

# PRATYAHARA: A VIEW ON ASTONISHMENT SKILL

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**Abstract:** Pratyahara is the withdrawing of the mind and senses from the objects. It is the fifth limb to attain full Self-realization as outlined in the Yoga Sutras which attributed by sage Patanjali. The senses are said to always follow the mind in the same way the hive of bees follows the queen bee. Wherever she goes, they will follow. Similarly, if the mind truly goes inward, the senses will come racing behind him. Our senses seem to drag us around in the external world, whether pursuing material objects, food, or circumstances related to professional, social, or economic life. Through the routine practice of pratyahara, we gradually gain positive control over the mind being obsessively drawn towards all of those objects. This is a further refinement of minimizing the coloring of the mind field, and the third Niyama, which is Tapas, or training the senses. Sense withdrawal, pratyahara, rests on the solid foundation of a steady, comfortable meditation posture, and smooth, deep, quiet breath that has no pauses. Without these two steps, sense withdrawal becomes a battle. With posture and breath regulated, pratyahara comes much more naturally. Meditation posture, regulation of prana, and withdrawal of the senses collectively set the stage for the higher practices of concentration, meditation and samadhi which are together called samyama (self-control). Samyama is the finer tool of the inner journey, and this is the reason for everyone should do the pratyahara.

**Index Terms -** pratyahara, soul, Desire, Asana, pranayama, Diseases.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In general perception Human self power goes in a wrong direction. Every human being busy with their mortal unsalable things. These Unsalable matters are endless until self realization. If human self power falls into deep illusion then it may not be Attain own ultimate goal. As we well-known that liberation is ultimate destination of every soul. If it fails to achieve that then it cause of mind only. With stable mind only one soul can reach that destination. Mind has five senses, until one control over senses it is impossible to control over mind which follow meditation. Pratyahara is one of the yogic practices where one can modify them to inwards. It is a practice where one can purify his/her body and mind.

## II. PRATYAHARA

Our perception of reality is predominantly influenced by our sensory experience whatever someone have sees, feel, hear, touch, and taste. Pratyahara refers to the withdrawal of the senses from external objects and our modern-day need for constant gratification from sensory stimuli. Our minds are constantly being pulled outward to evaluate all the information the senses bring in. Ancient yoga has given the definition of pratyahara is “*The drawing in of the organs is by their giving up their own objects and taking the form of the mind-stuff.*”<sup>1</sup> Pratyahara comes the fifth steps of Astanga yoga. It is the immediate stage of mind after the pranayama. One who successfully attained Asana and pranayama then automatically inner mind act for pratyahara. It's a kind of invisible Action which is automatically created after pranayama. It will give some benefits as like Peace, truthfulness, non-stealing and Energy. Apart from this it makes us to understand the Reality of the universe. The practitioner will not face any types of joy or grief in any circumstances and can able to sustain in society with detachment. Once detachment blow in the mind then desire will be nullified.

## III. NEED OF RECEDING

For a certain period of time every living being want to enjoy life. But when they become tired of it then try to overcome themselves from it permanently. In script it has been suggested to us that every living being should enjoy their respective gross body till last then only they can delete their past deed/sin as:

वर्तमानमिदं याभ्यां शरीरं सुखदुःखदम् ।

आरब्धं पुण्यपापाभ्यां भोगादेव तयो क्षयः ॥<sup>2</sup>

In this point of view one can ask what the use of pratyahara is ? To this point we can say enjoyment is under control of desire and the desire of living being is endless. Sometime it carries after the death of gross body also which cause of Ignorance. This ignorance can prevent by detachment only. Because the enjoyment/desire is much more it will carry after the death also. It means somewhere we need to stop. *Isvarakrushna* state that:

दुःखत्रय विघातात् तत् जिज्ञासा तद् अपघातके हेतौ ।<sup>3</sup>

Every human being gets joy sorrow from the birth. And after a certain time being they wants to come out from it. Here the word जिज्ञासा indicates that only. Until stopping our desire we can't stop pain or joy in our life. Desires are created in the mind through senses, this regards lord Krishna suggested us that one must have to control over their mind at first:

तस्मात् त्वम् इन्द्रियाणि आदौ नियम्य भरतर्षभः !

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥<sup>4</sup>

#### IV. CHALLENGES TO RECEDING

The nature of senses is run towards their own objects. For this every living being suffered with various facts in this world. In this process our all thoughts are goes as like a Boat takes by air in the river as:

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।

तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञा वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ॥<sup>5</sup>

This kind of situation one will face when unable to control senses with full of desire. This is a state when mind is under control of senses.

