

AMRITA VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM  
**CULTURAL EDUCATION**  
Ettimadai Campus

**Handout Vol 1 Copy 2**  
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**The Why and What of Yoga?**

What is central to the success of the people?

- Gift of a strong and disciplined mind.
- A mind that thinks when you will it to think and about what you decide.
- A mind that immediately complies, with the will to think fast, slow or stop.
- Thoughts entering the disciplined mind are cognized and directed and cannot sway the mind in one way or another.

**Ability** to hold the awareness of the mind to one point, without wavering is concentration or one-pointedness of the mind.

CONCENTRATED MIND	DISSIPATED MIND
• Strong mind	• weak mind
• can carry out its own decisions	• makes one decision and carries out another
• Higher the quality, higher the performance	• Lower quality of mind, lower the performance

Firm control over the senses and the mind is the **YOGA** of concentration. One must be ever watchful for this, since this yoga is difficult to acquire and easy to lose.

Mind is not aware of the external object (thoughts, feelings or emotions to the object of concentration) or peripheral things and experiences surrounding the object of concentration.

When this concentration becomes steady and is uninterrupted regarding the focused subject or object unobstructed by any other knowledge (of other sort), like the unobstructed and steady flow of oil, it results in meditation.

Mental concentration is the deepening of mental awareness. As the mental awareness deepens then there is total absence of sensorial awareness then *dharana* takes place.

*Dharana* is the deepening of awareness where the concept of time is lost where the objective consciousness is lost and only the awareness of space remains.

This practice gets firmly grounded when continued for a long time with reverence and without interruption.

Success is determined by strong will power detachment and non attachment.

Meditation is a state of mind and consciousness in which there is alertness, dynamism in dissociation of mind and senses and total concentration.

In the Raja Yoga sutras the process of meditation has been divided into eight stages.

- i. Yama: (Self restraint),
- ii. Niyama (Self-observances of fixed rules),
- iii. Asana (Postures)
- iv. Pranayama (breath control),
- v. Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses),
- vi. Dharana (concentration),
- vii. Dhyana (meditation),
- viii. Samadhi (transcendental consciousness).

First four are the *bahirangas* or external parts; they harmonise the body, awaken the pranic energy within the body; reach a point of total steadiness and equanimity within the body.

Awareness is first generated in the body because the body affects the stability and peace of the mind.

Process of meditation is dealt with in such a way that the mental and physical experiences are totally contained in the field of awareness to get to the centre of the mind there has to be an awareness of the peripheral experiences and total control over it.

The actual practices of meditation are of *pratyahara* and *dharana* only. Nowhere in the yogic tradition is *dhyana* mentioned as a practice or a technique.

Spontaneous meditation is possible when one is not attached to the experience of the senses, ego, buddhi (intellect), chitta (memory), and manas (rational mind).

*From the “Dharana Darshan” by Sri Swami Nirajananand Saraswati of the Bihar School of Yoga*