

First Edition

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The art on the cover, by Kerala muralist Suresh Muthukulam, depicts Rishi Patañjali, author of the Yoga Sūtras (ca. 200–500 bce), meditating while seated on the coiled body of a giant serpent. His hands are held in śuni mudrā, a gesture said to awaken intuition and higher consciousness and to purify thought and emotion. The banyan tree, with its vast rooting tendrils, symbolizes Hinduism's strength and longevity. In the sky above, Sadāśiva rides on His winged vāhana, Nandi. In the branches, two cobras wrap themselves around a palm-leaf manuscript of the Yoga Sūtras, guarding it for future generations. Near the bottom of the artwork, Śiva is present as the sage's personal Śivaliṅga. Subtly, Śiva's two all-seeing cosmic eyes gaze out from the sky behind, just above the horizon.

Patāñjali's Yoga Sūtras

पातञ्जलयोगसूत्राणि

A TRANSLATION &
ŚAIVA SIDDHĀNTA COMMENTARY

By Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami



Dedication

IT IS WITH DEEP REVERENCE THAT WE DEDICATE THIS WORK TO OUR BELOVED SATGURU, SIVAYA SUBRAMUNIASWAMI—AFFECTIONATELY KNOWN AS GURU-DEVA—WHOSE LIFE EMBODIED THE VERY ESSENCE OF YOGA. IT WAS HE WHO awakened in us a love of *sādhana*, *yoga* in its fullest form, and ignited the inner yearning for *kaivalya*, ultimate liberation. Imagine the power of a *guru* who can set an entire order of monks on a lifelong inner path, one that has brought them together each morning to meditate, without fail or excuse, for over fifty years.

Though Gurudeva never formally studied Sanskrit, his understanding of the *Yoga Sūtras* was profound—not by scholarship, but by experience. From his teenage years, when a mentor gifted him the book, he lived Patañjali’s path with unwavering discipline, mastering each nuance through direct realization. As you read his illuminating quotations throughout this volume, you will find Patañjali’s terse aphorisms lifted into clarity and relevance by Gurudeva’s deep inner wisdom. Time and again, where the ancient text seems opaque, his words bring light.

Our *paramparā* has long revered the *Yoga Sūtras*, as this telling from *The Guru Chronicles* reveals. It recounts a pivotal moment in May of 1949, when a young Gurudeva—then Robert Hansen, just 22—first encountered his *satguru*, Siva Yogaswami, in a thatched hut in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Yogaswami was in high spirits that evening, smiling and laughing as devotees came before him. The atmosphere was festive. On a tray before him were large bunches of grapes, and Yogaswami jovially asked his Western guest if he had read Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*. Retrieving the well-used slender book from a shelf, he noted that it was the only text he kept. Robert replied that he had indeed studied it—intensely and repeatedly—for it was the sole text he had truly taken to heart in his early training. Yogaswami asked a few penetrating questions about the classic, and Robert answered without hesitation. Later he recalled that the answers arose not from memory, but from the depths of his being.

“He showed me the book he had on Patañjali’s *yoga* aphorisms,” Gurudeva later recounted. “I had studied Patañjali, too. We had just a wonderful, deep and inner meeting. He treated me more like a brother. This did not surprise me, though, because I was so far within and not in the consciousness of being surprised, but it surprised everybody else.”

In the decades that followed, Gurudeva would fulfill every one of Yogaswami’s instructions from that encounter—roaring with the timeless voice of *dharma*, guiding thousands along the Śaiva Neri, and establishing a global fellowship rooted in profound inner realization. This book stands as a living testimony to his vision, his *tapas*, his realizations and the silent power that flows from one who has truly walked the path. It is a spirit that is eternal.

.....
Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami holds his covered bamboo sannyāsa daṇḍa at the Brihadisvara Siva Temple in Thanjavur in 1995.





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 Seated in the Himālayas on Ādiśeṣa, the cobra of infinite consciousness, Rishi Patañjali issues forth his Yogasūtrāṇi. He is sharing the first sūtra with five disciples.

Author's Introduction

OVER A FOUR-YEAR PERIOD FROM 2013 TO 2016, I WAS ENGAGED IN A STUDY OF VARIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE YOGA SŪTRAS. NOT HAVING READ THIS SEMINAL TEXT FOR MANY YEARS, I HAD FORGOTTEN HOW MANY of the core ideas expressed by Patañjali are also found in the writings of my *guru*, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, who studied this venerable text as a young man. This discovery proved so meaningful to me I set out to share it with others.

While continuing the study of the *Yoga Sūtras* translations, in 2015 I started sharing my findings on the similarity of the two teachings in a series of webinars with Gurudeva's *śiṣyas* so that they, too, could understand these similarities. I continued to refine the material presented in the webinars, molding it into the format found in the current book. At that time I started including select translated verses with my commentaries in many of my *satsaṅga* talks and YouTube videos. In 2022, I instructed my editing team of *ācāryas* to take on the task of bringing my *sūtra* project to a professional level. The result is the book that you now hold in your hands or see on your screen.

In modern times, in both the East and West, the term *yoga* has become synonymous with the *yoga āsanās*, or postures. The *yoga* movement has become so popular that on December 11, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly designated June 21 as the International Day of Yoga, to be celebrated in all nations. This declaration, under resolution 69/131, was a recognition of *yoga*'s universal appeal and its benefits as a physical, mental and spiritual practice originating in ancient India. The annual event aims to raise awareness of the many benefits of *yoga*, including promoting health, harmony and peace. Events and activities involving millions are organized globally to mark this day.

Moreover, in 2016, *yoga* was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. This acknowledgment by UNESCO underscores *yoga*'s significant cultural and spiritual value, further elevating its status as a practice that contributes to the well-being of humanity, awakening a sense of oneness with oneself, the world and nature.

Often *yoga*'s physical practices and health benefits are stressed. A typical description from one *yoga* studio website makes the point that *yoga* "increases the circulation of oxygen-rich blood, nourishing and detoxifying the internal organs, musculature, cardiovascular, immune, endocrine, digestive, reproductive and nervous systems." Sometimes mental benefits are also mentioned, such as improving concentration and clarity of mind, and reducing stress, something the world is dealing with more and more.

Yoga in Hinduism

The *yoga* honored by the International Day of Yoga is primarily physical/mental, while the fullness of *yoga* embedded in Indian tradition is far more diverse and profound. *Yoga* is at the heart of Hindu spiritual effort. The goal of each Hindu tradition is to provide practices by which an individual can sufficiently mature into his or her divine nature to achieve liberation from rebirth. Different Hindu traditions follow different forms of *yoga*, some focusing on service, others on devotion, others on spiritual study and knowledge and still others on *sādhana* and meditation.

.....
Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, spiritual head of Kauai Aadheenam in Hawaii, holds the silver daṇḍa that represents the authority of the Kailāsa Pīṭham.



In the *Yoga Sūtras*, Rishi Patañjali remains laser focused on practice, as if writing a recipe for realization. He rarely touches on philosophical discussion beyond what is necessary to outline the spiritual path—one that can be accepted by people of various *sampradāyas*—like a doctor who prescribes remedies to help a patient get well, but does not teach him the depths of medicine.

Patañjali outlines a path leading to liberation, guiding seekers into meditation and providing a system of purification, self-control and transcendence of the mind. In Hindu scripture, the earliest usage of the term *yoga* as applied to spiritual endeavor means “the control of the mind and senses.” That is the way in which Patañjali uses the term. His terse text of 196 *sūtras*, written around 200 bce (though dates vary), codifies the ancient *yoga* philosophy known as Yoga Darśana. One of the six classical philosophical systems (*darśanas*) of Hinduism, it is also known as Classical Yoga, *rāja yoga* and *aṣṭāṅga* or “eight-limbed” *yoga*.

Our *paramaguru*, Siva Yogaswami, observed, “Waves rise in the ocean; so waves of thought arise in the mind. *Yoga* is to control thoughts as they arise. Great ones say that *yoga* means union. If you want to take hold of something, all the fingers must join together; similarly, in order to reach God, the mind must become one-pointed. It is not a simple thing to control the mind. It cannot be done in a day, or even in a year. Through constant effort thoughts can be controlled a little. In this way the uncontrollable mind can finally be brought under control. This is the supreme victory.”

An Eightfold Path, *Ashtanga Yoga*

Yoga consists of eight limbs which describe progressively more advanced practices. The idea is to begin with the first limb and, after attaining some proficiency at it, strive to encompass the second, and so on. The eight limbs in Sanskrit and English are as follows: 1) *yama*, ethical restraints; 2) *niyama*, religious observances; 3) *āsana*, posture; 4) *prāṇāyāma*, breath control; 5) *pratyāhāra*, sense withdrawal; 6) *dhāraṇā*, concentration; 7) *dhyāna*, meditation; 8) *samādhi*, contemplation, the state of true *yoga* in which the meditator and the object of meditation are one.

Taking time to master each limb of practice is crucial to the eventual mastery of the mind. The first limb, *yama*, virtuous conduct, is fundamental. Patañjali speaks of the importance of good conduct in *sūtras* 2.30–31: “Noninjury, truthfulness, nonstealing, celibacy and non-possessiveness are the restraints. These constitute the great vow and are universally valid, irrespective of one’s class, place, time or circumstance.”

Any actions that deviate from these ethical restraints cause reverberations in one’s life, resulting in disturbance to the mind. Furthermore, each *adharmic* action generates a painful *karma* that will eventually come back to us, causing even more disturbance. The *Yoga Sūtras* indicate how far-reaching the consequences of a painful *karma* can be. “Thoughts such as violence—whether acted upon, caused or permitted, triggered by slight, moderate or intense greed, anger or delusion—find unending fruition in suffering and ignorance. Therefore, cultivate the opposite” (2.34).

Patañjali introduces the second limb of *yoga*, the *niyamas*, in *sūtra* 2.32: “Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and devotion to God are the observances.” Clearly, these are religious practices.

This directly challenges the popular understanding that *yoga* is a wholly nonreligious physical endeavor. It may come as a surprise to many modern practitioners that Īśvara, or God as a conscious being, plays a key role in Patañjali’s Classical Yoga. These two principles—ethical conduct and the importance of the Divine—so central to his text, are virtually absent in many of the commentaries on the *Sūtras* by Indian adepts and Western scholars alike. In this context, it has been fascinating to follow the vibrant 21st-century debates on whether *yoga* is inherently a Hindu practice or something entirely secular and distinct.

It can be seen from a study of the five *yamas* and five *niyamas* that it would take a long time—years or even decades—for an individual to fully integrate these ten ideals into daily life. The more informed *yoga* teachers make this point, though it is common for *yoga* studios to simply disregard them. B.K.S. Iyengar, a modern exponent of *haṭha yoga*, cautioned, “Practice of *āsanas* without the backing of *yama* and *niyama* is mere acrobatics. *Yama* and *niyama* control the *yogī*’s passions and emotions and keep him in harmony with other people.”

Āsana, Prāṇāyāma and Pratyāhāra: The next three limbs of *yoga*—after *yama* and *niyama*—are *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*. These form the foundational meditative practices that prepare the mind for concentration. Patañjali presents them in *sūtras* 2.46–55: “Meditative posture should be steady and comfortable. Through relaxation of effort and absorption in the infinite, this is achieved. Then one is undisturbed by the pairs of opposites. With this achieved, *prāṇāyāma* follows, controlling both inhalation and exhalation. When observed, the external, internal, and restrained modes become prolonged and subtle based on place, time and number. The fourth transcends the external and internal domains. From that, the veiling of light is diminished. Thus the mind becomes fit for concentration. Withdrawal of the senses—disconnecting from their objects—mimics, as it were, the natural state of the mind. Then arises supreme mastery of the senses.”

Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi: The final three limbs of *yoga* involve the actual directing and stilling of mental activity. Patañjali continues: “Concentration is binding the mind to a place. In that state, the uninterrupted flow of cognition is meditation. When only the object shines forth and all sense of self is absent, that indeed is *samādhi*. The integration of these three is *saṁnyama*. From that mastery dawns the light of profound wisdom. Application of this comes in stages. These three limbs are internal relative to the preceding ones. Yet, these limbs are external in relation to *samādhi* without seed.” (3.1–8)

Kriyā Yoga

Three of the five *niyamas*, or spiritual observances, are given special emphasis by Patañjali: austerity, self-study and devotion to Īśvara. These constitute the three components of *kriyā yoga*. Thus, *kriyā yoga*, literally the “*yoga* of action,” is a threefold practice consisting of *tapas* (self-discipline and austerity), *svādhyāya* (study of scriptures and self-inquiry) and Īśvarapraṇidhāna (surrender to God, the Supreme). Modern schools, however, sometimes present *kriyā yoga* as simply a system of breathing techniques, or *prāṇāyāma*.



Three Stages: Here we have three stages or limbs of *yoga*, one leading into the next. On the left, the *yogī* is practicing *dhāraṇā*, concentration. He holds a Śivaliṅga in his hand, his eyes open as he seeks to have an unbroken series of thoughts about the subject of his focus. In the middle, the *yogī*'s eyes are closed as he draws within in *dhyāna* or contemplation. On the right, he has attained *samādhi*, oneness with Śiva and with all things, shown by the Liṅga in his heart. The artist has shown the long-term progression of these practices in the landscaping, which moves from a tree's first flush to fully blossoming, from a nest of eggs to a flock of birds, from a young deer to an antlered adult. A similar growth is happening in the river below.

The purpose of *kriyā yoga*, Patañjali writes, is "to bring about *samādhi* and attenuate the *kleśas*" (2.2). The *kleśas*, five in number, are the fundamental mental afflictions—part of human nature—that disturb clarity and perpetuate suffering. Often regarded as obstacles to spiritual progress (and sometimes described as inner toxins or poisons), they are: ignorance, I-am-ness, attraction, aversion and clinging to life (fear of death). The *kleśas* provide the cognitive framework for understanding how most people, unaware of their spiritual nature, remain fully entangled in worldly experience. Patañjali teaches that in order to succeed in *yoga*, the force of the *kleśas* must be weakened. He prescribes *kriyā yoga* as the means to temper the *kleśas* and

cultivate *samādhi*. To attain *samādhi*, it is first necessary to diminish the influence of these afflictions.

Austerity, or *tapas*, the first element of *kriyā yoga*, may bring to mind images of *sādhus* in the Himalayas living in a cave or bathing in the freezing winter waters of the Gaṅgā. Though *tapas* does imply such intense practices, it also includes less extreme ones that can be done by all. A simple form of *tapas* is sacrifice, which can be an act of giving up a cherished possession—be it money, time, intelligence or a physical object—to manifest a greater good. Austerity can also involve silence (*mauna*), simplified diet, abstaining from electronic devices, chastity and undertaking difficult pilgrimages.

Kriyā yoga's second element, *svādhyāya* (self-study), is described by commentators as recitation (*japa*) of the sacred syllable Aum and other *mantras*—and as the study of sacred literature on liberation (*mokṣa-śāstra*). Verse 2.44 states, "Self-study brings communion with one's chosen Deity." In other words, reading stories and philosophical texts about the Deity and repeating the Deity's *mantra* deepen one's connection with Īśvara. In a broader sense, *svādhyāya* also implies introspective reflection—the inward inquiry into one's thoughts, actions, and motivations with the goal of self-purification and spiritual progress. It links the outer discipline of scripture and *mantra* with the inner work of knowing the Self.

Īśvarapraṇidhāna is the third practice of *kriyā yoga*. It is the inner work of expressing love, trust and surrender to the Divine. In later *yoga* literature, a term similar to Īśvarapraṇidhāna appears: Īśvarapūjana, which refers to devotional worship and *pūjā* as a way of cultivating intense devotion for Īśvara. This may reflect a subtle historic and theological difference—Īśvarapūjana introducing ritualistic worship, something Patañjali does not seem to have intended.

Practice

One could well ask, "What is *yoga*?" Patañjali defines *yoga* in verse two: "*Yoga* is the restraint of mental activities." Most individuals who talk to me about their efforts to restrain the mind find it difficult to accomplish. When they sit to meditate, their mind is all over the place. They just can't control it. They have discovered that sitting without moving in a meditative pose and controlling one's thoughts are two different accomplishments.

Fortunately, Patañjali offers suggestions on how to succeed: "Through practice and dispassion, these are restrained" (1.12). If the question were asked, how do we make progress in restraining mental activities, a common answer would be "practice." This verse points out that in addition to practice, the other essential component is dispassion. Indeed, the reason many of these mental activities arise is due to our attraction to or repulsion from someone or something. Freedom lies with our ability to be detached.

Subsequent *sūtras* elucidate: "Practice is exertion to achieve steadiness in that. This practice becomes firmly grounded only when cultivated with devotion for a long time without interruption. Dispassion is the masterful consciousness of one who is free of desire for objects, whether perceived or heard about. The supreme state of that is the non-craving for the *guṇas* arising from the realization of *puruṣa*." (1.13–16)

Those who have made sincere efforts know it is unrealistic to expect quick success in meditation. Not only does practice need to continue for a long time, it must be done with devotion and without interruption. As to dispassion, it increases through mollifying the *kleśas* of ignorance, attraction and aversion through the regular practices of *kriyā yoga*.

Remolding the Subconscious Mind

Changing the subconscious mind, a requisite for success in *yoga*, is a profound transformation, as the subconscious can only be remolded gradually over time. This process introduces the concept of *saṁskāras*, the imprints left on the subconscious by experiences from this or previous lives. These deep-seated impressions shape thought patterns, emotions and behaviors, requiring sustained *yogic* practice to replace old tendencies with new, refined ones.

My Gurudeva, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, explained: “All actions, reactions and *prāṇic* patterns from one life carry forward into the next but in condensed or seed form as tendencies.” Swami Sivananda, founder of the Divine Life Society, made a similar statement: “All *saṁskāras* lie dormant in the *citta* as latent activities, not only of this life but of all previous innumerable lives.” He gave an analogy for the condensing process: “As a merchant closing the year’s ledger and opening a new one does not enter in the new all the items of the old but only its balances, so does the spirit hand over to the new brain his judgments on the experiences of a life that is closed, the conclusions to which he has come, the decisions to which he has arrived. This is the stock handed on to the new life, the mental furniture for the new dwelling—a real memory.”

Saṁskāras are also activators, constantly propelling consciousness into action. The *sūtras* describe them as subliminal impressions or activators: “Transformation toward restraint occurs when externalizing *saṁskāras* are subdued and restraint *saṁskāras* emerge in the mind at the moment of restraint” (3.9–10). Thus, whenever restraint is employed, new *saṁskāras* are generated which subdue the externalizing (worldly) ones. Restraint *saṁskāras* influence the mind to be free of mental activity and therefore remain in a tranquil state.

Another source of *saṁskāra* transformation—from externalizing and worldly to internalizing and spiritual—is mystical insight arising from deep meditation. “Having a different focus than scripture and inference, it [mystical insight] apprehends the distinct essence of things. The *saṁskāras* produced by mystical insight obstruct other *saṁskāras*” (1.49–50).

Gurudeva comments on changing the subconscious: “After the subconscious mind has been very, very carefully reprogrammed into the contemplative lifestyle, there is little difference to us between the subconscious and the superconscious (intuitional) states. Therefore, basically, we have moved our awareness into an entirely new mind structure, or at least it seems new to us. This is called the subsuperconscious mind, or the area of the superconscious that has a subconscious which is connected with the physical-body functions and everyday life affairs.

“The subsuperconscious state is the total man, functioning at a higher vibratory rate than he did when in the instinctive-intellectual area. What is the subsuperconscious mind? It is the subconscious of the devotee, well programmed in the contemplative

life. This devotee can work with himself and move awareness freely through any area of the mind that he wants to, consciously, without being hindered by habit patterns and reactionary conditions of the past which were programmed in the subconscious for him by parents, schoolteachers, friends and the public in general as he came along through life from birth.”

Samādhi, Īśvara and Grace

Patañjali addresses the question of what brings the individual close to the attainment of *samādhi*: “*Samādhi* is near for the intensely ardent.” (1.21) In other words, our *yoga* practice has to be important. It doesn’t work if it is the sixth out of seven priorities in our life. First we have to do this, then this, then this, then this, and then, if we have time, we do our *yoga*. It has to be a top priority. Then Patañjali brings in Īśvara: “Or, this is gained through devotion to Īśvara.” (1.23)

Translator Dr. Edwin Bryant comments on this verse: “Patañjali here states that the goal of *yoga* can be attained by the grace of God, Īśvara. In this *sūtra*, the theistic element of the *sūtras* is encountered for the first time. The theistic, or Īśvaravāda, element in Indic thought stretches back at least to the late Vedic period.” *The Encyclopedia of Hinduism* defines Īśvarapraṇidhāna as intense devotion to God and elaborates by saying, “His grace is obtained by intense devotion, and this grace helps the seeker to attain *samādhi*.”

Patañjali repeats this idea in verse 2.45: “The attainment of *samādhi* comes from surrender to Īśvara.” These two verses mean that effort and dedication can be amplified by the blessings or grace we receive due to our intense devotion to God. In other words, devotion to God opens an individual to receiving God’s grace. And it’s His grace that transforms you. Or the blessings that transform you. It’s a two-step process. The more devotion you have, the more open you are to grace, which moves you toward *samādhi*.

Scholar Cogen Bohanec concludes that “Academic literature has tended to favor a ‘weak-theism’ reading of the *Yoga Sūtra*. For example, in 1923 Radhakrishnan notes that God is an object of meditation that helps in the removal of obstacles, but ‘theism is not, however, an integral part of Patañjali’s creed’ and the text is not concerned ‘much with the speculative interests of theism’ (368-369). However, in his 1924 book *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, Dasgupta favors a more theistic reading where worship of God in the text ‘means love or devotion to God as the one centre of meditation’ (p. 161). It seems that with these powerful scholars, a contrasting understanding of the role of God had been set forth.”

Dasgupta writes: “By devotion (*bhakti*) Īśvara is drawn towards the devotee through his *nirmāṇa citta* of pure *sattva*, and by His grace he removes all obstructions of illness, etc., described in 1.30-31, and at once prepares his mind for the highest realization of his own absolute independence. So for a person who can love and adore Īśvara, this is the easiest course of attaining *samādhi*. We can make our minds pure most easily by abandoning all our actions to Īśvara and attaining salvation by firm and steady devotion to Him.” (p. 161)

Bohanec continues, “Despite the importance of Dasgupta, the general academic discourse favors the idea that theism is a sort of *ad hoc* appendage to the sage’s text,

where God is one of many equally viable objects of meditation, and is really only of secondary importance to the practitioner's own meditative exertion. However, Edwin Bryant's groundbreaking work on the text notes how 'earlier scholars opted to consider the entire Īśvara element as a later interpolation, in the hope, we suspect, of preserving a rational core to Patañjali, possibly stemming from discomfort with this vivid background of Hindu Īśvara theologies' which more likely inform the theism of the text. Bryant's work opens the door for a more theistic reading of the text by underscoring the elements of grace and *bhakti*, and likens the Īśvara of the *Yoga Sūtra* to what we might find in other Hindu theistic texts, such as the *Purāṇas*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, etc." (Bryant, *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, 2009, 81 ff)

Additional discussion on Īśvara occurs in *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24–28. "Īśvara is a special *puruṣa*, untouched by afflictions, actions, their results, and *saṁskāras*. In Him is the peerless source of omniscience. Unbounded by time, He is also the *guru* of the ancients. Aum is His signifying sound. Repeat it while contemplating its meaning."

Let's look more closely at these ideas from the viewpoint of ontology. Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence, or reality, as well as the fundamental categories of being and their relationships. Hindu philosophies generally recognize three primary categories of being: God, soul, and world. In Classical Yoga, the corresponding terms are: God (Īśvara), soul (*puruṣa*) and world (*prakṛti*).

Indologist Dr. Georg Feuerstein, considered an expert on the *Yoga Sūtras*, offered this explanation: "The ontology of Classical Yoga, or *kriyā yoga*, has three major foci, viz., Īśvara, *puruṣa*, and *prakṛti*. These are deemed irreducible ontic ultimates. Against the above historical and psychological explanations of the concept of Īśvara, I wish to propose that His origins lie in the realm of *yogic* experiencing itself. On the transcendental level, the relation between Īśvara and *puruṣa* is one of 'enclosure' by coalescence; the Self (meaning *puruṣa*) is eclipsed by the being of Īśvara. Empirically, however, the relation is a one-way affair, in which the believing *yogin* emulates Īśvara's condition, which is co-essential with the condition of his inmost *puruṣa*. This is the idea implicit in the concept of Īśvarapraṇidhāna, which is a channeling of one's emotive and cognitive life to God by endeavoring to 'simulate' His unconditioned nature. Communication between Him and the *yogin* is possible by reason of the ontic co-essentiality of God and the inmost nucleus of man, viz., the *puruṣa*."

In layman's terms, Feuerstein is affirming both the oneness of man and God, and the distinction: "In Classical Yoga, God (Īśvara), the soul (*puruṣa*) and nature (*prakṛti*) are seen as the fundamental realities. Although God and the soul are distinct, the *yogī* can commune with God because the deepest part of the soul is essentially one with Him, and through deep devotion and meditation, the *yogī* seeks to reflect God's perfect, unchanging state." A pivotal statement is that "Īśvara's condition... is co-essential with the condition of his [the *yogī*'s] inmost *puruṣa*."

Yoga as Disunion

In general modern usage, the Sanskrit word *yoga* means "union." In Hindu philosophy, this union typically refers to that of the individual self with the Supreme—variously

expressed as *ātman* with Brahman, or *jīva* with Śiva. However, the process described by the term *yoga* in the *Yoga Sūtras* is one of separation, rather than joining or yoking.

Merriam-Webster's definition of *yoga* captures this nuance: "*Yoga* [capitalized]: a Hindu theistic philosophy teaching the suppression of all activity of body, mind, and will in order that the self may realize its distinction from them and attain liberation."

Dr. Feuerstein stated this idea as follows: "According to one definition especially popular among Vedānta and Neo-Vedānta followers, *yoga* means 'union.' Although this may be correct as regards certain forms of *yoga*, it is definitely inapplicable to Patañjali's Kriyā Yoga, whose essence consists rather in a 'disunion,' namely the disjunction of the *puruṣa* (soul) and the world."

A primary practice found in Patañjali's text is restraining mental activity, which is presented in the second *sūtra*: "*Yoga* is the restraint of mental activities." However, during my study I realized that *yoga*'s deeper practice is for the soul, or awareness, to stop identifying with what it experiences. Restraining mental activity is simply one requirement for that to happen.

The idea of disunion is, in fact, the very first concept presented in the Classical Yoga teachings of the *Yoga Sūtras*. "Now, the exposition of *yoga*. *Yoga* is the restraint of mental activities. Then awareness abides in its essential nature. Otherwise, awareness takes on the form of the mental activities." (1.1–4)

Awareness is the soul's ability to sense, see, or know, and to be conscious of this knowing. For awareness, Patañjali uses the terms *draṣṭṛ*, *dṛk*, *cit*, and *citi-śakti*. The state referred to in *sūtra* 1.3—"Then awareness abides in its essential nature"—is the result of awareness disuniting from mental fluctuations, remaining temporarily aware only of itself until thoughts arise once again. This is Patañjali's first mention of disunion on the path of *yogic* unfoldment. In the early stages of meditation and personal introspection, this state is typically sustained for only brief moments.

Gurudeva stated the goal of disunion using the terms consciousness (for mental activities) and awareness: "Consciousness and awareness are the same when awareness is totally identified with and attached to that which it is aware of. To separate the two is the artful practice of *yoga*. A tree has consciousness. Awareness can flow into the tree and become aware of the consciousness of the tree. Consciousness and mind are totally equated as a one thing when awareness and consciousness are a one thing to the individual. But when awareness is detached from that which it is aware of, it can flow freely through all five states of mind and all areas of consciousness, such as plants and the Earth itself, elements and various other aspects of matter. Here we find awareness separate from consciousness and consciousness separate from the five states of mind attributed to the human being... Consciousness, mind, matter and awareness experience a oneness in being for those who think that they are their physical body, who are convinced that when the body ends, they end and are no more."

Let me share the example I use to illustrate this point. Holding up a piece of paper, I say, "I see the paper." That makes sense, right? I see the paper. If I say, "I am the paper," how many of you would agree with that? No one. We're trained to understand that we are not physical objects—we perceive them. We see the paper; we smell the incense; we hear the water moving. That's the way we think. But then we say, "I am happy."



Five Kleśas: The artist places Siva's sacred golden Mount Kailash at the center of his canvas, symbolizing that all existence (the cosmic starry sky) revolves around the Divine. On either side stand five icy peaks, representing the five *kleśas* (the obstacles on our path): ignorance, egoity, attraction, repulsion and clinging to life. A serene *yogi* hovers above these mountainous obstacles, having freed himself of the five burdens that define most of earthly existence (or that keep the mind earth-bound). Vayu, God of the Wind, riding on a deer, creates a powerful gust which lifts the magic carpet.

Somehow, awareness identifies itself with the state of happiness—but not with the paper.

In the terminology of Patañjali's first few verses, happiness is a mental activity that awareness has taken on the form of. The idea is to distinguish ourself from what is mental or emotional in the same way we distinguish ourself from what is physical. We don't want to say, "I am happy." We want to say, "I, as awareness, perceive that there is an emotion called happiness in me. I am the perceiver of that happiness. My emotions

are currently in a state of being happy, and I am perceiving that. But happiness isn't who I am—just as I am not the paper I see."

Patañjali describes how disunion takes place during deep meditation, involving the sustained experience of pure awareness. This is introduced in *sūtras* 1.17 and 1.18: "Differentiated *samādhi* involves cogitation, subtle reflection, bliss or I-am-ness. The other is preceded by the practice of focusing on cessation and leaves only *saṃskāras*." These four stages of differentiated *samādhi* refer to specific mental modes: 1) cogitation (called *vitarka* in Sanskrit) is the thought process engaged when meditating on a gross object; 2) subtle reflection (*vicāra*) is used when focusing on a subtle object; 3) bliss (*ānanda*) describes the joy experienced in meditation; and 4) I-am-ness (*asmitā*) refers to the feeling of individual identity. The second type of meditation described here—called *asamprajñāta samādhi*, or objectless *samādhi*—is beyond these stages and occurs when all mental content has ceased, leaving only latent impressions (*saṃskāras*).

Dr. Feuerstein gives this definition of *asamprajñāta samādhi*: "The technique leading to, and the experience of, the state of unified consciousness beyond all cognitive content. In this superlative condition, subject and object become one. This realization presupposes the temporary deconstruction of ordinary consciousness. All that remains is a residuum of subconscious tendencies, called *saṃskāras*."

Gurudeva describes this state as pure awareness aware only of itself, and as super-consciousness, the core of consciousness. He elucidates, "Pure awareness aware only of itself is a fairly simple state to attain. But it does take a long time to be able to sustain that state for more than an instant or two. Ask anyone and they will tell you that they can at any moment become aware that they are aware. To remain longer in this state than a fleeting second does take practice. The breath should be well-regulated and the nerve system harmonized and the meditator should have made peace within himself, with family and friends, and be steadfast in this practice before the state of pure awareness can be held for longer periods of time."

The second way disunion takes place is at the time of liberation, *kaivalya*, which Patañjali describes in the very last *sūtra* of his text: "Liberation occurs when the power of pure consciousness abides in its essential nature, as the *guṇas* return to their source, now devoid of purpose for the *puruṣa*." (4.34)

The purpose of the *guṇas*—the material world—is twofold: to provide experience and, ultimately, liberation to the *puruṣa*. In *kaivalya*, the world is permanently gone; only *puruṣa* remains, turned in on itself. As stated at the beginning of chapter one, when mental activity is restrained, the soul's faculty that witnesses thought naturally turns inward. This initial restraint—described in *sūtras* 1.2 to 1.4—results in a momentary resting of awareness in its own essential nature. However, this is temporary and lasts only until thoughts arise again. In meditation, a more sustained form of restraint occurs, allowing this inward absorption to last much longer. In *kaivalya*, the culmination of *yoga*, the power of awareness is permanently established in itself.

Rishi Vyāsa, the earliest and most authoritative commentator on Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, provides a seminal exposition on the nature of liberation (*kaivalya*) in his *bhāṣya* (commentary) on *sūtra* 4.34. He explains: "*Kaivalya* or liberation (of *puruṣa*) is the state of permanent cessation of the *guṇas*, which function as cause and effect.

Having fulfilled their purpose of providing experience and liberation to *puruṣa*, they have no further service to render. In other words, *kaivalya* is the state reached when supreme awareness is established in its own self—unrelated to or unconcerned with *buddhi* (the discriminative aspect of mind)—and remains all alone for all time.”

Though Patañjali offers no description of the state of *kaivalya*, liberation, he does describe the experiences that lead up to it. “For one who is unattached even to profound knowing, supreme discriminative realization gives rise to the *samādhi* called *dharmamegha* (cloud). From that comes the cessation of afflictions and *karma*. When one is free of all impurities and coverings due to infinite wisdom, little remains to be known. Then, with the purpose of the *guṇas* fulfilled, their sequential transformations come to an end.” (4.29–32)

Hariharananda gives this explanation of *dharmamegha samādhi*: “It is known as virtue pouring cloud. As a cloud pours rain, so this *samādhi* pours the highest virtue, i.e., success is then attained without effort. That *samādhi* is the highest achievement through *yoga* practice and constitutes perpetual discriminative enlightenment.”

Yogic disciplines can temporarily suspend the *kleśas*. The state of *dharmamegha samādhi*, however, eliminates them altogether. It also dissolves any remaining stored *karma*. Another aspect of this attainment is the arising of infinite wisdom. At that point, the normal functioning of the mind comes to a natural conclusion. Following these experiences is the state of *kaivalya*—the permanent establishment of the power of awareness in its essential nature.

A Meditative-Devotional Approach

The schools of thought within Hinduism are varied, but the goal of each is the same—*moksha*, liberation from rebirth on Earth. There are two primary paths. The first is that of meditation on and study of the spiritual reality within the individual. The second is devotion, developing a relationship with the personal God, who is a divine being separate from you. Patañjali's teaching combines both of these approaches into one path. In this rendering of the *Yoga Sūtras*, in keeping with our Śaiva Siddhānta lineage, we intentionally give more prominence to the devotional *sādhana*s than do translators who choose to focus solely on meditation and seeking the spiritual reality within oneself.

Our teaching tradition, the Nandinātha Sampradāya, provides us with useful insights into Patañjali's meditative-devotional approach. Śaiva Siddhānta is generally and erroneously thought of as a devotional tradition absent a significant meditative component. Historically, there have been a number of schools of Śaiva Siddhānta. Ours is called Śuddha Śaiva Siddhānta, in the lineage of Rishi Tirumular. It is a form of monistic theism, stressing the ultimate oneness of man and God while equally exalting heart-melting temple worship (theism) and mind-transcending *yogic* revelation (monism). It teaches that God is both within us and outside of us, the Creator and the creation, immanent and transcendent.

In our theistic practices, we worship God and the Gods in the spirit of devotion and humble submission. In our monistic practices, we meditate deeply to experience the essence of our soul, which is identical with God Śiva's essence, which is present throughout the universe. The most complete and perfect path requires both monism

and theism. The opposite of monism is dualism, which teaches that God and creation are eternally separate realities. Dualists believe that God, like a potter, creates the universe (a pot) from “clay,” cosmic matter, which has always existed and is not part of Him. In Śaiva monism, Śiva is All and in all: the potter, the clay and the resulting pot.

Thus, in the teachings of Rishi Tirumular, which we follow, *yoga* and meditation are essential practices that everyone eventually needs to take up. Our teaching tradition fully affirms Patañjali's dual meditative and devotional approach.

God in the Yoga Sūtras

The key to understanding the devotional aspect of the *Yoga Sūtras* is Patañjali's description of Īśvara, God, which is found in *sūtras* 1.24–27. “Īśvara is a special *puruṣa* because He is unaffected by the *kleśas*, *karma* and its fruition and by stored *saṃskāras*. In Him, the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed. Īśvara was also the *guru* of those who lived earlier by virtue of His temporal continuity. His symbol is the Praṇava.” Many editions of the *Yoga Sūtras* render into English Patañjali's Īśvara in a generalized way, such as a higher power, an aspect of the spirituality within each individual, God's love within everyone, or the Seer within. This edition, however, sticks to the traditional Yoga Darśana concept of Īśvara as the Personal God, who, like man, is a soul, *puruṣa*, but is a unique soul who has always existed and, indeed, is the source of the teachings of *yoga*.

With that, let's now explore together the *yogic* path according to Rishi Patañjali, with a touch of Śaiva Siddhānta added in our commentaries!

About the Author

Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami is the spiritual leader of Kauai Aadheenam, ordained by its founder, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, prior to his *mahāsamādhi* in 2001. Bodhinatha resides most of the year at the 382-acre monastery-temple complex, where he oversees two Śiva temples, the teachings of Himalayan Academy and, as publisher, the international magazine HINDUISM TODAY. At the Aadheenam, he oversees the monks' daily duties and mentors their spiritual practices, while guiding the lives of hundreds of families worldwide. He is deeply involved in international educational projects and seminars that provide religious instruction to Hindu youth, producing pamphlets, books, media presentations, and films that effectively convey the teachings of Śaiva Siddhānta. Bodhinatha also travels extensively, teaching Hinduism and consecrating temples across the globe.

Editors' Preface

THE IMPETUS FOR THIS WORK BEGAN WITH THE INTENTION OF SATGURU BODHINATHA VEYLANSWAMI TO PROVIDE STUDENTS OF HIMALAYAN ACADEMY WITH A USEFUL RENDERING OF PATAÑJALI'S YOGA SŪTRAS, ONE THAT reflected the unique philosophy and spiritual practices of our Kailāsa Paramparā. Over the past three years, we, as editors, have amplified his initial insights to create a truly unique translation. While we used existing works as references, this rendering is wholly original, shaped by rigorous study, philosophical precision and editorial refinement. Of the many translations consulted, the works of Edwin F. Bryant, Georg Feuerstein and Swami Hariharananda Aranya proved most influential and foundational to our effort. The classical commentary by Sage Vyāsa—India's earliest known interpreter of Patañjali's *sūtras*—served as a constant reference, guiding our understanding of the text's original philosophical intent. In the early editorial phases, Sanskrit teacher and scholar Adaityananda Saraswati (Adam Welch) assisted, especially with the word-by-word glosses for each *sūtra*.

Our Translation Approach

In translating the *sūtras*, we rigorously avoided adding explanatory words—bracketed or otherwise—that are not present in the original Sanskrit. While most commentators freely insert words to aid comprehension, we chose instead to provide such explanations in the commentary, letting Patañjali's words stand in their sometimes raw brevity and opacity. When read continuously, as in the unbroken translation at the end of the book, each *sūtra* builds on the previous one, allowing the meaning to emerge naturally.

Minimal linking verbs—such as *is*, *arises* or *becomes*—were added where necessary, as were implied subjects such as “the mind” or “the *yogī*,” to prevent terse or opaque *sūtras* from becoming unintelligible. In some cases, we also rendered Sanskrit nouns as English verbs when this conveyed the intended meaning more naturally and fluidly, without distorting the original sense.

This translation aims to be as exacting in linguistic precision as it is in philosophical rigor. Every effort was made to ensure that it remain faithful to tradition while accessible to contemporary readers. Our goal has been to offer an accurate, insightful, high-quality rendering of Patañjali's teachings—one that will serve students and practitioners for years to come and inspire new insights for ardent *yogīs*.

In all instances, the word-by-word glosses preceding the *sūtra* translations strive to preserve the original Sanskrit roots and meanings. They are arranged in the order of the English translation rather than the Sanskrit syntax, prioritizing clarity and readability so readers can intuitively connect each Sanskrit term to its English meaning without mentally rearranging the structure. In certain cases—particularly with compound words (*samastapadam*)—we separated parts of the compound for clarity. In such instances, English noun cases or verbal forms were applied to individual components based on meaning, even if the Sanskrit appeared in root form or without visible inflection. This was done cautiously to support the reader's grasp of the semantic flow.

.....
A pandit introduces aspirants to the Yoga Sūtras,
originally scribed on palm leaves



While this departs from the traditional method of glossing in Sanskrit order or keeping compounds fully intact, it reflects our choice to prioritize comprehension for readers not versed in Sanskrit grammar. Where needed, we alternated between noun and verb forms in translation and glossing, guided by contextual clarity and fluency. This decision was made deliberately and is disclosed here to ensure full transparency in our method. An exacting review of all glosses was conducted during the final stage of production, with a Sanskrit aficionado carefully cross-checking them against authoritative sources to ensure accuracy and consistency. All interpretive decisions were made by Satguru and the editorial team, rooted in a traditional understanding of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*.

By consulting Vyāsa's commentary and historical interpretations, we ensured that Patañjali's original intent remained as clear as possible. Since the *Yoga Sūtras* are rooted in Sāṅkhya philosophy, we carefully maintained alignment with this framework while remaining aware of distinctions found in our own monistic Śaiva Siddhānta. We also strove to prevent inadvertent introduction of Advaita perspectives aside from explicitly discussing them in commentary.

Our commentary aims for structured, in-depth explanations covering *yoga* metaphysics, technical Sanskrit terms, comparisons of interpretations with traditional Śaiva and modern Vedāntic views and practical applications of the *sūtras* in spiritual life. Consistent terminology was strictly maintained while clarifying philosophical divergences, such as how Swami Vivekananda reinterprets *kaivalya* in a monistic way, why Patañjali's *puruṣa* is not equivalent to a universal Brahman, and how Śaiva Siddhānta approaches the *Yoga Sūtras* differently.

A major goal was to bring the monistic theism of Satguru Bodhinatha Veylan-swami's lineage to the forefront in the book. This was done with comparisons in the commentaries and by the targeted inclusion of related quotes from the teachings of our Gurudeva, Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. His words are both penetrating and straightforward, often shining a light on what Patañjali is implying but not saying. They also give a fresh interpretation, coming as they do from a modern *yogī* adept whose first language is English, bypassing all the interpreters and talking directly to English speakers about mystical experiences without linguistic cloaking—experiences that are normally discussed theoretically by scholastic translators.

About the Artwork

As the concepts and insights of *yoga* are profound and intertwined, they provide an ideal subject for the artist. Over the course of three years, we collaborated with one of the great contemporary Kerala temple muralists, Suresh Muttukulam, to create ten masterpieces depicting key dimensions of the text. Trained by traditional muralists, Suresh learned the craft of preparing his own pigments from natural herbs and minerals and mastered the distinctive style of Kerala temple murals. In each of the ten canvases he produced, God Śiva appears, now as Bhairava, now as Ardhanariśvara. This was an artistic way to bring Śaiva Siddhānta into the book, to express affection for Īśvara as God Śiva—a rich visual parallel to our Śaiva commentary on the *sūtras*.

From rough sketches emailed to Kerala, Suresh developed a visionary interpretation which we edited, sometimes communicating with him more than five times, until our concept and his vision were aligned. He then executed the canvas, sending us a

high-resolution digital version. We agreed that he would keep the originals, which he sold to a *yoga* patron who proudly displays them in his Kerala home.

Additional art was added at the end of the book creation process, by which time DALL•E, the AI artisan, had become gifted enough to render *yogic* ideas into suitable paintings. These are the four two-page spreads introducing *pādas* and the full-page canvases depicting *yoga sādhanas* throughout the text.

May this translation serve as a clear and faithful guide for sincere seekers on the path of *yoga*, illuminating the timeless wisdom of Patañjali's teachings.

A man with a beard and a topknot, wearing an orange robe and a mala, is seated in a meditative pose. He has a serene expression with his eyes closed. Behind his head is a large, glowing yellow halo. The background is a warm, golden-brown gradient.

CHAPTER ONE

Samādhi

MEDITATIVE ABSORPTION

- ❖ Foundational yoga principles
- ❖ The nature of the mind's fluctuations
- ❖ Aum *japa* and its significance
- ❖ Quieting the mind, *prāṇāyāma*
- ❖ Types of *samādhi*

A yogī has stilled the movements of the mind and sits in perfect quietude, one of the stages of samādhi.

प्रथमः समाधिपादः

prathamah samādhi-pādaḥ

Chapter One: Samādhi

Commentary by Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami

The first chapter is named after the deepest forms of contemplation, which are called *samādhi*. Its contents range widely, introducing fundamental topics of striving, Aum *japa*, distractions, overcoming obstacles, quieting the mind, *prāṇāyāma*, dream consciousness, types of *samādhi* and more.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is by contemplation and its final succeeding state, *samādhi*, or *nirvāṇa*, that the *rishis* of old, the great saints of all religions, achieved their revelations.

अथ योगानुशासनम् ॥ १॥

1.1 atha yogānuśāsanam

atha (now), anuśāsanam (instruction), *yoga*

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Now, the exposition of *yoga*.

Commentary

In Hindu scriptures, such as the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the earliest usage of the term *yoga* as applied to spiritual endeavor has the meaning of “the control of the mind and senses.” That is Patañjali’s meaning of the term in his *Yoga Sūtras*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

In *yoga*, the devotee worships the transcendent aspect of God. He strengthens his body and nerve system. He disciplines the energies of mind and body. He learns to regulate his breath and to control the *prāṇas* that flow as life’s force through his nerve system. In this process, the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* is lifted and the multi-petaled *chakras* unfold in all their splendor. The subtle realms within the devotee are revealed layer by layer as he methodically perfects attention, concentration, meditation and contemplation. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 364: “The Journey Called Yoga”)

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ॥ २॥

1.2 yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ

yogaḥ (*yoga*), nirodhaḥ (restraint), *citta* (of the mind), *vṛtti* (activities)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Yoga is the restraint of mental activities.

Commentary

Our minds are constantly engaged in one type of activity or another, whether awake or sleeping. We are remembering events from the past, thinking about current tasks or theorizing about future events. Or we are experiencing moods and emotions. The practices of *yoga* enable us to silence these mental activities, which can be thought of as movements or fluctuations.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As you sit to meditate, awareness may wander into past memories or future happenings. It may be distracted by the senses, by a sound or by a feeling of discomfort in the body. This is natural in the early stages. Gently bring awareness back to your point of concentration. . . . Don’t criticize awareness for wandering, for that is yet another distraction. Distractions will disappear if you become intensely interested and involved in your meditation. In such a state, you won’t even feel the physical body. . . . To become the ruler of the mind is the goal. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 99: “Taming Distraction”)

तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् ॥ ३॥

1.3 tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe’vasthānam

tadā (then), draṣṭuḥ (of awareness/the seer), avasthānam (abiding/residing), svarūpe (in its own nature)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then awareness abides in its essential nature.

Commentary

When the mind’s movements are restrained, awareness naturally turns in on itself, remaining aware only of itself until thoughts again arise.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To attain and sustain *kaif* is a simple practice. You pull awareness out of the thought processes. You pull awareness out of the emotion processes. You pull awareness out of the bodily processes, and you’re just completely on that pinnacle of being aware of being aware. That’s so necessary to practice every day, even if you do it for a split second. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 300: “Undesirable Influences”)

वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र ॥ ४ ॥

1.4 vṛttisārūpyamitaratra

itaratra (otherwise), vṛtti-sārūpyam (conformity, sārūpyam; with mental activities, vṛtti)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Otherwise, awareness identifies with the mental activities.

Commentary

It is the nature of the awareness that it not only observes the mind's movements but also identifies with them. A simple example is the idea of experiencing happiness. We say, "I am happy," fully identifying with the emotional state called happiness. A deeper understanding would be "Awareness has taken the form of happiness."

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Consciousness and awareness are the same when awareness is totally identified with and attached to that which it is aware of. To separate the two is the artful practice of *yoga*. Naturally, the Shum-Tyeif language is needed to accomplish this. When awareness is detached from that which it is aware of, it flows freely in consciousness. A tree has consciousness. Awareness can flow into the tree and become aware of the consciousness of the tree. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 34: "Awareness and Consciousness")

वृत्तयः पञ्चतयः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः ॥ ५ ॥

1.5 vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ

vṛttayaḥ (mental activities), pañcatayyaḥ (fivefold), kliṣṭa-akliṣṭāḥ (afflicted, kliṣṭāḥ; or un-afflicted, akliṣṭāḥ)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The mind's activities are of five types and can be detrimental or non-detrimental.

Commentary

Here Patañjali associates the mind's activities, or *vṛttis*, with the five *kleśas*. "*Kliṣṭa*" *vṛttis* are those mental modifications that arise from these afflictions and thus contribute to suffering and spiritual ignorance. Conversely, "*akliṣṭa*" (non-afflictive) *vṛttis* are those modifications of the mind that are not based on the *kleśas* and therefore do not lead to suffering—instead, potentially contributing to a state of clarity, understanding, and, eventually, liberation. Some mental activities are harmful, others nonharmful. Scriptural study and *sāttvic* reflections are examples of thoughts that are conducive to the practice of *yoga*. *Rājasic* thoughts of worldly attraction or repulsion are detrimental to *yoga* practice, and *tāmasic* thoughts—such as those rooted in dullness, confusion or inertia—are likewise harmful and obstructive on the path.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Apply the concept of diet to all the areas of your life. Every experience that we ingest is going to produce its own reaction. In surveying our own internal balance of *tāmasic*, *rājasic*, and *sāttvic* tendencies, we need to apply the power of discrimination so that everything we take into our mind and body can be easily and harmoniously digested and assimilated. Life becomes more beautiful in this way, and we become the master of our forces, because we have given the guiding power of our lives to actinic will. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 74: "Balance and Discrimination")

प्रमाणविपर्ययविकल्पनिद्रास्मृतयः ॥ ६ ॥

1.6 pramāṇaviparyayavikalpanidrāsmṛtayaḥ

pramāṇa (valid cognition), viparyaya (misperception), vikalpa (conceptualization), nidrā (sleep), smṛti (memory).

ॐ ॐ ॐ

They are valid cognition, misapprehension, conceptualization, sleep and memory.

Commentary

This *sūtra* defines the five categories of *vṛttis* (mental modifications or activities) that the mind can engage in. This fivefold division of mental activities provides a useful categorization system for analyzing and subsequently restraining one's thoughts. Patañjali implies that all movements of the mind can be identified as one of these five.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The totality of the mind is vast and complicated. However, it is helpful to look at the entirety of the mind in three basic phases: the instinctive, the intellectual and the intuitive.... Man alone develops the intellectual mind and is responsible for its composition as he lives along through life. This phase is a mixture of man's instinctive desires and cravings coupled with the knowledge he has gained from others and from his own intuitive discoveries.... The intuitive, or superconscious, phase is even more complex, more organized, more refined than the instinctive or intellectual phases. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 163: "The Mind's Three Phases")

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि ॥ ७॥

1.7 pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni

pramāṇāni (means of correct perception), **pratyakṣa** (direct perception),
anumāna (inference), **āgama** (authoritative testimony)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Valid cognition arises from direct perception,
inference and authoritative testimony.**

Commentary

The first source of correct knowledge is perceiving something directly. For example, we witness a burning building. We are directly perceiving the fire. Secondly, if the building were far away, we might only see the smoke, from which we could infer that there's a fire. We could also meet someone we trust who tells us about the fire, thus receiving knowledge based upon authoritative testimony, which is the third source. Patañjali's use of the Sanskrit word *āgama* is alternatively understood as referring to scripture as the third source of right knowledge. This interpretation is supported by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood in their commentary.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Veda, from *vid*, “to know,” means “supreme wisdom or science.” Similarly, *āgama*, which names the sacred sectarian revelations, means “descent of knowledge.” The *Vedas* and *Āgamas* are eternal truths transmitted by God through great clairaudient and clairvoyant *rishis*. They are Hinduism's primary and most authoritative scriptures, expounding life's sacredness and man's purpose on the planet. These psalms of wisdom were disclosed over many centuries, memorized and orally conveyed from generation to generation within priestly families, then finally written down in Sanskrit in the last few millennia. The subtly symbolic language of *śruti*, the cherished word of God, is lyrical and lofty.

In imparting religious practice, rules, and doctrine, the *Vedas* are general and the *Āgamas* specific. The *Vedas* extol and invoke a multiplicity of Gods through elaborate fire rituals called *yajña*. The *Āgamas* center around a single Deity and His worship with water, flowers, and lights in sanctified temples and shrines. The *Tirumantiram* lauds, “Two are the scriptures that Lord Śiva revealed—the primal *Vedas* and the perfect *Āgamas*.” (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 126: What Are Hindu Revealed Scriptures?)

.....
A yoginī meditating in the forest mistakes a rope for a cobra—a classic metaphor for viparyaya, misperception. (sūtra 1.8)

विपर्ययो मिथ्याज्ञानमतद्रूपप्रतिष्ठम् ॥ ८ ॥

1.8 viparyayo mithyājñānam atadrūpapraṭiṣṭham

viparyayaḥ (misperception/error), **mithyā-jñānam** (false, *mithyā*; knowledge, *jñānam*), **atad-rūpa-pratiṣṭham** (established, *pratiṣṭham*; form, *rūpa*; not that [i.e., other than the actual object], *atad*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Misapprehension, having no basis in an object's nature, is false knowledge.

Commentary

The *yogī* is tasked with training his mind to be clear and faithful to what is, to avoid misapprehensions of all kinds. Such accurate perception requires much work, as he learns to see things as they are. An example given in the tradition is this: in a dimly lit street we see an object on the ground and think it is a snake when it is actually a rope. The object exists, but we have misinterpreted its real nature.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When you begin to sense this changeless existence within, your intuition begins to awaken, and if you function through the use of your intuition you are able to clear many misunderstandings about the experiences of life. In this clarity, intuition is born. Right now you perhaps think you are the mind; you may feel remote from your Inner Being, but ask yourself each time you think you have found yourself, will this change? You will find that every image you hold of yourself is subject to change—even your soul, or your superconscious mind, is subject to change through evolution and, therefore, is impermanent. Only the Self, the very core, is eternally the same, eternally Real. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 196: “The Self Never Changes”)

शब्दज्ञानानुपाती वस्तुशून्यो विकल्पः ॥ ९ ॥

1.9 śabdajñānānupātī vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ

vikalpaḥ (conceptualization), **śabda-jñāna-anupātī** (following, *anupātī*; verbal, *śabda*: knowledge, *jñānā*) **vastu-śūnyaḥ** (devoid, *śūnyaḥ*; of an object, *vastu*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Conceptualization arises from verbal knowledge and lacks an actual object.

Commentary

Vyāsa highlights that *vikalpa* (which is often translated as “imagination”) involves mental constructs derived from language and knowledge that do not correspond to tangible realities. They are neither empirically true nor outright false but exist as products of verbal and mental formulations. (See Vyāsa on 1.9, Hariharanānda trans.) For example, when we say, “The *puruṣa* (Self) is uncreated,” we are attributing a characteristic (‘uncreated’) to the *puruṣa*. However, this characteristic is merely conceptual, as it denotes the absence of creation rather than a tangible quality. Such attributions are considered *vikalpa*, as they exist only in words without an actual object.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

“The intellect strengthened with opinionated knowledge is the only barrier to the superconscious. Opinionated knowledge can be harmful, for it is strictly of the sub-conscious realm of the mind. It is stored away in an effort to set up some security for the conscious and subconscious states of mind, something for them to cling to and lean upon—that is, the opinions of others, intellectual assertions made on happenings of the past based upon only what the eye and ear have received. This well-formed barrier makes it possible for the mind to convince itself of anything outside of reason or within the realm of reason. It manufactures a large percentage of the world's so-called thinkers. When, however, you ask them their own opinions, they only reformulate opinions of others and culminate them into one of their own. This makes one think that by this rearrangement of knowledge the thinking process has been stimulated. However, it has not. It has only run its natural course and is conditioned only by the faculty of memory. Memory, too, plays a part in the intellect, as you well know, for if very little memory exists, very little intellect would be present. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 4)

अभावप्रत्ययालम्बना वृत्तिर्निद्रा ॥ १० ॥

1.10 abhāvapratyayālambanā vṛttirnidrā

nidrā (sleep), **vṛtti** (mental activity), **abhāva-pratyaya-ālambanā** (basis, *ālambanā*; in awareness, *pratyaya*; of absence, *abhāva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Sleep is the mental activity based on the awareness of absence.

Commentary

This *sūtra* is, according to Vyāsa, referring to deep, dreamless sleep, the *tāmasic* condition called *abhāva*, which is translated as “absence,” “void,” or the “absence of phenomenal existence.” Bryant makes the astute point that consciousness is present and fully aware even in sleep which has no content, no dream element; it does not cease in the absence of objects.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When *japa* is well performed and the sincere desire is maintained to transcend the forces of the physical body and enter into the astral schools of learning, the aspirant would have dreamless nights. A deep sleep would prevail. There may be a few seconds of dreaming just before awakening, to which one should not pay any attention, as the astral body quickly reenters the physical. But a deep, dreamless sleep is in itself an indicator that the *puruṣa* is totally detached from the physical forces and totally intact and functioning in the Devaloka. Himalayan Academy is an academy in the Devaloka in which *rishis* of the Nandinātha Sampradāya teach, help and guide tens of thousands of devotees of God Śiva who have been influenced by the words and teachings of our *sampradāya*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 239: “The World of Dreams”)

अनुभूतविषयासम्प्रमोषः स्मृतिः ॥ ११ ॥

1.11 anubhūtavīṣayāsampramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ

smṛtiḥ (remembering/memory), **asampramoṣaḥ** (non-loss/retention),
anubhūta-vīṣaya (objects, *vīṣaya*; experienced, *anubhūta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Remembering is the retention of things experienced.

Commentary

Memory is deeply entwined with all experience, tying together past and present. For the *yogī*, memory, which resides mystically in the *mūlādhāra chakra*, must be cognized and harnessed, which requires control of the forces of the base *chakra*. Patañjali invites us to reflect on our memories as actual things, as objects of our experience.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Do not be afraid of the subconscious. It is useless to be afraid of the past. If memories come up from the subconscious as if they happened yesterday, and you begin reacting emotionally and even physically all over again, say to yourself, “Welcome, welcome, welcome, memory from the past. My goodness, you’re shaking my emotional body. I remember going through these emotional states years ago, and here we are reliving this film over again. But now I am on the spiritual path to enlightenment. I am the Self. One day I’m going to realize it fully.” (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 179: “Facing Old Memories”)

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः ॥ १२ ॥

1.12 abhyāsavairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyām (by practice, *abhyāsa*; and by dispassion, *vairāgya*), **tad-nirodhaḥ** (their, *tad*; *nirodhaḥ*, restraint)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through practice and dispassion, these are restrained.

Commentary

Here Patañjali is referring subtly to the restraint of all five types of *vṛttis* listed in *sūtra* 1.6: valid cognition, misapprehension, conceptualization, sleep and memory. If the question were asked, “How do we make progress in restraining these five activities?” a common answer would be “Practice.” This *sūtra* is pointing out that a second important component is dispassion. In other words, the reason these mental activities dominate our attention is our attraction or aversion toward someone or something, or to past experiences. Detachment brings freedom from unsolicited mental meanderings.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Still other goals must be met: quieting the energies, the *prāṇas*, through *prāṇāyāma*, purifying or refining mind and emotion, quelling the ever-constant movement of the restless, external mind and its immediate subconscious, where memories are stored, preserved memories which give rise to fear, anger, hatred and jealousy. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 4: “Harnessing the Energies”)

तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः ॥ १३ ॥

1.13 tatra sthitau yatno’bhyāsaḥ

abhyāsaḥ (practice), **yatnaḥ** (effort), **sthitau** (in steadiness), **tatra** (therein)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Practice is exertion to achieve steadiness in that.

Commentary

The point of *yoga* is to sit with a mind so well controlled that we achieve and later sustain steadiness, stillness and tranquility. “In that” refers to the restraint of mental activities, as mentioned in the previous *sūtra*. Practice is the *sādhana*, the work and effort we exert, over time, to achieve that sought-for state. Patañjali is stressing the need for sustained and disciplined effort toward *yoga*’s goals. There is also the implied lesson—that knowledge of *yoga*, understanding of the *sūtras*, is not sufficient to reach the goal. Hard work is necessary.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The mystic sits in meditation and asks himself, “Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?” He has the sensitivity to take a little flower and study it and conquer the functions of distraction as he works to hold his awareness at attention, like a well-disciplined soldier of the within, with a will supreme in governing that attention. This caliber of mystic will in this way learn to concentrate inwardly, as his supreme will dominates his powers of awareness, bringing forth the body of the soul into the physical elements so its keen inner observation is unfolded. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 168: “Understanding Is Control”)

स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः ॥ १४ ॥

1.14 sa tu dīrghakālanairantaryasatkārāsevito dṛḍhabhūmiḥ

saḥ (this), **dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ** (firmness, *dṛḍha*; ground, *bhūmiḥ*), **tu** (indeed), **dīrgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkāra-āsevitaḥ** (cultivated, *āsevitaḥ*; for a long time, *dīrgha-kāla*; continuously, *nairantarya*; with devotion, *satkāra*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

This indeed becomes firmly grounded when cultivated with devotion for a long time without interruption.

