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**25**

## SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND YOGA

In the last lesson we have tried to understand the meaning, nature and various types of Yoga along with the practices which help us achieve physical and mental health. Indeed Yoga makes our life enjoyable. There is no domain of life where Yoga is not relevant. It changes our attitude towards life. It awakens our creativity and enriches our relationships with others. In the light of Yoga nothing remains simply mundane but everything gets a touch of the sublime. We develop self control and grow morally. In this way, self does not remain an attribute related to personal functioning only. It goes beyond that and relates to the social world that we inhabit. Our notion or idea of self influences our interactions with the social world and is also influenced by that. We long and strive for success. Success is the result of tireless striving towards the goal with a positive attitude, and confidence in oneself and others. This is self-development. In this lesson, we are going to understand how Yoga contributes to self-development and relevance of Yoga for competence.



### OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- explain how yoga helps you in the different walks of life;
- describe how it shapes attitudes, thinking and behaviour;
- explain the relevance of yoga for competence; and
- discuss the eightfold path of yoga for progressive self-development.

### 25.1 SELF-DEVELOPMENT THROUGH YOGA

Most of us would agree that human beings have a self. Ordinarily we use the word 'Self' in the sense of ego but the term 'self' does not mean merely the ego. According to Indian thought the ego in us is the actor, knower and experiencer. That which performs all the functions of body and mind, is generally known 'I' or 'Ego', but it is



only the reflection of the absolute called Brahman or pure consciousness. It is said that the ego is the image of that divine spark within us, which gives it vitality and makes it do all works mental as well as physical. It is treated as a distinct entity with its own qualities and functions. As people grow, they develop their own concept of self-which determines how they relate to others and perform various activities. We perceive others as persons, relate to them and develop friendship and other kinds of close relationships. Our self concept, however, does not remain constant, rather it changes during the different stages of life. Now let us see how the development of self occurs during the different stages of life.

**Infancy:** Children of different age groups respond differently to the images they see. Infants are found to have a visual self recognition by the age of two years but clear self awareness is not found even in the third year of age. During childhood the idea of self remains concrete.

**Childhood and Adolescence:** During early childhood children start defining themselves on the basis of certain psychological attributes. They start thinking about attitudes. During adolescence representations of the self become much more subtle. They realize that they are not the same kind of person with everyone and in every situation. Identity provides a stable sense of who a person is and what one's values and ideals are. Many adolescents experience identity confusion. They fail to have a coherent and enduring sense of self. They have difficulty in committing to roles, values and occupational choices. Some adolescents establish their identities after considerable soul searching and introspection. Others commit early without much effort. This forecloses the process of identity development.

**Early Adulthood:** This stage of development is characterized by the challenge of intimacy v/s isolation. Intimacy refers to the establishment of a committed relationship which is enduring. It includes both romantic as well as friendly relationships. In the course of development one needs to redefine his or her role as father / mother, uncle / aunt.

**Middle Age:** During this stage of life people become concerned with relating to the next generation and one's contribution to society. During this period a person faces crisis of engaging with generative activities. In fact midlife crisis has become a popular phrase. It brings an interruption in the normal rhythm of life. For some, the changes are gradual and for others quite drastic in nature.

**Old Age:** In view of social mobility and disintegration of traditional family ties, many aged people lack social support and suffer from poor self concept. However, those who look back upon their life with a sense of satisfaction that they have lived it well, experience a sense of integrity. Others may have regrets and despair.

Thus we find that the notion of self assumes different forms and undergoes continuous change during one's life course. It reflects the changes in the experiential world of people. However, the views of self held are not merely representations of the



## Notes

expectations of others. They also work as a powerful force which directs behavior and shapes interactions in social situations. Self undergoes transformation and many elements are included and excluded in one's self structure. People often strive for an ideal self. They are expected to contribute to healthy development of society to which they belong.

All famous persons across the globe have contributed to the welfare of society. They are known for their integrity. Well integrated people contribute not only to their personal growth but also to the growth and development of society.

