

## CHAPTER-7

### ASSESSMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

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#### 7.0 ASSESSMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the first chapter, I gave the meaning of word Prasthānatrayī. The Prasthānatrayī is a compilation of three primary texts in Hinduism, encompassing the Upaniṣad, the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, and the Brahma-sūtra

- The *Upaniṣad*, known as *Upadeśa Prasthāna*, and the *Śruti prasthāna* (the starting point or axiom of revelation), especially the Principal *Upaniṣads*.
- The *Brahma Sūtra*, known as *sūtra prasthāna* or *Nyāya Prasthān* or *Yukti Prasthān* (logical text or axiom of logic)
- The *śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, known as *Sādhanā prasthāna* (practical text), and the *Smṛiti prasthāna* (the starting point or axiom of remembered tradition)
- *Patañjali yoga sūtra* authored by sage *Patañjali*, a treatise dealing with the eight limbs of Yoga

The Prasthānatrayī, consisting of the Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, and Brahma Sutras, holds immense significance in the realm of meditation and the practices of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi within Yoga and Indian philosophy. Each of these texts plays a distinctive role in enriching these aspects of meditation:

Dhāraṇā: The Upanishads, as the foundational part of the Prasthānatrayī, play a crucial role in Dhāraṇā by offering profound insights and guidance on concentration and single-pointed focus. Through their exploration of the nature of the self (Atman) and the ultimate reality (Brahman), the Upanishads assist practitioners in identifying an appropriate object of

meditation. Contemplating the teachings of the Upanishads helps individuals cultivate mental stability and prepare their minds for the practice of Dhāraṇā.

The Bhagavad Gita, another component of the Prasthānatrayī, further supports Dhāraṇā by providing practical instructions on maintaining focus and controlling the mind. Lord Krishna's teachings to Arjuna on duty, righteousness, and selfless action (Karma Yoga) offer valuable insights for individuals seeking to refine their ability to concentrate and avoid distractions during meditation.

The Brahma Sutras, being aphoristic in nature, furnish a logical and systematic framework for understanding the concepts presented in the Upanishads. They aid practitioners in gaining clarity about the chosen object of meditation and refining their concentration skills through structured philosophical analysis.

Dhyāna: The Upanishads significantly contribute to Dhyāna by presenting profound spiritual truths and insights, serving as subjects for contemplation during meditation. The teachings about the nature of reality, the self, and the ultimate truth provide practitioners with profound and transformative objects for sustained focus and meditative absorption.

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings on devotion (Bhakti Yoga) also play a vital role in Dhyāna. Engaging in devotional practices and contemplating the divine aspects described in the Gita can lead to a state of profound tranquility and inner peace during meditation.

The Brahma Sutras further enrich the practice of Dhyāna by presenting different philosophical perspectives within the Vedānta tradition. This diversity of viewpoints allows practitioners to explore a wide range of meditative themes and approaches, facilitating a deeper understanding of the object of meditation.

Samādhi: The Upanishads, with their exploration of the ultimate reality (Brahman), significantly contribute to the state of Samādhi. The profound truths revealed in the Upanishads act as a guiding light for seekers in their quest for unity and transcendence, leading to the experience of oneness and dissolution of the self in the object of meditation.

The Bhagavad Gita's teachings on self-realization and the nature of the soul also contribute to Samādhi. By understanding the true nature of the self (Atman), practitioners embark on a transformative journey that culminates in the experience of divine unity and blissful absorption.

The Brahma Sutras, through their systematic analysis of the Upanishads' teachings, aid practitioners in gaining clarity and intellectual grounding on the path to Samādhi. By providing a structured philosophical framework, the Brahma Sutras help seekers navigate the complexities of spiritual realization and guide them towards the ultimate goal of meditation.

In the second Chapter, TRANSLATIONS OF PRASTHĀNATRAYĪ IN THE CONTEXT OF DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI.

In the third chapter, the subject matter of prasthānatrayī was explained. The Prasthānatrayī is a compilation of three primary texts in Hinduism, encompassing the Upaniṣad, the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, and the Brahmasūtra. These revered texts form the cornerstone of Hindu philosophy, offering comprehensive insights into various dimensions of spiritual discipline. Among the profound teachings found within these texts is the exploration of the concepts of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. These practices hold significant importance in understanding and advancing one's spiritual journey.

Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi are three stages of meditation that are essential for achieving a state of deep concentration, contemplation, and absorption. These stages are described in detail in the Upaniṣad, the Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, and the Brahmasūtra, and are considered integral to the practice of Yoga and Hindu philosophy. Meditation offers a rich and complex field of study (Shapiro & Walsh, 2003).

