

Introduction

Prologue

It is with much love and gratitude that we are publishing Bābā Hari Dāss's commentary on Book II of Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtras* as a study guide for all serious students of this timeless classical Yoga.

As with Babaji's previous commentary on Book I, the main points of the traditional commentaries of Śhri Vyāsa, Vāchaspati Miśhra, and Bhoja Rāj are included. We would also like to acknowledge the work of Vimalā Karnatika in compiling the traditional commentaries in a combined Hindi commentary. In addition to presenting the profound insights of these commentaries in modern language, Bābā Hari Dāss has added his own knowledge as expressed in thirty years of teaching students in America, based on an ancient lineage and timeless knowledge realized in the practice and in the person of a master *yogi*.

SĀDHANA PĀDA INTRODUCTION

What relevance does the wisdom of the ancient and timeless practice and philosophy of *yoga* have for us today? Has the world qualitatively changed such that the principles of life and the dynamics of consciousness as observed by the seers and teachers of ancient times are no longer relevant? Is modern culture's aim of freedom to pursue desires and experience the world through the senses a sufficient explanation and justification of life? In *Sādhana Pāda* the ageless methods for achieving freedom from desires are presented. These life-changing principles and practices are offered here so that they can be tested and experienced in the setting of modern life; the experience of peace that they bring can then be measured against the experience of a life spent fulfilling desires.

We can see that there has been a progression of the collective knowledge of humanity through the development of various technologies, which has allowed us to modify and control our environment. In all aspects of life, from cooking to computers, we use the knowledge and tools passed along to us by our families and cultures, and this knowledge is both sequential and cumulative. Language and culture itself are the symbols and understandings passed on through the generations by which we form our collective agreements.

“Progress” is the term given to the evolution of this knowledge and these technologies. We can also see that there are recurrent patterns within human behavior, appearing in all cultures, which have not significantly changed over the entire span of human existence. Violence, politics, community, family, and religion are but some examples of human behavior that has ongoing expression throughout human history.

It is in addressing the basic human condition, that of consciousness in a mind-body complex and the resulting behaviors, that we find the relevance of the ancient wisdom traditions such as the *Yoga Sūtras*. These traditions offer guidance and methods to restrain the “lower” impulses of humanity such as violence, greed, lust, and hate, and to cultivate the “higher” nature of the human spirit such as love, tolerance, charity, and forgiveness. There is an implication here that humanity has the potential to evolve in a qualitatively positive way and that the effort involved in this transformation is the challenge of human existence.

Within the spectrum of the spiritual traditions, the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali blends philosophy with a variety of practical methods. Rarely do we find such a tradition that embraces experimentation and calls for experiential verification of the Truth expressed in its philosophy. The basic idea is that real change starts from within. If we cannot deal with our own egotism, anger, and attachment to desires, how can we expect the world to change?

In the process of the practice of *yoga* it becomes apparent how much the world we experience is colored by our projections. As soon as this coloring is removed, the perception of the world changes, becoming more truth bearing. If our attitude becomes more positive and less fearful, then our actions become more harmonious and the effect of our presence will bring peace to those around us.

In *Samādhi Pāda*, Book I of the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali outlines the vast realm of consciousness within the human psyche that can be unlocked through *nirodha* (control of thought waves, restraint of mental modifications). The methods of achieving *nirodha*, mainly *abhyāsa* (practice) and *vairāgya* (dispassion), are also described. But for most of us, who at the beginning of *yoga* practice find it difficult to sit with a calm mind, *nirodha* seems unachievable and *samādhi* (super consciousness) seems like a distant state rather than an imminent and potential reality.

Fortunately Patañjali did not stop the exposition with an outline of philosophical principles and advanced methods of practice. In *Sādhana Pāda*, Book II of the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali continues with a discussion of preliminary methods that can help an aspirant build a firm foundation for spiritual life and a more detailed exposition of the philosophy of *yoga* to facilitate the inquiry of the beginning aspirant.

COMPARISON OF SAMĀDHI PĀDA AND SĀDHANA PĀDA

In both *Samādhi Pāda* and *Sādhanā Pāda*, Patañjali begins with a quintessential statement of the essence of philosophy and practice, and then in subsequent *sūtras* breaks it down into components of refined explanation and methodology. In this sense, the two books are parallel in construction. Both begin with a definition of *yoga* and its method in generic form.