Commentary

Patañjali stresses here the complete immersion in the practice necessary to achieve the *yogic* goals. “This” refers to the sustained effort toward restraining the mind’s activities described in the previous *sūtras*. The sage cautions the *yogī* to be prepared for years of effort, and to avoid off-and-on practice which will not bring intended results. All *yoga* aspirants need to realize, at the outset, that this is not a quick process, not something mastered in a weekend retreat or a ten-day course. His use of the term devotion, *satkāra*, is twofold: reverent commitment coupled with intensity of practice.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

You must try. You must try. You must try very, very hard, very diligently. How often? Ten minutes a day? No. Two hours a day? No. Twenty-four hours a day! Every day! You must try very, very hard.... It is well worth craving for. It is well worth denying yourself many, many things for—to curb your nature. It is well worth struggling with your mind, to bring your mind under the dominion of your will. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 7: “Every Temple Made of Brick”)

दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णस्य वशीकारसञ्ज्ञा वैराग्यम् ॥ १५ ॥

1.15 dṛṣṭānuśravikaviṣaya-vitr̥ṣṇasya vaśīkārasañjñā vairāgyam

vairāgyam (dispassion), **vaśīkāra-sañjñā** (mastery, *vaśīkāra*; designation, *sañjñā*), **vitr̥ṣṇasya** (of one who is free from craving), **dṛṣṭa-anuśravika-viṣaya** (for objects, *viṣaya*; perceived, *dṛṣṭa*, heard-about, *anuśravika*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Dispassion is the masterful consciousness of one who is free of desire for objects, whether perceived or heard about.

Commentary

Progress in *yoga* is not possible if our mind is constantly externalized by and attracted to objects or people, whether actually seen or simply heard about, as in scripture or literature or even the news. The term *vairāgya* is a powerful one, not well represented by the single term dispassion. *Vairāgya* is a profound state of renunciation and indifference to worldly objects, a full and fearsome giving up of all things external. It is

rare to see someone who has achieved true *vairāgya*. Some commentators consider “what is heard” to include what is described in scripture, such as the heavenly worlds. Having heard of such worlds, the mind may desire the divine experiences they hold.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is the day-to-day reactions to circumstance that indicate the attainment and not mere recorded knowledge about the path. When the aspirant is able to meet ordinary happenings and respond to them in the effortless wisdom born of detachment, that indicates that his striving is genuine. When he is able to encounter conditions that send ordinary people into states of disappointment or discouragement and when his emotional nature indicates mastery over these lesser states of consciousness, he is well on his way toward filling the gaps of a natural growth of the instinctive vehicles—body, emotions and intellect. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 65: “Disappointment, Discouragement”)

तत्परं पुरुषख्यातेर्गुणवैतृष्यम् ॥ १६ ॥

1.16 tatparam puruṣakhyāterguṇavaitṛṣṇyam

tat-param (the supreme state, *param*; of that, *tat*), **guṇa-vaitṛṣṇyam** (non-craving for, *vaitṛṣṇyam*; the qualities, *guṇa*), **puruṣa-khyāteḥ** (from discernment, *khyāteḥ*; of the Self, *puruṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The supreme state of that is the non-craving for the guṇas arising from the realization of puruṣa.

Commentary

The Sanskrit term *puruṣa* is rich and complex. It defies rendering as a single English word—just as *dharma*, *yoga* and *karma* do. In Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophy, *puruṣa* is understood as the witness consciousness within us, the unchanging Self that simply watches without attachment or action. Patañjali explains in his *sūtras* that when spiritual awakening takes place and the *puruṣa* experiences its true nature, there is a natural loss of interest in all of *prakṛti*’s material manifestations and machinations. This is called *paravairāgya*—the supreme state of dispassion and indifference toward worldly matters achieved by the great ones.

In our Śaiva Siddhānta, the term *puruṣa*—most famously present in the *Puruṣa Sūkta* of the *R̥g Veda*—is not widely used. When speaking of the immortal soul, we use the term *ātman*. In his book *Dancing with Śiva*, Gurudeva explains: “We are not the physical body, mind or emotions. We are the immortal soul, *ātman*. The sum of our true existence is *ānandamaya kośa* and its essence, Parāśakti and Paraśiva. The inmost soul body is the blissful, ever-giving-wisdom *ānandamaya kośa*. Parāśakti is the soul’s superconscious mind—God Śiva’s mind. Paraśiva is the soul’s inmost core.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Having stepped out of his ego shell, the *sannyāsin* is a free soul. Nothing binds him. Nothing claims him. Nothing involves him. Without exclusive territory, without limiting relationships, he is free to be himself totally. He has no one to rely upon except God, Gods, *guru* and the power within his own spine. He is strong, yet gentle. He is aloof, yet present. He is enlightened, yet ordinary. He teaches the basic philosophy of monistic theism, or nondual Reality. He is a man on the path of enlightenment who has arrived at a certain subsuperconscious state and wishes to stay there. Therefore, he automatically has released various interactions with the world, physically and emotionally, and remains poised in a contemplative, monastic lifestyle. The *sannyāsin* is the homeless one who remains detached from all forms of involvement—friends, family, personal ambition—finding security in his own being rather than attaching himself to outward manifestations of security, warmth and companionship. He is alone, but never lonely. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 268: “The Meaning of Renunciation”)

At the core of the subtle soul body is Satchidānanda, or immanent Love, and at the core of that is Paraśiva, or transcendent Reality. At this depth of our being there exists no separate identity or difference—all are one. Thus, deep within our soul we are identical with God this very moment, for within us are the unmanifest Paraśiva and the manifest Satchidānanda. These are not aspects of the evolving soul, but the nucleus of the soul, which does not change or evolve. They are eternally perfect and one with God Śiva. From an absolute perspective, our soul is already in nondual union with God in His two perfections of Satchidānanda and Paraśiva, but to be realized to be known. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 323: “Śiva’s Three Perfections”)

वितर्कविचारानन्दास्मितारूपानुगमात् सम्प्रज्ञातः ॥ १७॥

1.17 vitarkavicārānandāsmītārūpānugamāt samprajñātaḥ

samprajñātaḥ (differentiated), **rūpa-anugamāt** (from accompaniment, *anugamāt*; in the form of, *rūpa*), **vitarka** (cogitation), **vicāra** (reflection), **ānanda** (bliss), **asmitā** (I-am-ness)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Differentiated *samādhi* involves cogitation, subtle reflection, bliss, or I-am-ness.

Commentary

In ordinary perception, the subject and the object are always distinct. This is the common experience of perceiver and that which is perceived. The distinguishing factor from the perspective of *samādhi* is the experiential identification or oneness of the subject and object. Here Patañjali is distinguishing between the perfect oneness of deeper *samādhis* and the residual duality of other *samādhis* which preserve a duality that can include cogitation, reflection, blissfulness and selfhood. The latter are forms of differentiated meditative absorption, *samprajñāta samādhi*, in which the object of

meditation remains distinct or differentiated from the meditator. Patañjali will later reveal deeper states where such duality ceases to exist.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The Self is timeless, causeless and formless. Therefore, being That, it has no relation whatsoever to time, space and form. Form is in a constant state of creation, preservation and destruction within space, thus creating consciousness called time, and has no relationship to timelessness, causelessness or formlessness. The individual soul, when mature, can make the leap from the consciousness of space-time-causation into the timeless, causeless, formless Self. This is the ultimate maturing of the soul on this planet. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 331: “How the One Becomes Many”)

विरामप्रत्ययाभ्यासपूर्वः संस्कारशेषोऽन्यः ॥ १८॥

1.18 virāmapratyayābhyāsapūrvāḥ saṁskāra-śeṣo’nyaḥ

anyaḥ (the other), **pūrvāḥ** (preceded), **abhyāsa** (practice), **virāma-pratyaya** (cognition, *pratyaya*; related to cessation, *virāma*), **saṁskāra-śeṣaḥ** (residue, *śeṣaḥ*; of latent impressions, *saṁskāra*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The other is preceded by the practice of focusing on cessation and leaves only *saṁskāras*.

Commentary

In the two *sūtras* above, Patañjali introduces the term *samādhi*, the principal subject of this chapter, the goal of *yoga* practice. The idea of this *sūtra* is that when one is in cognitive *samādhi* and all mental activity is terminated—without gross or subtle objects, or even bliss or selfhood present—one enters the deeper state known as *asamprajñāta samādhi*. Though that term is not used here by Patañjali, it is implied by his reference to “the other.” In sum, the deepest *samādhi* is reached more by giving up everything than by attaining something new.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The Self, Paraśiva, can be realized only when the devotee turns away from the world and enters the cave within as a way of life through initiation and under vows. We know the Self within ourselves only when we fully turn into ourselves through concentration, meditation and contemplation and then sustain the resulting *samādhi* of Satchidānanda, pure consciousness, in hopes of finding, determined to find, That which cannot be described, That which was spoken about by the *rishis*—Paraśiva, beyond a stilled mind, Paraśiva that has stopped time, transcended space and dissolved all form. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 2: “Like a Child’s Self-Discovery”)

भवप्रत्ययो विदेहप्रकृतिलयानाम् ॥ १९॥

1.19 bhavapratyayo videhaprakṛtilayānām

bhava-pratyayaḥ (focus, *pratyayaḥ*, on becoming, *bhava*)
videha-prakṛti-layānām (of the bodiless, *videha*; and
 those merged, *layānām*; in nature, *prakṛti*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Those who are unembodied and those who are
 absorbed in *prakṛti* remain focused on becoming.**

Commentary

This *sūtra* refers to two categories of unembodied beings in the inner worlds, those who have merged with the All and those who are between births. For such beings there persists an idea/aspiration of becoming, which does not exist in the highest *samādhi* that severs all attachments and bestows perfect *kaivalya*. Both groups remain tethered to *prakṛti* and its workings by their attachment to “becoming” and have not achieved liberation.

Sage Vyāsa explains the two categories of being referred to in this *sūtra*. *Videhas* (“disembodied beings”) are those who, through intense *yogic* practice, have shed their physical body but continue to exist in a subtle form. Despite this advanced state, they remain focused on *bhava* (becoming, or existence) due to residual impressions (*saṁskāras*) that bind them to the cycle of rebirth. Similarly, *prakṛtilayas* (those absorbed in *prakṛti*) have merged deeply into the subtle layers of *prakṛti* through advanced *samādhi*. (See Vyāsa on 1.19, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

In the inner worlds, one who has transcended the need for a physical birth is there like he is here. He has a twenty-four-hour consciousness. He does not have to eat unless he wants to, and he doesn't have to sleep, so he has a total continuity of consciousness. He has Paraśiva at will and is all-pervasive all of the time. He does have duties. He does relate to brother souls in the same stratum, and he does evolve, continuing in evolution from *chakra* to *chakra* to *chakra*, for there are *chakras*, or *nāḍīs*, above the *sahasrāra* for which he does not need a physical body. This, again, is for the *upadeśī*. The *nirvāṇī* would not turn back but proceed onward. The first realization of Paraśiva, the impact of the aftermath, allows you the decision to choose between the dispassion of the *nirvāṇī* and the compassion of the *upadeśī*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 357: “Beyond Liberation”)

श्रद्धावीर्यस्मृतिसमाधिप्रज्ञापूर्वक इतरेषाम् ॥ २०॥

1.20 śraddhāvīryasmṛtisamādhiprajñāpūrvaka itareṣām

itareṣām (of/for others), **śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-**
pūrvakaḥ (preceded, *pūrvakaḥ*; by faith, *śraddhā*; energy, *vīrya*;
 mindfulness, *smṛti*; meditative absorption, *samādhi*; insight, *prajñā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**For others, it is preceded by faith, energy,
 mindfulness, *samādhi* and mystical insight.**

Commentary

In contrast to those *yogīs* who have achieved a quasi-liberation, those who attain the ultimate *samādhi*, referred to as “it” in this *sūtra*, do so by virtue of their faith, energy, mindfulness, *samādhi* and mystical insight. This is a traditional list of practices and qualities shared among Hindu and Buddhist traditions in ancient times and today.

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The *yogī* who is in the process of *yoga*, who has not graduated to God Realization, is not yet a *jñāni*, though he has all kinds of realizations along the way, some sustained, others yet to be sustained. The *yogī* is seeking, striving, changing, unfolding, trying with all his heart to become, to know his ultimate goal. When the merger has become complete, when two have become one, he is no longer a *yogī*, he is a *jñāni*. When the student graduates from college, he is no longer a student, he is a graduate. The merger of which I speak is Paraśiva, to be experienced by the *sannyāsin* who has turned from the world and into himself. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 320: “Attaining the Ultimate”)

तीव्रसंवेगानामासन्नः ॥ २१॥

1.21 tīvrasaṁvegānāmāsannaḥ

āsannaḥ (near), **tīvra-saṁvegānām** (intense, *tīvra*; those with ardor, *saṁvegānām*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

***Samādhi* is near for the intensely ardent.**

Commentary

Śaṁvega, intense ardor, a common term in Hindu and Buddhist *yoga* traditions, refers to the desire for realization. It is a spirit, a yearning and sense of urgency required for advanced practices. Such intensity is needed in any extreme pursuit, whether sports, music, science or other advanced endeavors. While the word *samādhi* does not actually appear here in the Sanskrit, it is clearly discerned from the context—beginning with *sūtra* 1.17, which introduces *samprajñāta*, and continuing through *sūtra* 1.18's discussion of *asamprajñāta*. We have included *samādhi* in the translation for clarity.

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Sitting in a state of real meditation, one must be more alive and alert than a tightrope walker suspended without a net on a taut cable three hundred feet above the Earth. Do you suppose that this man is sleepy, that he allows his mind to wander? No, every muscle and sinew of his body, every thought, every feeling within him, is absolutely under his control. It is the only way he can maintain the balance which keeps him from plunging to the earth beneath. He must be the master of himself, all the while seeking to identify with his pure soul being, not allowing attention to be pulled here and there—to the physical body, to outside sounds, to thoughts of the past or to concerns about the future. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 79: “Mastery of the Mind”)

मृदुमध्याधिमात्रत्वात्ततोऽपि विशेषः ॥ २२ ॥

1.22 mṛdumadhyādhimātratvāttato’pi viśeṣaḥ

tataḥ-api (even then), **viśeṣaḥ** (distinction), **mṛdu-madhya-adhimātratvāt** (mild, *mṛdu*; moderate, *madhya*; extreme, *adhimātra*; due to the state of, *-tvāt*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Even among these, there is differentiation in degrees of ardor, whether mild, moderate or extreme.

Commentary

As with any task or goal, the passion and energy involved is essential to its accomplishment. This is obvious in external matters and equally relevant to mystical/yogic goals. Those who approach the Great Path with indifference and lassitude will advance slowly. Those who search enthusiastically will make swift progress. Those with passion will make the greatest strides and reach their spiritual goal early.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

If you have attention and concentration, the other stages come automatically. But for Self Realization, you have to really want it more than your life; for that deep *samādhi*, that’s what it is: more than your life. The realization of the Self, beyond the rarefied areas of pure consciousness, is more than your life. You have to want it more than your life. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 91: “After Self Realization”)

ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा ॥ २३ ॥

1.23 Īśvarapraṇidhānādvā

vā (or), **īśvara-praṇidhānāt** (through devotion, *praṇidhāna*; to God, *Īśvara*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or, this is gained through devotion to Īśvara.

Commentary

“This is gained” is a reference to achieving *asamprajñāta samādhi*. Vyāsa explains: “Through a special kind of devotion called *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* on the part of the

.....
This devotee’s pure devotion to Īśvara (Śiva) brings her close to His grace.

devotee, Īśvara inclines towards him and favors him with grace for fulfillment of his wish. From such grace also a *yogin* obtains *samādhi*, and its result, the attainment of the state of liberation, becomes imminent.” (See Vyāsa on 1.23 Hariharananda trans.)

We arrive at a key juncture in Patañjali's *sūtras*, where he stresses the importance of devotion to God. As discussed before, this is where Vedānta and Siddhānta diverge. Most commentators, leaning towards Advaita Vedānta, which regards devotion as a lesser practice, more or less set this *sūtra* aside, for to them there is no divine ruler, Īśvara, in the sense that Patañjali implies. Śaiva Siddhāntins, on the other hand, hold devotion as central to the spiritual path—this pure love of God, the Creator of all, the source of illumination. For Siddhāntins, this devotion is not only a surrender of the heart, it is also the active worship of Śiva through *pūjā* and adoration and the active pursuit of Śiva consciousness through *sādhana* and *tapas*.

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Someone once asked, “They say true *bhakti* is giving your whole will, your whole being, to God. If you do that, aren't you making yourself completely passive?” Many think that the ultimate devotion, called *prapatti* in Sanskrit, means giving up their will-power, their independence, and their judgment for an attitude of “Now you direct me, for I no longer can direct myself, because I no longer have free will. I gave it all away.”

This is a good argument against *prapatti*, to be sure, but a gross misinterpretation of the word, which is the very bedrock of spirituality. This is not the meaning of *prapatti* at all. The *yoga* of pure devotion is found at the beginning, the middle, and the end of the path. Merging with Śiva is more and more a deeply felt experiential reality when the soul gives of itself to Śiva inwardly and outwardly in unabashed devotion. *Prapatti* truly is the key that unlocks the love needed as merger increases as the years pass by and, as Satguru Yogaswami said, “Love pours forth to melt the very stones.” (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 155: “Your Will and the Gods' Will”)

क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः ॥ २४ ॥

1.24 kleśakarmavipākāśayairaparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣa īśvaraḥ

īśvaraḥ (God), **puruṣa-viśeṣaḥ** (distinct/special, *viśeṣaḥ*; Self, *puruṣa*), **aparāmṛṣṭaḥ** (untouched), **kleśa-karma-vipāka-āśayaḥ** (afflictions, *kleśa*; actions, *karma*; results, *vipāka*; *karmic* residue, *āśaya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Īśvara is a special *puruṣa*, untouched by afflictions and *karma*, with its results and residue.

Commentary

Though God, Īśvara, is a *puruṣa*, a Self or soul, just as are humans, He is distinct from all other *puruṣas*. In Śaiva Siddhānta, He is known as Maheśvara, “Great Lord,” or as Paramapuruṣa, “supreme or primal soul.” Two distinctions between Īśvara and other souls are mentioned in this *sūtra*. The first is not being affected by the five *kleśas*,

which are ignorance, I-am-ness, attraction, aversion, and clinging to life. The second is not being affected by *karma*. *Karmas* can be divided into two categories: *ārabdha*, “begun” or “undertaken,” *karma* that is ripening into its natural expressions in one's life—positive, negative and neutral; and *anārabdha*, “not commenced,” *karmas* that still lie dormant in their seed or stored form. Īśvara is not affected by either. As Īśvara is untouched by *karma* and the *kleśas*, He exists eternally in a liberated state, serving as a guiding presence and source of inspiration on the *yoga* path.

We could liken Patañjali's Īśvara to the Primal Soul in our Śaiva Siddhānta. Gurudeva elucidates: “Parameśvara is the uncreated, ever-existent Primal Soul, Śiva-Śakti, creator and supreme ruler of Mahādevas and beings of all three worlds... [Our] soul body is of the nature of God Śiva, but is different from Him in that it is less resplendent than the Primal Soul and still evolving, while He is unevolutionary Perfection.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

There is no place that Śiva is not. And He has yet another perfection, which is a golden body of light in the Third World, a perfect body in which He is our Lord and Creator, the most wonderful, loving, and perfect Being we can imagine. In the temple, when we invoke God Śiva, He comes in this golden body of light and blesses the people. He can see you. He can hear your prayers. He has created all the souls on this planet and all other planets in our universe, our holy scriptures tell us.

God Śiva is in all things and everywhere simultaneously at every point in time. And yet, Śiva as Maheśvara, the Divine Dancer, Naṭarāja, has a body not unlike yours or mine, a body in which He can talk, a body in which He can think, a body in which He can see you and you can see Him, a body with legs, a body with arms. In this body, He dances the eternal dance. I had a vision once of Śiva Naṭarāja dancing. I could hear the bells on His ankles. I could see His feet and legs. He is a beautiful dancer, and He dances in the Third World. God Śiva is so close to us. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 311: “The Nature of God Śiva”)

तत्र निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञत्वबीजम् ॥ २५ ॥

1.25 tatra niratīśayaṁ sarvajñatvabījaṁ

tatra (there/in that/Him), **niratīśayaṁ** (peerless/unexcelled), **sarvajñatva-bījaṁ** (source, *bījaṁ*; of omniscience, *sarvajñatva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

In Him is the peerless source of omniscience.

Commentary

This *sūtra* points out a further distinction between man and God, which is related to knowing. While the ordinary *puruṣa* is in the process of evolving into the lofty realms of superconsciousness, Īśvara rests in and is the source of all-knowingness—*sarvajñāna*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Paraśakti, Supreme Energy, is called by many names: silence, love, being, power and all-knowingness. It is Satcidānanda—existence-consciousness-bliss—that pristine

force of being which is undifferentiated, totally aware of itself, without an object of its awareness. It radiates as divine light, energy, and knowing. Out of Paraśiva ever comes Paraśakti, the first manifestation of mind, superconsciousness, or infinite knowing. God Śiva knows in infinite, all-abiding, loving superconsciousness. Śiva knows from deep within all of His creations to their surface. His Being is within every animate and inanimate form. Should God Śiva remove His all-pervasive Paraśakti from any one or all of the three worlds, they would crumble, disintegrate, and fade away. Śiva's Śakti is the sustaining power and presence throughout the universe. This unbounded force has neither beginning nor end. Verily, it is the Divine Mind of Lord Śiva. The *Vedas* say, "He is God, hidden in all beings, their inmost soul who is in all. He watches the works of creation, lives in all things, watches all things. He is pure consciousness, beyond the three conditions of nature." (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 18: "What Is God Śiva's Pure Consciousness?")

स पूर्वेषामपि गुरुः कालेनानवच्छेदात् ॥ २६॥

1.26 sa pūrveṣām-api guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt

kālena-anavacchedāt (due to non-limitation, *anavacchedāt*; by time, *kālena*),
saḥ (He), **api** (also), **guruḥ** (the *guru*), **pūrveṣām** (of the ancients)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Unbounded by time, He is also the guru of the ancients.

Commentary

This *sūtra* is pointing out that the original source of knowledge concerning *yoga* is Īśvara, not a human being. One of the common representations of Īśvara as teacher is the *mūrti* of Dakṣiṇāmūrti, in which Lord Śiva is depicted sitting under a banyan tree, silently teaching four *rishis* at His feet. It is said these four were the first to be taught, by Śiva Himself, the loftiest Truth. Thus, from the very beginning, Śiva has been the *Guru* of *gurus* and will forever be so.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Between the *guru* and *śiṣya*, many threads are woven together, and finally, we have a firm rope that cannot be pulled apart or destroyed even by two people pulling against one another. That is *sampradāya*. That is *paramparā*. That is the magical power of the Nāthas. As we look at this great line of *satgurus*—coming from Lord Śiva Himself through Nandinātha and countless ones before Nandinātha, to Rishi Tirumūlar and countless *rishis* after him, to the Rishi of Bangalore, to Kadaitswami, Chellappaguru, and Yogaswami—we see the same spiritual force flowing. We see an undaunted, rare succession of individuals who considered adversity a boon from the Gods, wherein all the accumulated *karmas* to be wiped away come together in one place to be taken care of all at once. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 325: "Sustaining the Connection")

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः ॥ २७॥

1.27 tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ

praṇavaḥ (Aum), **tasya** (His) **vācakaḥ** (signifying sound)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

"Aum" is His signifying sound.

Commentary

From Vedic times, the Praṇava sound, Aum, has named and embodied the Divine. It has been used to draw Īśvara near, to give Him presence in our consciousness through chanting the *mantra* Aum. It stands at the beginning of many *ślokas* and *mantras*, where it acknowledges God's presence and names Him to our ear. Thus, Īśvara, embodied in this cosmic sound, stands as the source and beginning of all things. Praṇava, Aum, is the root *mantra* and primal sound from which all creation issues forth. It is a sound, a *mantra*, a name, a *sādhana* and a meditation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This *mantra* is the essence of sound itself. All sounds blended together intone AUM. Listen to the sum total of all the noises of a big city, and you will hear the AUM, as in a seashell or the ocean waves. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 70)

तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम् ॥ २८॥

1.28 tajjapastadarthabhāvanam

tad-japaḥ (repetition, *japaḥ*; of it, *tad*), **tad-artha-bhāvanam**
(contemplation, *bhāvanam*; on the meaning, *artha*; of it, *tad*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Repeat it while contemplating its meaning.

Commentary

Patañjali gives us a *yoga sādhana*, called *japa yoga*, in which a *mantra* is repeated as a form of meditation. Here the meditation is to explore the sound of Aum and discover its meanings, of which there are more than one. The *yogī* can direct his meditation session on one meaning. One such meaning breaks down the sound into three: aaa, uuu and mmm. Here the *aaa* contains the physical/instinctive energies, the *uuu* holds the intellectual/mental and the *mmm* brings in the Divine/superconscious. We find Aum explained in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* as standing for the whole universe and its parts, including past, present and future. Within this simple syllable, the thoughtful, focused *yogī* can discover the All in all.

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The letters A-U-M, when correctly chanted, transmute the instinctive to the intellectual, and the instinctive-intellectual to the superconscious. Direct cognition will then be attained. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 71)



ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च ॥ २९ ॥

1.29 tataḥ pratyak-cetanādhigamo'pyantarāyābhāvaśca

tataḥ (then/therefore), **pratyak-cetanā-adhigamaḥ** (attainment, *adhigamaḥ*; of inward, *pratyak*; consciousness, *cetanā*), **ca** (and), **api** (also), **antarāya-abhāvaḥ** (elimination, *abhāvaḥ*; obstacles, *antarāya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Then follows the attainment of inner consciousness
and also the elimination of obstacles.**

Commentary

The regular practice of chanting AUM takes one into higher states of consciousness. As the very sound is holy and profound, it is capable, when voiced silently or aloud, of drawing the seeker closer to God within. As this proximity to Īśvara is perfected over time, the *yogī* becomes imbued with the Divine, and the obstacles to spiritual progress mentioned in the next *sūtra* are resolved and ultimately annihilated.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The A-U-M harmonizes the physical body with the mind, and the mind with the intuitive nature. Here again we can see the great benefits of the *mantra* Aum. It in itself is the ultimate psychiatrist. It in itself is the sound of the universe, the sound of a city in action, the sound at birth, the sound at death. Listen to the sounds anyplace, anywhere blended together and you will hear the Aum. While listening, mentally say the sound Aum and feel body, mind and the Godness within you blending as one. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 72)

व्याधिस्त्यानसंशयप्रमादालस्याविरति
भ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानि
चित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः ॥ ३० ॥

1.30 vyādhi-styāna-saṁśaya-pramādālasyaāvirati-bhrānti-
darśanālabdha-bhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepās-te'ntarāyāḥ

te (these), **citta-vikṣepāḥ** (mental distractions), **antarāyāḥ** (obstacles),
vyādhi (illness), **styāna** (apathy), **saṁśaya** (doubt), **pramāda**
(carelessness), **ālasya** (laziness), **avirati** (sensual indulgence), **bhrānti-**
darśana (wrong, *bhrānti*; view, *darśana*), **alabdha-bhūmikatva** (non-
attained, *alabdha*; stage, *bhūmikatva*), **anavasthitatvāni** (instability)

**The obstacles causing distraction to the mind are illness,
apathy, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensual indulgence,
misapprehension, non-attainment of the stages, and instability.**

.....
In a quiet forest, a yoginī performs her daily japa on rudrāksha beads.

Commentary

In speaking of “non-attainment of the stages,” Patañjali means the failure to progress to the next level. Every meditator confronts some, or all, of Patañjali's list of distractions to the inner work. These obstacles are present when an individual is uninspired or halfhearted about his or her *yoga* practice. While it is frequently true that efforts to attain higher consciousness focus on the goal, it is equally essential that the *yogī* focus on what is keeping him from that goal. Patañjali, in his wisdom, reminds us of the things we need to overcome. A great athlete or creative entrepreneur will work on weaknesses and impediments, eliminating them one by one, knowing that in their elimination lies the success sought. So it is with *yoga* and its attainments. There is great wisdom, and courage, in attending to the barriers before us with equal enthusiasm as we do the summits ahead. By working on our flawed nature and humanness, we unravel and reveal our true Divinity. In the *sūtras* coming up, Patañjali gives eight practices for uplifting oneself to a higher state of consciousness in which the obstacles naturally fall away.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Negative qualities are just congested masses of mind-stuff that are temporary and do not allow the spirit to flow through. If you have negative qualities as boulders in your mind, the spirit cannot flow through you; but as it tries to flow through, it will automatically set a part of your mind out of control, and you will be emotional. You can't help it. So, you must purify yourself. You purify yourself by being kind to others, being generous until it hurts, being benevolent, being ready to serve at all times until you are strained in serving. Put a smile on the faces of other people. Gain your happiness and your positive states of mind by making other people happy. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 115: “You Must Purify Yourself”)

दुःखदौर्मनस्याङ्गमेजयत्वश्वासप्रश्वासा विक्षेपसहभुवः ॥ ३१॥

1.31 duḥkha-daurmanasyāṅgam-ejayatva-
śvāsa-praśvāsā vikṣepa-sahabhuvaḥ

duḥkha (sorrow), **daurmanasya** (mental dejection), **aṅga-ejayatva** (trembling, *ejayatva*; of limbs, *aṅga*), **śvāsa-praśvāsāḥ** (exhalation, *śvāsa*; inhalation, *praśvāsa*), **vikṣepa-sahabhuvaḥ** (coexisting, *sahabhuvaḥ*; with distraction, *vikṣepa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Sorrow, dejection, trembling limbs, and disturbed
breathing accompany distraction.**

Commentary

Patañjali points out that the nine distractions are often accompanied by negative states that affect the seeker emotionally, mentally and even physically. The sage does not mention it, but it works the other way as well. As we live in higher states of joy, upliftment and physical steadiness, all balanced by proper breathing, the obstacles diminish and life is positive.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Another instinctive response to the ebb and flow of life force is disappointment, which intensified becomes discouragement, depression and despair. These three negative states are obstacles to all human endeavor, especially for the spiritual seeker, who must learn early to regulate, control and balance the emotional ups and downs so well that he never experiences discouragement, which is nothing more than an imbalance of force. Life tests and retests our emotional maturity. Whether we meet those tests or fail is entirely up to us. On the Śaivite path, the *satguru* gives the tests in order to mold and strengthen the seeker's character. Great strength of character is required to attain spiritual goals, enormous courage and forbearance, and anyone who lacks that strength and stamina will cease striving long before full realization is attained. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 65: “Discouragement, Disappointment”)

तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः ॥ ३२॥

1.32 tat-pratiṣedhārtham-eka-tattvābhyāsaḥ

tat-pratiṣedha-artham (for the purpose of, *artham*; counteracting, *pratiṣedha*; these, *tat*), **eka-tattva-abhyāsaḥ** (practice, *abhyāsaḥ*; single, *eka*; principle, *tattva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

To counteract these, practice on a single principle.

Commentary

The word *tattva*, here rendered as “principle,” indicates the essential nature of something, its essence and fundamental being. Patañjali is directing the *yogī* who seeks to overcome distractions to practice, and practice again, one-pointedness on the fundamentals of the object of meditation. Such disciplined focus leads the mind deeper and deeper into the reality of that thing, which, it turns out, is the reality of all things.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The fourth step comes as we plunge awareness into the essence, the center of this energy in the head and spine. This requires great discipline and exacting control to bring awareness to the point of being aware of itself. This state of being totally aware that we are aware is called *kaif*. It is pure awareness, not aware of any object, feeling or thought. Go into the physical forces that flood, day and night, through the spine and body. Then go into the energy of that, deeper into the vast inner space of that, into the essence of that, into the that of that, and into the that of that. As you sit in this state, new energies will flood the body, flowing out through the nerve system, out into the exterior world. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 98: “Four Steps to Meditation”)

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम् ॥ ३३ ॥

1.33 maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇām sukha-duḥkha-
puṇyāpuṇya-viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaś-citta-prasādanam

maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣāṇām (friendliness, *maitrī*; compassion, *karuṇā*; delight, *muditā*; equanimity, *upekṣā*), **sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayāṇām** (toward the joyful, *sukha*; the sorrowful, *duḥkha*; the virtuous, *puṇya*; the unvirtuous, *apuṇya*; of objects/people, *viṣayāṇām*), **bhāvanātaḥ** (from the cultivation, *bhāvanātaḥ*), **citta-prasādanam** (serenity, *prasādanam*; of the mind, *citta*)

Cultivating friendliness toward the joyful, compassion toward the sorrowful, delight toward the virtuous, and mindful detachment toward the unrighteous engenders mental serenity.

Commentary

Many seek to calm the mind, but have neither knowledge nor tools to do so. Here the great *yogī* gives four keys, simple attitudes to guide our interactions with others in such a way that we ourselves live in constant serenity. Instead of jealousy toward those who live in happiness, he proposes friendship. Instead of sadness upon encountering the suffering, he offers compassion, a higher state. Instead of judgment of those more virtuous, he recommends celebration. And with regard to the low-minded, he proposes we ignore them. Such responses to others have the power to change our interactions with people and strengthen our own centeredness. Patañjali is also leading up to a series of seven *sūtras*, each providing a *sādhana*, a practice, that helps eliminate or ameliorate the nine distractions. Each of the following *sūtras* begins with the word “or,” implying the seeker can select among them, choosing those that are most effective or most easily undertaken.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Compassion is the outgrowth of being forgiving. It is the outgrowth of truthfulness and of noninjury. It is a product of *asteya*, of *brahmacarya* and of *kṣamā*. It is, in fact, higher consciousness, based in the *viśuddha chakra* of divine love. One can't command compassion. Before compassion comes love. Compassion is the outgrowth of love. Love is the outgrowth of understanding. Understanding is the outgrowth of reason. One must have sufficient memory to remember the various points of reason and enough willpower to follow them through to be able to psychically look into the core of existence to gain the reverence for all life, all living organisms, animate or inanimate. Compassion is a very advanced spiritual quality. When you see it exhibited in someone, you know he is very advanced spiritually—probably an old soul. It really can't be taught. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 22 “*Dayā*, Compassion”)

प्रच्छर्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य ॥ ३४ ॥

1.34 pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya

vā (or), **pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyām** (exhaling, *pracchardana*; and retaining, *vidhāraṇā*), **prāṇasya** (of the breath)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or by exhaling and retaining the breath.

Commentary

This is the second of the several practices Patañjali introduces in the *sūtras* ahead meant to quiet the mind. It is a basic *prāṇāyāma*, regulation of breath, for quieting the mind. After breathing out, the *yogī* pauses, holding the breath before taking the next inbreath. No time is indicated in the *sūtra*, but Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has suggested holding for a single heartbeat to begin, and up to nine heartbeats. Breath is among the few bodily functions that can either be under control of the habit mind or controlled intentionally by the motor cortex of the cerebellum. By controlling the rhythms of breathing, we change the activity of the nervous system and calm the mind. They are interrelated.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The first observation you may have when thus seated for meditation is that thoughts are racing through the mind substance. You may become aware of many, many thoughts. Also the breath may be irregular. Therefore, the next step is to transmute the energies from the intellectual area of the mind through proper breathing, in just the same way that proper attitude, preparation and posture transmuted the physical-instinctive energies. Through regulation of the breath, thoughts are stilled and awareness moves into an area of the mind which does not think, but conceives and intuitively. There are vast and powerful systems of breathing that can stimulate the mind, sometimes to excess. Deep meditation requires only that the breath be systematically slowed or lengthened. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 96: “The Right Conditions”)

विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना मनसः स्थितिनिबन्धिनी ॥ ३५ ॥

1.35 viṣayavatī vā pravṛttir-utpannā manasaḥ sthiti-nibandhinī

sthiti-nibandhinī (causing steadiness, *sthiti*; by binding/supporting, *nibandhinī*), **manasaḥ** (of the mind), **vā** (or), **pravṛttiḥ** (engagement), **utpannā** (arisen), **viṣayavatī** (related to sense objects)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or mental steadiness is also gained by focusing on sense perceptions that arise.

Commentary

Here, the best of commentators gravitate to the important idea that mental firmness and serenity evolve out of the *yogī*'s awakening to higher senses or more subtle insights into the object of his perception or meditation. Instead of attending to the

grosser and more external aspects of the object, he develops the ability to see this object anew, to understand it in a deeper way. He can thus explore and unravel the essence of things. This, in turn, gives him assurance that he is on the right path, confidence that his meditations are working well, and this brings a certainty and peace that his inner work is being effective. Another insight is that such mental quietude can derive from reflection on a particularly beautiful sight, a musical masterpiece, an intoxicating smell or lofty concept. These can uplift our state of mind, take us to new realms of wonder and understanding.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

In concentrating on a flower, one of the *sādhana*s that you have been given, when awareness is held steady and only the flower exists within the mind, as well as outside your body, close observation and scrutiny of the flower can then begin. An intuitive flash will bring knowledge of the complete cycle of that particular form in all phases of its manifestation. This intuitive flash comes to those just beginning the processes of meditation. Later on, the process can be slowed down and sustained. We cannot be imaginative here or fantasize, for only through actually keying into the particular area in time and space does one begin to contemplate future and past in relationship to it. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 206: “Awareness Externalized”)

विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती ॥ ३६॥

1.36 viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī

vā (or), **jyotiṣmatī** (imbued with light),
viśokā (without sorrow)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or on that which is luminous and free of sorrow.

Commentary

When the mind is immersed in the inner light, be it a moon glow or full effulgence, it is automatically in a superconscious state, free of all forms of physical, mental and emotional sorrow. When one dwells on the super-subtle energies and experiences of the higher *chakras*, or on pursuit of profound insights, the intensity is such that the grosser energies and experiences of the lower *chakras* dissolve, or are transcended, at first temporarily.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As aspirants on the path, you have to live your life two-thirds within yourself. When you are conscious of the thoughts that you don't want to think, the emotions that you don't want to feel, go deep within where they don't exist. Take awareness to the central source of energy, right within the spine itself. Feel that energy flowing through the body, moving the muscles, enlivening the cells. Then you are two-thirds within yourself, and the world looks bright and cheery all the time; the Sun is always shining. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 32: “Living Two-Thirds Within”)

वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम् ॥ ३७॥

1.37 vītarāgaviṣayaṁ vā cittam

vā (or), **cittam** (mind), **vīta-rāga-viṣayam** (characterized by freedom from, *vīta*; desire/attachment, *rāga*; for objects, *viṣaya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or on a mind free from desire for things.

Comments

The *sūtra* continues the series of things to focus on to achieve steadiness of mind. Great *yogīs* have achieved true dispassion, and their attainments can be a light on our own path. As we intuit what it must be like to have not a single desire, no preferences or attachments, we begin to turn our own mind toward that possibility. There is a kind of simple magic to such a practice, for it sends the mind soaring into transcendental realms. As we slowly comprehend what such a consciousness would be like, we ourselves become less needful of attachments; we become like those great souls, having touched their inner being. Without their pure achievement, we could never imagine such a thing possible.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Though it may not be your *dharma* to formally renounce the world, you can benefit your search immensely by knowing how the great ones seek to live and respond to life. You can find ways in the midst of your life to follow their example. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 335: “The Way of Old Souls”)

स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा ॥ ३८॥

1.38 svapna-nidrā-jñānālambanaṁ vā

vā (or), **jñānālambanaṁ** (support, *ālambanaṁ*; on knowledge, *jñāna*), **svapna-nidrā** (dreams, *svapna*; and sleep, *nidrā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or by relying on insights from sleep and dreams.

Commentary

Sleep and dreams are a world unto themselves, vast worlds of imagery and experience only loosely related to material reality. A person trained in remembrance of dreams could spend two days recording the details of a single night's dreaming. This fact gives the potential to sunder our conceptions and habitual patterns of thought. Understood with wisdom, dreams can teach us. But it requires a shift in our thinking. Instead of regarding dreams as chimerical and confounding imaginations, we can approach them as mysterious clouds containing wisdoms to be mined, wisdoms that defy our ordinary understandings. This shift requires some training and practice, and it comes with a sense of unfathomable richness and an uncertainty as to the authenticity of our



waking-hours interpretations and insights. This is where a *guru* is needed. Without guidance, it is usually best for a *yogī* to forget his dreams and simply rest on the wisdom subtly absorbed.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Once the body is fully recuperated from a state of sleep, individual awareness is now again aware of the conscious plane, which is the external world. All of the subsuper-conscious input from the various regions is not forgotten, but is not remembered, and will slowly infiltrate from the subsuperconscious to the subconscious to the conscious mind and manifest in the conscious plane or conscious-mind intelligence at a much later time. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 53)

यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा ॥ ३९ ॥

1.39 yathābhīmata-dhyānād-vā

vā (or), **yathābhīmata-dhyānāt** (from meditation, *dhyānāt*; as, *yathā*; one prefers, *abhīmata*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or through meditating as one prefers.

Commentary

This is the final in Patañjali's series of seven disciplines to quiet the mind: 1) holding certain attitudes to guide our interactions with others; 2) exhaling and retaining the breath; 3) being aware of subtle sense perceptions; 4) immersion in that which is luminous; 5) knowing the mind of a desireless being; 6) learning from deep sleep and dreams; 7) meditating as one is inclined.

Patañjali is allowing that some may do best in choosing a meditation that they would find interesting and which would easily lead to upliftment. After all, the attentive *yogī* understands himself well, and thus knows which among the myriad forms of meditation would be most productive for him. He may, for instance, choose something that feels natural and inspiring, and ride that inspiration within. This, the sage implies, is far superior to continuing mindlessly with a meditation that does not provide results.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is impossible to meditate unless you are interested in what you are meditating on. Perhaps you have found this out. Then sit down dynamically. Close your eyes. Breathe, keeping your spine straight and head balanced at the top of the spine. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 256: "Energy and Meditation")

.....
Even in his sleep, this yogī finds mental serenity and insights.

परमाणुपरममहत्त्वान्तोऽस्य वशीकारः ॥ ४० ॥

1.40 paramāṇu-paramamahattvānto-'sya vaśīkāraḥ

asya (this), **vaśīkāraḥ** (mastery), **paramāṇu-parama-mahattva-antaḥ** (from the subatomic, *paramāṇu*; to the limit of, *antaḥ*; supreme, *parama*; greatness, *mahattva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

This mastery ranges from the subatomic to the cosmic.

Commentary

Here *asya vaśīkāraḥ*—“this mastery”—refers to the steadiness of mind cultivated through the methods described in the preceding *sūtras* (1.32–1.39). An advanced *yoga* adept who has attained full control over matter and mind can successfully focus on objects from the smallest to the largest, with access to both microcosm and macrocosm, both of which are vast. This ability to delve into reality on all scales and in all dimensions gives him unique entrée into the mind. He can proceed in meditative directions unavailable to the less adventuresome, the less accomplished.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

You have to go into the elements of the physical body, into the elements of that, and into the energy of that, and into the vast inner space of that, and into the core of that, and into the that of that, and into the that of that, and finally you realize that you have realized the Self. And you've lost something. You lost your goal of Self Realization. And you come back into the fullness of everything, and you are no longer looking, and you are no longer asking, and you are no longer wanting. You just are. When you get tired of the external area of the mind that you are flowing through, you simply dive in again. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 45: “Realization Requires Will”)

क्षीणवृत्तेरभिजातस्येव मणेर्ग्रहीतृग्रहणग्राह्येषु तत्स्थतदञ्जनता समापत्तिः ॥ ४१ ॥

1.41 kṣīṇa-vṛtter-abhijātasyeva maṇer-grahīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu tat-stha-tad-añjanatā samāpattiḥ

kṣīṇa-vṛtṭeḥ (mental activities, *vṛttiḥ*; dwindled, *kṣīṇa*), **abhijātasya maṇeḥ** (of the flawless crystal), **iva** (like), **grahīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu** (in relation to the perceiver, *grahīṭṛ*; perception, *grahaṇa*; perceived, *grāhyeṣu*), **tat-stha** (centered, *stha*; on that, *tat*), **tad-añjanatā** (colored, *añjana*; by that, *tad*), **samāpattiḥ** (coalescence of mind)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When mental activities have dwindled, the mind, like a flawless crystal, reflects the object of meditation—be it the perceiver, the act of perception, or the perceived—this is *samāpatti*.

Commentary

Patañjali is returning to the topic of *samādhi* and providing further details on the *vitarka* and *vicāra* stages of *samprajñāta samādhi*. His reference to the grasper, grasping and grasped (*grahīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu*) speaks of the perceiver, the sense organs and the thing perceived. The common understanding here is that the perfectly stilled mind is capable of complete identification with objects of meditation, comprehending them directly, without subjective analysis or ratiocination. Meditation becomes a form of uninterpreted knowing.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The state of meditation is careful, close scrutiny of the individual elements and energies which make up that flower. You are scrutinizing the inner layers of the mind, of how a flower grows, how the seed is formed. You are observing it so keenly that you have forgotten that you are a physical body, that you are an emotional unit, that you are breathing. You are in the area of mind where that flower exists, and the bush that it came from, and the roots and the seed and all phases of manifestation, all at the same time. And you are seeing it as it actually is in that area of the mind, where the flower is that you first put awareness at attention upon, then began to concentrate upon. Then you are meditating on the actual inner area of the mind where, in all stages of manifestation, that particular species actually is within the mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 8: “Step Three, Meditation”)

तत्र शब्दार्थज्ञानविकल्पैः सङ्कीर्णा सवितर्का समापत्तिः ॥ ४२ ॥

1.42 tatra śabdārtha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ

tatra (there/in that), **samāpattiḥ** (coalescence of mind), **saṅkīrṇā** (commingled), **vikalpaiḥ** (with distinctions), **śabda-artha-jñāna** (name, *śabda*; essence, *artha*; and knowledge, *jñāna*), **savitarkā** (with deliberation/cogitation)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

That *samāpatti* in which the distinctions of name, essence and knowledge are comingled is *savitarkā*.

Commentary

This *sūtra* explores the first level of meditation, *savitarkā samāpatti*, which Vyāsa describes as focusing on a gross object, such as the five elements or perceptible forms, including their mental or symbolic representations. A cow is commonly used as an example to elucidate this *sūtra*. When the mind of a *yogī* is engrossed in the thought of a cow and there is a mingling of these three things—the word cow, the animal itself and knowledge pertaining to cows—this meshing is called *savitarkā samāpatti*. The aware meditator is cognizant of this intersection of elements, and his awareness permits him to explore a deeper understanding of the subject.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

If you hold to the perspective that thoughts and forms are always changing, your awareness automatically traps itself into the pygmy consciousness as a victim in a vast, ever-changing conglomerate of *prāṇic* mind substances. You have experienced this, no doubt, as it is the experience of those who have not awakened to the inner path. What we must seek to see is the all-pervading energy which permeates all form. It is not necessary to centralize on one thought or sequence of pictures as opposed to another to gain this new perspective, for we cannot, in a sense, climb up to it. We have to drop down into it by going deep within the essence of the mind and intuiting the all-pervading force. We come out of that state as a pure, unhindered awareness, able to flow and focus detachedly in the accustomed areas of mind that make up what we term “our life,” and as new cavities of mind awaken before our vision, we flow in and out of them not hampered or hindered by what is seen. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 206: “Awareness Externalized”)

स्मृतिपरिशुद्धौ स्वरूपशून्येवार्थमात्रनिर्भासा निर्वितर्का ॥ ४३ ॥

1.43 *smṛti-parīśuddhau svarūpa-śūnyevārtha-mātra-nirbhāsā nirvitarkā*

smṛti-parīśuddhau (upon purification of, *parīśuddhau*; memory, *smṛti*), **svarūpa-śūnya** (intrinsic identity, *svarūpa*; empty, *śūnya*), **iva** (as if), **artha-mātra-nirbhāsā** (only, *mātra*; the object, *artha*; shining forth, *nirbhāsā*), **nirvitarkā** (free from deliberation/cogitation)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When memory is completely purified, intrinsic identity is seemingly absent and the object alone shines forth—this is *nirvitarkā*.

Commentary

Eventually the *yogī* transcends his normal cogitation process and encounters the object of his contemplation directly, without reference to prior experience. This stage, called *nirvitarkā samāpatti*, is beyond thinking. It is explained by some as taking the object out of time and space, or becoming the object. Instead of thinking about the object of contemplation, the *yogī*, having set aside all memory and learned knowledge of it, is open to direct communion with the object.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Contemplation is the nature of direct cognition of some thing through identity or oneness with it. Take a flower and place it in front of you. Breathe deeply as you sit before it. Simply look at it. Don't stare at it and strain your eyes. But simply become aware of it. Each time awareness moves to some other area of the mind, with your willpower move awareness back and become aware of the flower again. Keep doing this until you are simply aware of the flower and not aware of your body or your breath. Then begin to concentrate on the flower. That is the second step. Think about the flower. Move into the area of the mind where all flowers exist in all phases of manifestation, and concentrate on the flower. Move from one area to another—to

where all stems exist, to the stem of that particular flower, to the root that that particular flower came from, and to the seed. Concentrate, concentrate, concentrate on the flower. This is what concentration is—remaining in the thought area of the particular item that you are aware of and flowing through the different color and sound vibrations of the thoughts. How does it work? The powers of concentration—it is only a name. Actually, what is happening is you are flowing awareness through the area of the mind which contains the elements which actually made that particular flower, and you are perceiving how all those elements came together. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Section I, Introduction)

एतयैव सविचारा निर्विचारा च सूक्ष्मविषया व्याख्याता ॥ ४४ ॥

1.44 *etayaiva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣma-viṣayā vyākhyātā*

etayaiva (by this, *etayā*; indeed, *eva*), **savicārā** (with reflection), **nirvicārā** (without reflection), **ca** (and), **sūkṣma-viṣayā** (subtle, *sūkṣma*; objects, *viṣayā*), **vyākhyātā** (is explained)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

In the same way, subtle-object meditation—with and without reflection—is explained.

Commentary

This *sūtra* describes two stages of meditation, or *samāpatti*, focused on an internal or mental object, not a material one. First is the *savicāra* stage, in which the meditator examines a subtle object, exploring it with a goal to comprehend and define it better and better. Eventually that form of reflection is transcended, thinking subsides and the inherent essence of the object remains. That is the *nirvicāra* stage.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

A precisely controlled intellect pierces deeply beyond the veil of words into the threshold of spiritual experience. The noble devotee uses his willpower to discriminate philosophically as to the nature of his quest. It is the elimination of words and thoughts, which are the intellect, that is his goal. He already has a great deal of self-discipline through having conquered, somewhat, the emotions and passionate instincts of his past. Now comes the more advanced practice of *prāṇāyāma*, the control of breath and inner direction of *prāṇa* in transmutation toward the highest goal, of realization of the Self, that he hopes one day to attain. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 108: “Harnessing Willpower”)

सूक्ष्मविषयत्वं चालिङ्गपर्यवसानम् ॥ ४५॥

1.45 sūkṣma-viṣayatvaṁ cālīṅga-paryavasānam

ca (and), sūkṣma-viṣayatvam (subtle, sūkṣma; object-state, viṣayatvam),
aliṅga-paryavasānam (culmination, paryavasānam; in the unmanifest, aliṅga)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

And the subtlety of things culminates in the unmanifest.

Commentary

This sūtra is indicating that any subtle object of meditation can be traced back to its source, which is defined as the undifferentiate or unmanifest. According to Vyāsa's commentary on this sūtra, aliṅga refers to the unmanifest (avyakta), which is synonymous with mūlaprakṛti, the primal nature in Sāṅkhya philosophy, which is also mentioned in sūtra 2.19. In Śaivism, this source is pure consciousness. Within manifest existence, nothing is more subtle than consciousness.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The soul merged out of Śiva as the Self in His timeless, causeless, spaceless, unmanifest state... After thus being spawned, the soul goes through a maturing process... Once this soul has completed the cycle of the manifest state, then quite naturally it merges back into itself and realizes, or is, the unmanifest state. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 332: "Realization and Evolution")

Rishis describe this emanational process as the unfoldment of tattvas, stages or evolutes of manifestation, descending from subtle to gross. At mahāpralaya, cosmic dissolution, they enfold into their respective sources, with only the first two tattvas surviving the great dissolution. The first and subtlest form—the pure consciousness and source of all other evolutes of manifestation—is called Śiva tattva, or Parāśakti-nāda. But beyond Śiva tattva lies Paraśiva—the utterly transcendent, Absolute Reality, called atattva." (*Dancing with Śiva*, Lexicon: "tattva")

ता एव सबीजः समाधिः ॥ ४६॥

1.46 tā eva sabījaḥ samādhiḥ

tāḥ (these), eva (indeed), samādhiḥ (meditative absorption), sa-bījaḥ (with, sa; seed, bījaḥ)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These indeed are the samādhis with seed.

Commentary

The four types of samāpatti examined earlier all have an object that is the focal point of the practice. Savitarkā and nirvitarkā utilize gross objects. Savicāra and nirvicāra involve subtle objects. These all belong to the realm of sabīja (with seed) because they involve an object or focus—a "seed." In such meditation, the mind is actively engaged

.....
Inner light fills the head and body of a practicing yoginī.



with the object's qualities, analyzing and reflecting on it. This process is associated with mental "seeds," as it relies on the object and the conceptual framework around it.

In using the term *sabīja* (with seed) in this *sūtra*, Patañjali foreshadows the distinction between this meditative state and *nirbīja samādhi* (without seed), described in later *sūtras*. While *sabīja samādhi* involves absorption with a mental object, or "seed," *nirbīja samādhi* is entirely free of seeds, representing the culmination of meditative practice. Patañjali outlines the characteristics of these states, offering insights into how meditation moves from engagement with objects toward total transcendence.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The idea of *yoga*, union through perceptive control of the flow of thought, and of the generative processes of a perceptive idea before thought is formed, is most satisfying. The cognition of the actinic process of life currents intrigues him, and he looks further into the practice of *yoga* techniques and finds that peace is gained through a conscious government first of the life currents through the body and second of the realm of ideas as they flow into thought. And while remaining the observer of it all in the eternity of the here and now, the seeker fully realizes that time, space and causation are only indicated through holding an off-balanced consciousness of past and future.

On and on through the mind we travel daily, once awareness has become detached from the limited area of mind it has been trapped in. The journey seems endless! It is. Seek on, seek on. Look in, look in. And on that solid foundation of good character, move into that place in the mind and live there, seeing no difference between the inner and the outer states of fluctuating awareness. Be that now for which you have been striving. The search is within. Go within the mind. Go in and in and in and in and make fathomable the unfathomable depth of Being. You can do it. It has been done countless times over the past several thousand years. Give yourself the great benefit of believing in yourself and flow inward, inward—to the totality of it all. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 35: "Awareness Finds a New Home")

निर्विचारवैशारद्येऽध्यात्मप्रसादः ॥ ४७॥

1.47 nirvicāra-vaiśāradye'dhyātma-prasādaḥ

nirvicāra-vaiśāradye (in mastery, *vaiśāradye*; of being free from subtle thought, *nirvicāra*), **adhya-ātma** (inner, *adhya*; self, *ātma*) **prasādaḥ** (clarity)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Mastery in *nirvicāra* brings clarity of the inner self.

Commentary

Nirvicāra is meditation free of reflection. *Vaiśāradya*, lucidity or mastery, is likened to the clearness of the autumnal sky of North India, symbolizing the profound peace of mind that comes with *nirvicāra* meditation. Just as the autumnal sky represents a transition and a clearing of the clouds and storms of summer, *vaiśāradya* signifies a transition to a state of inner clarity and confidence in one's spiritual practice.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Now, in the dawn of a new age, when many men are being drawn within, it is eminently easier to attain and maintain clarity of perception through the actinic light within the body. Through the classical *yoga* techniques, perfecting the conscious use of the actinic willpower, the energies can be drawn inward from the outer mind, and the awareness can bask in the actinic light, coming into the outer mind only at will, and positively. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 51: "Capturing the Here and Now")

ऋतम्भरा तत्र प्रज्ञा ॥ ४८॥

1.48 ṛtambharā tatra prajñā

tatra (there/in that), **prajñā** (insight/wisdom), **ṛtam-bharā** (truth, *ṛta*; bearing, *bhara*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

In that state, mystical insight is truth-bearing.

Commentary

This knowledge is considered truth-bearing in that it discloses the contemplated object as it is, in a flash of insight, without any mental distortions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Contemplation is a state rarely, if ever, attained by the average man; it need not concern us too much here, as it flows quite naturally out of successfully sustained meditation. There is nothing fearsome or dangerous about it, but it is an experience quite different from either our ordinary sense perceptions or reasoning processes. It is in the nature of direct cognition of something through identity or oneness with it. The aim, of course, is the realization of the Self. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Section 1: Introduction)

श्रुतानुमानप्रज्ञाभ्यामन्यविषया विशेषार्थत्वात् ॥ ४९॥

1.49 śrutānumāna-prajñābhyām-anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt

śrutānumāna-prajñābhyām (by the two wisdoms, *prajñābhyām*; scripture, *śruta*; inference, *anumāna*), **anya-viṣayāḥ** (different, *anya*; objects/focus, *viṣayāḥ*), **viśeṣārthatvāt** (from the state of, *-tvāt*; distinct, *viśeṣa*; essence, *artha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Having a different focus than scripture and inference, it apprehends the distinct essence of things.

Commentary

Perceptive knowledge, mystical insight (denoted by "it" in this *sūtra*), is direct—unmediated by the kinds of learning derived from studying scriptures or from inference. It is therefore regarded as a purer, higher form of knowing. Note that the phrase "mystical insight" refers to the superconscious knowing that arises from *nirvicāra*

samādhi, continuing the train of thought from the two previous *sūtras*: “Mastery in *nirvicāra* brings clarity of the inner self. In that state, mystical insight is truth-bearing.” This verse explains that such *yogic* insight differs in both subject and quality from scriptural knowledge (*śruta-prajñā*) and inference (*ānumāna-prajñā*), as it uniquely apprehends the object’s essence in a direct and immediate way.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Here’s a fine example of the use of intuition. You have often been in a situation in your own mind where you felt a subtle, direct impulse from deep within you as to how you should proceed. Most probably you denied it as fantasy and commenced in a logical way to fulfill your impulses and desires from previous patterns of experience, only to find that you would have traversed agonies and confusions had you followed the subtle impulse of direction which was rejected to enhance established patterns of procedure. But I might add that that first impulse must have registered itself as cold and clear, direct and profound. Only if it did would it have indelibly imprinted itself within your memory patterns, clear and sharp, thus distinguishing itself clearly from all warm, emotional feelings that appear to be reasonable and totally in line with the current pictures of the day. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 195: “Subduing the Intellect”)

तज्जः संस्कारोऽन्यसंस्कारप्रतिबन्धी ॥ ५०॥

1.50 tadjah saṁskāro’nya-saṁskāra-pratibandhī

saṁskārah (mental impression), **tad-jah** (produced by, *jah*; that, *tad*), **anya-saṁskāra-pratibandhī** (obstructor, *pratibandhī*; of other, *anya*; impressions, *saṁskāra*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The *saṁskāras* produced by that obstruct other *saṁskāras*.

Commentary

Samskāras, the imprints left on the subconscious mind by experience, serve to constantly propel consciousness into action. Through the practice of *nirvicāra samāpatti*, new *saṁskāras* are created through mystical insight (denoted by “that”). Produced by superconscious experiences, these *saṁskāras* are more powerful than others, and thus overwhelm and diminish impressions of lesser intensity. This process invigorates the flow of life and draws us inward rather than outward into external activities.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The point I want to make is: do not fear the subconscious mind. Realize that it has not been programmed as it should be. Therefore, the program has to be changed. Realize that your superconsciousness is the master programmer. Get busy and reprogram your subconscious through the power of affirmation. You can do it through the powers of meditation. (*Merging with Śiva*, lesson 181: “Meditation’s Great Obstacle”)

तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधान्निर्बीजः समाधिः ॥ ५१॥

1.51 tasyāpi nirodhe sarva-nirodhān-nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ

tasya (of this), **api** (even), **nirodhe** (upon restraint), **sarva-nirodhāt** (from the restraint, *nirodhāt*; of all, *sarva*), **nirbījaḥ** (without, *nir*; seed, *bījaḥ*), **samādhiḥ** (meditative absorption)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When even this is restrained, the entire mind is restrained, and seedless *samādhi* ensues.