In the first stage infants have difficulty in differentiating self from others. They cry when others cry and laugh when others laugh. After one year they gradually develop a sense of self as characterized by egocentric thinking. They help the other person in the ways that they themselves would want to be helped. Then comes third stage during which children show situation specific empathy. Finally, when they reach the fourth stage they come to relate their expression of distress to others when others are also in distress. In fact in the fourth stage only appropriate exhibition of empathy is demonstrated, that is, others get emotional support from those who show appropriate empathic reaction.

Children can learn helping behavior by imitating significant others (e.g. parents, siblings, teachers). Opportunities for responsibility taking, reinforcing desirable behavior as and when it occurs strengthens the development of pro social behavior.

Yoga in the development of 'Self' can play a very important role. Through yogic asanas, pranayama and meditation the body, mind, vital force and intellect are properly nurtured which results in healthy development. It enhances self esteem, self confidence and self respect. Yoga is actually a systematic and properly regulated way of life. Let us see how yoga is useful in involving our selves in day-to-day activities like studies, relationships with other members of society, success at work place and maintenance of our health. Our attitudes, thinking and behavior also reflect our sense of self. We will study in the next section how yoga is helpful in shaping our attitudes, thinking and behavior.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.1

Fill in the Blanks

1. Visual self concept is found in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. During early childhood children start defining themselves on the basis of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. During middle age a person faces crisis of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ can play a very important role in the development of self.



## 25.2 APPLICATIONS OF YOGA IN DIFFERENT WALKS OF LIFE

- a) **Studies:** The main hurdle in preparing for our studies is that we study for hours together and still retain hardly anything because our mind wanders and does not remain fixed on the task of learning the lesson.

In the practice of Yoga, when we learn to perform Asana and Pranayama, our breathing becomes long and deep. We focus our attention on a particular spot. When this focused mind is applied to studies, it grasps the ideas and concepts better. It can retain the learning material more effectively. In other words, Yoga improves our learning and memory. When we appear for examination, our mind is cool and composed. So an unexpected question does not disturb us.

Even if we study very hard sometimes we do not get the expected results and our mind gets clouded by anxiety and depression. Regular practice of Yoga – frees us from depression. Yoga teaches us how to involve our self in doing our best and leave the rest in the hands of the Lord.

- b) **Relationships:** Our relationships with persons around brings to us both joy and pain. We are constantly seeking fulfillment through friends, family members and colleagues at our work-places. When we practice yoga, co-operation takes the place of competition. Instead of making constant and unreasonable demands from others, we learn to give selfless love to others. While making friends, we learn to give greater importance to the inner qualities than to outer appearances. The sage Patanjali gives important advice regarding our reactions in relationships. He says, ‘Make friendship with those who are awake to the higher values of life and try to put them into practice. There is less likelihood of misunderstanding in their company. For those who are in misery, we must have compassion. We should not be self-centered. We should feel happy in the progress and prosperity of others. There should be no shadow of envy or rivalry in our minds. Towards the wicked, we should have indifference. It is not worth spending your precious energy – mental or emotional on their bad deeds’. Being intolerant towards others and getting irritated unnecessarily spoils our mind. We can be aware of our reactions towards others and develop a habit of giving a positive response to even a negative situation, that is, emotional balance. This can be achieved only by practicing yoga regularly.
- c) **Work :** Work or employment should be seen as a joyous opportunity for self expression and growth. What do we see in the offices? Boredom, clock watching, politics, fights between workers and management! Our work should be seen in terms of what we can give to it rather than what we get from it. Good posture, deep breathing and gentle stretching will help you to keep relaxed at the work-



**Notes**

place. Pausing for a moment and watching your breath immediately makes you relaxed. It is good to be creative in your work. Try to find new ways of doing things. Learn to enjoy even the routine work. Gita says that the art of doing work in an excellent way without expecting fruit is Yoga.

- d) **Health:** Why do we fall ill? Usually it happens because of some kind of imbalance in our physical and mental systems. Conflicts create blockages in the flow of life-force or Prana leading to diseases. Illness, depression, sulkiness all are the symptoms of negativity and obstructions in the flow of life-force. Through pranayama and meditation, we gradually free ourselves from the negativity and re-experience our natural state of vibrant health and energy.