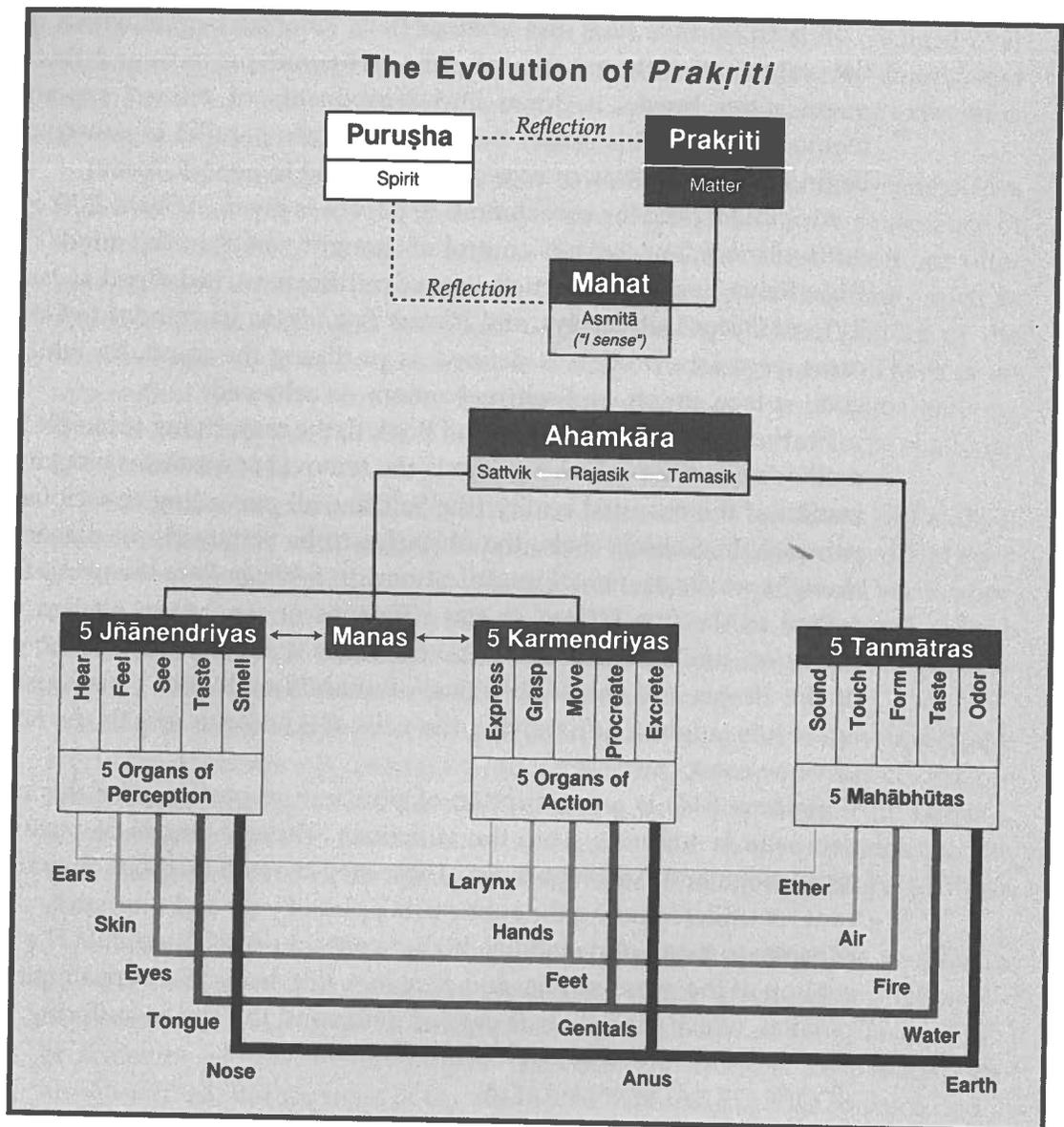
In *Samādhi Pāda* the core definition of *yoga* is given in Sūtra 2, “*Yogaśh-chitta-vṛitti-nirodhaḥ*,” or “*yoga* is control of thought waves in the mind.” In *Sādhanā Pāda*, *Kriyā Yoga* (the practical *yoga* of purification), is defined as *tapas* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (self-study), and *Īshvara Praṇidhāna* (surrender to God). In both cases, *yoga* as a process is defined as purifying the mind, by which *yoga* the goal—peace, union, and self-realization—is achieved.

Furthermore, in both Book I and Book II, the underlying principle behind the methods given for achieving *yoga* is the removal of obstacles blocking the realization of the essential reality (the Self, the all pervading conscious principle, *puruṣha*). In *Samādhi Pāda*, the obstacles to be removed are presented as the thought waves or mental modifications. In *Sādhanā Pāda* the obstacles are presented as the five *kleśhas*, or the afflictions of ignorance, egoism, attraction, repulsion, and fear of death. Sutra II:2 states that *Kriyā Yoga* is the weakening of the *kleśhas* and the establishing of *samādhi* or higher consciousness. Here again it is taught that removing the veils of ignorance reveals the natural state of yogic consciousness.

Sādhanā Pāda is a prescription of purification practices for this category of *yogi* who is suffering from the afflictions. These methods of purification are *Kriyā Yoga* and *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*. These step-by-step methods prepare the aspirant for understanding the subtle principles of *yoga* and ultimately develop the capacity to intuit and stabilize higher consciousness (*samādhi*). The direct perception of the gross, subtle, and cosmic reality leads to discrimination and dispassion, which precede true *yoga* or union and the end of suffering.

