lotus of Heart is said to be located in the bosom, it is not referred to as the physical heart.

The *Bhāgavatam* also at numerous places, refers to the heart. For instance, the Lord is said to be present in the hearts of all.¹⁸⁰⁹ When *Brahmā* could not find out his origin outside, he meditated within and realized the truth of the Lord as the Indwelling Spirit within his Heart.¹⁸¹⁰ Further, it is mentioned that a devotee's Heart melts in the love for God.¹⁸¹¹ Heart is also called cave (*guhā*).¹⁸¹²

b. How to meditate:

One should be seated on a seat not too elevated nor too low, not too soft nor too hard, with body straight, hands in lap, eyes half-closed and gazing at the tip of nose.¹⁸¹³ The place of meditation should be congenial to peace, clean, without noise. Yoga should not be practised where there are many anthills or wild animals or danger or many wicked persons and where four streets meet. Place of meditation may be well hidden, peaceful, beautiful and preferably enclosed. One should not practise yoga while ill, sorrowful, or lazy. One should begin the meditation by first saluting all the ancient yogis, one's guru and God. One can meditate on the tip of nose, or between eyebrows, or on the heart, or on the temple of the head.

The aspirant is directed to meditate on the Lotus of the Heart blooming upward with eight petals and a pericarp in which the sun, moon and fire are arranged one over the other, and the form of God in the middle of the fire.¹⁸¹⁴ The total form of God along with all paraphernalia should be conceived. The withdrawn mind, directed by its controller, the *buddhi*, should be made to hold on to His complete form. Having attained perfection in this concentration, a resolute aspirant should, then, concentrate exclu-

¹⁸⁰⁸ II,2,8

¹⁸⁰⁹ I,9,42

¹⁸¹⁰ III,8,22

¹⁸¹¹ III,28,34 etc.

¹⁸¹² *sarvabhūtaguhasayam*, III,24,39

¹⁸¹³ XI,14,32; also RY, pp.100-101

¹⁸¹⁴ XI,14,36-37

sively on one limb or a part of God, preferably on the face illumined by a smile,¹⁸¹⁵ he should meditate on the heart-bewitching exploits of God in His various incarnations.¹⁸¹⁶ *Sādhaka*, having attained perfect concentration on the gross form of God, should establish his intellect on the subtle or the formless *Brahman*.¹⁸¹⁷ The one who concentrates his pure *Citta* on *Nirguṇa Brahman* attains the Supreme Bliss.¹⁸¹⁸

viii. *Samādhi*:

The *Bhāgavatam* describes *Samādhi* also as *Kaivalya*, *Nirvāṇa*, *Apavarga*, *Ekāntitvam*, etc.¹⁸¹⁹

a. Definition:

Patanjali defines *Samādhi* as a state wherein *citta* (the mind-stuff) gets the modification 'taking in all sorts of objects, and concentrating upon one object, these two powers being destroyed and manifested respectively...'¹⁸²⁰

The *Bhāgavatam* defines *Samādhi* as 'subjugation of mind' and considers it as the highest yoga.¹⁸²¹ By practising austerity accompanied by various disciplines, a *sādhaka* attenuates his *saṁskāras* and desires; consequently, the mind becomes completely purified. It is obvious that when the *Bhāgavatam* discusses *Samādhi* as the ultimate goal, the sole object of concentration is the Divine; because concentration on anything other than the Divine causes desires and, subsequently, miseries. Patanjali says, 'Among various *cittas*, that which is attained by *Samādhi* is desireless'.¹⁸²² Just as water that is free from impurities, the *citta* in its pristine state is pure, unmodified and peaceful.¹⁸²³ Only when one is freed from all desires of mind, one becomes fit for the realization of God.^{1824*} When *citta* is subject to this state, it can ceaselessly concen-

¹⁸¹⁵ II, 1, 19; III, 28, 31; XI, 14, 42-43

¹⁸¹⁶ IV, 8, 57

¹⁸¹⁷ V, 26, 39

¹⁸¹⁸ XI, 15, 17

¹⁸¹⁹ IX, 2, 11

¹⁸²⁰ RY, III, 11

¹⁸²¹ XI, 23, 46, transl. S.T.

