

PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS

CHAPTER I – The Path of Contemplation

I.1 Now begins instruction in yoga

I.2 Yoga is stilling the mind

I.3 Then the true nature of the Self is experienced

I.4 Otherwise, one identifies with the thoughts

1.5 There are five kinds of thoughts, some painful, others not painful

I.6 These: are correct knowledge, misperception, fantasy, sleep and memory

I.7 Correct knowledge is derived from direct perception, inference and proven facts

I.8 Misperception is based on incorrect perception of the true nature of reality

I.9 Fantasy arises from imagination, not reality

I.10 Sleep is the absence of deliberate, conscious thought

I.11 Memory is the recall of words and experiences

I.12 The thoughts can be controlled through practice and non-attachment

I.13 Practice is repeated effort to still the mind

I.14 Practice becomes firmly grounded over time, with uninterrupted and devoted effort

I.15 Non-attachment is letting go of wanting

I.16 The highest form of non-attachment comes when one glimpses the Soul

I.17 There are four stages of contemplation: analysis, reflection, peace and awareness of pure being

- I.18 By non-attachment to the thoughts, a state arises where there is no conscious object, only faint unconscious impressions
- I.19 Without non-attachment one remains subject to the forces of nature
- I.20 Practice should be accompanied by faith, vigour, good memory, concentration and discrimination
- I.21 Success comes quickly to those who practice keenly
- I.22 Practitioners may be mild, average or intense
- I.23 Contemplation may also be achieved by devotion to God
- I.24 God is untouched by sorrow or cause and effect
- I.25 God is omniscient
- I.26 God is timeless, the teacher of teachers
- I.27 God is represented by the syllable OM
- I.28 This word is to be repeated with realisation of its meaning
- I.29 From which the obstacles are removed to knowledge of the Self
- I.30 Illness, procrastination, doubt, inertia, self-indulgence, misconceptions, discouragement, lack of success and backsliding are the obstacles
- I.31 These distractions are accompanied by grief, depression, unsteadiness of the body and irregular breathing
- I.32 They can be removed by single minded effort
- I.33 The mind is made calm by cultivating friendliness towards the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the good and indifference towards the bad
- I.34 The mind is also calm at the end of exhalation
- I.35 Contemplating an object brings steadiness of mind
- I.36 Or contemplating an inner light, beyond sorrow

- I.37 Or contemplating a saint or enlightened person
- I.38 Or contemplating a dream of the state of mind in dreamless sleep
- I.39 Or by meditating on a chosen symbol which appears to one as good
- I.40 With mastery the yogi can contemplate any object from the infinitesimal to the infinite
- I.41 As the pure crystal takes colour from its surroundings, so the mind of a yogi becomes one with the object of contemplation
- I.42 A special contemplation arises when the object, name and concept are merged
- I.43 When total awareness of the true nature of the object is achieved without words, the consciousness shines
- I.44 Contemplation of a subtle object can be with word or without word
- I.46 These kinds of contemplation are 'with seed'
- I.47 From clear contemplation the mind is made serene
- I.48 There is an experience of knowledge 'filled with truth'
- I.49 This is a different kind of knowledge from that obtained from ordinary study
- I.50 It makes an impression on the mind which overshadows all previous impressions
- I.51 When even this impression is released the contemplation is 'seedless'

CHAPTER II – The Path of Practice

II.1 Dedication, self-awareness and surrender to God are prerequisites to yoga practice

II.2 These lead to serenity and the reduction of suffering

II.3 Suffering comes from ignorance, egotism, liking and disliking and fear of death

II.4 Ignorance is the main cause of all suffering, whether it is potential or dormant, presently overcome or present now

II.5 Ignorance is to mistake the finite for the eternal, the impure for the pure, evil for good and the non-self for the Self

II.6 Egotism is to identify with the external world

II.7 Liking is associated with pleasure which is followed by pain

II.8 Disliking is associated with pain

II.9 Fear of death is found even in the wise

II.10 When these five afflictions are reduced almost to nothing they can be resolved by examining their cause

II.11 Even without reduction they can be resolved through meditation

II.12 The residue of past suffering can affect present and future lives

II.13 As long as the root is still there past suffering can affect life, length of life and experiences

II.14 Pleasure and pain arise as fruits of one's actions

II.15 The wise are aware of the transient and thus painful nature of pleasure

II.16 Future pain is to be avoided

II.17 That pain comes from identifying with the seen

II.18 What is seen is nature which can be one of three states: luminous, active or inert. Nature exists for the experiencer to experience it and be liberated