Usually, the life-force or Pranic energy flows in the body where it is needed without our conscious control or even awareness on our part. It is possible through the use of will and Yogic techniques to direct the life-force wherever we want. It is possible to energize the whole system, heal the injured or diseased area or even heal others. Will is the master switch that draws the Pranic energy into the body and directs it to flow wherever it is needed. The connection between human will and life-force is the key to healing.



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.2**

1. How does Yoga help us in our studies?

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2. How should one perceive work?

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**25.3 HOW YOGA SHAPES OUR ATTITUDES, THINKING AND BEHAVIOR**

Everybody feels that he or she should become a happy and successful person. Our happiness and success depends on the pattern of our attitude, thinking and behavior. Yoga assures us that our dream can be fulfilled provided we acquire certain healthy attitudes and habits of thinking and living. The ancient wisdom can be turned into some practical hints for joyous and effective living. Some of them are as follows.

- a) **Let us not complain about our environment:** Some people may not be happy with their parents, their financial status, or social status. They may not be happy about their physique, looks and brain. They always look at others, envy them



and feel sad! They think, if only "I had a mother like that", 'or' "Had I been in the place of that scholar or that champion!". It is not healthy to complain about what we have; it is good to think of how we can make the best of it. Many great persons in the world fought against physical disabilities and adverse circumstances and became successful.

Everyone of us is gifted in some way or the other. Let us find out our own gift. It may not be academic intelligence, it may be social or other type of intelligence. We may not be good with books but we may be very good with machines, which is equally valuable. We may have a potential to become a singer, a painter or a stage-actor. Let us have a goal and take steps to move towards it. Yogic techniques make our body, mind and intellect strong. We become competent to take decisions.

- b) Let us train the body first:** Yogasanas shake off our lethargy and idleness. They bring fresh vigor to our body. They free us from tensions and diseases, so that we can focus our attention totally on our goal.

How do we train the body? Let us take care of our food. Let us avoid eating very less or eating unnecessarily. Select the food that agrees with us and brings harmony to our body. Digestion of food, its assimilation in the body and excretion of unwanted stuff, must be regular. Rest and proper sleep is also necessary to keep our body fit.

- c) Let us train our mind:** Self-education is very important in Yoga. If we train our mind to become strong, it will be strong. If we let it be weak like a pampered child, it will become weak and brittle. It would collapse at the smallest shock. Let us avoid self-pity because it makes us weak. Let us avoid all kinds of negative thoughts like envy, jealousy and narrow-mindedness. Some students do not exchange notes because they feel that somebody would 'steal' their knowledge! They forget that the more we give, the more our knowledge grows! Also, let us give up the ideas of dependence. There is no person or thing in the world without whom or without which it is impossible for us to live. Nothing is indispensable. There are persons, communities and nations who have rebuilt life from ashes. Japan is one of the living examples, why can't we?
- d) Let us train our intellect:** If we don't give challenging work to our intellect, it gets rusted, it loses its capacity to do mighty things. In fact we do not use our brain to the fullest extent. If the brain does not get enough exercise, it gets tired easily.

Seeing dreams and exerting all our energies to fulfill them makes our intellect strong. Let us teach our intellect by taking wise decisions and staying firm with our decisions.



Notes



**INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.3**

Match the Columns:

A	B
1. One way of becoming happy is	a) thinking habits and character
2. Eating unnecessarily	b) make your mind brittle
3. Negative thoughts	c) not complaining about your environment
4. There is strong relationship between	d) causes accumulation of fat on body

**25.4 YOGA FOR MOTIVATION AND EXCELLENCE:  
IN ACTION**

A poet has said:

**Heights that great men reached and kept were not achieved in a single flight.  
They, when their companions slept strove upward in the night.**

We, in our respective field, can make a resolution to ourselves that whatever we do, it will be of excellent quality. May it be teaching or typing, plumbing or fitting. Yoga can train the body and intellect for development of self to achieve excellence and competence in action.

One of the definitions of Yoga given in Gita is योगःकर्मसु कौशलम्. Yoga is excellence in action. Excellence in action does not come without motivation.

Why do we work? There are two reasons: One is visible. You work because you get money. The second is invisible. You work because you enjoy work, it increases your self-respect, people appreciate you, you are proud that you are given responsibility and try your best to rise to the occasion.

