

Introduction

Overview of the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*

The *Yoga Sūtras* attributed to the Sage Patañjali are used as a source scripture by many traditional yoga systems. The principles and practices of Rāja Yoga (Kingly Yoga) and Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (Yoga with Eight Limbs of Practice) are found within the four books of the *Yoga Sūtras*. The four books are *Samādhi Pāda* (on super-consciousness), *Sādhana Pāda* (on practice), *Vibhūti Pāda* (on super-normal powers), and *Kaivalya Pāda* (on liberation). This introduction focuses primarily on Book I, with a brief overview of each of the four books.

As the *Yoga Sūtras* are concise aphorisms, a great many commentaries have been written on them over the ages. First and foremost among these is the commentary of Sage Vyāsa. It is said that the *Yoga Sūtras* cannot be properly understood without the Vyāsa commentary, and indeed most of the other commentaries are commenting both on Vyāsa and on the *Sūtras* themselves. The other notable classical commentaries include Vāchaspati Miśra's *Tattva-vaiśharadī*, Vijñāna-bikṣhu's *Yoga-vārttika*, and Bhojarāja's *Bhoja-vṛitti*. The commentary presented by Baba Hari Dass incorporates their core elements, making the essence of the *Yoga Sūtras* accessible to Western students while remaining true to the classical interpretations and Saṅskṛit terminology.

Yoga was not a new subject even at the time of Patañjali. In fact, the methods of yoga (union with truth, God, or Self) had been developed and practiced for thousands of years by *ṛishis* (seers) and *munis* (teachers) of ancient India, prior to being written down by Patañjali. That yoga existed before being encoded in the *Sūtras* is implied in the first *sūtra* of Book I, "Now (in this present and auspicious moment) the discipline of yoga is presented."

In Book I, *Samādhi Pāda* (on super-consciousness), Patañjali outlines the whole yoga system by saying in Sūtra 2, "Yoga is the control of thought waves in the mind." Two conditions of mind (*chitta*) are implied by the *sūtra*: the mind's outward expression (*pravṛitti*) and its inward expression (*nivṛitti*). These two conditions define the basic value system of yoga. In terms of mental activity (*vṛitti*), the former binds the mind to the afflictions of worldly experience, and is called *kliṣṭa-vṛitti* (painful thought waves) or *vyutthāna saṁskāras* (outgoing mind). The latter liberates the mind from afflictions, and is called *akliṣṭa-vṛitti* (non-painful thought waves) or *ekāgra saṁskāras* (one-

pointed mind). Numerous methods of turning the mind inward and achieving *samādhi* (super-consciousness) are explained in the *Sūtras*. Further, the various levels of *samprajñāta* or *sabīja samādhi* (super-consciousness with knowledge or with seed), are elucidated. Book I concludes by defining the one state that is beyond knowledge, called *asamprajñāta* or *nirbīja samādhi* (super-consciousness beyond knowledge and without seed).

Book II, *Sādhana Pāda* (on practice), gives methods for those aspirants who could not attain yoga through the intense, direct prescriptions of Book I. The book starts by outlining the three practices of Kriyā Yoga (the Yoga of Purificatory Action): austerity (*tapas*), study (*svādhyāya*), and surrender to God (*Īśhvara praṇidhāna*). It culminates in a detailed description of the eight limbs of yoga (Aṣṭāṅga Yoga). Book II also deepens the philosophical background of the yoga system by describing creation as a conjunction of spirit (*puruṣha*) and matter (*prakṛiti*) that has the purpose of experience (*bhoga*) and liberation from experience (*apavarga*).

Book III, *Vibhūti Pāda* (on powers), is a description of supernormal powers that can be the result or side effect of the practice of yoga. Beginning with the three internal limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, which are *dhāraṇa* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (super-consciousness), Patañjali gives a description of the technique of *samyama*, which is the perfection of these three limbs performed simultaneously. Practicing *samyama* on different objects gives the yogi super-normal powers. The implication is that the unraveling of limited perceptions by piercing to the essence of the phenomenal reality unlocks unlimited knowledge and fantastic abilities for the yogi. *Vibhūti Pāda* culminates with a warning against the possible entrapment by these powers, as well as ways the powers of *samyama* can be used to accelerate spiritual development.