¹⁸²² RY, IV, 6

¹⁸²³ III, 26, 22

^{1824*} VII, 10, 9*; *Katha Up.*, II, 3, 14

trate on one object, then, it can dwell on that object (God) without any other thought.¹⁸²⁵ This concentration is like flow of oil (*taila-dharā*) devoid of bubbles. Ultimately, the distinction of meditator and the object of meditation are overcome.¹⁸²⁶ Such *Samādhi* is the highest yoga. God resides in the yogi who attains to this state of equanimity.¹⁸²⁷

b. Nature:

The state of *Kaivalya*,¹⁸²⁸ *Nirvāṇa*,¹⁸²⁹ *Apavarga*¹⁸³⁰ and *Nihśreya*¹⁸³¹ correspond to the state of *Samādhi*.¹⁸³² In passage of time, these names were adopted by different schools, as a result of which their connotation changed by a little. Nevertheless, fundamentally, all of them denote the same destination, *viz.*, dis-identification of mind from matter, and the liberation from karmas and their effects. Hence, the *Bhāgavatam* use any of these words to mean the state of Final Beatitude.

When *Citta* transcends these three states of consciousness, *viz.*, waking, dream and deep sleep, then, a person realizes *Ātman* and attains to the actionlessness.¹⁸³³ This state is without any name and description; hence, the only name it must be given is the Fourth (*Turīya*), and the only description, the blissful state.

All synonyms of the transcendental state manifestly point at the persistence of one substance in that state; albeit the words '*Apavarga*' as well as '*Nirvāṇa*' do not explicitly take this stance, thereby, leaving ample scope for various interpretations. *Apavarga* is the 'Final Beatitude'. Similarly, *Nirvāṇa* is also understood as 'the freedom'; it is obviously the freedom from karmas and their effects. Various schools have analyzed

¹⁸²⁵ XI,14,44

¹⁸²⁶ IV,12,17

¹⁸²⁷ IV,20,16

¹⁸²⁸ III,27,28; IV,20,10; XI,20,34, etc.

¹⁸²⁹ III,25,28-29; VII,7,37; IX,7,27, etc.

¹⁸³⁰ XI,20,33, etc.

¹⁸³¹ XI,20,35

¹⁸³² '*Kaivalya*', by definition, means the state of perfect isolation, or that of perfect unity. '*Nirvāṇa*' is the state of absolute extinction of individuality. '*Apavarga*' is the state of completion and absolution. '*Nihśreya*' is the state of Supreme Blessedness. All the four states are quite in correspondence with each other, as, the meaning they convey is the 'Final Beatitude'.

¹⁸³³ XII,7,21

this state as the Nihil or Void (*Śunya*). Nevertheless, the *Bhāgavatam* rejects this misconception. It states that this state is so subtle that it escapes the vision of certain philosophers, and is conceived erroneously as nihil (*sukṣmam aśunyam śunya kalpītam*).^{1834*} *Brahman*, who is also described as ‘the one like void’ (*Śunyatulam*),¹⁸³⁵ alone can be the existence in the Final Beatitude because, *Brahman*, who is that which remains after all negation (*Nīśedhaśeṣa*),¹⁸³⁶ alone is the Final. Therefore, the *Bhāgavatam* as well as the *Gītā* very pertinently uses the phrase ‘*Brahma nirvāṇa*’¹⁸³⁷ for this state and also describes the nature of this state as blissful (*Brahmanirvāṇasukham*).^{1838*} Undoubtedly, if the sectarian ideas are husked apart, all the concepts as noticed above aim at one single state of emancipation.

2. TANTRA-YOGA IN THE BHĀGAVATAM:

The *Bhāgavatam* shows various ways of meditation of which we have observed the ways of meditation in *Jñāna-yoga* and *Bhakti-yoga*.

There is a third way of meditation implicit in the *Bhāgavatam* – it is meditation according to *Tantra-yoga*. The meditation on various plexuses, the transcendence of those plexuses by the yogi in order to leave the body, and the geographical reflections as discussed in the *Bhāgavatam* establish a cogent relation between the *Bhāgavatam* and *Tantra-yoga*.