When we read the life stories of great men and women, we realize that they kept a lofty goal as the pole star of their life and strove hard to reach it. They had no place for laziness in their life. They could not afford to get entangled in clumsy and demanding relationships. With singleness of purpose, they ultimately achieved their goal. This is Yoga. This harnesses all your energies in a particular direction, keeping your instruments i.e. body, mind and intellect ready and sharp for the work undertaken. Great men see great dreams and make great effort to realize them.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.4

State whether the following statements are True or False:

1. According to Gita Yoga is excellence in action.
2. Great men and women could be great without any goal in life.
3. Yoga harnesses our energies in a particular direction.

Notes

## 25.5 PATANJALI ON MIND: ITS NATURE, FUNCTIONS AND STATES

Yoga was compiled in a concise form by Sage Patanjali. This compilation is called Yoga Sutra. It tells us about the nature of human mind and its functions. It analyses the causes of turbulence and suggests the ways of overcoming them. It enlightens us on how to reach the state of oneness with energy or Supreme Consciousness that pervades the entire universe. According to Yoga Sutra mind comprises of four faculties namely *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Ahankar* and *Chitta*. These are called *Antahkaran*. *Manas* or mind makes *Sankalpa* (I will do this) and *Vikalp* (What, if this does not work?) *Buddhi* or intellect makes decision in the light of previous knowledge and wisdom. *Ahamkar* or ego is the centre around which all emotions, memories and thoughts are organized. *Chitta* is that consciousness on which the waves and ripples of various reactions are generated. *Vikalpa* and *Chitta* or consciousness is seen as the birth place of all mental reactions.

### Ever-changing States of Mind

Our mind is found in the following states:

- 1) **Kshipt:** Most of the time our mind is thrown out to some object of interest in the process of experiencing the world. Such totally outgoing mind is called Kshipt (Literally-thrown out).
- 2) **Vikshipt:** Our consciousness or awareness sometimes goes outward and with effort, it turns inside, but again it goes out. So, in Vikshipt state our mind plays 'in and out'.
- 3) **Moodha:** When we are not alert, and our awareness appears to be non-functioning. This state is *Moodha*. A person out of his mind, in coma or in a fit has *Moodha* state of mind.
- 4) **Ekagra:** While practicing Yoga, you learn to concentrate your awareness on a particular object. Here the state of consciousness is *Ekagra* which is very useful for day-to-day functioning and for higher goals. When mind becomes *Ekagra*, it is a major achievement. Yoga helps in achieving this state of mind.



## Notes

## Relatively Steady States of Mind

Besides the ever changing states of consciousness, there are some relatively steady and regular states as well.

- 1) **Jagriti:** Full awareness with conscience (Vivek).
- 2) **Swapna:** A state of dream where some people play wish fulfillment game.
- 3) **Sushupti:** Deep and dreamless sleep.
- 4) **Tureeya:** This is the state of deep meditation in which a person becomes oblivious of space and time. Suppose he or she sits for meditation and enters *Tureeya* level of consciousness. During this state a person's consciousness becomes one with the Divine or universal consciousness.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.5

1. Who is the author of Yoga Sutra?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the different states of mind?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 25.6 THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH OF YOGA

Patanjali has given a detailed account of the eight-fold path of Yoga.

There are eight steps that you have to follow if you want to lead life with health and well being. These steps are called eight fold path of Yoga. These are referred to as the limbs of Yoga.

Following are the eight steps of Yoga with their brief descriptions.

1. **Yama:** In general, Yama is exercising restraint on our lower animal like instincts. For instance, overcoming greed, lust, anger and envy and never acting based on these impulses. Yamas are five rules of behavior which purify one's mind and behavior. They also have social relevance. **अहिंसा सत्य अस्तेय ब्रह्मचर्य अपरिग्रहाः यमाः (पतंजलि योगसूत्र 2.30)**
  - (i) **Ahimsa:** It involves not hurting anyone including animals, plants and the so called non-living being like things that you use. It means non-violence in thought, word and deed. You must learn to respect everyone and everything around you.