SCOPE OF SĀDHANA PĀDA

Sādhanā Pāda begins with the definition and explanation of *Kriyā Yoga* and proceeds with an exposition on the *kleśhas*, or afflictions (ignorance, egoism, attraction, repulsion, and fear of death). In the central part of *Sādhanā Pāda*, Patañjali presents an explanation of the mechanics of creation based on the Sāṃkhya philosophy of Kapila. This explanation covers both the individual or microcosmic creation, the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) created by actions (*karma*) and the latent potentiality of action (*saṃskāras*); as well as the universal creation, the interface of consciousness and matter activating the three *guṇas* (purity, activity, and stability), which are the qualities by which the creation is known. Furthermore, the purpose of creation, *bhoga* (experience) and *apavarga*



(liberation), is given. Finally the book culminates with the definition and explanation of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

Though Patañjali uses terminology from Sāṅkhya philosophy like *puruṣha* (consciousness), *prakṛiti* (matter), *guṇas* (qualities - *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*), *indriyas* (sense organs), *tanmātras* (energetic essence of the five elements), and the *mahābhūtas* (five elements - earth, water, fire, air, space), there is a clear distinction between Sāṅkhya philosophy and practice and Yoga philosophy and practice. The Sāṅkhya philosophy of Kapila is essentially an atheistic philosophy that posits two eternal principles, consciousness (*puruṣha*) and matter

(*prakṛiti*). The union of these two is the cause of the creation, bringing the experiential modality; the disunion of these two is the cause of liberation. The practice of Sāṅkhya is based on the discrimination of the principles of creation leading to discriminative wisdom, which is the means to liberation and the end of suffering. It is a *jñāni* approach, beginning with an intellectual dialectic and progressing through deep reflection on the principles beyond words, and culminating in a direct experience of their essential reality. This type of analysis is included in *Sādhanā Pāda* Sūtras 17-26; it is presented within the scope of a comprehensive practice. Classical Sāṅkhya is a form of Jñāna Yoga, the *yoga* of knowledge, in which the mind and intellect are the main instruments used to achieve liberation. Kriyā Yoga, on the other hand, is the *yoga* practice in which the physical body is used in actions towards the spiritual goal. It is a practical approach and sometimes Kriyā Yoga is translated as practical *yoga*, as *Sādhanā Pāda* is the book on practice.

Yoga philosophy differs from Sāṅkhya in that Patañjali brings in the idea of *Īśvara* or God the creator, preserver (savior) and destroyer of the whole creation. In *Samādhi Pāda*, Patañjali presents *Īśvara* as being before the creation, outside the laws of creation, yet immanent within the creation. In Sūtra I: 28 the method of devotional surrender to God (*Īśvara Praṇidhāna*) was given and equated with the most intense methods (*upāya*) of *sādhanā* (spiritual practice). Here in *Sādhanā Pāda*, surrender to God is again presented as part of a combined approach to spiritual practice that also includes intellectual reflection and inquiry as well as physical, mental, and moral disciplines.

The methods of *yoga* presented in *Sādhanā Pāda* are presented in two broad categories: Kriyā Yoga (Sūtra II:2), the *yoga* of purificatory action, and Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (Sūtras II:29), eight limbed *yoga*. Kriyā Yoga is defined in three broad generic categories of practice: austerity, self-study, and surrender to God. Kriyā is presented first as a more advanced method and the limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga are presented at the end of the book.

The eight limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga can be fit into the context of the three aspects of Kriyā Yoga, thus making Aṣṭāṅga Yoga a more complete and expanded explanation of Kriyā Yoga. In this scenario, the moral precepts of *yama* and *niyama*, and the physical disciplines of *āsana* (postures) and *prāṇāyāma* (breath control) come within *tapas* (austerity). *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawing the mind from the sense objects) is the bridge between the external and internal limbs. It comes within self-study or *svādhyāya*, the deep reflection on the true nature of experience that accompanies the internalization of consciousness.

Nowhere in the *Yoga Sūtras* are moral precepts implied in yogic life more clearly and explicitly than in the presentation of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga in the final sūtras of *Sādhanā Pāda* (Sūtras II:28-52). The five restraints (*yama*) of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual continence, and non-possessiveness provide the guiding principles for virtuous action in the world. Then taken as "great vows" (Sūtra II:31), any one of these principles can be taken as a *sādhanā*

in itself. Mahatma Gandhi is an example of a reformer saint who practiced non-violence (*ahimsā*) and truthfulness (*satya*) without reservation concerning class, country, time, or situation.

The fixed observances (*niyama*) of purity, contentment, austerity, self-study, and surrender to God are the main precepts of yogic life. It is interesting to note that the observances include the three elements of Kriyā Yoga. In defining Kriyā Yoga, Patañjali removed *śhaucha* (cleanliness) and *santoṣha* (contentment) and included *tapah* (austerity), *svādhyāya* (self study) and *Īshvara Praṇidhāna* (surrender to God). These are identified in Kriyā Yoga as the three main methods to attain the spiritual goal. The complete discussion of *yama* and *niyama* as well as the limbs of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, comprise the balance of the second book of Patañjali Yoga Sūtras.