Tantra must have been derived from the root ‘*tan*’ (8 U.) meaning ‘to spread, to stretch, to extend’, etc.¹⁸³⁹ To it, the suffix ‘*tra*’ which means ‘to save’ is added. Thus, *Tantra* is that scripture of which knowledge that saves is spreaded.¹⁸⁴⁰ To quote the same source, “*Kāmika Āgama* of the *Śaiva Siddhānta* (*Tantrāntara Paṭala*) says: ‘*Tanoti vipulān arthān tattvamantra-samanvitān traṇaṇīca kurute yasmāt tantram ity-abhidhiyate*’ (It is called *Tantra* because it promulgates great knowledge concerning

¹⁸³⁴ IX,9,49*

¹⁸³⁵ X,87,29

¹⁸³⁶ VIII,3,24

¹⁸³⁷ III,33,30; B.G., II,72

¹⁸³⁸ VI,4,28*; VII,7,37; VIII,6,8

¹⁸³⁹ Apte

¹⁸⁴⁰ Avalon, p. 54

Tattva and *Mantra* and because it saves).”¹⁸⁴¹

There is yet another implication of ‘*Tantra*’ to which the *Bhāgavatam* also lends supports. ‘*Tan*’ is that which is extended. *Brahman* is self-existent and exists in itself. It is not referred to as the extended reality. What extends is *Māyā*, *Śrī*, or *Devī*, the power (*śakti*) of *Brahman*.¹⁸⁴² ‘*Tra*’ is a derivative of ‘*tra*’ (1.A) meaning ‘to protect, to rescue from’ etc. Hence, ‘*Tantra*’ is also connotative of the knowledge, which protects from that which is extended (i.e. *Māyā* or *Prakṛti*). *Tantra* is a branch of knowledge, which seeks to transcend the matter through matter itself.¹⁸⁴³ It shows the means to get over the matter with the help of material instruments of which body is the foremost. The *Bhāgavatam* also supports this method of *sādhana*: Just as gold-smelters extract gold from the ore so does a *sādhaka*, through spiritual communion, extract *Brahman* from the ore of the body (*kṣetreṣu deheṣu*).^{1844*}

i. The Lotus or Plexuses:

The lotuses or plexuses as mentioned in the *Tantra* are *Mulādhāra*, *Svādhīsthāna*, *Maṇipuraka*, *Anāhaṭ*, *Vīśuddha*, *Ājñā* and *Sahasrāra*. Though these centres are said to be located at a particular place in the human body, their existence may not be taken as anatomical. They are the stages of consciousness which can be revealed exactly only to a sincere *sādhaka*. This is a mysterious aspect of the *Tantra*, which relates the levels of consciousness to body.

The *Bhāgavatam*, while describing various methods of meditation, allude to the doctrine of plexuses and considers the meditation on the *Sahasrāra* as the highest attainment reaching which there is no fall for the yogi.¹⁸⁴⁵

Another allusion to the plexuses is found in the detailed description of the process of leaving body as undertaken by the yogi.¹⁸⁴⁶ Therein we find the reference to the

¹⁸⁴¹ *ibid.*, p.55

¹⁸⁴² VI,19,13

¹⁸⁴³ *Kulamava Tantra*, II, 24, transl. S. Barada Kanta Majumdar in “Principles of Tantra” Pt.II, by A.Avalon, Ganesh & Co., Madras; 1986, p.153.

¹⁸⁴⁴ VII,7,21*

¹⁸⁴⁵ X,87,18

¹⁸⁴⁶ *infra* p. 227

*Ṣaṭcakra*bheda of *Kuṇḍalinī*-yoga. It also concludes with the process of piercing of consciousness through the temple of head (*Brahmarandhra*) thereby realizing oneness with the Supreme Being.¹⁸⁴⁷

However, although the *Bhāgavatam* refers to *suṣumnā* (*nāḍī*),¹⁸⁴⁸ it does not refer to the name '*Kuṇḍalinī Śakti*'.

ii. The Plexuses and the philosophy of the Logos or Sound:

Kṛṣṇa himself in the *Bhāgavatam* explicitly presents the doctrine of lotuses.