Book IV, *Kaivalya Pāda* (on liberation), addresses the concept of liberation. *Kaivalya* means perfect isolation and refers to the nondual state that is the goal of yoga (union). At this point, the spirit is isolated from worldly experience and the Self is established in the Self.¹

In the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali draws heavily from the Sāṃkhya philosophy of Kapila for the terminology and concepts describing the principles of creation (*tattvas*). However, pure Sāṃkhya is non-theistic. In contrast to classical Sāṃkhya, Patañjali introduces the concept of *Īśhvara* (God with form), which is indicated by the sacred syllable Om (ॐ). This opens the path of surrender to God (*Īśhvara praṇidhāna*, *Sūtra* I:23), as one means of attaining to yoga (union with truth, God, or Self).

1 There is speculation that Book IV may have been added at a later date by another author and attributed to Patañjali. While the original *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali pre-date Buddhism, some of the *sūtras* in Book IV seem to be posed as a refutation of the Buddhist doctrine of momentary existence (*Kṣhanika Vāda*).

If creation is the expansion of the life principle out from the source, constantly evolving into new forms, then yoga (union) is the involution of consciousness back to its source. In this sense, the principles of yoga are found in all religions, while yoga itself is a spiritual discipline and not a religion. Yoga can be practiced both within and without the context of various religious beliefs, as it is an expression of the universal truth.

The *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali combine deep philosophical principles with practical methods for realizing the nature of truth through direct experience. The *Yoga Sūtras* are a description of the process of *yoga sādhana* (spiritual practice) and a map of the states of consciousness that are attained through that practice. As soon as one starts the quest to determine the truth, to understand the nature of reality, or to find eternal peace, then the aspirant begins on the path of yoga. The path of yoga is to join with that reality, which is truth and which brings peace. The study of the *Yoga Sūtras*, in conjunction with the practice of *yoga sādhana*, is an effective and vital path for spiritual aspirants.