The internal limbs of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*) ultimately fall within *Īshvara Praṇidhāna*, or surrender to God, because in these processes the ego of individuality along with its attachments and desires is transcended. While all three of these limbs may be practiced within the focus of *tapas* (austerity) and *svādhyāya* (reflection), in the Kriyā Yoga and Aṣṭāṅga Yoga systems the complete surrender of the ego of individuality is called *Īshvara Praṇidhāna*.

In the following outline of *Sādhana Pāda*, Kriyā Yoga, the *kleśhas*, as well as several philosophical topics are discussed. They include: ignorance (*avidyā*), which is the field of afflictions (*kleśhas*); the dynamic of consciousness (*puruṣha*) and matter (*prakṛiti*) and how these two eternal principles produce the 24 principles (*tattvas*); the cycle of action (*karma*), impression of action (*saṃskāra*), and desire (*vāsanā*) that sustains and conditions the cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*); the purpose of the creation being experience (*bhoga*) and liberation (*apavarga*); and reflections on pleasure, pain, and freedom, from the perspective of *yoga*.

KRIYĀ YOGA OVERVIEW

Kriyā Yoga, the first description of the preliminary practices of *yoga* offered by Patañjali in *Sādhana Pāda*, can be translated as “*yoga* of purificatory actions.” It is also known as practical *yoga*. These actions of purification fit into three categories that work together to prepare the aspirant for one-pointed meditation and *samādhi* (*chitta vṛitti-nirodhaḥ*).

Tapah

Austerity, the first category of discipline, is based on the idea of limiting desires. Placing or imposing limitation creates tension, friction, or heat within the mind of the aspirant. This heat in itself is purifying, and it gives first hand knowledge of “where we are at,” for when we put limits on our behavior, the ego reacts and resists, and this gives visibility to our attachments. The discipline, if performed correctly, also gives energy and fortifying strength of will

that can be applied towards the goal. Severe austerities performed beyond one's capacity are not recommended, as they can create depression, self-torture, and morbidity. Watching one's thoughts is a form of austerity. Breath control (*prāṇayāma*) is also an effective austerity as it puts one directly in touch with fear of death.

Svādhyāya

Self-study is the second category of purificatory action included in the prescription of Kriyā Yoga. Self-study includes scriptural study when the knowledge gained is applied in one's life. The application of reflection within self-study has different degrees. For example, the scriptures tell us that everything in life is transitory. One may pass a burning *ghāṭ* (cremation grounds) or a graveyard and for a moment have a thought of one's own mortality. This "graveyard dispassion" may last only for a moment, as the next thought may be of some opportunity for pleasure or ownership. The grief experienced at the death of a family member brings a much deeper experiential awareness of mortality, but all intellectual and inferential acknowledgment of one's own mortality evaporates in the face of the life-and-death struggle at the end of one's life. Patañjali says in Sūtra II:9 that fear of death dominates even the wise.

With this in mind, *svādhyāya*, or self-study, becomes a deeply personal and experiential inquiry into one's life and sense of being. An example of this type of inquiry is watching one's own self-interest in every thought, word, and action. This can be as painful as it is revealing, for virtually every action is rooted in self-protection, selfishness, comparison, and self-justification.

