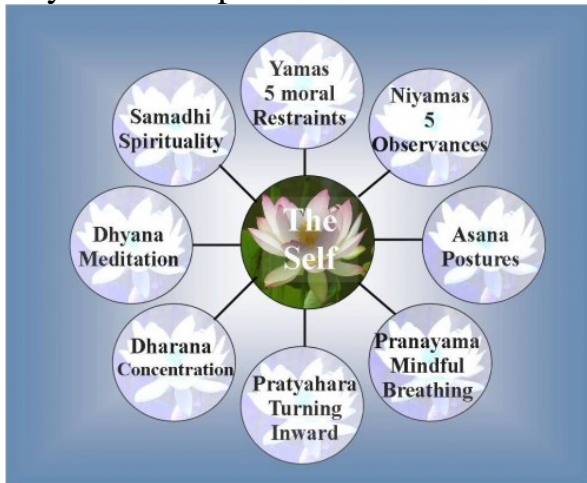


**The Science of Upanishads – Part 52: Foundations of Modern Yoga Practice (Contd.): Description of Dharana (Concentration) as The Sixth Anga (Limb) of The Ashtanga Yoga (Eight Limbed Yoga) of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**  
(March 14 – March 20, 2018)

We have so far covered five Angas (Limbs) of the Eight Angas (Ashtanga) of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, which included Yama (Self-Control), Niyama (Discipline), Asana (Physical Pose), Pranayama (Breath Control) and Pratyahara (Withdrawal of Senses). **Today, we will discuss the Sixth Anga, namely Dharana (Concentration).**

Dharana (Concentration) is a precursor step to Dhyana (Meditation). According to Patanjali, Dhyana is not possible without first mastering the Dharana.



**The mind is like a monkey, jumping from one thought to next, like clamorous monkeys leaping from tree to tree. So, it takes some discipline and patience to learn how to focus our attention on a single object.** The mind can be fixed on something external or internal to the body. For example, externally it can be fixed on a beautiful picture, flower, statue, or any other object of choice. Internally, it can be fixed on any part of the body or any abstract idea like the sound of ocean, a flute, or a drum. One can also focus one's mind on the mystical, all powerful, mind-captivating mantra. Yogis normally fix their mind internally on Prana (breath) through the practice of Pranayama.

Practicing Dharana is easier said than done! **Whether one is concentrating one's mind with an image, object or an abstract idea, the mind repeatedly tries to move away from the focused point. The goal is to bring the mind back to focus by redirecting the mind again and again. It is like taming a monkey.** Once it's tamed, it will just listen to you. You will be able to say, 'Okay, sit there quietly.' And it will. At that point you are meditating. Until then you are training yourself to meditate. Training your mind to meditate is dharana all about. He who practises concentration will possess a very good health and very cheerful mental vision. Through concentration you will get penetrative insight. Subtle esoteric meanings will flash out in the field of mental consciousness. You will understand the inner depths of philosophical significance when you read the Gita or the Upanishads with concentration. **Those who practise concentration evolve quickly. They can do any work with greater efficiency. What others can do in six hours, can be done by one who does concentration, within half an hour. Concentration purifies and calms the surging emotions,**

**strengthens the current of thought and clarifies the ideas.** Concentration keeps a man in his material progress also. He will have a very good out-turn of work in his office. What was cloudy and hazy before, becomes clearer and definite; what was difficult before becomes easy now; and what was complex, bewildering and confusing before, comes easily within the mental grasp. You can achieve anything through concentration. Nothing is impossible for one who practises regular concentration.

**Read Here for more on [Dharana](#) Anga of Ashtanga Yoga**