“This is that perceptible Supreme Lord who infuses life in all and who manifests himself within the nerve-centres or plexuses (*cakras*) known as *Mulādhāra* and other (existing in the internal parts of human body). With the *Prāṇa* impregnated with *Nāda* (called *Parā* speech), he enters the ‘cave’ (known as *ādhāra cakra*, located near the anal orifice). He proceeds (ahead) assuming the subtle mental form (known as *Paśyanti*, and *Madhyamā* forms of speech) in the spiritual plexuses called *Maṇipura* and *Viśuddha* located at the navel and at the throat, respectively. He reveals Himself in the mouth in the form of short and long notes, accents (such as *udāṭṭa*, *anudāṭṭa* and palatals, dentals etc.). This is the grossest speech-form (called *Vaikharī*) of the *Vedas* and its branches.”¹⁸⁴⁹

As we have observed, God first manifests within the space of the heart of the Yogi in the form of *Sphoṭa* (also called *Parā* aspect of sound) – the inarticulate sound,¹⁸⁵⁰ which is also known as the *Śabda Brahma*, changeless and limitless in power, proceeding from *Para Brahma*.¹⁸⁵¹ *Sphoṭa* further manifests as *Nāda* or *Ghoṣa* (also called *Paśyanti* aspect of sound) – the articulate sound.¹⁸⁵² *Nāda* is also often out of the conceptual periphery of the *sādhaka*. So, the articulate sound further extended as the *Pranava* ‘AUM’ (also called *Madhyamā* aspect of sound which is conceivable, but

¹⁸⁴⁷ II,2,21; IV,4,25; IV,23,14-15

¹⁸⁴⁸ II,2,24

¹⁸⁴⁹ XI,12,17 transl. Tagare

¹⁸⁵⁰ X,85,9; XII,6,37

¹⁸⁵¹ XI,21,37

¹⁸⁵² X,85,9

not perceptible through senses).¹⁸⁵³ The *sādhaka* can meditate on it as manifesting in the heart (*anāhat*) in the form of the sound of *AUM* in order to know the Supreme Truth. Having practised *prāṇāyāma*, *sādhaka* should, further, follow the sound that is as continuous as the ringing of a bell (*ghaṅṭānādam*).¹⁸⁵⁴ The *Antah-Praṇava* develops into the *Bāhya-Praṇava* (*vaikhari* aspect of the sound), which can be heard and uttered. As the sound is associated with all levels of consciousness – from *Mulādhāra* to *Sahasrāra*, *AUM* – the symbol that signifies the sound is verily considered as indicative of *Brahman*, *Param Ātman*, *Bhagavān*.¹⁸⁵⁵ Hence, it is called *Brahmākṣaram* or *Brahma bījam*.¹⁸⁵⁶

AUM is only one of the names or symbols of God. God revealed Himself unto *Brahmā*, who had withdrawn after the intense search for his origin, as the sound ‘*TAPA*’.¹⁸⁵⁷ Thus, the *Bhāgavatam* concept of the Sound can accommodate any form *Logos* that is indicative of the Supreme Reality. It can be *AUM*, *TAPA*, or the Biblical ‘*I am I*’.

iii. *Tantra* and the Geographical Reflections of the *Bhāgavatam*:

We have traced the allegory in the geographical description that is found in the *Bhāgavatam*. We, here, relate the geographical reflections of the *Bhāgavatam* with the concept of plexuses of the *Tantra*. This co-relation helps the *sādhaka* to understand an aspect of the *Bhāgavatam* which is conducive to the meditation.

For the description of *cakras*, we have resorted to Sir John Woodroffe’s (alias Arthur Avalon) translation of ‘*Ṣaṭ-cakra-Nirūpaṇa*’ which is a part of his book ‘*The Serpent Power*’.¹⁸⁵⁸ Given below are the points of comparison between a *cakra* as described in the *Tantra* and the corresponding continent on the earth, as described in the geographical reflections in the *Bhāgavatam*:

