

Selections from the Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali

translations © 2003, 2008 Christopher D. Wallis

atha yogānuśāsanam

1.1 Now begins the traditional teaching on Yoga.

yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ

1.2 Yoga is the stilling of the fluctuations of the mind.

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam

1.3 Then, the Seer abides in its true nature.

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tannirodhaḥ

1.12 The stilling of these (mental fluctuations) is achieved through practice (abhyāsa) and detachment (vairāgya).

śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣāṃ

1.20 For others, it [Yoga] presupposes faith, heroic energy, remembrance, absorption (samādhi), and wisdom.

maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣaṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇyāpuṇya-viṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam

1.33 Tranquility and clarity of mind arises from the cultivation of [or meditation on] friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference in the spheres of happiness, misery, virtue, and vice (respectively).

Structure of the Part One (Samādhi-pāda) of the Yoga-sūtra

Student: What is Yoga? Patañjali: Sūtras 2-4 (Yoga is cessation of the vṛttis)

Student: What are the Vṛttis? Patañjali: Sūtras 5-11

Student: How do you stop the vṛttis? Patañjali: Sūtras 12-29 (incl. discussion of the 'theistic option' 23-28)

Student: What are the obstacles to the cessation of the vṛttis? Patañjali: Sūtras 30-31

Student: How do you overcome these obstacles? Patañjali: Sūtras 32-39

Student: What is the fruit of these practices? Patañjali: Sūtras 40-51

Part Two

tapah-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ

2.1 Austerity, study of sacred texts, and dedication to the Lord are Kriyā Yoga (the Yoga of Divine Action).

2.2 [It is practiced] for the purpose of cultivating samādhi and for the purpose of attenuating the afflictions.

avidyāsmitā-rāga-dveṣābhīniveśāḥ kleśāḥ

2.3 The afflictions are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life.

2.28 yogāṅgānuṣṭhānād asuddhi-kṣaye jñānadīptir āvivekakhyāteḥ

When there is destruction of impurity from practicing the components ['limbs'] of yoga, the light of knowledge spontaneously arises, up to the highest level of discernment [i.e., the experiential identification of the true Self].

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

2.29 Restraints, observances, postures, breath-control, withdrawal of sense energies, concentration, meditation, and Absorption are the eight components of Yoga.

ahiṃsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryāparigrahā **yamāḥ (1)**

2.30 The restraints are: non-violence, truth, non-stealing, sexual restraint, and nongrasping.

śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni **niyamāḥ (2)**

2.32 The observances are: purity, contentment, discipline, scriptural study, and contemplation of the Lord.

sthira-sukham **āsanam (3)**

2.46 **Posture should be stable and steady, yet joyful and easeful...**

prayatna-śaithilyānanta-samāpattibhyām

2.47 ...by means of an constant convergence of exertion and relaxation.

[Or: by means of a releasing of effort and a meditative contemplation of the infinite.]

deśa-bandhaś cittasya **dhāraṇā (6)**

3.1 Concentration of mind is binding it to a single place.

tatra pratyayaikatānatā **dhyānam (7)**

3.2 Meditation is the single, unbroken flow of mental energy toward the object of meditation.

[The mind becomes like a steady stream of oil: dynamic and flowing, yet simultaneously totally still. One is now equally focused on one's awareness of the object of meditation as on the object itself; the practice thus grows increasingly subtle.]

tad evārtha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śūnyam iva **samādhiḥ (8)**

3.3 When the object of meditation alone shines forth, as if oneself is absent, that alone is

Absorption.

[I.e., all cognitions and even ego-identity have fallen away and one's mind is utterly absorbed and dissolved into the object of meditation. In this state, when mental energy has finally become totally quiescent, one spontaneously experiences one's true nature as the inner Self, the eternal Witness. It is impossible to identify with the mind any longer, to believe it is one's true nature—because it has, at least temporarily, dissolved. The 'union' of *samādhi* is the union of the mind—not the Self—with the object of meditation, so that the revelation of one's true Self-identity may unfold.]

trayam ekatra **saṃyamāḥ**

3.4 **These three together, (focused) on a single object, constitute 'perfect discipline'.**

viśeṣadarśina ātmabhāvabhāvanāvinivṛttiḥ

4.25 **One who sees the distinction (between the higher mind and the Witness) ceases to cultivate an (artificial) sense of 'self'.**