Commentary

Here Patañjali describes a state of absorption without seed (*nirbīja samādhi*), a level of knowing in which even the subtlest of impressions (*saṁskāras*) cease. This profound absorption, transcending all forms of mental activity, leads to the cessation of all fluctuations in consciousness and results in pure, objectless awareness.

Nirbīja samādhi is achieved when not only active thought processes, but also the latent impressions that could give rise to future thoughts and actions cease or are completely inhibited. In this state, no seeds of future *karma* are planted, as there are no *saṁskāras* left to sprout into new cycles of thought, action and reaction. Patañjali underscores a progression in the *yogic* journey: from recognizing and attenuating the influence of mental impressions, *saṁskāras*, to reaching a state of consciousness where these impressions are entirely dissolved. This progression ultimately culminates in liberation, known as *kaivalya*.

In monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, the path continues beyond even this—toward *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the direct realization of Paraśiva, which lies beyond thought, form and even awareness itself. This ultimate breakthrough lies beyond the scope of *nirbīja samādhi* as described in the *Yoga Sūtras*, for while *nirbīja* transcends all mental activity, it does not yet pierce the final veil concealing the Self’s absolute nature. In *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the *yogī* becomes one with the Self, Paraśiva—if only for a timeless instant—and is irrevocably transformed.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The first breakthrough into *samādhi* happens quickly, so that the subtle parts of the mind, shall we say, are not consciously aware of what is actually taking place and what has actually happened, because they are not used to being consciously aware in the higher states of consciousness. However, when the renunciate has broken through to the Self, Paraśiva, he has the possibility of the full use of his mind, the higher states of consciousness as well as the full understanding of lower states of consciousness and how his individual awareness travels from one state to another. The mere fact he has broken through to *samādhi* means that he was able to justify experience enough in his subconscious mind so that his subconscious mind could fall into line, into the habit pattern of pure concentration. When the conscious mind is in concentration upon one single thing, the subconscious mind is in concentration also, following the pattern of the conscious mind, on one particular thing. Then that expands consciousness automatically into the superconscious state of mind. With the understanding

of the functioning of the superconscious mind, and not being deluded by any of the ramifications of the superconscious mind, often a renunciate has managed to go right into the very core and actually break through to the Self. This is what has happened to him. (*Merging with Śiva*, lesson 337: “After the First Great *Samādhi*”)

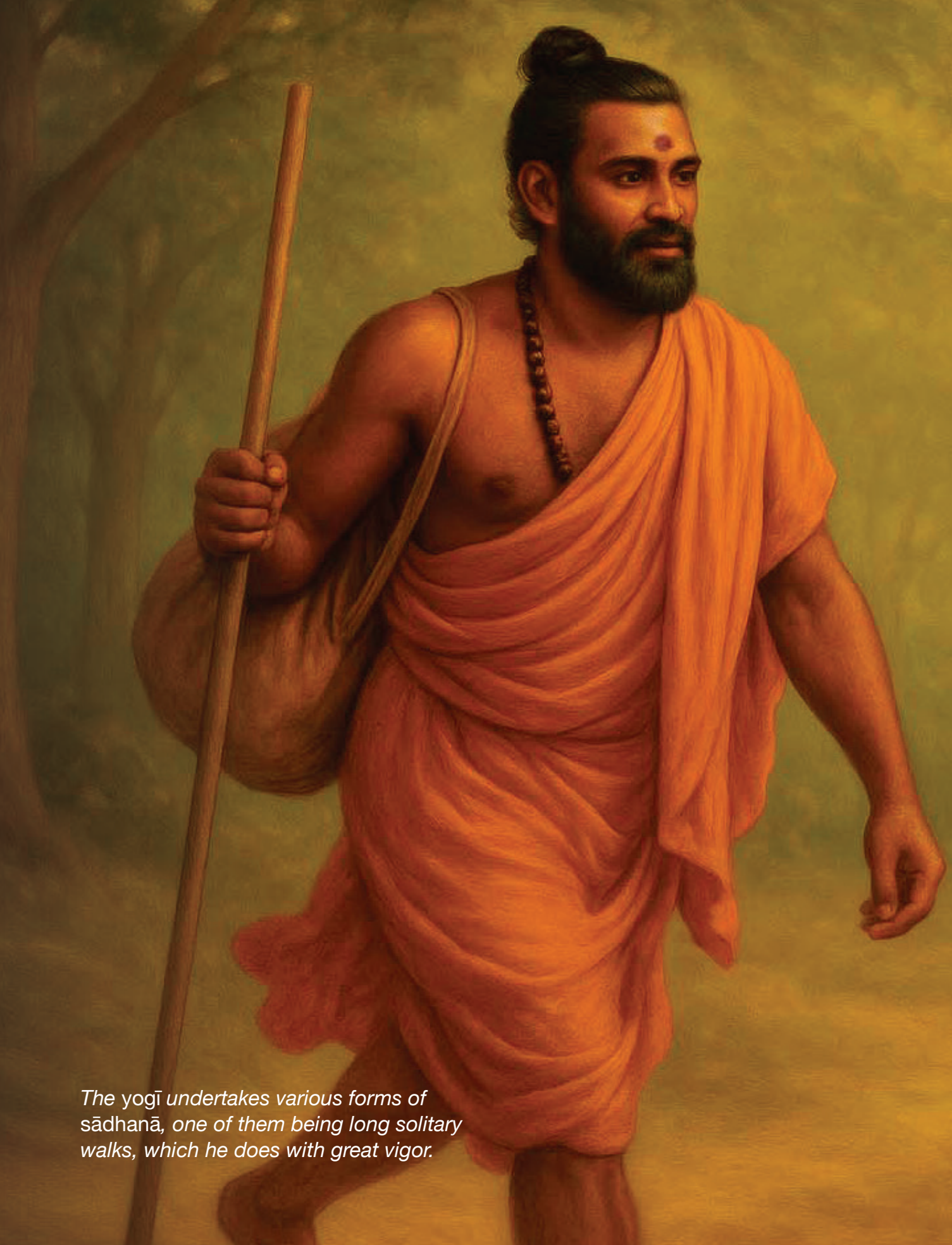
इति पतञ्जलिविरचिते योगसूत्रे प्रथमः समाधिपादः ।

iti Patañjali-viracite yoga-sūtre prathamah samādhi-pādaḥ

iti (thus), **Patañjali-viracite** (compiled by Patañjali), **yoga-sūtre** (in the *Yoga Sūtras*), **prathamah** (first), **samādhi-pādaḥ** (chapter on meditative absorption)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Thus ends chapter one, *Samādhi*,
of the *Yoga Sūtras* compiled by Patañjali.



CHAPTER TWO

Sādhana

MEANS OF ATTAINMENT

- ❖ The practices of *kriyā yoga*
- ❖ The *kleśas* and their roots
- ❖ *Yamas* and *niyamas*
- ❖ *Āsana*: meditative posture
- ❖ *Prāṇāyāma*: techniques and effects
- ❖ *Pratyāhāra*: withdrawal of the senses
- ❖ Building concentration and mental clarity

The yogī undertakes various forms of sādhanā, one of them being long solitary walks, which he does with great vigor.

द्वितीयः साधनपादः

Dvitiyaḥ, Sādhana-Pādaḥ

Chapter Two: Means of Attainment

Commentary

The second chapter is about *sādhana*, literally, “effective means of attainment,” and discusses specific religious disciplines, the purpose of which is twofold— lessening the five afflictions, or *kleśas*, and achieving *samādhi*. While *sādhana* (neuter) here means the path or means of attainment, it is closely related to *sāadhanā* (feminine), which refers to sustained spiritual practice or disciplined effort. The two are often conflated in English, but in Sanskrit the distinction is meaningful.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Yoga is the path of *sāadhanā*, or discipline, leading the advanced soul toward *jñāna*.

तपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः ॥ १॥

2.1 tapaḥ-svādhyāyēśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ

kriyā-yogaḥ (yoga of action, *kriyā*), **tapaḥ** (austerity), **svādhyāya** (self-study/ scriptural study), **īśvara-praṇidhānāni** (devotion, *praṇidhānam*; to God, *īśvara*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Kriyā yoga consists of austerity, self-study and devotion to *īśvara*.

Commentary

In modern Hindu teachings, *kriyā yoga* generally refers to a spiritual path that includes techniques of meditation, particularly those that focus on breathing techniques, *prāṇāyāma*. Here, however, the term simply means the “yoga of action.” *Kriyā* could also be rendered in English as “the yoga of religious action.” It is threefold.

Tapas, austerity, may bring to mind images of *yogīs* wintering in Himalayan caves or bathing in the freezing waters of the Gaṅgā. Though *tapas* does include such intense practices, it also includes moderate disciplines that can be done by all. A simple form of *tapas* is sacrifice. Sacrifice is the act of giving up a cherished possession, be it money, time or a treasured item.

Svādhyāya involves both the study of sacred texts and introspection. It implies a process of learning about one’s own true nature through study of important spiritual texts, reflection and meditation. Chosen texts may vary depending on the cultural and religious context, and might include works like the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Yoga Sūtras*, and other scriptures that lead to greater understanding of oneself and the universe. Commentators sometimes include as an element of self-study, *svādhyāya*, *japa*, recitation of the sacred syllable AUM and other *mantras*.

īśvarapraṇidhāna is total surrender to God. Though *yoga* as taught today tends to altogether leave out the concept of the personal God, *īśvara*, the *Yoga Sūtras* give a central place of importance to worship and devotion to *īśvara*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

External worship, *bhakti yoga*, is taught first on the spiritual path, because it produces a softened, mellow heart. It is to waste the *guru*’s time to give training in meditation and contemplation before the heart has been softened through *bhakti yoga*. The patient *guru* will wait until this has happened within the devotee. Otherwise, any accomplishment attained through intense *raja yoga* practices will not be sustained. And the problems that arise within the devotee’s subconscious mind—should he be taught *raja yoga* before the proper preparation has been mastered—will go back on the *guru*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 141: “Softening of the Heart”)

समाधिभावनाथः क्लेशतनूकरणार्थश्च ॥ २॥

2.2 samādhi-bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa-tanū-karaṇārthaś-ca

samādhi-bhāvanārthaḥ (for the purpose of, *arthaḥ*; effecting, *bhāvana*; meditative absorption, *samādhi*), **ca** (and) **kleśa-tanū-karaṇārthaḥ** (for the purpose of, *arthaḥ*; weakening, *tanūkaraṇa*; the afflictions, *kleśa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The purpose is to bring about *samādhi* and attenuate the *kleśas*.

Commentary

Patañjali is about to reveal the five obstacles to spiritual progress, which he calls the *kleśas*, the mental afflictions or existential poisons that are the root of suffering, delusion and obstacles on the spiritual path. They must be diminished to free the *yogī* to go within.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Negative qualities are just congested masses of mind-stuff that are temporary and do not allow the spirit to flow through. If you have negative qualities as boulders in your mind, the spirit cannot flow through you; but as it tries to flow through, it will automatically set a part of your mind out of control, and you will be emotional. You can’t help it. So, you must purify yourself. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 115: “You Must Purify Yourself”)

अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः ॥ ३ ॥

2.3 avidyāsmītā-rāga-dveṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ

avidyā (ignorance), **asmitā** (I-am-ness/egoism), **rāga** (desire/attraction), **dveṣa** (aversion/dislike), **abhiniveśaḥ** (clinging to life/fear of death), **kleśāḥ** (afflictions/obstacles)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The *kleśas* are: ignorance, I-am-ness, attraction, aversion and clinging to life.

Commentary

These five obstacles can all be weakened and diminished by the practice of *kriyā yoga*. It is a little-known truth of *yoga* practice that seekers must consistently attend to these impediments if they are to achieve their spiritual goals.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Spiritual unfoldment is not a process of awakening the higher *chakras*, but of closing the *chakras* below the *mulādhāra*. Once this happens, the aspirant's consciousness slowly expands into the higher *chakras*, which are always there. The only thing that keeps the lower *chakras* closed is regular *sādhana*, *japa*, worship and working within oneself. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 294: "Closing the Door to Lower Realms")

अविद्या क्षेत्रमुत्तरेषां प्रसुप्ततनुविच्छिन्नोदाराणाम् ॥ ४ ॥

2.4 avidyā kṣetramuttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanu-vicchinnodārāṇām

avidyā (ignorance), **kṣetram** (field), **uttareṣāṃ** (of the others), **prasupta** (dormant), **tanu** (attenuated), **vicchinna** (intermittent), **udārāṇām** (activated/manifest)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Ignorance is the breeding ground of the others, whether dormant, attenuated, intermittent or activated.

Commentary

Here Patañjali stresses that the first *kleśa*, *avidyā* (ignorance), is the field for the other *kleśas*—I-am-ness, attraction, aversion and clinging to life. Commentators explain that the *kleśas* are dormant in a baby, attenuated by *yogic* practices, intermittent when one *kleśa* temporarily overrides or inhibits another, or fully activated in those who make no effort to control them. Vyāsa introduces a fifth state, that of the burnt *kleśa*, *dagdha-bīja*, fried by *jñāna* such that they are no longer able to sprout. This becomes important in Patañjali's fourth *pāda*. It is understood that the *kleśas* are fully destroyed (not just incapacitated) only when the mind of the *yogī* dissolves back into *prakṛti* at death. (See Vyāsa on 2.4, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Each time you blame another person for what has happened to you, or cast blame in any way, tell yourself, "This is my *karma* which I was born to face. I did not come into

.....
By releasing the five *kleśas*, this seeker prepares to ascend to higher consciousness.

a physical body just to blame others for what happens to me. I was not born to live in a state of ignorance created by an inability to face my *karma*. I came here to spiritually unfold, to accept the *karmas* of this and all my past lives and to deal with them and handle them in a proper and a wonderful way.” Humility is intelligence; arrogance is ignorance. To accept one’s *karma* and the responsibility for one’s actions is strength. To blame another is weakness and foolishness. Let’s begin by not advertising our ignorance. If you must blame what happens to you on your friend, your neighbor, your country, your community or the world, don’t advertise it by speaking about it. Keep that ignorance to yourself. Limit it to the realm of thought. Harness your speech and at the same time work to remold your thinking and retrain your subconscious to actually accept this basic premise of Śaiva Siddhānta. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 262: “How to Face Your *Karma*”)

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ॥ ५॥

2.5 anityāśuci-duḥkhānātmasu nitya-śuci-sukhātma-khyātir-avidyā

avidyā (ignorance), **khyātiḥ** (discernment/perception), **anityāśuci-duḥkhānātmasu** (in the non-eternal, *anitya*; impure, *aśuci*; sorrowful, *duḥkha*; non-Self, *anātma*), **nitya-śuci-sukhātma** (as the eternal, *nitya*; pure, *śuci*; joyful, *sukha*; Self, *ātma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Ignorance is perceiving the non-eternal, impure and sorrowful non-Self as the eternal, pure and joyful Self.

Commentary

Here Patañjali starts a series of explorations on the five *kleśas*. He asserts that *avidyā*, ignorance, is wrongful thinking and misapprehension, engendering an erroneous understanding of existence. The body, mind and external phenomena (which are all part of *prakṛti*) are impermanent and not the true Self; yet they are mistaken as eternal, pure and pleasurable. Most people live in this state of nescience, unaware of the ways their mind is misinterpreting things. For Patañjali, the truth of existence can be known only when such false and limited perceptions are obliterated.

It is intriguing to note that the word *ātma* appears in this *sūtra* and the next as part of key philosophical discussions about ignorance and egoism. In the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies, the Self is primarily referred to as *puruṣa*, which emphasizes the witness or conscious aspect of the Self. By contrast, *ātma* can convey a broader sense of “selfhood” or individual soul, potentially influenced by Vedāntic terminology. Patañjali’s use of *ātma* may reflect a subtle integration of other philosophical streams, as also seen in his inclusion of Īśvara in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This dance of ignorance is not one of Lord Śiva’s favorite dances, though it is definitely one of His dances. He does it with a smile and a sneer, mirth and a tear on His face. He actually has most of the world doing this dance now. Ignorance is equally distributed throughout the planet. The intrinsic ability to ignore, consistently and persistently, the

eternal truths of the Sanātana Dharma is one of the great qualifications of the *āṇava mārgī*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 149: “Self-Concern, Self-Preservation”)

दृग्दर्शनशक्त्योरेकात्मतेवास्मिता ॥ ६॥

2.6 dṛg-darśana-śaktyor-ekātmatevāsmitā

asmitā (I-am-ness/egoity), **iva** (apparent/as if), **ekātmatā** (oneness/identification—one, *eka*; selfhood, *ātmatā*), **dṛg-darśana-śaktyoḥ** (of the two powers, *śaktyoḥ*; seer, *dṛg*; seeing, *darśana*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

I-am-ness stems from the apparent oneness of two powers: the seer and seeing.

Commentary

In this *sūtra* Patañjali observes that in order to avert immersion in the external ego identifications, *asmitā*, one must distinguish between the *puruṣa* and the powers of *buddhi*, the instrument of perception and knowing. It is wise to not identify with our perceptive faculties.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As we begin working with ourselves, we remold the patterns that set the course of our life. We remold our subconscious mind. We begin to identify with infinite intelligence, not with the body or the emotions or the intellect. As we prepare for the realization of the Self in this life, we set new energies into action within our body. We begin to flow our awareness out of the past and into the present, right into the now. This steadies emotion. Then we cease to have concepts that the physical body or the emotional body is “I.” We begin to claim spiritual independence and are able to watch the mind think. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 168: “Understanding Is Control”)

सुखानुशयी रागः ॥ ७॥

2.7 sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ

rāgaḥ (attraction), **sukhānuśayī** (arising from, *anuśayī*; pleasure, *sukha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Attraction arises from pleasure.

Commentary

The power of attraction, *rāga*, with its desire for experiences that bring happiness, is a powerful force driving the mind and determining its movements and decisions. For the common man it is a natural pattern, while for the *yogī* it is a principle to be understood and overcome.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

What stops you from flowing with cosmic forces and becoming one with life's ocean of eternal bliss? Is it not attachment that keeps us clinging to the bank of the river? Is it not fear that we are attached to? All of the personalities we know and the various material objects we are clinging to keep us holding tightly to the banks of life's cosmic river. The river still flows on, but we do not flow with it. We are fighting against life's currents when we allow ourselves to become attached. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 22: "The River of Life")

The conscious mind throws into its subconscious a series of erroneous thoughts based upon a false concept. This creates a deep-rooted desire or complex. Single out the seed of desire by disregarding all other corresponding erroneous thoughts. Then destroy that seed through understanding its relation in itself and to all other corresponding thoughts. The deep-rooted desire or complex will then vanish. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 20)

दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥ ८॥

2.8 duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ

dveṣaḥ (aversion), **duḥkhānuśayī** (arising from, *anuśayī*; pain, *duḥkha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Aversion arises from pain.

Commentary

Dveṣaḥ, aversion, is as potent a negative force as *rāga*, attraction, is an attracting force. For the serious *yogī*, both are to be cognized and overcome. Experiences of pain and suffering live on in the mind's memory vault, compelling actions and reactions until they are resolved through *sāadhanā* and grace.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

All movement is Śiva's dance. When we fight this movement and think it should be other than it is, we are reluctantly dancing with Śiva. We are stubbornly resisting, holding ourselves apart, criticizing the natural processes and movements around us. It is by understanding the eternal truths that we bring all areas of our mind into the knowledge of how to accept what is and not wish it to be otherwise. Once this happens, we begin to consciously dance with Śiva, to move with the sacred flow that surrounds us, to accept praise and blame, joy and sorrow, prosperity and adversity in equanimity, the fruit of understanding. We are then gracefully, in unrestrained surrender, dancing with Śiva. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 3: "What Is Meant by 'Dancing with Śiva?'")

स्वरसवाही विदुषोऽपि तथारूढोऽभिनिवेशः ॥ ९॥

2.9 svarasa-vāhī viduṣo'pi tathārūḍho'bhiniveśaḥ

abhiniveśaḥ (clinging to life), **sva-rasa-vāhī** (of one's own, *sva*; essence, *rasa*; flowing on, *vāhī*), **ārūḍhaḥ** (firmly rooted), **tathā** (likewise/also), **api** (also), **viduṣaḥ** (in the wise)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The will to live is a deep-seated instinct, present even in sages.

Commentary

Abhiniveśa, whether defined as the dread of death or clinging to life, is found in all creatures, from an earthworm to a human child. It is an instinct that protects the preciousness called life, a marvelous and mystical creation of God Śiva.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

One great peculiarity about man is that he individually feels that he is never going to die and goes on through life planning and building as though he were going to live forever and ever. The fear of death is a natural instinctive reflex. We encounter it sometimes daily, once a month, or at least once a year when we come face to face with the possibility of obliteration of our personality and of leaving the conscious mind. The fear of change or fear of the unknown is an ominous element in the destiny of a human being. The study and comprehension of the laws of reincarnation can alleviate this fear and bring an enlightened vision of the cosmic rhythms of life and death. It is a simple process, no more fantastic, shall we say, than other growth problems we experience daily. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 344: "The Transition Called Death")

ते प्रतिप्रसवहेयाः सूक्ष्माः ॥ १०॥

2.10 te pratiprasava-heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ

te (these), **sūkṣmāḥ** (subtle), **pratiprasava-heyāḥ** (abandon/eliminate, *heyāḥ*; by involution/returning to the origin, *pratiprasava*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Their subtle form is to be dissolved into their source and abandoned.

Commentary

Referred to in this *sūtra* as "these," the *kleśas* (afflictions) have a gross and a subtle form. The grosser forms, referred to as either intermittent or activated in *sūtra* 2.4, are dealt with through understanding and meditation, thereby overcoming the obstacles' outer hold. The subtler forms, spoken of here, are either dormant or attenuated. They are more difficult to overcome and retain the ability to re-engage should the *yogī* become careless.

These subtle forms are weakened by *kriyā yoga*, and disempowered through super-conscious meditation. However, they are only truly eliminated when dissolved into their immediate antecedent origins, and ultimately into their root cause, *avidyā*.

Pratīprasava, meaning “involution” or “reversal of manifestation,” describes the dissolution of the *kleśas*. Vyāsa explains it as a process where the *kleśas* are traced back to their origin, and their manifestations are reversed or dissolved into their source through meditative insight and *yogic* discipline. This dual process—tracing the *kleśas* through introspection and dissolving them at their root—embodies the *yogic* practice of self-awareness and the natural resolution of afflictions. (See Vyāsa on 2.10, Hariharananda trans.)

This process culminates in *kaivalya*, liberation, which is achieved when the conjunction between the *puruṣa* (the individual Self) and *prakṛti* (manifestation) is dissolved, allowing *puruṣa* to abide in its true, independent nature. In our monistic Śaiva Siddhānta view, the soul has returned to its source: “Even when God Realization is attained, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul, as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean. This is the destiny of all souls without exception.” (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 27: “How Is Our Soul Different from Śiva?”)

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When the mind has resolved all of its differences through worship, penance, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyaṇa*, then the inner which is stillness itself is known. Then the inner is stronger than the outer. It is then easy to see every other person going through what has to be gone through during his or her particular stage on the path. Opposites are there, but no opposites are seen. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 322: “When the Quiet Comes”)

ध्यानहेयास्तद्वृत्तयः ॥ ११॥

2.11 dhyāna-heyās-tad-vṛttayah

tad-vṛttayah (their mental activities), **dhyāna-heyāḥ** (to be overcome/eliminated, *heyāḥ*; through meditation, *dhyāna*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Their mental ramifications are overcome through meditation.

Commentary

When the mind is drawn toward worldly thought patterns and activity, driven by one or more of the *kleśas* (referred to in this *sūtra* as “their”), the *yogī* can disempower such mental fluctuations through meditation. Commentators have elaborated that this can include intentional redirection of the mind to higher thoughts, careful dismantling of the energies by discriminative perception or surrendering to grace of the Deity or the *guru* in silence. Here, according to Vyāsa, Patañjali is referring to the gross manifestation of *kleśas* and their power to produce spiritually unproductive mental activity, or *vṛttis*. In the previous *sūtra* he addressed the *kleśas* in their subtle condition,

explaining that they can be removed only by “returning to their source,” having already been diminished through *kriyā yoga* and meditation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

After you have practiced meditation for some time, your inner vision will become keen and clear. For a while there may be the feeling of arrival, that you have at last conquered life’s cycles, that you are pure now and free at last. But soon, layer by layer, your past will begin to unfold itself to you as your subconscious mind shows you in vivid, pictorial form all the vibratory rates you have put into it in this life. Like a tape recorder, it begins to play back the patterns and vibrations of previous cause and effect. Since some of these memories and actions may not have been complimentary, you may try to avoid looking at them. The more you avoid facing them, the more apparent they will become. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 101: “Clearing the Subconscious”)

क्लेशमूलः कर्माशयो दृष्टादृष्टजन्मवेदनीयः ॥ १२॥

2.12 kleśa-mūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛṣṭādrṣṭa-janma-vedanīyaḥ

kleśa-mūlaḥ (rooted, *mūlaḥ*; afflictions, *kleśa*), **karmāśayaḥ** (*karmic* repository), **dṛṣṭādrṣṭa-janma-vedanīyaḥ** (to be experienced, *vedanīyaḥ*; seen, *dṛṣṭa*; unseen, *adrṣṭa*; births, *janma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The afflictions are the root of stored karmas to be experienced in the present or future births.

Commentary

The five *kleśas* influence one’s actions and intentions, which in turn generate *karma*. When actions are strongly influenced by the *kleśas*, they are often unskillful, arising from a place of misunderstanding and ego, leading to future consequences that bind one to further suffering and rebirth. The practice of *yoga* aims to reduce the influence of *kleśas*, thereby promoting more skillful actions, reducing the accumulation of negative *karma*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The study of *yoga* is reserved for the few who have the courage to seek the depths of their being, for the few who can overcome their experiences and their desires in deep meditation. Now, you may meet in your own subconscious, as soon as you sit down to practice meditation, all of the worldly desires latent within you, including several of which you perhaps have no conscious idea. If your meditation is successful, you will be able to throw out the unnecessary experiences or desires that are consuming your mind. When you do this and you travel past the world of desire, you will begin to break free of the wheel of *karma* which binds you to the specific reaction which must follow every action. To break free of this wheel of *karma*, you must have a strong, one-pointed mind. Your only key to help you attain this one-pointedness, this steadfastness, is your devotion to God, your devotion to the realization of the Truth. Few people remain

steadfast enough under all circumstances and tests that life offers to realize the many causes and effects that are linked together in their lives. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 313: “We Mold Our Future”)

The origin of man—being spawned from Śiva, the birthless, deathless God—therefore, is as a pure, taintless soul. After thus being spawned, the soul goes through a maturing process. This slow growth is in three basic categories: *karma* exercises, *aṇava* clouds, *māyā* distorts. This classroom of these experiences finally matures an intelligence free enough from the bondage of the classroom of *aṇava*, *karma* and *māyā* to realize its own Divinity and at-one-ment with Śiva as a taintless, pure soul. This, then, is the foundation, after once attained, for final liberation, Self Realization, to be sought for. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 332: “Realization and Evolution”)

सति मूले तद्विपाको जात्यायुर्भोगाः ॥ १३ ॥

2.13 sati mūle tadvipāko jātyāyur-bhogāḥ

sati (when in existence), **mūle** (in the root), **tad-vipākaḥ** (the ripening, *vipākaḥ*; of that, *tad*), **jāti-āyus-bhogāḥ** (birth, *jāti*; lifespan, *āyus*; experiences, *bhogāḥ*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

So long as this root source exists, there is a ripening into one's kind of birth, lifespan and experiences.

Commentary

“Root source” here refers to the *kleśas*, which have powerful influence over our *karmas*. As long as the five afflictions are active, there will be *karmic* consequences, primary among them what our state and position in life will be, how long we will live and what life experiences, positive and otherwise, we will encounter. Sage Vyāsa reflects that *karmas* are only active and viable so long as the *kleśas* remain, and become sterile in the absence of the *kleśas*, like a seed which has been roasted and cannot sprout.

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If your meditation is successful, you will be able to throw out the unnecessary experiences or desires that are consuming your mind. When you do this and you travel past the world of desire, you will begin to break free of the wheel of *karma* which binds you to the specific reaction which must follow every action. To break free of this wheel of *karma*, you must have a strong, one-pointed mind. Your only key to help you attain this one-pointedness, this steadfastness, is your devotion to God, your devotion to the realization of the Truth. Few people remain steadfast enough under all circumstances and tests that life offers to realize the many causes and effects that are linked together in their lives. It is easy to study the law of *karma* and to appreciate it philosophically, but to realize it, to apply it to everything that happens to you, to understand the workings of it as the day goes by, requires an ability to which you must awaken. Attachment, desire, craving, fear of loss—these are the self-created ropes that hold man in bondage to his lower states of mind. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 260: “We Mold Our Own Future”)

ते ह्लादपरितापफलाः पुण्यापुण्यहेतुत्वात् ॥ १४ ॥

2.14 te hlādaparitāpaphalāḥ puṇyāpuṇyahetutvāt

te (these), **hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ** (fruits, *phalāḥ*; of pleasure, *hlāda*; pain, *paritāpa*), **puṇyāpuṇya-hetutvāt** (from causality, *hetutvāt*; virtue, *puṇya*; vice, *apuṇya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These bear fruits of pleasure or pain, depending on virtue or vice.

Commentary

“These” is a reference to the three topics in the last *sūtra*: condition of life, length of life and life experience. Condition of life, *jāti*, here refers to species, social class, etc. These can be full of joy or sorrow, depending on the good or not-so-good actions of the past, commonly called good and bad *karma*. Thus, even a short life can be full of pleasure, and a long life filled with anguish. A lowly farmer can be happy while the king may be miserable. Vyāsa summarizes: “The *kleśas* provoke *karma*, and *karma*, depending on its nature, produces different qualities of births, life spans and life experiences, and these, in turn, produce corresponding pleasure and pain.” (Vyāsa on 2.23, quoted in Bryant trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

One of the major keys to understanding the importance of good conduct relates to the release of seed *karmas*. Performing *dharma*—acting with correct thought, word and deed—siphons the results of previous patterns of behavior from the past and causes those seeds to sprout in this life. Like attracts like. These patterns then aid the individual by bestowing clarity of mind and a life in which *yoga* can be performed and truth sought. In the practice of *yoga*, the negative seed *karmas* can actually be burned up without ever having to be lived through. Conversely, *adharma*—wrong thought, word and deed—siphons the results of past misdeeds, like attracting like. These seed *karmas* begin to bear bitter fruit, resulting in a miserable life and state of mind. The individual is immersed in confusion, wrong patterns of thought and is, of course, in no position to practice *yoga*, follow *dharma* or realize truth. He is simply immersed in *saṁsāra*. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 264: “Good and Bad; Like Attracts Like”)

परिणामतापसंस्कारदुःखैर्गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च
दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः ॥ १५॥

2.15 pariṇāma-tāpa-saṁskāra-duḥkhair-guṇa-vṛtti-
virodhāc-ca duḥkham-eva sarvaṁ vivekinaḥ

vivekinaḥ (discerning ones), **duḥkham** (sorrow), **sarvam** (all), **eva** (indeed),
pariṇāma-tāpa-saṁskāra-duḥkhaiḥ (from sufferings, *duḥkhaiḥ*; of change,
pariṇāma; affliction, *tāpa*; latent impressions, *saṁskāra*), **ca** (and), **guṇa-vṛtti-
virodhāt** (from conflict, *virodhāt*; in the activity, *vṛtti*; of the qualities, *guṇa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**To the discerning ones, all is indeed sorrow, whether
from the suffering caused by impermanence, affliction,
saṁskāras or the turmoil of the guṇas' activities.**

Commentary

An ordinary person focuses on the transient enjoyments that come from experience. A wise man, however, looks beyond the moment, knowing that all experience is impermanent and thus cannot bring lasting joy. While this somewhat radical statement echos the philosophy of the Buddhists, the final *sūtra* in the *Yoga Sūtras* talks about the ultimate liberation (*kaivalya*), where the *yogī* is liberated from all suffering, leading to a state of true freedom and enduring bliss. In Śaiva Siddhānta, even suffering has a spiritual purpose, for it brings the soul through necessary, albeit painful, experiences that are required for growth and spiritual evolution. Thus the Śaiva Siddhāntin embraces all human experience, even suffering, knowing it is Śiva's concealing grace, *tirodhana śakti*, leading to Self Realization and liberation.

Bryant notes, "This *sūtra* is actually the pivot of this chapter, which, in turn, is the heart of the entire text. *Sūtras* 2.1–14 discuss the causes, the *kleśas*, that produce *duḥkha*; and *sūtras* 2.16 onward focus on the path to remove *duḥkha* as well as the state beyond. The chapter thus echoes the Four Noble Truths."

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

There is a divine purpose even in the existence of suffering in the world. Suffering cannot be totally avoided. It is a natural part of human life and the impetus for much spiritual growth for the soul. Knowing this, the wise accept suffering from any source, be it hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, famine, wars, disease or inexplicable tragedies. Just as the intense fire of the furnace purifies gold, so does suffering purify the soul to resplendence. So also does suffering offer us the important realization that true happiness and freedom cannot be found in the world, for earthly joy is inextricably bound to sorrow, and worldly freedom to bondage. Having learned this, devotees seek a *satguru* who teaches them to understand suffering, and brings them into the intentional hardships of *sādhana* and *tapas* leading to liberation from the cycles of experience in the realm of duality. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 51: "Why Is There Suffering in the World?")

.....
A mendicant's virtue yields the ripe fruits of joy.
He walks away from vice and its sorrowful pomes.



हेयं दुःखमनागतम् ॥ १६॥

2.16 heyam duḥkham-anāgatam

duḥkham (suffering/pain), anāgatam (yet to come), heyam (to be avoided)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Suffering that is yet to come is to be avoided.

Commentary

Suffering is avoided by acting free from the influences of the *kleśas*. Śaiva Siddhānta echoes this wisdom through its emphasis on *icchā* (divine will), *kriyā* (right action), and *jñāna* (true knowledge), all aimed at transcending *ānava*, the root impurity. Future suffering (*anāgata duḥkha*) stems from *karmas* yet to fructify—driven by the five *kleśas*: *avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (ego), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion), and *abhiniveśa* (clinging to life). Through the *guru*'s grace and inner vigilance, we weaken the *kleśas* that bind us to repeated sorrow. By aligning our life with *dharma* and seeking union with Śiva, we proactively dismantle the seeds of pain before they bear fruit. True *yoga* is thus preventive, not reactive.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When we act wrongly, we create negative *karma* for ourselves and must then live through experiences of suffering to fulfill the law of *karma*. Such *karmas* may be painful, but they were generated from our own thoughts and deeds. God never punishes us, even if we do not believe in Him. It is by means of worship of and meditation on God that our self-created sufferings are softened and assuaged. God is the God of all—of the believers within all religions, and of the nonbelievers, too. God does not destroy the wicked and redeem the righteous; but grants the precious gift of liberation to all souls. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 55: “Does God Ever Punish Wrongdoers?”)

द्रष्टृदृश्ययोः संयोगो हेयहेतुः ॥ १७॥

2.17 draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoḥ saṁyogo heya-hetuḥ

draṣṭṛ (awareness/perceiver), saṁyogaḥ (identification/conjunction), dṛśyayoḥ (with the perceived), heya-hetuḥ (cause, *hetuḥ*; to be avoided, *heya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Awareness identifying with what it is aware of is the cause to be surmounted.

Commentary

Awareness, the experiencer, or seer, mistakenly identifying with what is experienced is a fundamental misapprehension for the *yogī* to unravel in his meditations. Nothing is more fundamental, for when awareness is separated from all it is aware of, it exists truly and purely, untainted by even the loftiest experience. The “I am happy,” “I am human,” “I am in love,” all dissolves into “I am.” *Samyoga* is the term that names this identification or conjunction of awareness and its objects.

Draṣṭṛ, translated here as awareness (literally “the one who sees”) is the unchanging and passive witness that observes experiences and mental activities without engaging in them. It is pure awareness, distinct from the mind (*citta*), body and sensory faculties. *Draṣṭṛ*, in Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy, simply witnesses the activities of *prakṛti* (nature), including the fluctuations of the mind, remaining untouched and unaltered by them.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The mystic lives, and is taught to live, two-thirds within himself and only one-third in the external. In learning how to do this, the mystic is taught to become consciously conscious, or aware that he is aware. He learns to separate awareness from that which he is aware of. The person who is not a mystic, living two-thirds in the external mind, says, “I am happy,” meaning, “I am aware of a state of mind called happiness, and I am in that state, so that is me.” Or, “I am unhappy. Unhappiness is me.” The mystic living two-thirds within says to himself, “I am flowing through the area of the mind that’s always unhappy.” He doesn’t change; he is a pure state of awareness. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 29: “Awareness, a Ball of Light”)

प्रकाशक्रियास्थितिशीलं भूतेन्द्रियात्मकं भोगापवर्गार्थं दृश्यम् ॥ १८॥

2.18 prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlam bhūtendriyātmakam bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam

dṛśyam (the perceivable), prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlam (of the nature, *śīlam*; of brightness, *prakāśa*; activity, *kriyā*; and inertia, *sthitī*), bhūtendriyātmakam (consisting of, *ātmakam*; elements, *bhūta*; senses, *indriya*), bhogāpavargārtham (for the purpose of, *artham*; experience, *bhoga*; and liberation, *apavarga*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The perceivable world, characterized by illumination, activity and inertia, consisting of the elements and the senses, exists to provide both experience and liberation.

Commentary

While the sage uses the terms *prakāśa*, *kriyā* and *sthitī*, he is clearly referencing the three *guṇas*: brightness (*sattva*), activity (*rajas*), and inertia (*taṃas*). “Everything perceivable” refers to outer manifestation, the elements (*bhūta*) and the senses (*indriya*), but it does not include all of *prakṛti*, omitting the subtle elements (*mahābhūta*), the mind (*manas*, *buddhi* and *ahaṅkāra*) and unmanifest *prakṛti* (*avyakta*).

In Śaiva Siddhānta, God Śiva creates the world so that the soul may learn, grow and mature through experience—not for its own sake, but for its power to slowly purify the mind sufficiently to receive the grace known as liberation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world, we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into light and from a consciousness of death to immortality. The whole world is an *āśrama* in



Three Guṇas: Śiva watches evolution from His aerie in the Śivaloka, high above the Himalayas' cloud-bedecked icy peaks. Gaṅgādevī, the moon, an ax, *trīśūla*, *ḍamaru*, and a deer representing living creatures are held in His locks. His earrings are two powerful serpents. His locks of hair surround the world, just as Śiva encompasses all. Below, on the Earth, He is witness to the natural evolution of human life. It begins, in the green oval, with the first *guṇa* of *tamas*, the spectrum of darkness and chaos. Here humans are in the instinctive phase. Clockwise from the right, the artist has depicted an amorous couple, a businessman/farmer, two men fighting with poles, a married couple in conflict, and a man entirely confused. In the yellow oval we have the *rajas guṇa*, the intellectual experiences, activity and passion—a children's classroom, a man studying the texts, a teacher offering *upadeśa*, and a *paṇḍit* chanting sacred *śloka*s. In the lavender oval are the ways people express their spirituality—the *sattva guṇa*, the sphere of harmony and light. There is an artist creating at his easel, a generous wanderer helping a beggar, a man meditating, *yoga* practitioners, and a woman worshipping Lord Gaṇeśa. Significantly, Śiva's face itself is composed of the same colors and energies, to imply that He is not simply witnessing the three phases of energy (instinctive, intellectual and spiritual)—He is them. He is His creation.

which all are doing *sādhana*. We must love the world, which is God's creation. Those who despise, hate and fear the world do not understand the intrinsic goodness of all.

The world is a glorious place, not to be feared. It is a gracious gift from Śiva Himself, a playground for His children in which to interrelate young souls with the old—the young experiencing their *karma* while the old hold firmly to their *dharma*. The young grow; the old know. Not fearing the world does not give us permission to become immersed in worldliness. To the contrary, it means remaining affectionately detached, like a drop of water on a lotus leaf, being in the world but not of it, walking in the rain without getting wet. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 50: "Should One Avoid Worldly Involvement?")

विशेषविशेषलिङ्गमालालिङ्गानि गुणपर्वणि ॥ १९॥

2.19 viśeṣāviśeṣa-liṅgamātrāliṅgāni guṇa-parvāṇi

guṇa-parvāṇi (qualities, *guṇas*; levels, *parvāṇi*), **viśeṣa** (particularized/differentiated), **aviśeṣa** (unparticularized/undifferentiated), **liṅgamātra** (merely indicated—mere, *mātra*; *liṅga*, mark/sign), **aliṅgāni** (unmarked)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The levels of the *guṇas* are the particularized, the unparticularized, the differentiate and the undifferentiate.

Commentary

This *śloka* engenders profound discussion among commentators, as it outlines the basic categories or evolutes arising from the primordial interaction of the *guṇas* within *prakṛti*. The four levels of *guṇas* are:

- (1) *viśeṣa*: the particularized, comprising the five elements, five organs of action, five sense organs, and the *manas* (mind);
- (2) *aviśeṣa*: the unparticularized—*tanmātras* (sound, touch, form, taste and smell), and *ahaṅkāra* (I-am-ness);
- (3) *liṅga-mātra*: the differentiate—*buddhi* (intellect); and
- (4) *aliṅgāni*: the undifferentiate, which is *prakṛti* itself (*mūla-prakṛti*)—primordial matter or nature.

These evolutes constitute the 25 *tattvas* of the Sāṅkhya philosophical system. Yoga philosophy and Sāṅkhya philosophy are complementary, with Sāṅkhya providing theoretical underpinnings and *yoga* offering a practical methodology.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

God Śiva created us. He created the Earth and all things upon it, animate and inanimate. He created time and gravity, the vast spaces and the uncounted stars. He created night and day, joy and sorrow, love and hate, birth and death. He created the gross and the subtle, this world and the other worlds. There are three worlds of existence: the physical, subtle and causal, termed Bhūloka, Antarloka and Śivaloka. The Creator of all, Śiva Himself is uncreated. As supreme Mahādeva, Śiva wills into manifestation all souls and all form, issuing them from Himself like light from a fire or waves from an ocean. *Rishis* describe this perpetual process as the unfoldment of thirty-six *tattvas*,

stages of manifestation, from the Śiva-*tattva*—Parāśakti and *nāda*—to the five elements. Creation is not the making of a separate thing, but an emanation of Himself. Lord Śiva creates, constantly sustains the form of His creations and absorbs them back into Himself. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 41: “Where Did This Universe Come From?”)

द्रष्टा दृशिमात्रः शुद्धोऽपि प्रत्ययानुपश्यः ॥ २०॥

2.20 draṣṭā dṛśi-mātraḥ śuddho'pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ

draṣṭā (awareness/seer), **dṛśi-mātraḥ** (merely, *mātraḥ*; seeing, *dṛśi*), **śuddho'pi** (ever, *api*; pure, *śuddhaḥ*), **pratyaya-anupaśyaḥ** (witnessing, *anupaśyaḥ*; cognition, *pratyaya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Ever pure, awareness is simply seeing, witnessing the mind's cognitions.

Commentary

Awareness is so simple, so pure, so untainted by the things it becomes aware of. Even when it is aware of some thought or feeling or energy of the mind, or some impurity, it is not affected by that thing but remains itself unchanged. Ever pure, awareness is simply seeing, witnessing the mind's activities. It is not an entity or experiencer but the very nature of pure knowing.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The devotee who has developed the subsuperconscious area of the mind can sit quietly as a being of pure cosmic energy and observe the many thoughts of the mind without being affected by them. The intuitive knowing that we are pure awareness, the soul, and not the thoughts that we think gives the security to move from concentration into deeper meditation. The subsuperconscious state gives that inherent feeling of inner stability, the feeling of being stationary or centered within the realms of the thinking mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 197: “The State of Perfect Timing”)

तदर्थ एव दृश्यस्यात्मा ॥ २१॥

2.21 tad-artha eva dṛśyasyātmā

ātmā (essential nature), **dṛśyasya** (of the seen), **tad-artha** (that, *tad*; purpose, *artha*), **eva** (only)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By its very nature, the seen exists only for that purpose.

Commentary

Patañjali conveys a profound truth in this brief *sūtra*: the soul, or *puruṣa*, is the aware being for whom the entire universe exists. *Prakṛti*—the universe and all that can be known—has but one purpose: to fulfill *puruṣa* by “providing both experience and

liberation,” as explained in *sūtra* 2.18. The world has no meaning unless it is perceived by *puruṣa*; it exists to be seen, and only then does it become real and meaningful.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The entire range of human expression—whether intellectual achievement, social and cultural interaction, creative and psychological states of mind, instinctive desires or lofty *yogic* cognitions—is but pure experience, powerful living lessons by which the soul learns, matures and progresses nearer to God. Experience is governed by *karma* and the divine laws of *dharma*, softened through God's grace. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Resource 3, The Tradition of Masters)

कृतार्थं प्रति नष्टमप्यनष्टं तदन्यसाधारणत्वात् ॥ २२॥

2.22 kṛtārthaṁ prati naṣṭam-apyanaṣṭaṁ tad-anyā-sādhāraṇatvāt

apyanaṣṭaṁ (although, *api*; ceased to exist, *anaṣṭaṁ*), **prati** (for), **kṛtārthaṁ** (fulfilled, *kṛta*; purpose, *artha*), **tat** (it), **anaṣṭam** (not ceased), **anyā-sādhāraṇa-tvāt** (due to being, *-tvāt*; common, *sādhāraṇa*; to others, *anyā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Although what is seen ceases to exist for one whose purpose has been fulfilled, it still exists as the shared experience of others.

Commentary

For the Self-Realized soul, *puruṣa* is all that exists, as the grosser energies of *prakṛti* vanish, subsumed in the higher. The awakened one claims, “*Sarvam Śivamaya*, all is Śiva.” However, there remain other souls for whom *prakṛti*, “the seen,” is real and needed.

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As we move through the mind, the mind stays the same, just as the world stays the same as the traveler moves from city to city. Paris does not vanish when he enters New Delhi. It is still there. Others remain in the city, and he can return. Fear does not disappear from the mind when we are blissfully fearless. Others still experience it. Our awareness has simply moved to a more refined area. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 38: “Remaining Free, Detached”)



Path to Śiva: His hands held worshipfully above his head, a *yogī* follows the Śivaneri, the path to Śiva, stepping in the footsteps of the illumined ones who have gone before. His goal is the Light and Love of God Śiva, standing at the end of the path in the form of a Mukhalinga. On the left is the natural world, with its organic forces, time, space, gravity and life-giving energies. On the right is the world of man—family life, culture, villages and survival strategies that perpetuate humanity. The world has lost its allure to the *yogī*, who is remaining undistracted as he moves toward God with devotion and determination. There is a famed *śloka* in the *Mahābhārata* that says: *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*, “One should follow in the footsteps of the great, liberated ones.”

.....

स्वस्वामिशक्त्योः स्वरूपोपलब्धिहेतुः संयोगः ॥ २३ ॥

2.23 sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhi-hetuḥ saṁyogaḥ

saṁyogaḥ (identification/conjunction), **hetuḥ** (cause), **svarūpa-upalabdhi** (apprehension, *upalabdhi*; of essential nature, *svarūpa*), **sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ** (of the powers, *śaktyoḥ*; of the owned, *sva*; and the owner, *svāmi*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The identification is the key to understanding the essential nature and powers of both the owner and the owned.

Commentary

The dance of the seen and the seer is the potency needed to bring about realization. Ironically, it is the wrongful identification of the seer with the seen, equating awareness and the object of awareness, that provides the means for spiritual progress. This obscure *sūtra* focuses on the identification or union (*saṁyoga*) of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (pure consciousness and primordial matter). Vyāsa explains: “*Puruṣa* is the possessor, *svāmin*, and he is conjoined with that which he possesses, *sva*, namely *prakṛti* and her objects (the ‘seen’ of the previous *sūtra*), for the sake of experience. Worldly experience means perceiving the seen, and liberation means perceiving the real nature of the seer.” (Vyāsa on 2.23, quoted in Bryant trans.)

On the macrocosmic scale, *puruṣa* is universal consciousness—an infinite, unchanging awareness beyond personal identity—while *prakṛti* represents universal materiality, the entire manifest cosmos. On the microcosmic level, *puruṣa* is the inner consciousness, the individual Self or soul—the constant, pure observer within—while *prakṛti* is the personal world of experience.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

For the most part, monists and pluralists within Śaiva Siddhānta are of one mind. They both argue vehemently against the Advaita Vedānta view of *māyā* as mere illusion, insisting that this world has a divine purpose—the evolution of the soul—and that, even though it is only relatively real, it is certainly not unreal. (*The Guru Chronicles*, Chapter 26: “Standing Strong for Hinduism”)

तस्य हेतुरविद्या ॥ २४ ॥

2.24 tasya hetur-avidyā

hetuḥ (the cause), **tasya** (of that), **avidyā** (ignorance)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The cause of that is ignorance.

Commentary

Ignorance is the cause of the misidentified unity of the seer and the seen, and true knowledge dispels this fundamental ignorance. Thus right knowing, direct perception from the higher *chakras*, is the cause of liberation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The mystic seeks to gain the conscious control of his own willpower, to awaken knowledge of the primal force through the direct experience of it and to claim conscious control of his own individual awareness. In the beginning stages on the path, you will surely experience your mind wandering—when awareness is totally identified with everything that it is aware of. This gives us the sense, the feeling, that we are the mind or that we are the emotion or the body. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 48: “Don’t Get Sidetracked”)

तदभावात् संयोगाभावो हानं तदुशेः कैवल्यम् ॥ २५॥

2.25 tad-abhāvāt saṁyogābhāvo hānaṁ tad-dṛśeḥ kaivalyam

tad-abhāvāt (from disappearance, *abhāvāt*; of that, *tad*),
saṁyoga-abhāvaḥ (disappearance, *abhāvaḥ*; of identification, *saṁyoga*),
hānam (cessation), **kaivalyam** (liberation), **tad-dṛśeḥ** (of the seer)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**With the disappearance of that, the identification also disappears.
 This cessation constitutes the liberation of the seer.**

Commentary

“That” is a reference to “ignorance” in the previous *sūtra*. This *sūtra* marks a major milestone, as Patañjali defines the ultimate goal of *yoga*—*kaivalya*, liberation—absolute, perfect freedom from bondage and the end of suffering. It is brought about by the simple, but nearly impossible to achieve, return to pure awareness, freed from the taints, the limitations, the associations with the objects of awareness. It is achieved by eliminating the mistaken identification of the seer (*puruṣa*) with the seen (*prakṛti*). The word *kaivalya* literally translates to “the state of aloneness” or “the condition of being absolute,” which are references to the *puruṣa*’s complete detachment from all things.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Each time he enters that unspeakable *nirvikalpa samādhi*, he returns to consciousness more and more the knower. He is the liberated one, the *jīvanmukta*, the epitome of *kaivalya*—perfect freedom—far-seeing, filled with light, filled with love. One does not become a *jñānī* simply by reading and understanding philosophy. The state of *jñāna* lies in the realm of intuition, beyond the intellect. The *Vedas* say, “Having realized the Self, the *rishis*, perfected souls, satisfied with their knowledge, passion-free, tranquil—those wise beings, having attained the omnipresent on all sides—enter into the All itself.” (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 40: “What is the Nature of the *Jñāna Pāda*?”)

विवेकख्यातिरविप्लवा हानोपायः ॥ २६॥

2.26 viveka-khyātir-aviplavā hānopāyaḥ

hāna-upāyaḥ (means, *upāyaḥ*; of cessation, *hāna*), **aviplavā** (unwavering),
viveka-khyātiḥ (discriminative, *viveka*; discernment/realization, *khyātiḥ*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The means of cessation is unwavering discriminative discernment.

Commentary

When Patañjali mentions “the means of cessation” here, he is referring back to the cessation of the conjunction (*saṁyoga*) between *puruṣa* (the seer) and *prakṛti* (the seen). The means to achieve this cessation is *viveka-khyāti*, discriminative discernment. From the perspective of the meditator, we can describe this conjunction as awareness identifying with what it is aware of. Through discriminative discernment, the *puruṣa*

perceives its real nature, free from the fluctuations of *prakṛti*. This recognition dissolves the binding association, bringing an end to ignorance, attachment and the cycle of suffering, ultimately leading to liberation.

An important idea here is that a single superconscious insight is not sufficient to bring about liberation. That requires a relentless, persistent habit of perceptive insight that the seer and the seen are not one, a constant return by the *yogī* to his inmost self, the state in which he alone exists as the immortal Self apart from the transient world he perceives.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

By calling awareness to attention, awareness immediately has to detach itself from that which it was previously aware of. For when awareness is attached to that which it is aware of, it thinks it is that thing. It doesn’t think it is that thing, but seemingly so. When we detach awareness from that which it is aware of, we can move freely through the mind, first in a limited area of the mind, then in a more and more vast area of the mind. Then we learn to concentrate, which awakens the power of observation. If you have attention and concentration, the other stages come automatically. But for Self Realization, you have to really want it more than your life; for that deep *samādhi*, that’s what it is: more than your life. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 91: “After Self Realization”)

तस्य सप्तधा प्रान्तभूमिः प्रज्ञा ॥ २७॥

2.27 tasya saptadhā prānta-bhūmiḥ prajñā

prānta-bhūmiḥ (final, *prānta*; stage, *bhūmiḥ*), **prajñā** (wisdom/
 mystical insight), **tasya** (of one), **saptadhā** (sevenfold)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

At the final stage, one’s wisdom is sevenfold.

Commentary

Vyāsa expounds on the seven stages of the *yogī*’s enlightened understanding. Without reiterating them all here, it is sufficient to note the list begins with sufferings which are to be avoided and ends with “In the seventh state the insight reveals *puruṣa* abiding in itself, pure and alone.” (See Vyāsa on 2.27, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

We shall now compare the superconscious mind to an onion of seven layers, each interior layer more subtle than the outer ones. 1) Experiencing the consciousness of the eternity of the moment, as if the world was revolving around you; 2) Experiencing a cosmic energy, a divine force, flowing through your external mind which is more real to you than the external mind itself; 3) Experiencing hearing voices singing, music playing—the divine sounds of the flute, *mṛdaṅga*, *viṇā* and *tambūrā*—while in meditation or early in the morning just before awakening; 4) Experiencing seeing the

faces of Gods or *devas*, or a *rishi's* face, looking into yours while in meditation or early in the morning just before awakening; 5) Experiencing the peace and inner poise of the all-pervasive Satchidānanda; 6) Experiencing the *ānandamaya kośa*, the body of the soul, as it comes into conscious union with the physical body, 7) Experiencing being on the brink of the Absolute, Paraśiva, the void, having lost consciousness of the physical body and of being any of the five states of mind. These seven states of superconsciousness are only a few, to be sure, of this vast area of mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 192: “Be Aware of Energy”)

योगाङ्गानुष्ठानादशुद्धिक्षये ज्ञानदीप्तिराविवेकख्यातेः ॥ २८ ॥

2.28 yogāṅgānuṣṭhānād aśuddhi-kṣaye jñāna-dīptir-āvivekakhyāteḥ

yogāṅga-anuṣṭhānāt (from practice, *anuṣṭhānā*; of the limbs, *aṅga*; of *yoga*),
aśuddhi-kṣaye (upon destruction, *kṣaye*; of impurities, *aśuddhi*),
jñāna-dīptiḥ (radiance, *dīptiḥ*; of wisdom, *jñāna*), **āviveka-**
khyāteḥ (up to, *ā*; discriminative, *viveka*; realization, *khyāteḥ*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**By practicing the limbs of yoga, impurities are destroyed
and radiant wisdom leads to discriminative realization.**

Commentary

This begins the section on the eight limbs of *yoga*. Practice causes three events to happen: First, impurities dwindle. Second, with the grosser impediments removed, the radiance of the soul, *jñāna dipti*, always there but hidden, is revealed. Third, the ability to discriminate between the seer and the seen becomes possible.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To the meditating *yogī*, *darśana* is more than a communication radiating out to him from an external God or Mahādeva. It is a radiant light shining from the sanctum sanctorum of his own *saḥasrāra chakra*. Worship for him becomes completely internal as he follows that light, that *darśana*, seeking to know its source. In *yoga*, the devotee worships the transcendent aspect of God. He strengthens his body and nerve system. He disciplines the energies of mind and body. He learns to regulate his breath and to control the *prāṇas* that flow as life's force through his nerve system. In this process, the *kuṇḍalinī śakti* is lifted and the multi-petaled *chakras* unfold in all their splendor. The subtle realms within the devotee are revealed layer by layer as he methodically perfects attention, concentration, meditation and contemplation. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 364: “The Journey Called Yoga”)

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ॥ २९ ॥

2.29 yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-
dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo'ṣṭāv-aṅgāni

aṣṭau (eight), **aṅgāni** (limbs), **yama** (restraints), **niyama** (observances), **āsana** (postures), **prāṇāyāma** (breath control), **pratyāhāra** (sense withdrawal), **dhāraṇā** (concentration), **dhyāna** (meditation), **samādhi** (meditative absorption)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**The eight limbs are restraints, observances, postures, breath control, withdrawal
of the senses, concentration, meditation and meditative absorption.**

Commentary

Patañjali begins a series of sūtras discussing the limbs of *yoga*. Because of its eightfold nature, Classical Yoga is also known as *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, literally “eight-limbed *yoga*.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Aṣṭāṅga yoga, also called *rāja yoga*, has eight successive steps, each one dependent upon the one that precedes it. These eight successive steps are *yama* (restraint), *niyama* (observance), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (sense withdrawal), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (contemplation). (*Dancing with Śiva*, Introduction)

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥ ३० ॥

2.30 ahiṁsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ

ahiṁsā (noninjury), **satya** (truthfulness), **asteya** (nonstealing), **brahmacarya** (celibacy), **aparigraha** (non-possessiveness), **yamāḥ** (restraints)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Noninjury, truthfulness, nonstealing, celibacy and
non-possessiveness are the restraints.**

Commentary

The *yamas* are the “ethical restraints” which control the instinctive mind and provide a necessary foundation for the other seven limbs. Without their practice, no sustainable spiritual progress can be made. While the others are self-explanatory, it is useful to note that *aparigraha*, greedlessness, is more broadly defined as non-attachment to possessions, not clinging to things. Similarly, *brahmacarya*, celibacy, is strict for the renunciate *yogī*, but for the householder is understood to be sexual purity or fidelity, not engaging, even in thought, sexually with anyone but one's spouse. Though Patañjali lists five *yamas* and five *niyamas* in his work, other sacred texts, such as the *Śāṇḍilya Upaniṣad* and the *Tirumantiram* of Tirumular, list ten *yamas* and ten *niyamas*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Religion teaches us how to become better people, how to live as spiritual beings on this Earth. This happens through living virtuously, following the natural and essential guidelines of *dharma*. For Hindus, these guidelines are recorded in the *yamas* and *niyamas*, ancient scriptural injunctions

for all aspects of human thought, attitude and behavior. In Indian spiritual life, these Vedic restraints and observances are built into the character of children from a very early age. For adults who have been subjected to opposite behavioral patterns, these guidelines may seem to be like commandments. However, even they can, with great dedication and effort, remold their character and create the foundation necessary for a sustained spiritual life. Through following the *yamas* and *niyamas*, we cultivate our refined, spiritual being while keeping the instinctive nature in check. We lift ourself into the consciousness of the higher *chakras*—of love, compassion, intelligence and bliss—and naturally invoke the blessings of the divine *devas* and Mahādevas. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 8: “How to Live with Śiva”)

जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमा महाव्रतम् ॥ ३१ ॥

2.31 jāti-deśa-kāla-samayānavacchinnāḥ sārva-bhaumā mahāvratam

mahāvratam (great, *mahāt*; vow, *vrata*),
sārvabhaumāḥ (related to all, *sārva*; of the Earth domain, *bhauma*), **jāti-**
deśa-kāla-samaya-anavacchinnāḥ (not limited by, *anavacchinna*;
class, *jāti*; place, *deśa*; time, *kāla*; circumstance, *samaya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**These constitute the great vow and are universally valid,
irrespective of one's class, place, time or circumstance.**

Commentary

It is not uncommon, when discussing spiritual ideals to be followed, to provide some exceptions to the rules. Here, Patañjali takes a stand, decreeing that with regard to the *yamas* there are, for the *yogī*, no exceptions. As the great vow, they must be followed in all cases, in all circumstances. However, commentators discuss societal exceptions in special cases, one being the allowance of the fisherman to catch fish, or for a soldier to fight the enemy.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Not all of Earth's one billion Hindus are living in a perfect state of *ahimsa* all of the time. Sometimes conditions at hand may force a situation, a regrettable exception, where violence or killing seems to be necessary. Hindus, like other human beings, unfortunately do kill people. In self-defense or in order to protect his family or his village, the Hindu may have to hurt an intruder. Even then he would harbor no hatred in his heart. Hindus should never instigate an intrusion or instigate a death; nor seek revenge, nor plot retaliation for injuries received. They have their courts of justice, punishment for crimes and agencies for defending against the aggressor or the intruder. Before any personal use of force, so to speak, all other avenues of persuasion and intelligence would be looked into, as Hindus believe that intelligence is their best weapon. In following *dharma*, the only rigid rule is wisdom. My *satguru*, Siva Yogaswami, said, “It is a sin to kill the tiger in the jungle. But if he comes into the village, it may become your duty.” A devout Hindu would give warnings to scare the tiger or would try to capture the tiger without injury. Probably it would be the most

unreligious person in the village who would come forward to kill the tiger. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 275: “Peace and Righteous War”)

शौचसन्तोष तपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥ ३२ ॥

2.32 śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ

śauca (purity), **santoṣa** (contentment), **tapaḥ** (austerity), **svādhyāya**
(self-study/study of sacred texts), **īśvara-praṇidhānam** (devotion,
praṇidhānam; to God, *īśvara*), **niyamāḥ** (observances)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and
devotion to God are the observances.**

Commentary

Yoga's second limb is comprised of the religious observances, which encompass the fundamental spiritual practices. As with the *yamas*, Patañjali only lists five *niyamas*, while various other sacred texts list ten. Once the instinctive mind is harnessed and purified by the consistent practice of the restraints, the mind is malleable and open to the deeper practices noted here. If a seeker attempts to perform *tapas* or explore the mystical worship of Śiva without attending to the restraints, success will be all but impossible.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

These restraints and practices build character. Character is the foundation for spiritual unfoldment. The fact is, the higher we go, the lower we can fall. The top *chakras* spin fast; the lowest one available to us spins even faster. The platform of character must be built within our lifestyle to maintain the total contentment needed to persevere on the path. These great *rishis* saw the frailty of human nature and gave these guidelines, or disciplines, to make it strong. They said, “Strive!” Let's strive to not hurt others, to be truthful and honor all the rest of the virtues they outlined. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 8: “How to Live with Śiva”)

वितर्कबाधने प्रतिपक्षभावनम् ॥ ३३ ॥

2.33 vitarka-bādhane pratipakṣa-bhāvanam

vitarka-bādhane (when troubled by, *bādhane*; thoughts, *vitarka*),
pratipakṣa-bhāvanam (cultivation, *bhāvanam*; opposite, *pratipakṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When troubled by thoughts, cultivate their opposites.

