

# Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

## Ashtanga (Eight Limbs of) Yoga (Chapter 2)

Subhash Mittal

Integral Yoga Studio

[www.integralyogastudio.com](http://www.integralyogastudio.com) ♦ 919-926-9717 ♦ subhashmittal@gmail.com

# Invocation to Sage Patanjali

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां । मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन ॥  
योऽपाकरोत्तं प्रवरं मुनीनां । पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि ॥  
yogena chittasya padena vAchAM | malaM sharIrasya cha  
vaidyakena ||

yo.apAkarottaM pravaraM munInAM | pata~njaliM  
prA~njaliRAnato.asmi ||

"I respectfully bow down with folded hands and offer my salutations to Sage Patanjali, the highest among the Munis (sages), who has presented the remedies for removing the impurities of the body through his treatise on Ayurveda, of language through his treatise on grammar (Patanjala Mahabhashya) and the impurities of the Chitta (mind field) through his treatise on Yoga (Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)."

## Sutra 2.28

योगाङ्गाऽनुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षये  
ज्ञानदीप्तिरौविवेकख्यातेः ॥२८॥

yogaanga anuShThaanaat ashuddhikshaye  
jnaanadIptiH aa-vivekakhyaateH

By the practice of the limbs of Yoga, the  
impurities dwindle away and there dawns the  
light of wisdom, leading to discriminative  
discernment.

# Deepest benefits of yoga (sutra 2.28)

- ashuddhi-kshaye: Impurities are eliminated
  - Physical: sickness etc (sutras 1.30, 1.31)
  - Mental: five kleshas (sutras 2.3-2.9)
  - Anger, jealousy, hatred etc.
- jnana-dipti: glow of pure, innate, intuitive wisdom
- viveka-khyati: Discrimination between real and unreal – self realization

## Sutra 2.29

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ॥२९॥

yamaniyamaasanapraaNaayaamapratyaahaaradhaa  
raNaadhyaanasamaadhayo.Shtaava~ggaani

Yama (Restraint), Niyama (Observance), Asana (Posture), Pranayama (Regulation Of Breath), Pratyahara (Withholding of Senses), Dharana (Fixity), Dhyana (Meditation) And Samadhi (Perfect Concentration) Are The Eight limbs Of Yoga

# Eight Limbs

- Yama (restraint)
- Niyama (observance)
- Asana (physical posture)
- Pranayama (regulation of breath)
- Pratyahara (Sense withdrawal)
- Dharana (focus/concentration)
- Dhyana (meditation)
- Samadhi (total absorption)

-- Sutra 2.29

## Sutra 2.30

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः॥३०॥

ahiMsaasatyaasteyabrahmacharyaaparigrahaa  
yamaaH

Yamas consist of non-violence, truthfulness,  
non-stealing, continence, and non-greed

# Five Yamas

- Ahimsa (non-injury)
- Satya (truthfulness)
- Asteya (non-stealing)
- Brahmacharya (continence)
- Aparigraha (non-hoarding)

-- Sutra 2.30



# Yamas - Great Vows

- Must be followed in totality, universally
- With no regard to birth, place, time or circumstance
- Ex: class/birth – fisherman can only kill fish  
- Sutra 2.31

## Sutra 2.31

जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमा  
महाव्रतम् ॥३१॥

jaatideshakaalasamayaanavachChinnaaH  
saarvabhoomaa mahaavratam

These Great Vows are universal, not limited by  
class, place, time or circumstance

## Sutra 2.32

शौचसंतोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि  
नियमाः ॥३२॥

shouchasaMtoShatapaHsvaadhyayeshvarapraN  
idhaanani niyamaaH

Niyamas consist of purity, contentment,  
accepting but not causing pain, study of spiritual  
books and worship of God [self-surrender]

# Five Niyamas

- Shaucha (cleanliness)
- Santosha (contentment)
- Tapas (austerity)
- Svadhyaya (self-study)
- Ishvara-pranidhana (surrender to God)

- Sutra 2.32

## Sutra 2.33

वितर्कबाधने प्रतिपक्षभावनम्॥३३॥

vitarkabaadhane pratipakShabhaavanam

When disturbed by negative thoughts, opposite [positive] ones should be thought of. This is pratipaksha bhavana

## Sutra 2.34

वितर्का हिंसादयः कृतकारितानमोदिता  
लोभक्रोधमोहपूर्वका मृदुमध्याधिमात्रा  
दुःखाज्ञानानन्तफला इति प्रतिपक्षभावनम्॥३४॥

vitarkaa hiMsaadayaH kRutakaaritaanumoditaa  
lobhakrodhamohapUrvakaa  
mRudumadhyaadhimaatraa  
duHkhaaj~jaanaanantaphalaa iti  
pratipakShabhaavanam

# Ways to Remove Disturbances

- Bring thoughts opposite to disturbing thoughts (2.33)
- Ex: love for hatred; compassion for injury
- Opposing thoughts are triggered by realizing that evil actions, physical or mental, (such as violence)
  - Done by oneself, by another or approved by oneself
  - Performed through anger, greed or delusion
  - whether mild, moderate or intense  
are the cause of infinite misery and unending ignorance

- 2.34

## Sutra 2.35

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः॥३५॥

ahiMsaapратиShThaayaaM tatsannidhou  
vairatyaagaH

In the presence of one firmly established in non-violence, all hostilities cease.