Dhāraṇā signifies the concentration stage, where the mind focuses intensely on a singular point or object. This practice helps calm the mind, bringing it under control and priming it for the subsequent stage of meditation, known as Dhyāna. In Dhyāna, the mind becomes entirely absorbed in the chosen object of concentration. This phase deepens concentration levels, leading to a state of profound contemplation and reflection.

The pinnacle of meditation is realized in Samādhi, denoting complete absorption and unity with the focal point. During this state, practitioners experience a profound interconnectedness with the universe and attain an elevated level of consciousness. Samādhi is considered the ultimate goal of meditation, representing enlightenment within Indian philosophy.

The concept of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi holds immense significance within Prasthānatrayī, encompassing the Upaniṣad, Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, and Brahmasūtra. These stages are fundamental components of yoga and meditation practice in Hinduism, serving as progressive steps toward spiritual awakening and enlightenment.

The roots of the concept of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi can be traced back to the ancient Indian texts, particularly the Upaniṣad, which serve as the foundational texts of Hindu philosophy. Within the Upaniṣad, the practice of yoga and meditation are depicted as a means to attain self-knowledge and gain insight into the ultimate reality.

The Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, a revered Indian text, delves into the principles of yoga and meditation, emphasizing the stages of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. Lord Krishna elucidates the significance of these stages, leading to a state of consciousness free from suffering and ignorance.

The Brahmasūtra, also known as Vedānta Sūtras, holds immense importance in Vedānta philosophy, rooted in the teachings of the Upaniṣads. It outlines the path of yoga and meditation as a means to realize the ultimate reality, Brahman.

In the fourth chapter titled 'PATANJALI YOGA SUTRA -AN ANALYSIS OF DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI' an analysis of DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI undertaken according to Patañjali yogasutra. Patañjali yogasutra divided into four chapters or (Sanskrit *Pada*), containing in all 195 aphorisms, divided in four Padas.

**Samādhi Pada:** There are 51 sutras in Samādhi Pada. Samādhi is a state of direct and reliable perception (*pramāṇa*) where "the seer" (*Purusha*, pure consciousness, the Self) abides in itself. Samādhi is the main technique the yogi learns by which to calm the workings of the mind, whereafter **Kaivalya**, the isolation of 'the seer' from the impurities of the mind, is attained. The author describes yoga and then the nature and the means of attaining samādhi.

**Sadhana Pada:** There are 55 sutras in Sadhana Pada. Sadhana is the Sanskrit for "practice" or "discipline," aiming at discriminative discernment, to discern the Seer (consciousness) from its objects and the hindrances. Here the author outlines two systems of Yoga: Kriyā Yoga and Aṣṭāṅga Yoga ('Eightlimbed Yoga').

**Vibhuti Pada:** There are 56 sutras in Vibhuti Pada. Vibhuti is the Sanskrit word for "power" or "manifestation". In chapter 3, samyama is outlined:

*Dhāraṇā* – concentration, *Dhyāna* – meditation, *Samādhi* – absorption.

**Kaivalya Pada:** There are 34 sutras in Kaivalya Pada. Kaivalya "isolation", of the Seer from the contents of the mind so it is no longer disturbed by the movements of the mind. It stands for emancipation or liberation and is used where other texts often employ the term moksha (liberation). The Kaivalya Pada describes the process of liberation and the reality of the Seer.

### **CONCEPT OF DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN PATANJALI YOGA SUTRA:**

Dhāraṇā (Sanskrit: धारणा) translates to "collection or concentration of the mind (joined with the retention of breath)," or "the act of holding, bearing, wearing, supporting, maintaining, retaining, keeping back (in remembrance), a good memory," or "firmness, steadfastness, certainty."

**Dhāraṇā :** The term is rooted in the Sanskrit verbs dha and ana, signifying actions related to holding, carrying, maintaining, and resolving. Dhāraṇā represents the initial step in deep concentration meditation, wherein the practitioner focuses on an object, maintaining unwavering consciousness upon it.

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ ३.१॥(योग दर्शन)

*desa-bandhaṁ cittasya dhāraṇā. (Yog Darshan-3/1)*

*Concentration locks consciousness on a single area.*

**Dhyāna** (Sanskrit: ध्यान, Pali: ज्ञान) means "contemplation, reflection" and "profound, abstract meditation". The origin of the word can be traced back to the root "Dhi," which, in the earliest texts of the Vedas, signifies "imaginative vision."

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ ३.२ ॥(योग दर्शन)

*tatra pratyayaika-tānatā dhyānam. (Yog Darshan-3/2)*

In the state of meditative absorption, the entire perceptual flow becomes aligned with the chosen object of focus. The term Dhyāna is found in the Aranyaka and Brahmana layers of the Vedas, although its meaning remains unclear. In the early Upanishads, it is used to signify "contemplation" or "meditation," playing a significant role in the process of self-knowledge.