Summary of *Samādhi Pāda*

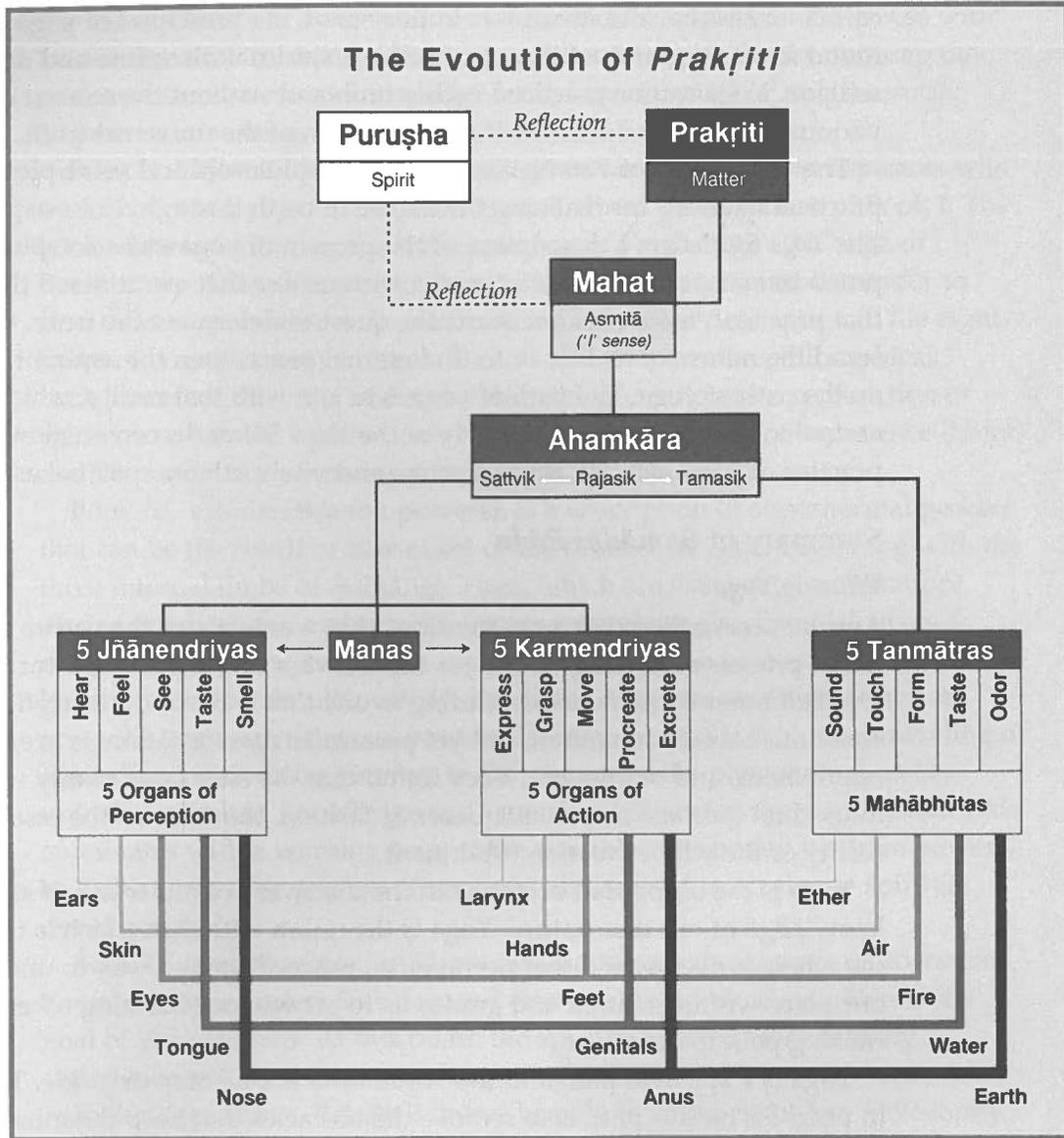
What is Yoga?

Ancient seers asked the same questions that we do about the nature of reality. In the process of looking within for the answers they discovered various levels of inner consciousness, leading to one that is beyond description. This consciousness is unmanifest and yet permeates manifestation, is ever-present, omnipotent, and omniscient. They found that the essence of reality within the individual (*jivātma*) is, in a microcosmic fashion, the same as the essence of reality of the whole creation (Brahman).

Yoga is the union that occurs with the discovery of our true Self and the knowledge of our true nature. Yoga is the union with that which is truth for the whole universe, and that union gives peace. Yoga is a way to understand our place within creation and guides us to act without harming others or causing pain to ourselves.

Yoga is a spiritual path and the *Yoga Sūtras* are its map or guide. The way to progress on this path is to remove the obstacles that keep the mind in a state of distraction, blocking the ever-present, eternal reality. To attain yoga, nothing is required from outside. That reality, that truth, is already here, now. It is our very Self, and in yoga, this state of eternal peace and union is viewed as our natural state.

From the perspective of yoga, it is our commonly experienced state of separation and pain, which we assume to be natural, that is unnatural. Yoga philosophy sees that our normal state of confused mind and multi-mindedness is used to fulfill our desires and to justify and defend our self-interest. In this worldly-minded state, the individual ego with all its attachments becomes most important, separates itself, and strives to accomplish what it wants.



The *Yoga Sūtras* explore both the state of inwardly directed (*nivṛitti*) mind and outwardly directed (*pravṛitti*) mind. These inward and outward flows define each other. The *sūtras* offer a complete description of not only the yogic state, but also of the state of mind as we normally exist in the world. The first impulse to practice yoga often comes from a recognition of the relationship of bondage and pain to ego, attachment, and desires. It is said that freedom is only relevant to one who is in prison.