¹⁸⁵³ XI,21,39; XII,6,39; X,85,9

¹⁸⁵⁴ XI,14,34

¹⁸⁵⁵ XII,6,39

¹⁸⁵⁶ II,1,17

¹⁸⁵⁷ II,9,6

¹⁸⁵⁸ Madras, Ganesh & Co., 1981

I. MULĀDHĀRA CAKRA	JAMBUDWEEPA
1. <i>Merudaṇḍa</i> , the Backbone, starts from here. It is the centre line of body which passes through the plexuses.	Meru mountain is located at the centre of this <i>dweepa</i> . It is also the centre of the earth. ¹⁸⁵⁹
2. There is a square on this lotus with <i>Merudaṇḍa</i> as its centre.	There is a square with Meru at centre.
3. The square is surrounded by eight shining spears (which are often compared to mountains).	Meru has eight mountains around it. ¹⁸⁶⁰
4. <i>Mulādhāra</i> is yellow in colour.	Meru shines like gold. ¹⁸⁶¹
5. <i>Bija</i> of <i>Dharā (Jam)</i> , which is located within the center of the pericarp has in its lap four-faced creator Child.	In the center upon the Meru, there is a golden city of <i>Brahmā</i> who is the four-faced creator Child of the Lord. ¹⁸⁶²
5. Within the square in the pericarp, upon the triangle, there resides <i>Svayambhu</i> in His <i>liṅga</i> form.	In the <i>Ilāvṛta Varṣa</i> that immediately surrounds the Meru, there resides <i>Paramesvara</i> ¹⁸⁶³ the Lord of <i>Bhavānī</i> .
6. The above-mentioned square is the location of the <i>Bija</i> of <i>Dharā</i> (the Earth).	In the <i>Uttarkuru</i> , bordering the Jambu <i>dweepa</i> , the <i>Varāha</i> form of Lord is worshipped. <i>Varāhāvatāra</i> has the earth as

¹⁸⁵⁹ V,16,7¹⁸⁶⁰ V,16,27¹⁸⁶¹ V,16,7¹⁸⁶² V,16,28¹⁸⁶³ V,17,15¹⁸⁶⁴ V,18,34

	His consort. ¹⁸⁶⁴
7. The above-mentioned triangle at the mouth of <i>Nāḍī</i> , is called <i>Kāmarūpa</i> inside which are <i>kāma-vāyu</i> and <i>kāma-bīja</i> (<i>Klim</i>).	In the <i>Ketumala Varṣa</i> of the <i>dweepa</i> , the Lord is worshipped in the form of <i>Kāma-Deva</i> . ¹⁸⁶⁵
8. <i>Kuṇḍalīnī</i> produces the Sound.	The Lord in the form of <i>Hayagrīva</i> , who symbolizes the <i>Vedas</i> , is worshipped. ¹⁸⁶⁶ The <i>Vedas</i> are also known as <i>Śabda Brahma</i> .

II. <i>SVĀDHISTHĀNA CAKRA</i>	<i>PLĀKṢADWEEPA</i>
1. Though the lotus is of vermilion hue, it has within it the white circle of <i>Varuṇa</i> .	The <i>Plākṣa</i> tree has white flowers.
2. One who meditates upon this lotus, in him rises the sun of knowledge.	<i>Mahāviṣṇu</i> as the Sun is worshipped in this <i>dweepa</i> . ¹⁸⁶⁷

III. <i>MANIPURAKA CAKRA</i>	<i>ŚĀLMALA AND KUŚA DWEEPA</i>
1. Fire is the <i>adhīṣṭhātā devatā</i> (presiding deity) of this lotus.	Fire is the lord of <i>Kuśa dweepa</i> . ¹⁸⁶⁸
2. <i>Vaiśvānara</i> , the Fire, is called ' <i>Vedabahuḥ</i> ' – the four-armed one or with the <i>Vedas</i> as arms.	The Lord in the form of <i>Veda</i> and <i>Soma</i> is worshipped in <i>Śālmala dweepa</i> . ¹⁸⁶⁹

¹⁸⁶⁵ V,18,15¹⁸⁶⁶ V,18,1¹⁸⁶⁷ V,20,4¹⁸⁶⁸ V,20,16¹⁸⁶⁹ V,20,11

IV. ANĀHAT CAKRA	KRAUŅCA DWEEPA ¹⁸⁷⁰
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V. VIŚUDDHA CAKRA	ŚĀKADWEEPA
1. Ether is the element in this lotus.	The Supreme Being as <i>Vāyu</i> is meditated upon in this <i>dweepa</i> . ¹⁸⁷¹
2. On the arrival of <i>Kuṇḍalinī</i> in this plexus, purity is bestowed upon <i>Jīva</i> .	Residents of this <i>dweepa</i> attain purity through <i>Prāṇāyāma</i> . ¹⁸⁷²
3. Meditating on this lotus, a Yogi becomes the <i>Ātma-jñānī</i> .	The residents are endowed with <i>samādhi</i> with which they worship the Lord. ¹⁸⁷³