**Samādhi** (Sanskrit: समाधि): Samādhi is a state of meditative consciousness characterized by oneness with the object of meditation. In this state, there is no distinction between the act of meditation and the object of meditation. Samādhi can be categorized into two types: one with the support of an object of meditation and the other without. Maharishi Patanjali has given us an amazing and crystal-clear road map towards Kaivalya through his Sutras. Yet the onus lies entirely upon us to follow it with the twin keys of Abhyasa and Vairagya for that is the only way that we can finally attain our goal of absolute liberation - once and for all (Bhavanani, 2014).

In the fifth chapter titled 'CONCEPT OF DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN PRASTHĀNATRAYĪ AND PATAÑJALI YOGA SŪTRA'. Following explanations are given in the PRASTHĀNATRAYĪ AND PATAÑJALI YOGA SŪTRA.

### **DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN THE BRAHMASUTRA**

The Brahmasūtras predominantly delve into Vedantic philosophy, yet they do address the concepts of Dhyāna (meditation) and Samādhi (state of deep absorption) to some extent.

## **DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN BHAGWAD GITA**

The Śrīmadbhagavadgītā, a revered and widely known as Hindu scripture, focuses on the principles of yoga and meditation, encompassing the stages of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi. Lord Krishna elaborates on the importance of these three stages in attaining a state of consciousness free from suffering and ignorance.

## **DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN THE UPANISHADS**

The principles of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi, denotes concentration, are discussed in several key Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads emphasize the importance of concentration and focus in spiritual practice, frequently highlighting Dhāraṇā as a method to attain this state. Dhāraṇā is regarded as a foundational step leading to deeper stages of meditation and spiritual realization.

## **DHĀRAṆĀ, DHYĀNA, AND SAMĀDHI IN YOG DARSHANA:**

The practice of meditation has a rich history, with varied interpretations and purposes among individuals. For many, meditation serves as a simple method to relax and alleviate stress. However, there are diverse forms of meditation, ranging from straightforward techniques used by ordinary people to complex practices.

The exploration of the concepts of Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and Samādhi within the Prasthānatrayī has been a focal point in Indian philosophy, contributing significantly to the diverse schools of thought. These practices entail a systematic approach to concentration, meditation, and contemplation, leading to profound spiritual and psychological growth.

In the sixth chapter titled ‘AN OVERVIEW OF EXPERIMENTS DONE ON DHĀRANA AND DHYĀNA BY ANVESHANA OF SVYASA UNIVERSITY’ *University*’ an analysis

of the results obtained by the researchers at SVYASA was done and it was found that they were in close accordance with the *Patanjali Yoga sūtras*' concept of the development of mindfulness. The findings of the researchers at SVYASA were found to be closely aligned with the concepts presented in the Patañjali Yoga Sūtras regarding the development of mindfulness. The study revealed a positive correlation between the duration of meditation practice and the level of mindfulness experienced during cyclic meditation. In previous research on mindfulness, various neuro-imaging techniques such as Electroencephalography (EEG) and Event-Related Potentials (ERP) studies were used to analyze changes in the activation of the prefrontal cortex (PFC) and the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), as well as significant increases in alpha and theta brainwave activity during meditation.

The results obtained by the researchers at SVYASA validate and support the principles outlined in the Patañjali Yoga Sūtras, highlighting the importance of consistent and dedicated meditation practice in cultivating mindfulness. The positive correlation between the duration of meditation practice and the level of mindfulness emphasizes the transformative potential of regular meditation on one's mental state.

Furthermore, previous studies utilizing advanced neuro-imaging techniques have provided valuable insights into the neurological changes associated with mindfulness meditation. The increased activation of the prefrontal cortex and anterior cingulate cortex, along with elevated alpha and theta brainwave activity, suggest enhanced attention, focus, and relaxation during meditation.

This pattern of activation is commonly associated with meditation and relaxation (Chan B.R, Polich J, 15), meditation status and traits, EEG, ERP and neuro-imaging studies (Psychol 76 Bull, 2006:132:180-211, 15). There is enough evidence of changes in PFC during mindfulness meditation, which is associated with attention, concentration and

emotion regulation. There have been other studies covering brain related self-awareness whose findings show a great promise for the individual's ability to train the mind which not only changes the emotional experiences but also structure of the brain and its functioning.