- II.19 The three states of nature may be apparent or hidden, distinguishable or merged
- II.20 Experience is pure consciousness and witnesses nature
- II.21 Nature exists to free the Soul
- II.22 It no longer exists for the liberated soul but continues for others
- II.23 In the union of the soul with nature the true nature of both is realised
- II.24 This however is still ignorance
- II.25 Once this identification is relinquished the soul is truly free
- II.26 No trace of illusion remains to mask unwavering knowledge of the soul
- II.27 There are seven stages to this knowledge
- II.28 Practice of these stages of yoga brings the sage to enlightenment
- II.29 The seven stages plus enlightenment constitute eight limbs; ethics, personal conduct, posture, breathing, sense withdrawal, concentration, contemplation and enlightenment or self-realisation
- II.30 The ethics are abstinence from violence, falsehood, theft, promiscuity and greed
- II.31 These are universal laws, unmitigated by time, place, purpose or circumstances
- II.32 Personal conduct involves cleanliness, contentment, quiet zeal, self-study and devotion to God
- II.33 When thoughts arise which distract one from the path of yoga they can be countered by opposing thoughts
- II.34 Distractions such as thoughts of violence, falsehood and so on always result in suffering. With self-awareness they can be countered
- II.35 When one becomes steadfast in non-violence all living creatures cease to feel enmity in one's presence

- II.36 When one becomes steadfast in truthfulness one's words come to fruition
- II.37 When one becomes steadfast in non-theft abundance comes
- II.38 When one becomes steadfast in self-containment, energy ensues
- II.39 From steadfastness in non-possessiveness comes knowledge of past and future lives
- II.40 From steadfastness in cleanliness arises reserve in contact with others
- II.41 Also simplicity of the heart, cheerfulness, a sense of purpose and readiness to experience a vision of the soul
- II.42 From contentment comes happiness
- II.43 Quiet zeal erodes impurities bringing a sense of divine perfection to body and mind
- II.44 From self-study comes connection with God
- II.45 From dedicating one's efforts to God one achieves perfect contemplation
- II.46 The body should be steady and at ease
- II.47 Posture becomes effortless with control and with meditation
- II.48 There is harmony between opposites such as strength and suppleness
- II.49 After this one can begin to control the breathing
- II.50 Breathing has three movements: inhalation, exhalation and retention. These can be finely tuned to be long or short, deep or subtle
- II.51 The fourth movement is transcendental
- II.52 From which the veil is removed from illumined wisdom
- II.53 The mind is prepared for concentration
- II.54 The senses are withdrawn from external objects and the attention is turned inwards

II.55 The senses are mastered

Chapter III – Accomplishments

III.1 Concentration is holding the attention on one point

III.2 Contemplation or meditation comes when the flow of attention is steady and uninterrupted

III.3 When the meditator becomes completely absorbed in the object of meditation so that self-awareness is lost there is self-realisation or enlightenment

III.4 These three together constitute integration or *samyama*

III.5 From mastery of *samyama* comes insight

III.6 *Samyama* is to be applied in stages

III.7 These three stages apply to an inner experience in comparison to the first five limbs

III.8 Even *samyama* appears external in comparison to complete enlightenment

III.9 In letting go the thoughts almost before they arise the mind becomes still

III.10 When this stillness becomes continuous there is a state of undisturbed tranquillity

III.11 Being able to bring the attention to one point is the beginning of the journey to tranquillity

III.12 One-pointed attention flows into no-pointed attentiveness

III.13 Through these three phases the transformation of elements, senses and mind takes place

III.14 Underneath the transformation is a principle which remains unaltered

III.15 Different changes in consciousness depend on the order of transformations

III.16 Through *samyama* on the three transformations comes knowledge of the past and future

III.17 Through *samyama* on words one learns to differentiate between the sound, its meaning and one's response to the meaning and gains understanding of the language of all beings

III.18 Through *samyama* on subconscious impressions one gains knowledge of previous lives

III.19 Through *samyama* on the body language of another one gains an understanding of that person's thought processes

III.20 But not specific thoughts for that is not the object of the *samyama*

III.21 Through *samyama* on the form of one's own body, absorbing (not reflecting) the light which falls on it, one becomes invisible

III.22 Similarly sound, smell and touch can be suspended

III.23 By *samyama* on one's actions one gains knowledge of the fruits of one's actions including the time of one's death

III.24 By *samyama* on friendliness, compassion and so on, one gains the power of those qualities

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III.25 By *samyama* on the strength of an elephant one gains strength

III.26 Through *samyama* on the inner light hidden truths are revealed

III.27 Through *samyama* on the sun one gains knowledge of the cosmos

III.28 Through *samyama* on the moon one gains knowledge of the positions of the stars

III.29 Through *samyama* on the polestar one gains knowledge of the motions of the stars