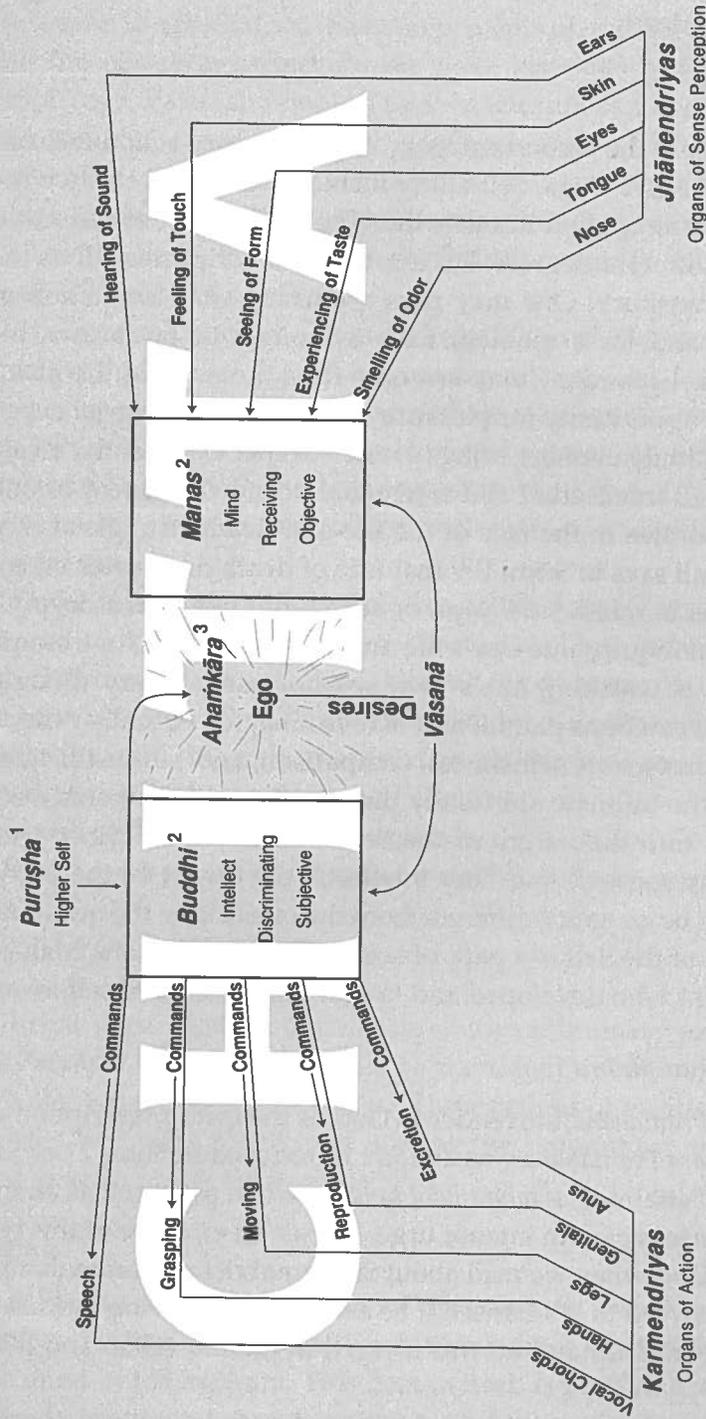
One of the ultimate spiritually directed forms of self-study is *Ātmā vichāra*, or inquiry into the nature of the Self: "Who am I?" Since we refer to "my body," "my senses," and "my intellect," the owner of the body, senses, and mind must be an entity different from the one asking the question. Inquiry into the nature of the Self is a path of self-realization. Ramana Mahārīṣhi is a well-known saint who developed and taught this method of self-awareness.

Īshvara Praṇidhāna

Īshvara Praṇidhāna, surrender to God, is the third prescription given in Kriyā Yoga. *Īshvara Praṇidhāna* was already introduced in Sūtra 23 of *Samādhi Pāda* as a means of attaining *asamprajñāta samādhi* when practiced as an intense method by an intense *yogi* with intense urge. We see an example of this type of self-surrender to God when we read about Sri Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahaṅsa reaching for Kālī Mā's sword to kill himself if he cannot see her living form. At that moment the sky opened up and he was merged in cosmic vision and bliss of self-realization.

For the *yogi* of less intense nature and urge, a method of self-surrender is given as part of Kriyā Yoga. This practice is keeping the presence of God in 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*.

heart at all times, seeing God in everyone and everything. Patañjali mentions *Īshvara Pranidhāna* for a third time in Sūtra 45 of *Sādhana Pāda*, indicating ritualistic activities of surrender to God that may be integrated into one's daily life and practice such as *pūja* (prayer), or *yajña* (sacrifice).

KLEŚHAS

Sūtra II:24 can be stated, "Ignorance (*avidyā*) is the field of the afflictions (*kleśhas*)."

Implied in the concept of purification is the existence of impurity. In the first section of *Sādhana Pāda*, Patañjali introduces the *kleśhas* or afflictions (ignorance, egoism, attraction, repulsion, and fear of death), which are the generic forms of impurity. Actually, all five afflictions are forms of ignorance (*avidyā*). Ignorance is primordial, existing from the beginning of creation. It is in the seed of creation. In fact, all five afflictions are necessary for the creation to manifest. They are woven into the fabric of creation itself.

All spiritual traditions posit some sort of flaw—sin, evil, suffering, darkness, ignorance—the correction of which marks the achievement of the goal of perfection, transcendence, release, salvation, satori, which is the experience of merging with, or knowledge of, the Absolute (God, Self, Nirvāṇa, Tao, Peace, Reality). The goal is beyond the pairs of opposites, transcendent and imminent, yet it is achieved due to the condition of purity of mind developed by the practice of virtue.

Within the philosophy behind the *yoga* system there is no question of the existence of ignorance, though ignorance is a form of wrong cognition or mistaken identity (*viparyaya*). Without ignorance (*avidyā*) and its forms of egoism (*asmitā*), attraction (*rāga*), repulsion (*dveṣha*), and fear of death or clinging to life (*abhiniveśha*), the creation simply would not and could not exist. Nor would the stated purpose of creation, experience and liberation (Sūtra II: 18), be possible. Ignorance is the means by which the one becomes many and is the principle behind the evolution of the diversity of life forms (*eko ham, bahu shyam*, "I am one in many"). Furthermore, the piercing of the veil of ignorance by discriminative wisdom (*viveka khyāti*) brings the dissolution of the creation with its multiplicity of appearances and union with the One, non-dual reality that is the goal of *yoga*.