Following are some important concept in Prasthānatrayī:

**Concept of Svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā, Svarūpa, Āropa, Upādhi, Cīti, Śakti, Kaivalya, Bheda:**

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यं स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तिर् इति ॥ ४.३४  
॥(yogdarshan)

*puruṣārthasūnyānāṃ guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktir iti ॥*  
4.34 ॥

**Absolute freedom comes when the qualities, becoming devoid of the object of the Puruṣa, become latent; or the power of consciousness becomes established in its own nature.**

स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठेति। तदानीं निरोधावस्थायां न व्युत्थानावस्थायामिति भावः। स्याद् एतद्व्युत्थानावस्थायामप्रतिष्ठिता स्वरूपे चितिशक्तिर्निरोधावस्थायां प्रतितिष्ठन्ती परिणामिनी स्यात्।1.3(श्रीवाचस्पतिमिश्रविरचितायां पातञ्जलभाष्यव्याख्यायां)

कृतकरणीयतया पुरुषार्थशून्यानां यः प्रतिप्रसवः स्वकारणे प्रधाने लयस्तेषां कार्यकारणात्मकानां गुणानां व्युत्थानसमाधिनिरोधसंस्कारा मनसि लीयन्ते

मनोऽस्मितायामस्मिता लिङ्गे लिङ्गमलिङ्ग इति। योऽयं गुणानां कार्यकारणात्मकानां  
प्रतिसर्गस्तत् कैवल्यम्। यं कंचित् पुरुषं प्रति प्रधानस्य मोक्षः स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा पुरुषस्य  
मोक्ष इत्याह --- स्वरूपेति। अस्ति हि महाप्रलयेऽपि स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा  
चितिशक्तिः।4.34(श्रीवाचस्पतिमिश्रविरचितायां पातञ्जलभाष्यव्याख्यायां)

**स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा (Svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā):** Refers to the realization and establishment of one's true essence or nature. In spiritual contexts, this often signifies recognizing oneself as pure consciousness or the absolute reality (Brahman).

**चितिशक्ति(Citiśakti):** *Citiśakti* can be understood as the dynamic energy of consciousness. It highlights that awareness is not merely a passive state, but also possesses a creative and transformative quality.

**कैवल्य(Kaivalya):** *Kaivalya* , translated as "liberation" or "isolation," represents the ultimate state of spiritual freedom, where the individual soul (*jiva*) is liberated from the cycle of birth and death, realizing its oneness with the absolute.

Collectively, this concept illustrates the journey toward self-realization, where one comes to understand and establish their true nature as pure consciousness. This recognition reveals the transformative power of awareness, ultimately leading to liberation. It emphasizes the profound connection between consciousness, reality, and the spiritual path.

*Svarūpa, Āropa, Upādhi, Cit, Śakti, and Kaivalya*—are key concepts in Indian philosophy, particularly in Vedanta. Here's an overview of their meanings:

**Svarūpa** (स्वरूप): Literally means "one's own form" or "true nature." In Vedanta, *svarūpa* refers to the essential nature or true identity of an entity, especially of the self (*ātman*). It often denotes the unchanging, pure, and absolute reality of something, as distinct from the temporary or superficial attributes.

**Āropa** (आरोप): Refers to "superimposition" or the attribution of qualities or characteristics that do not truly belong to an object or entity. In Advaita Vedanta, for example, *āropa* refers to the mistaken identification of the self with the body or mind, which leads to ignorance (*avidyā*).

**Upādhi** (उपाधि): Means "limiting condition" or "adjunct." An *upādhi* is a factor that limits or conditions the perception of an entity's true nature. For instance, in Vedanta, the *ātman* is seen as being infinite, but the body and mind act as *upādhis* that make it seem limited. Removing the *upādhis* allows the self to be realized in its true, unlimited form.

**Cit** (चित्): Refers to "consciousness" or "pure awareness." It is often used in Vedanta and Shaivism to denote the fundamental nature of reality as pure consciousness. In Advaita Vedanta, *cit* is often equated with *Brahman*, the ultimate, formless, and infinite reality.

**Śakti** (शक्ति): Means "power" or "energy." In the context of Indian philosophy and spirituality, *śakti* refers to the dynamic, creative, and active power of the universe. In the dualistic and non-dualistic schools like Shaivism, *śakti* is often personified as the Goddess and is considered the feminine principle that manifests the universe.

These terms are interconnected in various philosophical systems. For example, understanding one's *svarūpa* involves overcoming *āropa* and *upādhi*, which obscure the true self (*cit*). *Śakti* is often viewed as the force that operates in the world, and attaining *kaivalya* is about transcending these forces to realize one's eternal nature.

The terms *Bheda*, *Abheda*, and *Tādātmya* are used in Indian philosophy to discuss the relationships between different entities, especially in the context of metaphysical debates about the nature of reality, the self, and the ultimate principle (*Brahman* or *Ātman*). Let's break them down:

***Bheda* (भेद) Difference:**

स्वस्वामिशक्त्योः स्वरूपोपलब्धिहेतुः संयोगः ॥ २.२३ ॥

***Yoga Sūtra 2.23:*** "*Sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi-hetuḥ saṁyogaḥ*" — This sutra describes the relationship between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, indicating their distinct roles but also their interaction. This separation between consciousness and material nature reflects *bheda*.

