

CHAPTER 2
LITERARY RESEARCH

2.0 LITERARY RESEARCH

2.1 REVIEW OF ANCIENT LITERATURE ON MEDITATION

The concepts of emotion and meditation are explained in detail in our ancient scriptures like:

- *Patañjali Yoga Sūtrās*
- *Bhagavadgīta*
- *Zen Meditation*
- *Astāvakra gītā*
- *Yogavāsiṣṭha*
- *Brahma Sūtrās*
- *Ānāpānasati Meditation*
- *Dhammapāda*

2.1.1 PATAÑJALI YOGA SŪTRĀS

Sage *Patañjali* in his *Patañjali Yoga Sūtrās* mainly deals with controlling of mind. According to *Yoga* and spiritual lore, the mind is a conglomeration of thoughts. The root cause of all the problems is the mind. Hence, Sage *Patañjali* in his second *sūtrā* in *Patañjali Yoga Sūtrās*, explains that *Yoga* is a systematic elimination of modifications of the mind.

Definition of *Yoga* in *Samādhipāda*:

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः। (प ॥ यो ॥ सू ॥ १-२)

Yōgaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ ॥ (P.Y.S. 1-2)

Yoga is the systematic elimination of modifications of the mind.

In the beginning, the mind has to be controlled by practicing *dhārana*.

Dhāraṇa - Focussing:

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा। (प ॥ यो ॥ सू ॥ ३-१)

Deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā ॥ (P.Y.S. 3-1)

Binding the mind to particular a place is *dhāraṇa*. This is to mainly focus the mind on a single thought. Once *dhāraṇa* is perfected, *dhyāna* will happen automatically.

Dhyāna – Defocusing:

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्। (प ॥ यो ॥ सू ॥ ३-२)

Tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam ॥ (P.Y.S. 3-2)

An uninterrupted flow of thought on the object of meditation.

Meditation (*Dhyāna*) is an unbroken flow of thought towards or contemplation on the object. The flow of thought must be like the pouring of oil from one vessel to another (*Tailadhāravat-tāiladhāravat*).

2.1.2 BHAGAVADGĪTA

According to *Bhagavadgīta* meditation is defined as

शनैःशनैरूपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृति गृहीतया।

आत्मसंस्थं मनःकृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ (भ ॥ गी ॥ ६-२५)

Sanaiḥ Sanairūparamedbuddhyā dhṛti grhītayā |

Ātmasaṁsthaṁ manahkṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayet ॥ (Bha. Gi. 6-25)

One should through gradual practice attain tranquillity. Fixing the mind on SELF through reason controlled by steadfastness, one should not think of anything else.

The practice of mediation must be performed systematically, gradually, and slowly.

In the beginning, it is very difficult to fix one's mind on one object. Time and again mind begin to wander. Hence, it is a gradual process. Only through steady and continuous practice, one can achieve quietude.

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्॥ (भ ॥ गी ॥ 6-26)

Yato yato niścarati manaścañcalamasthiram |
Tatastato niyamyaitadātmanyeva vaśam nayet || (Bha. Gi. 6-26)

In the beginning, wherever the mind wanders or becomes restless, we need to bring back to a state of quietude. We need to practice again and again. The practitioner experiences bliss and joy when his mind attains quietude.

प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम्।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम्॥ (भ ॥ गी ॥ ६-२७)

Praśantamanasaṁhyenaṁ yoginaṁ sukhamuttamam |
Upaiti śāntarajasam brahmabhūtamakatmaṣam || (Bha. Gi. 6-27)

Eventually, supreme bliss comes to that practitioner of a perfectly tranquil mind with the passion of quietude, *Brahman* becomes free from taint.

Before meditation, one has to choose a good place and posture for meditation. The suggested postures are *Padmāsana*, *Vīrāsana*, or *Sukhāsana* with an erect back, which has a very lucid explanation in the following *sloka*.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम्॥ (भ ॥ गी ॥ ६-११)

Śucau deśe pratiṣṭhāpya sthiramāsanamātmanaḥ |
Nātyuchchritam nātinīcam cailājinaśuśottaram || (Bha. Gi. 6-11)

Having established in a clear spot, the seat is firm neither too high or nor too low, made of a cloth, a skin of and *kusha* grass arranged one above the other.

As the skin is not available now, it is suggested to use a carpet cloth.