EXPERIENCE AND LIBERATION

What does the philosophical dialectic of the eternal principles of consciousness and matter and the 24 *tattvas* of creation mean for the aspirant who feels stuck in restlessness, distraction, and depression? First we have to look at the cause of our own "stuckness" and then we can see how our individual reality is actually a microcosm of the cosmic reality, which is explained in universal

terms in the Sūtras. Actually, if we can accept on faith that there is a “spiritual reality,” that consciousness is indeed separate from nature, this in itself creates freedom to move out of old patterns.

In *Sādhana Pāda*, Patañjali presents the overall purpose of the creation as experience and liberation of the Self, the embodied consciousness. The concepts of experience and liberation have direct relevance in every day life. The first consideration in applying these principles is to examine the nature of experience. According to the law of cause and effect, every thought, word, and action (*karma*) produces an effect. In yogic terminology, the effect of any action is a latent impression or *samskāra* that is stored in the mind (*chitta*). These impressions carry the latencies and predispositions that have the potentiality to create actions and color perceptions. In Sūtra II:12, Patañjali states that there is a reservoir of latent tendencies called *karmāśhaya* that are rooted in afflictions and will be experienced in present and future births. A person’s personality is thus the cumulative expression of habits, predispositions, and desires coming from the experiences of this life and, by inference, past lives. It is clear that the mind is conditioned and experiences the objects of perception according to its likes and dislikes. In this way, the ego of individuality expresses its self-interest and is in turn bound by the limitations of its own predispositions. Thus people become trapped in habitual behavior even after the behavior is identified as hurtful.

As long as the mind is rooted in the *kleśhas* and perceiving the world in terms of its own self-interest, likes, dislikes, and fears, the cycle of action, impression, and desire continues. This is experienced on the microcosmic or individual level and it produces pleasurable and painful experiences. Sūtra II: 14 states that actions of virtue and vice result in pleasure and pain in one’s birth, span of life, and experience. This is one of the purposes (*prayojana*) of creation; to give all kinds of experience (*bhoga*) through all the manifest forms of creation, to all sentient beings from the gods (*devas*) to single celled organisms.

The companion purpose of creation is liberation (*apavarga*). For the *yogi* with discrimination, all experiences are seen as painful because they do not lead to the goal of liberation (Sūtra II:15). Certainly all experiences have their place and the process of liberation comes in degrees as discrimination and dispassion develop. The beginning stages of this process start with examining one’s own life and habitual thought process, which is discussed as part of *svādhyāya* or self-study. The liberating aspect of this is the development of the witnessing awareness that gives a more objective or dispassionate view of one’s involvements in the world. This development starts with a desire to know the truth and progresses by honest introspection. To see ourselves this way is often humbling, but with this more objective view the opportunity for change is created. For example, if we catch ourselves before we react with judgment or anger, we create the opportunities for other responses to the situation, and we create a space for others to see and react to us differently. This is liberating

from the deep entrenchment in habitual egoistic behavior.

A more profound level of the process of liberation happens in meditation. By focusing the mind on subtle principles such as inner light or sound, the inclination of the mind to go out to worldly objects, memories, and desires is confronted and gradually reduced. The mind is trained by regular *sādhana* practice and becomes habituated to the withdrawal from worldly preoccupation. The mind proficient in one-pointed concentration on subtle spiritual principles becomes absorbed in the reality of all-pervasive being and experiences a peace and freedom not found in the choices of worldly life. The discrimination, dispassion, and will to live a virtuous life are thus reinforced by the regular practice of meditation.

CONSCIOUSNESS AND MATTER

To explain more fully the origin and nature of the creation (*saṁsāra*), Patañjali brings the principles of Sāṁkhya to bear in the central philosophical section of *Sādhana Pāda*. Two eternal principles, consciousness (*puruṣha*) and matter (*prakṛiti*), constitute the absolute aspects of the ever-changing phenomenon of creation. In order to remove bondage and effect liberation, we have to remove the cause of bondage. Ignorance is the cause, and ignorance is uniting *puruṣha* and *prakṛiti* as if they were one entity; in ignorance the two are identified as one. This identity or "I-sense," known as *asmitā*, is the sense of being within each manifest entity.

Each entity in creation carries within its essential being the two eternal realities. Due to ignorance the conscious principle and the matter principle are not identified as distinct realities. The identification is with the "I-sense," the separate identity that expresses itself according to the nature of the entity. Whether it is a star, a planet, a plant, a rock, or a human being, every created thing or being in the creation is expressing its existence and has life force within it.