**Diseases** are one of the major Obstacles for the pratyahara. It gives us the physical and mental deficiency with the cause by वात पित्त & कफ. All living beings are worry about it. Apart from disease there are some more huddles which create more trouble to get Attention i.e. mental laziness, doubt, calmness, cessation, false perception, non-attaining concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained. व्याधिस्त्यान... अन्तरायाः<sup>6</sup>. Imbalance between body and mind it may major cause of a major destroy. In *Bhagwat Gita* lord *Krishna* say that:

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंस संगस्तेषुपजायते ।

संगात् संजायते कामः कामात् क्रोधःभिजायते ॥

क्रोधात् भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।

स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥<sup>7</sup>

When the mind start to think about an External Objects since from that moment attachment will form in mind which is gradually leads to death after become more. An object can be a cause of good or bad for someone; it's depending on one's thinking because originally every object has three qualities as per *sankhya* philosophy प्रकृति त्रिगुणात्मिका<sup>8</sup>. I.e. सत्त्वः रजस् and तमस्. So, if mind follow objects with ignorance then it take away us from the absolute truth.

#### V. ANXIETY & IRRITATION

Most of us are suffer with these two mental disorders. It's a state of worry when mind want to fulfill desire without wasting time. To fulfill wishes mind start think on possibilities. At that point of time the unstable mind never agrees with that everything is uncertain in this world.

अस्थिरं जीवितं लोके अस्थिरः धनयौवनं, अस्थिरं पुत्रदाराश्च धर्मकीर्तिः द्वयस्थिरम् ॥<sup>9</sup>

And moreover if mind unable to fulfill desire then it create uncertain fear and irritation in the mind. According to *sankhya* philosophy these kind mind function contained more Quality of Destruction (*tamoguna*).The nature of the *tamoguna* is exact opposite nature of *sattvaguna* like darkness, confusion, eager, false-knowledge etc. This is the cause it's create more affection in the mind towards objects naturally as said:

लघ्वादिदर्मैः साधर्म्यं वैधर्म्यं गुणानाम् ॥<sup>10</sup>

#### VI. THE RECEDING

It's a difficult to make reverse of the function of senses. Because the natural process of the senses is towards their respective object as we know. In this process of receding one should modify them to inwards. Some time one may feel that it's impossible but once practice pratyahara can feel it is possible. When a person is in expert in doing asana and *pranayama* then he/she can realize purity in mind which make everything is possible. In *yogasutra patanjali* is saying that:

विषयवति वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना मनसः स्थितिनीवन्धिनी ॥<sup>11</sup>

With these words *patanjali* has clearly state that mind will get some extraordinary perception after become expert in *Pranayama*. By that kind of perception mind can able to deploy senses as per own wish. At this kind of state all the senses will be act under the mind only. They will not be able to run independently towards objects. *patanjali* give emphasis us to practice as:

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः ॥<sup>12</sup>

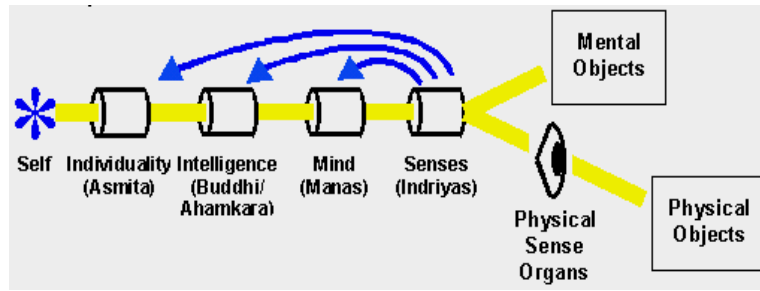
One should have practicing asana and *pranayam* with love for a long period. It should not break in the middle. About asana Daniel *Lacerda* had mentioned in his yoga book that: *asanas help prepare the mind and body for meditation, relieving tension and protecting the body from disturbances by purifying the nervous system.*<sup>13</sup>. It will help us to remove stress from our mind and purifying body and mind which leads healthy body. As same like *pranayam* also work to purify our mind. About *parayama* researcher pointed out that *“pranayama purges each one of the aforementioned nadis in 3 months general practice. It actuates tranquility of brain by directing the stream of prana in the form.”*<sup>14</sup>

#### VII. ENVIRONMENT & RECEDING

In current social condition it is quite difficult to practice receding. Some are working in an office. Some are engaged with business. Some are always engaged themselves with their social network. Some are with tight daily schedule. So in these types of situation it's very difficult to convey mind for *pranayam* or meditation. One thing it's clear that environment, condition make us depress, seek as well and for that we lose our strength. In an interview Dr. *Esther Sternberg* has told that: **“If you are under constant exposure to stress hormones and nerve chemicals over weeks or months, your immune system will wear down”**<sup>15</sup>. If a person constant having stress due to family, jobs, money etc. then he will lose WBC also. In her interview by giving emphasize on yoga Physiologist had state that : *“I want to emphasize that extreme exercise, shoveling snow in the winter or even running at 90% VO<sub>2</sub>max on the treadmill, can also trigger your brain's physiological stress response...regular exercise is good because it helps your heart do a more efficient job”*<sup>16</sup>.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

On the base of above focus we may conclude that surround situation is not in our control but, mind is in our control. Once we control on our senses then it mean control over the mind. Our environment may disturb us with various ways, but it is our proficiency, to make mind pleasant. When the practitioner is able to turn his senses inwards then he/she can understand about the reality of the world with extra perception. Then he /she can attain *pratyahara*.



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