Commentary

It is natural on the Śaiva spiritual path for negative thoughts to arise now and then, thoughts which are in opposition to the *yamas* and *niyamas*—thoughts of hurtfulness, lust, deceit, theft and more. Patañjali offers a *yogic* way to neutralize these thoughts and bring them into alignment with the spiritual life. He advises that the

seeker consciously ponder the opposite thought. So, when ideas of hatred arise, fill the mind with affection, and so on.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

After you have practiced meditation for some time, your inner vision will become keen and clear. For a while there may be the feeling of arrival, that you have at last conquered life's cycles, that you are pure now and free at last. But soon, layer by layer, your past will begin to unfold itself to you as your subconscious mind shows you in vivid, pictorial form all the vibratory rates you have put into it in this life. As you remain inwardly poised, watching the images of life but remaining detached, they gradually fade away, leaving awareness free to dive ever deeper into superconscious realms. This sometimes intense experience brings you into renewed desire to live the kind of life that does not produce distorted images. You become religious and consciously shape up your lifestyle according to the *yamas* and *niyamas*, so that the reverberation of each action is positive in the subconscious. You have seen the uncomplimentary results of living according to the moods and emotions of the instinctive mind and the senses, and that experience has taught a great lesson. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 101: "Clearing the Subconscious")

वितर्का हिंसादयः कृतकारितानुमोदिता लोभक्रोधमोहपूर्वका
मृदुमध्याधिमाला दुःखाज्ञानानन्तफला इति प्रतिपक्षभावनम् ॥ ३४ ॥

2.34 vitarkā himsādayaḥ kṛta-kāritānumoditā lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakā
mṛdu-madhyādhimātrā duḥkhājñānānanta-phalā iti pratipakṣa-bhāvanam

vitarkāḥ (thoughts), **himsādayaḥ** (violence, *himsā*; et cetera, *ādayaḥ*),
kṛta-kāritānumoditāḥ (acted upon, *kṛta*; caused, *kārita*; permitted, *anumoditāḥ*),
lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakāḥ (preceded by, *pūrvakāḥ*; greed, *lobha*; anger, *krodha*; delusion, *moha*), **mṛdu-madhyādhimātrāḥ** (slight, *mṛdu*; moderate, *madhya*; intense, *adhimātrāḥ*), **duḥkhājñāna-ananta-phalāḥ** (with endless, *ananta*; results, *phalāḥ*; in suffering, *duḥkha*; ignorance, *ajñāna*), **iti** (thus),
pratipakṣa-bhāvanam (cultivation, *bhāvanam*; of the opposite, *pratipakṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Thoughts such as violence—whether acted upon, caused or permitted, triggered by slight, moderate or intense greed, anger or delusion—find unending fruition in suffering and ignorance. Therefore, cultivate the opposite.

Commentary

While the previous *sūtra* was a concise and straightforward insight on negative thoughts, this one is more detailed, describing the types and sources of negative thoughts, their varying intensities and the extensive negative consequences they entail. Here Patañjali reinforces the practice of cultivating opposite, positive thoughts as a remedy.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is the baser emotions, when stimulated, that bring awareness from inner depths into the thought strata of the mind, thus strengthening human emotions and feelings with powers of reason and memory. Therefore, for those not too deeply engaged in the external emotional traps, certain *sādhana*s can be performed to regulate and control these instinctive drives. When they are less impulsive and forceful, one has a sense of being able to control one's thoughts. Later on, if the *sādhana* persists, the sense that awareness travels in and among these thoughts is felt, and still later the perceptions occur of hovering above thought, looking out upon the thought stratum of the mind or a portion of it. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 204: "Thought and Awareness")

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ॥ ३५ ॥

2.35 ahiṁsā-pratiṣṭhāyām tat-sannidhau vaira-tyāgaḥ

tat-sannidhau (in that presence), **ahiṁsā-pratiṣṭhāyām**
(established in, *pratiṣṭhāyām*; noninjury, *ahiṁsā*), **vaira-**
tyāgaḥ (abandonment, *tyāgaḥ*; of hostility, *vaira*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

In the presence of one established in noninjury, hostility is abandoned.

Commentary

When a *yogī* is firmly ensconced in noninjury, in thought, word and deed, his presence can affect the consciousness of others. More particularly, a person accustomed to feelings of hatred, enmity and hostility will find his harsh emotions quelled, mollified in the presence of a pure soul. It is said that even animals are so affected, calmed and domesticated in the proximity of a serene *yogī*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Satguru darśana opens psychic seals in the devotee by moving his awareness out of an area that he does not want to be in. Similarly, a blowtorch changes the consistency of metal. The *satguru* is like the Sun. He is just there, radiating this very pure energy like the Sun evaporates water. The *satguru's* power of *darśana* releases the meditator's individual awareness from the thinking area of mind and stabilizes him in the heart *chakra*, and he begins to awaken and unfold his Divinity. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 308: "The Devotee's Responsibilities")

सत्यप्रतिष्ठायां क्रियाफलाश्रयत्वम् ॥ ३६॥

2.36 satya-pratiṣṭhāyām kriyā-phalāśrayatvam

satya-pratiṣṭhāyām (established in, *pratiṣṭhāyām*; truth, *satya*),
kriyā-phalāśrayatvam (dependency, *āśrayatvam*, of fruit, *phala*; on action, *kriyā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When one is established in truthfulness, his actions assuredly bear fruit.

Commentary

Patañjali declares that truthfulness practiced perfectly by the *yogī* endows his actions with success and fulfillment. Some commentators suggest that the *yogī*'s pure truth-telling naturally and inevitably builds trust in his words. Support of his words elicits inspiration, a kind of universal backing of his actions, which then easily manifest in positive results.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Satya is a restraint, and as one of the ten restraints it ranks in importance as number two. When we restrain our tendencies to deceive, to lie and break promises, our external life is uncomplicated, as is our subconscious mind. Honesty is the foundation of truth. It is ecologically, psychologically purifying. However, many people are not truthful with themselves, to themselves, let alone to others. And the calculated, subconscious built-in program of these clever, cunning, two-faced individuals keeps them in the inner worlds of darkness. To emerge from those worlds, the practice of truthfulness, *satya*, is in itself a healing and purifying *sādhana*. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 13: "Satya: Truthfulness")

अस्तेयप्रतिष्ठायां सर्वरत्नोपस्थानम् ॥ ३७॥

2.37 asteya-pratiṣṭhāyām sarva-ratnopasthānam

asteya-pratiṣṭhāyām (established in, *pratiṣṭhāyām*; non-stealing, *asteya*),
sarva-ratnopasthānam (proximity, *upasthānam*; of all, *sarva*; jewels, *ratna*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When one is established in non-stealing, all treasures draw near.

Commentary

The sage continues to unravel the powers of the *yamas*, declaring that the true *yogī*'s abdication of all forms of stealing, subtle and gross, has a corresponding impact on his life. Good things, jewels, whether literal or not, are drawn to him. Good people are attracted to him and his work, wealth flows toward him for he can be trusted to manage it selflessly, and so on.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Of course, stealing must never ever happen. Even a penny, a peso, a rupee, a lira or a yen should not be misappropriated or stolen. Defaulting on debts is also a form of

stealing. But avoiding debt in principle does not mean that one cannot buy things on credit or through other contractual arrangements. It does mean that payments must be made at the expected time, that credit be given in trust and be eliminated when the time has expired, that contracts be honored to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. Running one's affairs on other peoples' money must be restrained. To control this is the *sādhana* of *asteya*. *Brahmachārīs* and *sannyāsins*, of course, must scrupulously obey these restraints relating to debt, stealing and covetousness. These are certainly not in their code of living. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 15: "Asteya: Nonstealing")

ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः ॥ ३८॥

2.38 brahmacharyapraṭiṣṭhāyām vīryalābhaḥ

brahmacharya-pratiṣṭhāyām (established in, *pratiṣṭhāyām*; celibacy, *brahmacharya*), **vīryalābhaḥ** (acquisition of, *lābhaḥ*; vitality, *vīrya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When established in celibacy, one obtains great vitality.

Commentary

Sex has unmistakable powers, being the force that perpetuates life in all species. When that power is controlled, transmuted, instead of dissipated in physical and mental expression, the force of it is internalized. The *yogī* harnesses the life force, and instead of dissipating it, he redirects it within. This energy, being contained, brings strength and a vitality that is visible. *Yogīs* are known for their radiance, vigor, creativity and energy.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Love, including sex, is one of the legitimate four goals of life, according to our religion. Sex is not bad. Its place, however, is properly within the confines of a sanctified marriage. Nor are sex drives unnatural. The goal of the *brahmacārī* and *brahmacāriṇī* is not to become fearful of sex, but to understand sex and the sexual impulses in a balanced way. During the time of *brahmacharya*, the goal is to control the sex urges and transmute those vital energies into the brain to gain a great mental and spiritual strength. Yes, this vital life force must be focused on studies and spiritual pursuits. The spiritual value of celibacy has long been understood in the Hindu tradition. Most religions also provide a tradition of monastic life in which young men take lifetime vows of celibacy. Many of our greatest spiritual lights were celibate throughout their entire life, including Siva Yogaswami, Shankara and Swami Vivekananda. Others, such as Buddha, Gandhi and Aurobindo, became celibate after a period of marriage. For the individual preparing for monastic life, *brahmacharya* is essential in harnessing and transmuting the powerful sexual life energies into spiritual and religious concerns. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 64: "The Power of Purity")

अपरिग्रहस्थैर्ये जन्मकथन्तासम्बोधः ॥ ३९॥

2.39 aparigraha-sthairye janma-kathantā-sambodhaḥ

aparigraha-sthairye (steadfast in, *sthairye*; non-possessiveness, *aparigraha*), **janma-kathantā-sambodhaḥ** (knowledge, *sambodhaḥ*; of the manner, *kathantā*; of birth, *janma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When non-possessiveness is steadfast, knowledge of the how and why of births is revealed.

Commentary

By restraining attachments, greediness and the urge to possess things, one is sufficiently detached to see into births, past, present and future. Specifically, the causal mechanism of a birth is known, along with the reasons for it, meaning its purpose in the evolution of the soul.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Dharma is to the individual what its normal development is to a seed—the orderly fulfillment of an inherent nature and destiny. *Dharma* means merit, morality, good conduct, religious duty and the way of life of the wise person. When people fulfill their *dharma*, they fulfill the very purpose of their life; and when they act against their *dharma*, they create new *karmas*. Just as we are born in a physical body with a certain outward appearance, our *dharma* is a certain accumulated pattern. We are expected to live through this *dharma* during a lifetime, understanding that all persons can be in their rightful place, doing their rightful *dharma* at the right time. The Hindu has this understanding. It's inbred. It offers a certain contentment in knowing that there is a rightful place for each soul in this vast universe. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 253: "What Is *Dharma*?")

शौचात् स्वाङ्गजुगुप्सा परैरसंसर्गः ॥ ४०॥

2.40 śaucāt-svāṅga-jugupsā parair-asamsargah

śaucāt (from purity), **svāṅga-jugupsā** (aversion, *jugupsā*; for one's own body, *svāṅga*), **paraiḥ-asamsargah** (disassociation, *asamsargah*; from others, *paraiḥ*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From purity arises a detachment from one's body and a natural withdrawal from external association.

Commentary

Patañjali now turns to the *niyamas*, the practices, of which the first is purity. As purity is sought, there comes a refinement of the soul which affects body, mind and emotions. This purity reveals the gross nature of the physical body, full as it is of diseases, infections and other corruptions. Seeing this from his state of refinement, the seeker

easily achieves a detachment from his physical home. This is a gift, for it makes it easier to transcend body consciousness and soar within.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Purity for the *sannyāsin* may be defined as wisdom in handling the forces of the mind and body, including the sexual instincts. In aspiring toward the ideals of purity, the Śaiva *sannyāsin* must attune himself to the inner worlds, the Second and Third Worlds. He must strive to live the contemplative life, cautiously avoiding undue or unseemly involvement with the world. He must associate with other Hindu devotees, seeking the company of good and holy men. He must be pure in his thoughts, never allowing his mind to indulge in sexual fantasies. He must speak pure words that reflect the purity of his thought, never using harsh, angered or indecent language. (*Holy Orders of Sannyāsa*, "The Vow of Purity")

सत्त्वशुद्धिसौमनस्यैकाग्र्येन्द्रियजयात्मदर्शन-योग्यत्वानि च ॥ ४१॥

2.41 sattva-śuddhi-saumanasyaikāgryendriya-jayātma-darśana-yogyatvāni ca

sattva-śuddhi (purity, *śuddhi*; of luminosity, *sattva*), **saumanasya** (cheerfulness), **aikāgrya** (one-pointedness), **indriya-jaya** (mastery, *jaya*; of the senses, *indriya*), **ātma-darśana-yogyatvāni ca** (and, *ca*, fitness, *yogyatvam*; perceiving, *darśana*; the Self, *ātma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From purity of the luminous mind arise cheerfulness, one-pointedness, mastery of the senses and fitness to realize the Self.

Commentary

The use of *ātma-darśana* in this *sūtra* is highly significant, marking a rare moment in which Patañjali explicitly points to the direct realization of the Self. It complements the more methodical tone of the rest of the text, which focuses on discriminative discernment (*viveka-khyāti*) as the primary tool for liberation. This unique inclusion reminds us that while discernment is the means, realization (*ātma-darśana*) is the transformative culmination of the *yogic* journey.

"The luminous mind" here translates the word *sattva*, which in this context refers to *buddhi* (the cognitive mind) illuminated by *sattva guṇa*—the quality of clarity, purity and luminosity. *Buddhi*, when dominated by *sattva* in an individual, enables discriminative realization (*viveka-khyāti*), ultimately leading to liberation. Later, in *sūtra* 3.55, Patañjali explains that liberation becomes possible when the purity of the luminous mind matches the purity of the *puruṣa*, the individual Self.

The seeker benefits immensely from purity of mind, finding himself naturally immersed in states of blessedness, joy and clarity. Just as physical purity shielded him from detrimental exposure, mental purity protects him from deleterious thoughts and feelings. He will naturally avoid those who are not pure, those whose actions and



Distractions: Beneath a spreading banyan tree sits a *yogī* in firm *padmāsana*, dwelling more inside than out. He is surrounded by astral and worldly forces of distraction, assailed on all sides by threats, temptations, desires and fascinations of all sorts. Yet, he is not moved, but remains *summa*—still, centered on God Śiva within. Below, devilish ghouls attack him with swords of hate and spears of fear. Winsome maidens dance to seduce him. Wealthy merchants bring silks, gems and other riches to purchase his attention, and *paṇḍits* draw near to entice him with knowledge. A wizard conjures spellbinding illusions, his wife holding “something miraculous” beneath a cloth. Families lovingly approach with sumptuous foods. Above, five *devas* gather, well aware of the strength needed, sending divine blessings to the *yogī*, urging him to stay the course.

thoughts and emotions are of the instinctive, lower nature. He will avoid such defiling and corrupting associations, seeking to affiliate only with like-minded souls.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Purity is the natural heritage of men and women disciplined in mind and body, who think before they speak, speaking only that which is true, kind, helpful and necessary. People whose thoughts are pure—and this means being in line with the *yamas* and *niyamas*—and whose bodies are free from incompatible alien obstructions, are naturally happy, content and ready to perform *japa*. To be pure in mind means to have a bright, luminous aura filled with the pastel hues of the primary and secondary colors under every circumstance and life situation. Those who practice this restraint have realized that thoughts create and manifest into situations, actual physical happenings. Therefore, they are careful what they think and to whom they direct their thoughts. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 29: “*Śauca*: Purity”)

सन्तोषादनुत्तमः सुखलाभः ॥ ४२ ॥

2.42 *santoṣād-anuttamaḥ sukhālābhaḥ*

santoṣād (from contentment), **anuttamaḥ** (unsurpassed),
sukha-lābhaḥ (attainment, *lābhaḥ*; of happiness, *sukha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From contentment, unsurpassed happiness is attained.

Commentary

Contentment is the second *niyama*. This practice brings great joy into the seeker’s life, for he has mastered the skill of acceptance—acceptance of the good and the not-so-good that life brings, acceptance of his *karmas* as they wash over him, acceptance of all that Śiva has created. Joy, being the nature of the soul, is ever with him. He does not ride the vicissitudes of life, now up and now down. He is steady, fulfilled, centered and secure—happy to be who he is, where he is.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Contentment is a quality that everyone wants, and buys things to obtain—“Oh, if I only had my house redecorated, I would be content.” “A new wardrobe would content me, give me joy and serenity.” “To be content, I must have a vacation and get away from it all. There I can live the serene life and have joyous experiences.” The *dharmic* way is to look within and bring out the latent contentment that is already there by doing nothing to inhibit its natural expression, as *santoṣa*, the mood of the soul, permeates out through every cell of the physical body. Contentment is one of the most difficult qualities to obtain. Life is meant to be lived joyously. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 36: “*Santoṣa*: Contentment”)

कायेन्द्रियसिद्धिरशुद्धिक्षयात् तपसः ॥ ४३ ॥

2.43 *kāyendriya-siddhir-aśuddhi-kṣayāt tapasaḥ*

tapasaḥ (from austerity), **aśuddhi-kṣayāt** (from the removal,
kṣayāt; of impurities, *aśuddhi*), **kāya-indriya-siddhiḥ** (perfection,
siddhiḥ; of the body, *kāya*; and the senses, *indriya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**From austerity, which removes impurities, comes
the perfection of the body and senses.**

Commentary

Tapas, austerity, is the third *niyama*, coming from the root *tap*, “to burn.” *Tapas* is a fiery practice which incinerates all dross of the mind, which has the power to burn up and destroy *karmas* yet to be faced. These self-imposed disciplines take many forms: fasting, severe and prolonged meditations, celibacy, observance of silence, living in severe circumstances, hardships of many kinds which soften the ego. The difficulties of life which are forced upon us have a similar effect, but when hardships are undertaken intentionally, their power to transform our nature is immeasurable. Patañjali tells us that the result of *tapas* well performed is nothing less than the perfection of the senses and body. Vyāsa tells us that austerity incinerates the impure covering of

tamas and *rajas*, allowing the manifestation of mystical powers, *siddhis*, such as clairvoyance and clairaudience. (See Vyāsa on 2.43, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To atone for misdeeds, penance is obligatory. We must quickly mitigate future effects of the causes we have set into action. This is done through such acts as performing 108 prostrations before the God in the temple. *Tapas* is even more austere. It may come early in a lifetime or later in life, unbidden or provoked by *rāja yoga* practices. It is the fire that straightens the twisted life and mind of an individual, bringing him into pure being, giving a new start in life, awakening higher consciousness and a cosmic relationship with God and the Gods, friends, relatives and casual acquaintances. *Tapas* in Hinduism is sought for, feared, suffered through and loved. Its pain is greater than the pains of parturition, but in the aftermath is quickly forgotten, as the soul, in childlike purity, shines forth in the joys of rebirth that follow in the new life. Truly, *tapas* in its fullest form is sought for only by the renunciate under the guidance of a *satguru*, but this madness often comes unbidden to anyone on this planet whose dross of misdeeds spills over. The only difference for the Hindu is that he knows what is happening and how it is to be handled; or at least the *gurus* know, the *swāmīs* know, the elders know, the astrologers know. This knowledge is built into the Hindu mind flow as grout is built into a stone wall. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 61: “*Tapas*, Austerity”)

स्वाध्यायाद् इष्टदेवतासम्प्रयोगः ॥ ४४ ॥

2.44 svādhyāyād iṣṭadevatā-samprayogaḥ

svādhyāyād (from self-study), iṣṭa-devatā-samprayogaḥ
(communion, samprayogaḥ; with the chosen, iṣṭa; Deity, devatā)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Self-study brings communion with one's chosen Deity.

Commentary

Besides delving into one's nature and being for deeper understandings, self-study commonly includes chanting God's names and studying the sacred texts, for these dwell on the inner being of man and his spiritual path. Such practices, it is said, refine the seeker's nature, making it more like that of the divine beings, *rishis* and *siddhas*, who can then relate to the seeker from their subtle world. Śaivites often have a *deva* or Mahādeva with whom they relate most intimately. It can be Gaṇeśa, Murugan or others.

In a way, this is their personal Divinity, less aloof than Śiva (Īśvara), more accessible. It is considered that the relationship with the Iṣṭa Devatā will bring one closer to Śiva, whose grandeur and magnificence can make Him seem remote. This allusion by Patañjali gives further evidence of his understanding of the three worlds (Śivaloka, Devaloka and Bhūloka) and their interrelated importance on the *yogic* path. Along with his crucial references to Īśvara, it shows his strong divergence from the prevailing Sāṅkhya philosophy of his day.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The Hindu traditionally adopts an Iṣṭa Devatā. This is a personal Deity chosen from the many Hindu Gods, often according to the devotee's family background or the feeling of closeness to one form of divine manifestation. It is the unique and all-encompassing nature of Hinduism that one devotee may be worshipping Gaṇeśa while his friend worships Subramaṇiam or Viṣṇu, and yet both honor the other's choice and feel no sense of conflict. The profound understanding and universal acceptance that are unique in Hinduism are reflected in this faculty for accommodating different approaches to the Divine, allowing for different names and forms of God to be worshiped side by side within the temple walls. It may even happen that one may adopt a different personal Deity through the years according to one's spiritual unfoldment and inner needs. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 127: “The Nature of Devotion”)

समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् ॥ ४५ ॥

2.45 samādhi-siddhir-īśvara-praṇidhānāt

samādhi-siddhiḥ (attainment, siddhiḥ; of samādhi),
īśvara-praṇidhānāt (from surrender, praṇidhānāt; to God, īśvara)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The attainment of samādhi comes from surrender to Īśvara.

Commentary

While the boons and blessings accruing from all the earlier practices are worthy, it is through total surrender to Śiva that the ultimate attainment called *samādhi* is most efficiently achieved. It is surprising, therefore, that many commentators do not give such heartfelt devotion its due. This is evident in the way the concept of Īśvara (God) is often treated more as a symbolic or instrumental aspect of the path to Self Realization rather than as an end in itself. Many Vedāntic interpreters do not place significant value on devotion as a fundamental element of *yoga*. Patañjali certainly gave this spiritual practice pride of place, treating meditation on Īśvara as the highest form of meditation. It is here that Patañjali, historically interpreted in a Vedāntic manner, shows his theistic convictions, demonstrating his alignment with the monistic theism found in Śaiva Siddhānta.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is only in the stage of grace, *arul*, and on its doorstep that true worship arises, which is invoking and opening up to the great beings, God, Gods and *devas*, in order to commune with them. Faith, *āstikya*, creates the attitudes for the action of worship. We can see that from the soul's conception to its fullness of maturity into the final merger with God Śiva Himself, worship, communication, looking up, blending with, is truly monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, the final conclusions for all mankind. Worship is the binding force that keeps the Hindu family together. On a deeper level, external worship is internalized, worshipping God within through meditation and contemplation. This



form of worship leads into *yoga* and profound mystical experiences. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 47: “Īśvarapūjana: Worship”)

स्थिरसुखम् आसनम् ॥ ४६॥

2.46 *sthira-sukham āsanam*

āsanam (posture), *sthira-sukham* (steady, *sthira*; comfortable, *sukham*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Meditative posture should be steady and comfortable.

Commentary

One’s meditation posture is directly related to how deep one’s meditation is. It is important to take time to find a posture that is comfortable. When the most suitable pose has been mastered, the body will remain still, allowing awareness to soar within without physical distractions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Haṭha yoga is a system of bodily postures, or *āsanas*, created as a method for the *yogī* practicing *yoga* for long hours each day, performing *japa* and meditation, to exercise and keep the physical body healthy so that his meditations could continue uninhibited by disease or weakness. That is how it was explained to me long ago. The great, fully illumined *rishis* of old, in order to serve mankind, completely inwardly motivated the external world for good upon good upon good, as do the great *rishis* of India today as well. They sat in their caves, in forests or on river banks to think upon the *karma* of the masses and take it into their minds by understanding mankind’s predicaments. The impact of the cause-and-effect actions would affect their physical body. Outside of meditation, they would perform their routine of *āsanas* to untie the knots of these *karmas* they had taken onto themselves, and the villages and the countries and the individuals within them would improve. These great *yogīs* were, indeed, not unlike the Gods. The purpose of *haṭha yoga* today again is the same—to keep the physical body, emotional body, astral body and mental body harmonious, healthy and happy so that awareness can soar within to the heights of divine realization. (*Living with Śiva*, Resource 1: “*Hatha Yoga*”)

.....
In a remote forest, a family practices *prāṇāyāma* to calm the mind and prepare for performing *japa*. Just as the tortoise withdraws into its shell, they will practice *pratyāhāra* to withdraw the senses.

प्रयत्नशैथिल्यानन्तसमापत्तिभ्याम् ॥ ४७॥

2.47 prayatna-śaithilyānanta-samāpattibhyām

prayatna-śaithilya (relaxation, *śaithilya*; of effort, *prayatna*),
ananta-samāpattibhyām (absorption, *samāpattibhyām*; in the infinite, *ananta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through relaxation of effort and absorption in the infinite, this is achieved.

Commentary

Ananta samāpatti, a term used in this *sūtra*, is described as experiencing yourself as infinite space, knowing you extend out beyond your physical body into the surrounding environment, and beyond that into Śiva's vastness. Without effort, awareness soars into the infinite. Here the sage is counseling the seeker to learn the art of letting go, of not struggling overmuch. Minimal effort brings infinite absorption.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Now we begin to see the vastness and yet the simplicity of the superconscious mind as awareness flows through it. Nothing is there for awareness to attach itself to. When aware of something other than itself, awareness is in its natural state in subsuperconsciousness. Occasionally in superconsciousness we can feel and actually inwardly see the inner body, the body of the soul, and we can feel this body inside the physical body. This is the body of light. Then we know through feeling and seeing that this body has existed and will exist forever and ever and ever, and we enjoy moving within the energies of this inner body. As we feel them, we become so quiet, so centered, that awareness is aware of itself so intently that we are right on the brink of the Absolute, ready to dissolve, to merge, into That which is man's heritage on Earth to realize, the maturity of his being, the Self God. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 42: "Maturity of Being")

ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः ॥ ४८॥

2.48 tato dvandvānabhighātaḥ

tataḥ (then/therefore), **dvandva-anabhighātaḥ** (non-disturbance, *anabhighātaḥ*; pairs of opposites, *dvandva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then one is undisturbed by the pairs of opposites.

Commentary

Patañjali subtly references the previous *sūtra* to stress the centrality of *āsana*, sitting effortlessly in a meditative pose. He offers that this has the effect of balancing the nerve system, centering the *yogī's* awareness so profoundly that he is no longer assailed by the natural assault of opposites: hot and cold, pleasure and pain, comfort

and discomfort. With these subdued, there arises a detachment from the body which allows the *yogī* to focus on the inner work and not the outer distractions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When we begin to meditate, we have to transmute the energies of the physical body. By sitting up straight, with the spine erect, the energies of the physical body are transmuted. The spine erect, the head balanced at the top of the spine, brings one into a positive mood. In a position such as this we cannot become worried, fretful or depressed or sleepy during our meditation. Slump the shoulders forward and short-circuit the actinic forces that flow through the spine and out through the nerve system. In a position such as this it is easy to become depressed, to have mental arguments with oneself or another, or to experience unhappiness. With the spine erect and head balanced at the top of the spine, we are positive, dynamic. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 81: "Transmuting the Energies")

तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥ ४९॥

2.49 tasmin-sati śvāsa-prāśvāsayor-gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ

tasmin-sati (when established, *sati*; in that, *tasmin*),
prāṇāyāmaḥ (breath control), **śvāsa-prāśvāsayoḥ** (of inhalation, *śvāsa*; and exhalation, *prāśvāsa*), **gati-vicchedaḥ** (interruption, *vicchedaḥ*; of movement, *gati*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

With this achieved, *prāṇāyāma* follows, controlling both inhalation and exhalation.

Commentary

"With this achieved" refers to posture. With a strong foundation of meditative posture, the restraint of breath becomes possible, even natural. The sage is implying that each of these stages rests on the previous one. The success of *āsana* rests on following the *yamas* and *niyamas*, and the attainment of *prāṇāyāma* requires a certain mastery of *āsana*. Breath is one of the fundamental biological processes that is both autonomic and somatic, controlled by the body without conscious intervention most of the time, but controllable by the individual when necessary. This conscious control of breath has deep reverberations in the mind, like putting reins on a horse so it will obey the rider's directions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

We have to use willpower to control the breath. When we do control the breath, we begin to have an immense control, and awareness begins to become detached from that which it is aware of. This means that we are consciously conscious of what we are aware of—that we are aware. We control our individual awareness more than we realize when we practice the regulation and control of breath. For instance, as we breathe, *prāṇāyāma*—in on nine counts, hold one, out on nine counts, hold one—we find that

we begin to become more alert, more alive. Our awareness is more subtle and refined. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 58: “The Subtlety Within You”)

बाह्याभ्यन्तरस्तम्भवृत्तिदेशकालसङ्ख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घसूक्ष्मः ॥ ५० ॥

2.50 bāhyābhyantara-stambha-vṛttir-deśa-kāla-saṁkhyābhiḥ paridr̥ṣṭo dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ

paridr̥ṣṭaḥ (observed), bāhyabhyantara-stambha-vṛttiḥ (modes, vṛttiḥ; of external, bāhya; internal, abhyantara; retention, stambha), deśa-kāla-saṁkhyābhiḥ (by, -bhiḥ; place, deśa; time, kāla; number, saṁkhyā), dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ (prolonged, dīrgha; and subtle, sūkṣmaḥ)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When observed, the external, internal and restrained modes become prolonged and subtle, based on place, time and number.

Commentary

Patañjali speaks here of three modes of breath control. Halting the breath after the inbreath is termed “internal,” If held following the outbreath, he terms it “external.” When breath is totally stopped, he calls it “restrained.” Further, his cryptic reference to the breath’s place, time and number are rich in meaning, requiring analysis to understand. *Place* can refer to the proper *yogic* environment where the breath is being controlled, or to the areas of the body to which the breath is directed, or to the place of control, the upper chest or the diaphragm. *Time* refers to the length of the breath, whether quick or slow and *number* refers to the *yogī*’s repetitions, the cycles of inhalation and exhalation he chooses to practice. All of these can make the practice simple and basic or increasingly more difficult and complex as advanced control is mastered.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Controlling the breath is the same as controlling awareness. They go hand in hand. During meditation, the breath, the heartbeat, metabolism—it all slows down, just like in sleep. You know, deep meditation and deep sleep are extremely similar. Therefore, the practice of *prāṇāyāma* and regulation of the breath, the *prāṇas*, the currents of the body, should really be mastered first. In the very same way, the dancer doesn’t just start out dancing. He starts out exercising first. He may exercise strenuously for a year before he begins to really dance. The pianist doesn’t sit down at the piano and start with a concert. He starts with the scales and with the chords. He starts by limbering his fingers, by perfecting his rhythm and posture. Meditation has to be taught like one of the fine arts. It’s only the finely refined person who can really learn to meditate. Not everyone who wants to meditate can learn to meditate. Not everyone who wants to learn to dance or to play the piano can learn how to really, really do it. We need this preparation of the physical body so that the physical and emotional bodies behave themselves while you are in a deep state of meditation. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 254: “Meditation Is a Fine Art”)

बाह्याभ्यन्तरविषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः ॥ ५१ ॥

2.51 bāhyābhyantara-viṣayākṣepī caturthaḥ

caturthaḥ (the fourth), bāhyābhyantara-viṣayākṣepī (transcending, ākṣepī; the field/domain, viṣaya; of external, bāhya; internal, abhyantara)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The fourth transcends the external and internal domains.

Commentary

Consciously regulating the breath for an extended period leads to the stage where the breath is halted. This goes beyond the measured suspension of breath after inhalation and exhalation referred to as the three “modes” in the last *sūtra*. This *sūtra* refers to a fourth, more advanced, cessation, *kevala-kumbhaka*, as named by Vijñānabhikṣu. In this advanced stage, the breath can be suspended for long periods as the life force is harnessed and normal metabolism subdued. The sustained suspension of breath is a rare *yogic* attainment.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Your breath will slow down until you almost seem to stop breathing. Sometimes you do, and you’re breathing with an inner breath. You have to educate yourself to that so it doesn’t make you fearful and bring you out of meditation with a jerk and a gasp, which can then inhibit you. You can get fearful in meditation. So, good basics must be learned for one to become a deep meditator. You can spend hours or years working with the breath. Find a good teacher first, one who keeps it simple and gentle. You don’t need to strain. Start simply by slowing the breath down. Breathe by moving the diaphragm instead of the chest. This is how children breathe, you know. So, be a child. If you learn to control the breath, you can be master of your awareness. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 254: “Meditation Is a Fine Art”)

ततः क्षीयते प्रकाशावरणम् ॥ ५२ ॥

2.52 tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśāvaraṇam

tataḥ (then/therefore), kṣīyate (is diminished), prakāśāvaraṇam (covering, āvaraṇam; of light, prakāśa)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From that, the veiling of light is diminished.

Commentary

“From that” is a reference to the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, which internalizes the *yogī* so that the coverings which normally conceal the inner light are weakened, allowing him to experience his natural effulgence. Vyāsa describes this shroud as a great net of one’s past and present *karmas* that conceals the true self. (See Vyāsa on 2.52, Hariharananda trans.)



Kriyā Yoga: Ardhanārīśvara, soaring gracefully in the Śivaloka, witnesses the three major yoga practices described by Rishi Patañjali—*tapas*, *svādhyāya* and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*. On the left, three *yogīs* are meditating and performing *prāṇāyāmas* in high Himalayan caves, their bodies covered with ice in a severe *yoga tapas*. Rabbits, small foxes and a cobra find warmth in their laps. In the middle, two *yogīs* are engaged in *svādhyāya*, which includes scriptural study with a *guru*. Attentive parrots listen to the *guru's upadeśa*. On the right, in the third practice, *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*, a man and his wife perform *pūjā* to a cobra-guarded Śivaliṅga beneath a *bilva* tree, offering devotional love and *bilva* leaves to God Śiva.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Breath controls *prāṇa*. This practice is called *prāṇāyāma*. It is the control of *prāṇa*, the regulation of *prāṇa*, or the withdrawal of *prāṇa* from the external world back to its primal source. That is why *prāṇāyāma* is so important to practice systematically, regularly, day after day, so we get all the *prāṇa* into a rhythm. In this way we get a rhythm of the pure life force flowing through *idā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumṇā* and out through the aura. We gain a rhythm of awareness soaring inward, into refined states of the *ājñā chakra* and *sahasrāra chakra*, the perspective areas from which we are looking out at life as if we were the center of the universe. This is how we feel when we are in these *chakras*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 262: “How to Face Your Karma”)

धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः ॥ ५३ ॥

2.53 dhāraṇāsu ca yogyatā manasaḥ

ca (and), **yogyatā** (fitness), **manasaḥ** (of the mind), **dhāraṇāsu** (in concentration)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Thus the mind becomes fit for concentration.

Commentary

Once the beclouding *karmas* and sensory distractions have sufficiently withdrawn from the *yogī's* experience, he is ready, fit, for true concentration. This power to focus the mind pertains to both his outer and inner life, on the gross matters of the world outside him and the subtle reflections within. The instrument of his mind has been fine-tuned, like a laser, and turning that power upon any object or subject can reveal new knowledge and insight.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

“How does one know if he is really meditating or not?” That’s a question that a lot of people who meditate ask themselves. When you begin to know, having left the process of thinking, you are meditating at that point. When you sit down and think, you are beginning the process of meditation. For instance, if you read a metaphysical book, a deep book, and then sit quietly, breathe and start pondering what you have been reading, well, you’re not quite meditating. You’re in a state called concentration. You’re organizing the subject matter. When you begin to realize the interrelated aspects of what you have read, when you say to yourself, “That’s right. That’s right,” when you get these inner flashes, the process of meditation has just begun. If you sustain this intensity, insights and knowledge will come from the inside of you. You begin to connect all of the inner flashes together like a string of beads. You become just one big inner flash. You know all of these new inner things, and one insight develops into another, into another, into another. Then you move into a deeper state, called contemplation, where you feel these beautiful, blissful energies flow through the body as a result of your meditation. With disciplined control of awareness, you can go deeper and deeper into that. So, basically, meditation begins when you move out of the process of thinking. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 253: “What Is Meditation?”)

स्वविषयासम्प्रयोगे चित्तस्यस्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ॥ ५४ ॥

2.54 svaviṣayāsamprayoge cittasyasvarūpānukāra
ivendriyāṇām pratyāhāraḥ

pratyāhāraḥ (withdrawal), **indriyāṇām** (of the senses),
sva-viṣaya-asamprayoge (disconnection, *asamprayoge*; from their,
sva; objects, *viṣaya*), **svarūpa-anukāraḥ** (imitation, *anukāraḥ*; of the
natural state, *svarūpa*), **iva** (as it were), **cittasya** (of the mind)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Withdrawal of the senses—disconnecting from their objects—
mimics, as it were, the natural state of the mind.**

Commentary

Patañjali is again reminding us that the mind is by nature pure, complete and aware. But sense objects distract it, externalize it. When the *yogī* learns to withdraw the senses, those distractions diminish and ultimately disappear, leaving only pure consciousness.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

After you have quieted the body, and the breath is flowing regularly, close your eyes. Close your ears and shut off the external sense perceptions. As long as you are aware of sights and sounds on the outside, you are not concentrated. It is a fallacy to think you have to find a totally silent place before you can go within. When your senses are stilled, you don't hear any sounds. You're in a state of silence. You don't hear a car that passes, you don't hear a bird that sings, because your awareness has shifted to different perceptions. It helps, but it's not necessary, to have a totally silent place. This is not always possible, so it is best not to depend on outer silence. We must discover silence within ourselves. When you are reading a book that is extremely interesting, you are not hearing noises around you. You should be at least that interested in your meditations. Having thus quieted the outer forces, we are prepared to meditate. Just sitting is not enough. To meditate for even ten or fifteen minutes takes as much energy as one would use in running around a city block three times. A powerful meditation fills and thrills us with an abundance of energy to be used creatively in the external world during the activities of daily life. Great effort is required to make inner strides. We must strive very, very hard and meet each inner challenge. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 97: "Control of Breath")

ततः परमा वश्यतेन्द्रियाणाम् ॥ ५५ ॥

2.55 tataḥ paramā vaśyatendriyāṇām

tataḥ (then/therefore), **paramā** (supreme), **vaśyatā-indriyāṇām**
(control/subjugation, *vaśyatā*; of the senses, *indriyāṇām*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then arises supreme mastery of the senses.

Commentary

The *yogī*'s power of sense withdrawal has the somewhat ironic result of giving him power over the senses themselves. His initial goal is to draw awareness within, in a sense to abdicate the senses and their objects to gain perfect silence. But in that process, he learns the art of mastering those very senses he drew himself away from. Ultimately, the senses become his instruments for unfoldment, not distracting him, but empowering him on his path. What was an obstacle has become a spiritual tool.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

In meditation, awareness must be loosened and made free to move vibrantly and buoyantly into the inner depths where peace and bliss remain undisturbed for centuries, or out into the odic force fields of the material world where man is in conflict with his brother, or into the internal depths of the subconscious mind. Meditate, therefore, on awareness traveling freely through all areas of the mind. The dynamic willpower of the meditator in his ability to control his awareness as it flows into its inner depths eventually brings him to a state of bliss where awareness is simply aware of itself. This would be the next area to move into in a meditation. Simply sit, being totally aware that one is aware. New energies will flood the body, flowing out through the nerve system, out into the exterior world. The nature then becomes refined in meditating in this way. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 81: "Transmuting the Energies")

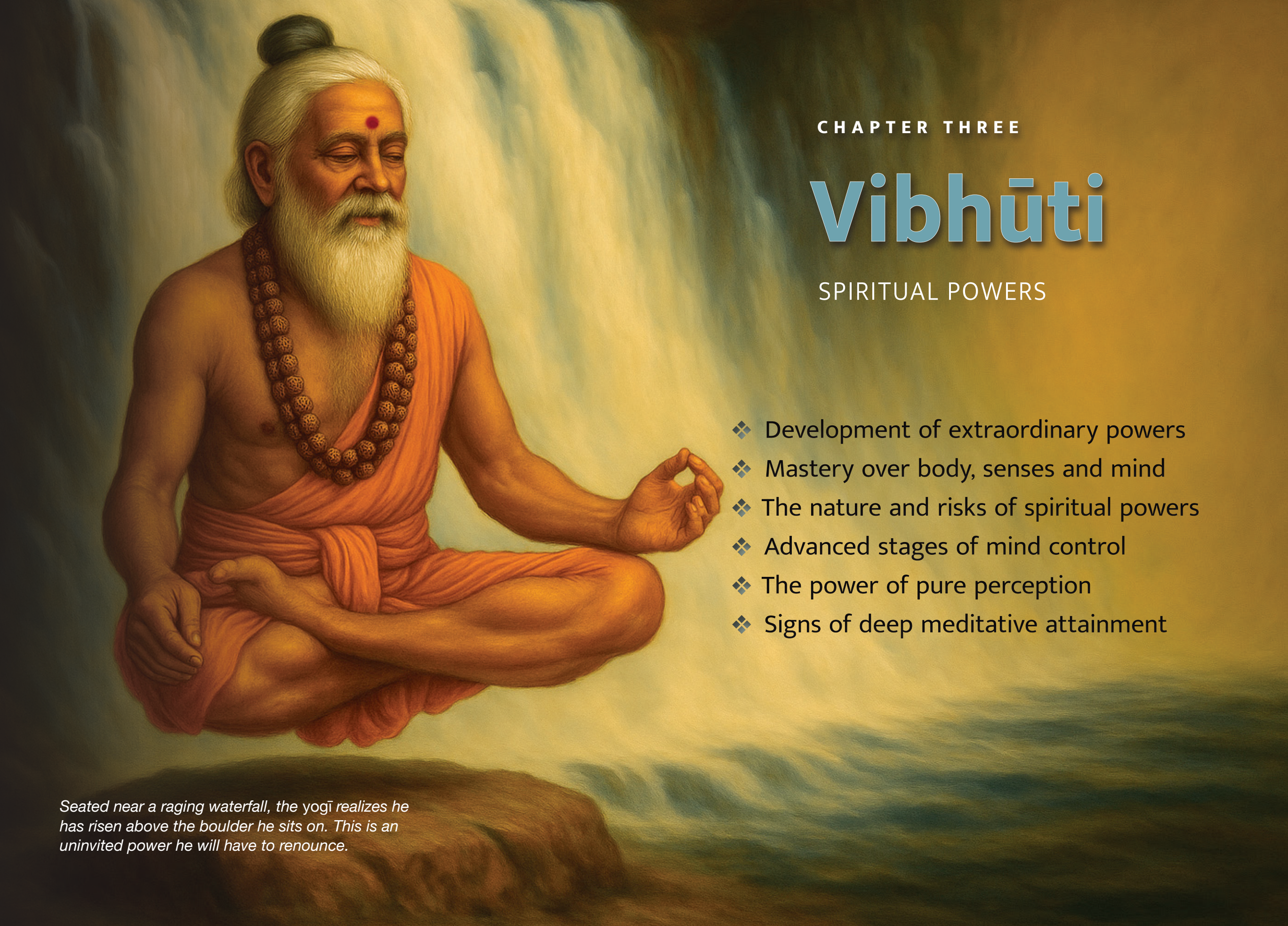
इति पतञ्जलिविरचिते योगसूत्रे द्वितीयः साधनपादः ।

iti Patañjali-viracite yoga-sūtre dvitīyaḥ sādhana-pādaḥ

iti (thus), **dvitīyaḥ** (the second), **sādhana-pādaḥ** (chapter on means of attainment),
yoga-sūtre (in the *Yoga Sūtras*), **Patañjali-viracite** (compiled, *viracite*, by Patañjali)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Thus ends chapter two, *Sādhana*,
of the *Yoga Sūtras* compiled by Patañjali.**



CHAPTER THREE

Vibhūti

SPIRITUAL POWERS

- ❖ Development of extraordinary powers
- ❖ Mastery over body, senses and mind
- ❖ The nature and risks of spiritual powers
- ❖ Advanced stages of mind control
- ❖ The power of pure perception
- ❖ Signs of deep meditative attainment

Seated near a raging waterfall, the yogī realizes he has risen above the boulder he sits on. This is an uninvited power he will have to renounce.



तृतीयो विभूतिपादः

Tṛtiyo Vibhūti-Pādaḥ

Chapter Three: Spiritual Powers

Commentary

The third chapter delves into the final three limbs of *yoga*, focusing on the cessation of mental fluctuations. It introduces *saṁnyama*, explores the attainment of extraordinary powers, and concludes with a profound discussion on liberation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

If you have powers, *siddhis*, that are unfolded, it is best not to consciously use them. You can demonstrate to yourself to be sure you have them, but these *siddhis* are all connected with *devonic* forces that will work totally for righteousness without your demonstrating them. That is why no one wants to come up against a *rishi*. Similarly, a good king does not use his power. He makes everything flourish without appearing to be powerful. His greater power happens in unseen ways. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 266: “The Way after Realization”)

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ १॥

3.1 deśa-bandhaś-cittasya dhāraṇā

dhāraṇā (concentration), **deśa-bandhaḥ** (binding, *bandhaḥ*; to a place, *deśa*), **cittasya** (of the mind)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Concentration is binding the mind to a place.

Commentary

A fundamental practice leading to deep meditative states is the ability to hold the mind on a limited space, a single object. This is not, in itself, meditation, but a precursor to meditation. It is the training and discipline of the mind that will later allow meditation to naturally unfold. This binding is done using willpower over time and sometimes requires years to achieve. One exercise used by *yogīs* is to have uninterrupted, sequential thoughts about a simple object, such as fifty thoughts in a row on a flower or a black rock without having a single unrelated thought intrude.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This is not as hard as it seems. It does not require you to renounce the world. It only requires you to make an effort every day to concentrate the mind, by first quieting the physical body and then the mind, to free itself from all the thoughts of the day. Then hold the mind on one thing that is attractive to you for as long as you can. When it wanders, pull it back until the light of understanding begins to appear. You will be

.....
A tailor concentrates his mind on the tedious task of threading a needle.

amazed at the results in a very short time. True happiness will then be yours, released from the subsuperconscious state of your own mind.

To elaborate on the last statement, I will say that to follow a line of thought, then into its depths, through the use of reason takes time. When the depths are reached instantaneously through contacting the superconscious, all the essence is unfolded without the use of reason, space or time. Yet it does not conflict with reason, because the end result is the same in any case. All the time spent in reason requires the mind to open its superconscious resources through the subconscious for the final answer. Hence, training the mind in the arts of concentration and meditation is of great value in this instance. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 19)

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ २॥

3.2 tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam

tatra (therein), **pratyaya-ekatānatā** (one uninterrupted flow, *ekatānatā*; of cognition, *pratyaya*), **dhyānam** (meditation)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

In that state, the uninterrupted flow of cognition is meditation.

Commentary

“In that state” refers to concentration, *dhāraṇā*, defined in the previous *sūtra*. Concentration and meditation are interwoven, not fully separate processes. It is more a matter of degree, where concentration permits subtle spaces or interruptions and meditation is the accomplished flow of undistracted mental activity. In *dhāraṇā*, the flow of knowledge is compared to a succession of separate drops of water. In *dhyāna*, the flow is continuous, like oil flowing from one vessel to another in a steady, unbroken stream.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This leads us then into our very next step, meditation. Meditation and concentration are practically the same thing, though meditation is simply a more intense state of concentration. The state of meditation is careful, close scrutiny of the individual elements and energies which make up that flower. You are scrutinizing the inner layers of the mind, of how a flower grows, how the seed is formed. You are observing it so keenly that you have forgotten that you are a physical body, that you are an emotional unit, that you are breathing. You are in the area of mind where that flower exists, and the bush that it came from, and the roots and the seed and all phases of manifestation, all at the same time. And you are seeing it as it actually is in that area of the mind, where the flower is that you first put awareness at attention upon, then began to concentrate upon. Then you are meditating on the actual inner area of the mind where, in all stages of manifestation, that particular species actually is within the mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 87: “Step Three, Meditation”)

तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ॥ ३॥

3.3 tad-evārtha-mātra-nirbhāsaṁ svarūpa-śūnyam-iva samādhiḥ

tad-eva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṁ (that very, *tad-eva*; object, *artha*; alone, *mātra*; shining forth, *nirbhāsaṁ*), **iva** (as if), **svarūpa-śūnyam** (devoid, *śūnyam*; of self-form/sense of self, *svarūpa*), **samādhiḥ** (meditative absorption)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When only the object shines forth and all sense of self is absent, that indeed is *samādhi*.

Commentary

When the flow of meditation is attained, there arises a state of union of the meditator and the object of his meditation. He has directed his awareness so perfectly toward the object that he and it have lost their differences and become one. He no longer is meditating, he is meditation. In this state, called *samādhi*, the object's nature and being is revealed and new knowledge, never learned, is acquired by direct, superconscious perception.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Out of meditation, we come into contemplation. Contemplation is concentrating so deeply in the inner areas of the mind in which that flower and the species of it and the seed of it and all exist. We go deeper, deeper, deeper within, into the energy and the life within the cells of the flower, and we find that the energy and the life within the cells of the flower is the same as the energy within us, and we are in contemplation upon energy itself. We see the energy as light. We might see the light within our head, if we have a slight body consciousness. In a state of contemplation, we might not even be conscious of light itself, for you are only conscious of light if you have a slight consciousness of darkness. Otherwise, it is just your natural state, and you are in a deep reverie. In a state of contemplation, you are so intently alive, you can't move. That's why you sit so quietly. This, then, leads to *samādhi*, the very deepest *samādhi*, where we almost, in a sense, go within one atom of that energy and move into the primal source of all. There's really nothing that you can say about it, because you cannot cast that concept of the Self, or that depth of *samādhi*, you cannot cast it out in words. You cannot throw it out in a concept, because there are no areas of the mind in which the Self exists, and yet, but for the Self the mind, consciousness, would not exist. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 88: “Step Four, Contemplation”)

त्रयमेकत्र संयमः ॥ ४ ॥

3.4 trayam-ekatra saṁyamaḥ

trayam-ekatra (the three, *trayam*; together, *ekatra*), **saṁyamaḥ** (meditation)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The integration of these three is *saṁyama*.

Commentary

Here Patañjali brings together concentration, meditation and *samādhi*, decreeing that when these three are skillfully mastered, the state of *saṁyama*, meditative union, is reached.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Here we are speaking about *saṁyama*—thought, meaning and knowledge combined as one. When combined as one, it lifts up the lid of the third eye. What is hidden behind the veil of ignorance is seen. Concentration is an art that once attained leads naturally into meditation, contemplation and *samādhi*. The three-point concentration spoken of in this aphorism releases the whole of the external from its internal counterpart of the *yogī*'s awareness. A deep *yoga* law is discussed here. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 79)

तज्जयात्प्रज्ञालोकः ॥ ५ ॥

3.5 tajjayāt-prajñālokaḥ

tajjayāt (from the mastery, *jayāt*; of that, *tad*), **prajñā-ālokaḥ**
(the light, *ālokaḥ*; of profound wisdom, *prajñā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From that mastery dawns the light of profound wisdom.

Commentary

Prajñā, mystical insight or wisdom's light, refers to wisdom obtained from being in the state of *samādhi*. It is distinct from knowledge gained by inference or from tradition. It is based on direct perception, known as *sākṣātkāra* in the *yoga* tradition. Here the sage decrees that such divine insight naturally awakens when the *yogī* has mastered the practices of *saṁyama*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

A new balance must be attained in relating to the materialistic world, for the physical body still must be cared for to unfold further into the human destiny of *nirvikalpa samādhi*, the realization of the Self beyond the states of mind. Enlightened seers are turning inward to unravel solutions in building new models to bring forth new knowledge from inner realms to creatively meet man's basic needs, and to bring through to the external spheres beauty and culture found only on inner planes, thus heralding the Golden Age of tomorrow and the illuminated beings of the future who, through

.....
The light of jñāna dawns on a cave-dwelling
meditator as beclouding thoughts depart.



the use of their disciplined third eye and other faculties, can remain “within” the clear white light while working accurately and enthusiastically in the obvious dream world. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 18: “Masculine and Feminine”)

तस्य भूमिषु विनियोगः ॥ ६॥

3.6 tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ

viniyogaḥ (the application), **tasya** (of this), **bhūmiṣu** (in stages)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Application of this comes in stages.

Commentary

“This” refers back to *saṁyama*, the integrated practice of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, as defined in the previous *sūtras*. *Yoga* does not come all at once, but like a long journey unfolds in stages, as Patañjali indicates here, referring to the application of *saṁyama*. Each part of the journey must be followed and completed before the next reveals itself. Beginners must focus on the fundamentals, while advanced practitioners may engage in the more profound contemplative practices. There are complex changes happening as one pursues *yoga*, changes to the contents of external life, companions, changes in the mental and emotional diet, and deep changes to the structure of the nervous system. All of this happens over wide spans of time, not quickly. The wise *yogī* will be observant of the stages, and know where he is on the progressive path.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

According to the Āgamic tradition, these four categories are the natural sequence of the soul’s evolutionary process, much like the development of a butterfly from egg to larva, from larva to caterpillar, from caterpillar to pupa, and then the final metamorphosis from pupa to butterfly. Every butterfly, without exception, will follow this pattern of development, and every soul will mature through *caryā* to *kriyā*, through *kriyā* to *yoga* and into *jñāna*. *Caryā*, or *karma yoga*, may be simply defined as service. *Kriyā*, or *bhakti yoga*, is devotion. *Yoga*, or *rāja yoga*, is meditation, and *jñāna* is the state of wisdom reached toward the end of the path as the result of God Realization and the subsequent enlivened *kuṇḍalinī* and unfoldment of the *chakras* through the practices of *yoga*. The soul does not move quickly from one stage to another. It is a deliberate process, and within each stage there exist vast libraries of knowledge containing the sum of thousands of years of teachings unraveling that particular experiential vista. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 361: “From Caterpillar to Butterfly”)

त्रयमन्तरङ्गं पूर्वेभ्यः ॥ ७॥

3.7 trayam-antar-aṅgaṁ pūrvebhyaḥ

trayam (three), **antar-aṅgaṁ** (internal, *antar*; limb, *aṅgaṁ*), **pūrvebhyaḥ** (to the preceding ones)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These three limbs are internal relative to the preceding ones.

Commentary

Here, Patañjali refers to the practices of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*—the three elements of *saṁyama* mentioned in *sūtra* 3.4—stating they are more internal than *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*. He is continuing with his discussion of stages, implying again that mastery of the earlier five brings in its wake effective engagement with the last three. Another way to understand his intent is to know that the outer expressions of life and consciousness must be clarified and mastered before the innermost explorations are undertaken.

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Caryā, *kriyā*, *yoga* and *jñāna* are the sequence of the soul’s evolutionary process, much like the natural development of a butterfly from egg to caterpillar, from caterpillar to pupa, and then the final metamorphosis to butterfly. These are four *pādas*, or stages, through which each human soul must pass in many births to attain its final goal. Before entering these spiritual stages, the soul is immersed in the lower nature, the *āṇava mārga*, or self-centered path, bound in fear and lust, hurtful rage, jealousy, confusion, selfishness, consciencelessness and malice. Then it awakens into *caryā*, unselfish religious service, or *karma yoga*. Once matured in *caryā*, it enters *kriyā*, devotion or *bhakti yoga*, and finally blossoms into *kuṇḍalinī yoga*. *Jñāna* is the state of enlightened wisdom reached toward the path’s end as a result of Self Realization. The four *pādas* are not alternative ways, but progressive, cumulative phases of a one path, San Mārga. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 36: “What Are the Four Stages on the Path?”)

तदपि बहिरङ्गं निर्बीजस्य ॥ ८॥

3.8 tad-api bahir-aṅgaṁ nirbījasya

tad-api (even, *api*; these, *tad*), **bahir-aṅgaṁ** (external, *bahir*; limb, *aṅgaṁ*), **nirbījasya** (of the seedless—without, *nir*; seed, *bīja*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Yet, these limbs are external in relation to *samādhi* without seed.

Commentary

“These limbs” refers to *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. The term *seed* (*bīja*) refers to the potential for form, change or mental activity. Seeds are latent impressions, or *saṁskāras*, stored in the mind, which have the potential to sprout into thoughts,

emotions and actions. They represent the residue of past experiences. These subtle impressions or tendencies can arise in the mind even in deep states of meditation.

Patañjali reminds us that *samādhi* itself has stages and speaks of the ultimate stage, *samādhi* without seed, *nirbīja* or *asamprajñāta samādhi*. By this he means a *samādhi* which has no form, no object, no seed to sprout into experience.

In the *Yoga Sūtras*, *nirbīja samādhi*—*samādhi* without seed—is described as the ultimate meditative attainment. It is a state in which all mental activity has ceased and no impressions (*saṁskāras*) or seeds (*bīja*) remain to sprout into future thoughts or actions. The mind is completely still, and awareness stands alone, untouched by form or content. This is not the annihilation of the Self but its absolute disentanglement from *prakṛti*. The *puruṣa*, the pure witness-consciousness, remains distinct and isolated from *prakṛti*, leading to *kaivalya*, or final liberation.

In contrast, monistic Śaiva Siddhānta speaks of an even more profound realization known as *nirvikalpa samādhi* (a term Patañjali does not use), in which not only thoughts and impressions, but even the sense of being a witness is transcended. *Nirvikalpa* means “without conceptualization” or “beyond distinctions,” pointing to a state beyond the dualities of observer and observed, knower and known. Whereas *nirbīja samādhi* is characterized by still, seedless awareness, *nirvikalpa samādhi* is the dissolution of awareness itself into the Absolute—Paraśiva—which is beyond time, space, form and even consciousness as we typically understand it. In this state, there is no “I” to experience; only Śiva remains.

Thus, while *nirbīja samādhi* marks the culmination of meditative effort in Patañjali's system, leading to the isolated freedom of the *puruṣa*, *nirvikalpa samādhi* in the Śaiva tradition goes beyond individual awareness altogether, culminating in the soul's direct and total union with the Divine.