VI. ĀJŅĀ CAKRA	PUṢKARA DWEEPA
1. It has two petals.	The <i>dweepa</i> is divided into two <i>varṣas</i> . ¹⁸⁷⁴
2. It is the seat of mind.	<i>Manasottara</i> is the only mountain on it. It symbolizes mind. ¹⁸⁷⁵
3. Here, the yogi realizes non-dualism of <i>Brahman</i> .	The residents worship the Lord in order to attain to non-dual (<i>advayan</i>) form of <i>Brahman</i> (<i>Brahmalīṅgam</i>). ¹⁸⁷⁶
4. In the centre of the <i>Ājñā-cakra</i> is the ' <i>Itaralīṅga</i> ' which is lightening-like. This is the Lord <i>Śiva</i> , the non-dual <i>Brahman</i> .	<i>Brahman</i> , the non-dual Supreme, is identified as ' <i>Brahmalīṅgam</i> .' ¹⁸⁷⁷

¹⁸⁷⁰ V,20,18-23¹⁸⁷¹ V,20,27¹⁸⁷² V,20,27¹⁸⁷³ V,20,27¹⁸⁷⁴ V,20,30¹⁸⁷⁵ V,20,30¹⁸⁷⁶ V,20,32-33¹⁸⁷⁷ V,20,32-33

5. The <i>Devī</i> of this lotus has a book in one of her six hands (<i>vidyā mudrā</i> or <i>Pustaka mudrā</i>). She creates.	<i>Brahmā</i> , the creator is said to have his seat in the lotus of this <i>dweepa</i> (from which the <i>dweepa</i> derives its name). ¹⁸⁷⁸
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VII. SAHASRĀRA AND BEYOND THE LOKĀLOKA MOUNTAIN:

When the *Kuṇḍalinī* arrives at the *Brahma-randhra* having pierced through the six plexuses, the lotus of *Sahasrāra* in the *Brahma-randhra* blooms. This is the state of *samādhi*. The *Kuṇḍalinī Śakti* imbues the nectar that drops from the *Sahasrāra*. This state cannot be described fully. It is beyond the ken of senses.

The geographical region beyond the *Lokāloka* mountain resembles this state, ‘...Beyond that is another region, golden and shining like a mirror. Nothing put in it can return, as it will get dissolved.’¹⁸⁷⁹ ‘...Great men say that this is the holy region of the Masters of Yoga’.¹⁸⁸⁰

Neither the light of the sun nor any luminary up to *Dhruva* can go beyond this mountain.¹⁸⁸¹

Tagare draws our attention that Patanjali (2nd cent. A.D.) mentions this concentric division of the earth in seven island-continent, which is also common to the *Viṣṇu P* (2.4), the *Mārkaṇḍeya P* (54.6), and with a variation in the *Matsya P* (121,122) and the *Agni P* (108.1.3). Nundo Lal De in *The Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India* (Luzac and Co., London, 1927) p. 179, presents a geographical identification of the seven seas. However, Baladeva Upadhyaya in *Purāṇa Vimarsa*, pp. 317-331 and D.C. Sircar in *Studies in GAMI*, pp.17-25 differ from De.¹⁸⁸²

3. HOW A YOGI ABANDONS THE BODY:

The process of leaving body as described in the *Bhāgavatam*, also bears its links with the *Tantra*. The yogi who attains to finality does not require continuing his life in this

¹⁸⁷⁸ V,20,29

¹⁸⁷⁹ V,20,35 transl. S.T.

¹⁸⁸⁰ V,20,42 transl. S.T.

¹⁸⁸¹ V,20,37

¹⁸⁸² AITM, FN,V.1.32-33

world.¹⁸⁸³ Otherwise, the horses of senses may lend a man in the midst of the robbers of sense-objects.¹⁸⁸⁴ Moreover, the yogi, who attains *samādhi*, has no other purpose to fulfill by continuing in the body. He may continue to live embodied until the *prārabdha* karmas get completely exhausted.¹⁸⁸⁵ In certain cases, the yogi lives on for the general benefit of the world. However, there is a process¹⁸⁸⁶ by which he can leave the body as and whenever¹⁸⁸⁷ he wishes to. When a yogi desires to leave his body, he should give up all thoughts about time and space; then, regulating his vital energy, sitting in a firm and convenient posture he should establish control over all senses.¹⁸⁸⁸ By the process of '*neti neti*' ('not this, not this'), he should overcome the identification with body embracing the Lord's feet in the heart.¹⁸⁸⁹