Sūtras 2 - 4: The Framework of Yoga Philosophy

The keynote *sūtra* is Sūtra 2 of Book I: *yogaśh chitta vṛitti nirodhaḥ*, or, "Yoga is the control of thought waves in the mind." Yoga is the *nirodha* (restraint, control, suppression, stilling) of the *vṛitti* (thought waves) in the *chitta* (mind). Two general states of mind are implied by Sūtra 2: the controlled state of mind and the uncontrolled state of mind. *Nirodha* (control) is the operative factor in the development of higher consciousness. *Nirodha* is both a process by which subtler levels of reality are revealed and a state of pure unconditioned awareness beyond the comprehension of the finite mind. The obstacle to discovering our own true nature is the *vṛitti* (thinking principle) in the mind. It is this distinguishing mark of human existence, cognitive thought, that separates us from knowing our own true nature.

In Sūtra I:3 *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe-'vasthānam*, Patañjali states that when the mind is controlled, "Then the seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature." *Tadā* (then), *draṣṭuḥ* (seer), *svarūpa* (own form, *rūpa* form), and *avasthānam* (established). In Sūtra I:4 *vṛitti-sārūpyam itaratra*, Patañjali states, "At other times (when the mind is not controlled) one identifies with the thought waves in the mind." *Vṛitti* (thought waves), *sārūpyam* (in the form of), and *itaratra*, (at other times).

To understand the subtlety of these statements it is necessary to ask, "What is the mind?" In yoga philosophy, the mind has several aspects. The aspect that is used in Sūtra I:2 is *chitta*,² which refers to the general field of consciousness. The mind is a field of consciousness.

Sāṁkhya Philosophy

At this point it is important to understand the underlying philosophy of Sāṁkhya, which predates the *Yoga Sūtras*, as it is the key to understanding the yogic concept of mind. Sāṁkhya is a dualistic philosophy, the first of the *darśhanas* of the Indian philosophy. The Sāṁkhya philosophy was proposed by the great sage Kapiladev. Kapila noted that the two constituent eternal principles that cause the creation are consciousness (*puruṣha*) and matter (*prakṛiti*). These principles cannot be known directly but their existence is inferred because everything that exists has these qualities.

Consciousness is eternal, unmanifest, and conscious. Matter is eternal, manifest, and unconscious. The creation comes from the interface of these two eternal principles, as all the constituent principles are derived from the conjunction of these two primordial, eternal principles. We can see them at

2 The terms, *chitta*, *buddhi*, and *mahat*, are used almost interchangeably in the *Yoga Sūtras* to describe the first evolute of *prakṛiti* (matter principle), which receives the reflection of *puruṣha* (conscious principle). *Chitta* is primarily a term from Vedānta, while *buddhi* and *mahat* are primarily from Sāṁkhya. The *Sūtras* draw from both philosophies.

work in every level of existence from the first evolute, *mahat* (cosmic mind), to the elements of material form (earth, water, fire, air, and space).

Prakṛiti (the nature principle) has within it three qualities (*guṇas*): the quality of sentience or existence (*sattva*), the quality of action (*rajas*), and the quality of inertia (*tamas*). These qualities, which manifest themselves at every level of the creation, are opposed to each other and yet always trying to achieve a balance. Therefore, *mahat* (universal intellect) has three *guṇas*, the *chitta* (individual mind) has three *guṇas*, and every material thing has three *guṇas*.

The mind is part of *prakṛiti* (matter). The mind is not conscious by itself. Instead it is the reflection of consciousness in the mind that lights the mind field and causes *chitta*. Just as a movie projector shines a light upon the screen, so does the all-pervasive consciousness, which is everywhere, reflect on all matter and make it appear to be conscious. This reflection gives matter its "I-sense," the sense of individuated being. This reflection of consciousness in our mind gives us the ability to cognize.

The first expression of that mind is "I am" (*asmitā*). This is what is called *mahat tattva*. *Mahat* is the greatest, *tattva* is principle, and so *mahat tattva* is the great principle. It is the cosmic mind, and it has the nature of *asmi* ("I"). All impressions, emotions, thoughts, intuitions, experiential knowledge, and ignorance are a modification of this mind stuff. The I-sense is the basic ingredient, everything is a modification of the I-sense.