In reality, consciousness (*puruṣha*) is eternal, unchanging and all pervasive, while matter (*prakṛiti*) is eternal, mutable, but unconscious. Consciousness pervades matter like the sunlight illuminates everywhere. When the sunlight is blocked there is darkness; likewise when the interface of consciousness and matter is broken or blocked, there is *prālāyā* or suspension of the creation. This can either be a partial suspension (*kānda prālāyā*) or a complete suspension (*mahā prālāyā*) as in the end of the universal cycle. During the period of dormancy, between creations, *prakṛiti* holds the seed (*saṁskāra*) of creation. Thus matter (*prakṛiti*) exists in unmanifest or potential form as well as in manifest or active form (the creation).

Prakṛiti is characterized by three qualities: *sattva*—purity, essence, sentience; *rajas*—activity, life force, will; *tamas*—inertia, stability, perceptibility. These three qualities or *guṇas* are seen in every aspect of creation, in everything as

well as every subjective awareness, perception, and action. The *guṇas* are in opposition to each other by nature of their characteristics and yet supportive of one another when there is predominance of any particular quality over the others. In creation the three *guṇas* are constantly unbalanced yet moving towards balance. This is the essence of the evolutionary process that moves from chaos to order and back to chaos with continual innovation and adoption to ever changing conditions.

As *prakṛiti* (matter) has an unmanifest state (*pradhāna*) as well as a manifest state (*saṁsāra*), the *guṇas* are either dormant or active. In the unmanifest state of matter the *guṇas* exist as the potential for manifestation. The qualities exist within the *guṇas* in seed form, but they do not mix or act together to produce anything.

The unmanifest is the cause of the manifest and also exists concurrently with the manifest as creative potentiality. The eternal existence of the unmanifest aspect of *prakṛiti* also allows for the possibility of liberation (*mokṣha*), which is the state of *kaivalya* or the isolation of consciousness (*puruṣha*) from matter (*prakṛiti*).

The static equilibrium of the unmanifest state of *prakṛiti* is disturbed due to the pervasive influence of *puruṣha* (consciousness), as a seed germinates due to the influence of the sun. In *mahat*, the first evolute of the interface of consciousness and matter, the *guṇas* exist in their cosmic form. *Mahat* is the first manifestation of evolution and the last knowledge of the involution before liberation.

THE 24 PRINCIPLES OF CREATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF EVOLUTION AND INVOLUTION

From the association or union of consciousness and matter, all the evolutes of creation (*tattvas* or principles) come into manifest forms—from *mahat* to the elements (five *bhūtas*). Ignorance is the cause of this union, and experience and liberation are its purpose (Sūtras II:18 and 24). Thus the universal and individual reality is defined in terms of the evolution and involution of consciousness and matter. The flow and ebb, manifestation and dissolution of creation is a self-defining eternal process. Evolution produces experience (*bhoga*) of diversity, and involution gives rise to the knowledge leading to the establishment of non-dual reality (*kaivalya*), which is liberation (*apavarga*).

In the process of evolution, the principles (*tattvas*) appear in more diversified, denser, and tangible forms, as manifestation progresses. The process of involution, experienced in deep meditation through the states of *samādhi*, is exactly the reverse of the cause and effect sequence of evolution or creation.

In evolution, the first manifestation of the interface of consciousness and matter, *mahat*, has the nature of “I-sense” (*asmitā*). *Mahat* is the subtlest level of duality as it is the unqualified essence of being. When this universal “I sense”

is identified in ignorance as an independent entity, the unqualified sense of being crystallizes into the ego of individuality, which is called *ahamkāra*, or ego sense. *Ahamkāra* identifies everything as “mine” or “not for me” and the grosser level of duality of self and other is born. The *ahamkāra* expresses itself in the form of subjective and objective realities. From *sattvik ahamkāra* comes the *manas* (recording mind) and sense capabilities (five *jñānendriyas*—organs of perception, and five *karmendriyas*—organs of action). From *tamasik ahamkāra* issues their objects, the five *tanmātras* (subtle elements or energies of hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting, and smelling). *Buddhi*, the discriminating faculty of mind is actually the aspect of *mahat* that serves the *ahamkāra*. The three aspects of mind, *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkāra* along with the ten senses and subtle elements are collectively called the *antaḥkaraṇa* and constitute the subtle body. The gross body and gross objects are created by the five elements (*pañcha mahābhūtas*—space, air, fire, water, and earth). This is the most dense and final manifestation of the interface of consciousness and matter, which, of course, is constantly evolving. The *rajasik* form of *ahamkāra* is contact of subject and object, which is characterized by attraction, creating attachment and repulsion, which ultimately creates hatred.

In deep meditation, the mind traces back this lineage from effect to cause as each level of manifestation is pierced. The states of the *guṇas* (qualities of *prakṛiti*) that are discriminated by the concentrated mind are given in Sūtra II: 19 as particular, universal, indicator only, and that which is without indication. The particular (*viśheṣha*) refers to the gross or elemental reality that is perceived by the senses. The universal (*aviśheṣha*) is the subtle, energetic level of reality created by the *tanmātras*, which is the cause or essence of the gross physical reality. Indicator only (*liṅga mātra*) is *mahat* (*sattva buddhi*), which is the cause and essence of the subtle reality. That indicator is “I-sense” or sense of pure unqualified being, the substratum of all life and indeed all animate and inanimate existence. That which is without indication is the unmanifest state of the *guṇas* (*mūla prakṛiti*), which is the causeless cause (*pradhāna*).