***Brahma Sūtra 3.2.28-3.2.31:*** प्रकाशाश्रयवद्वा, तेजस्त्वात् ॥ २८ ॥ परमतः  
सेतून्मानसंबन्धभेदव्यपदेशेभ्यः ॥ ३१ ॥ These sutras argue for the difference between the individual soul (*jīva*) and *Brahman*. In Dvaita interpretation, these are key in asserting the eternal difference between the two.

***Bheda*** refers to "difference" or "distinction." In philosophical contexts, it highlights the concept that two entities are separate and distinct from each other. For instance, in **Dvaita** (dualism) philosophy, *bheda* plays a key role, as it asserts that the individual soul (*jīva*) and God (*Brahman*) are inherently and eternally distinct. Additionally, the material world is viewed as distinct from God. This concept is fundamental to schools of thought that emphasize duality, underscoring the clear separation between the creator, creation, and individual beings.

**Abheda (अभेद) Non-Difference:**

क्षीणवृत्तेरभिजातस्येव मणेर्ग्रहीतृग्रहणग्राह्येषु तत्स्थतदञ्जनता समापत्तिः ॥ १.४१ ॥

**Yoga Sūtra 1.41:** "*Kṣīṇa-vṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grahīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu tatsthatadañjanatā samāpattiḥ*" — This sutra describes a state of *samāpatti*, where the mind becomes one with the object of meditation, losing the sense of separateness. This temporary oneness can be seen as a form of *abheda*.

**Brahma Sūtra 3.2.11:** न स्थानतोऽपि परस्योभयलिङ्गम्, सर्वत्र हि ॥ ११ ॥ In the Advaita view, this sutra supports the idea of non-difference between *jīva* and *Brahman*. The world and the individual self are seen as superimpositions on *Brahman*, which is the only reality.

**Abheda** means "non-difference" or "oneness," emphasizing that no fundamental distinction exists between entities. In **Advaita Vedanta** (non-dualism), *abheda* is the central idea that the ultimate reality, **Brahman**, is singular and without a second (*ekam advitiyam*). According to this view, the individual soul (*ātman*) and Brahman are essentially the same, and any apparent distinctions are the result of ignorance or illusion (*māyā*), and therefore not ultimately real. This concept is foundational to non-dualistic teachings, where the seeming separations between the self, the universe, and God are recognized as illusions once the ultimate truth is realized.

**Tādātmya (तादात्म्य) - Identity or Sameness:**

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥ ३.३ ॥

**Yoga Sūtra 3.3:** "*Tad eva arthamātranirbhāsaṁ svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ*" — This sutra explains that in *samādhi*, the mind loses its own form and becomes completely

absorbed in the object of meditation, a state of identity or oneness (*tādātmya*). However, this is not the ultimate state, which is *kaivalya*, the isolation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*.

***Brahma Sūtra 4.4.17***: जगद्व्यापारवर्जम्, प्रकरणात्, असंनिहितत्वाच्च ॥ १७ ॥ This sutra explains the ultimate liberation of the individual soul and its identity with *Brahman*, which is described as a realization of the eternal *tādātmya* relationship between the self and the supreme reality.

***Tādātmya*** means "identity" or "being of the same essence." It refers to a state in which one entity is seen as unified with or immersed in another. This concept is employed to describe the relationship between the individual self and the ultimate reality in various philosophical traditions. In *Advaita Vedanta*, *tādātmya* signifies the oneness of the *jīva* (individual soul) with *Brahman* upon realizing that there is no true separation between them. In *Vishishtadvaita* (qualified non-dualism), the term is used to express the connection between the individual soul and God. While the soul remains a distinct entity, it is inseparably linked to God.

**Summary of Relationships in *Bheda*, *Abheda* and *Tādātmya***: ***Bheda*** emphasizes **difference**: Reality consists of distinct and separate entities (e.g., God and individual souls are different). ***Abheda*** emphasizes **non-difference**: All distinctions are illusory, and everything is one unified reality. ***Tādātmya*** emphasizes **identity**: One entity is seen as being the same as or completely identified with another, often used to explain the relationship between the individual soul and the ultimate reality.

In Indian philosophy, these terms reflect different metaphysical perspectives about how the individual relates to the ultimate reality (*Brahman* or *God*) and the nature of existence itself.