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This, then, leads to *samādhi*, the very deepest *samādhi*, where we almost, in a sense, go within one atom of that energy and move into the primal source of all. There's really nothing that you can say about it, because you cannot cast that concept of the Self, or that depth of *samādhi*, you cannot cast it out in words. You cannot throw it out in a concept, because there are no areas of the mind in which the Self exists, and yet, but for the Self the mind, consciousness, would not exist. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 89: “Step Five: Self Realization”)

व्युत्थाननिरोधसंस्कारयोरभिभवप्रादुर्भावौ निरोधक्षणचित्तान्वयो निरोधपरिणामः ॥ ९ ॥

3.9 vyutthāna-nirodha-saṁskārayoḥ-abhibhava-prādur-
bhāvau nirodha-kṣaṇa-cittānvayo nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ

vyutthāna-nirodha-saṁskārayoḥ (of the two latent impressions, *saṁskārayoḥ*; of emerging/outgoing, *vyutthāna*; and restraint, *nirodha*), **abhibhava-prādurbhāvau** (subduing, *abhibhava*; and arising, *prādurbhāva*), **nirodha-kṣaṇa-cittānvayaḥ** (alignment, *anvayaḥ*; of the mind, *citta*; at the moment, *kṣaṇa*; of restraint, *nirodha*), **nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ** (transformation, *pariṇāmaḥ*; toward restraint, *nirodha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Transformation toward restraint occurs when the externalizing
saṁskāras are subdued and the restraint saṁskāras
emerge in the mind at the moment of restraint.**

Commentary

The *yogī*, through his inner work and discipline, develops new *saṁskāras* which neutralize and subdue the worldly *saṁskāras* which are the common man's lot. These *yogic* impressions are brought to bear and further strengthened each time he strives to control the mind, to quiet the mental noise. Slowly his controlling impressions become stronger than the instinctive impressions that normally dominate, and he is able to use the one to be rid of the other. This subtle interaction between the control and the controlled is a major discussion in the *sūtras*, to be understood through practice and more practice.

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As you sit to meditate, awareness may wander into past memories or future happenings. It may be distracted by the senses, by a sound or by a feeling of discomfort in the body. This is natural in the early stages. Gently bring awareness back to your point of concentration. Don't criticize awareness for wandering, for that is yet another distraction. Distractions will disappear if you become intensely interested and involved in your meditation. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 99: “Taming Distraction”)

तस्य प्रशान्तवाहिता संस्कारात् ॥ १०॥

3.10 tasya praśānta-vāhitā saṁskārāt

tasya (its), **praśānta-vāhitā** (flow, *vāhitā*; of tranquility, *praśānta*), **saṁskārāt** (from subtle impressions)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The flow of tranquility is due to these *saṁskāras*.

Commentary

The previous *sūtra* explains the interaction between two types of past subconscious impressions: externalizing (*vyutthāna*) *saṁskāras* and internalizing (*nirodha*) *saṁskāras*. In this *sūtra*, “these” refers to the latter group, which contribute to a peaceful flow of consciousness in meditation.

Since *saṁskāras* are cumulative and not limited to a single lifetime, it can be encouragingly inferred that the collective power of all past efforts to restrain awareness comes forth to subdue the prevailing outgoing *saṁskāras* in one’s meditations. Satguru mentions this phenomenon in the passage below.

As the *yogī* develops the patterns of control, the restraint *saṁskāras* of mind, he masters the ability to withdraw into himself and rein in the flow and fluctuations of thought. Then there arises, naturally, a peacefulness, a quietude that is profoundly rewarding. This state is an island of peace and solitude to which he can return again and again in balancing his forces against those of the external world. Patañjali’s intention in using “flow” emphasizes the idea that once the mind has been disciplined through consistent practice, it begins to experience a smooth and uninterrupted stream of calmness and focus, a continuous state of tranquility.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As soon as strong initiative is taken to change our nature toward refinement, a new inner process begins to take place. The forces of positive accomplishment from each of our past lives begin to manifest in this one. The high points of a past life, when something great has happened, become strung together. These merits or good deeds are vibrations in the ether substance of our memory patterns, because each one of us, right now, is a sum total of all previous experience. All of the distractions of the external area of the mind begin to fade, and positive meditation becomes easily attainable. It is not difficult to move our individual awareness quickly within when distractions occur. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 93: “Remolding the Subconscious”)

.....
In a thatched hut, a meditator ignores the swirling thoughts, keeping her focus on the small lamp.



सर्वार्थतैकाग्रतयोः क्षयोदयौ चित्तस्य समाधिपरिणामः ॥ ११॥

3.11 sarvārthataikāgratayoḥ kṣayodayau cittasya samādhi-pariṇāmaḥ

kṣayodayau (decline, *kṣaya*; and arising, *udaya*), **sarvārthatā-ekāgratayoḥ** (of scattered attention, *sarvārthatā*; and one-pointedness, *ekāgratā*), **cittasya** (of the mind), **samādhi-pariṇāmaḥ** (transformation, *pariṇāmaḥ*; toward meditative absorption, *samādhi*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The dwindling of scattered attention and the awakening of one-pointedness transform the mind toward *samādhi*.

Commentary

The mind is naturally given to wandering, focusing now on this and now on that, mulling over the past, worrying about the future, reflecting and reacting, frequently without plan or purpose. It is the work of the *yogī* to tame this undisciplined movement, to slowly harness the beast, bring the mind to concentrate, as he wills and for as long as he wills, on a single object. It is a fundamental skill he must master. His every effort at this brings him closer to the goal of unitive contemplation.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Upon entering a state of meditation, one may find awareness enmeshed in a struggle between the subconscious of the past and the conscious, external waking state concerned with the present and future. The experienced meditator learns that he is the watcher, pure awareness. When concentration is sustained long enough, he dives into the superconscious, intuitive state of mind. It enables him, in time, to unravel the mystery. An integrated, one-pointed state of being is the goal—a state of inner perception without vacillation, with the ability to move awareness through the mind's various states at will. To become the ruler of the mind is the goal. To then go beyond the mind into the Self is the destiny of all living on this planet, for most in a life to come. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 79: "Mastery of the Mind")

ततः पुनः शान्तोदितौ तुल्यप्रत्ययौ चित्तस्यैकाग्रतापरिणामः ॥ १२॥

3.12 tataḥ punaḥ śāntoditau tulya-pratyayau cittasyaikāgratā-pariṇāmaḥ

tataḥ punaḥ (then, *tataḥ*; again, *punaḥ*), **śāntoditau tulya-pratyayau** (two thought-waves, *pratyayau*; of similar content, *tulya*; one subsided, *śānta*; and one arisen, *udita*), **cittasya** (of the mind), **ekāgratā-pariṇāmaḥ** (transformation, *pariṇāmaḥ*; characterized by one-pointedness, *ekāgratā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then again, the most recent and the present thought-waves being similar defines the transformation of mind called one-pointedness.

Commentary

This *sūtra* is defining one-pointedness. In the flow of thoughts, it is most common to have subsequent thoughts differ as the mind moves, often randomly, from this idea to that. As the *yogī* harnesses this tendency, the thought of the moment and the following thought will be similar, will follow a pattern rather than being haphazard. This meaningful river of thought, where one is not so different than the next, defines true one-pointedness.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

How does attention work? Attention is awareness poised like a hummingbird over a flower. It doesn't move. The flower doesn't move, and awareness becomes aware of the flower—poised. The entire nerve system of the physical body and the functions of breath have to be at a certain rhythm in order for awareness to remain poised like a hummingbird over a flower. Now, since the physical body and our breath have never really been disciplined in any way, we have to begin by breathing rhythmically and diaphragmatically, so that we breathe out the same number of counts as we breathe in. After we do this over a long period of time—and you can start now—then the body becomes trained, the external nerve system becomes trained, responds, and awareness is held at attention. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 85: "Step One: Attention")

एतेन भूतेन्द्रियेषु धर्मलक्षणावस्थापरिणामा व्याख्याताः ॥ १३ ॥

3.13 etena bhūteन्द्रियेषु dharma-lakṣaṇāvasthā-pariṇāmā vyākhyātāḥ

etena (by this), **dharma-lakṣaṇa-avasthā-pariṇāmāḥ** (transformations, *pariṇāmāḥ*; of essential nature, *dharma*; characteristic, *lakṣaṇa*; and condition, *avasthā*), **bhūteन्द्रियेषु** (of the elements, *bhūta*; and senses, *indriya*), **vyākhyātāḥ** (are explained)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By this, the transformations of the essential nature, characteristics and conditions of the elements and the senses are explained.

Commentary

“By this” refers to the terse explanations in the previous two *sūtras* on transformations within the mind of the meditator, indicating that they apply to all aspects of creation. All things are subject to change, the universal constant. In seeking to understand the nature of change, we can break it down into a thing’s inherent nature, its condition or present qualities (old/new, big/small, alive/inert) and its movement through time. Each of these three can change independent of the others, and all of the transformations they imply are applicable not only to material objects but as well to the senses by which they are known.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The material world is where we have our experiences, manufacture *karma* and fulfill the desires and duties of life in a physical body. It is in the Bhūloka that consciousness is limited, that awareness of the other two worlds is not always remembered. It is the external plane, made of gross matter, which is really just energy. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 42: “What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane?”)

शान्तोदिताव्यपदेश्यधर्मानुपाती धर्मो ॥ १४ ॥

3.14 śāntoditāvyapadeśya-dharmānupātī dharmī

dharmī (substratum), **anupātī** (abides, remains through change), **śānta-udita-avyapadeśya-dharma** (of characteristics, *dharma*; that are past, *śānta*; present/arisen, *udita*; or not-yet-designated/future, *avyapadeśya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The substratum persists, whether its characteristics are past, present or in the future.

Commentary

In this *sūtra*, “substratum” refers to *dharmī*, which in this context means the underlying entity that possesses characteristics. *Dharmi* remains identifiable even as its characteristics (*dharma*s) change. Here, *dharma* does not carry its more common meaning of duty or moral law, but instead refers to the characteristics or properties of an

object that transform over time. As an example, a lump of gold may have been a ring in the past, a crown in the present and a pendant in the future. In all instances and through all transformations, it remains gold.

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All styles of music can be played on a harp, but no matter what kind of music is played, the harp remains the same. People can do all sorts of things to our nervous system, and make patterns of tone and color appear. This does not hurt the nervous system. It, like the harp, remains the same. The same nervous system can be played by our superconscious or by our passions. We can experience beautiful knowledge from within, which is the outgrowth of good meditation abilities, or experience a mental argument with another person. All tones are played at different times through the same nervous system. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 102: “Conflicts with Other People”)

क्रमान्यत्वं परिणामान्यत्वे हेतुः ॥ १५ ॥

3.15 kramānyatvaṁ pariṇāmānyatve hetuḥ

kramānyatvam (difference, *anyatvam*; in sequence, *krama*), **hetuḥ** (cause), **pariṇāmānyatve** (in difference, *anyatve*; in transformation, *pariṇāma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Difference in sequence is the cause of difference in transformation.

Commentary

Things change in sequence. A seed develops, sprouts and matures into a plant. This progression over time is essential to all changes, whether of nature or of mind. Each stage is built on the last and gives rise to the next. Changes in any part of the natural sequence causes differences in the progression. For example, the growth of a mighty oak from acorn to sprout to sapling and mature tree can be altered at any point by changes in the sequence, such as squirrels, draught, lack of sunlight, poor soil, etc.

By understanding the differences in sequence, and the importance of sequence, the *yogī* begins to comprehend the nature of change, of spiritual evolution, which Patañjali cryptically calls the transformations of body, mind and consciousness. He learns to follow the proven path which will give the proven result.

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We as the soul see out through the physical eyes. As we look through the physical eyes at the flower and meditate deeply upon the flower, we tune into the soul’s vast well of knowing and begin to observe previously unknown facts about the flower. We see where it came from. We see how one little flower has enough memory locked up within its tiny seed to come up again and again in the very same way. A rose does not forget and come up as a tulip. Nor does a tulip forget and come up as a lily. Nor does a lily forget and come up as a peach tree. There is enough memory resident in the genes of the seeds of each that they come up as the same species every season. As we observe this single law and pierce into the inner realms of the mind, we see the

परिणामत्रयसंयमाद् अतीतानागतज्ञानम् ॥ १६॥

3.16 pariṇāma-traya-saṁyamād atītānāgata-jñānam

pariṇāma-traya-saṁyamād (from meditation, *saṁyamād*; on the three, *traya*; transformations, *pariṇāma*), **atīta-anāgata-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of the past, *atīta*; and future, *anāgata*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the three transformations, knowledge of the past and future arises.

Commentary

The three transformations (*pariṇāmas*) are defined in *sūtra* 3.13, which describes how all phenomena undergo shifts in qualities (*dharma*), temporal stages (*avasthā*), and states of existence (*lakṣaṇa*). As the *yogī* learns to identify the substratum of the object (*dharmī*) and then meditate on its characteristics (*dharma*), state (*lakṣaṇa*) and temporal position (*avasthā*), he naturally awakens the ability to see into the past and the future.

This is just the first of such extraordinary powers of the metaphysically awakened mind. So important are these *siddhis* that Patañjali dedicates fully one-sixth of the aphorisms to this magical and mystical side of *yoga* practice. Narratives of mystical phenomena beyond ordinary consciousness fill the textual coffers of India's spiritual traditions. Quantum physics hints at the remarkable world within, how time and distance are fluid, how dimensions and multiple realities are folded within one another, how things can be connected despite being great distances apart, how the simple act of observing a thing changes that thing, how the seemingly impossible is really not. Modern physicists sound much like *yogīs* as they discuss the power of consciousness to shape the universe. This is not so different from the *sūtras* on *siddhis*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

There are people with the ability to look back into the past and ahead to the future accurately and in detail. That feat is understood clearly in the light of awareness traveling through the mind. The entire mind exists right now—past and future included. These psychically talented individuals have trained their awareness to flow into areas of the mind that are unavailable to the average person. They go into the mind itself to view these phenomena. Similarly, ESP, mind-reading and other mystical wonders are illumined by the knowledge that there is only one mind, and all phases of it are open to the spiritually awakened person. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 37: “The Mind Is Complete”)



Eight Siddhis: Here the artist creatively describes eight *siddhis*, powers, that a *yogī* naturally attains (and is encouraged to renounce). Clockwise from the lower left:

1) invisibility; 2) knowledge of past and future; 3) mastery of the body, super strength; 4) seeing and hearing at a great distance, called “remote viewing;” 5) ability to control nature (rain, animals, people); 6) entering another person’s body; 7) understanding all languages, even animal sounds; 8) attaining cosmic knowledge. At the center, the *yogī* has Śiva (*piṅgalā*) and Śakti (*iḍā*) balanced along his *kuṇḍalinī* (the serpents at his third eye). The Sun and Moon are his eyes; fire and air from the nostrils show energies balanced through *prāṇāyāma*. Powerful waves of *tejas* energy radiate in all directions.

.....

flower as large as a house, or as small as the point of a pin, because the eyes of the superconscious mind, the spiritual body, can magnify or diminish any object in order to study it and understand it. To know this, to experience this, is to develop willpower to transform oneself into the knower of what is to be known. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 49: “Gaining Self-Control”)

शब्दार्थप्रत्ययानामितरेतराध्यासात् संस्करस्तत्प्रविभागसंयमात्सर्वभूतरुतज्ञानम् ॥ १७॥

3.17 śabdārtha-pratyayānām-itaretarādhyāsāt
saṅkaras-tat-pravibhāga-saṁyamāt-sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñānam

saṅkaraḥ (confusion), **itaretara-adhyāsāt** (mutual, *itaretara*; from superimposition, *adhyāsa*), **śabda-artha-pratyayānām** (of word, *śabda*; of meaning, *artha*; and of idea, *pratyayānām*), **tat-pravibhāga-saṁyamāt** (through meditation, *saṁyamāt*; on their, *tat*; distinction, *pravibhāga*), **sarva-bhūta-ruta-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of the sounds, *ruta*; of all creatures, *sarva-bhūta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Confusion arises from the mutual superimposition of word, meaning, and idea. By performing *saṁyama* on the distinctions among these, knowledge of the sounds of all creatures arises.

Commentary

In his search for the essence of the universe, the *yogī* is advised to not conflate an object with the concept of the object or the word describing the object. They are not the same and must be unpacked. Take a flower for example. The word is flower; the object is the physical blossom; the idea is one's concept or understanding of flower-ness. The *yogī* is taught to perform *saṁyama* on the triad of word, meaning and idea so he understands their differences and disabuses himself of the natural confusion that can arise among them. By learning to perform *saṁyama* of this nature, he awakens a new understanding and appreciation of sound and speech. If fully successful, he can understand the information contained in any sound, including the sounds produced by any creature.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

You have to repeat certain affirmations for certain lengths of time to produce a certain result. Every word—and the meaning of each word if you know the meaning—has a certain vibration. As a thought goes into motion, it permeates your nervous system and gives you a particular feeling. Just as your thoughts and your words can make your body feel a certain way, in the very same way the spirit, or God, flowing through the mind, can illumine and does illumine the mind and purify it. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 113: “Living in the Spirit”)

संस्कारसाक्षात्करणात्पूर्वजातिज्ञानम् ॥ १८॥

3.18 saṁskāra-sākṣāt-karaṇāt-pūrva-jāti-jñānam

saṁskāra-sākṣāt-karaṇāt (through direct perception, *sākṣāt-karaṇāt*; of latent impressions, *saṁskāra*), **pūrva-jāti-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of previous, *pūrva*; births, *jāti*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through direct perception of *saṁskāras*, knowledge of previous births arises.

Commentary

Hindu mysticism discusses at great length the enduring power of *karma* and *saṁskāras*, or impressions made by action and reaction. It is a fundamental insight into our humanness, taking into account past, present and future actions. It is understood in *yogic* mysticism that these impressions persist, they are embedded in the deep chambers of the mind, and they survive our physical death to impact future births. This *sūtra* notes that the *yogī* can access these *ākāśic* memories, and when they are fully cognized he can have access to memories of previous births. But, like all *siddhis*, he is also advised not to dwell on this power to know the past. He evolves by living in the now.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

People wonder about their past lives, but it doesn't really matter who you were in your past lives. It is the cumulative creation of what you've done in the past which has manifested in what you are in this life that should concern you. Knowing how these things are going to manifest in the future is a forewarning that can improve the quality of the next life. Therefore, though possible, it is irrelevant to know what nationality, station in life or occupation one was in the past. What is relevant is the knowledge of accumulated deeds of all the past lives, especially those that will manifest in this life. People who don't truly understand reincarnation fear death. Fear of the unknown is part of the human psyche. To understand reincarnation, you have to understand and accept the existence of the astral body and have an intuitive knowledge of the soul. Then you understand that reincarnation is as natural as a child becoming a teenager and a teenager becoming a young adult. Reincarnation records are kept in the *sahasrāra chakra* of every individual. They are readable by inner-plane helpers and by trained psychics. The *sahasrāra chakra* is in the *ākāśa*. Every soul is packing his dossier right along with him. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 240: “Mourning and Fear of Death”)

प्रत्ययस्य परचित्तज्ञानम् ॥ १९॥

3.19 pratyayasya para-citta-jñānam

pratyayasya (of mental patterns), **para-citta-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of another, *para*; mind, *citta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through insight into mental patterns, knowledge of another's mind is acquired.

Commentary

Mastery of his thoughts and of the nature and mechanics of mental impressions gives the *yogī* the ability to cognize the mind of another. Since there is but one mind in the mystical sense, if he comprehends his own he will understand the mental state, thoughts and emotions of others.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To the awakened mystic, there is only one mind. There is no “your mind” and “my mind,” just one mind, finished, complete in all stages of manifestation. Man's individual awareness flows through the mind as the traveler treads the globe. Just as the free citizen moves from city to city and country to country, awareness moves through the multitude of forms in the mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 36: “The Purity of Awareness”)

न च तत्सालम्बनं तस्याविषयीभूतत्वात् ॥ २०॥

3.20 na ca tat-sālabhanam tasyāviṣayī-bhūtatvāt

na ca (nor), **tat-sālabhanam** (reliant on the object/support, *sālabhanam*; of that, *tat*), **tasya** (its), **aviṣayī-bhūtatvāt** (due to having become, *bhūtatvāt*; beyond the scope of perception, *aviṣayī*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

That knowledge does not rely on its object, as that is beyond the range of perception.

Commentary

Though the *yogī* can know the thoughts of another person, he cannot necessarily know the source of those thoughts, which Patañjali calls the *object*. Thus he can clearly perceive that a person is afraid of animals, but will not have access to the childhood incident in the forest when a wolf approached him and caused future fears.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Sometimes the thoughts you think are not your own. Your individual awareness may have inadvertently been pulled into an area of the mind that someone else is aware in. So, unintentionally you may be reading someone else's thoughts as your own, and if they are of a nature that you do not approve, it is possible that you may be disappointed

in yourself. Keen discernment must always be employed by the aspirant on the path in order to decipher which is which. This is difficult, but you should always question thoughts that just pop into your head to find out whether they are, in fact, your own or those of another. A general outline that you can follow in deciphering your personal thoughts from those of another is this. As soon as you begin to question your thinking with this in mind, if the thoughts are yours, you will continue thinking in the same way after the questioning has subsided. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 207: “The Sources of Thought”)

कायरूपसंयमात् तद्ग्राह्यशक्तिस्तम्भे चक्षुःप्रकाशासम्प्रयोगेऽन्तर्धानम् ॥ २१॥

3.21 kāya-rūpa-saṁyamāt-tad-grāhya-śakti-stambhe cakṣuḥ-prakāśasamprayoge'ntardhānam

kāya-rūpa-saṁyamāt (through meditation, *saṁyamāt*; on the body *kāya*; form, *rūpa*), **tad-grāhya-śakti-stambhe** (in the suspension, *stambhe*; of the power, *śakti*; to perceive, *grāhya*; that, *tad*), **cakṣuḥ-prakāśa-asamprayoge** (in the disconnection, *asamprayoge*; of the eye, *cakṣuḥ*; from light, *prakāśa*), **antardhānam** (invisibility)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the body's form, and by suspending the power of perception, the connection between the eye and light is severed and the body becomes invisible.

Commentary

This *sūtra* is saying one can become invisible by preventing another's eyes from receiving the light normally reflected from your body. As with other *siddhis*, it is thought that this is possible because the deeper *tattvas* of the mind govern the grosser external forms, even light and its ability to transmit through *ākāśa*. By harnessing these precursors to external reality, control over them is achieved.

एतेन शब्दाद्यन्तर्धानमुक्तम् ॥ २१-अ ॥

3.21a etena śabdādyantardhānam uktam

etena (by this) **śabdādi-antardhānam** (disappearance, *antardhānam*; of sound, *śabda*; and others, *ādi*) **uktam** (is explained)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By this, the disappearance of sound and others is explained.

Commentary

As with invisibility, the *yogī* is able, through *saṁyama* on the body's form, to make sound and other sensory perceptions disappear, such as touch, taste and smell.

Editors' Note: This *sūtra* is an anomaly. It was elucidated by none other than Vyāsa, but is absent from most editions of the *sūtras*. This can be due to historical transmission issues, commentarial influences, regional practices and scholarly decisions. One explanation given for its absence is that it is so parallel to the previous *sūtra*, and that its conclusions could logically be deduced from the *sūtra* on invisibility. Since Vyāsa addressed it, we include it here using a special numbering: 3.21a (a custom followed in other translations), so as to keep the numbering consistent with prevailing standards. (See Vyāsa on 3.21a, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The knowledge of reincarnation, astral travel, channeling messages from the departed, auras and oh-so-many other psychic mysteries of the soul are an intrinsic part of the Western world in this age of communication, just as these phenomena have been an acknowledged part of life in the East since the dawn of mankind. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 317: “*Tantras* of Communication”)

सोपक्रमं निरुपक्रमं च कर्म तत्संयमादपरान्तज्ञानमरिष्टेभ्यो वा ॥ २२ ॥

3.22 sopakramam nirupakramam ca karma tat-
saṁyamād-aparānta-jñānam-aṛiṣṭebhyo vā

tat-saṁyamāt (by meditation, *saṁyamāt*; on that subject, *tat*), **sopakramam** (fructifying), **ca** (and), **nirupakramam** (dormant), **karma** (*karma*), **vā** (or), **aṛiṣṭebhyaḥ** (from omens), **aparānta-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of death, *aparānta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**By performing *saṁyama* on fructifying and dormant
karmas, or on omens, knowledge of death is obtained.**

Commentary

By contemplation on these two forms of *karma*, the *yogī* can cognize the nature of death. Some commentators take this to mean his own death, even the time it will happen, but it can imply a greater insight into the nature of death itself. Not only that, the *sūtra* does not speak literally of death, but of “the end.” This opens the door to a much more profound understanding of the *sūtra*. By merging his mind with the dual forms of *karma*, the active and the yet-to-be active, or the swift to fructify and the slow to fructify, the *yogī* can delve into the end of things: the end of the ego, the end of the cosmos (*mahāpralaya*), the end of time itself, as everything is consumed in Śiva.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The dying should always remember that the place where one will incarnate is the place that he is thinking about prior to death. So, choose your desires wisely. The last thoughts just before death are the most powerful thoughts in creating the next life. One must also realize that if he and others are aware that he will soon depart, others

in the inner worlds also realize he will soon be making his transition and are busy making adjustments and preparations for his arrival. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 351: “Preparations for Transition”)

मैत्र्यादिषु बलानि ॥ २३ ॥

3.23 maitryādiṣu balāni

maitryādiṣu (on friendliness, *maitri*; and others, *ādiṣu*), **balāni** (strengths)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

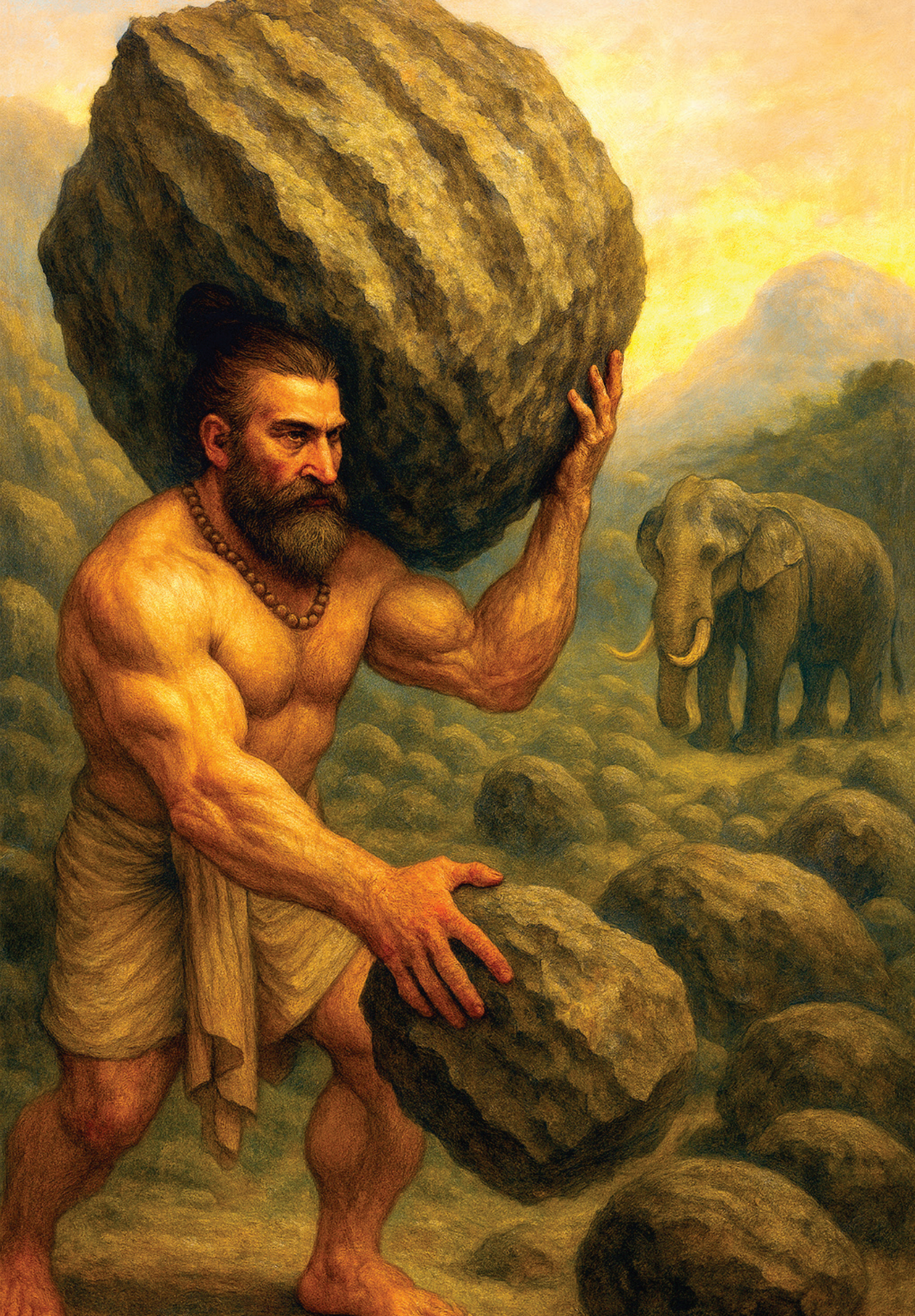
From friendliness and the others, strengths arise.

Commentary

The sage gives expression to the power of positive qualities. He mentions friendliness but implies another list spoken of elsewhere: joy, compassion and equanimity (*sūtra* 1.33). By practicing *saṁyama* on such uplifting qualities, a practitioner develops inner strength, which Patañjali terms the power of friendliness, but means much more. The *yogī* exudes happiness and thus makes those around him happy. He is joyous, and his presence removes darkness and despair in others. His compassion teaches the world there is no place for hate or harshness. He becomes a source of goodness and light, of comfort and hopefulness, a living counterweight to the world's storehouse of misery and maliciousness. His very presence can change the world. And that, indeed, is a power worthy of having.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

You purify yourself by being kind to others, being generous until it hurts, being benevolent, being ready to serve at all times until you are strained in serving. Put a smile on the faces of other people. Gain your happiness and your positive states of mind by making other people happy. ... Through service and kindness, you can unwind the subconscious mind and gain a clear understanding of all laws of life. Your soul will shine forth. You will be that peace. You will radiate that inner happiness and be truly secure, simply by practicing being kind in thought, word and deed. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 115: “You Must Purify Yourself”)



बलेषु हस्तिबलादीनि ॥ २४ ॥

3.24 baleṣu hasti-balādīni

baleṣu (on strengths), hasti-balādīni
(strength of an elephant and so on)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From strengths comes the strength of an elephant, and so on.

Commentary

In the same way that we can take on human virtues, as explained in the last verse, we can also take on the positive quality of an animal through *saṁyama* on it. “From strengths” is a terse way of saying “from meditating on strengths.” Just as *saṁyamas* in earlier *sūtras* bring various psychic powers, so by *saṁyama* on strength itself, the *yogī* attains strength. Traditional commentators such as Vyāsa understand the *sūtra* to mean that by meditating on strength, the *yogī* may gain not only the power of an elephant but also the force of the wind or other mighty qualities. The words “and so on” (*ādīni*) point to this whole range of strengths.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To be steadfast as we go through life, we must have a purpose, a plan, persistence and push. Then nothing is impossible within the circumference of our *prārabdha karmas*.... *Dhṛiti*, steadfastness, rests on the foundation of good character. Character—the ability to “act with care”—is built slowly, over time, with the help of relatives, preceptors and good-hearted friends. Observe those who are steadfast. You will learn from them.... Nonperseverance and fear must be overcome, and much effort is required to accomplish this. Daily *sādhana*, preferably under a *guru*’s guidance, is suggested here to develop a spiritual will and intellect. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 21: “*Dhṛiti*: Steadfastness”)

प्रवृत्त्यालोकन्यासात्सूक्ष्मव्यवहितविप्रकृष्टज्ञानम् ॥ २५ ॥

3.25 pravṛttyāloka-nyāsāt sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam

pravṛtti-āloka-nyāsāt (from placement, *nyāsāt*; of the light, *āloka*, of perception/activity, *pravṛtti*), **sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of the subtle, *sūkṣma*; the hidden, *vyavahita*; the distant, *viprakṛṣṭa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Directing the light of perception brings knowledge
of the subtle, the hidden and the distant.**

Commentary

There is a great power in focusing the mind on its innermost movements and activities. A deep internalization is achieved and the *yogī* can find himself in another world, beyond the physical and astral. Here he can move through the *ākāśa* and experience

.....
One of the natural siddhis that may come is physical strength equal to that of an elephant.

a reality seldom known by others. He can, for instance, visit remote places. There are reports of *yogīs* being aware of happenings in distant lands, even reporting conversations and events. This access to the *ākāśic* reality that is always there but unseen has even been the subject of scientific study, sometimes termed “remote viewing.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Consciousness and awareness are the same when awareness is totally identified with and attached to that which it is aware of. To separate the two is the artful practice of *yoga*...When awareness is detached from that which it is aware of, it flows freely in consciousness. A tree has consciousness. Awareness can flow into the tree and become aware of the consciousness of the tree. Consciousness and mind are totally equated as a one thing when awareness and consciousness are a one thing to the individual. But when awareness is detached from that which it is aware of, it can flow freely through all five states of mind and all areas of consciousness. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 34: “Awareness and Consciousness”)

भुवनज्ञानं सूर्ये संयमात् ॥ २६॥

3.26 bhuvana-jñānaṁ sūrye saṁyamāt

sūrye (on the sun), **saṁyamāt** (from meditation), **bhuvana-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of the planes of existence, *bhuvana*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the sun, knowledge of the planes of existence is acquired.

Commentary

Patañjali reveals that meditative union with the Sun gives access to the many planes of consciousness and existence that lie beyond the physical universe. We take this to mean the *yogī* can actually travel through the Sun into other worlds, other realities. These would include the many subtle realms of the astral and causal planes. There is, perhaps, a nod in this *sūtra* to the quantum worlds being discovered by mankind.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

God Śiva created us. He created the Earth and all things upon it, animate and inanimate. He created time and gravity, the vast spaces and the uncounted stars. He created night and day, joy and sorrow, love and hate, birth and death. He created the gross and the subtle, this world and the other worlds. There are three worlds of existence: the physical, subtle and causal, termed Bhūloka, Antarloka and Śivaloka. The Creator of all, Śiva Himself is uncreated. As supreme Mahādeva, Śiva wills into manifestation all souls and all form, issuing them from Himself like light from a fire or waves from an ocean. *Rishis* describe this perpetual process as the unfoldment of thirty-six *tattvas*, stages of manifestation, from the Śiva *tattva*—Paraśakti and *nāda*—to the five elements. Creation is not the making of a separate thing, but an emanation of Himself. Lord Śiva creates, constantly sustains the form of His creations and absorbs them back

into Himself. The *Vedas* elucidate, “As a spider spins and withdraws its web, as herbs grow on the earth, as hair grows on the head and body of a person, so also from the Imperishable arises this universe.” (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 41: “Where Did This Universe Come from?”)

चन्द्रे ताराव्यूहज्ञानम् ॥ २७॥

3.27 candre tārā-vyūha-jñānam

candre (on the moon), **tārā-vyūha-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; of the arrangement, *vyūha*; of the stars, *tārā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through the moon, knowledge of the arrangement of the stars is acquired.

Commentary

Some commentators state that “moon” refers to the point in the body known as the lunar entrance, which is the *anāhata chakra*. But this can also refer to contemplation on the physical Moon above. Either way, the *yogī* awakens knowledge of the stars by this *saṁyama*—their sizes, composition, relationships, structural organization and influence.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

With the spiritual will aroused, awareness flows quite naturally into the *anāhata chakra*, the heart center, governing the faculties of direct cognition or comprehension. Connected to the cardiac plexus, this *chakra* is often referred to as “the lotus of the heart.” Its twelve “petals” imply that the faculty of cognition can be expressed in twelve distinct ways or through as many masks or personae. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 284: “Cognition and Divine Love”)

ध्रुवे तद्वतिज्ञानम् ॥ २८॥

3.28 dhruve tad-gati-jñānam

dhruve (on the pole star), **tad-gati-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*, of their, *tad*; motion, *gati*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through the polestar, knowledge of their motion is acquired.

Commentary

The term *pole star* refers to Polaris, which is the current North Star. A *yogī's* *saṁyama* on this star is said to bring understanding of the movements of the other stars. Such movements have deep implications in the Indian science of *jyotiṣa*. They are not just spatial movements; they influence movements and changes in *karmas*. Unfolding this science, the *yogī* can understand how the celestial bodies and their infinite interactions affect the life of living beings.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Astrology explores the stars and planets as they move in the heavens and their subtle effects on our physical, mental and emotional condition, mapping the ebb and flow of our *karma*. Astrology plays a very important part in every Hindu's life. An established family is not complete without their master of *jyotiṣa*. Guided by the stars from birth to death, devout Hindus choose a *śubha muhūrta*, auspicious time, for every important experience of life. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 77: "Insights from Astrology")

नाभिचक्रे कायव्यूहज्ञानम् ॥ २९॥

3.29 nābhi-cakre kāya-vyūha-jñānam

nābhi-cakre (on the navel *chakra*), **kāya-vyūha-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; body, *kāya*; structure/constitution, *vyūha*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through the navel *chakra*, knowledge of the body's constitution is acquired.

Commentary

By taking the nerve plexus at the navel as the point of focused attention, knowledge can be gained of the physical body, its structure, functions, anatomy and physiology. There is also the implication that the *yogī* unfolds deep understandings of the science of āyurveda. He knows the body and its three *doṣas*, and knows he is not that body.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The solar plexus is often called the sun center. It is the great balancer of all bodily functions. It contains the fire within the body. When the *maṇipūra chakra* sleeps, the sub of the subconscious begins to build. The individuals in this state appear to have no will of their own; nor would they dare to even think they could think for themselves. But when the *maṇipūra chakra* begins to unfold, individual willpower asserts itself—this is not without its problems—and if the individual is a spiritual person, the sub-superconscious mind begins to work through this *chakra*, healing the past. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 97)

कण्ठकूपे क्षुत्पिपासानिवृत्तिः ॥ ३०॥

3.30 kaṇṭha-kūpe kṣut-pipāsā-nivṛttiḥ

kaṇṭha-kūpe (on the suprasternal notch), **kṣut-pipāsā-nivṛttiḥ** (cessation, *nivṛttiḥ*; of hunger, *kṣut*; thirst, *pipāsā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through the suprasternal notch, cessation of hunger and thirst occurs.

Commentary

Patañjali tells us that *saṁnyama* on the hollow of the throat results in a calm and placid feeling and that feelings of hunger and thirst are also conquered.

.....
By meditating on the pole star, this swāminī has unfolded knowledge of the movements of the galaxies.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Some animals that hibernate do this as well. Frogs have been found buried in earthen mounds in the United States and are said to have been hibernating there hundreds of years without food, water, or air, yet once liberated they showed every sign of life. And man can do it, too, with proper training over a long period of time. This, of course, is not a complete unfoldment of the meaning of life. It is only the conquest of the second aspect of man, odic *prāṇa*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 215: “The Sheath of Vitality”)

कूर्मनाड्यां स्थैर्यम् ॥ ३१॥**3.31 kūrma-nāḍyāṁ sthairyam**

kūrma-nāḍyāṁ (tortoise, *kūrma*; on the channel, *nāḍyāṁ*), **sthairyam** (steadiness)



Through the tortoise channel, steadiness is acquired.

Commentary

The *yogī* can attain balance and steadiness by performing *samīyama* on the cluster of nerve ganglia located at the throat and associated with the *viśuddha chakra*. Control of bodily functions is achieved, perhaps the sage's subtle reference to *pratyāhāra*, the withdrawal of senses often associated with the tortoise who withdraws his limbs into its shell. By this, the *yogī* masters the disciplined sensory withdrawal and firmness of mind necessary to achieve the deepest states of consciousness.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Universal or divine love is the faculty expressed by the next center, called the *viśuddha chakra*. This center is associated with the pharyngeal plexus in the throat and possesses sixteen “petals” or attributes. Whereas the first two centers are predominantly odic force in nature and the third and fourth are mixtures of odic force and a little actinic force, *viśuddha* is almost a purely actinic force structure. On a percentage scale, we could say that the energies here are eighty percent actinic and only twenty percent odic. Whenever people feel filled with inexpressible love and devotion to all mankind, all creatures, large and small, they are vibrating within *viśuddha*. In this state there is no consciousness of a physical body, no consciousness of being a person with emotions, no consciousness of thoughts. They are just being the light or being fully aware of themselves as actinic force flowing through all form. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 284: “Cognition and Divine Love”)

मूर्धज्योतिषि सिद्धदर्शनम् ॥ ३२॥**3.32 mūrdha-jyotiṣi siddha-darśanam**

mūrdha-jyotiṣi (in the light, *jyotiṣi*; of the head, *mūrdha*), **siddha-darśanam** (vision, *darśanam*; perfected beings, *siddha*)



The light in the head brings vision of perfected beings.

Commentary

The sixth of the primary *chakras*, *ajñā*, is the rarefied area of mind of color, sound and vibration, as well as subtle forms and beings composed of these elements. By performing *samīyama* on the intense inner light in the head, the *yogī* gains access to other worlds and ultimately to union with the Divine. Here Patañjali reveals that the *yogī* can have visions of perfected souls, *siddhas*, enlightened beings who have lived on Earth and transcended all physicality, existing in deep inner spheres. The world of the *siddhas* becomes accessible to the awakened *yogī*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

It is a great new world of the mind that is entered into when first the clear white light dawns, birthing a new actinic race, immediately causing him to become the parent to his parents and forefathers. When living in an expanded inner state of mind, he must not expect those living in materialistic consciousness to understand him. On this new path of “the lonely one,” wisdom must be invoked to cause him to be able to look through the eyes of those who believe the world is real, and see and relate to that limited world in playing the game as if it were real, thus maintaining the harmony so necessary for future unfoldments.

Occasionally, in a cross-section of the inner mind, when light merges into transcendental form, the young aspirant may view the golden actinic face of a master peering into his, kindly and all-knowing. He is looking at his own great potential. As the clear white light becomes more of a friend to his external mind than an experience or vision and can be basked in during contemplative periods of the day, the nourishment to the entirety of the nerve system, as ambrosia, bursts forth from the crown *chakra*. This is identified inadequately as “the peace that passeth understanding,” for he who reaches this state can never seem to explain it. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 55: “Turning to the Inner Light”)

प्रातिभाद्वा सर्वम् ॥ ३३ ॥

3.33 prātibhād-vā sarvam

vā (or) prātibhāt (from intuition), sarvam (everything)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Or, by intuition, everything is known.

Commentary

Intuition is regarded as a preliminary state of omniscience, and is the *yogī's* doorway into knowledge of all kinds, in all dimensions. All of the previously discussed forms of knowing are limited, but direct cognition of existence brings the fullness of knowing of, remarkably, everything. In this state the *yogī* can see what seems impossible to the mind—everything, all existence in a glance.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Mystics never demean or belittle intellectual reasoning. The intellect is not bad. It is good and necessary when used correctly. But they also do not elevate it too highly, knowing it is not the whole mind, it is only one phase of the mind. Instinctive, intellectual and intuitive phases define the whole of the mind. We often use the terms “unfolding intuitive faculties” and “developing intuition” in an effort to encourage an individual on the path to work within himself in subduing his intellect so that he can actually observe the already functioning totality of his intuitive mind. When the superconscious pushes the desired knowledge through the subconscious, that is as close as the superconscious can come to time and space....The closeness of the superconscious to the external world of time and space is through the subconscious and/or intuitive flashes penetrating the conscious mind. The superconscious knows about time and space, but is not in time and space as are the other four states of mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 165: “Intellect and Intuition,” and *Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 47)

हृदये चित्तसंवित् ॥ ३४ ॥

3.34 hrdaye citta-saṁvit

hrdaye (on the heart), citta-saṁvit (knowledge, saṁvit; mind, citta)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From the heart, knowledge of the mind arises.

Commentary

The heart plexus is the center of cognition—knowledge reached through intuitive, superconscious faculties rather than through intellect. Hindu mysticism places both the mind, *citta*, and the soul, *ātma*, at the heart *chakra*. So naturally, performing *saṁnyama* there awakens knowledge of the mind and its ways.

.....
Her head filled with the clear white light, this
swāminī has visions of perfected beings.



Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Visualize within yourself a lotus. Have you ever seen a lotus flower? I am sure you have. Now visualize this lotus flower centered right within the center of your chest, right within your heart. You have read in the Hindu scriptures that the Self God dwells in the lotus within the heart. Let's think about that. We all know what the heart is, and we know what happens when the heart stops. Try to mentally feel and see the heart as a lotus flower right within you. Within the center of the lotus, try to see a small light. Doubtless you have read in the Hindu scriptures that the Self God within the heart looks like a brilliant light about the size of your thumb—just a small light. This light we shall call an emanation of your effulgent being. We could also call it your atomic power, the power that motivates, permeates, makes the mind self-luminous. It is dwelling right within. The Self God is deeper than that. The lotus is within the heart, and the Self God dwells deep within that lotus of light. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 57: “Emanations From Within”)

सत्त्वपुरुषयोरत्यन्तासङ्कीर्णयोः प्रत्ययाविशेषो भोगः
परार्थत्वात्स्वार्थसंयमात्पुरुषज्ञानम् ॥ ३५॥

3.35 sattva-puruṣayor-atyantāsaṅkīrṇayoḥ pratyayāviśeṣo
bhogaḥ parārthatvāt-svārtha-saṁyamāt-puruṣajñānam

bhogaḥ (experience), **pratyaya-aviśeṣaḥ** (non-differentiation, *aviśeṣaḥ*; cognition, *pratyaya*), **sattva-puruṣayoḥ** (illuminated principle, *sattva*; Self, *puruṣa*), **atyanta-asamkīrṇayoḥ** (exceedingly, *atyanta*; entirely distinct, *asaṅkīrṇa*), **parārthatvāt** (due to existing for another), **svārtha-saṁyamāt** (from meditation, *saṁyamāt*; self-purpose, *svārtha*), **puruṣa-jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; Self, *puruṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Experience of material reality arises from not distinguishing between the completely distinct *puruṣa* and the luminous mind. Through *saṁyama* on that which is self-existing and that which exists for another, knowledge of *puruṣa* is acquired.

Commentary

This *sūtra* highlights the fundamental error of identifying the innermost self (*puruṣa*) with the luminous mind (*sattva*). This identification underpins the experience of material reality. As the *yogī* focuses on the difference between the two, he unravels the knot which ties the Self to the mind, and this gives him true knowledge of *puruṣa*, basically untangling the two and allowing *puruṣa* to be known in its self-existent purity.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

After you realize the Self, you see the mind for what it is—a self-created principle. That is the mind ever creating itself. The mind is form ever creating form, preserving form, creating new forms and destroying old forms. That is the mind, the illusion, the

great unreality, the part of you that in your thinking mind you dare to think is real. What gives the mind that power? Does the mind have power if it is unreal? What difference whether it has power or hasn't power, or the very words that I am saying when the Self exists because of itself? You could live in the dream and become disturbed by it. Or you can seek and desire with a burning desire to cognize reality and be blissful because of it. Man's destiny leads him back to himself. Man's destiny leads him into the cognition of his own Being; leads him further into the realization of his True Being. They say you must step onto the spiritual path to realize the Self. You only step on the spiritual path when you and you alone are ready, when what appears real to you loses its appearance of reality. Then and only then are you able to detach yourself enough to seek to find a new and permanent reality. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 6: “The Self God Within”)

ततः प्रातिभश्रावणवेदनादर्शास्वादवार्ता जायन्ते ॥ ३६॥

3.36 tataḥ prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanādarśāsvāda-vārtā jāyante

tataḥ (then/therefore), **jāyante** (are born), **prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedana-ādarśa-āsvāda-vārtāḥ** (intuitive knowledge, *prātibha*; hearing/listening, *śrāvaṇa*; touch, *vedana*; vision, *ādarśa*; taste, *āsvāda*; smell, *vārtā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From that arises intuitive perception—heightened hearing, touch, vision, taste and smell.

Commentary

“From that” refers back to meditating on the difference between *puruṣa* and *sattva*, the luminous *buddhi*, as discussed in the previous *sūtra*. With knowledge of *puruṣa* comes the natural awakening of the subtle senses. This gives rise to a world not known by most, a world in which the senses are pure and enhanced. Sounds are extraordinarily clear, feelings are intense, sight reveals the Divine in all things. There is also the awakening of clairaudience and clairvoyance. Unlike the acquisition of previous powers, these awakenings are independent of any specific *saṁyama*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

My devotees may spontaneously experience but do not practice clairvoyance, clairaudience, astral projection, lucid dreaming, trance mediumship, mind-reading, fortunetelling, magic or other distracting occult arts. (*Living with Śiva*, Sūtra 312: “Avoiding Occult Powers”)

ते समाधायुपसर्गा व्युत्थाने सिद्धयः ॥ ३७ ॥

3.37 te samādhāvupasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ

te (these) **samādhau** (in *samādhi*) **upasargāḥ** (obstacles) **vyutthāne** (in outward engagement) **siddhayaḥ** (powers/perfections)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These are powers for the outgoing mind but obstacles to *samādhi*.

Commentary

Patañjali is giving a caution that is widely repeated in Hindu texts, that all such enhanced sensory powers—regarded as beguiling and desirable by those living in the external mind—are, for the true *yogī*, recognized not as achievements but as distractions to his true purpose on the *yoga* path. Though they may arise spontaneously, they are not to be pursued, for they have the power to entangle one in the mesh of worldliness. Gurudeva advised: “Therefore, before Paraśiva, we should not seek the *siddhis*. After Paraśiva, through *saṁyama*, we keep the *siddhis* we need for our work.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Realizing Paraśiva gives you great power, but to use that power very sparingly or not at all is the greater thing to do, because the power itself works of its own accord.

Curiosity is the final thing to leave the mind, which it does after Self Realization. The curiosity of things goes away—of *siddhis*, for example. We no longer want power, because we are power, nonpower, unusable. And we don't have the yearning for Paraśiva anymore; we don't have the yearning for the Self. And Satchidānanda is now to us similar to what the intellect used to be. If we want to go to a far-off place, we go into Satchidānanda and see it. It is that easy. *Samyama*, contemplation, is effortless to you now, like the intellect used to be; whereas before, *saṁyama* was a very big job which took a lot of energy and concentration. Therefore, before Paraśiva we should not seek the *siddhis*. After Paraśiva, through *saṁyama*, we keep the *siddhis* we need for our work. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 341: “*Dharma* after Realization”)

बन्धकारणशैथिल्यात्प्रचारसंवेदनाच्च चित्तस्य परशरीरावेशः ॥ ३८ ॥

3.38 bandhakāraṇaśaithilyātpṛacārasaṁvedanācca
cittasya paraśārīrāveśaḥ

bandhakāraṇa-śaithilyāt (from loosening, *śaithilyāt*; of the causes, *kāraṇa*; of bondage, *bandha*), **ca** (and), **pṛacāra-saṁvedanāt** (from direct perception, *saṁvedanāt*; of movement, *pṛacāra*) **cittasya** (of the mind), **para-śārīra-āveśaḥ** (entry, *āveśaḥ*; other, *para*; body, *śārīra*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By loosening the causes of bondage, and by intimate awareness of the mind's pathways, one can enter another's body.

Commentary

Bodily identification is a powerful and universal attachment. We think we are a body, we live in a body, move and experience through the body's senses. That confinement to a one body, which is secured by the cords of *karma* in this life, is so potent it is considered necessary. But it is not. Patañjali tells us that if we understand the fetters that tie us to the body, if we overcome the *kleśas* and gain knowledge of the corridors of the mind, how it travels, we can free ourselves of the self-imposed limits to the mind's travels and move in non-physical spaces. We can even enter another body and experience it as our own, returning at will or when our concentration is broken. There is a famous story in Śaiva Siddhānta literature in which Saint Tirumular comes upon a Tamil cowherd who has died. In compassion for the abandoned cows, he enters and reanimates the body and continues to live in it till death.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The next theory of reincarnation, governed by the throat, brow and crown *chakras*, states that when an advanced soul leaves the body through the brow *chakra*, or third eye, he enters a highly refined force field world from which he is able to pick and choose exactly when and where he will return. At this point he does not have to reincarnate as an infant, but could take an already well-matured physical body. In such a case, the soul inhabiting the body would have *karmically* ended this life and be involved in the reincarnation process, either dead or preparing to die. The advanced *yogī* would flow his awareness into the nerve system of the body, revitalizing it with the spark of his will and consciously bring it back to life. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 349: “Reincarnating Prior to Death”)

उदानजयाज्जलपङ्ककण्टकादिष्वसङ्ग उत्क्रान्तिश्च ॥ ३९ ॥

3.39 udānajayājjalapaṅkakaṇṭakādiṣvasaṅga utkrāntiśca

udānajayāt (from mastery, *jayāt*; of the upward moving energy, *udāna*), **jala-paṅka-kaṇṭaka-ādiṣu** (in water, *jala*; mud, *paṅka*; thorns, *kaṇṭaka*; and such, *ādiṣu*), **asaṅgaḥ** (non-contact), **ca** (and), **utkrāntiḥ** (ascension)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Mastery of *udana* brings ascension and non-contact with water, mud, thorns and such.

Commentary

Five *prāṇas* control the life force of the body. Of these, the *udāna nāḍī* raises life force upward and into the head. By controlling this *prāṇa*, the *yogī* can lift the body itself, levitate in defiance of gravity. Practically speaking, he attains the ability to avoid the dangers and discomforts of water, mud, thorns and other impediments. A second interpretation of this ascension is that the *yogī*'s extraordinary control of the forces of the body and mind allows him to rise at the time of death to the crown *chakra*, leaving through the *brahmarandhra*, thus exiting physical existence, never to return.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

After *nirvikalpa samādhi* is attained and perfected so that the *mahayogī* can go into it at will, he leaves the body consciously through the door of Brahman, the center of the *sahasrāra chakra* above the pituitary gland at the top of the head. This depends on whether or not the golden actinic causal body, which has been developed after Self Realization, is mature enough to travel in actinic force fields on its own. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 349: “Theories of Reincarnation”)

समानजयाज्ज्वलनम् ॥ ४० ॥**3.40 samānajayājñvalanam**

samānajayāt (from mastery, *jayāt*; of the balancing energy, *samāna*), **jñvalanam** (radiance)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By mastery of *samāna*, radiance arises.

Commentary

The *samāna nāḍī* is situated in the abdomen and is responsible for digestion, assimilation of food and the movement of energies/*prāṇas* throughout the body. It mediates between the upward-moving energy (*prāṇa*) and the downward-moving energy (*apāna*), giving rise to balance, to body-wide health and vitality. When *samāna* is working optimally, the cells of the body, the organs and tissues are vital and strong, and this gives the body an effulgence. Even the skin can appear to glow. But it is the underlying radiance, the presence of a dynamic life force, that is most important.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

To protect yourself from psychic influences, you can charge your aura with the vital *prāṇa* from your own *prāṇic* body. To do so, sit quietly, breathe deeply and mentally get in touch with your *prāṇic* body, first by visualizing it and secondly by feeling it. The *prāṇic* body of most people extends out from the physical body about one or two inches, depending on the level of vitality. Of course, the *prāṇic* body also completely permeates the entire physical body. As you sit quietly, breathing deeply and slowly, become intimately aware of the vitality, the *prāṇa*, running throughout the physical body. As you breathe in, feel the vitality of your body. Feel the magnetic energy within it. Feel its life. Then, as you breathe out, mentally and through feeling release some of this vitality, this *prāṇa*, this life force, and send it out into your aura. Keep sending it out on the out-breath to the aura's outer edges all around your body, from your head to your feet. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 236: “Charging Your Aura with *Prāṇa*”)

श्रोत्राकाशयोः सम्बन्धसंयमाद्विव्यं श्रोत्रम् ॥ ४१ ॥**3.41 śrotrākāśayoḥ sambandhasaṁyamādivyaṁ śrotram**

sambandha-saṁyamāt (through meditation, *saṁyamāt*; on the relationship, *sambandha*), **śrotra-ākāśayoḥ** (between the ear/hearing, *śrotra*; and space, *ākāśa*), **divyam** (divine), **śrotram** (hearing)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the relationship between the ear and space, divine hearing is acquired.

Commentary

Sound propagates through space. By focusing on their relationship, understanding the subtle relationship they have, the *yogī* awakens new sensitivities in hearing. It is said he can hear at a distance, but by using “divine hearing,” Patañjali is implying another form of hearing, such as the clairaudience experienced by psychically awakened people—hearing one's own inner voice, hearing messages from inner plane beings, listening to cosmic music.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Occasionally, when you close your eyes in meditation, you may see the face of your *guru* or some divine being that possibly once lived on Earth, and now just the shell of his subtle body remains vibrating in the ethers. You see superconscious beings while in the superconscious area of the mind. Occasionally you clairaudiently hear voices singing, music playing, just as Beethoven heard his wonderful symphonies that he recorded like a scribe. It is the superconscious mind again, so near, so real, so vibrant. These psychic powers sometimes take years to develop. But under the right circumstances those carried over from a previous incarnation come immediately, of course, and are as much available as the ability to speak, listen and feel. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 41: “Superconscious Signposts”)

कायाकाशयोः सम्बन्धसंयमाल्लघुतूलसमापत्तेश्चाकाशगमनम् ॥ ४२ ॥

3.42 kāyākāśayoḥ

sambandhasaṁyamāllaghutūla-samāpatteścākāśagamanam

sambandha-saṁyamāt (from meditation, *saṁyamāt*; on the relationship, *sambandha*), **kāyākāśayoḥ** (between the body, *kāya*; and space, *ākāśa*), **ca** (and), **laghu-tūla-samāpatteḥ** (absorption, *samāpatteḥ*; in lightness, *laghu*; like cotton, *tūla*), **ākāśa-gamanam** (travel, *gamanam*; through space, *ākāśa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the body's relationship to space and meditative absorption with the lightness of cotton, the ability to travel through space is acquired.

Commentary

Patañjali speaks here of *samāpatti*, the advanced form of meditation in which the *yogī* so perfectly loses himself in the object of his contemplation that the observed and the observer are not different. By so meditating on lightness, as with a cotton ball and its relationship with space, an advanced *yogī* is able to travel through the sky/*ākāśa*. The *Yoga Sūtras* present many *siddhis* that can be interpreted as literal supernatural abilities or as metaphors for profound spiritual achievements. The interpretation may depend on one's philosophical perspective and understanding of *yogic* practices.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

In the *ākāśa*, he would be able to go into all sorts of psychic phenomena. We don't want that. We don't want to utilize the *ākāśa* in that way, because then we cause the growth of gross matter in the subconscious mind, which is capable of imprinting into the *ākāśa* things that we want to happen. Then we could go in the *ākāśa* and see them. We will see those forms change shape from what we have, from our own subconscious, imprinted in the subconscious. Then, through the power of the light, it takes form in the *ākāśa*, and we can have a little world of our own going around on the inside, and that is called psychism or occultism. We don't want that. Nor do we want to tune in with anybody else who is also in the *ākāśa*, because that leads us away from the purity of *yoga*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 340: "Distractions and Sidepaths")

बहिरकल्पिता वृत्तिर्महाविदेहा ततः प्रकाशावरणक्षयः ॥ ४३ ॥

3.43 bahirakalpitaḥ vṛttirmahāvidehā tataḥ prakāśāvaraṇakṣayaḥ

tataḥ (then/therefore), **bahirakalpitaḥ vṛttiḥ** (external, *bahih*; unimagined/real, *akalpita*; modification, *vṛttiḥ*), **mahāvidehā** (great, *mahā*; disembodied state, *videhā*), **prakāśa-āvaraṇa-kṣayaḥ** (destruction, *kṣayaḥ*; of the covering, *āvaraṇa*; of light, *prakāśa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through the real external mental projection called the great out-of-body experience, the covering of the light is destroyed.