# Ahimsa (non-injury)

- Ahimsa toward all living creatures – plants, animals, humans
- Evil tendencies like selfishness, hatred, jealousy, anger etc cause tendency to inflict injury to others
- To nourish one's own body with the flesh of another is 'himsa'
- Inflicting pain for one's own comfort is 'himsa'
- Ahimsa through action, thought and speech; as the thoughts so the actions – so purify thoughts

# Ahimsa (cont.)

- Apply ahimsa not only to others but to yourself as well
- Ex: hurting yourself by over-eating, performing asana beyond your capability etc
- Self-destructive behavior caused by fear, guilt
- Food wastage is a form of violence against those who sleep hungry
- Love involving demands and expectations entails violence, both to self and others
- Emotional violence in relationships: harsh, abusive language; angry outbursts, emotional judgments, sarcasm, skillful manipulations
- As the yogi becomes established in ahimsa, all beings coming near him cease to be hostile (sutra 2.35)

## Sutra 2.36

सत्यप्रतिष्ठायां क्रियाफलाश्रयत्वम्॥३६॥

satyapратиShThaayaaM kriyaaphalaashrayatvam

To one established in truthfulness, actions and their results become subservient

# Satya (Truthfulness)

- Speech and mind conforming to reality as seen, inferred or heard
- Action that conveys the reality as is
- Speech should not be deceptive, confused, equivocal, barren of a meaning, or hurtful – avoid unpleasant truth or pleasant untruth
- Give up luxury of imagination in favor of pure objectivity
- False ego hides the true voice of intuition
- Everyone has their own perception of truth
- When established in truth, fruit of action depend upon the action of the yogi (sutra 2.36)

## Sutra 2.37

अस्तेयप्रतिष्ठायां सर्वरत्नोपस्थानम् ॥३७॥

asteyapратиShThaayaaM sarvaratnopasthaanam

To one established in non-stealing, all wealth  
comes

# Asteya (non-stealing)

- Taking something not belonging to you is stealing; to forsake any such desire is asteya
- Greed (lobha) and desire (raaga) cause stealing
- Developing non-desirousness helps resist temptation for objects of the senses
- Making demands in a relationship is stealing
- Through practice of Asteya, all treasures will be at your disposal (sutra 2.37)

## Sutra 2.38

ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः ॥३८॥

brahmacharyapratiShThaayaaM vlryalaabhaH

By one established in continence, vigor is gained

# Brahmacharya (Celibacy)

- Celibacy is controlling the sense organs
- Refrain from the 8 forms of sexual indulgence
- A brahmachari should have frugal diet and moderate sleep
- Avoid craving for sensual enjoyments
- Sublimate and redirect sexual energy – to achieve inner strength
- One established in celibacy attains “virya” – indomitable courage, vigor (sutra 2.38)
- Can effectively transmit true knowledge of self to disciples



## Sutra 2.39

अपरिग्रहस्थैर्ये जन्मकथंतासंबोधः॥३९॥

aparigrahashtairye janmakathaMtaasaMbodhaH

When non-greed is confirmed, a thorough illumination of the how and why of one's birth comes

# Aparigraha (Non-hoarding)

- Strictly speaking, no possessions besides what is needed for bare sustenance
- Time and energy spent in accumulation and guarding possessions
- Constant fear of losing causing mental anguish; loss of possession causing intense pain
- Aparigraha removes fear, hate, disappointment, attachment, anxiety and pain
- When stabilized in aparigraha, one obtains full knowledge of past and future lives (sutra 2.39)

## Sutra 2.40

शौचात् स्वाङ्गजुगुप्सा परैरसंसर्गः ॥४०॥

shouchaat svaa~ggajugupsaa parairasaMsargaH

By purification arises disgust for one's own body  
and for contact with other bodies

## Sutra 2.41

सत्त्वशुद्धिसौमनस्यैकाग्र्येन्द्रियजयात्मदर्शनयोग्य  
त्वानि चे॥४१॥

sattvashuddhisoumanasyaikaagriyendriyajayaat  
madarshanayogyatvaani

Moreover, one gains purity of sattva,  
cheerfulness of mind, one-pointedness, mastery  
over the senses, and fitness for Self-realization