## Relationship Between *Cit* and *Ātman*:

### ***Brahma Sūtra 2.3.18: "Asmad-yogāt śabdebhyaḥ"* (अस्मद्योगात् शब्देभ्यः)**

- **Meaning:** "Because of the connection of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul, as indicated by scriptural texts."
- **Relation to *Cit* and *Ātman*:** This *sūtra* suggests that the individual soul (*Ātman*) is connected with the Supreme Soul (*Brahman*), which is pure consciousness (*Cit*). The apparent separation is due to ignorance, but in essence, they are one and the same.

### ***Brahma Sūtra 1.3.19: "Jīvām pratīkādrśābhyām"* (जीवं प्रतीकादृशाभ्याम्)**

- **Meaning:** "The individual soul (*jīva*) is a reflection of *Brahman*, as declared by scripture and analogy."
- **Relation to *Cit* and *Ātman*:** In *Advaita Vedanta*, *jīva* (individual self) is considered a reflection of *Ātman*, which is identical to *Brahman*. Since *Brahman* is pure consciousness, *jīva* too, in its true form, is pure consciousness (*Cit*), though veiled by ignorance.

### ***Mandukya Upanishad 7: "Prapañcopaśamaḥ śivo'dvaitaḥ"* (प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैतः)**

- **Meaning:** "The cessation of all phenomena, the blissful, the non-dual."
- **Relation to *Cit* and *Ātman*:** In this Upanishad, the nature of *Ātman* is described as non-dual (*advaita*) and pure consciousness (*Cit*). It declares that the self, when freed from ignorance, is the ultimate reality, which is blissful and non-dual consciousness.

***Yoga Sūtra 2.20: "Draṣṭā dr̥śīmātraḥ śuddho'pi pratyaya-anupaśyaḥ"* (The seer is nothing but the power of seeing, yet appears as though it is seeing through the mind.)**

- **Explanation:** Here, *Puruṣa* is described as the "seer," or pure consciousness, whose nature is to witness or observe. It is intrinsically pure and remains unaffected by the contents of the mind or the activities of *Prakṛti*. This is akin to *Cit*, which is the unchanging and eternal aspect of reality.

**Yoga Sūtra 1.4:** "*Vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra*" the seer identifies with the fluctuations of the mind.)

- **Explanation:** The identification of the *Puruṣa* with the fluctuations of the mind (*vṛttis*) leads to the false perception of the self being connected to the body and mental modifications. This identification is a superimposition (similar to *āropa* in Advaita), creating the illusion that the *Puruṣa* (pure consciousness, or *Cit*) is bound by the activities of the mind.

**Yoga Sūtra 2.23:** "*Sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi-hetuḥ saṁyogaḥ*" (The conjunction of the seer and the seen is for the seer's realization of its true nature.)

- **Explanation:** The connection between *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti* exists for the purpose of experience and liberation. When the *Puruṣa* is entangled with *Prakṛti*, it forgets its true nature as pure consciousness (*Cit*). The practice of yoga aims to separate the two, allowing the *Puruṣa* to realize its independent, pure, conscious nature.

### **Cit as the Nature of Ātman:**

In *Advaita Vedānta* (non-dualism), *Ātman* (the individual self) is described as having the essential nature of *Cit*, which is pure consciousness or awareness. The *Ātman* is said to be **self-luminous**, meaning that it is not dependent on anything else for its existence or for its capacity to illuminate the world of experiences. *Cit* refers

to the undifferentiated, unchanging, and infinite awareness that constitutes the very essence of *Ātman*.

In this view, the relationship is one of **identity**: *Ātman* is pure *Cit*, and realizing this is the goal of spiritual practice. The problem arises when the *Ātman* is mistaken for the body, mind, or senses due to ignorance (*avidyā*), creating the illusion that the self is limited and bound. Liberation (*mokṣa*) occurs when one realizes that the *Ātman* is, in fact, identical with *Cit* and *Brahman*, the universal consciousness.

### **Summary of the Relationship Between *Cit* and *Ātman* in the *Yoga Sūtra*:**

- *Cit* (pure consciousness) in the *Yoga Sūtra* is represented by *Puruṣa*, the eternal, unchanging observer.
- *Ātman* (the individual self) is understood as non-different from *Puruṣa*, though the *Yoga Sūtra* uses the term *Puruṣa* to emphasize the role of pure consciousness in contrast to *Prakṛti* (the material world).
- The fluctuations of the mind (*citta-vṛtti*) cause the self (*Puruṣa*) to mistakenly identify with the body and mind, similar to the concept of superimposition in Advaita Vedānta.
- The goal of yoga is to remove this misidentification, allowing the self to realize its nature as pure consciousness (*Cit*).
- *Kaivalya*, the ultimate state of liberation, occurs when the self (*Puruṣa*) is freed from the influence of *Prakṛti* and abides in its true nature as pure consciousness (*Cit*).