2.1.3 ZEN MEDITATION

Zen meditation has its origin in China during the Tang dynasty. And the then Chan School was largely inclusive of the principles of *Mahāyāna* of Japan and it entered Japan as *Zen*. *Zen* includes various teachings of *Mahāyāna* especially the *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtrās* and the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtrās*. It also includes teachings of the Huayan School. It allows Buddha-nature and the *Bodhisattva*-ideals. *Zen* embraces Taoism as well. It spread and became popular in Korea and Japan. *Zen* aims to understand the meaning of life as such without getting misled by logical thoughts.

The word ‘*Zen*’ has also its root in the *Sanskrit* word (*Dhyān*). *Dhyān* means meditation. Here, the emphasis is more on the value of meditation and intuition rather than on ritual worship or study of scriptures. Here also the emphasis is on observations of breath flowing in and out. It is adopted as a tool to de-stress and make the mind tension-free. Some of the benefits of practicing *Zen* meditation are as below:

- It triggers an intuition in
- It gives spiritual insights into various aspects of ongoing events
- It enhances creative power
- It refines overall health – mental, emotional, physical and spiritual
- It helps the mind by its focus on incoming and outgoing breath to be free from any distortions from outside

2.1.4 AŚTĀVAKRA GĪTĀ

‘*Aśtāvakra gītā*’ is a well-known treatise in the form of a dialogue between an eminent saint, namely *Aśtāvakra*, and his famous disciple king namely *Janaka*.

Astāvakra was a holy sage in the court of King *Janaka* who was the father of *Sita*, wife of Lord *Sri Rama* (*Ramayana*). He had a deformed physical body; His preaching was essentially about Self-knowledge. He taught that a temple can be physically in any shape, but deity in the Temple, i.e., Self in a body remains the same. His teachings are today a source of enlightenment to humanity. He belonged probably to 6th Century CE. The following is one of his teachings:

यदि देहं पृथक्कृत्य चित्तिविश्राम्य तिष्ठसि।
अधुनैव सुखीशान्तः बन्धमुक्तो भविष्यसि ॥ (अ.व. गी. १-४)

Yadi deham pṛthakṛtya citiviśrāmy tiṣṭhasi |
Adhunaiva sukhīśāntaḥ bandhamukto bhaviṣyasi || (A.V.G. 1-4)

When one detaches from the body consciousness and the mind relaxes, the detacher will experience immediate peace and tranquillity and will be free from the bondage of the mind.

2.1.5 *YOGAVĀŚIṢṬA*

Yogavāśiṣṭa is a philosophical text authored by a well-known legendary sage, *Vaśiṣṭa* during the Lord *Sri Rama* dynasty. His preaching was on *Advaita Vedanta* and mainly aimed to alleviate the illusion of *Sri Rama* to the material world. This treatise is a source of enlightenment to humanity.

Definition of *Yoga* according to *Yogavāśiṣṭa*:

मनः प्रशमनोपायः योग इत्यभिधीयते । (यो. वा. ३-९।३२)
Manah praśamanopāyaḥ Yoga ityabhidhīyate || (Y.V. 3-9-32)

Yoga is a skillful technique to calm down the mind which is the source of meditation.

2.1.6 BRAHMA SŪTRĀS

The 'Brahma Sūtrās' is one of the foundational and philosophical texts of *Vedānta*. It summarises more about the nature of human existence and the universe, and ideas in the *upaniśads*. It reveals the concept of Ultimate Reality called *Brahman*. The text is attributed to *Badarayana*, who is *Veda Vyasa*, the legendary sage, an associate of *vedās* and *upaniśads*.

Brahma Sūtrās:

It is one in the *Prasthāna Trayam*, which includes *upaniśads* and *Bhagavadgīta* too. It explains the procedure of meditation.

The first step enunciated for meditation is a sitting posture:

आसिनः सम्भवात् . (ब्र ॥ सू ॥ ४-७)
Āsinaḥ sambhavāt. (B.S. 4-7)

One should adore mentally while having a sitting posture. A comfortable sitting posture will support easy meditation.

The second step is *Dhyāna*:

ध्यानाच्च . (ब्र ॥ सू ॥ ४-८)
Dhyānācca. (B.S. 4-8)

The third step prescribed in this meditation technique is:

अचलत्वञ्चापेक्ष्य . (ब्र ॥ सू ॥ ४-९)
Acalatvañcāpekṣya . (B.S. 4-9)

One needs to practice meditation with steadiness while remaining motionless and without any desire.

Meditation is mainly for purification. Once the body and mind are purified, one can establish in reality.