Commentary

In modern times the out-of-the-body experience is being avidly studied, with thousands of documented cases in the record. Patañjali did not have the advantage of such research, but spoke knowingly of the possibility of detaching awareness from the body, and seeing them clearly as two distinct entities. There are two ways we project the mind outside the body: the common one being watching a film or reading a book, which are imagined experiences, and the unfabricated or real projection which happens, for instance, in an out-of-body experience. The *yogī*, from the vantage point of non-embodied awareness, gains a great insight, becomes convinced of the truth "I am not my body." This has a profound affect on him, removing the misconceptions that have driven him until now, essentially removing the veil of ignorance that has heretofore hidden the light of the mind, freeing him to see that light at will. Removing the covering of the light fundamentally refers to the removal of the *kleśas* and *karmas* which shroud the mind's natural, *sāttvic* effulgence.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As we can walk and talk using our conscious mind and our physical body as a vehicle during our waking hours, so can we walk and talk using the duplicate of the physical body, our astral body of the subconscious mind, during the hours we are asleep. When we are in the astral body in the subconscious world, other people are also in that world, and forms of communication take place, as in the physical world. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 218: "Your Astral Counterpart")

स्थूलस्वरूपसूक्ष्मान्वयार्थवत्त्वसंयमाद्भूतजयः ॥ ४४ ॥

3.44 sthūlasvarūpasūkṣmānvayārthavattvasaṁyamādbhūtajayaḥ

saṁyamāt (from meditation), **sthūla** (gross), **svarūpa** (essential nature), **sūkṣma** (subtle), **anvaya** (constitution/connection), **arthavattva** (purposiveness), **bhūta-jayaḥ** (mastery, *jayaḥ*; over the elements, *bhūta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on the gross, essential and subtle nature of objects, along with their constitution and purposiveness, the elements are mastered.

Commentary

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.” This is spoken by Hamlet to his friend Horatio, suggesting that the world holds many mysteries that go beyond human understanding or conventional wisdom. This *sūtra* was made for Shakespeare’s quote. Patañjali is guiding the *yogī* deeper and deeper into the object of concentration, starting with its gross physicality and further into its true nature, its subtle composition, its assembly of the *guṇas*, and its purpose (by which he means that the existence of things is to bring the mind into worldliness or into liberation). While some object to the notion of the *siddhis*, considering them as some form of sorcery or magic-making, Patañjali says it is just subtle physics.

The gross arises from the subtle, and if the *yogī* can rearrange the subtle forces or energies of the object, he can effect changes in their gross expression; he can in fact learn to manipulate the five elements: earth, air, fire, water and ether. In contemporary nanotechnology, scientists and engineers manipulate matter at the atomic and molecular scale to create new materials and devices with unique properties. This manipulation of the very small can lead to changes in the larger, visible properties of materials, affecting everything from their strength and electrical conductivity to how they interact with light. This mirrors Patañjali’s teaching that by understanding and manipulating subtle energies, a *yogī* can potentially influence the physical elements of existence.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When you worship the God in the temple through *pūjā* and ceremony, you are bringing that Divinity out of the microcosm and into this macrocosm. You supply the energy through your worship and your devotion, through your thought forms, and even your physical aura. The *pūjārī* purifies and magnetizes the stone image for this to take place. The Gods and the *devas* are also magnetizing the stone image with their energy, and finally the moment is ready and they can come out of the microcosm into this macrocosm and bless the people. You observe that they stayed only for an instant, but to them it was a longer time. The time sense in the inner worlds is different. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 140: “Grace of the Gods”)

ततोऽणिमादिप्रादुर्भावः कायसम्पत्तद्धर्मनभिघातश्च ॥ ४५ ॥

3.45 tato’ṇimādiprādurbhāvaḥ kāyasampattaddharmānabhighātaśca

tataḥ (then/therefore), **aṇimādi-prādurbhāvaḥ** (minuteness, *aṇimā*; and others, *ādi*; manifestation, *prādurbhāvaḥ*), **kāya-sampat** (body, *kāya*; perfection, *sampat*), **ca** (and), **tad-dharma-anabhighātaḥ** (indestructibility, *anabhighātaḥ*; its, *tad*; attributes, *dharma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From this manifests the power to become as small as an atom, perfection of the body, indestructibility of its attributes, and more.

Commentary

There are eight well-known *siddhis*. The words “and more” refer to the seven not explicitly mentioned in this *sūtra*. To that list of eight, Patañjali adds bodily perfection—meaning perfect physical functionality, freedom from disease and decay—and being indestructible, immune to injury.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Through the millennia, Nāthas have been conveyors of esoteric knowledge and wielders of *siddhis*, powers of the soul. Nātha *siddhas* delve deep into the mind, invoking Śiva’s grace, controlling the *kuṇḍalinī śakti*. They worship with full heart and mind the Lord of lords, Śiva, and in *yogic* contemplation experience identity in His Being. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Resource 3: “The Tradition of Masters”)

रूपलावण्यबलवज्रसंहननत्वानि कायसम्पत् ॥ ४६ ॥

3.46 rūpa-lāvaṇya-bala-vajra-saṁhananatvāni kāya-sampat

kāya-sampat (perfection, *sampat*; of the body, *kāya*), **rūpa** (form), **lāvaṇya** (grace/charm), **bala** (strength), **vajra-saṁhananatvāni** (diamond-like or thunderbolt-like, *vajra*; firmness, *saṁhananatvāni*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Perfection of the body includes graceful form, strength and diamond-like firmness.

Commentary

In the previous *sūtra* the sage mentions the *siddhi* of a perfect body and here is giving the three features which such a body possesses.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Great knowledge is being developed in our Dravidian monasteries on the five great winds of the physical body to aid in its refinement, so that Self can be realized. . . . Various forms of *yoga* are practiced to quiet the animal nerve system, mature the inner

bodies and seek the Self. (*Lemurian Scrolls*, TOC Summary, Chapter 13: “Continuity of Wisdom”)

ग्रहणस्वरूपास्मितान्वयार्थवत्त्वसंयमादिन्द्रियजयः ॥ ४७॥

3.47 grahaṇasvarūpāsmitānvayārthavattvasaṁyamādindriyajayaḥ

saṁyamād (from meditation on, *saṁyama*), **grahaṇa** (perception), **svarūpa** (essential nature), **asmitā** (egoity), **anvaya** (connection/constitution), **arthavattva** (purposiveness), **indriya-jayaḥ** (mastery, *jayaḥ*; of the senses, *indriya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Through *saṁyama* on perception, essential nature, egoity, constitution and purposiveness, control of the senses is acquired.

Commentary

Patañjali presents a five-step exploration of the senses and what they perceive, moving from gross to subtle, from the grasping of an object by the senses, to the subtle elements of sense perception (*tanmātras*), to their relation to egoism (*asmitā*), all the way to his repeated insight that the very purpose of the senses is to provide experience, joy and sorrow, by which the soul matures toward liberation. As before, “constitution” (*anvaya*) is a reference to the three *guṇas* which underpin all of *prakṛti*, the cosmos. This is a foundational *sūtra*, inasmuch as the *yogī* is striving in order to control the senses.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Control of the mind builds the intuitive nature. By directing the flow of thought, perceptively discriminating between actions, aware of attending reactions, the *yoga* student soon learns the use of his actinic power. In order to hold an expanded consciousness, this power must be brought into use, and when it flows through the intellect, it automatically changes the chemistry of the intellect while it begins to build the intuitive nature. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 224: “Soul Body, the Real You”)

ततो मनोजवित्वं विकरणभावः प्रधानजयश्च ॥ ४८॥

3.48 tato manojavitvaṁ vikaraṇabhāvaḥ pradhānajayaśca

tataḥ (then/therefore), **manojavitvam** (quickness of mind), **vikaraṇa-bhāvaḥ** (state of, *bhāvaḥ*, non-instrumentality/metaphysical perception, *vikaraṇa*), **ca** (and), **pradhāna-jayaḥ** (mastery, *jayaḥ*; primordial matter, *pradhāna*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From that comes quickness of mind, metaphysical perception and mastery over primordial matter.

Commentary

Patañjali describes three additional powers attained by the *yogī* who conquers the senses. Swiftens of thought is one, sometimes interpreted as the ability of the body

to move as quickly as the mind. Perceptions that do not rely on the physicality of the senses is another, such that the *yogī* can perceive in ways that do not involve the normal sense organs. He enjoys a direct, unmediated link to things, a form of pure knowing. Finally, he has mastery of the underlying forces of the universe (*pradhāna*), a kind of omnipotence.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As soon as we can understand awareness detached from that which it is aware of, we have a vibrant energy, a tremendous drive. A tremendous willpower is released from within us, and we live with the feeling that we can do anything that we want to do, almost as quickly as we want to do it. We want things to happen now, for we vividly see the area where they already exist within the force fields of the mind itself. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 30: “Claim the Being of Yourself”)

सत्त्वपुरुषान्यताख्यातिमात्रस्य सर्वभावाधिष्ठातृत्वं सर्वज्ञातृत्वं च ॥ ४९॥

3.49 sattvapuruṣānyatākhyātimātrasya
sarvabhāvādhiṣṭhātṛtvaṁ sarvajñātṛtvaṁ ca

sattva-puruṣa-anyatā-khyāti-mātrasya (merely, *mātra*; discerning, *khyāti*; distinction, *anyatā*; luminous mind; *sattva*, Self, *puruṣa*), **sarva-bhāva-adhiṣṭhātṛtvaṁ** (omnipotence—mastery, *adhiṣṭhātṛtvaṁ*; over all, *sarva*; states of being, *bhāva*), **ca** (and), **sarva-jñātṛtvaṁ** (omniscience—being the knower, *jñātṛtvaṁ*; of all, *sarva*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

By merely discerning the distinction between *puruṣa* and the luminous mind, one gains omnipotence and omniscience.

Commentary

In this *sūtra* the sage notes a great milestone for the *yogī*, the full realization of the difference between the highest aspect of the cognitive faculty, known as *buddhi*, and *puruṣa*, the witnessing Self. This brings forth the most mirific of the *yogī*'s *siddhis*, the ability to manipulate all of manifest reality and to know all things. As with the earlier powers, it is all premised on the principle that mastery of the subtle forces, the purest aspect of mind, is key to controlling their grosser expressions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The three bonds, or *malas*, are given by Lord Śiva to help and protect us as we unfold. Yet, God Śiva's all-knowingness may be experienced for brief periods by the meditator who turns within to his own essence. . . . Those of you who have experienced contemplation know the depth from which I am speaking. You have had a taste of your true Self. It has tasted like nothing that you have ever come in contact with before. It has filled and thrilled and permeated your whole being, even if you have only remained in that state of contemplation not longer than sixty seconds. Out of it you have gained a great knowing, a knowing that you could refer back to, a knowing that will bear the fruit of wisdom if you relate future life experiences to that knowing, a knowing greater

than you could acquire at any university or institute of higher learning. Can you only try to gain a clear intellectual concept of realizing this Self that you felt permeating through you and through all form in your state of contemplation? That is your next step. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Lesson 183: “Why Are We Not Omniscient Like Śiva;” and *Living With Śiva*, Lesson 7: “Every Temple Made of Brick”)

तद्वैराग्यादपि दोषबीजक्षये कैवल्यम् ॥ ५०॥

3.50 tadvairāgyādapi doṣabījakṣaye kaivalyam

tad-vairāgyāt (through detachment, *vairāgyāt*; from that, *tad*),
api (even), **doṣa-bīja-kṣaye** (in eradication, *kṣaye*; of the
seeds, *bīja*; of defects, *doṣa*), **kaivalyam** (liberation)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Through detachment even from this—and the eradication
of the seeds of all defects—liberation is attained.**

Commentary

Even the marvelous attainment of all-power and all-knowing mentioned in the previous *sūtra* (expressed in this *sūtra* by “this”) must be renounced for the attainment of perfect freedom, liberation. In addition, the *yogī* must destroy the seeds (the sources)—of all imperfections—these being the *kleśas*, the mental aberrations, *karmic* fetters and unresolved experiences of the mind that linger in the subconscious until brought into the light for resolution.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Mokṣa—also called *kaivalya*, perfect inner freedom—is the soul’s release from *saṁsāra*, the cycle of birth and death, attained after dynamic and personal *yogic* realization of Paraśiva and resolution of all *karmas*. Having known the Absolute, there is no fuller realization, no greater knowing, no higher “experience.” Even after Self Realization and liberation, the soul body continues to evolve in this and other worlds until it merges with the Primal Soul as a drop of water merges with its source, the ocean. (*Merging with Śiva*, Introduction: “The Hindu View of Liberation”)

स्थान्युपनिमन्त्रणे सङ्गस्मयाकरणं पुनरनिष्टप्रसङ्गात् ॥ ५१॥

3.51 sthānyupanimantraṇe saṅgasmayākaraṇaṁ punaraniṣṭaprasaṅgāt

sthāni-upanimantraṇe (when invited, *upanimantraṇe*; by inhabitants/celestial
beings, *sthāni*), **saṅga-smaya-akaraṇam** (not engagement, *akaraṇam*; with
attachment, *saṅga*; and pride, *smaya*), **punar-anīṣṭa-prasaṅgāt** (due to
entanglement/attachment, *prasaṅgāt*; again, *punar*; in the undesirable, *anīṣṭa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**When summoned by celestial beings, there should be no attachment
or pride, for this could renew undesirable entanglements.**

Commentary

Hindu cosmology assumes the existence of three worlds: the physical, the *devonic* and the celestial, sometimes called the Śivaloka. It is regarded that the progress of each soul is overseen by the beings of the two higher worlds, guided toward liberation. Thus, when a *yogī* enters the higher spheres, he is acknowledged by these guides who welcome him into their world. Being praised by the Gods themselves, of course, can be exhilarating and ego-enhancing. Here the *yogī* is admonished from allowing this to go to his head, which would only feed the ego and bring new obstructions on his path. So, he should remain humble, unattached to even divine acclaim. A proper response to such accolades is to intone, “*Sarvam Śivamayam*,” Śiva is doing it all.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The wise say, “Pride goes before a fall.” And the still wiser know that “spiritual pride is the most difficult pride to deal with, to eliminate, to rise above in a lifetime.” The spiritually proud never open themselves to a *satguru*. The mystically humble do.

The advice is, having once attained a breakthrough of light within the head, wisdom tells us, remain wise and do not allow these experiences to strengthen the external ego. Become more humble. Become more self-effacing. Become more loving and understanding. Don’t play the fool by giving yourself reprieve from *prāṇāyāma*, *padmāsana*, deep meditation, self-inquiry and exquisite personal behavior. Having once attained even a small semblance of *samādhi*, do not let that attainment fade into memories of the past. The admonition is: once enlightened, stay enlightened. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 54: “Untying the Bonds”)

क्षणतत्क्रमयोः संयमाद्विवेकजं ज्ञानम् ॥ ५२ ॥

3.52 kṣaṇatatkramayoḥ saṁyamādvivekajaṁ jñānam

saṁyamāt (from *saṁyama*), **kṣaṇa** (moment), **tat-kramayoḥ** (of its sequence), **jñānam** (knowledge/wisdom), **viveka-jam** (discrimination, *viveka*; born, *-jam*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Through *saṁyama* on the now and its sequence,
wisdom born of discrimination is acquired.**

Commentary

Wisdom is a lofty goal, and Patañjali offers a path to its attainment—performing *saṁyama* on the nature of time itself. Specifically, he enjoins the *yogī* to focus the mind on the tiniest measure of time, called *kṣaṇa*. Commentators speak of it as the smallest imaginable or measurable increment of time, that taken for an atom to move across its diameter. In other words, almost infinitely brief. We have proposed this is an exploration of the eternity of the moment, the now. Understanding the now and its manner of flowing into the next now and the next gives insight into time and thus the nature of reality.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Only by experiencing and acquiring the ability to reexperience, through the practice of *yoga*, the eternity of the moment can the aspirant allow deeper and deeper access to the fullness of his being. Thus arriving at the now, if only for an instant, begins the auspiciousness of the moment, after which the project should be begun. By thus meditating and through this practice, inner results infiltrate worldly undertakings, and the opposing forces succumb to the clarity of your perceptions derived through initially being aware in the now, if only for a few seconds. When you are experiencing the totality of the moment, you are not aware of the past, nor are you aware of the future or anything within the externalities of the mind. You are aware of the *ākāśa*, the primal substance of the superconsciousness of the mind. You are able to have a continuity of intuitive findings within it and gain much knowledge from within yourself. For the beginner on the path, the concept of the eternity of the moment is refreshing, and he does touch into it occasionally when he tries to meditate. This is encouraging to him, and he gains a new impetus to pursue his inner life more courageously than before. It is impossible to intellectually try to experience the here-and-now state of consciousness, as it is impossible to describe the feeling one would have standing on the top of a tall mountain. Only through experience can these transcendental states be known. Therefore, become perfect in *yoga*. Your rewards will be great and your future sublime. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 119: “Be a Friend to Yourself”)

जातिलक्षणदेशैरन्यतानवच्छेदात्तुल्ययोस्ततः प्रतिपत्तिः ॥ ५३ ॥

3.53 jātilakṣaṇadeśairanyatā'navacchedāt tulyayostataḥ pratipattiḥ

tataḥ (then/therefore), **pratipattiḥ** (discernment), **anyatā** (difference), **tulyayoḥ** (between two similars), **jāti-lakṣaṇa-deśaiḥ** (by species, *jāti*; characteristics, *lakṣaṇa*; location, *deśa*), **anavacchedāt** (from lack of distinction)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Then arises discernment of the difference between two things that
appear the same by category, characteristics and location.**

Commentary

This *sūtra* explains while two entities may appear identical by category, characteristics or location, the discerning *yogī* can clearly discern their differences. One commentator gives the example of a scientist examining two seemingly identical gold coins. While the normal observer regards them as indistinguishable, the scientist, with his microscope, can see their differences.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Discrimination is the result of an abundance of lymph in the brain through transmutation of the vital forces. The vital sexual forces when transmuted feed the brain, but first all of the *chakras* leading up to the brain; and not only discrimination, which is depth of perception, is enhanced, but many other soul qualities as well, such as expanding consciousness, seeing through and into inner worlds and more. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 98)

तारकं सर्वविषयं सर्वथा विषयमक्रमं चेति विवेकजं ज्ञानम् ॥ ५४ ॥

3.54 tāraḥ sarvaviṣayaṁ sarvathā viṣayam
akramaṁ ceti vivekajaṁ jñānam

ca (and), **iti** (thus), **vivekajaṁ jñānam** (knowledge, *jñānam*; born of discrimination, *vivekajaṁ*), **tāraḥ** (liberator/deliberator; that which carries across), **sarva-viṣayam** (pertaining to all, *sarva*; objects/fields of experience, *viṣayam*), **sarvathā-aviṣayam** (in all respects, *sarvathā*; beyond all objects, *aviṣayam*), **akramam** (without sequence/beyond the flow of time/simultaneously)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**Wisdom born of discrimination is the liberator, encompassing
everything in all spheres in all circumstances simultaneously.**

Commentary

This *sūtra* describes the profound and liberating form of knowledge that arises from *viveka-khyāti*, discriminative discernment. Such knowledge is not bound by the usual limitations of time and sequence; it encompasses all objects in every possible manifestation. The reference to simultaneity is a nod to the earlier insight that all things exist in the moment, free of past and future. Vyāsa mentions that such knowledge comes from spontaneous insight and intuition, not from study and books. (See Vyāsa on 3.54, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami:

The subsuperconscious mind in the mystically inclined soul well perfected in *kriyā* longs for realization of Śiva's two perfections, Satchidānanda and Paraśiva. Through *yoga* he bursts into the superconscious mind, experiencing bliss, all-knowingness and perfect silence. It is when the *yogī's* intellect is shattered that he soars into Paraśiva and comes out a *jñānī*. Each time he enters that unspeakable *nirvikalpa samādhi*, he returns to consciousness more and more the knower. He is the liberated one, the *jīvanmukta*, the epitome of *kaivalya*—perfect freedom—far-seeing, filled with light, filled with love. One does not become a *jñānī* simply by reading and understanding philosophy. The state of *jñāna* lies in the realm of intuition, beyond the intellect. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Sloka 40: “What Is the Nature of the *Jñāna Pāda*?”)

सत्त्वपुरुषयोः शुद्धिसाम्ये कैवल्यम् इति ॥ ५५॥

3.55 sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyam iti

sattva-puruṣayoḥ (of the luminous mind, *sattva*; and the Self, *puruṣa*), **śuddhi-sāmye** (sameness, *sāmye*; of purity, *śuddhi*), **kaivalyam** (liberation), **iti** (thus, it is said)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

**When the purity of the luminous mind becomes equal
to that of the *puruṣa*, liberation ensues.**

Commentary

As a perfectly clear mirror faithfully reflects an image, so the perfectly purified mind perceives the Self. They are, of course, not the same, but the equivalence is nearly identical. This absence of *kleśas*, especially *avidyā*, or ignorance, is the *yogī's* pinnacle, bringing in its wake the freedom known as *kaivalya*, the aloneness and perfect freedom he has sought and worked toward, and which will be the subject of the following *pāda*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

He has removed the veils of ignorance, removed the obstacles to understanding. He has come into his true being, union with God, union with Śiva, and in this serene state he sees God as his beloved, as that which is dearer to him than life itself, as he is consumed by that all-encompassing love. There is for him no more an inner and an outer life and consciousness, for they have melted and merged into a single continuum. He is That, and for him it is clear that all are That. Unknown to himself, he has become the temple of

his religion, capable of imparting knowledge merely by the power of his silent presence. He has become the source of light and *darśana* which radiate out through the *nāḍīs* and *prāṇas* of his being. This great soul is found in his reveries sweeping the temple floor, polishing brass lamps, weaving fragrant garlands, expounding *smṛti* and being the humble Śivanādiyar, slave to the servants of the Lord, as he lives out the final strands of *karma* of this last birth. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 364: “The Journey Called *Yoga*”)

इति पतञ्जलिविरचिते योगसूत्रे तृतीयो विभूतिपादः

iti Patañjali-viracite yoga-sūtre tṛtīyo vibhūti-pādaḥ

iti (thus), **Patañjali-viracite** (compiled by Patañjali), **yoga-sūtre** (in the *Yoga Sūtras*), **tṛtīyaḥ** (third), **vibhūti-pādaḥ** (chapter on spiritual powers)

**Thus ends chapter three, *Vibhūti*, of the
Yoga Sūtras compiled by Patañjali.**

CHAPTER FOUR

Kaivalya

LIBERATION

- ❖ The distinction between *puruṣa* & *prakṛti*
- ❖ The process of dissolving *karma*
- ❖ Transcending cause and effect
- ❖ Freedom from the cycle of rebirth
- ❖ Self-awareness and detachment
- ❖ The nature of liberation and Self Realization

In the fullness of realization, the yogī dissolves into the All—disengaging from prakṛti, he merges completely with puruṣa, entering the stillness of kaivalya.

चतुर्थः कैवल्यपादः

caturthaḥ kaivalya-pādaḥ

Chapter Four: Liberation

The fourth chapter is about the final attainment, perfect freedom or liberation. Patañjali's word, *kaivalya*, is the term in the Yoga Darśana for *mokṣa*. It is described as pure isolation or aloneness, absolute freedom from the bonds of *prakṛti*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Moksha comes when earthly *karma* has been resolved, *dharma* well performed and God fully realized. Each soul must have performed well through many lives the *varṇa dharmas*, or four castes, and lived through life's varied experiences in order to not be pulled back to physical birth by a deed left undone.

जन्मौषधिमन्त्रतपःसमाधिजाः सिद्धयः ॥ १॥

4.1 janmauṣadhimantratapaḥsamādhijāḥ siddhayaḥ

siddhayaḥ (powers/attainments), **janma-auṣadhi-mantra-tapaḥ-samādhī-jāḥ** (arising from, *jāḥ*; birth, *janma*; herb, *auṣadhi*; mantra, *mantra*; austerity, *tapaḥ*; meditative absorption, *samādhī*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The mystic powers arise due to birth, medicinal plants, mantras, austerity and samādhī.

Commentary

The attainment of paranormal powers can be brought about by five catalysts, listed in the *sūtra*. Spiritual practices in this life make up three of these—repetition of *mantras*, performance of austerities, or *tapas*, and *samādhī*. Patterns established in previous births is the fourth, and medicinal plants is the fifth. Some commentators regard the plants as providing strength to the body and nervous system, strength that the ardent *yogī* will need. This may well refer to mind-enhancing plants. Adi Shankara mentions the example of the famous Vedic elixir called *soma*. (Bryant, *Yoga Sūtras*, commentary on 4.1)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

A *sannyāsin* of attainment has had many, many lifetimes of accumulating this power of *kuṇḍalinī* to break that seal at the door of Brahman. Here is a key factor. Once it is broken, the seal never mends. Once it is gone, it's gone. . . . I personally didn't manage that until 1968 or '69 when I had a series of powerful experiences of *kuṇḍalinī* in the *sahasrāra*. It took twenty years of constant daily practice of tough *sādhana*s and *tapas*. I was told early on that much of the beginning training was had in a previous life and that is why, with the realization in this life, I would be able to sustain all that has manifested around me and within me as the years passed by. Results of *sādhana*s

came to me with a lot of concentrated effort, to be sure, but it was not difficult, and that is what makes me think that previous results were being rekindled. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 342: "To Stay Enlightened")

जात्यन्तरपरिणामः प्रकृत्यापूरात् ॥ २॥

4.2 jātyantarapariṇāmaḥ prakṛtyāpūrāt

jāti-antara-pariṇāmaḥ (change, *pariṇāmaḥ*; to another, *antara*; birth, *jāti*), **prakṛti-āpūrāt** (from the filling/flowing in, *āpūrāt*; of nature, *prakṛti*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Transmigration into another birth occurs through the full flowing in of prakṛti.

Commentary

The sage is describing a subtle process by which the soul moves into another body, as in reincarnation. That new body is determined in part by the *karmas* of previous incarnations, by *saṃskāras* of previous experience and such. But these are only partial and incomplete, and it is nature itself, the 24 parts of *prakṛti*, that flow in to fill the interstices, to make the body full and complete.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

When the physical body dies, this automatically severs the actinodic silver cord that connects the astral and physical bodies. Then the process of reincarnation and rebirth eventually begins. The physical body remains on the physical plane as a conglomeration of magnetic forces and begins to dissolve into the forces of surrounding nature. The actinic life of the physical body and the vital health body travels up the silver cord as it dissolves and lends a tremendous charge to the astral body. This movement registers on the subconscious astral body all conscious-mind memory patterns of the life just lived, and the person becomes fully conscious on the astral plane. This tremendous charge of odic and actinic force registering upon the astral body at the time of transition, or death, is what stimulates and gives the initial impulse to the process of reincarnation. . . . Another physical body is created, and a reentry into the conscious world is made. The old astral body is dropped off, and the newly generated actinic forces give life to a new physical body and a new health body, along with a new astral body. The new astral body is the sum total of all preceding subconscious experience, and it may be quite mature during the time the physical body is only a child. The odic astral form that was left behind is called an astral shell and eventually corresponds to the corpse of the dead physical body. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 219: "Life on the Astral Plane")

निमित्तमप्रयोजकं प्रकृतीनां वरणभेदस्तु ततः क्षेत्रिकवत् ॥ ३ ॥

4.3 nimittamaprayojakaṁ prakṛtīnāṁ varaṇabhedastu tataḥ kṣetrikavat

nimittam-aprayojakam (instrumental cause, *nimittam*; not instigating/setting into motion, *aprayojakam*), **prakṛtīnām** (pertaining to *prakṛti*/nature), **varaṇa-bhedah** (breaking, *bhedah*; barriers, *varaṇa*), **tu** (but), **tataḥ** (then/therefore), **kṣetrikavat** (like a farmer)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The instrumental cause does not set *prakṛti* into motion but, like a farmer, merely breaks down barriers.

Commentary

This *sūtra* draws an analogy comparing the role of an instrumental cause in relation to *prakṛti* to that of a farmer who irrigates his fields. The farmer does not create water; it has its own source. The farmer's expertise lies in removing obstacles and guiding the water into the fields. Similarly, practitioners of *yoga*, through disciplined practices, create conditions conducive to evolution and transformation without being the direct agents of these changes. This principle encourages a humble approach to spiritual practice, recognizing the inherent potentials within the natural order and aligning one's efforts to support and facilitate these natural processes. By living a *dharmic* life, the *yogī* invites the inflow of Śiva's grace; he does not directly bring about that grace.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

True union and identity of Śiva (*liṅga*) and soul (*aṅga*) is life's goal, described as *śūnya*, or nothingness, which is not an empty void. One merges with Śiva by *ṣaṣṭhala*, a progressive six-stage path of devotion and surrender: *bhakti* (devotion), *maheśa* (selfless service), *prasāda* (earnestly seeking Śiva's grace), *prāṇaliṅga* (experience of all as Śiva), *śaraṇa* (egoless refuge in Śiva), and *aikya* (oneness with Śiva). Each phase brings the seeker closer, until soul and God are fused in a final state of perpetual Śiva consciousness, as rivers merging in the ocean. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Resource II: "Six Schools of Śaivism")

निर्माणचित्तान्यस्मितामात्रात् ॥ ४ ॥

4.4 nirmāṇacittānyasmitāmātrāt

nirmāṇa-cittāni (minds, *cittāni*; created, *nirmāṇa*), **asmitā-mātrāt** (solely from, *mātrāt*; I-am-ness, *asmitā*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These minds are created solely from I-am-ness.

Commentary

This *sūtra* references one of the *yogī*'s powers, that of creating numerous bodies. Here, according to commentators, Patañjali addresses the question whether each has its

own mind, or if they share the same mind (*citta*) as the *yogī*. Patañjali suggests that these constructed minds (*nirmāṇa cittāni*) are real and separate from the original mind of the *yogī* but are not independent in the truest sense. He says that they arise purely from *asmitā*, or egoism, implying that they are extensions of the *yogī*'s sense of I-am-ness. Hindu literature has numerous instances of great souls creating multiple bodies. The possible motivations include: to demonstrate mastery over consciousness, assist in teaching and transmitting knowledge, resolve *karmic* influences more quickly, engage in compassionate service, explore aspects of reality, or to further their spiritual understanding.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Hundreds each circle left the monastery and traveled to all parts of the globe, teaching, keeping open the inner faculties of mankind. Others of these teachers remained with their *guru* in the monastery, constantly working with and training monastics, from the beginning to the most advanced areas of the various schools of philosophy that had accrued during the *yuga*... When the *guru* finally left his physical body, all the advanced monastics left the monastery and wandered forth as teachers. He worked through them all simultaneously. (*Lemurian Scrolls*, Chapter 13: "Continuity of Wisdom")

प्रवृत्तिभेदे प्रयोजकं चित्तमेकमनेकेषाम् ॥ ५ ॥

4.5 pravṛttibhede prayojakaṁ cittamekamanekēṣām

pravṛtti-bhede (in differing, *bhede*; activities, *pravṛtti*), **prayojakam** (instigator/director), **cittam** (mind), **ekam** (one), **anekēṣām** (of the many)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Though activities differ, the one mind is the director of the many.

Commentary

Patañjali explores further the relationship between the *yogī*'s mind and the minds of the bodies he creates. He affirms that while the *yogī*'s mind is the central force that directs and controls these created minds, the diverse activities of the multiple minds might give the impression of independence. This *sūtra* highlights that despite the appearance of autonomy in the actions of these minds, they are ultimately governed by the singular consciousness of the *yogī*.



Kaivalya: Here a *yogī* is dancing in joy and wild freedom. Śiva is nearby, also dancing, rejoicing in the *yogī*'s attainment of *samādhi*. Below (seated on what seems to be the Earth but which is a ball of joy) is Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, witnessing his disciple's enstatic achievement—the most difficult of all human enterprises. No wonder there is such celebratory exuberance. Above, the *devas* have formed a celestial band to provide the music. Left to right they play the *kañjira*, *mṛdaṅgam*, *viṇā*, *ghaṭam* clay pot, flute, *taṁbūrā* and cymbals.

.....

तत्र ध्यानजमनाशयम् ॥ ६॥

4.6 tatra dhyānajamanāśayam

tatra (there/of these), **dhyāna-jam** (born, *jam*; from meditation, *dhyāna*), **anāśayam** (without stored impressions)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Among these, those born of meditation are free of stored karma.

Commentary

Here Patañjali is cycling back to *sūtra* 4.1—"The mystic powers arise due to birth, medicinal plants, *mantras*, austerity and *samādhi*" —clarifying that only *samādhi* (meditation) is sufficient for attaining freedom from *karma*'s stored impressions.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Paraśiva, the Self God, must be realized to be known, does not exist, yet seems to exist; yet existence itself and all states of mind, being and experiential patterns could not exist but for this ultimate reality of God. Such is the great mystery that *yogīs*, *rishis*, saints and sages have realized through the ages. To discover Paraśiva, the *yogī* penetrates deep into contemplation. As thoughts arise in his mind, mental concepts of the world or of the God he seeks, he silently repeats, "*Neti, neti*—it is not this; it is not that." His quieted consciousness expands into Satchidānanda. He is everywhere, permeating all form in this blissful state. He remembers his goal, which lies beyond bliss, and holds firmly to "*Neti, neti*—this is not that for which I seek." Through *prāṇāyāma*, through *mantra*, through *tantra*, wielding an indomitable will, the last forces of form, time and space subside, as the *yogī*, deep in *nirvikalpa samādhi*, merges into Paraśiva. The *Vedas* explain, "Self-resplendent, formless, unoriginated and pure, that all-pervading being is both within and without. He transcends even the transcendent, unmanifest, causal state of the universe." (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 17: "What is God Śiva's Unmanifest Reality?")

कर्माशुक्लाकृष्णं योगिनस्त्रिविधमितरेषाम् ॥ ७॥

4.7 karmāśuklākṛṣṇaṁ yogīnastrividhamitareṣām

karma-aśukla-akṛṣṇam (action, *karma*; not white, *aśukla*; not black, *akṛṣṇam*), **yogīnaḥ** (of a *yogī*), **trividham** (threefold), **itareṣām** (of others)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

A *yogī*'s karma is neither white nor black; for others, it is of three kinds.

Commentary

Here, white *karma* is "good" and black *karma* is "bad," which can be interpreted as conducive to liberation or not. For the non-*yogī*, *karmas* fall into three categories: some are good, others are bad, and a third category produces a combination of results. The *karma* of an accomplished *yogī* is neither black nor white. Because his actions are performed without attachment or desire, they do not generate new *karma* or affect his spiritual progress.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Right knowledge, right decision and right action imperceptibly straighten out, unkink and unwind ignorantly devised or contrived past actions. The key word is reform. Re-form, re-make, re-cast. To put into a molten state and be reformed is what happens to our *karma* when we enter *dharma*. *Adharma* is creating *karma*—good, not so good, terrible, mixed and confused. *Dharma* reforms all of this—reshapes and molds, allowing the devotee to do good and think good, to be clearly perceptive. Putting all the *karma* in a molten state is *bhakti*. Happy *karma*, sad *karma*, bad *karma*, when consciously or unconsciously wanted to be held on to, inhibits *bhakti*. *Bhakti* brings grace, and the sustaining grace melts and blends the *karmas* in the heart. In the heart *chakra* the *karmas* are in a molten state. The throat *chakra* molds the *karmas* through

sādhana, regular religious practices. The third-eye *chakra* sees the *karmas*—past, present and future—as a singular oneness. And the crown *chakra* absorbs, burns clean, enough of the *karmas* to open the gate, the door of Brahman, revealing the straight path to merging with Śiva. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 252: “Categories of Karma”)

ततस्तद्विपाकानुगुणानामेवाभिव्यक्तिर्वासनानाम् ॥ ८॥

4.8 tatastadvipākānugūṇānāmevābhivyaktirvāsanānām

tataḥ (then/therefore), **abhivyaktiḥ** (manifestation), **vāsanānām** (of *vāsanās*) **eva** (only/particularly), **tat-vipāka-anuguṇānām** (aligned with, *anuguṇānām*; their fruition, *tat-vipāka*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From these follows the manifestation of *vāsanās* suitable for their fruition.

Commentary

In this *sūtra*, “from these” refers to the three types of *karma*—white, black and mixed. The sage is describing how the impressions stored in the mind due to actions, thoughts and experiences remain latent until awakened or expressed. They do not all manifest in any one birth, but move with the soul as seeds of future actions, awaiting the right circumstances for their expression. The manifestation of *vāsanās*, as described in this *sūtra*, is linked to the ripening of *karma*, which brings these latent tendencies to the surface, influencing behavior and experiences.

Vāsanās (from the Sanskrit root *vas*, “to dwell” or “reside”) are subtle, latent tendencies or inclinations formed by past experiences (*karma*). While *saṁskāras* are the residual impressions left on the mind by one’s actions, *vāsanās* represent the latent seeds of desires and habitual patterns that influence thoughts, behaviors and preferences, subtly shaping an individual’s personality and actions. In summary, as stated in *Dancing with Śiva*, “*saṁskāras*, experiential impressions, combine in the subconscious to form *vāsanās*, which thereafter contribute to mental fluctuations, called *vṛtti*.”

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Naturally, *karma* also determines the circumstance of one’s life in the Antarloka after death. The infallible law of *karma* continues for disembodied souls between births, though many *karmas* can only be fulfilled in physical incarnation. Thus, Earth is called *karma-kṣetra*, “arena of *karma*.” *Karma* is also binding, to varying degrees, for those who have attained *mokṣa* and are living in the Antarloka and for those who have attained residency in the Śivaloka until *viśvagrāsa*, ultimate merger in the Primal Soul, Parameśvara. *Prārabdha karmas* fructify in a given lifetime, fortified by the ripe *karmas* that are experienced in the in-between. Some of what is learned in the Antarloka is used in the next birth, to know how to best face the *prārabdha karmas* as they manifest. Some of what is learned will only be used in future births. *Karma* made in the Antarloka, positive or negative, is added into the big *sañcita* basket; and, of course, some of it also bears fruit. All *karmas* are either ripe or unripe, ready or unready. Of

the *prārabdha karmas* that one is born with, some are immediately released, and others will be ready only in later years of life. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 266: “Intricacies of the Law”)

जातिदेशकालव्यवहितानामप्यानन्तर्यं स्मृतिसंस्कारयोरेकरूपत्वात् ॥ ९॥

4.9 jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām apy anantaryam
smṛti-saṁskārayor eka-rūpatvāt

ekarūpatvāt (from equivalence/sameness), **smṛti-saṁskārayoḥ** (of memory, *smṛti*; and *saṁskāras*), **anantaryam** (uninterrupted continuity), **api** (even) **jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām** (of the separated, *vyavahitānām*; by birth, *jāti*; place, *deśa*; time, *kāla*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Because memories and *saṁskāras* are equivalent, there is continuity despite being separated by birth, place and time.

Commentary

Memory (*smṛti*) and *saṁskāra* are two forms of impression left by experience, but they operate at different levels of the mind. Memories lie nearer the surface of awareness and can be recalled or reflected upon. *Saṁskāras* are more deeply embedded—subtle traces that shape tendencies and responses even when not consciously accessed. Patañjali teaches that, despite this difference, they are essentially of the same nature (*ekarūpatva*) and preserve continuity across time and place and even lifetimes.

This uninterrupted connection is so enduring that it will persist even ten thousand years from now on another planet. Another, closely related, meaning drawn by commentators is that the *saṁskāras* persist undiminished in intensity or clarity from lifetime to lifetime, for vast spans of time, coming to fruition when circumstances are ripe. One could reasonably conclude from this that a *saṁskāra* created one hundred births ago could trigger the related memory in this birth.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Dormant *sañcita karma*, while not directly being acted upon, is a weighty and compelling force of potential energy, be it benign or gross, good or bad, slothful or inspirational. It is this dormant *karma* that explains why two people born at the same moment, and who thus have the same astrology, differ in their talents and tendencies. It is this held-back force of *sañcita karma* that the *yogī* seeks to burn out with his *kuṇḍalinī* flame, to disempower it within the *karmic* reservoir of *ānandamaya kośa*, the soul body. Astrologers who understand *karma* well emphasize that one can influence his or her dormant *sañcita karma*. Further, one does have power over *karmas* being made, *kriyamāṇa*. But *karmas* set in motion, *prārabdha*, are binding. They form the gridwork of life and must be lived through. Facing them positively is the key to their resolution. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 265: “Three Kinds of Karma”)

तासामनादित्वं चाशिषो नित्यत्वात् ॥ १०॥

4.10 tāsāmanāditvaṃ cāśiṣo nityatvāt

tāsām (of these), anāditvam (without beginning), nityatvāt
(from eternal nature) cā (and indeed) āśiṣaḥ (of desire)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

These are without beginning due to the eternal nature of desire.

Commentary

In the previous *sūtra* Patañjali noted that *saṃskāras* are persistent in time, and commentators note that impressions created in lives lived millennia ago still exist today. Here, the sage takes it further, saying that there is no beginning to *saṃskāras*—they go back in time without limit. His proof? That desire itself is eternal and without a beginning, implying that it is desire that creates the experiences that are recorded in *saṃskāras*. Commentators clarify that this is a desire for nothing less than life itself. All creatures desire to live, and struggle in their own ways to hold on to life, whether they are bacteria, plants, worms, animals or people.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

We must also have desirelessness even for the realization of the Self itself in order to freely proceed and attain the goal. The realization of the Self must never be to us a need to get away from something, an avoidance, a departure from or a means to become better than others. Now we can see that desire is the barrier to freedom—physically, mentally and emotionally. To give up desire is very difficult. Only when one is secure in the highest of attainments do many of the desires vanish. Desire is connected to the *āṇava mala*, which is the last fetter to be conquered before *mukti* is finally attained. *Māyā* can be understood and dealt with. All *karmas* can be unwound. *Āṇava mala* has encased within it the power to create new *karmas* through desire and regenerate the veiling ignorance of *māyā*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 49)

हेतुफलाश्रयालम्बनैः सङ्ग्रहितत्वादेष्टामभावे तदभावः ॥ ११॥

4.11 hetuphalāśrayālambanaiḥ saṅgrhītatvādeṣāmabhāve tadabhāvaḥ

saṅgrhītatvāt (from being held together), hetu-phalāśraya-ālambanaiḥ
(by cause, *hetu*; effect, *phala*; substratum, *āśraya*; foundation, *ālambana*),
eṣām (of these), abhāve (in the absence), tad-abhāvaḥ (their absence)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Since they are held together by cause, effect, substratum
and support, when these cease, they also disappear.

Commentary

By the word *they*, Patañjali is referencing *saṃskāras*, as discussed in *sūtras* 4.9–10. The sage defines the four things which sustain a *saṃskāra*. First is the experience which caused it to form. Second is the effect or fruition of that experience. Third is the substratum, which is the mind—specifically referring to the *karmic* storehouse in which the impressions are recorded. Fourth is the activating agent, motive or catalyst, termed the support. Only when these conditions disappear does the *saṃskāra* cease to exist.

Motives, referred to here as “*phala*” (fruit), are the driving forces behind actions, whether righteous or unrighteous. These actions generate *saṃskāras* that perpetuate the cycle of behavior. *Saṃskāras* reinforce similar *saṃskāras*, leading to habitual patterns, such as addictive behaviors. To break the cycle, one must change their underlying motives, ideally shifting from desires rooted in pleasure to the desire for liberation. When the causes, motives, substratum and supports for *saṃskāras* are removed, *saṃskāras* themselves dissipate. Ultimately this leads to the end of the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Every action is like planting a seed. The fruit of that seed, harvested perhaps years later, is reaction. Like the seed, actions remain vibrating in the mind until fulfilled. It is not possible to trace past causes to current effects through analyzing or through the ordinary processes of reason, which result in uncertain conjecture. Only superconscious insight can accurately portray the chain of cause-and-effect relationships as a picture of what is. Thus the wheel of *karma* continues, on and on and on, creating and recreating. The wheel of *karma* is simply the mechanism of the mind’s action—your mind, everyone’s mind. Through the study of the wheel of *karma*, which is a meditative study, you realize that you have created everything that is happening or has already happened to you. Everything that is coming your way in the future you will have created. Everything you will acquire your own wants will have brought into being. You are right now a sum total of millions of thoughts, feelings, desires and actions—all of them yours. Circumstance is not responsible for your condition, for you have made your circumstances consciously and unconsciously. There are no outside forces imposing themselves upon you. Whatever you attract to yourself of the world, though it seems to be external, is but a manifestation of your own inner nature. You are the author of all of your creations; and yet in the inner recesses of your being you are already the finished product at the same time. To understand this fully, you need *yoga*. The study of *yoga* is reserved for the few who have the courage to seek the depths of their being, for the few who can overcome their experiences and their desires in deep meditation. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 260: “We Mold Our Own Future”)

अतीतानागतं स्वरूपतोऽस्त्यध्वभेदाद्धर्माणाम् ॥ १२ ॥

4.12 atītānāgataṁ svarūpato'styadhvabhedāddharmāṇām

atīta-anāgatam (past, *atīta*; and future, *anāgata*), **svārūpataḥ** (own nature—own, *svā*; nature, *rūpa*), **asti** (is), **adhva-bhedāt** (from differences, *bhedāt*; in paths/progressions, *adhva*), **dharmāṇām** (of properties/characteristics)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Past and future exist in their own nature, as evidenced by the differences in pathways and characteristics.

Commentary

Patañjali notes that while the past is gone and the future is yet to be, they are nonetheless each real, though different from the present in terms of time, or sequence, and characteristics, or form. The past was latent in an earlier now, and the future is latent in this moment.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Should we acquire the ability to identify as the experiencer instead of the experience, the true and valid nature of awareness and its patterns of movement in the mind become evident. We see the mind as a total manifestation, containing all of the past and future evolutions in the eternal now. The mind is vast in its combinations of time, space and form. It contains every vibration, from subtle to gross. Awareness is free to travel in the mind according to our knowledge, our discipline and our ability to detach from the objects of awareness and see ourselves as the experience of awareness itself. This explains many of the so-called mysteries of life. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 37: “The Mind Is Complete”)

ते व्यक्तसूक्ष्मा गुणात्मानः ॥ १३ ॥

4.13 te vyaktasūkṣmā guṇātmānaḥ

te (these), **vyakta-sūkṣmāḥ** (manifest, *vyakta*; or subtle, *sūkṣmāḥ*), **guṇa-ātmānaḥ** (of the nature of/composed of, *ātmānaḥ*; of the qualities, *guṇas*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Whether manifest or subtle, they are of the nature of the guṇas.

Commentary

“They” in this *sūtra* refers to the *dharmas* (qualities or attributes) mentioned in 4.12. This *sūtra* emphasizes that the attributes of all objects and experiences—whether manifest (present) or subtle (past/future)—arise from the inherent nature and interplay of the *guṇas* (the fundamental qualities of *prakṛti*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*).

Past and future are subtle but real; the present is manifest and equally real. We wrongly think past and future do not really exist, but Patañjali thinks differently.

Perhaps he is intimating the reflections of theoretical science which speaks of travel into the past and future.

This is a further discussion of time and its reality, specifically addressing how the past, present and future, like everything else in the cosmos, are composed of the three *guṇas*, the fundamental building blocks of the universe: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. Although the past is no longer present, it remains real because it was once formed by the *guṇas*, which are eternal and never cease to exist. Similarly, the future is awaiting the right configuration of *guṇas* to manifest. The present, of course, is the full manifestation of time existing in the here and now as a dynamic interplay of the *guṇas*. Thus, past, present, and future are all real in their own way, each reflecting the ongoing influence of the *guṇas* in the cosmos.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Do you know that the ability to live right now, in the instant, is a spiritual power, reflecting the awakening of the soul and requiring a subconscious control of the mind? Your soul is never bothered with the things that disturb the rest of the mind! The mind lives in the past, and the mind tries to live in the future. But when you quiet your mind, you live in the present. You are living within your soul, or the higher state of your mind which is undisturbed by the things of time. . . . Visualize yourself sitting on top of a mountain. There is no place to go except inside yourself. If you were to go down the northern side of the mountain, you would be going into the future and its ramifications, which are only conceptual. If you were to go down the southern side, you would be going into the past and its similar recorded ramifications. So, you stay where you are, at the pinnacle of consciousness, well balanced between past and future. Everything is in its rightful place in the master plan of evolution, so you sit, just watching, sensing the clarity of your own perfect being, learning to live in spiritual consciousness every day. That is your heritage on this Earth. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 114: “Torn Between Past and Future”)

परिणामैकत्वाद्वास्तुतत्त्वम् ॥ १४ ॥

4.14 pariṇāmaikatvādvastutattvam

vastu-tattvam (essential nature, *tattvam*; of an object, *vastu*), **pariṇāma-ekavāt** (from oneness/uniformity, *ekavāt*; of transformation/change, *pariṇāma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The essential nature of an object stems from the uniformity of transformations.

Commentary

This *sūtra* highlights the consistency of transformation (*pariṇāma*) within the *guṇas*, which underlies the creation of the objects of the material world. *Pariṇāma* is the process through which the *guṇas* interact and lead to the creation, preservation and destruction of phenomena. Here Patañjali explores the idea of change, indirectly addressing the philosophical question of how the One manifests as the many.

Transformation here is change, modification, evolution all in one. He speaks of how diverse objects emerge from a unified source, and posits they are real—a response to the Idealism of his day that denied the reality of manifest things. Commentators detail how the *guṇas* interact with things to create the many modifications, but under all the differences lie the building blocks of physical reality—the three *guṇas*: *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This universe, and indeed all of existence, is *māyā*, Śiva's mirific energy. While God is absolutely real, His emanated world is relatively real. Being relatively real does not mean the universe is illusory or nonexistent, but that it is impermanent and subject to change. It is an error to say that the universe is mere illusion, for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. The universe is born, evolves and dissolves in cycles much as the seasons come and go through the year. These cycles are inconceivably immense, ending in *mahāpralaya* when the universe undergoes dissolution. All three worlds, including time and space, dissolve in God Śiva. This is His ultimate grace—the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Śiva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 45: “Does the Universe Ever End?”)

वस्तुसाम्ये चित्तभेदात्तयोर्विभक्तः पन्थाः ॥ १५॥

4.15 vastusāmye cittabhedāttayorvibhaktaḥ panthāḥ

vastu-sāmye (in the sameness, *sāmye*; of the object, *vastu*), **vibhaktaḥ** (distinct/separate), **panthāḥ** (paths/lines of perception), **citta-bhedāt-tayoḥ** (due to difference, *bhedāt*; between those two, *tayoḥ*; minds, *citta*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Though an object remains the same, two minds have distinct perspectives due to their differences.

Commentary

The sage is discussing the subjective nature of reality. Though an object remains constant, it is perceived and interpreted differently by different minds, leading to different “paths” or understandings. Each person's life experiences, background and circumstances influence how they perceive the same object or situation, creating a unique experiential journey. By extension, Patañjali may be suggesting that various schools of philosophical thought address the same reality, but take different paths due to their unique background, training and interpretations. The object is one thing, the mind that interprets it is another.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The world is remarkable in its unending variety and enthralling novelty. Mystics call it the unfoldment of *prakṛti*, primal nature, and liken it to a bubble on the ocean's

surface. It arises, lives and bursts to return to the source. This physical world, though necessary to our evolution, is the embodiment of impermanence, of constant change. Thus, we take care not to become overly attached to it. It is mystically subjective, not objective. It is dense but not solid. It is sentient, even sacred. It is rocks and rainbows, liquid, gas and conflagration, all held in a setting of space. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Śloka 42: “What Is the Nature of the Physical Plane?”)

न चैकचित्ततन्त्रं वस्तु तदप्रमाणकं तदा किं स्यात् ॥ १६॥

4.16 na caikacittatantram vastu tadapramāṇakam tadā kiṁ syāt

na (no/not) **ca** (and), **vastu** (an object), **eka-citta-tantram** (dependent, *tantram*; on a single, *eka*; mind, *citta*), **tad-apramāṇakam** (unverified, *apramāṇakam*; by that, *tad*), **tadā kiṁ syāt** (then, *tadā*; what, *kiṁ*; would exist/be, *syāt*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

An object is not dependent on a single mind. If it were, what would exist if not so validated?

Commentary

This *sūtra* addresses the philosophical debate on whether objects exist independently of perception, affirming their independent reality. In his commentary, Vyāsa questions if a pot would cease to exist when the mind is in *samādhi* or distracted, since others can still perceive it. He humorously critiques the philosophical principle of idealism by asking if unseen parts of an object, like a person's back, don't exist. Vyāsa concludes that objects are independent entities, like minds, and exist to provide experiences for the *puruṣa*, especially within *saṁsāra*. This perspective resonates with a Śaiva Siddhānta insight, that God Śiva's perception gives reality to things (even when the *yogī* is in *samādhi* and unaware of them), and when Śiva withdraws His mind during *mahāpralaya*, all things cease to exist.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

As we move through the mind, the mind stays the same, just as the world stays the same as the traveler moves from city to city. Paris does not vanish when he enters New Delhi. It is still there. Others remain in the city, and he can return. Fear does not disappear from the mind when we are blissfully fearless. Others still experience it. Our awareness has simply moved to a more refined area. Therefore, the goal is to make awareness totally free by not getting too magnetically attached to only a few of the many areas. If the traveler enjoys Paris and settles down there, he will never know the other cities of the world. We on the spiritual path must work hard at keeping ourselves detached from friends, places, habits. Only then can we keep awareness free enough to travel uninhibitedly through the sublime, inner areas of the mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 38: “Remaining Free, Detached”)

तदुपरागापेक्षित्वाच्चित्तस्य वस्तु ज्ञाताज्ञातम् ॥ १७॥

4.17 taduparāgāpekṣitvāccittasya vastu jñātājñātam

vastu (object), **jñātam-ajñātam** (known, *jñātam*; unknown, *ajñātam*), **cittasya** (of the mind), **apekṣitvāt** (from dependence on) **tad-uparāga** (the coloring/influence of that)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

An object is known or not known, depending on whether the mind is colored by it or not.

Commentary

While an object's existence is independent of whether it is observed by a mind, the mind's knowledge of the object is contingent on the degree to which the mind is influenced or "colored" by it. In this context, Patañjali uses *colored* to signify that the mind must actively notice, be permeated by, or be affected by the object. This metaphor suggests that knowledge arises not from passive observation, but from the mind's active engagement and assimilation of the object's qualities.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

This, then, is the essence of what we are first working for: to become consciously conscious. It is bringing the mind to a state of constant concentration so that it can look in on itself and cognize its own nature. This is easy, for all you have to do is to watch your mind think, and to begin this interesting activity, just tell yourself one little truth. Tell yourself that you are not your mind, because you can control your mind with your will. You can if you really try. Tell yourself that, and you'll see how fast the mind objectifies itself long enough for you to study it. (*Dancing with Śiva*, Cognizantability: "Torn Between Past and Future")

सदा ज्ञाताश्चित्तवृत्तयस्तत्प्रभोः पुरुषस्यापरिणामित्वात् ॥ १८॥

4.18 sadā jñātāścittavṛttayastatprabhoḥ puruṣasyāpariṇāmitvāt

citta-vṛttayaḥ (activities, *vṛttayaḥ*; of the mind, *citta*), **sadā** (always), **jñātāḥ** (known), **tat-prabhoḥ** (of its master/Lord, *tat-prabhoḥ*), **apariṇāmitvāt** (due to the unchanging nature), **puruṣasya** (of the *puruṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The mind's activities are always known to its master, the *puruṣa*, due to its unchanging nature.

Commentary

It is because the Self, *puruṣa*, is unchanging that the mind is able to perceive the modifications and movements of things. Vyāsa interprets this to mean that if *puruṣa* were subject to change, like the mind (*citta*), it would sometimes be aware of the mind's *vṛttis* and sometimes not. Were the Self also subject to change, it would be impossible to discern whether such change was of the mind or the innermost Self. *Puruṣa*'s awareness is constant and unwavering, even in states like deep sleep. This constancy

highlights the distinct, unchanging nature of *puruṣa*, setting it apart from the ever-changing mind. (See Vyāsa on 4.18, Hariharananda trans.)

In monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, the terms are a bit different. What is called *puruṣa* by Patañjali is not the ultimate Reality, which in Śaivism is called Paraśiva, the "Self God," the timeless, formless, and causeless. Sivaya Subramuniyaswami terms this the true Self, beyond all form, even beyond Satchidānanda (the unchanging, all-pervasive divine mind), which we take to mean the same thing as Patañjali's *citi* (transcendent consciousness). Subramuniyaswami would not regard the *puruṣa* described by Patañjali as the Self God.

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Upon entering a state of meditation, one may find awareness enmeshed in a struggle between the subconscious of the past and the conscious, external waking state concerned with the present and future. The experienced meditator learns that he is the watcher, pure awareness. When concentration is sustained long enough, he dives into the superconscious, intuitive state of mind. It enables him, in time, to unravel the mystery. An integrated, one-pointed state of being is the goal—a state of inner perception without vacillation, with the ability to move awareness through the mind's various states at will. To become the ruler of the mind is the goal. To then go beyond the mind into the Self is the destiny of all living on this planet, for most in a life to come. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 79: "Mastery of the Mind")

तत्स्वाभासं दृश्यत्वात् ॥ १९॥

4.19 na tatsvābhāsaṁ dṛśyatvāt

tat (that), **na** (not), **svābhāsam** (self-illuminating), **dṛśyatvāt** (because of being perceivable)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The mind is not self-luminous, because it is perceivable.

Commentary

For the mind to be self-luminous, it would need to perceive itself, which is not possible. In this *sūtra*, Patañjali refutes the Buddhist view that the mind is self-aware or self-illuminating, independent of any external source, such as *puruṣa*. Yoga philosophy posits that the mind is an object of awareness, necessitating a distinct subject (*puruṣa*) to perceive it. The mind's apparent illumination is actually a reflection of *puruṣa*'s awareness, rather than inherent self-awareness, thereby reinforcing the essential distinction between subject and object.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Mind can only encompass what it identifies with. Mind cannot identify Truth in this subtle form which represents Śiva as beyond the mind—formless, timeless and spaceless. Yet, within you this very instant, only shrouded by your ignorance, only shrouded by the ego, which is the sense of personal identity and separation, is Śiva.

He is there right now, not at some fictitious future time. Just get rid of the *māyā*, the *āṇava* and resolve the *karma*, and there He will be. The ego is the last thing to go. It is the last bond to break. Once the bondage of personal ego is broken, it is seen that this mysterious God is all-pervading. He is what He has created. Think about that. It is very deep. Śiva pervades His creation constantly as ever-present Love and Light of the mind of everyone, as Intelligence and Being; and yet God also has a form. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 4: “Knowing Self by Self”)

एकसमये चोभयानवधारणम् ॥ २०॥

4.20 ekasamaye ca-ubhayānavadhāraṇam

ca (and), **ubhaya-anavadhāraṇam** (non-perception, *anavadhāraṇam*; of both, *ubhaya*), **eka-samaye** (at one, *eka*; time/moment, *samaye*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Furthermore, the two cannot be perceived at the same time.

Commentary

The “two” refers to the mind and the object it perceives. Patañjali argues against the idea that the mind can be self-aware and object-aware simultaneously, saying that *citta* cannot be aware of itself and an object at the same time. *Yoga* philosophy posits *puruṣa* as the enduring, self-aware subject, distinct from the mind, which is object-aware. This is another argument to prove the mind is not self-luminous.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

The mission is: don't go anyplace. Turn awareness back in on itself and simply be aware that you are aware. Try to penetrate the core of existence. Become conscious of energy within the physical body and the inner bodies, flowing out through the nerve system and drawing forth energy from the central source of the universe itself. Now try to throw awareness into this central source of energy and dive deeper and deeper in. Each time you become aware of something in the energy realm, be aware of being aware. Finally, you go beyond light. Finally, you go into the core of existence itself, the Self God, beyond the stillness of the inner areas of mind. That is the mission and that is what humanity is seeking—total Self-God Realization. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 34: “Awareness and Consciousness”)

चित्तान्तरदृश्ये बुद्धिबुद्धेरतिप्रसङ्गः स्मृतिसङ्करश्च ॥ २१॥

4.21 cittāntaradṛśye buddhibuddheratiprasaṅgaḥ smṛtisaṅkaraśca

citta-antara-dṛśye (in being perceivable, *dṛśye*; by another, *antara*; mind, *citta*), **buddhi-buddheḥ** (the intellect, *buddhi*; of the intellect, *buddheḥ*), **atiprasaṅgaḥ** (infinite regress), **ca** (and), **smṛti-saṅkaraḥ** (confusion, *saṅkaraḥ*; of memory, *smṛti*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

If one mind were perceivable by another, there would be an infinite regress of intellects and confusion of memories.

Commentary

This *sūtra* refers to the hypothetical scenario where one mind (*citta*) could directly observe or become aware of another mind. This idea is explored to illustrate a logical problem in the Buddhist concept of momentary mental states. (Much of Patañjali's work serves to counter the widespread Buddhist arguments of his day.) This *sūtra* suggests that if one mind were to perceive another, it would mean that a mind can act as both the subject (the perceiver) and the object (the perceived) of awareness. This challenges the idea that the mind itself could be both the observer and the observed.