III.30 By *samyama* on the navel one gains knowledge of the human body

III.31 By *samyama* on the throat one stills hunger and thirst

- III.32 By *samyama* on the tortoise meridian within the chest one becomes steady and immovable
- III.33 By *samyama* on the light of the crown of the head one gains visions of saints and yogis
- III.34 This knowledge may also come spontaneously to those who have the power of spiritual perception
- III.35 Through *samyama* on the heart one understands consciousness
- III.36 Through *samyama* one learns to differentiate between the intelligence and the soul
- III.37 One's powers of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell are enhanced
- III.38 These are worldly powers and are obstacles to enlightenment
- III.39 Loosening the mind from its worldly attachment the yogi can enter another body
- III.40 By mastering the life force of the upper body the yogi can walk over water, swamps and thorns without sinking
- III.41 Through mastery of the life force of the middle body the body glows
- III.42 Through master of the relation between sound and space the yogi gains supernatural hearing
- III.43 Through mastery of the relation between the body and space the yogi becomes as light as cotton fibre and can travel through space
- III.44 By *samyama* on the disembodied state the veil over the light of knowledge is removed
- III.45 By *samyama* on the elements the yogi gains mastery over them all
- III.46 This mastery confers perfection of the body, including the ability to become minute
- III.47 Perfection is in beauty, grace, strength and the hardness of a thunderbolt

III.48 Mastery of the senses is gained by *samyama* on the process of knowing, nature, ego and purpose

III.49 From that comes to the body the power of rapid movement like that of the mind, power of the senses independent of the body and the conquest of nature

III.50 Through *samyama* on the difference between the luminous state of nature and the soul, comes supreme knowledge of existence

III.51 Through renunciation of even these powers there is liberation

III.52 The yogi should not be allured by higher beings for fear of the return of ignorance

III.53 By *samyama* on a single moment and its relationship to time the yogi gains knowledge of reality

III.54 Exactly similar objects as defined by type, characteristic and position can be distinguished by the above *samyama*

III.55 Furthermore the knowledge of all objects throughout time and in all aspects is grasped simultaneously

III.56 When the illumined mind becomes as pure as the soul the yogi has reached perfection

Chapter IV – Liberation

IV.1 Psychic powers can be gained by birth, drugs, chanting, austerities or by concentration

IV.2 Powers of birth come through spiritual evolution

IV.3 As a farmer breaks down the obstacles in a water course so good and bad deeds break down the obstacles to spiritual evolution

IV.4 All minds are created from “I”

IV.5 Although minds are various the “I” directs them all

IV.6 Minds purified by meditation are free from unconscious motivation

IV.7 The actions of a yogi are neither good nor bad; others can be either or mixed

IV.8 The good, bad or mixed activities of others will have consequences according to their conditions

IV.9 Memories and subconscious tendencies transcend birth, space and time

IV.10 The desire to be is eternal

IV.11 Subconscious and conscious motivations are perpetuated by cause and effect. By not pondering to those desires and motivations, they will disappear

IV.12 The past and the future exist in the present, actualised at different times

IV.13 Actualizations may be gross or subtle according to the three states of nature (gunas)

IV.14 Since the three states of nature operate on all things there is a unity in all things

IV.15 Since all things are perceived differently by different minds, minds are different from objects

IV.16 Objects are not dependent on minds for their existence or they would be non-existent if they were not perceived

IV.17 An object is known or unknown according to the colour of the mind

- IV.18 The “I” is unmoving and knows all states of mind
- IV.19 The mind is not self illuminating since it is an object which can be known
- IV.20 Mind and its objects cannot be perceived simultaneously
- IV.21 To postulate a second mind to perceive the first and so on ad infinitum would be confusing
- IV.22 Contemplating the mind as an object brings one closer to the knowledge of “I”
- IV.23 The mind, being influence by the “I” and the objects of perceptions, can be all-knowing
- IV.24 Although the mind is swayed by perceptions it is dependent on and serves the “I”
- IV.25 One learns to discriminate between the mind and the “I”
- IV.26 Through discrimination one moves towards liberation
- IV.27 One can be distracted from the path of liberation by memories and subconscious tendencies
- IV.28 They may be overcome in the same way as the obstacles to enlightenment (Ch.II)
- IV.29 Perfect discrimination, undistracted even by psychic powers is known as the “cloud of virtue”
- IV.30 From the “cloud of virtue” comes the end of suffering and the effects of actions
- IV.31 The knowable universe becomes as nothing compared with infinite knowledge
- IV.32 The fluctuations of the three states of nature come to an end, having fulfilled their purpose
- IV.33 Time stands still

IV.34 The three states of nature are resolved into nature itself. The “I” is consciousness itself