In conclusion, the relationship between *Cit* and *Ātman* is one of identity. *Ātman* is the individual manifestation of the same pure consciousness that is *Brahman*. Through self-knowledge, one can realize that they are, in essence, pure consciousness (*Cit*).

## Merits of Understanding the *Cit-Ātman* Relationship:

### 1. Clarity in the Nature of the Self:

In non-dualistic perspectives (like Advaita), understanding that *Ātman* is *Cit*—pure consciousness—leads to a profound realization that the true self is beyond the limitations of the body, mind, and senses. This insight helps overcome fear, desire, and suffering, as the individual realizes their eternal, unchanging nature.

Realizing that *Ātman* is essentially the same as *Brahman* (*aham brahmāsmi*) results in liberation (*mokṣa*), where the illusion of separateness dissolves.

### 2. Spiritual Freedom and Liberation:

In schools where *Cit* is understood as the true essence of *Ātman*, recognizing this can lead to the dissolution of ignorance (*avidyā*) and the attainment of *mokṣa* (liberation). The identification with pure consciousness, which is infinite and unchanging, allows the individual to transcend the limitations of the physical world and the cycle of birth and rebirth (*samsāra*).

### 3. Practical Approach to Meditation and Self-Realization:

In *Advaita Vedanta*, meditation and self-inquiry (*ātma-vicāra*) are methods used to contemplate the nature of the *Ātman* as *Cit*. This approach has practical merits for spiritual seekers, as it focuses on direct experience of the self's nature as pure consciousness, bypassing the need for complex rituals or external validations.

The concept of *Nirvāṇa* (निर्वाण):

*Nirvāṇa* (निर्वाण) is a profound concept in Indian religions, particularly in *Buddhism*, *Jainism*, and some schools of *Hinduism*. It generally refers to the state of ultimate

liberation, freedom from suffering, and the cessation of the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*). The meaning and interpretation of *nirvāṇa* differ slightly among the traditions, but the central theme is always one of liberation from the bondage of existence.

### **1. *Nirvāṇa* in *Buddhism*:**

In Buddhism, *nirvāṇa* is the ultimate spiritual goal. It represents the extinguishing of the fires of desire, hatred, and ignorance, which cause suffering and rebirth

### **2. *Nirvāṇa* in *Jainism*:**

In *Jainism*, *nirvāṇa* represents the final state of liberation, where the soul (*jīva*) is freed from all karmic bonds. Jainism teaches that karma, in the form of fine particles, attaches to the soul and keeps it bound in the cycle of birth and death.

### **3. *Nirvāṇa* in *vedanta*:**

#### **In the *Upanishads* and *Vedanta*:**

In certain *Upanishadic texts*, the concept of *nirvāṇa* is closely aligned with *mokṣa*, where an individual attains the realization that their true self (*ātman*) is one with the universal consciousness (*Brahman*). *Nirvāṇa* is often described as the extinguishing of the ego or ignorance, enabling the self to unite with the infinite.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, *nirvāṇa* is discussed in relation to spiritual liberation and union with *Brahman*, emphasizing inner peace and detachment from the material world.

In essence, *nirvāṇa* represents a state of ultimate liberation, freedom from suffering, and profound spiritual tranquility. While interpretations may differ across philosophical traditions, it remains a key spiritual goal, symbolizing transcendent peace and enlightenment.

## ***Mokṣa* in Indian Philosophy:**

### **In *Advaita Vedanta* (Non-dualism):**

- In *Advaita Vedanta*, *mokṣa* is not viewed as something new that must be attained, but rather as the recognition of an eternal truth. According to this philosophy, the individual soul (*ātman*) is always one with ***Brahman*** (the ultimate reality), but this truth is obscured by **ignorance** (*avidyā*).
- From the perspective of ultimate reality (*paramārtha*), there is nothing to achieve because the self is already liberated. What is required is the removal of ignorance to realize the self's true nature. Thus, *mokṣa* is often described as "realizing what is already the case," since the self has always been free; we simply need to recognize this truth.
- **Illustration:** A common metaphor used is that of mistaking a rope for a snake. When a person realizes it is actually a rope, nothing has fundamentally changed—the rope was always a rope, but the misunderstanding (*avidyā*) was cleared. Similarly, the self is inherently free, and *mokṣa* is the awareness of this eternal freedom.

### **Is *Mokṣa* Accomplishing What is Accomplished?**

In *Advaita Vedanta*, *mokṣa* is understood as "accomplishing what is already accomplished." It is not about attaining a new state or becoming something different, but rather realizing one's true nature as the infinite and eternal *ātman*, which has always been the case. The barriers are ignorance and the false identification with the body and mind. Once these are dispelled, *mokṣa* is simply the recognition of this eternal truth.

