

Yoga Philosophy: History and Culture

The Yoga Sūtras (or, Pātañjalayogaśāstra)

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Patañjali Chant



yogena cittasya padena vācāṃ
malaṃ śarīrasya ca vaidyakena |
yo'pākarot taṃ pravaraṃ munīnāṃ
patañjaliṃ prāñjalirānato'smi ||

Yoga for the mind, grammar for speech and
medicine for the impurities of the body.

I bow down before Patañjali,
foremost among the sages.

1. SAMĀDHI PĀDA

Definition of Yoga:

1.2 *yogaḥ citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*

Yoga is the cessation of the mind's fluctuations

1.3 *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarupe avasthānam*

Then the Seer is established in its own form

1.4 Otherwise, there is identification with the fluctuations

Yoga=Samādhi

As well as a series of practices, Samādhi indicates the final goal of yoga in the PYS. It is a synonym of Yoga itself (defined as the ultimate state reached through practices like prāṇāyāma, fixation, meditation and the *practice of samādhi*).

PRACTICE (abhyāsa)

1.12 Cessation [of the mind's fluctuations] comes from practice (abhyāsa) and freedom from desire (vairāgya)

1.13 Practice needs stability and effort

1.14 [Practice] becomes firmly grounded (dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ) when carried out 1. for a long time 2. without interruption 3. with care 4. respectfully and 5. assiduously.

1.21 The strongly intense ones are near

Obstacles, Distractions of the Mind

1. Sickness 2. Dullness 3. Doubt 4. Carelessness 5. Laziness 6. Sense indulgence 7. False views 8. Back-sliding 9. Instability
(1.30)

1.32 tatpratiṣedha-artham eka-tattva-abhyāsa

To counteract them, there is one principle: Practice

Various Practices follow, for example:

1.34 Exhalation and retention of the breath

1.35 Steady binding of the mind

1.38 Resting in knowledge gained in sleep and dream

1.39 Or from meditation as desired

And....The Four Abodes of Brahma for the clarification of mind

1.33 Maitrī, Karuṇā Muditā, Upekṣa

Friendliness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, Equanimity

*(maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣāṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇya- apuṇya-
viṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaś citta prasādanam)*

2. SĀDHANA PĀDA

Kriya Yoga and the Kleśas

2.1 Kriya yoga consists of austerity (tapas), study of sacred texts (svādhyāya), and dedication to Īśvara (īśvarapraṇidhāna)

2.2 Its purpose is to cultivate samādhi, and to reduce the afflictions (kleśa)

2.3 The kleśas are: Ignorance, I-am-ness, Attraction, Aversion and Desire for Continuity

2.4 Ignorance is the origin of all the others [...]

2.5 Ignorance is seeing the temporal as eternal, the impure as pure, pain as pleasure and the non-self as the self (ātman).

SUFFERING (duḥkha)

2.15 For the one who discerns properly (vivekinaḥ) all is suffering (duḥkham eva sarvam) because of the conflict of the fluctuations of the guṇas and the sufferings caused by change (pariṇāma), pain/sorrow (tāpa) and karmic imprints (saṃskāra).

2.16 Future suffering is to be avoided!

2.17 The cause of what is to be avoided (i.e. suffering) is the confusion of the Seer and the Seen

DISCERNMENT (viveka)

=

escape from suffering

- 2.26 The means of escape (hānopāyaḥ) is unwavering discriminative awareness (vivekakhyātiḥ)

Aṣṭāṅgayoga (2.29)

1. Yama (rules and observances)
2. Niyama (personal discipline)
3. Āsana (posture)
4. Prāṇāyāma (breath control)
5. Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of senses)
6. Dhāraṇā (fixation of an object)
7. Dhyāna (meditation)
8. Samādhi (Absorption)

Yama

(rules and observances, 2.30)

1. Ahimsā (non-violence)
2. Satya (truthfulness)
3. Asteya (not stealing)
4. Brahmacharya (sexual continence)
5. Aparigraha (non-grasping)

II.30 ahimsā-satya-asteya-brahmacharya-
aparigrahā yamāḥ

Niyama (personal discipline, 2.32)

1. Śauca (cleanliness)
2. Santoṣa (contentedness)
3. Tapas (austerity)
4. Study of scripture (svādhyāya)
5. Devotion to Īśvara

II.32 śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāya-īśvara-
praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ

ĀSANA (postures)

2.46 sthira-sukhaṃ āsanam

Posture should be steady and comfortable

2.47 From it (posture), there is the relaxation of effort and endless unity

2.48 Then one is not assailed by dualities

Prāṇāyāma (breath control)

2.49 Being in this, there is breath control, which is the cutting off of inhalation and exhalation

2.53 Thus (through Prāṇāyāma) the covering of the light is dissolved

Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses)

2.54 Withdrawal of the sense faculties (indriya) is the disengagement of the mind from its objects (svaviṣaya) as if in imitation of its (the mind's) own form.

2.55 From this arises supreme master of the senses.

The Three Inner Auxiliaries (antaraṅga):

Dhāraṇā: 3.1 Concentration is binding the mind in place

Dhyāna 3.2 The drawing out of a single intention is meditation (dhyāna)

Samādhi: Samādhi is when the purpose (artha) alone shines forth as if empty of its own form (i.e. when one realizes that all objects arise for the sake of puruṣa)

The three inner auxiliaries are collectively known as Saṃyama:

3.4 trayam ekatra saṃyamahaḥ

The union of these three (dhāraṇa, dhyāna and samādhi) is called saṃyama

(The remainder of Book 3 describes the special powers (siddhi, vibhūti that arise from concentrating on particular objects).

1. Absorption-with-cognition (*saṁprajñātasamādhi*)

- i) reasoning (*vitarka*),
- ii) reflection (*vicāra*),
- iii) bliss (*ānanda*)
- iv) egoism (*asmitā*, glossed in the commentary as ‘unitary consciousness’) (1.17)

It is said to be ‘with seed’ (*sabīja*) on account of the karmic traces which arise from it (1.46)

2. Absorption-without-cognition

(asamprajñātasamādhi)

- The contemplation of cessation itself (the highest practice of dispassion (*vairagya*)).
 - Free of meditation object.
 - Called ‘absorption without seed’ (*nirbījasamādhi*) because it produces no further karmic traces. One enters the state of ‘isolation’ (*kaivalya*)

Yoga Chant

(Pātañjalayogaśāstra, Bhāṣya 3.6)

yogena yogo jñātavyo
yogo yogāt pravartate |
yo'pramatastu yogena
sa yogē ramate ciram ||

Yoga is to be known through yoga.

Yoga arises from yoga.

One who is practised in yoga

Delights in yoga for a long time.

End of Unit 1.4