In the individuated mind, this "I-sense" becomes *ahamkāra*, "I am." When *ahamkāra* contacts an object, it becomes the owner of experience. The *ahamkāra* operates in conjunction with the other three aspects of mind. These four—*chitta*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, and *manas*—form the subjective capacity and are collectively known as the *antaḥkarana* (internal instruments). The phrase, "Control of thought waves in the mind," implies control over all four aspects of mind.

Vṛitti

The third word of Sūtra I:2, *vṛitti*, means to revolve. *Vṛittis* are the thought waves that revolve in the mind. Because thought waves include emotions, memories, intuitions, imagination, and subliminal thoughts as well as cognitive thought, *vṛitti* is sometimes translated as mental modification. The revolving aspect of thought waves implies an imprinting process that conditions the arising of subsequent thoughts. Every thought creates a *samskāra* (impression), which is stored in the *chitta*. This impression remains dormant until activated by a favorable environment, at which time it becomes active and a "new" thought arises. Again, the new *vṛitti*, conditioned by the past impression, creates another impression. So there is a feedback loop in our thinking process in which one thought conditions another. Our perceptions are colored in this process. In this sense, each of us experiences the world according to our own projections. This is illusion.

In Sūtra I:5, Patañjali classifies *vṛitti* into two broad categories: *kliṣṭa* (painful) and *akliṣṭa* (non-painful). Painful thoughts are based on the *kleśhas* (afflictions), which are ignorance, egoism, attraction, aversion, and fear of death. They bind the being in the cycle of rebirth (*saṁsāra*). Non-painful thoughts are those leading to understanding, truth, peace. Their effect is to liberate the being from bondage.

Nirodha

Sūtra 2 says that to attain yoga, that which is revolving in the mind needs to be blocked, stopped, controlled, stilled. In martial arts, *nirodha* is the blocking pose. Blocking is different than repressing, which is related to aversion. Blocking is the selectivity we use in concentration. Normally, our mind receives input from the senses and from memory at a rapid rate, perhaps thousands of impressions every second, and we choose which impressions to allow into our awareness. This process of selective awareness, which gives us the ability to focus our concentration, is related to the idea of *nirodha*. In focusing on one thought we automatically exclude others.