### **Philosophical Implications of "Accomplishing What is Accomplished":**

- ***Mokṣa* as Not Creating a New State:**

- Viewing *mokṣa* as "accomplishing what is already accomplished" suggests that liberation is not a new event or state, but rather the removal of ignorance. It's like clearing dust from a mirror to reveal what has always been there.
- **The Eternal Nature of the Self:**
  - This idea underscores the eternal and unchanging nature of the self. In *Advaita Vedanta*, mokṣa involves no transformation of the self; it is simply the realization that the self has always been one with *Brahman*.
- **Ignorance Removal as the Path to Liberation:**
  - The concept emphasizes that liberation is not about gaining something new, but about eliminating what hides the true self. This aligns with the path of knowledge (*jñāna-mārga*), where self-realization is achieved by removing false perceptions about the self.

### **Conclusion:**

In certain philosophical traditions, particularly *Advaita Vedanta*, *mokṣa* is understood as "accomplishing what is already accomplished." Rather than creating something new, it involves realizing the eternal truth that the self is inherently free. Liberation, in this view, is simply the removal of **ignorance** (*avidyā*), which allows one to recognize their true nature as pure consciousness (*cit*) and one with *Brahman*. In contrast, other schools see mokṣa as a more transformative process, where one attains a new state, such as eternal union with God or freedom from karmic bonds. Both interpretations stress the importance of spiritual practice in reaching this ultimate state.

**In conclusion**, the *Prasthānatrayī*, with its profound insights and philosophical depth, serves as a guiding beacon for practitioners of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi*. These sacred texts form an integral part of the spiritual practices in Yoga and Hindu philosophy,

providing seekers with the wisdom and knowledge necessary to progress on the transformative path of meditation and attain spiritual realization.

In the context of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi*, the *Prasthānatrayī* (comprising the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and *Brahma Sutras*) offers profound and comprehensive guidance for practitioners on their spiritual journey and the path of meditation. Each text within the *Prasthānatrayī* plays a unique role in enriching these aspects of meditation, leading to a transformative and enlightening experience. The conclusions drawn from the teachings of these texts can be summarized as follows:

***Dhāraṇā*:** The *Prasthānatrayī* provides a strong foundation for *Dhāraṇā* by offering deep insights into the nature of the self, the ultimate reality (Brahman), and the principles of righteous action (*Dharma*). The *Upanishads*' profound teachings guide practitioners in identifying suitable objects of meditation, while the *Bhagavad Gita* imparts practical instructions on maintaining focus and controlling the mind through selfless action (*Karma Yoga*). The *Brahma Sutras* further aid in gaining clarity and focus by systematically analyzing the *Upanishads*' concepts. The conclusion is that *Dhāraṇā* is a crucial preparatory step for deeper stages of meditation, helping individuals develop mental stability and discipline to overcome distractions.

***Dhyāna*:** The *Prasthānatrayī* significantly contributes to *Dhyāna* by presenting profound spiritual truths and transformative insights for contemplation during meditation. The *Upanishads* provide profound objects of meditation by exploring the nature of reality and the self. The *Bhagavad Gita*'s teachings on devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*) offer a path of surrender and contemplation on the divine aspects, leading to a state of profound tranquility and inner peace. The *Brahma Sutras* enrich the practice of *Dhyāna* by presenting various philosophical perspectives, allowing practitioners to explore different themes and approaches. The conclusion is that *Dhyāna* is a transformative practice that leads to a deep

sense of connection with the divine and a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of all existence.

***Samādhi:*** The Prasthānatrayī plays a vital role in attaining Samādhi, the highest state of meditative absorption and union with the object of meditation. The *Upanishads*, with their exploration of the ultimate reality (*Brahman*), serve as a guiding light for seekers on their quest for unity and transcendence. The *Bhagavad Gita's* teachings on self-realization and the nature of the soul provide the groundwork for the transformative journey towards divine unity and blissful absorption. The Brahma Sutras aid seekers in navigating the complexities of spiritual realization, providing intellectual grounding and structured guidance on the path to Samādhi. The conclusion is that *Samādhi* represents the ultimate goal of meditation, where the boundaries of the self dissolve, leading to profound spiritual realization and unity with the divine.

Overall, the *Prasthānatrayī* serves as a guiding beacon for practitioners of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi*, offering profound insights and philosophical depth. These sacred texts form an integral part of the spiritual practices in *Yoga* and Indian philosophy, providing seekers with the wisdom and knowledge necessary to progress on the transformative path of meditation and attain spiritual realization. Through the systematic integration of these teachings, individuals can experience a profound transformation, leading to a deeper understanding of the self, profound spiritual insights, and a profound sense of connection with the universal consciousness.