While Buddhism and *yoga* agree on the momentary nature of surface-level reality, *yoga* maintains that this flux is grounded in a constant, enduring substratum (*prakṛti*), guided by *puruṣa*. This is in contrast to the Buddhist denial of any permanent underlying entity. *Puruṣa*, which the Buddhists deny, is the eternal, unchanging witness that ensures clarity and continuity of awareness and memory.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

There is but one mind. The consciousness, or Ego, functions within the mind's various phases. . . . We only make it possible for you to prove it for yourself, consciously, from the results of what you comprehend subconsciously. These aphorisms are explained in simple language so they may be understood in their entirety by everyone, for there is but one mind, and in its functioning it works on itself, the same in everyone, only varying its actions between the instinctive, the intellectual and the superconscious or intuitive spheres. (*Merging with Śiva*, Cognizantability: Aphorism 1)



Merging with Śiva: The artist captures the attainment of *kaivalya*, ultimate liberation. Grace-giving clouds, called *dharmamegha*, fill the cosmos, symbol of Śiva’s grace and love surrounding the *yogī*. Patañjali speaks of this as “a cloud of virtue raining goodness,” shown as the various blessings from the *devas*—flowers, *bilva* leaves, light, music and water. Above, Śiva as the fierce Bhairava with His *vāhana*, a dog. Śiva’s ten strands of hair flail across the sky. On each is a *devatā* showering goodness and benedictions. Above Bhairava, the blazing Central Sun represents *savikalpa samādhi*, and at the center is the Great Nothingness called *śūnya*, Paraśiva beyond the beyond, the source and final destiny of all form. The *yogī* is seen to merge into this timeless, formless, causeless Self, propelled by the power of the Śiva temples below, north and south. *Dharmamegha samādhi* arises when you have lost even the desire for enlightenment. It comes not by effort, but reveals itself when all effort has subsided. It is a divine gift from Śiva.

चितेरप्रतिसङ्क्रमायास्तदाकारापत्तौ स्वबुद्धिसंवेदनम् ॥ २२ ॥

4.22 citerapratisaṅkramāyāstadākārāpattau svabuddhisamvedanam

apratisaṅkramāyāḥ (unchanging/non-transitioning), **citeḥ** (of pure consciousness), **tat-ākāra-āpattau** (upon taking on, *āpattau*; those forms, *tat-ākāra*), **sva-buddhi-samvedanam** (awareness, *samvedanam*; of one’s own, *sva*; cognitions, *buddhi*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

While remaining unchanged, pure consciousness reflects those forms, enabling awareness of one’s cognitions.

Commentary

Here, Patañjali focuses on the term *citi*, referring to transcendent consciousness or pure awareness. It is regarded as the essence of *puruṣa*—the eternal, unchanging witness in *yoga* philosophy. *Citi* is the fundamental aspect of consciousness which transcends the fluctuations of the mind (*citta*). In contrast, *citta* refers to the individual mind, shaped by personal impressions, thoughts and mental activities. *Citta* encompasses the entire mental system, which includes *buddhi* (cognitive mind), *manas* (sensory mind), and *ahaṅkāra* (the ego or sense of individuality).

The phrase “enabling awareness of one’s cognitions” refers to the process by which *buddhi* (the cognitive mind) interprets and processes the forms or modifications (*vṛttis*) of the mind. These *vṛttis* are shaped by the interaction between *citta* and the external world, creating coherent thoughts and cognitions. This cognition is made possible by *citi*, transcendent consciousness. By reflecting the form of the objects of perception, *citi* enables the soul (*puruṣa*) to perceive the mind’s ever-changing forms.

In the context of meditation, this *sūtra* suggests that by focusing on the unchanging nature of *citi*, one can transcend the fluctuations of the mind and move closer to the realization of the Self (*puruṣa*). Understanding that *citi* is the pure consciousness which assumes—but does not engage with—the mind’s fluctuations helps in the process of Self Realization, which is the ultimate goal of *yoga*.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

We grow up and look back on our childhood and again see the appearance of change. Through meditation, however, we observe that we have not changed at all. Awareness becomes our real identity, and it is pure and changeless. It was the same at seven years of age as it is today. It is the same in happiness as it is in sadness. Pure awareness cannot change. It is simply aware. Therefore, you are right now the totality of yourself. You never were different, and you never will be. You are perfect at this very moment. Change is only a seeming concept created through false identification with the experiences we have in various areas of the one mind. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 36: “The Purity of Awareness”)

द्रष्टृदृश्योपरक्तं चित्तं सर्वार्थम् ॥ २३ ॥

4.23 draṣṭṛdṛśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham

cittam (the mind), **draṣṭṛ-dṛśya-uparaktam** (colored/influenced, *uparaktam*; by the seer, *draṣṭṛ*; and the seen, *dṛśya*), **sarvārtham** (relating to all, *sarva*; objects/purposes, *artham*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The mind, colored by both the seer and the seen, connects to all things.

Commentary

This *sūtra* describes a general characteristic of the mind rather than a special condition of an advanced mind. It explains how the mind (*citta*) naturally functions—it is

always colored by both the *draṣṭṛ* (the seer, *puruṣa*) and the *dṛśya* (seen, *prakṛti*). This applies universally to all minds, whether advanced or not.

However, while this is a fundamental aspect of how the mind operates, the degree to which a person recognizes or transcends this conditioning varies. For most people, the mind is strongly influenced by the seen (*dṛśya*), meaning it is deeply entangled in experiences, emotions and external objects. An advanced *yogī*, on the other hand, begins to recognize the influence of *puruṣa* (the seer) and gradually shifts awareness toward it, leading to liberation (*kaivalya*).

In the context of this *sūtra*, *citta* is central to understanding how the mind functions in relation to both the seer (*puruṣa*) and the seen (*prakṛti*, the external world). *Citta* is a dynamic entity that is shaped by both consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the external world. This dual influence gives the mind the ability to engage with all aspects of life, but it also means that the mind can be easily distracted or led astray by external objects. The understanding and management of *citta* are therefore essential in the practice of *yoga*, where the aim is to harmonize the mind with the pure awareness of *puruṣa*, leading to a state of inner peace and clarity.

Thus, this *sūtra* is not describing a special meditative state but rather the default way the mind functions, with its ability to take on impressions from both the observer (*draṣṭṛ*) and the observed world (*dṛśya*). The path of *yoga* is about refining this awareness to recognize the *draṣṭṛ* as the true Self, rather than being absorbed entirely in the *dṛśya*.

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The inner universe of the mind is tremendous. It is much larger, more complex and better organized than any of the universes we can see with our physical eyes. The superconscious areas of mind deep within each of us are more advanced than the externalities of the material conscious world. ... The more he knows about the external world, the more he discovers from deep within himself. ... Many enlightened souls on the Earth today are handling the knowledge acquired from the exterior areas of the mind and the knowledge acquired from the depths of their own being in this way. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 162: “The Inner and Outer Being”)

तदसङ्ख्येयवासनाभिश्चित्तमपि परार्थं संहत्यकारित्वात् ॥ २४ ॥

4.24 tadasaṅkhyeyavāsanābhiścitraṁ parārthaṁ saṁhatyakāritvāt

citram-api (though, *api*; variegated, *citram*), **asaṅkhyeya-vāsanābhiḥ** (with conditioned tendencies, *vāsanābhiḥ*; with countless, *asaṅkhyeya*), **saṁhatyakāritvāt** (due to acting, *kāritvāt*; collaboratively/in unison, *saṁhatya*), **parārtham** (for another)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Though variegated with countless *vāsanās*, the mind exists for another, due to its coordinated functioning.

Commentary

The mind (*citta*), though variegated due to countless *vāsanās* (latent impressions), functions as a collaborative system, existing for the sake of another—*puruṣa*. While *citta* actively engages with the world through its various components (*manas*, *ahankāra*, and *buddhi*), *puruṣa* remains entirely passive, observing without direct involvement or interaction. This dynamic underscores the dualistic relationship between *citta* (mutable mind) and *puruṣa* (immutable consciousness).

Feuerstein (p. 139) explains that this *sūtra* serves as a metaphysical proof for the existence of the Self (*puruṣa*) in Yoga and Sāṅkhya philosophy. Patañjali argues that the mind, though it appears self-sufficient due to its ongoing and complex activity, cannot exist for its own sake. He and other Yoga/Sāṅkhya thinkers firmly reject the idea that consciousness is autonomous. Like all composite entities in *prakṛti*, the mind exists for the sake of another—the Self (*puruṣa*). Because consciousness is made of parts, it must serve a purpose beyond itself, just as houses or tools do not exist for their own sake.

However, it's crucial to understand that *citta* does not collaborate with *puruṣa* in an active manner. *Puruṣa* remains completely detached and unaffected by the mind's activities, serving solely as the observer. Although the term *citta* (mind) is not explicitly mentioned in this *sūtra*, the description strongly implies it, because it is *citta* that processes *vāsanās* and operates with the ultimate purpose of serving *puruṣa* in *yoga* philosophy.

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But when awareness is detached from that which it is aware of, it can flow freely through all five states of mind and all areas of consciousness, such as plants and the Earth itself, elements and various other aspects of matter. Here we find awareness separate from consciousness and consciousness separate from the five states of mind attributed to the human being. In Sanskrit we have the word *chaitanya* for consciousness, and for awareness it is *sākṣin*, meaning witness, and for mind the word is *citta*. Consciousness, mind, matter and awareness experience a oneness in being for those who think that they are their physical body, who are convinced that when the body ends, they end and are no more. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 34: “Awareness and Consciousness”)

विशेषदर्शिन आत्मभावभावनाविनिवृत्तिः ॥ २५॥

4.25 viśeṣadarśina ātmabhāvabhāvanāvinivṛttiḥ

ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-vinivṛttiḥ (cessation, *vinivṛttiḥ*; of cultivation, *bhāvanā*; of self-identity, *ātma-bhāva*), **viśeṣa-darśinaḥ** (the person who sees, *darśinaḥ*; the distinction, *viśeṣa*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Cultivation of self-identity ceases for one who perceives the distinction.

Commentary

Much of the spiritual journey revolves around existential questions about identity: Who am I? Where did I come from? What is my path? As the seeker progresses, he cultivates and nurtures his better self, works on his weaknesses and strengthens his good qualities. In this *sūtra*, “For one who sees the distinction” refers to the person who has attained *viśeṣadarśinaḥ*—the insight that allows him to distinguish between *puruṣa* (the true self) and *citta* (the mind and its activities). Various contemplative experiences that grace the *yogī*’s journey work to undo his sense of self. His journeys into vast inner space, his discoveries of inner worlds and his encounters with infinite knowing and the clear white light all conspire to dissolve his egoity, self-engagement and self-improvement, and lift him into his infinite being. When these happenings come, he knows without question that he is not a body, not a mind, not a bundle of emotion. He is an infinite being. This obliterates his further desire to develop his intellect or personality, to learn more, to become more. He enters a phase of being beyond doing or becoming.

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Meditation is a long journey, a pilgrimage into the mind itself. Generally we become aware that there is such a thing as meditation after the material world has lost its attraction to us and previous desires no longer bind us to patterns of fear, greed, attachment and ramification. We then seek through philosophy and religion to answer the questions, “Who am I? Where did I come from? Where am I going?” We ask others. We read books. We ponder and wonder. We pray. We even doubt for a while that there is a Truth to be realized, or that we, with all our seeming imperfection, can realize it if it does exist. Oddly enough, this is the beginning of the meditator’s journey on the path, for we must empty ourselves fully before the pure, superconscious energies can flow freely through us. Once this state of emptiness and genuine searching is reached, we soon recognize the futile attempt to find Truth on the outside. We vividly begin to know, from the depth of ourselves, a knowing we could not explain or justify. We simply know that Reality, or the Self God, resides within, and we must go within ourselves to realize it. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 92: “Turning Inward”)

तदा विवेकनिम्नं कैवल्यप्राग्भारं चित्तम् ॥ २६॥

4.26 tadā vivekanimnam kaivalyaprāgbhāram cittam

tadā (then), **cittam** (the mind), **viveka-nimnam** (inclined, *nimnam*; toward discernment, *viveka*), **kaivalya-prāgbhāram** (gravitating toward, *prāgbhāram*; liberation, *kaivalya*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then the mind, inclined toward discrimination, gravitates toward liberation.

Commentary

The *yogī*’s *sādhana*s eventually reveal that the soul and mind are quite different, and he begins to discern those moments when he is identified with mind and remind himself of the deeper truth. Slowly, slowly this perception drives him deeper, drives him to pursue all things that lead to perfect liberation and to let go of all else, of the misperceptions that hold him back from his continuing journey within.

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In the third stage, the helping hand within becomes more than an aid to the troubled mind; it becomes pure consciousness itself. Rather than seeking God outside, God is enjoyed as a vital, integral dimension of the person, the Life of life, the power and radiant energy of the universe. The calm within is greater than the outside disturbance. In this stage of bliss-consciousness, it is clearly seen and exuberantly experienced that God is indeed within us. The experiencer’s perceptions become acute, and in his daily life he becomes a witness, observing that others do not see God within themselves. He has a secret that he has discovered. God within becomes soul-realized as Truth-Knowledge-Bliss, Satchidānanda, the pervasive energy that glues all things together. Mind becomes serene, peace is seen to be everywhere, and the bliss so strong. A deeper inner eye opens at this stage, and it is truly perceived that this same presence of Śiva is in each and every living being, permeates every atom of the universe as the great, sustaining substratum of all that exists. Only when this is experienced can one truly say that God is within man and man is within God. (*Living with Śiva*, Lesson 4: “Knowing Self by Self”)

तच्छिद्रेषु प्रत्ययान्तराणि संस्कारेभ्यः ॥ २७ ॥

4.27 tacchidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṁskārebhyaḥ

tat-chidreṣu (in lapses/gaps, *chidreṣu*; of that, *tat*), **pratyaya-antarāṇi** (other, *antarāṇi*; thoughts/impressions, *pratyaya*), **saṁskārebhyaḥ** (from latent impressions)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

During lapses, other thoughts arise due to the influence of saṁskāras.

Commentary

It is natural for the *yogī* to not perfectly maintain his discriminative insights, and to lapse into thoughts of “I know this,” “I own that.” Vyāsa asks where such notions come from, and answers that they are simply the diminishing residue of past impressions, *saṁskāras* and habits of the mind and not really a return to earlier misapprehensions. These will dwindle as the *yogī* persists in his *sādhana*s. (See Vyāsa on 4.27, Hariharananda trans.)

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

There is a little of the *āṇava* always with us right up to the moment of *mukti*. The *āṇava* presides through the fourteen *chakras*, but is most expressive before the awakening of the knowledge of the Gods and their abilities as helpmates to spiritual unfoldment. You don’t get off the *āṇava mārḡa*. Individual ego slowly diminishes as the soul unfolds from *mārḡa* to *mārḡa*. Nandi the bull represents the ego, personal identity, and in a large traditional Hindu temple, we see many images of Nandi, getting progressively smaller as we approach the innermost sanctum. This indicates the soul’s progression toward God or the diminishing ego. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 153: “Bound to the Path”)

हानमेषां क्लेशवदुक्तम् ॥ २८ ॥

4.28 hānameṣāṁ kleśavaduktam

hānam (cessation/relinquishment), **eṣāṁ** (of these),
uktam (is said), **kleśavat** (like the afflictions)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The cessation of these is said to be like that of the afflictions.

Commentary

“These” in this *sūtra* refers to the thoughts arising from past *saṁskāras*, as mentioned in the previous *sūtra*. Patañjali draws a parallel between addressing these thoughts and the method for overcoming *kleśas* (afflictions). It states that the process of overcoming these residual impressions mirrors the method for overcoming *kleśas*—through introspection, tracing them back to their root cause, and neutralizing their subtle presence with discriminative awareness (*viveka-khyāti*). Just as *kleśas* can exist in both subtle and gross forms, so too can the thoughts stemming from *saṁskāras*. Relinquishing such thoughts involves “frying” the underlying *saṁskāras* in the fire of

.....
Drenched by the grace of dharmamegha samādhi, a yogī celebrates his perfect freedom from prakṛti.

discriminative awareness, an advanced *yogic* practice that renders them incapable of producing further mental constructs.

Yet, as stressed in the previous *sūtra*, this quelling of *saṁskāras* can be undone should the *yogī* return to ordinary consciousness, in which case he again becomes susceptible to his past latent impressions. Like the *kleśas*, the *saṁskāras* are not truly and completely obliterated until the fully enlightened *yogī* leaves his body at death.

Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami

Only the strongest and bravest souls can succeed in enlightenment and maintain and develop it until true wisdom comes as a boon. Therefore, we reaffirm, having attained a small degree of enlightenment, or a fuller enlightenment, stay enlightened, because *mukti*, the transference from the physical body through the top of the head at the point of death, has not yet occurred. And only after that happens are we enlightened forever. This is the beginning of the ultimate merging with Śiva in a physical body! Thereafter follows *viśvagrāsa*, the final, final, final merger whence there is no return, where *jīva* has in reality become Śiva, as a bowl of water poured into the ocean becomes the ocean. There is no difference and no return. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 343: “Insisting on *Sādhanā*”)

प्रसङ्ख्यानेऽप्यकुसीदस्य सर्वथा विवेकख्यातेर्धर्ममेघः समाधिः ॥ २९ ॥

4.29 prasaṅkhyāne'pyakusīdasya sarvathā
vivekakhyāterdharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ

akusīdasya (of one who is unattached), **prasaṅkhyāne api** (even, *api*; in profound insight/knowing, *prasaṅkhyāne*), **sarvathā viveka-khyāteḥ** (due to complete, *sarvathā*; discriminative, *viveka*; discernment/realization, *khyāteḥ*), **dharmameghaḥ** (cloud, *meghaḥ*; of virtue/merit, *dharma*), **samādhiḥ** (meditative absorption)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

For one who is unattached even to profound knowing, supreme discriminative realization gives rise to *dharmamegha samādhi*.

Commentary

As the *yogī* nears the end of his path, there arises a dispassion that is so complete not even the temptations of omniscience, divine knowledge and perfection attract his interest. This is a critical milestone for him, necessary for his further progress, lest he become enamored of the higher forms, as he was once immersed in the lower. This severe detachment brings on the *samādhi* called *dharmamegha*, which oddly, since it is so crucial, is named explicitly only in this *sūtra* and indirectly referenced in a few more.

This leads translators to differ widely in their interpretation, as chronicled by Bryant. Hariharananda calls it “the omniscience ensuing from discrimination.” He states, “It is known as virtue pouring cloud. As a cloud pours rain, so this *samādhi* pours the

highest virtue, i.e., success is then attained without effort. That *samādhi* is the highest achievement through *yoga* practice and constitutes perpetual discriminative enlightenment.” Bryant adds that Ādi Śaṅkara takes this as the divine force, *dharma*, raining down the grace of freedom, *kaivalya*. The *yogī*, having lost all desires and attachments, experiences the dissolution of the mind and *karma*, leaving the *puruṣa* (true self) in a state of pure, serene self-knowledge. Vijñānabhikṣu equates this state with *jīvanmukti*, where the *yogī* is liberated while still embodied, with no further rebirth.

Dharmamegha samādhi can be seen as a culmination of the profound realizations gained in *asamprajñāta samādhi* and Śiva's final grace before *kaivalya*. When meditation becomes completely absorbed in its object—when there is no distinction between the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation—the mind becomes steady, like a flame undisturbed by wind. In this state, the Self is not perceived as an external object but is realized inwardly, as direct knowledge beyond the reach of the senses.

This transcendent state is described in the *Pañḍala Upaniṣad* (3.1-2) of the *Yajur Veda* as follows. “With this realization, the accumulated *karma* from countless past lives dissolves. As the practice deepens, an unceasing stream of spiritual nectar flows from all directions. Because of this, accomplished *yogīs* refer to this highest realization as ‘the cloud of virtue’ (*dharmamegha samādhi*). When all past impressions—both good and bad—are completely dissolved, and *karma* is extinguished at its very root, the direct perception of Brahman occurs as clearly as one sees an *amalaka* fruit held in their hand. At this stage, the realized being is *jīvanmukta*, liberated while still embodied.” (From S. Radhakrishnan's *The Principal Upanishads*, lightly edited)

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This, then, leads to *samādhi*, the very deepest *samādhi*, where we almost, in a sense, go within one atom of that energy and move into the primal source of all. There's really nothing that you can say about it, because you cannot cast that concept of the Self, or that depth of *samādhi*, you cannot cast it out in words. You cannot throw it out in a concept, because there are no areas of the mind in which the Self exists, and yet, but for the Self the mind, consciousness, would not exist. You have to realize It to know It; and after you realize It, you know It; and before you realize It, you want It; and after you realize It, you don't want It. You have lost something. You have lost your goal for Self Realization, because you've got it. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 89: “Step Five: Self Realization”)



Following the Path to Śiva: Hands held reverently above his head, a *yogī* walks the Śivaneri, the path to Śiva, carefully following in the footsteps of illumined masters who have gone before. His goal is the light and love of God Śiva, appearing at the path’s end in the form of a Mukhalinga. On the left lies the radiant natural world, with its forces of time, space, gravity and life-giving energies. On the right is the world of humanity—family, village, culture and survival—where most souls, not firmly on the spiritual path, move through their worldly *karmas*. The *yogī* however, has lost interest in these outer realms, remaining steadfastly focused on God alone. Though he looks neither left nor right, he blesses and understands all around him, knowing that in time every soul will undertake these same *sādhana*s. As the *Mahābhārata* proclaims: *mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ*—“One should follow in the footsteps of the great, liberated ones.”

.....

ततः क्लेशकर्मनिवृत्तिः ॥ ३०॥

4.30 tataḥ kleśakarmanivṛttiḥ

tataḥ (then/therefore), kleśa-karma-nivṛttiḥ (cessation, nivṛttiḥ; of afflictions, kleśa; karma, karma)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

From that comes the cessation of afflictions and karma.

Commentary

“From that” references the state of *dharmamegha samādhi*, which state frees the *yogī* of the afflictions, or *kleśas*. *Karmas*, too, are “fried” and no longer viable, though there is the winding-down of *karmas* of this birth that still have momentum. The *yogī* no longer creates *karma*, but he must patiently let the top cease its spinning, at which time he is freed of this body and all potential for future incarnations.

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While some sects of Hinduism teach that liberation comes only upon death, most embrace the state of *jīvanmukti*, liberation in which the advanced soul unfolds its inherent perfection while alive. It is said of such a great one that “He died before he died,” indicating the totally real, not merely symbolic, demise of the ego. It is possible to realize the Self and still not reach the emancipated state. If this happens, the soul would return and in its next birth easily become a *jīvanmukta* by virtue of the past realization. What distinguishes the *mukta* from the non-liberated is his total freedom from all selfishness and attachments, his permanent abidance in the all-pervading Divine Presence, his lucid, witnessing consciousness and his *jñāna*, revealed in spontaneous utterances.

To attain liberation while living, the realization of the Self has to be brought through into every aspect of life, every atom of one’s body. This occurs after many encounters with *nirvikalpa samādhi*. Through harnessing the power of *sāadhanā* and *tapas*, the adept advances his evolution, moving ahead ten lives or more. Only great *tapasvins* achieve *jīvanmukti*, for to catalyze the death of the astral body and then revive the life forces, one must be proficient in *brahmacarya*, *yoga*, *prāṇāyāma* and the varied *sāadhanās*. It is a grace, made possible by guidance of a living *satguru*, attained by single-minded and strong-willed efforts of *yoga*, worship, detachment and purification. Non-*yogīs* may be freed at death, provided all *karmas* have been worked out and the Self is realized as the body is released. (*Merging with Śiva*, Author’s Introduction, “The Hindu View of Liberation”)

.....

Here kaivalya is depicted by the *yogī*’s freedom from impurity, which brings knowing that he is All and in all.

तदा सर्वावरणमलापेतस्य ज्ञानस्यानन्त्याज्ज्ञेयमल्पम् ॥ ३१॥

4.31 tadā sarvāvaraṇamalāpetasya jñānasyānantyājjñeyamalpam

tadā (then), **sarva-āvaraṇa-mala-apetasya** (free from/cleansed of, *apetasya*; all, *sarva*; coverings, *āvaraṇa*; impurities, *mala*), **jñānasyānantyāt** (due to the infinitude, *ānantyāt*; of knowledge, *jñānasya*), **jñeyam** (that which is to be known) **alpam** (little)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then, because knowledge freed from all impurities and coverings is infinite, little remains to be known.

Commentary

This *sūtra* emphasizes that the ultimate knowledge of reality is infinite, encompassing the core truths of existence. As the *yogī* progresses toward this stage, the practice leads to the removal of the veils of impurity and ignorance, or obstacles, allowing for direct experiential wisdom. Once *dharmamegha samādhi* is attained, worldly knowledge becomes irrelevant and trivial in comparison to the vastness of the *yogī*'s new-found insight.

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The eighth merger with Śiva is Paraśiva. Becoming and being timeless, formless, spaceless is the total transformation of the soul body, the mental body, the astral body, the *prāṇic* body and the physical body. It is the breaking of seals which subsequently makes changes never to be repaired. A new, an entirely new, process begins. It is the ultimate healing of all *karmas*, the ultimate knowing of *dharma*. (*Merging with Śiva*, Author's Introduction: "Nine Ways of Merging with Śiva")

ततः कृतार्थानां परिणामक्रमपरिसमाप्तिर्गुणानाम् ॥ ३२॥

4.32 tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāmakramasamāptirguṇānām

tataḥ (then/therefore), **kṛtārthānam** (whose purpose is fulfilled), **guṇānām** (of the *guṇas*) **pariṇāma-krama-samāptiḥ** (cessation of sequential transformations—cessation, *samāptiḥ*; sequence, *krama*; transformations, *pariṇāma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Then, with the purpose of the *guṇas* fulfilled, their sequential transformations come to an end.

Commentary

Sequential transformations here describes the orderly way the *guṇas* change as the material aspects of reality evolve or shift in a structured way. Since the very purpose of *prakṛti*, and therefore the *guṇas*, is the illumination of the soul, once that state is achieved, the *guṇas* are no longer needed or relevant. The extinction or retirement of the *guṇas* applies specifically to the *yogī*'s experience upon achieving liberation. In the *yogī*'s personal reality, the *guṇas* no longer exert influence, while they continue to

operate in the broader world of *prakṛti* for others who have not yet attained liberation. Śaiva Siddhānta teaches that all of creation is conscious, even the smallest of creatures, and that all of creation, perfect in each moment, is also evolving. Thus, it is not merely for human attainment that *prakṛti* exists, but for all of creation and creatures.

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Once having been spawned, the soul exists in a quiescent condition, not being aware of itself. This is the *kevala* state. Eventually it hits matter, magnetizes matter around its first etheric body. This etheric body slowly develops into a mental, then emotional and astral body, and finally a physical body. This begins the *sakala* state—soul being aware of the mental plane, astral plane and finally the physical world. It is in the latter stages of the *sakala* state that religion begins, when the soul has completed enough of this process to realize its individual identity, apart from the mental matter, the emotional or astral matter and the physical matter. All through this process, the all-pervading Śiva nurtures the soul into its maturity on the onward march of its evolution. Lord Śiva does not create a soul, then, unattached from it, wait for it to return on its own volition. Rather, He creates the soul and energizes it through its entire evolution until, at the end of the *śuddha avasthā*, the final merger occurs, *viśvagrāsa*, absorption, by His grace. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 333: "Maturation of the Soul")

क्षणप्रतियोगी परिणामापरान्तनिर्ग्राह्यः क्रमः ॥ ३३॥

4.33 kṣaṇapratyogī pariṇāmāparāntanirgrāhyaḥ kramah

kramah (sequence/progression), **kṣaṇa-pratyogī** (corresponding, *pratyogī*; moments, *kṣaṇa*), **pariṇāma-aparānta-nirgrāhyaḥ** (comprehended/grasped, *nirgrāhyaḥ*; at the culmination, *aparānta*; of transformation, *pariṇāma*)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

The progression of correlative moments can be comprehended at the culmination of a transformation.

Commentary

In this *sūtra*, it is implied that the *yogī*, upon reaching a state where he transcends personal change, gains the ability to perceive the orderly progression of transformations within the universe. This includes the movement and interplay of the *guṇas* and the sequential changes that drive the material world. This perception is a result of the *yogī*'s realization, where he sees the universe's movements with a clarity that comes from being beyond the changes himself. We take it to mean that when the *yogī* reaches a contemplative state beyond time, he can then cognize the fullness of time and all of its movements.

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There is yet another area of thought, which can be viewed from the fifth dimension of the mind, and here we see form in all phases of manifestation from one point in inner space and time. We can look to the future and to the past, viewing one singular object,

and see a change in manifestation as new, individual frames on a motion picture film, each one being slightly different from the other. This really has to be experienced to be believed—that all phases of manifestation and all of the various and varied forms of the universe exist in the great circle of life. Therefore, we can conclude that it is the point in time and space where our awareness resides that keys us in to seeing only one frame at a time on this circle of creation, preservation and dissolution of form, which leads into the creation of the same form again. The mystic, once recognizing his particular point in time and space, can travel around this circle of life at will, his control being prior *sādhana* performed well during early years of unfoldment. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 205: “Thought and Manifestation”)

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यं स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तिरिति ॥ ३४ ॥

4.34 puruṣārthaśūnyānāṃ guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ
kaivalyaṃ svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktirīti

kaivalyam (liberation), **guṇānām** (of the *guṇas*), **puruṣa-artha-śūnyānām** (devoid of, *śūnyānām*; purpose, *artha*; for Self, *puruṣa*), **pratiprasavaḥ** (involution/return to the origin), **vā** (or), **citi-śaktiḥ** (the power/potency, *śaktiḥ*; of consciousness/pure awareness, *citi*), **svarūpa-praṭiṣṭhā** (establishment, *praṭiṣṭhā*; in one's own/essential nature, *svarūpa*), **īti** (it is said)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

When the potency of pure consciousness abides in its essential nature—or when the *guṇas*, bereft of purpose for *puruṣa*, return to their source—this is *kaivalya*.

Commentary

As stated at the beginning of chapter one, when mental activity is restrained, the soul's faculty that witnesses thoughts naturally turns in on itself. However, this is temporary and only lasts until thoughts again arise; whereas in *kaivalya*, the power of awareness is permanently established in itself.

Kaivalya, or liberation, the ultimate goal of *yoga*, is defined as the complete disconnection of *puruṣa* (the seer) from *prakṛti* (the seen). It signifies a state of complete isolation in which the *puruṣa*, the true self, recognizes its nature as entirely separate from everything else, including the mind (*citta*) in its three aspects—*manas*, *ahaṅkāra* and *buddhi*. At this point, the *guṇas* (the fundamental qualities of nature) have completed their purpose, leading *puruṣa* to liberation, and are no longer active. The *puruṣa* (which was never truly bound) is now fully detached from *prakṛti* and abides in its pure, unchanging essence.

At the end of his life, the *yogī*, having completed the journey through the cycle of life and death (*saṁsāra*), releases the physical body and mind, allowing them to dissolve back into the elements, reversing the process of creation.

Patañjali does not explore the specifics of what final liberation feels like, nor does he address the relationship between the liberated *puruṣa* and Īśvara (God), inner

worlds of being or the nature of existence after *kaivalya*. His focus remains strictly on the path to achieving liberation, offering no description of the state of being liberated or any divine connections. He may be following the *guru* tradition in which the disciple is not told what to expect, for that would constrain his search. By not having a concept in mind, his possibilities are limitless.

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After realization of the Self, to attain actual liberation from rebirth requires the willful and deliberate act of the adept at the point of death to direct the course. If he feels and knows that he has yet to perform actions of service on this planet, once the physical body has been parted from, he will find himself on an inner plane in which he can prepare to return at the proper place and proper time to fulfill his desire. However, should he have felt well satisfied with his many lives, as they play before his vision during his transition from his physical body, now ready to go on in this liberated state, he would find himself on an inner plane whence it would be impossible to reenter flesh. Thus, *mokṣa*, *kaivalya*, liberation from earthly birth, has been attained, and the way is open to further evolution on the subtle planes.

In the inner worlds, one who has transcended the need for a physical birth is there like he is here. He has a twenty-four-hour consciousness. He does not have to eat unless he wants to, and he doesn't have to sleep, so he has a total continuity of consciousness. He has Paraśiva at will and is all-pervasive all of the time. (*Merging with Śiva*, Lesson 332: “Realization and Evolution”)

इति पतञ्जलिविरचिते योगसूत्रे चतुर्थः कैवल्यपादः ।

iti Patañjali-viracite yoga-sūtre caturthaḥ kaivalya-pādaḥ

iti (thus), **caturthaḥ** (the fourth), **kaivalya-pādaḥ** (chapter, *pādaḥ*; on absolute independence, *kaivalya*), **yoga-sūtre** (in the *Yoga Sūtras*), **Patañjali-viracite** (compiled, *viracite*; by Patañjali)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Thus ends chapter four, *Kaivalya*, of the *Yoga Sūtras* compiled by Patañjali.

॥ इति श्रीपातञ्जलयोगसूत्राणि ॥

iti śrī Pātañjala-yoga-sūtrāṇi

iti (thus), **śrī-pātañjala-yoga-sūtrāṇi** (the respected/auspicious, *śrī*; *Yoga Sūtras*, *yoga-sūtrāṇi*; of Patañjali)

ॐ ॐ ॐ

Here ends the venerated *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali.



Patañjali's Uninterrupted Text

The Complete Yoga Sūtras without Commentary

Chapter 1: *Samādhi*

- 1.1 Now, the exposition of yoga.
- 1.2 Yoga is the restraint of mental activities.
- 1.3 Then awareness abides in its essential nature.
- 1.4 Otherwise, awareness identifies with the mental activities.
- 1.5 The mind's activities are of five types and can be detrimental or non-detrimental.
- 1.6 They are valid cognition, misapprehension, conceptualization, sleep and memory.
- 1.7 Valid cognition arises from direct perception, inference and authoritative testimony.
- 1.8 Misapprehension, having no basis in an object's nature, is false knowledge.
- 1.9 Conceptualization arises from verbal knowledge and lacks an actual object.
- 1.10 Sleep is the mental activity based on the awareness of absence.
- 1.11 Remembering is the retention of things experienced.
- 1.12 Through practice and dispassion, these are restrained.
- 1.13 Practice is exertion to achieve steadiness in that.
- 1.14 This indeed becomes firmly grounded when cultivated with devotion for a long time without interruption.
- 1.15 Dispassion is the masterful consciousness of one who is free of desire for objects, whether perceived or heard about.
- 1.16 The supreme state of that is the non-craving for the *guṇas* arising from the realization of *puruṣa*.
- 1.17 Differentiated *samādhi* involves cogitation, subtle reflection, bliss or I-am-ness.
- 1.18 The other is preceded by the practice of focusing on cessation and leaves only *saṁskāras*.
- 1.19 Those who are unembodied and those who are absorbed in *prakṛti* remain focused on becoming.
- 1.20 For others, it is preceded by faith, energy, mindfulness, *samādhi* and mystical insight.
- 1.21 *Samādhi* is near for the intensely ardent.
- 1.22 Even among these, there is differentiation in degrees of ardor, whether mild, moderate or extreme.

.....
Before the age of printing, sacred texts were meticulously copied by hand. In a quiet scriptorium, scribes transcribe the 196 sūtras, preparing them for distribution to earnest seekers on the yogic path.

- 1.23 Or, this is gained through devotion to Īśvara.
- 1.24 Īśvara is a special *puruṣa*, untouched by afflictions and *karma*, with its results and residue.
- 1.25 In Him is the peerless source of omniscience.
- 1.26 Unbounded by time, He is also the *guru* of the ancients.
- 1.27 "Aum" is His signifying sound.
- 1.28 Repeat it while contemplating its meaning.
- 1.29 Then follows the attainment of inner consciousness and also the elimination of obstacles.
- 1.30 The obstacles causing distraction to the mind are illness, apathy, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensual indulgence, misapprehension, non-attainment of the stages, and instability.
- 1.31 Sorrow, dejection, trembling limbs and disturbed breathing accompany distraction.
- 1.32 To counteract these, practice on a single principle.
- 1.33 Cultivating friendliness toward the joyful, compassion toward the sorrowful, delight toward the virtuous, and mindful detachment toward the unrighteous engenders mental serenity.
- 1.34 Or by exhaling and retaining the breath.
- 1.35 Or mental steadiness is also gained by focusing on sense perceptions that arise.
- 1.36 Or on that which is luminous and free of sorrow.
- 1.37 Or on a mind free from desire for things.
- 1.38 Or by relying on insights from sleep and dreams.
- 1.39 Or through meditating as one prefers.
- 1.40 This mastery ranges from the subatomic to the cosmic.
- 1.41 When mental activities have dwindled, the mind, like a flawless crystal, reflects the object of meditation—be it the perceiver, the act of perception, or the perceived—this is *samāpatti*.
- 1.42 That *samāpatti* in which the distinctions of name, essence and knowledge are comingled is *savitarkā*.
- 1.43 When memory is completely purified, intrinsic identity is seemingly absent and the object alone shines forth—this is *nirvitarkā*.
- 1.44 In the same way, subtle-object meditation—with and without reflection—is explained.
- 1.45 And the subtlety of things culminates in the unmanifest.
- 1.46 These indeed are the *samādhis* with seed.
- 1.47 Mastery in *nirvicāra* brings clarity of the inner self.
- 1.48 In that state, mystical insight is truth-bearing.

- 1.49 Having a different focus than scripture and inference, it apprehends the distinct essence of things.
- 1.50 The *saṁskāras* produced by that obstruct other *saṁskāras*.
- 1.51 When even this is restrained, the entire mind is restrained, and seedless *samādhi* ensues.

Chapter 2: Sādhana

- 2.1 *Kriyā yoga* consists of austerity, self-study and devotion to Īśvara.
- 2.2 The purpose is to bring about *samādhi* and attenuate the *kleśas*.
- 2.3 The *kleśas* are: ignorance, I-am-ness, attraction, aversion and clinging to life.
- 2.4 Ignorance is the breeding ground of the others, whether dormant, attenuated, intermittent or activated.
- 2.5 Ignorance is perceiving the non-eternal, impure and sorrowful non-Self as the eternal, pure and joyful Self.
- 2.6 I-am-ness stems from the apparent oneness of two powers: the seer and seeing.
- 2.7 Attraction arises from pleasure.
- 2.8 Aversion arises from pain.
- 2.9 The will to live is a deep-seated instinct, present even in sages.
- 2.10 Their subtle form is to be dissolved into their source and abandoned.
- 2.11 Their mental ramifications are overcome through meditation.
- 2.12 The afflictions are the root of stored *karmas* to be experienced in the present or future births.
- 2.13 So long as this root source exists, there is a ripening into one's kind of birth, lifespan and experiences.
- 2.14 These bear fruits of pleasure or pain, depending on virtue or vice.
- 2.15 To the discerning ones, all is indeed sorrow, whether from the suffering caused by impermanence, affliction, *saṁskāras* or the turmoil of the *guṇas*' activities.
- 2.16 Suffering that is yet to come is to be avoided.
- 2.17 Awareness identifying with what it is aware of is the cause to be surmounted.
- 2.18 The perceivable world, characterized by illumination, activity and inertia, consisting of the elements and the senses, exists to provide both experience and liberation.
- 2.19 The levels of the *guṇas* are the particularized, the unparticularized, the differentiate and the undifferentiate.
- 2.20 Ever pure, awareness is simply seeing, witnessing the mind's cognitions.

- 2.21** By its very nature, the seen exists only for that purpose.
- 2.22** Although what is seen ceases to exist for one whose purpose has been fulfilled, it still exists as the shared experience of others.
- 2.23** The identification is the key to understanding the essential nature and powers of both the owner and the owned.
- 2.24** The cause of that is ignorance.
- 2.25** With the disappearance of that, the identification also disappears. This cessation constitutes the liberation of the seer.
- 2.26** The means of cessation is unwavering discriminative discernment.
- 2.27** At the final stage, one's wisdom is sevenfold.
- 2.28** By practicing the limbs of *yoga*, impurities are destroyed and radiant wisdom leads to discriminative realization.
- 2.29** The eight limbs are restraints, observances, postures, breath control, withdrawal of the senses, concentration, meditation and meditative absorption.
- 2.30** Noninjury, truthfulness, nonstealing, celibacy and non-possessiveness are the restraints.
- 2.31** These constitute the great vow and are universally valid, irrespective of one's class, place, time or circumstance.
- 2.32** Purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and devotion to God are the observances.
- 2.33** When troubled by thoughts, cultivate their opposites.
- 2.34** Thoughts such as violence—whether acted upon, caused or permitted, triggered by slight, moderate or intense greed, anger or delusion—find unending fruition in suffering and ignorance. Therefore, cultivate the opposite.
- 2.35** In the presence of one established in noninjury, hostility is abandoned.
- 2.36** When one is established in truthfulness, his actions assuredly bear fruit.
- 2.37** When one is established in non-stealing, all treasures draw near.
- 2.38** When established in celibacy, one obtains great vitality.
- 2.39** When non-possessiveness is steadfast, knowledge of the how and why of births is revealed.
- 2.40** From purity arises a detachment from one's body and a natural withdrawal from external association.
- 2.41** From purity of the luminous mind arise cheerfulness, one-pointedness, mastery of the senses and fitness to realize the Self.
- 2.42** From contentment, unsurpassed happiness is attained.
- 2.43** From austerity, which removes impurities, comes the perfection of the body and senses.

- 2.44** Self-study brings communion with one's chosen Deity.
- 2.45** The attainment of *samādhi* comes from surrender to Īśvara.
- 2.46** Meditative posture should be steady and comfortable.
- 2.47** Through relaxation of effort and absorption in the infinite, this is achieved.
- 2.48** Then one is undisturbed by the pairs of opposites.
- 2.49** With this achieved, *prāṇāyāma* follows, controlling both inhalation and exhalation.
- 2.50** When observed, the external, internal and restrained modes become prolonged and subtle, based on place, time and number.
- 2.51** The fourth transcends the external and internal domains.
- 2.52** From that, the veiling of light is diminished.
- 2.53** Thus the mind becomes fit for concentration.
- 2.54** Withdrawal of the senses—disconnecting from their objects—mimics, as it were, the natural state of the mind.
- 2.55** Then arises supreme mastery of the senses.

Chapter 3: *Vibhūti*

- 3.1** Concentration is binding the mind to a place.
- 3.2** In that state, the uninterrupted flow of cognition is meditation.
- 3.3** When only the object shines forth and all sense of self is absent, that indeed is *samādhi*.
- 3.4** The integration of these three is *saṁyama*.
- 3.5** From that mastery dawns the light of profound wisdom.
- 3.6** Application of this comes in stages.
- 3.7** These three limbs are internal relative to the preceding ones.
- 3.8** Yet, these limbs are external in relation to *samādhi* without seed.
- 3.9** Transformation toward restraint occurs when the externalizing *saṁskāras* are subdued and the restraint *saṁskāras* emerge in the mind at the moment of restraint.
- 3.10** The flow of tranquility is due to these *saṁskāras*.
- 3.11** The dwindling of scattered attention and the awakening of one-pointedness transform the mind toward *samādhi*.
- 3.12** Then again, the most recent and the present thought-waves being similar defines the transformation of mind called one-pointedness.
- 3.13** By this, the transformations of the essential nature, characteristics and conditions of the elements and the senses are explained.
- 3.14** The substratum persists, whether its characteristics are past, present or in the future.

- 3.15** Difference in sequence is the cause of difference in transformation.
- 3.16** Through *saṁyama* on the three transformations, knowledge of the past and future arises.
- 3.17** Confusion arises from the mutual superimposition of word, meaning, and idea. By performing *saṁyama* on the distinctions among these, knowledge of the sounds of all creatures arises.
- 3.18** Through direct perception of *saṁskāras*, knowledge of previous births arises.
- 3.19** Through insight into mental patterns, knowledge of another's mind is acquired.
- 3.20** That knowledge does not rely on its object, as that is beyond the range of perception.
- 3.21** Through *saṁyama* on the body's form, and by suspending the power of perception, the connection between the eye and light is severed and the body becomes invisible.
- 3.21a** By this, the disappearance of sound and others is explained.
- 3.22** By performing *saṁyama* on fructifying and dormant *karmas*, or on omens, knowledge of death is obtained.
- 3.23** From friendliness and the others, strengths arise.
- 3.24** From strengths comes the strength of an elephant, and so on.
- 3.25** Directing the light of perception brings knowledge of the subtle, the hidden and the distant.
- 3.26** Through *saṁyama* on the sun, knowledge of the planes of existence is acquired.
- 3.27** Through the moon, knowledge of the arrangement of the stars is acquired.
- 3.28** Through the pole star, knowledge of their motion is acquired.
- 3.29** Through the navel *chakra*, knowledge of the body's constitution is acquired.
- 3.30** Through the suprasternal notch, cessation of hunger and thirst occurs.
- 3.31** Through the tortoise channel, steadiness is acquired.
- 3.32** The light in the head brings vision of perfected beings.
- 3.33** Or, by intuition, everything is known.
- 3.34** From the heart, knowledge of the mind arises.
- 3.35** Experience of material reality arises from not distinguishing between the completely distinct *puruṣa* and the luminous mind. Through *saṁyama* on that which is self-existing and that which exists for another, knowledge of *puruṣa* is acquired.
- 3.36** From that arises intuitive perception—heightened hearing, touch, vision, taste and smell.

- 3.37** These are powers for the outgoing mind but obstacles to *samādhi*.
- 3.38** By loosening the causes of bondage, and by intimate awareness of the mind's pathways, one can enter another's body.
- 3.39** Mastery of *udana* brings ascension and non-contact with water, mud, thorns and such.
- 3.40** By mastery of *samāna*, radiance arises.
- 3.41** Through *saṁyama* on the relationship between the ear and space, divine hearing is acquired.
- 3.42** Through *saṁyama* on the body's relationship to space and meditative absorption with the lightness of cotton, the ability to travel through space is acquired.
- 3.43** Through the real external mental projection called the great out-of-body experience, the covering of the light is destroyed.
- 3.44** Through *saṁyama* on the gross, essential and subtle nature of objects, along with their constitution and purposiveness, the elements are mastered.
- 3.45** From this manifests the power to become as small as an atom, perfection of the body, indestructibility of its attributes, and more.
- 3.46** Perfection of the body includes graceful form, strength and diamond-like firmness.
- 3.47** Through *saṁyama* on perception, essential nature, egoity, constitution and purposiveness, control of the senses is acquired.
- 3.48** From that comes quickness of mind, metaphysical perception and mastery over primordial matter.
- 3.49** By merely discerning the distinction between *puruṣa* and the luminous mind, one gains omnipotence and omniscience.
- 3.50** Through detachment even from this—and the eradication of the seeds of all defects—liberation is attained.
- 3.51** When summoned by celestial beings, there should be no attachment or pride, for this could renew undesirable entanglements.
- 3.52** Through *saṁyama* on the now and its sequence, wisdom born of discrimination is acquired.
- 3.53** Then arises discernment of the difference between two things that appear the same by category, characteristics and location.
- 3.54** Wisdom born of discrimination is the liberator, encompassing everything in all spheres in all circumstances simultaneously.
- 3.55** When the purity of the luminous mind becomes equal to that of the *puruṣa*, liberation ensues.

Chapter 4: Kaivalya

- 4.1 The mystic powers arise due to birth, medicinal plants, *mantras*, austerity and *samādhi*.
- 4.2 Transmigration into another birth occurs through the full flowing in of *prakṛti*.
- 4.3 The instrumental cause does not set *prakṛti* into motion but, like a farmer, merely breaks down barriers.
- 4.4 These minds are created solely from I-am-ness.
- 4.5 Though activities differ, the one mind is the director of the many.
- 4.6 Among these, those born of meditation are free of stored *karma*.
- 4.7 A *yogī's karma* is neither white nor black; for others, it is of three kinds.
- 4.8 From these follows the manifestation of *vāsānas* suitable for their fruition.
- 4.9 Because memories and *saṁskāras* are equivalent, there is continuity despite being separated by birth, place and time.
- 4.10 These are without beginning due to the eternal nature of desire.
- 4.11 Since they are held together by cause, effect, substratum and support, when these cease, they also disappear.
- 4.12 Past and future exist in their own nature, as evidenced by the differences in pathways and characteristics.
- 4.13 Whether manifest or subtle, they are of the nature of the *guṇas*.
- 4.14 The essential nature of an object stems from the uniformity of transformations.
- 4.15 Though an object remains the same, two minds have distinct perspectives due to their differences.
- 4.16 An object is not dependent on a single mind. If it were, what would exist if not so validated?
- 4.17 An object is known or not known, depending on whether the mind is colored by it or not.
- 4.18 The mind's activities are always known to its master, the *puruṣa*, due to its unchanging nature.
- 4.19 The mind is not self-luminous, because it is perceivable.
- 4.20 Furthermore, the two cannot be perceived at the same time.
- 4.21 If one mind were perceivable by another, there would be an infinite regress of intellects and confusion of memories.
- 4.22 While remaining unchanged, pure consciousness reflects those forms, enabling awareness of one's cognitions.
- 4.23 The mind, colored by both the seer and the seen, connects to all things.
- 4.24 Though variegated with countless *vāsanās*, the mind exists for another, due to its coordinated functioning.

- 4.25 Cultivation of self-identity ceases for one who perceives the distinction.
- 4.26 Then the mind, inclined toward discrimination, gravitates toward liberation.
- 4.27 During lapses, other thoughts arise due to the influence of *saṁskaras*.
- 4.28 The cessation of these is said to be like that of the afflictions.
- 4.29 For one who is unattached even to profound knowing, supreme discriminative realization gives rise to *dharmamegha samādhi*.
- 4.30 From that comes the cessation of afflictions and *karma*.
- 4.31 Then, because knowledge freed from all impurities and coverings is infinite, little remains to be known.
- 4.32 Then, with the purpose of the *guṇas* fulfilled, their sequential transformations come to an end.
- 4.33 The progression of correlative moments can be comprehended at the culmination of a transformation.
- 4.34 When the potency of pure consciousness abides in its essential nature—or when the *guṇas*, bereft of purpose for *puruṣa*, return to their source—this is *kaivalya*.



Thirty Essential Sutras

A Guided Overview of the *Yogic Path*

The Definition and Purpose of *Yoga*

- 1.2 *Yoga* is the restraint of mental activities.
- 1.3 Then awareness abides in its essential nature.
- 1.4 Otherwise, awareness identifies with the mental activities.

The Nature of the Mind and the Path to Restraint

- 1.12 Through practice and dispassion, these are restrained.
- 1.13 Practice is exertion to achieve steadiness in that.
- 1.14 This indeed becomes firmly grounded when cultivated with devotion for a long time without interruption.
- 1.15 Dispassion is the masterful consciousness of one who is free of desire for objects, whether perceived or heard about.
- 1.16 The supreme state of that is the non-craving for the *guṇas* arising from the realization of *puruṣa*.

The Role of *Īśvara*

- 1.23 Or this is gained through devotion to *Īśvara*.
- 1.24 *Īśvara* is a special *puruṣa*, untouched by afflictions and *karma*, with its results and residue.
- 1.26 Unbounded by time, He is also the *guru* of the ancients.
- 1.29 Then follows the attainment of inner consciousness and also the elimination of obstacles.

The *Kleśas* and the Root of Suffering

- 2.3 The *kleśas* are ignorance, I-am-ness, attraction, aversion and clinging to life.
- 2.4 Ignorance is the breeding ground of the others, whether dormant, attenuated, intermittent or activated.
- 2.10 Their subtle form is to be dissolved into their source and abandoned.
- 2.12 The afflictions are the root of stored *karmas* to be experienced in the present or future births.
- 2.17 Awareness identifying with what it is aware of is the cause to be surmounted.

.....
A mature yogī sits at the pinnacle of consciousness, having ascended Patañjali's essential steps on the path to liberation.

The Eightfold Path of Yoga

- 2.28** By practicing the limbs of *yoga*, impurities are destroyed and radiant wisdom leads to discriminative realization.
- 2.29** The eight limbs are restraints, observances, postures, breath control, withdrawal of the senses, concentration, meditation and meditative absorption.
- 2.33** When troubled by thoughts, cultivate their opposites.
- 2.45** The attainment of *samādhi* comes from surrender to Īśvara.
- 2.46** Meditative posture should be steady and comfortable.

Karma and Rebirth

- 2.14** These bear fruits of pleasure or pain, depending on virtue or vice.
- 2.15** To the discerning ones, all is indeed sorrow whether from the suffering caused by impermanence, affliction, *saṁskāras* or the turmoil of the *guṇas*' activities.
- 2.16** Suffering that is yet to come is to be avoided.
- 4.8** From these follows the manifestation of *vāsanās* suitable for their fruition.
- 4.9** Because memories and *saṁskāras* are equivalent, there is continuity despite being separated by birth, place and time.
- 4.11** Since they are held together by cause, effect, substratum and support, when these cease, they also disappear.

Final Liberation

- 3.3** When only the object shines forth and all sense of self is absent, that indeed is *samādhi*.
- 3.5** From that mastery dawns the light of profound wisdom.
- 4.25** Cultivation of self-identity ceases for one who perceives the distinction.
- 4.29** For one who is unattached even to profound knowing, supreme discriminative realization gives rise to *dharmamegha samādhi*.
- 4.34** When the potency of pure consciousness abides in its essential nature—or when the *guṇas*, bereft of purpose for *puruṣa*, return to their source—this is *kaivalya*.

Concluding Reflections

The *Yoga Sūtras* in Perspective

THE *YOGA SŪTRAS* OF PATAÑJALI PROVIDE A METICULOUSLY STRUCTURED PATH OF SPIRITUAL UNFOLDMENT, METHODICALLY GUIDING THE SEEKER FROM ETHICAL DISCIPLINE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF KAIVALYA. THIS PROGRESSION closely parallels the monistic Śaiva Siddhānta teachings of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami (Gurudeva), though important differences exist. While both emphasize ethical restraints and religious observances (*yama* and *niyama*), disciplined *sādhana* and progressive withdrawal from external distractions, Gurudeva's path places greater emphasis on devotion (*bhakti*), the inner worlds, connections with the Deities and the grace of the *guru*—elements that are either de-emphasized or all but absent in Patañjali's work. Furthermore, while the *Yoga Sūtras* present *kaivalya* as an isolated state of pure awareness beyond the influence of *prakṛti*, in Gurudeva's Siddhānta, liberation (*mokṣa*) is not merely the end of *karma* but the conscious merger of the individual soul (*jīva*) with Śiva, an aspect completely outside the scope of Patañjali's text.

The Sāṅkhya Foundations of Patañjali's *Yoga*

The *Yoga Sūtras* rest upon a strict dualism, having been composed in a time when the atheistic Sāṅkhya philosophy prevailed as the main framework for spiritual inquiry. *Puruṣa* is the witness-self, distinct from *prakṛti*, the evolving material realm. *Prakṛti* is singular and universal, functioning for the experience and liberation of all *puruṣas* (*sūtra* 2.18). *Puruṣas* are many, each undergoing its own individual journey of bondage and liberation. Liberation is not a merging into a universal oneness but the isolation of each *puruṣa*, attained by the cessation of identification with *prakṛti* (2.25). The distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* remains fundamental throughout the process, emphasizing individual rather than collective emancipation.

As stated by Bryant, "The history of Yoga is inextricable from that of the Sāṅkhya tradition. Sāṅkhya provides the metaphysical infrastructure for Yoga and thus is indispensable to an understanding of Yoga. . . . While Yoga and Sāṅkhya share the same metaphysics and the common goal of liberating *puruṣa* from its encapsulation, their methods differ. Sāṅkhya occupies itself with the path of reasoning to attain liberation—specifically concerning the analysis of the manifold ingredients of *prakṛti* from which *puruṣa* is to be extricated—and Yoga more with the path of meditation, focusing on the nature of mind and consciousness, and on the techniques of concentration in order to provide a practical method through which the *puruṣa* can be isolated and extricated." (Bryant, p. xxv-xxvi)

Sāṅkhya and Patañjali's *Yoga* do not present a universal reality that encompasses both *puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (nature). Unlike Advaita philosophies, which posit an ultimate oneness, Sāṅkhya/*Yoga* affirms that *puruṣas* are many, *prakṛti* is one, and nothing exists beyond them. These philosophies recognize no universal Brahman or Supreme Consciousness shared by all *puruṣas*, as found in Advaita Vedānta and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta.

.....
A family man offers ghee into the holy fires of a homa, joined by his wife and daughter as they all express devotion to Īśvara.



Although deeply rooted in Sāṅkhya metaphysics, Patañjali uniquely incorporates Īśvara as a special *puruṣa*—an addition that is absent in Sāṅkhya. This introduces a limited theistic dimension into what is otherwise a non-theistic system focused on self-discipline and meditative practice.

The foundation of the *Yoga Sūtras* in Sāṅkhya philosophy is evident in its core concepts, many of which align directly with the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, written by Īśvarakṛṣṇa (ca 4th–5th century ce).

Beyond Twenty-Five *Tattvas*: The Śaiva Perspective

Sāṅkhya excludes divine grace, Śiva's role, and an explanation of how *māyā* binds the soul. In Śaivism, there are thirty-six *tattvas* grouped into three categories: *śuddha tattvas* (five pure principles representing transcendent reality), *śuddha-āśuddha tattvas* (seven pure-impure principles forming the interface between the divine and the soul), and *āśuddha tattvas* (twenty-four principles governing material existence).

This last group aligns with the first twenty-four *tattvas* of Sāṅkhya, which likewise represent material reality. The 25th *tattva* in Sāṅkhya is *puruṣa*, the individual Self, whereas Śaivism repositions *puruṣa* as one of the intermediate *tattvas*, allowing for a fuller view of the soul's bondage and liberation. One could say that by lacking the subtler *tattva* divisions, Sāṅkhya has no framework for divine grace or the soul's return to Śiva.

Monistic Śaiva Siddhānta and Kashmir Śaivism expand beyond Sāṅkhya by integrating grace, the veiling of consciousness through *māyā*, and the soul's reunion with Śiva. Sāṅkhya concludes at *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, whereas Śaiva traditions extend further, explaining the full journey from material limitation to divine realization. Thus, while Patañjali's *yoga* is a powerful system of self-discipline and mental purification, its twenty-five-*tattva* framework limits its metaphysical scope compared to traditions that incorporate divine grace and ultimate unity with the Divine.

Karma, Rebirth and the Inner Worlds

One striking aspect of the *Yoga Sūtras* is its relative silence on the inner worlds of existence, a key aspect of Hindu, mythology, mysticism and scripture. Unlike the *Purāṇas*, *Upaniṣads* or *Śaiva Āgamas*, Patañjali does not elaborate on the *lokas*, *devas* or subtle realms of existence. A few *sūtras* obliquely imply awareness of such inner worlds, particularly through the reference to *prakṛtilayas* (beings absorbed in nature) and *videhas* (bodiless beings) (1.19 and 3.51). While Patañjali does not delve into these realms, his silence does not necessarily indicate rejection. Rather, it may have been a conscious choice to keep the text purely pragmatic, addressing only what is immediately relevant to the discipline of meditation. This approach aligns with Sāṅkhya's 25-*tattva* cosmology, which counts *puruṣa* as the 25th *tattva* and describes the unfolding of *prakṛti* into the remaining 24 *tattvas*, explaining how the mind, senses and intellect arise—but does not include a structured cosmology of *lokas* or Deities. Yet, Patañjali, like Sāṅkhya, acknowledges rebirth as a result of *karma* and *saṁskāras*, which inherently suggests the existence of subtle planes where beings await rebirth.

The *Yoga Sūtras* strongly affirm the doctrines of *karma* and reincarnation, emphasizing the mechanics of *saṁskāras* (latent impressions), *vāsanās* (deep-seated

tendencies) and *kleśas* (mental afflictions) in shaping both our present experience and future births. Patañjali's discussion of *karma* follows a precise psychological model, detailing how past actions generate subtle impressions that persist across lifetimes, forming the deep subconscious tendencies that dictate behavior (2.12-14 and 4.8-9;11). The process of *yoga*, then, is a systematic deconstruction of these imprints, leading to a state of freedom in which past *karma* ceases to bind the *puruṣa*. Through conscious restraint (*vairāgya*) and meditative absorption (*samādhi*), these *karmic* seeds are gradually burned away, leading to ultimate liberation.

Acceptance & Criticism across Hindu Traditions

While the *Yoga Sūtras* are widely respected, not all Hindu traditions embrace them as an authoritative text. Adherents of Advaita Vedānta might argue that the dualism of Classical Yoga is incompatible with the nonduality (*advaita*) of the *Upaniṣads*, leading them to minimize the influence of Patañjali, or to acknowledge and reinterpret the *Yoga Sūtras* through a nondual lens, as seen in the case of Swami Vivekananda and others.

Śaiva and Śākta traditions—particularly those rooted in the Āgamic worldview—would criticize the *Yoga Sūtras* for their reliance on self-effort at the expense of divine grace, arguing that *mantra*, devotion and Śiva's grace are necessary for liberation. The *Tirumantiram* states: “They who control their breath and still their mind—do they reach Śiva's feet? Not so. Without love, *yoga* is barren; without Śiva's grace, liberation is far away” (verse 2700, Himalayan Academy).