# Shaucha (cleanliness)

- External cleanliness through soap/water etc and taking pure foods (includes fasting), avoiding alcohol and putrid food
- Hatha yoga has six cleansing techniques – neti, basti, dhauti, kapalabhati, trataka, nauli
- Internal cleanliness through making the mind-field sattvic (pure) by removing anger, pride, arrogance, jealousy, greed, delusion etc. (sutra 1.33 – friendliness etc. to purify the mind)
- Cleanliness of environment (non-pollution)
- From Shaucha comes disgust for one's own body and disinclination for contact with others (sutra 2.40)
- From inner purity arise purity of sattva, cheerfulness, one-pointedness, control of senses, and fitness for vision of the Self (sutra 2.41)

## Sutra 2.42

संतोषादनुत्तमसुखलाभः ॥४२॥

saMtoshaadanuttamasukhalaabhaH

By contentment, supreme joy is gained

# Santosha (Contentment)

- Being contented with what we have, not desiring more than what we need
- Being contented in all situations, under all circumstances (not constantly complaining)
- No need to strive to 'be something' or 'achieve something' – we are perfect the way we are
- One established in santosha attains supreme happiness (2.42)

## Sutra 2.43

कायेन्द्रियसिद्धिरशुद्धिक्षयात्तपसः ॥४३॥

kaayendriyasiddhirashuddhikShayaattapasaH

By austerity, impurities of body and senses are destroyed and occult powers gained



# Tapas (Austerity)

- Defined as resisting pairs of experiences like heat/cold, pain/pleasure, hunger/thirst etc
- Not getting upset over small sufferings
- Ability to sit and stand motionless
- Ability to hold silence
- Practice of asana, pranayama help develop tapas
- Tapas is needed to remove impurities caused by karma, afflictions (klesha) and propensities (vasanas)
- When established in tapas, mastery over body and senses is achieved (sutra 2.43)

## Sutra 2.44

स्वाध्यायादिष्टदेवतासंप्रयोगः ॥४४॥

svaadhyayaadiShTadevataasaMprayogaH

By study of spiritual books comes communion  
with one's chosen deity

# Svadhyaya (self-study)

- Study of scriptures – Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, YSP, Bible, Qurana etc.
- Japa of OM with ‘bhava’ (awareness of its meaning) leads to understanding of self
- Through Svadhyaya one can achieve one’s ‘ishta devata’ (chosen deity) (sutra 2.44)

## Sutra 2.45

समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात्॥४५॥

samaadhisiddhirIshvarapraNidhaanaat

By total surrender to God, samadhi is attained

# Ishvara Pranidhana (Surrender to Lord)

- Ishvara is a special Purusha who is untouched by the afflictions of life, actions and the results and impressions produced by these actions (sutra 1.24)
- Afflictions are ignorance, I-am-ness (egoism), likes, dislikes, and fear of death (sutra 2.3)
- Dedicating all acts to the supreme Lord and renouncing the fruits thereof
- Emphasis on 'bhakti yoga' – yoga of devotion
- Samadhi can be attained quickly through Ishvara Pranidhana (sutra 2.45)

## Sutra 2.46

स्थिरसुखमासनम् ॥४६॥

sthirasukhamaasanam

Asana is a steady, comfortable posture

# Asana (Physical Posture)

- Posture must be steady and comfortable (2.46)
- Asana implies a seated posture suitable for meditation, e.g., lotus
- Steady = no shaking or trembling, firm
- Comfortable posture needed for steadiness of breath and stillness of the mind
- In Hatha Yoga, asana practiced to develop a strong and flexible body resulting in comfortable and steady seated posture
- Asanas help remove the nine impediments (1.30)

## Sutra 2.47

प्रयत्नशैथिल्यानन्त्यसमापत्तिभ्याम् ॥४७॥

prayatnashaithilyaanantyasamaapattibhyaam

By lessening the natural tendency for  
restlessness and by meditating on the infinite,  
posture is mastered



# Asana

- By relaxation of effort and meditation on the 'Endless' (posture is mastered) (2.47)
- Relaxation – mind free from body awareness
- Meditation of endless – 'ananta' also translated as the snake that upholds the earth –symbolizing strength and steadiness, also the kundalini shakti
- Practice of 'yoga nidra' helps to relax

## Sutra 2.48

ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः ॥४८॥

tato dvandvaanabhighaataH

Thereafter, one is undisturbed by the dualities

# Asana

- From that no assaults from the pairs of opposites (2.48)
- Opposites – heat/cold, pleasure/pain, good/bad etc., all causing mental conflict
- Necessary for the other limbs like pranayama, and pratyahara (sense withdrawal)
- Develops will-power necessary for undertaking long periods of meditation