The goal of meditation is:

तदधिगम उत्तरपूर्वाघयोरश्लेषविनाशौ तदव्यपदेशात् ॥ (ब्र ॥ ५ ॥ ४-१-१३.)

Tadadhigama uttara pūrvāghayorasleşavināśau tadvyapdeśāt . (B.S. 4-1-13)

Through meditation, one can understand self, which can help to eradicate sin from the past, and also sins in the future will not accrue.

2.1.7 ĀNĀPĀNASATI MEDITATION

Ānāpānasati means "mindfulness of breathing". The word is in *Pāli* language which is a colloquial version of *Sānskrit*. This is a meditation practice in 'Theravada' tradition of Buddhism and widely used. This is a method of meditation, which was taught by Gautama Buddha in several *suttās* (*sūtrās*) including *Ānāpānasati Suttā* (MN 118). This discourse of Gautama Buddha was the 118th discourse and incorporated in "Majjhima Nikaya".

Majjhima Nikaya is the collection of middle length discourses of Buddha. In both the ancient and modern times, *Ānāpānasati* is the most known and widely used in Buddhist methods for contemplation and securing the seven factors of enlightenment. Gautama Buddha explained *Ānāpānasati* Meditation in *Ānāpānasati Suttā*.

It is mindfulness of breathing i.e., observation of breathing in (*āna*) and breathing out (*apāna*) and 'sati' means being with. The Buddhist practice of *Ānāpānasati* Meditation envisages breathing exercises. In *Ānāpānasati*, as the name suggests, there is only observation/witnessing of inhaling and exhaling. There is no interference in the breathing in and out. *Ānāpānasati* translates as the mindfulness (*sati*) of inhalation (*āna*) and exhalation (*apāna*) as a result of an engaged observation of it.

2.1.7.1 PROCEDURE OF MEDITATION

The procedure of meditation is as follows:

First, the practitioner has to sit comfortably in a calm place and concentrate on breathing in and breathing out. If the breath is long, observation has to be long and if it is short, it has to be observed as short. The breath has to be observed without any manipulation. Focussing on the breathing will make the mind soundless and all its restlessness will vanish. Both breathing in and out should be natural and there should not be any force. One can experience knowledge, awareness and joy when one practices this, clear comprehension is the outcome.

2.1.8 DHAMMAPĀDA (PALI LANGUAGE)

*Dunniggahassalahuno yatthakāmanipātino/
Cittassadamathosādhu cittaṃ dantaṃ sukhāvahaṃ//
(Dhammapāda), Cittavaggo-35)*

Mastery over the mind is placid and control is bliss.

‘*Dhammapāda*’ is a collection of sayings and teachings of Buddha. It is in *the Pāli* language. It has 423 verses. Chapter III of *Dhammapāda* talks about the mind. Buddha says our mind itself is the devil. Owing to its fickleness and wandering nature, it is called ‘*Maya*’. It is very difficult to control this mind. Underneath it lays a lot of desires and attachment. It is the cause of all misery. The only solution for calming the mind is the practice of meditation. Through meditation, one can gain mastery over the mind. Mastery over the mind is placid and a controlled mind is bliss.

2.1.8.1 MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

The advantages of mental development are:

- Happiness here-and-now
- “Knowledge-and-Vision” namely, Divine Ear and Divine Eye
(*Dibba-sota, Dibba-cakkhu*)
- Awareness and Clear Comprehension (*sati-sampajañña*)
- It helps to extinct the inflows (*āsava-khaya*)

On this subject, one has an authoritative message from none other than the great spiritual master, Buddha himself. The standard source is the “*Ānāpānasati-Suttā*,” the “Discourse on Mindfulness of Breathing,” found in the third section of the *Majjhima-Nikāya* (Discourse No. 118). The subject is referred to in many other places in the *Tripātaka* besides this. Essentially, the description is the same everywhere, though in some cases it varies according to the situation. One shall consider as a basis for practice the “*Ānāpānasati-Suttā*” itself, which deals specifically with the development of mindfulness of breathing including the ultimate fruit of the practice.

2.2 SUMMARY

All scriptures talk about mastery over the mind which can be achieved through *Yoga*. *Yoga* is a comprehensive term that includes preparatory practices viz., *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, etc., and meditation is the final practice under *Yoga*.

People practice various meditation techniques throughout the world of which *Ānāpānasati* Meditation is very simple and easy to practice. It is the observation of breathing in and breathing out.

Once one masters his mind, he can experience absolute bliss thereby establishing in its real nature.