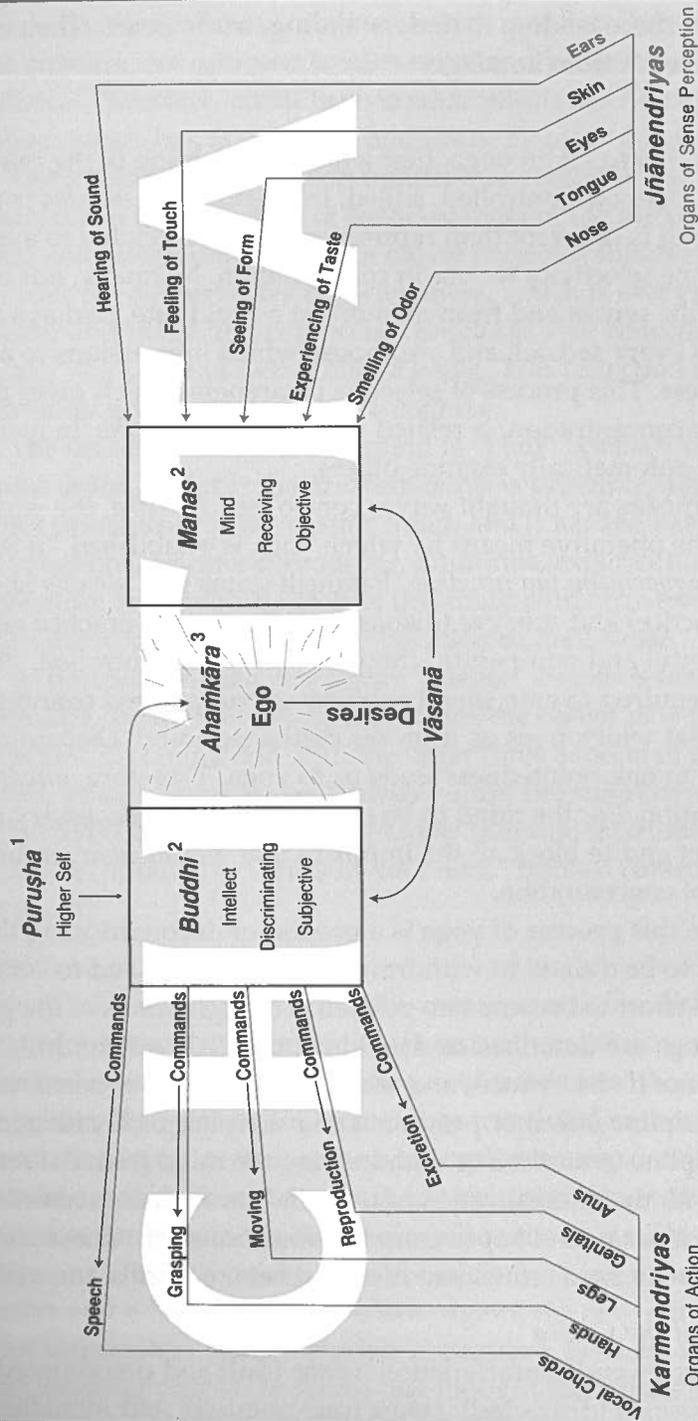
By what means are thought waves controlled? *Nirodha*, the word used for control, is the operative means by which yoga is established. In Sūtra I:12 *abhyāsa vairāgyabhyām tan nirodhaḥ*, Patañjali states that *nirodha* has two parts: *abhyāsa* (practice) and *vairāgya* (dispassion). By regular practice and dispassion the painful and non-painful thought waves are controlled. Practice is that effort required to gain *sthiti* (stability) in one-pointed concentration. Dispassion is that which frees us from the distracted mind. Dispassion for all the distractions to one-pointedness leads us to yoga. Therefore, *nirodha* is related to concentration. For the mind to be concentrated, it is necessary to both focus on one object and to block all the impulses that would distract the mind from that object of concentration.

Therefore, this process of yoga is a process of deconditioning the mind. The mind needs to be trained to withdraw from the senses and to concentrate, which is the effort to become one-pointed. The eight limbs of the practice of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga are described in detail in Sūtras II:29 – 55 and III:1 – 4. These begin with moral observances and restraints (*yama* and *niyama*), continue with physical discipline (*āsana* or postures and *prāṇāyāma* or breath control), and mental discipline (*pratyāhāra* or withdrawing the mind from the senses), and culminate with the internalization of the mind through concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and super-consciousness (*samādhi*). These last three internal limbs of yoga are a refinement of the process of *nirodha* (mental control).

Conditions of the Chitta

The *chitta* has several characteristics: *mūḍha* (dull and preoccupied), *kṣhipta* (restless), *vikṣhipta* (distracted), *ekāgra* (one-pointed), and *niruddha* (restrained). These are called conditions of the *chitta*, as the mind as a whole is categorized as dull, restless, distracted, one-pointed, or restrained. The

The Mechanics of Experience According to Yoga Philosophy



- 1 *Buddhi* receives the reflection of *puruṣha* (consciousness), and thus has the nature of "I am." When this "I-sense" becomes self-aware, the sense of individual identity (*ahaṁkāra*) is created.
- 2 *Manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahaṁkāra* work together within the mind field or field of experience (*chitta*) to create the sense of experience.
- 3 *Ahaṁkāra* creates the subject-object experience. *Ahaṁkāra* is the experienter that connects all experiences of life. The other aspects of mind serve the interests of the *ahaṁkāra*.

mind as an evolute of *prakṛiti* (matter principle) has three qualities (*guṇa*): *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity), and *tamas* (inertia). Due to the reflection of *puruṣha* (conscious principle), the mind becomes conscious. According to the predominance of the *guṇas*, this conscious mind takes on the form of the five conditions. The three *guṇas* are always working together, although at any given moment, one quality (*guṇa*) dominates the mind, the other two are present also.