- (ii) **Satya (Truth):** To speak truth, we should mean what we say. Our words should be gentle and free from deception. They should be uttered with the desire to do good to others. We see many types of deception in society like corruption and adulteration and malpractices in medicine causing deaths of innocent people, selling the secrets of our country to enemy countries – all these are forms of untrue behavior. It is socially harmful and dangerous to one's integrity.
- (iii) **Asteya (Not stealing).** Some times there is temptation to grab money which does not belong to us. There is tendency in some people to take bribe. They take money for what they are already being paid. Some people steal credit and happiness of others. All this is theft. To keep away from all these temptations is non stealing.
- (iv) **Brahmacharya (Restraint on sex related activities):** As there are temptations of money, there are temptations of indulging in unethical sex. In fact this energy can be fruitfully used for one's personality development i.e. development of one's physical prowess and mental faculties. This is Brahmacharya. In this way you channelize your energy for individually satisfying and socially useful purposes.
- Marriage and householder's life can be equally pure if its sanctity is taken care of. Husband and wife should be loyal to each other. Thoughtless sex can invite incurable diseases like AIDS. So, Sage Patanjali very rightly emphasized on the importance of Brahmacharya.
- (v) **Aparigraha:** Aparigraha also means not to store more than what you need, because by doing that you may be depriving those who are in genuine need of the object.

Now we will discuss Niyamas

2. **Niyama:** Niyamas are mainly for purifying the body and mind. They are practiced on individual basis.

- (i) **Shauch :** keeping your body and mind clean. Taking a bath everyday, cleaning teeth and drinking pure water. It covers activities like healthy food including grains, fresh green vegetables provide all the necessary ingredients like starch, fats, vitamins, salts and minerals give stamina and strength to your body. So Yoga advises us to eat healthy food. It also expects you to be regular in your toilet habits so that your body is free of toxins (harmful substances).

Shauch also means purity of mind. Our sages have recognized six enemies that make our minds impure. These include Kama – excessive desire, Krodha – anger, Lobha –greed, Moha – temptation, Mada – ego and Matsar – jealousy. Shauch means keeping away from these six enemies and filling one's mind with noble thoughts.



Notes

- (ii) **Santosh:** It means contentment. You should do your best in every undertaking and be happy with that. There are certain factors which are beyond your control so if you achieve the expected success, that is fine and if you do not achieve the expected success that also fine. Joy is lies doing the work itself.
  - (iii) **Tapa:** The literal meaning of Tapa is penance. When our exams approach we generally give up seeing movies and T.V. We do not waste time in chatting with friends. To achieve a goal we have to make sincere effort, and give up certain pleasures. This is Tapa. While treading the path of Yoga, we have to control our desires and concentrate our mind.
  - (iv) **Swadhyaya:** It literally means self-study. Here it means studying the principles related to Yoga. If we do not understand it all by our selves, we may seek the guidance of experts. Swadhyaya not only means reading literature related to Yoga but also contemplating on the principles of Yoga.
  - (v) **Ishwar Pranidhan :** It means being in constant contact with God by chanting or by keeping in mind all the time that our actions are in the worship of the Lord. Lord is the witness of everything we see, do and experience.
3. **Asana:** Patatanjali defines Asana as that posture in which we can sit comfortable for the Yogic practices, with our head, neck and back in a straight line. Since Yoga is vitally related to our nervous system, our spinal cord should be in the right position. Squatting on a mat or sitting on your knees is usually prescribed for yogic practice (Sukhasan, Sahajasan or Vajrasan). The yogic tradition gives us 84 Asanas to keep our body and nerves supple. As we take care of our vehicles and instruments, so we must take care of the body. We must give it proper exercise. Hence, there is a need to do Asanas. They build our resistance to diseases and keep us fit.
  4. **Pranayama:** Pranayama is getting control on our Pranic energy through the regulation of breathing. Inhaling air is called *Poorak* in Yoga. Exhaling air out is called *Rechak*. Stopping for a few seconds before exhalation is called *internal Kumbhak*. Kumbhak should not be done for more than five seconds. Pranayama should be done under expert guidance. Otherwise, instead of being useful, it can become harmful.