## Sutra 2.49

तस्मिन् सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः  
प्राणायामः ॥४९॥

tasmin sati shvaasaprashvaasayoH  
gativichChedaH praaNaayaamaH

That [firm posture] being acquired, the  
movements of inhalation and exhalation should  
be controlled. This is pranayama

# Pranayama

- Asana having been accomplished, Pranayama is cessation of inspiration and expiration (2.49)
- Breath is the gross manifestation of prana – the cosmic life force
- Link between the body (matter) and the mind (consciousness)
- The vehicle for prana is the pranamaya kosha with all its channels (nadis) of subtle energy

## Sutra 2.50

बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिर्देशकालसंख्याभिः परिदृष्टो  
दीर्घसूक्ष्मः ॥५०॥

baahyaabhyantarastambhavRuttirdeshakaalasaMkh  
yaabhiH paridRuShTo dIrghasUkShmaH

The modifications of the life-breath are either external, internal or stationary. They are to be regulated by space, time and number and are either long or short

# Pranayama

- (Pranayama is) external, internal or suppressed modification; is regulated by place, time and number, (and becomes progressively) prolonged and subtle (2.50)
- Different ratios of inhale, retention and exhale are recommended by various authors, most common being 1,2,2 or 1,4,2
- With practice, over a period of time, one can prolong each breath and make it subtle

## Sutra 2.51

बाह्याभ्यन्तरविषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः॥५१॥

baahyaabhyantaraviShayaakShepl chaturthaH

That Pranayama which goes beyond the sphere of internal and external is the fourth (variety).



## Sutra 2.52

ततः क्षीयते प्रकाशावरणम्॥५२॥

tataH kShlyate prakashaavaraNam

As its result, the veil over the inner light is destroyed

## Sutra 2.53

धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः॥५३॥

dhaaraNaasu cha yogyataa manasaH

And the mind becomes fit for concentration  
(dharana)

# Pranayama

- The fourth pranayama is the one that goes beyond the internal and external (2.51)
- From that is dissolved the covering of light (2.52)
- And the fitness of the mind for concentration is established (2.53)
- All the activities of the mind are controlled by prana, and if prana is controlled, we can control the mind.

## Sutra 2.54

स्वविषयासंप्रयोगे चित्तस्य स्वरूपानुकार  
इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ॥५४॥

svaviShayaasaMprayoge chittasya  
svarUpaanukaara ivendriyaaNaaM  
pratyahaaraH

When the senses withdraw themselves from the objects and imitate, as it were, the nature of the mind-stuff, this is pratyahara

## Sutra 2.55

ततः परमा वश्यतेन्द्रियाणाम्॥५५॥

tataH paramaa vashyatendriyaaNaam

Then follows supreme mastery over the senses

# Pratyahara (Sense Withdrawal)

- In Pratyahara, by withdrawing themselves from their objects, the senses seem to imitate the mind (2.54); supreme mastery over the senses then follows (2.55)
- Content of mind at any time determined by:
  - Sensory input
  - Memories from the past
  - Anticipation of the future
- Pratyahara is to eliminate all sensory input

# Sutra 3.1

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ १ ॥

deshabandhashchittasya dhaaraNaa

Dharana is the binding of the mind to one place,  
object or idea

# Dharana (Concentration)

- Confining the mind within a limited mental area (object of concentration) (3.1)
- When the mind strays, bringing it back to the object of meditation
- Mental images are sharpened and alertness and power of attention are increased.



## Sutra 3.2

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्॥२॥

tatra pratyayaikataanaataa dhyaanam

Dhyana is the continuous flow of cognition  
toward that object

# Dhyana (Meditation)

- Uninterrupted flow (of the mind) towards the object (chosen for meditation) is meditation (3.2)
- Narrowing the field of focus compared to dharana
- Holding that focus for longer durations

## Sutra 3.3

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥३॥

tadevaarthamaatranirbhaasaM  
svarUpashUnyamiva samaadhiH

Samadhi is the same meditation when there is the shining of the object alone, as if devoid of form

## Sutra 3.4

त्रयमेकत्र संयमः ॥४॥

trayamekatra saMyamaH

The practice of these three [dharana, dhyana and samadhi] upon one object is called samyama

# Samadhi (Total Absorption)

- When there is consciousness only of the object of meditation and not of itself (the mind), that is Samadhi (3.3)
- The three (dharana, dhyana, samadhi) taken together constitute Samyama (3.4)
- Extremely narrow focus with no distractions
- Consciousness of the mind too is lost, only the object of meditation shines