Vaiṣṇava schools, such as those of Madhva, Vallabhācārya and Caitanya, which are not rooted in *yogic* practice, generally do not center their teachings on meditative absorption. While some Vaiṣṇava traditions incorporate elements of *yoga*—particularly meditative devotion such as *dhyāna*, *nāma-japa* or *bhakti yoga*—they regard the impersonal and isolated state of *kaivalya* as inferior to their goal of loving union with and eternal servitude to God. Their emphasis on personal devotion and their distinct understanding of liberation often contrast with the goals outlined in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

In his *Bhagavadgita Bhashya* (6.46; 12.6–7), Madhvācārya addresses the limitations of *yogic* disciplines and other forms of human effort that focus solely on meditation and self-inquiry as paths to liberation. He argues that without the grace of God and the active cultivation of devotion through *bhakti*, such practices are insufficient for achieving ultimate salvation. (*Madhva, Gītā Bhāṣya*, Sharma trans.)

Milestones on the Path to Liberation

The *Yoga Sūtras* offer a structured format for liberation, with clearly defined steps, methods and milestones. Each stage builds on the previous, guiding the *yogī* from ethical preparation to complete freedom. The path is not without pitfalls. Patañjali warns against various distractions, spiritual pride and misuse of *siddhis* (supernatural powers) as potential sidetracks. Some seekers may become enamored with mystical experiences, forgetting that the goal is absolute freedom, not temporary ecstasies. Others may be drawn into the pursuit of *siddhis* (powers), mistakenly believing them to be the sought-after attainment.

For Patañjali, *samādhi* and true liberation come only through sustained dispassion (*vairāgya*) and unwavering meditative practice (*abhyāsa*). It is a gradual process,

requiring immense dedication, and is achieved not in a single lifetime but across many births (2.13–14).

1. Ethical and physical foundation (*yama, niyama, āsana*)

Yama and *niyama* are five ethical restraints and five observances. *Yama* includes noninjury, truthfulness, nonstealing, celibacy and non-possessiveness. *Niyama* includes purity, contentment, austerity, self-study and devotion to God. *Āsana*—correct posture—provides the physical stability and comfort needed for breath regulation and deeper inner practices. (2.30–2.46) (2.30–2.45)

2. Breath control, sense withdrawal, concentration (*prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā*)

With posture established, the breath is regulated (*prāṇāyāma*) to steady the life force. This leads to *pratyāhāra*, the withdrawal of awareness from the senses. As awareness turns inward, it becomes capable of unwavering concentration (*dhāraṇā*), free from distraction and fluctuation. (2.49–3.1)

3. Meditation (*dhyāna*)

From sustained focus, meditation becomes continuous and effortless, undisturbed by inner or outer influences. (3.2)

4. Samādhi with seed (*samprajñāta / sabīja samādhi*)

As absorption deepens, the *yogī* remains aware of an object, thought, or impression. These progressively subtler states of concentration culminate in full meditative immersion. (1.17; 1.46)

5. Objectless samādhi (*asamprajñāta / nirbīja samādhi*)

Awareness withdraws from all objects, thoughts, and impressions. Latent tendencies, or *saṃskāras*, may still remain in the earlier phase known as *asamprajñāta samādhi*. With further stillness, even these dissolve, resulting in *nirbīja samādhi*. No seeds remain to sprout into future experience. This marks the culmination of meditative effort and the threshold of liberating insight.

6. Discriminative realization (*viveka-khyāti / kaivalya-prāgbhāram*)

Insight becomes steady and unbroken, clearly perceiving the distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. This clarity dissolves the last traces of ignorance, and the mind inclines naturally toward liberation. (2.26; 4.26)

7. Freedom from afflictions and bondage of karma (*kleśa-karma-nivṛtti*)

As clarity deepens, the impressions (*saṃskāras*), karmic seeds (*āśaya*), and afflictions (*kleśas*) that bind the soul to repeated birth begin to dissolve, softening the cycle of cause and effect. (4.30)

8. Boundless wisdom (*jñānasyānanyāt*)

Vast wisdom dawns, and reality is perceived directly and instantaneously, beyond the reach of ordinary knowledge. (4.31)

9. Cloud of *dharma samādhi*

In this exalted state, supreme detachment (*paravairāgya*) arises, dissolving even the subtlest tendencies (*vāsanās*). Like a rain-laden cloud, the mind releases all burdens and merges into pure knowing. One could say that *dharmamegha samādhi* is the final flowering—the ripe fruit of *nirbīja samādhi*. (4.29–30)

10. Liberation (*kaivalya*)

With the final severance of identification with the *guṇas*, the *yogī* abides as pure *puruṣa*, free from all conditioned existence—beyond time, causality and worldly experience. (4.32)

Supernormal powers (*siddhis*) are not included in this list of milestones because Patañjali warns that they are distractions rather than true markers of progress. While they represent a significant portion of the text, and are indicators of profound mastery of consciousness, he states that *siddhis* “are obstacles in *samādhi* but attainments in the waking state” (*sūtra* 3.37). While they may arise naturally, they are not goals on the path to liberation.

Final Thoughts

The *Yoga Sūtras* remains a cornerstone of Hindu thought, providing a universal methodology for spiritual seekers across traditions. Patañjali's genius lies in his laser-like focus on practice, offering a system that transcends sectarian boundaries. Whether one follows a path of devotion, self-inquiry or mystical union, the insights of the *Sūtras* serve as a timeless guide for inner transformation.

While *kaivalya* in the *Yoga Sūtras* is described as the *yogī's* final state, other Hindu traditions, including monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, extend the vision of liberation beyond *puruṣa's* separation from *prakṛti*. Instead of an individual awareness permanently disengaged, *mokṣa* in Śaivism is the realization of one's unity with Śiva, the Absolute Reality. Advaita Vedāntins and monistic Śaiva Siddhāntins alike will be critical of the lack of a universal absolute in the *Yoga Sūtras*, where the final attainment is not oneness but eternal individuality—each *puruṣa* existing separately, never merging into a greater whole.

Yoga students may be surprised by the eternal duality that is the final conclusion of their cherished *yoga* scripture. The path Patañjali outlined is profound and enduring, even though the final goal he presents stands apart from the unitive vision embraced by the *Āgamas* and the *Upaniṣads*.

But Wait. . .

As with any arcane and profound text, the *Yoga Sūtras* are infinitely discoverable. The dualist will see dualism, and the *advaitin* will see oneness, proving once again the inherent subjectivity of the cosmos.

Strictly speaking, the *Yoga Sūtras* appear to be dualistic. The evidence is strong, especially since its roots are deeply woven into Sāṅkhya philosophy, which is strongly dualistic—a fact that seems undeniable.

Why then, one might ask, was this book an important bedrock text in the early life of such great nondualistic luminaries as Swami Vivekananda, Yogaswami and Gurudeva Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, among many others? The young Vivekananda

made it the centerpiece of his *yoga* teachings, translating and discussing key *sūtras* in his seminal book *Rāja Yoga*, related to mind control, meditation and higher states of consciousness—116 *sūtras* in all. Gurudeva studied the *Yoga Sūtras* as a young man, and Yogaswami, his *guru*, questioned him on it during their first encounter. Perhaps they were unconvinced that Sāṅkhya is the root philosophy underlying Rishi Patañjali's work. Perhaps they understood that Patañjali's vision, while rooted in Sāṅkhya, reached beyond it. Or perhaps they chose to overlook it and interpreted Patañjali's *kaivalya*, liberation, as a merger in a divine oneness rather than a state of eternal isolation from *prakṛti*, apart from all other souls, and from God. In any case, they revered it as a profound map of the essential steps to Self Realization.

Yes, the God factor. Patañjali's inclusion of Īśvara in his great work sets it apart from the atheistic dualism of Sāṅkhya, implying a *yogic* form of monistic theism. Commentators through history have posited that the description of Īśvara's pure, untouched consciousness is indicative of the ultimate reality that individual souls (*puruṣas*) are inherently part of and aspire to realize their unity with.

Consider *sūtra* 1.23, "Or, this [*samādhi*] is gained through devotion to Īśvara" is another gateway for monistic insight, implying that the fruits of *yoga* practice can indeed be achieved by the grace of God, leading to direct knowledge of reality.

What could be further from Sāṅkhyan doctrine! The following seven *sūtras* on God point to an overarching Divinity that is easily seen as a universal reality encompassing everything. "Īśvara is a special *puruṣa*, untouched by afflictions, actions, their results, and stored impressions. In Him is the peerless source of omniscience. Unbounded by time, He is also the *guru* of the ancients. Aum is His signifying sound. Repeat it while contemplating its meaning. Then follows the attainment of inner consciousness and also the elimination of obstacles. The attainment of *samādhi* comes from surrender to Īśvara." (1.24-1.29, 2.45)

Vācaspati-miśra (9th–10th century philosopher of the Nyāya school) attempted to bridge the gap between the dualism of Sāṅkhya and the theism of Vedānta. He saw the inclusion of Īśvara in the *Yoga Sūtras* as a philosophical shift away from strict Sāṅkhya dualism toward a Vedāntic conception of a unified or overarching divine presence.

Further, in *sūtra* 2.44, Patañjali writes: "Self-study brings communion with one's chosen Deity." This inclusion of the fundamental Hindu understanding of personal divine entities, who provide guidance, solace and protection, gives credence to the idea that he regarded theism and the reality of the inner worlds a vital element on the *yoga* path.

The final *sūtra* of Patañjali's work further opens the doors for a monistic interpretation. "Liberation occurs when the power of pure consciousness abides in its essential nature, as the *guṇas* return to their source, now devoid of purpose for *puruṣa*." (4.34) If one steps beyond the Sāṅkhyan framework, the phrase "the power of pure consciousness abiding in its essential nature" suggests not isolation but transcendence—a realization of the soul's inherent unity with ultimate reality.

When approached from a monistic perspective, the presence of Īśvara, the focus on supreme knowledge, and the nature of *kaivalya* as Self Realization reveal a profound, nondual dimension within Patañjali's masterpiece, one that transcends the apparent boundaries of Sāṅkhya dualism.

Glossary

Essential Sanskrit Terms with Sūtra References

- abhāva** (nonexistence): From *a-* (not) + *bhāva* (being, existence), *abhāva* refers to absence, non-being or negation. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, it is used to describe sleep as a mental activity based on the awareness of absence. (1.10)
- abhiniveśa** (clinging to life): From *abhi-* (toward, intensely) + *niveśa* (settling, dwelling), *abhiniveśa* is the powerful instinctual fear of death or tenacious attachment to life. It is identified as the fifth and subtlest of the five afflictions (*kleśas*), persisting even in the wise. (2.3, 2.9)
- ācārya** (spiritual preceptor): From *ā-* (toward) + the root *car* (to walk, conduct), *ācārya* means “one who teaches by example,” a learned teacher who leads disciples on the path through knowledge and personal guidance.
- actinic** (superconscious): A term from Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami’s teachings, *actinic* refers to the radiant, spiritual energies of the soul that exist beyond intellect and emotion. It is the vibration of divine consciousness, pure awareness and intuition—contrasted with the grosser odic energies of the physical and mental realms.
- adharma** (unrighteousness): From *a-* (not) + *dharma* (righteousness, law), *adharma* refers to actions or states that are contrary to divine order and virtue. The adjective *adharmic* describes conduct that opposes spiritual duty and moral truth.
- Advaita Vedānta** (nondualistic Vedic philosophy): From *a-* (not) + *dvaita* (duality) + *Vedānta* (end of the *Vedas*), Advaita Vedānta is a school of Hindu philosophy that asserts the identity of the individual self (*ātman*) with the universal absolute (Brahman). Founded on the *Upaniṣads* and most prominently systematized by Ādi Śaṅkara, it teaches that liberation is attained by realizing this oneness, which contrasts sharply with the dualism of Sāṅkhya and Patañjali’s *yoga*.
- Āgama** (scripture; authoritative testimony): From *āgam* (to come), *āgama* means “that which has come down.” In Hinduism, the *Āgamas* are sacred texts of divine origin that form the scriptural basis for Śaiva, Śākta and Vaiṣṇava traditions, elaborating on worship, cosmology and liberation. In the *Yoga Sūtras* (1.7), *āgama* refers specifically to verbal testimony or authoritative scriptural knowledge—one of the three valid means of knowledge alongside direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāna*).
- ahiṃsā** (noninjury): From *a-* (not) + *himsā* (violence or harm), *ahiṃsā* is the ethical commitment to avoid harming any living being in thought, word or deed. It is the foremost *yama* (ethical restraint), said to create an atmosphere of peace so powerful that hostility dissolves in its presence. (2.30, 2.35)

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A monk’s weathered hand gently points to a line of sacred script on an ancient palm-leaf manuscript, illuminated by the soft glow of an oil lamp. Surrounded by incense smoke and temple stone, the scene evokes the timeless transmission of yogic wisdom through reverent study and silence.

ānanda (bliss): From the root *nand* (to rejoice), *ānanda* is spiritual bliss or joy—the natural state of the soul when unobstructed by ignorance. In Śaiva Siddhānta, it is the inherent quality of the soul in its pure, awakened state.

ānandamaya kośa (sheath of bliss): From *ānanda* (bliss) + *maya* (consisting of) + *kośa* (sheath), the *ānandamaya kośa* is the innermost of the five sheaths covering the soul, experienced in deep meditation or *samādhi*. It is the body of inherent spiritual bliss, closest to the soul's essence.

aṇava (separateness; individuality): From *aṇu* (atom, small), *aṇava* is the limiting principle of individuality and finitude that veils the soul's unity with Śiva in Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy.

ānumāna-prajñā (knowledge through inference): From *ānumāna* (inference) + *prajñā* (wisdom, direct knowledge), *ānumāna-prajñā* is inferential knowledge as opposed to direct experience. (1.49)

aparigraha (nonpossessiveness): From *a-* (non) + *parigraha* (grasping; from *pari*, around + the root *grah*, to seize), *aparigraha* is the practice of letting go of possessions and attachments. (2.39)

ārabdha karmas (begun *karmas*): From *ārabdha* (begun) + *karma* (action), *ārabdha karmas* are those *karmas* that have already started to manifest in this lifetime and must be lived through. They represent the portion of *karma* currently unfolding.

arul (grace): From Tamil, meaning divine grace, compassion or benevolence, *arul* is the outpouring of God's love that uplifts and transforms the soul. In Śaiva Siddhānta, it is the essential force by which the soul receives wisdom, softens its *karmas* and advances toward liberation. Arul is not earned but bestowed by Śiva's will, often through the agency of the *satguru*. It is both the goal and the means of spiritual life, culminating in the soul's union with Śiva.

asamprajñāta samādhi (objectless absorption): From *a-* (not) + *samprajñāta* (distinguished, with content) + *samādhi* (absorption), *asamprajñāta samādhi* is a meditative state beyond all cognitive content, in which even the subtlest impressions and objects have ceased. Only latent tendencies (*saṁskāras*) remain. It is the threshold to final liberation. (1.18)

asmitā (egoity; I-am-ness): *Asmitā* is the ego-sense or sense of individuality—the mistaken identification of pure awareness with the instruments of perception. It is one of the five *kleśas* (afflictions) that obscure the soul's true nature. (2.6)

aṣṭāṅga yoga (eight-limbed *yoga*): From *aṣṭa* (eight) + *aṅga* (limb) + *yoga* (union), *aṣṭāṅga yoga* refers to the eightfold path of practice taught in the *Yoga Sūtras*: *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. (2.29)

asteya (non-stealing): From *a-* (not) + *steya* (stealing), *asteya* is the ethical restraint of non-stealing—not taking what is not given and avoiding exploitation or dishonesty. It is one of the five *yamas*. (2.30)

atattva (unreal; nonprinciple): From *a-* (not) + *tattva* (principle, reality), *atattva* refers to that which is not grounded in reality or truth. It designates the erroneous identification of the Self with non-Self.

ātman (self; inner soul): From the root *an* (to breathe), *ātman* traditionally refers to

the innermost essence or true self, distinct from body and mind, and recognized in Vedānta as identical with the Absolute. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, however, the term appears rarely and carries a different nuance: it denotes the mistaken identification of what is not self as the Self, particularly in *sūtras* 2.5–2.6. Rather than *ātman*, Yoga philosophy uses the term *puruṣa* for the true Self—unchanging, conscious and distinct from all mental activity.

Aum (sacred syllable): Also spelled Om, Aum is the primal sound and vibration of the Divine, considered the source of all creation. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, it is described as the name of Īśvara and a gateway to *samādhi* when repeated and meditated upon. (1.27–1.29)

avidyā (ignorance; spiritual unknowing): From *a-* (not) + *vidyā* (knowledge; from *vid*, to know), *avidyā* is the root of all afflictions, a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of reality, self, and the world, which causes bondage and misidentification. (2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.24)

avyakta (unmanifest): From *a-* (not) + *vyakta* (manifest), *avyakta* refers to the unmanifest state of *prakṛti*, the subtle, undifferentiated source of material existence prior to form and perception.

bhakti (devotion): From the root *bhaj* (to share, to love, to be devoted), *bhakti* is the spiritual path of love and devotion toward a personal Deity. It emphasizes surrender, emotional connection and grace over austerity or philosophical analysis, forming a central component of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Śākta traditions. Though not prominent in the *Yoga Sūtras*, *bhakti* appears implicitly in the concept of Īśvarapraṇidhāna.

bhava (becoming; existence): From the root *bhū* (to be, to become), *bhava* denotes existence, becoming, or worldly life. It also refers to a state of being or attitude, especially in spiritual contexts.

bīja (seed): *Bīja* refers to the seed of thought or *karma* that gives rise to future mental patterns or experiences, particularly in meditative states. (1.18)

brahmacharya (continence; celibacy): From *brahman* (Absolute Reality) + *carya* (conduct), *brahmacharya* is the disciplined practice of controlling sensual and sexual impulses, redirecting that energy toward spiritual realization. (2.38)

Bryant, Edwin (modern scholar of *yoga*): Dr. Edwin F. Bryant (b. 1957) is a professor of Hinduism and Indian philosophy whose 2009 book, *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary*, offers one of the most comprehensive academic treatments of the text. His work draws from traditional Sanskrit commentaries while highlighting the roles of Īśvara and *bhakti* as central themes within Patañjali's system.

Caitanya (Vaiṣṇava saint and teacher): Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486–1534) was a Bengali saint who established Gaudiya Vaiṣṇavism, teaching that loving union with Kṛṣṇa through ecstatic *bhakti* is the highest goal.

chakra (*cakra*—wheel; energy center): *Chakra* refers to the subtle energy centers of the body. In classical *yoga*, there are seven primary *chakras* aligned along the spinal axis.

citi (pure consciousness): From the root *cit* (to be conscious), *citi* is the pure,

unchanging witness consciousness—the essence of *puruṣa*—that reflects the activities of the mind without being affected by them. (4.22, 4.34)

citta (mind-stuff; mental field): From *cit* (to perceive, be conscious), *citta* refers to the entire mental apparatus, including memory, thought, and perception, which *yoga* aims to still for realization of the Self. (1.2, 1.4, 3.1, 4.23)

citta-prasādana (clarifying the mind): From *citta* (mind-stuff) + *prasādana* (calming, clarifying), *citta-prasādana* refers to the purification and serenity of the mind as a prerequisite for deeper meditation. (1.33)

Dakṣiṇāmūrti (silent teacher): A form of Śiva depicted as the silent teacher of wisdom and liberation, seated in meditation and facing south (*dakṣiṇa*). Dakṣiṇāmūrti symbolizes the transmission of higher knowledge through silence.

darśana (vision; philosophy): From the root *drś* (to see), *darśana* means sight or vision and refers to both direct spiritual perception and the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophy, including the Yoga and Sāṅkhya *darśanas*.

Dasgupta, Surendranath (scholar of Indian philosophy): Author of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* (1924), Dasgupta (1885–1952) advocated a theistic interpretation of the *Yoga Sūtras*, stressing love for God as central.

dhāraṇā (concentration): From the root *dhṛ* (to hold, maintain), *dhāraṇā* is the *yogic* practice of fixing the mind on a single point or object. It is the sixth limb of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. (3.1)

dharma (righteousness; cosmic order): From the root *dhṛ* (to uphold), *dharma* refers to the natural law, moral order and duty that upholds the universe and individual life. Relating to the soul, it is the mode of conduct most conducive to spiritual advancement, the right and righteous path. (2.31, 3.13)

dharmamegha samādhi (cloud of virtue): From *dharma* (virtue, law) + *megha* (cloud), *dharmamegha samādhi* is the culminating meditative absorption in which even the desire for spiritual attainment is relinquished, and from which the final dissolution of afflictions and *karma* arises. (4.29–4.30)

dharmī (essence-holder): *Dharmī* refers to the underlying substratum that abides through transformations of form, state and qualities. (3.13, 3.14)

dhyāna (meditation): From the root *dhyai* (to contemplate), *dhyāna* is the continuous, unbroken flow of awareness toward a single object, forming the seventh limb of *yoga* and serving as a means of overcoming mental afflictions. (2.11, 3.2, 3.4–3.6, 3.8)

disunion (separation of awareness): In the *Yoga Sūtras*, disunion refers to the separation of *puruṣa* (pure awareness) from *prakṛti* (nature), a core goal of Classical Yoga, contrasted with union-based paths. (1.2–4)

dualism (twofold metaphysics): From Latin *duo* (two), dualism in Indian philosophy refers to any system that posits two distinct and irreducible realities. In the *Yoga Sūtras* and Sāṅkhya philosophy, this refers to *puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (matter), which are eternally separate. Dualism stands in contrast to Advaita Vedānta and monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, which assert the essential oneness of reality.

duḥkha (suffering; pain): From *dus-* (bad) + *kha* (space or condition), *duḥkha* refers

to the experience of suffering or distress, seen in *yogic* philosophy as an inherent aspect of worldly life and a central problem. (1.31, 2.5, 2.8, 2.15, 2.16)

dveṣaḥ (aversion): From the root *diviṣ* (to hate, to be hostile), *dveṣaḥ* is the reactive attitude of avoidance or repulsion, particularly toward experiences associated with pain or discomfort. It is listed among the five *kleśas* that disturb the mind and obscure inner clarity. (2.3, 2.8)

ekāgratā (one-pointedness): From *eka* (one) + *agratā* (pointedness), *ekāgratā* is the state of focused concentration where the mind rests steadily on a single object. (3.11)

ekatānatā (single-pointedness): From *eka* (one) + *tānatā* (continuity, thread), *ekatānatā* refers to the uninterrupted continuity of mental focus, particularly in meditation. (3.2)

Feuerstein, Georg (Yoga philosopher and scholar): Georg Feuerstein (1947–2012) was a leading 20th-century Indologist who explored the philosophical underpinnings of Classical Yoga. His writings proposed a theistic reading of Īśvara and *kaivalya*, integrating traditional and modern interpretations in works such as *The Yoga Tradition* and *The Philosophy of Classical Yoga*.

grace (divine blessing): Grace is the compassionate, transformative energy of God that descends unbidden to uplift the soul, often emphasized in Śaiva Siddhānta as indispensable for liberation, beyond self-effort.

grahaṇa (perception): From the root *grah* (to grasp), *grahaṇa* refers to the process or faculty of perceiving or apprehending objects through the senses or mind. (1.41)

grahīṭṛ (perceiver): From the root *grah* (to grasp), *grahīṭṛ* is the perceiver or the knowing subject in the triad of perception. (1.41)

grāhya (perceived): From the root *grah* (to grasp), *grāhya* refers to the object that is perceived or grasped in the act of cognition. (1.41)

guṇas (qualities of nature): The three *guṇas*—*sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity) and *tamas* (inertia)—are the constituents of *prakṛti*, influencing the mind, body and experience, out of which the remaining *tattvas* arise, shaping all manifestation and experience. (2.18)

Hariharananda Aranya (*yogic* scholar): A Bengali *yogī* and authoritative scholar of Pātañjala Yoga (1869–1947), Hariharananda Aranya authored *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali*, a comprehensive Sanskrit commentary (known as *Bhaṣyatī*) that expands upon Vyāsa's classical exposition. The English edition, rendered by P.N. Mukerji, is titled *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali: Containing His Yoga Aphorisms with Vyāsa's Commentary in Sanskrit and a Translation with Annotations Including Many Suggestions for the Practice of Yoga*.

himsā (violence; harm): From the root *hims* (to injure or harm), *himsā* refers to any form of injury—physical, verbal or mental—caused to another being, the opposite of *ahimsā*. (2.30)

inner worlds (subtle planes of existence): In Hindu cosmology, the inner worlds—also known as *lokas*—are subtle realms beyond the physical, inhabited by *devas* (divine beings), ancestors, and other subtle entities. These planes are central to the *Purāṇas*, *Āgamas*, and theistic traditions such as Śaiva Siddhānta, which view

them as stages on the soul's evolutionary journey. Though vital to broader Hindu metaphysics, they are only briefly hinted at in the *Yoga Sūtras* (e.g., 1.19), reflecting the text's pragmatic and psychological focus rather than cosmological exposition.

Īśvara (Lord; Supreme Being): From *īś* (to rule, to own) + *vara* (supreme, best), *Īśvara* refers to the special *puruṣa* untouched by afflictions, *karma* and the fruits of actions. He is the eternal teacher, beyond time, and the source of all-knowingness. As the divine ideal in Classical Yoga, *Īśvara* serves as the object of deep devotion and surrender, a model for *yogic* aspiration and a key to *samādhi* through *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*. (1.23–1.28, 2.1, 2.45)

Īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to the Lord): From *Īśvara* (Lord) + *praṇidhāna* (devotion), *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* is the practice of dedicating all actions and outcomes to the Divine as a form of inner surrender. (1.23, 2.1, 2.45)

Īśvarakṛṣṇa (Sāṅkhya philosopher): A 4th–5th century ce sage credited with authoring the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā*, the earliest extant text systematically presenting classical Sāṅkhya philosophy. His aphorisms codify the metaphysical system that undergirds the *Yoga Sūtras*, emphasizing the dualism between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and the path of liberation through discriminative knowledge.

Īśvarapūjana (worship of God): From *Īśvara* (Lord) and *pūjana* (worship), *Īśvarapūjana* refers to devotional worship and reverent service to God. While the term itself does not appear in the *Yoga Sūtras*, it is introduced in the commentary to elucidate the spirit of *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* (devotion to *Īśvara*), which is listed as a key *niyama* in the *yoga* tradition and is central to *bhakti yoga*.

japa (repetition of *mantra*): From the root *jap* (to mutter or repeat softly), *japa* is the meditative repetition of a sacred sound or *mantra*, used to focus the mind and awaken deeper awareness. (1.28)

jñāna (knowledge): From the root *jñā* (to know), *jñāna* refers to direct spiritual knowledge or insight. In Yoga philosophy, it is both the means and the culmination of inner realization—clarifying the distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, and leading ultimately to liberation. (2.26, 2.28, 4.31)

jñānasyānantyāt (due to the infinitude of knowledge): From *jñāna* (knowledge) + *ānanta* (infinity), *jñānasyānantyāt* refers to the state in which boundless wisdom arises, leaving little to be known. (4.31)

jñāni (knower; realized soul): From *jñāna* (knowledge), a *jñāni* is one who has attained direct realization of Truth, or the Self. In Śaiva Siddhānta, the *jñāni* transcends lower identities and lives in constant awareness of the Divine.

kaif (pure awareness): A term in the Shum-Tyeif language created by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, *kaif* refers to a state of awakened perception in which awareness is aware only of itself.

kaivalya (liberation; aloneness): From *kevala* (alone, isolated), *kaivalya* is the state of absolute freedom in which the *puruṣa* is completely disentangled from *prakṛti*. (3.55, 4.26, 4.29–4.34)

kaivalya-prāgbhāra (inclination toward liberation): From *kaivalya* (liberation) + *prāgbhāra* (inclination), *kaivalya-prāgbhāra* is the state in which the mind becomes naturally inclined toward discriminative knowledge and liberation. (4.26)

karma (action): From the root *kṛ* (to do or act), *karma* refers to action and its residual effects, forming the basis for future experiences through the law of cause and effect, particularly as shaped by the *kleśas*, or afflictions. (2.12, 2.13, 4.7, 4.8)

karmāśaya (storehouse of *karma*): From *karma* (action) + *āśaya* (repository, resting place), *karmāśaya* refers to the latent repository of *karmic* impressions that condition future births and experiences through the influence of the *kleśas*. (2.12, 2.13, 4.8)

kleśa (affliction): From the root *kliś* (to torment), *kleśa* refers to the five mental afflictions—*avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (egoity), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion), and *abhiniveśa* (fear of death)—that disturb the clarity of consciousness. These afflictions are the root of suffering and the primary obstacles to liberation. (2.2–2.4, 2.12, 4.30)

kriyā yoga (yoga of action): From *kriyā* (action; from *kṛ*, to do) + *yoga* (union), *kriyā yoga* is the disciplined path of *tapas*, self-inquiry and surrender to the Lord, employed to attenuate the afflictions. It constitutes three of the five *niyamas*. (2.1, 2.2)

kuṇḍalinī śakti (coiled power): From *kuṇḍala* (coil) + *śakti* (power), *kuṇḍalinī śakti* is the latent spiritual energy residing at the base of the spine. When awakened, it rises through the *chakras*, purifying and transforming the mind and body.

Mahādeva (Great God): From *mahā* (derived from *mahat*, meaning great) + *deva* (God), *Mahādeva* is a name for Śiva as the supreme Deity, honored as the source of all that exists and the final goal of the soul's evolution. While it primarily refers to Śiva, the term is also used more broadly in certain contexts to refer to exalted Deities such as Gaṇeśa and Murugan.

mahāpralaya (great dissolution): From *mahā* (derived from *mahat*, meaning great) + *pralaya* (dissolution), *mahāpralaya* is the complete reabsorption of the cosmos at the end of a cycle of creation, when all forms dissolve back into Śiva.

Maheśvara (Great Lord): Another name for Śiva, combining *mahā* (derived from *mahat*, great) + *Īśvara* (Lord). It emphasizes God's role as the sovereign source and sustainer of all creation.

Madhvā (dualist philosopher *guru*): Madhvāchārya (1238–1317) was the founder of the Dvaita Vedānta school, teaching that the individual soul and the supreme God are eternally distinct. Emphasizing devotional service (*bhakti*) to Viṣṇu as the means to liberation, he rejected nondual philosophies and argued that knowledge and meditative effort alone are insufficient without divine grace.

manas (mind): From the root *man* (to think), *manas* is the faculty of mind responsible for sensory coordination, initial evaluation including doubt, and preliminary thought, distinct from *buddhi*. (1.35, and 3.48—*manojavitvaṁ*)

mantra (sacred utterance): From *man* (to think), *mantra* is a sacred syllable, word or phrase used in *japa* or meditation to focus the mind and invoke spiritual power. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, the sacred syllable *Pranava* (Om or Aum) is presented as a primary *mantra* for meditating on *Īśvara*. (1.27–1.29)

mauna (silence): From *muni* (silent sage), *mauna* is the discipline of spiritual silence, cultivated to quiet the mind and deepen meditation.

moksha (liberation): From the root *muc* (to release), *moksha* is the final liberation from rebirth and all *karmic* bonds, attained through realization of the Self and resolution of *karma*.

monistic theism (nondualism which affirms that God is all and in all): A theological view that integrates monism—the belief in a single, unified reality—with theism, which affirms the existence of a conscious Divine Being. Monistic theism holds that God pervades all that exists, transcends it, and is ultimately identical in essence with the soul. Though often seen as opposing perspectives, monism and theism are reconciled in this view as aspects of one truth. This philosophy, known in Sanskrit as Advaita Īśvaravāda, is the basis of monistic Śaiva Siddhānta and contrasts with Patañjali's dualistic goal of *kaivalya*.

mukti (release; emancipation): From the root *muc* (to free), *mukti* is liberation from bondage, often used synonymously with *moksha*, referring to the ultimate freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

mūlaprakṛti (primordial nature): From *mūla* (root) + *prakṛti* (nature), *mūlaprakṛti* is the original unmanifest substance from which the universe arises—identified in Sāṅkhya philosophy as the root of all material existence.

Nāthas (lords; spiritual adepts): *Nātha* means lord or protector. The Nāthas are a broad stream of Śaiva *yoga* adepts known for their mastery of *kuṇḍalinī* and *haṭha yoga* disciplines. While many associate the tradition with Gorakhnātha, the Nāthas encompass multiple *paramparās* (guru lineages), including our own, and are understood as a timeless assembly of enlightened beings rooted in the primordial Śaiva path.

nirbīja samādhi (meditative absorption without seed): From *nir-* (without) + *bīja* (seed), *nirbīja samādhi* is seedless absorption, a meditative state free of all mental impressions or support objects. It is synonymous with *asampraññāta samādhi*, the objectless state beyond even the subtlest cognitive content, and marks the culmination of meditative practice. (1.51)

nirmāṇa citta (created mind): From *nirmāṇa* (created, constructed) + *citta* (mind), *nirmāṇa citta* refers to secondary minds or mental bodies created through *yogic* power, as described in the *Yoga Sūtras*. (4.4)

nirodha (restraint): From *ni-* (in/into; completely) + *rudh* (to block or restrain), *nirodha* means restraint or suppression. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, it specifically refers to the restraint of the mind's fluctuations (*vṛtti-nirodha*), which is the central aim of *yoga*. (1.2, 1.51, 4.34)

nirvāṇī (liberated soul): From *nirvāṇa* (liberation), a *nirvāṇī* is a soul who has attained *moksha*—freedom from rebirth and all bondage—and chooses to abide in the deepest realization of God. In Gurudeva's teachings, the two terms, *nirvāṇī* and *upadeśī*, have special meaning, naming the two modes of the realized, liberated soul, similar to the Buddhist *arhat* and *bodhisattva*.

nirvicārā samāpatti (absorbed state without subtle reflection): From *nir-* (without) + *vicāra* (subtle reflection), *nirvicārā samāpatti* is a deep stage of meditative absorption in which reflective thought has ceased, allowing for pristine inner clarity. (1.17, 1.47)

nirvitarkā samāpatti (absorbed state without deliberation): From *nir-* (without) + *vitarka* (deliberation), *nirvitarkā samāpatti* is a type of meditative absorption on a gross object in which all conceptual associations have subsided, leaving only the object itself. (1.17, 1.43)

niyama (observance): From *ni-* (in, into; completely) + *yam* (to restrain, control), *niyama* refers to the five inner observances—purity (*śauca*), contentment (*santoṣa*), austerity (*tapas*), study (*svādhyāya*) and devotion (*Īśvara praṇidhāna*)—that support personal discipline in *yoga*. (2.32)

nondualism (oneness of reality): From Latin *non-* (not) + *dual*, nondualism is the view that all of existence is a unified reality without fundamental distinctions. In Advaita Vedānta, this means the self (*ātman*) is Brahman. In monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, it is the soul's identity with Paraśiva. Nondualism challenges the dualistic ontology of the *Yoga Sūtras* by affirming a transcendent unity beyond *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

ontology (nature of being): From Greek *ontos* (being) + *-logia* (study), ontology is the philosophical inquiry into existence and reality. In Hindu traditions, it commonly refers to the fundamental categories of God (*Īśvara*), soul (*puruṣa*), and world (*prakṛti*), and their interrelations. The *Yoga Darśana* presents these as three irreducible realities.

paramaguru (supreme teacher): From *parama* (supreme) + *guru* (spiritual teacher). The *paramaguru* is traditionally the *guru* of one's *guru*—the preceptor one generation above. In some traditions, the term also refers to the founding or most revered teacher of the entire lineage, who may be a historical, mythic or divine figure. The meaning varies by lineage, with some using it relationally for living transmission and others hierarchically to honor a source teacher.

Paramapuruṣa (Supreme Person): From *parama* (supreme) + *puruṣa* (person, spirit), *Paramapuruṣa* refers to the Primal Soul, Śiva as the divine personal being—compassionate, all-knowing, and ever-present. In the teachings of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, this is one of the three perfections of God Śiva, distinct from both Satchidānanda (pure consciousness) and Paraśiva (the formless Absolute).

Parameśvara (Supreme Lord): From *parama* (supreme) + *Īśvara* (Lord), *Parameśvara* refers to Śiva as the Supreme Being—the all-knowing, all-powerful personal God who lovingly governs the universe. In the teachings of Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, *Parameśvara* is the Primal Soul, one of the three perfections of Śiva, distinct from Satchidānanda and Paraśiva.

paramparā (lineage, succession): *Paramparā* names a sacred *guru*-disciple lineage through which spiritual teachings are transmitted across generations with fidelity and living force.

Parāśakti (transcendent energy): From *parā* (supreme, beyond, transcendent) + *śakti* (power, energy), *Parāśakti* is the highest aspect of divine energy, the conscious, creative force of Śiva. She is revered as the first cause, immanent in all creation yet transcending it. This term is parallel with Satchidānanda.

Parāśakti-nāda (primordial sound of divine energy): From *Parāśakti* (transcendent energy) + *nāda* (sound), *Parāśakti-nāda* is the subtle sound vibration of the

Divine Feminine, the inner voice or current of spiritual unfolding heard in deep meditation.

Paraśiva (Absolute Reality): From *para* (beyond) + Śiva (Auspicious One), Paraśiva is the unmanifest, formless Absolute Reality, transcending time, space, and causation. It is beyond thought and definition, the highest perfection of Śiva, realized only in deep *nirvikalpa samādhi*.

paravairāgya (supreme dispassion): From *para* (supreme, beyond) + *vairāgya* (dispassion), *paravairāgya* is the highest level of detachment, in which even subtle spiritual desires are renounced. (4.29)

pariṇāma (transformation): In the *Yoga Sūtras*, *pariṇāma* refers to change or transformation, especially of the mind or matter through *yogic* process. (3.13-3.15)

prākṛtilaya (absorbed in *prakṛti*): From *prakṛti* (primordial nature) + *laya* (absorption), *prākṛtilaya* refers to a non-embodied soul whose consciousness remains absorbed in material nature, without moving toward liberation. (1.19)

prāṇa, prāṇic (life force): From the root *an* (to breathe), *prāṇa* is the vital energy that animates all beings. *Prāṇic* refers to anything pertaining to or transmitting this life force, including breathing practices and healing systems.

Praṇava (sacred syllable Om—also spelled Aum): Praṇava is the mystical syllable Om, considered the vibration of the Absolute and a focus for meditation on Īśvara. (1.27)

prāṇāyāma (breath control): From *prāṇa* (life force) + *āyāma* (restraint, extension), *prāṇāyāma* is the *yogic* regulation of breath to steady the mind and prepare for meditation. (2.49–2.53)

prapatti (total surrender): From *pra-* (forth, completely) + *pat* (to fall or submit), *prapatti* is the act of total surrender to God, regarded as the highest expression of devotion.

pratiprasava (involution): From *prati-* (back, reverse) + *prasava* (origin, production), *pratiprasava* means “return to the source” or reversal of manifestation. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, it refers to the inward process by which the mind and elements of nature dissolve back into their subtle cause, *prakṛti*. In *sūtra* 4.34, it specifically denotes the complete involution of *prakṛti* into its original unmanifested state, as it relates to the individual *puruṣa*, upon the attainment of liberation. (2.10, 4.34)

pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses): From *prati-* (against, back) + *āhāra* (bringing in, intake), *pratyāhāra* is the *yogic* withdrawal of the senses from external objects, turning awareness inward in preparation for meditation. It leads to mastery over the senses. (2.54–2.55)

pratyaya (mental content; idea): From the root *pra-tyai* (to go toward, to be convinced), *pratyaya* refers to a mental impression, idea or cognition that becomes the focus of meditation. Depending on context, it may indicate a rudimentary mental impression (1.10), the object held in meditative absorption (1.17, 1.41, 1.42), or the steady cognitive stream in meditation (*dhyāna*) (3.2).

Primal Soul (original, uncreated soul): The term *Primal Soul*, or *Paramapuruṣa*,

designates Parameśvara as the original, uncreated soul—the Creator of all other souls. He is God Śiva's third perfection, the Supreme Mahādeva, a personal, father-mother God who acts, blesses, gives *darśana*, creates, preserves, reabsorbs, obscures and enlightens. This paradigm is specific to our monistic Śaiva Siddhānta tradition and does not appear in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

pūjā (worship, adoration) From the root *pūj* (to honor, to worship), *pūjā* is a ritual act of reverence performed in a temple, shrine, or home to a Deity, guru, or consecrated object. Its purpose is to invoke divine presence, make offerings, and establish communion with the inner worlds. *Pūjā*, the worship of a *mūrti* through water, lights and flowers in temples and shrines, is the Āgamic counterpart of the Vedic *yajña* rite, in which offerings are conveyed through the sacred *homa* fire.

pūjārī (worshiper, priest) From *pūjā* (worship), *pūjārī* is a general term for one who performs *pūjā*, whether as a temple priest or as a devotee in the home or shrine.

puruṣa (pure consciousness): The seer who observes the movements of the mind but remains untouched by them. In Yoga philosophy, there are many *puruṣas*, each a distinct *cit-rūpa* (form of awareness), eternally separate from *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is not the body, senses or thoughts, but the eternal subject, beyond all experience. Liberation (*kaivalya*) is attained when *puruṣa* is fully disentangled from identification with *prakṛti*. (2.20–2.25, 4.18, 4.23, 4.34)

Radhakrishnan (Vedāntic philosopher and statesman): Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (1888–1975), India's second president, was a modern Vedāntin who interpreted the theistic elements of the *Yoga Sūtras* as optional rather than foundational. He emphasized a rational, universal approach to *yoga* rooted in self-knowledge over devotional practice.

rāga (attachment): From the root *rañj* (to color, to be affected), *rāga* is emotional attachment or craving for pleasurable experiences, one of the five *kleśas* that obscure clarity. (2.7)

rāja yoga (royal *yoga*): From *rāja* (king, royal) + *yoga* (union, discipline), *rāja yoga* is the “royal path” of meditation and inner control as codified by Patañjali, emphasizing the eight limbs.

rajas, rājasic (activity; passionate): From *rajas* (one of the three *guṇas*), *rajas* is the quality of motion, passion and restlessness. A *rājasic* person is driven by desire, ambition and outward involvement. (2.18)

ṛta (cosmic order): From the root *ṛ* (to move, go rightly), *ṛta* refers to the inherent order of the cosmos; the laws of being and nature that contain and govern all forms, functions and processes, from galaxy clusters to the power of mental thought and perception.

śabda (sound; word): From the root *śabd* (to sound, to utter), *śabda* refers to sound as perceived or used in language, often considered an object of attachment in subtle *samādhi*. (1.42)

sabīja samadhi (meditative union with seed) From *sa-* (with) + *bīja* (seed), *sabīja samādhi* retains a subtle “seed” in the form of latent impressions or a meditative support, such as an object, thought pattern, or sense of self. It corresponds to

samprajñāta samādhi, in which awareness is absorbed in progressively refined content—gross objects (*vitarka*), subtle principles (*vicāra*), bliss (*ānanda*), or individuality (*asmitā*). It is distinct from *nirbija samādhi*, the seedless state beyond all mental content. (1.46)

sādhana (means, instrument): From the root *sādh* (to accomplish), *sādhana* is a neuter noun meaning “means,” “instrument,” or “that by which something is accomplished.” It refers to the tools, methods, or causes that enable spiritual progress. In the context of Sādhana Pādaḥ in the *Yoga Sūtras*, it denotes the conceptual and structural means of *yoga*, especially the eightfold path (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*) that facilitates the inward journey. Though distinct from *sāadhanā*, the term is often blurred with it in English usage.

sāadhanā (spiritual practice): From the root *sādh* (to accomplish), *sāadhanā* (with a long final *ā*) is a feminine noun referring to sustained, disciplined spiritual effort. It encompasses personal practices undertaken to purify the mind, subdue the ego, and ultimately realize the Divine. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, it appears in the form of *kriyā yoga*—the active *yoga* of purification. While technically distinct from *sādhana*, the two are closely related: *sāadhanā* is the practice, and *sādhana* is the means by which it is achieved. In English texts, these terms are often conflated, though their difference is meaningful in Sanskrit.

sādhū (holy person): From the root *sādh* (to accomplish), a *sādhū* is one who has renounced the world in pursuit of spiritual realization, living a life of austerity, meditation and service.

sahasrāra (thousand-petaled lotus): From *sahasra* (thousand), the *sahasrāra chakra* is the crown center at the top of the head. It is the seat of divine illumination and the merging point of individual consciousness with the Supreme.

Śaiva Neri (Śaiva path): In Tamil, *neri* means path or way. *Śaiva Neri* refers to the path of Śaivism, especially in its South Indian expression, encompassing worship, discipline, and the soul's merger with Śiva.

śakti (divine energy): From the root *śak* (to be able), Śakti is the dynamic power of Śiva, the source of creation, manifestation and change, personified as the Divine Mother. This term is central to broader Hindu traditions, especially Śaivism and Śāktism, but does not appear in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

samādhi (absorption): From *sam-* (together, completely) + *ā-dhā* (to place), *samādhi* is the complete absorption of the mind in its object, in which all mental fluctuations are stilled and the seer abides in oneness with the object of meditation. It is the culmination of meditative practice and occurs in progressively deeper stages—from supported (*sabīja*) to seedless (*nirbīja*). (1.20, 1.41, 3.3)

samāpatti (coalescence; merging): From *sam-* (together) + *āpatti* (entering into a state/attainment), *samāpatti* refers to the state in which the mind merges with its object in such intimacy that it reflects it without distortion, like a clear crystal placed over a colored object. It is a refined form of *samādhi*, marked by deep inner clarity and stillness. (1.41)

sampradāya (spiritual lineage): From *sam-* (together) + *pradāya* (handing down),

sampradāya refers to a traditional spiritual lineage or school of thought in Hinduism, defined by its transmission of teachings through an unbroken line of *gurus* and *śiṣyas*. It ensures doctrinal continuity and preserves the integrity of a tradition.

samprajñāta samādhi (absorptive meditation with content): From *sam-* (completely) + *prajñā* (discriminative knowledge) + *samādhi* (absorption), *samprajñāta samādhi* is a meditative state in which awareness is fully absorbed in a specific focus or content, accompanied by clarity, cognition and discernment. It encompasses increasingly subtle stages involving physical objects (*vitarka*), subtle principles (*vicāra*), bliss (*ānanda*), and the sense of individuality (*asmitā*). This state precedes *asamprajñāta samādhi* in the hierarchy of meditative attainment. (1.17)

saṁskāra (latent impression): From *sam-* (together) + *kr* (to do, form), *saṁskāra* refers to the subliminal mental impression formed by past actions, experiences or thoughts. These impressions accumulate in the subconscious and condition future reactions, habits and tendencies. In *yogic* practice, *saṁskāras* are gradually attenuated through sustained meditation and disidentification from the mind. (1.18, 4.9)

saṁyama (integrated practice): From *sam-* (together) + *yama* (restraint/control), *saṁyama* is the integrated *yogic* discipline of *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption) applied simultaneously to a single object, leading to profound insight and inner mastery. (3.4)

Sāṅkhya (enumerative philosophy): From *saṅkhyā* (number, enumeration), Sāṅkhya is one of the six classical systems (*ṣaḍ-darśanas*) of Indian philosophy. It presents a dualistic worldview in which two fundamental realities—*puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (primordial matter)—are eternally distinct. Liberation is achieved through discriminative knowledge (*viveka*) that separates the self (*puruṣa*) from the material world (*prakṛti*). Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* are rooted in Sāṅkhya metaphysics, though they introduce Īśvara as a unique element.

Sāṅkhya Kārikā (classical text of Sāṅkhya philosophy): From *saṅkhyā* (enumeration) + *kārikā* (aphoristic verse), the *Sāṅkhya Kārikā* is the foundational text of classical Sāṅkhya, authored by Īśvarakṛṣṇa in the 4th–5th century ce. Drawing from the older proto-Sāṅkhya tradition, it presents 72 verses detailing a dualistic metaphysics in which *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are eternally distinct, and liberation arises through discerning their difference. The *Yoga Sūtras*, composed earlier, draw from the same philosophical roots but include the concept of Īśvara and emphasize meditative discipline.

sarvajñāna (omniscience): From *sarva* (all) + *jñāna* (knowledge), *sarvajñāna* is the knowledge of all things, attained through discriminative insight into the distinction between *puruṣa* and the luminous intellect (*sattva*), the most refined aspect of the mind. (3.49)

śāstra (scripture; teaching): From the root *śās* (to instruct, rule), a *śāstra* is a sacred text or authoritative treatise, encompassing both revealed and traditional

knowledge. The *Yoga Sūtras* themselves are a form of *śāstra*.

Satchidānanda (saccidānanda—Existence-Consciousness-Bliss): A compound of *sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness), and *ānanda* (bliss), *Satchidānanda* is a synonym for *Parāśakti*, Śiva's Divine Mind and simultaneously the pure superconscious mind of each individual soul. In Śaiva Siddhānta, it is understood not as the Absolute (Paraśiva), but as the primal, perfectly divine form that emerges from the formless Absolute. It is pure, amorphous energy—radiant, loving and all-knowing.

satguru (true teacher, *sadguru*): From *sat* (truth) + *guru* (teacher), a *satguru* is a fully realized spiritual master who guides the soul to liberation, embodying both divine wisdom and personal experience.

satkāra (reverence; respect): From *sat* (truth, virtue) + *kāra* (action, doing), *satkāra* refers to respectful conduct toward one's teacher, God or scripture, expressing devotion and humility.

satsaṅga (company of the wise): From *sat* (truth) + *saṅga* (company), *satsaṅga* is uplifting association with the wise, especially in the form of spiritual gatherings, scriptural study or time with the *guru*.

sattva (lucidity; purity): From *sat* (being, real), *sattva* is the *guṇa* of clarity, harmony and light, associated with wisdom, virtue and spiritual refinement. It predominates in the illumined mind (*buddhi*), enabling discernment and spiritual insight. Though the purest of the three *guṇas*, *sattva* too must ultimately be transcended to attain *kaivalya*. (2.18, 3.49)

sattva, sāttvic (purity; harmony): From *sattva* (one of the three *guṇas*), *sattva* is the quality of light, clarity and peace. A *sāttvic* nature is marked by purity, selflessness and spiritual insight. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, *sattva* also refers to the luminous mind—the ultra-*sāttvic* aspect of *buddhi* (intellect) that reflects consciousness and is ultimately distinguished from *puruṣa* through discriminative insight. (2.18; 3.49)

savicārā samāpatti (absorbed state with subtle reflection): From *sa-* (with) + *vicāra* (subtle reflection; from *vi*, apart + *cāra*, movement), *savicārā samāpatti* is a type of meditative absorption involving subtle objects, such as the senses, or *tanmātras*, in which reflective thought is still present. It is the second stage of *samprajñāta samādhi*. (1.17)

savitarkā samāpatti (absorbed state with deliberation): From *sa* (with) + *vitarka* (deliberation/cogitation) + *samāpatti* (absorption), *savitarkā samāpatti* is a type of meditative absorption where the object, its name and the idea of it remain distinct. (1.42)

Self (inner being; *ātman*): In our monistic Śaiva Siddhānta, the capitalized *Self* refers to God Śiva's perfection of Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—That which abides at the core of every soul. In this *Yoga Sūtra* translation, *puruṣa*—the pure witness consciousness—is rendered as *Self* to reflect its identity as the soul's inner being.

Self God (the Absolute within): A term used by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami to denote God Śiva's perfection of Absolute Reality, Paraśiva—That which abides at the core of every soul, ultimately realized through deep meditation and spiritual

maturity.

Self Realization (direct experience of the Self): The direct, unmediated experience of the Self as Paraśiva, the formless Absolute beyond mind and time. This realization results in liberation from rebirth and the attainment of one's eternal divine identity as Śiva.

Shum-Tyeif (language of meditation): A mystical language of meditation and inner perception revealed by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami. Shum-Tyeif provides precise vocabulary for inner experiences, guiding the meditator progressively inward through consciousness.

śiṣya (disciple): From the root *śikṣ* (to discipline, train), a *śiṣya* is a devoted student who receives teachings and spiritual guidance from a *guru*, following the path with humility and trust.

smṛti (memory): From the root *smṛ* (to remember), *smṛti* is the faculty of memory or recall, essential for the continuity of meditative practice and inner clarity. (1.20)

śraddhā (faith; confidence): From *śrad* (heartfelt trust or devotion) + *dhā* (to place), *śraddhā* is the inner trust or confidence that propels sustained effort and commitment in *yoga*. (1.20)

śrutā-prajñā (knowledge from hearing): From *śruta* (heard) + *prajñā* (wisdom), *śrutā-prajñā* refers to knowledge gained by hearing or studying scripture or the words of the *guru*. It is considered the initial stage of wisdom. (1.49)

śruti (that which is heard): From the root *śru* (to hear), *śruti* refers to the revealed scriptures of Hinduism, such as the *Vedas* and *Upaniṣads*, perceived by ancient sages in deep meditation rather than authored.

subsuperconscious (refined intuitive mind): A term from Gurudeva's teachings, the *subsuperconscious* mind is the purified subconscious aligned with the soul's intuitive knowing—bridging everyday life and divine insight. It is the superconscious working through and informing the lower states of mind.

supernormal powers (*siddhis*): Extraordinary abilities such as clairvoyance or levitation, described in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* as natural byproducts of *yogic* mastery, but regarded as distractions to guard against. (3.16–3.37)

svādhyāya (self-study): From *sva* (self) + *adhyāya* (study, recitation), *svādhyāya* is the personal recitation and reflection on sacred texts and *mantras*. It is a core *niyama* on the path of *yoga*. (2.1, 2.44)

tamas (inertia; darkness): From the root *tam* (to become dull or dark), *tamas* is the *guṇa* of inertia, heaviness and ignorance, obscuring clarity and impeding progress. (2.18)

tapas (austerity; inner heat): From the root *tap* (to heat, to burn), *tapas* refers to disciplined effort or austerity that generates transformative inner energy. (2.1)

tattvas (categories of reality): *Tattva* means “thatness” or principle. In Hindu cosmology, *tattvas* are ontological categories describing the structure of existence. Sāṅkhya philosophy identifies 25 *tattvas* culminating in *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. Śaivism expands this to 36 *tattvas* divided into three groups: five *śuddha tattvas* (pure principles) representing the divine realm beyond *prakṛti*; seven *śuddha-*

aśuddha tattvas (pure-impure principles) that bridge the soul and the divine; and twenty-four *aśuddha tattvas* (impure principles) describing the material and mental realms of embodied existence.

theism (belief in a creator God): From Greek *theos* (God), theism is the belief in a divine being who is conscious, personal and involved in the world. In Hindu contexts, it refers to traditions centered on Deities, such as Śiva, Viṣṇu or Devī. Theism is lightly present in the *Yoga Sūtras* through the figure of Īśvara, while prominent in *bhakti*-based and Āgamic paths.

tyāga (renunciation): From the root *tyaj* (to abandon), *tyāga* refers to the act of relinquishing attachment, especially to the fruits of actions.

udāsīnatā (dispassion; detachment): From *ud-* (up) + *āsīna* (sitting), *udāsīnatā* denotes an elevated state of indifference or detachment from worldly experience. (3.11)

upadeśī (one who gives instruction): From *upa* (near) + *diś* (to show or teach), *upadeśī* is one who imparts direct spiritual guidance, especially in an intimate or oral manner. In Gurudeva's teachings, the *upadeśī* is the illumined soul who chooses to return to the world to help others along the path to Self Realization, contrasted with the *nirvāṇī*, who after *moksha*—release from birth—chooses to abide in the deepest realization of God. These two terms are parallel to the Buddhist *arhat* and *bodhisattva*, naming the two modes of the realized, liberated soul.

Upaniṣads (wisdom teachings): From *upa-* (near) + *ni-* (down) + *śad* (to sit), *Upaniṣad* means “sitting near,” referring to the mystical teachings received at the feet of a *guru*. These mystical texts form the philosophical core of the *Vedas*, presenting nondual insights into the identity of *ātman* and Brahman. Their monistic vision stands in contrast to the dualism of the *Yoga Sūtras* and Sāṅkhya philosophy.

Vācaspatiśīra (philosopher and commentator): A 9th–10th century scholar of the Nyāya school who tried to harmonize Sāṅkhya dualism with Vedāntic theism, viewing Īśvara in the *Yoga Sūtras* as a real, transcendent Deity.

vairāgya (dispassion; detachment): From *vi* (apart) + *rāga* (passion, attachment), *vairāgya* is the quality of freedom from desire, cultivated by understanding the limitations of worldly pleasure. It is a means to *samādhi*. (1.12, 1.15–1.16)

Vallabhācārya (founder of Śuddhādvaita Vedānta, 1479–1531): He taught a form of qualified nondualism centered on loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa, contrasting with the isolationism of Patañjali's *kaivalya*.

Vedas (sacred revelations): From the root *vid* (to know), *Veda* means “knowledge” or “wisdom.” The *Vedas* are the foundational scriptures of Hinduism, revealed to ancient sages and composed in Vedic Sanskrit. They consist of four collections—*Rg*, *Yajur*, *Sāma*, and *Atharva*—each containing hymns (*saṁhitās*), rituals (*brāhmaṇas*), meditations (*āranyakas*), and spiritual philosophy (*upaniṣads*).

vicāra (subtle reflection): From the root *car* (to move, reflect), *vicāra* in the *Yoga Sūtras* refers to a refined, introspective process of inquiry on subtle objects, subtler

than *vitarka* (gross-level cognition). It is the second of the four stages of cognitive *samādhi*. (1.17)

videha (bodiless being): From *vi-* (without) + *deha* (body), *videha* refers to a being without a physical body, abiding in the inner planes in a meditative state sustained by latent impressions from past practice. According to Vyāsa, such beings must eventually take birth again to cultivate discriminative knowledge (*viveka-khyāti*) and attain liberation. (1.19)

vitarka (deliberation): From *vi-* (apart/distinct) + *tarka* (reasoning/discussion), *vitarka* refers to gross-level deliberative thought, particularly as it arises in early stages of meditative inquiry or *samādhi* involving external or conceptual objects. It precedes *vicāra* (subtle reflection) in the progression of cognitive *samādhi*. (1.17)

viveka-khyātiḥ (discriminative discernment): From *viveka* (discernment) + *khyātiḥ* (clear perception), *viveka-khyātiḥ* is the continuous inner clarity that distinguishes *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* and leads to liberation. (2.26)

vṛtti (mental fluctuation): From the root *vṛt* (to turn, to revolve), *vṛtti* refers to the various movements or modifications of the mind which *yoga* seeks to still. (1.2)

yajña (sacred offering): From the root *yaj* (to worship, sacrifice), *yajña* is ritual worship or offering made with devotion, traditionally in a fire ceremony. Spiritually, it represents any selfless act performed with consecration and divine intent.

yama (restraint): From the root *yam* (to control or hold), *yama* refers to moral restraints or ethical precepts that form the first limb of *yoga*. (2.30)

yoga (union; discipline): From the root *yuj* (to yoke or unite), *yoga* is the stilling of mental fluctuations for the realization of the true self. (1.2)

Yoga Darśana (Yoga philosophy): From *yoga* (union/discipline) + *darśana* (view, philosophical system), Yoga Darśana is one of the six classical schools of Hindu thought. It is codified in Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*.

Yogaswami (Master of *yoga*): Sri Lanka's revered contemporary spiritual master (1872–1964), a Sivajñāni and Nātha *siddhar* honored by both Hindus and Buddhists. Trained in *kuṇḍalinī yoga* under Satguru Chellappaswami, from whom he received *guru dikṣā*, he conveyed his teachings through hundreds of devotional songs known as *Natchintanai* (“good thoughts”), which urge seekers to live virtuously and realize God within. Yogaswami was the *guru* of Sivaya Subramuniyaswami.

yogī (practitioner of *yoga*): From the root *yuj* (union, discipline), *yogī* is one who practices *yoga*, especially the inner disciplines leading to liberation.

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The quotations by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami throughout the commentary are drawn from the following books, published by Himalayan Academy Publications, Hawaii, USA

Dancing with Śiva: Hinduism's Contemporary Catechism

Living with Śiva: Hinduism's Contemporary Culture

Merging with Śiva: Hinduism's Contemporary Metaphysics

Loving Gaṇeśa: Hinduism's Endearing Elephant-Faced God

Lemurian Scrolls: Angelic Prophecies Revealing Human Origins

Twelve Shum Meditations: Basic Maps of the Inner Mind

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Spiritual scrolls and books in the library of a student of Patañjali, with Lord Gaṇeśa blessing the work now concluded. Aum Namasivaya!