Fig. 25.1: Pranayama

Along with air we also take in the vital energy from the atmosphere which is called Prana or the life-force, breathing rhythmically improves your blood circulation and circulation of Pranic or vital energy in the body. It is a systematic, scientific process of managing our vital force and an art of utilizing it fully for an allround development of our personality.

5. **Pratyahara:** It literally means withdrawing. In Pratyahara we withdraw the senses from their external objects and turn them inward. We have five main senses



which are sight, smell, hearing, touch, and taste. In Yoga we train our sense organs to remain quiet. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayam and Pratyahara are called external aids to Yoga. For the next steps, you have to go still deeper. So they are called as internal aids.

6. **Dharana:** Dharana is focusing of mind on a particular object. The object may be a part of our body like the midpoint of our eye-brows or it may be outside our body like a flame of a candle or moon or an image of the Lord or a saint. Our attention should be focused on either an internal or external object. This practice improves concentration which helps in studies and professional life.
7. **Dhyana:** When one learns to maintain Dharana or attention on a single object for a relatively longer period, that steady contemplation is called Dhyana or meditation. In Dhyana, we are aware of being a witness to what is happening in our minds. But we are not emotionally or intellectually involved in those happenings. This is also called Meditation. It is the best medication for all mental agitations.
8. **Samadhi:** In Samadhi, the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object of contemplation that it loses itself in the object and has no awareness of itself. Only when one comes out of Smadhi he/she realizes that it was a state of Samadhi where sense of time and space was totally absent. In Samadhi the individual consciousness is absorbed with pure consciousness.



Fig. 25.2: Dhyana

A person who progresses along this eight-fold path of Yoga successfully and becomes an evolved person. He or she is free from anger, lust and other vices. S/he becomes a lover of the entire humanity. S/he does his/her own duty with great excellence but is not at all proud of his/her achievements. S/he becomes an instrument in the hands of the Lord. This eight fold path is not for a chosen few. Everybody can tread on it.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 25.6

Match the following :

- |                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Satya       | (a) Restrain on sex-deisre |
| 2. Asteya      | (b) Non-violence           |
| 3. Aparigraha  | (c) Truth                  |
| 4. Ahimsa      | (d) Non-hoarding           |
| 5. Brahmcharya | (e) Non-stealing           |



**Notes**



**WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT**

Patanjali defines Yoga as that state of consciousness where there are no ripples of thoughts or emotions. In this state our mind becomes one with the universal mind. Patanjali compiled all knowledge of Yoga in concise form. In 196 Sutras, he explained the nature of mental faculties and eight-fold path of Yoga.

The eight-fold Path is as follows :

- 1) **Yamas** : Attitudes and rules for Yogic life in social context.
- 2) **Niyamas** : Attitudes and rules for individual purity.
- 3) **Asana** : Right posture to keep the body fit and mind alert.
- 4) **Pranayama**: Controlling the in going and out going pranic energy through breathing.
- 5) **Pratyahara** : Shutting down the sense from outside and withdrawing inside.
- 6) **Dharana** : Concentration on a particular object.
- 7) **Dhyan** : Staying there for a long time.
- 8) **Samadhi** : Being one with the object of meditation.

This is the process of purification. In pure consciousness God cosmic consciousness is reflected. When this happens there is great change in one's life. In this state one enjoys supreme joy and becomes an epitome of all divine qualities like love, compassion etc.

By practicing yoga every one can gain mastery over the body and mind. Then, nothing remains impossible for him/her.



**TERMINAL QUESTIONS**

1. Which are the relatively steady states of mind?
2. Explain how yoga shapes our behaviour.
3. Describe Niyama.



**ANSWER TO INTEXT QUESTIONS**

**25.1**

1. infancy

2. psychological attributes
3. generative activities
4. Yoga

**25.2**

1. Yoga improves learning and memory.
2. as a joyous opportunity.

**25.3**

1. c
2. d
3. b
4. a

**25.4**

1. True
2. False
3. True

**25.5**

1. Maharshi Patanjali
2. Manah, buddhi, ahankar, chitta
3. changing and steady

**25.6**

1. c
2. e
3. d
4. b
5. a

**Hints for Terminal Questions**

1. Refer to section 25.5
2. Refer to section 25.6
3. Refer to section 25.6