The conscious principle (*puruṣha*) is the all-pervading awareness that is the motivating factor in both evolution and involution. Therefore, it is said in Sūtra II:21 that nature (*prakṛiti*) exists for the purpose of the Self (*Ātmā*), which is embodied consciousness (*puruṣha*). This is the concept of *puruṣhārtha* (the purpose of *puruṣha*), which is experience and liberation. In experience, consciousness is identified with matter or nature. Ignorance is the cause of this identification (Sūtra II:24). In liberation matter and consciousness are known to be separate by means of *viveka khyāti* (discriminative wisdom). It is nature or *prakṛiti* that goes through transformation. *Puruṣha* or consciousness is always separate, independent, and immutable. If this were not true, liberation would be impossible.

CONCLUSION

By repetition and elaboration, Patañjali develops the practice and philosophy of *yoga* to include all levels and natures of aspirants. In *yoga*, practice includes an array of different approaches including devotion (*bhakti*), selfless service (Karma Yoga), self-inquiry (*Ātmā vichāra*) and spiritual exercises such as Rāja Yoga. The basis of all these practices are presented in generic form in *Sādhana Pāda*, without references to specific deities, creeds, or lineages. For this reason, it is said that the principles of *yoga* are in all religions.

Reading a book cannot bring liberation from suffering, and understanding philosophical concepts does not bring higher consciousness. This testimonial knowledge can, however, provide a map of a path to liberation and a context for practice. Faith in the truth of the scriptures and association with truth-seekers (*satsang*) does not establish the reality of that truth, though these intentions and associations are necessary aspects of a genuine spiritual life. Even association with an enlightened master does not necessarily bring enlightenment, though without such guidance, inspiration, and example the attainment of spiritual awareness leading to liberation is very difficult.

Knowledge remains inferential until established by one's own practice and the Truth is directly perceived. If testimonial or inferential knowledge alone were sufficient means to attain liberation, then *Sādhana Pāda*, Book II of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* would not be necessary.

Those spiritual aspirants who are inspired by the great philosophies and exemplary lives of saints and sages, and want to experience the truth for themselves, know that practice is where "the rubber meets the road" in spiritual life. Practice may be dynamic and ecstatic, but more often it may seem repetitive and uneventful. Whereas spiritual awakening may be a joyous or wondrous experience, it is often followed by another kind of pain, the pain of separation from the Divine Reality, the loss of transcendence. At some point an aspirant realizes how thick the layers of delusion are and how we are trapped in habitual patterns of hurtful behaviors. As depressing as this realization may be, the sincere aspirant must push on and continue their practice.

Those of us who have had the privilege of studying with Babaji have heard him give the answer "regular *sādhana*" to any number of questions about problems in spiritual life. He has likened a daily *sādhana* practice to "rowing your boat in the middle of the ocean." We may not see any progress because neither shore is visible, nevertheless there is still movement. Over time, *sādhana* practiced regularly and with consistent effort, is transformative. In the end, the truth realized through practice is not a speculative belief, but it is rather an experienced truth, which is irrefutable to the one who has become established in its awareness through his or her own efforts.

As we embark on the study of *Sādhana Pāda*, whether it is for the first time or the hundredth time, let us commit ourselves again to practice, discipline, and

virtuous action. In preparation for contemplation of the timeless knowledge of Yoga, let us consider two ancient Vedic prayers to sanctify the aims of liberation from the afflictions or ignorance, freedom to know the Truth, and finding Peace in the infinite unbounded Self.

*Om saha nā va vatu/Saha nau bhunaktu
Saha viryaṁ karavā-vahai
Tejasvinā-vadhitam-astu mā vidviṣhā-vahai
Om śhāntiḥ, śhāntiḥ, śhāntiḥ*

Om. May God protect us both, teacher and the disciple.
May we be nourished and work together with great energy.
May our study be vigorous and fruitful.
May love and harmony dwell amongst us.
Om, Peace, Peace, Peace

*Om asato mā sad gamaya
Tamaso mā jyotir-gamaya
Mrityor-mā-amritaṁ gamaya
Sarveṣhām svasti-bhavatu
Sarveṣhām śhānti-bhavatu
Sarveṣhām pūrṇam-bhavatu
Sarveṣhām maṅgalaṁ-bhavatu
Lokā samastāḥ sukhino bhavantu
Om Śhāntiḥ śhāntiḥ śhāntiḥ*

From untruth lead us to truth
From darkness lead us to light
From death lead us to immortality
May all beings dwell in happiness
May all beings dwell in peace
May all beings attain oneness
May all beings attain auspiciousness
May happiness be unto the whole world
Om Peace Peace Peace

*Dayanand Diffenbaugh
Mount Madonna 2008*