When the mind is dominated by the quality of *tamas* (dullness), *rajas* and *sattva* are present but overpowered. This is called *mūḍha*. It is a trapped state in which we are locked into a depressed feeling. *Kṣhipta* (restless) is also a trapped state but in this case the mind moves from one thing to another in an uncontrolled fashion. In this restless state, *rajas guṇa* (activity) is predominant, and *tamas* and *sattva* are overpowered. Neither of these two states are conducive to yoga.

Yoga, or the search for peace, reality, or truth, starts in the *vikṣhipta* stage (distracted state) when we can concentrate some, but we are still distracted while concentrating. This kind of distracted state is familiar to most meditators. In this state *rajas guṇa* is predominant but *sattva guṇa* is increasing.

The states that follow are *ekāgra* (one-pointed) and *niruddha* (restrained), which characterize the higher states of *samprajñāta samādhi* (super-consciousness with knowledge) and *asamprajñāta samādhi* (super-consciousness beyond all knowledge), respectively. In *ekāgratā* (one-pointedness), *sattva guṇa* predominates with *rajas* and *tamas* merely playing supporting roles. In this state, truth bearing knowledge develops (*ṛitambharā prajñā*, Sūtra I:48) leading to discriminative wisdom (*viveka khyāti*). In the *niruddha* state, which arises due to supreme dispassion (*paravairāgya*), the mind is characterized by the transformation of restraint and the identification with the *guṇas* is finished.

Samādhi

The word *samādhi* comes from the root *sam*, meaning “perfect or complete,” and *dhi*, meaning “consciousness.” Concentration (*dhāraṇā*) becomes meditation (*dhyaṇa*) when the flow of concentration becomes smooth and even. Meditation becomes *samādhi* (super-conscious trance) when the mind merges into the object of concentration and there is no sense of a separate subjective experience. These three are a refinement of the same process: the process of *nirodha* (control) through which the mind is purified. As purity (*sattva*) becomes established in the mind, the mind is capable of perceiving subtler levels of reality. These are the levels of *samprajñāta samādhi* (super-conscious absorption) that bring knowledge of the real and dispassion for the unreal. This perfection of consciousness gives true direct knowledge of the principles (*tattvas*) of creation.

Patañjali begins the discussion of *samādhi* in Sūtra I:17 by introducing the levels of *samprajñāta samādhi* (perfect higher consciousness with knowledge). The first level of *samādhi*, which is *savitarka* (with reasoning), is knowing the

truth of the elemental or gross level of our experienced reality. This means knowing an object as a combination of the five elements, uncolored by our likes and dislikes, or with a sense of relationship to it. This knowledge of the gross reality is supported by the help of words. The mind revolves in the consideration of the object, using the word that denotes the object, experiencing the form of the object, and extrapolating meaning or knowledge concerning the object and its function. There is still *vṛitti* and there is still mental fluctuation, although on a much subtler level than normal consciousness because it is confined within one object of concentration.

The word and the knowledge about the object are less essential than the direct experience of the form itself. When the mind goes deeper, it realizes this and the word and meaning drop away. Only the form of the object (called *artha mātra nirbhāsa* or the indicator of the object) shines forth in the mind. The mind becomes wholly absorbed, dissolved into that form. As the cause is hidden in the effect, so the subtle level of reality is within the gross or elemental level. The form of the gross object is none other than the subtle aspect of the object. There is no longer any external object of concentration. That level, that *vitarka*, has dropped away, and only the form, which is the subtle object, shines forth in the mind.

Absorption on that subtle object (*savichāra samādhi* or *samādhi* with reflection) gives knowledge of the *tanmātras* (subtle elements). These are the subtle energies of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling. The fluctuation of mind in this *samādhi* concerns time, space, and causality. Time and space are less essential than causality because they relate to objects of creation. The cause of the subtle elements is *ahamkāra* (the individuated subject principle, the experimenter). When the mind gets absorbed in the subjective principle (*sānanda samādhi* or *samādhi* with bliss), the bliss of pure being is the result. The sense of bliss is relative to being or "I-ness" itself. This "I-sense" is the subtlest aspect of experience, and it becomes the focus and support of *samādhi* in the *sāsmīṭā* (with pure "I-sense") level. The knowledge at this highest level of refinement of *samprajñāta samādhi* leads to discriminative wisdom (*viveka khyāti*).