Pressing the anal region with the heel, a yogi should raise up the *prāṇa* gradual from *Mulādhāra* to the upper plexuses and ultimately to the *Brahma-randhra*, in the temple of the head. Utterly detached, he should dissolve his five *prāṇas* into the universal *Prāṇa*. He should, then, dissolve the physical elements in their respective universal counterparts, e.g. the space in the universal space, and air, fire, water and earth in the same manner. Further, he should dissolve the element into its causal element, i.e., earth in water, water in fire, fire in air and air in ether. Then, he should dissolve the gross elements into their causal subtle elements which should be dissolved in turn in ego. Likewise, the senses and the mind along with the presiding deities should be dissolved into ego. Ego should be dissolved in intellect, which in turn should be dissolved along with *Prakṛti* into the individual Self, the *jīva*, which is a projection of the Lord's power of *Māyā*. Abiding on this matrix, *viz.*, the Supreme Spirit, the limitations of *jīva*hood should also be cast off thereby establishing unity with *Brahman*. Then the body would fall like a dried leaf. We also find reference to this process of

¹⁸⁸³ VII, 15, 45

¹⁸⁸⁴ VII, 15, 46

¹⁸⁸⁵ I, 6, 29; III, 28, 37

¹⁸⁸⁶ IV, 23, 14-18; II, 2, 15-21; XI, 15, 24; I, 13, 53-56

¹⁸⁸⁷ I, 9, 29

¹⁸⁸⁸ II, 2, 15

¹⁸⁸⁹ II, 2, 18

leaving body in the narrative of *Satī Devi*,¹⁸⁹⁰ and many other yogis and devotees.¹⁸⁹¹ The *brāhmaṇa* lady as well as the *Vraja-Gopīs* who were prevented from going to *Kṛṣṇa* also left their body in constant remembrance of *Kṛṣṇa* with their Karma-force having been exhausted due to such remembrance.¹⁸⁹²

4. SUMMARY:

Rāja-yoga of Patanjali has put such an indelible mark on the methods of *sādhana* of all of Indian traditions that it has been woven into every one of them. The eight-fold path as envisaged by the *Rāja-yoga* has been unanimously accepted as the path that is beneficial for every kind of spiritual endeavour. Starting from the external and physical part of *sādhaka's* life, it gradually goes on to purify and uplift the inner chambers of his life. It aims to thoroughly discipline body and mind with help eight modes; hence, the path is also known as the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. However, yoga does not encourage the practice of yogic disciplines for enhancing the body-strength as well as longevity, and for the attainment of psychic powers. The *summum bonum* according to *Rāja-yoga* is *nirvikalpa samādhi*, which is total cessation of all mental waves. The original yoga as taught by Patanjali, although theistic, does not stress the role of personal approach to Godhood. In sharp contrast to it, the version as put forward by the *Bhāgavatam* is not only theistic but emphasizes the indispensability of devotion to God. Thus, while the *Rāja-yoga* of Patanjali considers the devotion to God as only one of the means to attain *samādhi*, according to the *Bhāgavatam*, it is the foremost means to attain the goal with the rest being complimentary to it.

We would like to underscore the fact that we have been able to identify certain Tantric facets which hide from view of the reader. The esoteric *Tantra-yoga* does find its due place in the *Bhāgavata sādhana*, although it is not highlighted as a prominent yoga on par with *Jñāna-yoga*, *Karma-yoga* and *Rāja-yoga*. The aspects of *Tantra* that are found relevant to the other forms of *sādhana* are woven into those with a finesse so as neither to miss the advantages of those aspects nor to deviate from the core ideas of the *Bhāgavata sādhana*, which may have certain marked difference with

¹⁸⁹⁰ IV,4,24-27

¹⁸⁹¹ IX,6,10

¹⁸⁹² X,23,34; X,29,9-11

those of the *Tantra*. A very important Tantric notion of *ṣaṭ-cakra-bheda* is allegorically expressed in the geographical description of the earth. The continents and the oceans around each of them actually refer to the seven stages of human consciousness. In addition, the philosophy of Sound as is popular with the Tantric literature also finds explicit reference in the *Bhāgavatam*.

The ultimate aim of *Tantra*, like that of *Rāja-yoga*, is also the total cessation of mental waves and the experience of the undivided consciousness.