These are the four levels of *samādhi* with knowledge—*savitarka*, *savichāra*, *sānanda*, *sāsmīṭā*—mentioned in Sūtra I:17. As the mind introverts, going back through these subtler and subtler levels of reality, and getting closer to the core of its own being, it experiences these different levels of *samādhi*. In Sūtra I:46 Patañjali explains that these are only the *samādhis* with seed (*sabīja samādhi*), and beyond them is *nirbīja samādhi* (super-consciousness without seed).

While practicing to control the mind in all four of its active states, the process of *nirodha* blocks and directs the mind toward one-pointed concentration. Through the refined states of *samprajñāta samādhi*, the *chitta* is characterized as *ekāgra* (one-pointed). However, when *nirodha* takes over as a characteristic of the mind, there is no longer any content of mind, and this is known as *niruddha*, which is the truly restrained mind.

The transformation of restrained mind happens in the transition of *samādhis* from the *samādhi* with knowledge (*samprajñāta samādhi*) to the *samādhi* that is beyond knowledge (*asamprajñāta samādhi*); from the *samādhi* with seed (*sabīja*), with a supportive object of concentration and a knowledge gained from that concentration, to the seedless *samādhi* (*nirbīja*). This happens due to the discriminative awareness arising from *sāsmītā samādhi*, in which the discriminative aspect of mind (*buddhi*) becomes totally purified, receiving only the reflection of consciousness.

The reflection of consciousness in the mind forms "I-ness," which is subtler than bliss itself. When absorption in the "I-sense" alone (*sāsmītā samādhi*) is established, the mind gets dispassion for the reflection of consciousness and identifies with the consciousness itself. This discrimination between consciousness and its reflection in the mind brings supreme dispassion (*paravairāgya*), dispassion that is the bridge to *asamprajñāta samādhi*. Then the mind (*chitta*) is characterized as *niruddha* (restrained). Nothing is happening in the mind but the print of restraint. That print also makes a *saṃskāra*, and the *saṃskāra* of that print burns all other *saṃskāras*. This process continues in a *samādhi* called *dharma megha* (cloud-pouring virtue) *samādhi*, and no further effort is required by the aspirant. The mind finishes its experience of the world and gets liberation from that experience. It becomes established in its own fundamental nature, which is Self-realization.

Conclusion – Studying the *Yoga Sūtras*

The *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali are concise aphorisms, full of meaning. They deserve, or even require, repeated study, and can be the object of deep reflection. Each *sūtra* serves as a point of entry into the whole body of knowledge known as *yoga philosophy*, as each one reflects an aspect of the whole.

There are, of course, keynote *sūtras* that are pivotal to understanding the essence of *yoga philosophy* and practice. In Book I, *Samādhi Pāda*, the most important *sūtras* are 2, 3, 4, 12, 17, 18, 20, 23, 28, 33, 41, 43, 50, and 51. Any of these *sūtras* can be used as the object of deep meditation.

The *Yoga Sūtras* can also be read as a flow or progression. This creates another type of understanding through the linking of different concepts. As such, it is sometimes difficult for Western students to understand and accept the format of cyclical or spherical logic, in which topics are introduced, left, and then later returned to and examined in greater detail.

The subject of *samādhi*, for example, is introduced in *Sūtras* 17 & 18, and then returned to in *Sūtras* 41 – 44, & 51. It is as if Patañjali is showing the crystalline structure of a gem by turning it so that the different facets can be examined. This approach is appropriate for the *Yoga Sūtras* as the subject matter is subtle and beyond the scope of ordinary mental functions.

The possibility of experiencing the subtle nature of reality, and indeed going beyond experience in a subject-object modality, is the promise and

potentiality of the *Yoga Sūtras*. The possibility of real peace, through the experience of nondual reality in *asamprajñāta samādhi*, is an ever-present beacon of hope in a world of confusion and suffering.

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