

108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 9 – Duḥkha

दुःख

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- Reflections on TKV Desikachar's Teaching and Svatantra.....
- TKV Desikachar talks on Śraddhā in the light of the Yoga Sūtra.....

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"Mental activities are called Kliṣṭa when they result
in Duḥkha and Akliṣṭa when they do not.

When the three Guṇa are dominant,

Jīva is troubled and mental activities result in Duḥkha.

When the mind is free from desires, inclined toward discrimination
and seeking truth, mental activities do not result in Duḥkha.

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 5

"Duḥkha is the mental activity that
brings impurities into the heart,
thus disturbing it."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 31

"When impurities disturb the heart,
one feels restricted and unable to move."

- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 31

"Depending on whether the mind is in a state of Samādhi or not,
the person enjoys permanent happiness or
successive chains of unhappiness and happiness.
Those who accept nothing short of Samādhi,
freedom from the suffering of disease is realised.
After all, the root cause of disease is the disturbed mind,
when we cannot distinguish right from wrong or good from bad."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 34

"Each person possesses a body.
Encased in the body, as it were,
he goes through pain and pleasure.
The pain and pleasure through the body arises
because of contact with the external world.
However such variations of pain and pleasure
do not happen to one absorbed in Īśvara."
- T Krishnamacharya Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 50

"No medicine can reduce Duḥkha, only Kriyā Yoga."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 1

"Only a teacher who has experienced Duḥkha can heal others Duḥkha."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 2

"Kriyā Yoga is more about
working with the symptoms.
Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is more about
working with their cause."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 2

"Anguish arises from the illusion feeding
the conflation of I-ness and Am-ness,
the consequences of pleasure and suffering,
and underpins the fear of not feeling alive."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 3

"When something is understood differently from what it truly is, it is called Avidyā.
What is changing is taken to be non-changing. For example the mind.
What is subjected to decay is assumed to be pure. For example the body.
What is leading to suffering is taken to be the source of pleasure.
What is not conscious is assumed to be conscious.
All these errors in perceptions have many possibilities.
But the ultimate stage of Avidyā is to assume that we are the Masters, not Īśvara."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Still subtler layers of meditative reflection as in Samādhi, can reveal the source of this confused sense of "I" Am-ness, as in leading us to the roots from which the tree trunk, and then the branches grew, namely the ultimate illusion. These hidden roots sustain this existential illusion where, what in reality is transient, adulterated, infused with suffering and non-Spiritual, is personally lived and experienced as if everlasting, unadulterated, infused with pleasant feelings and Spiritual."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"I know something and I am presented with something different.
How I react or choose not to react is Asmitā.
The wrong response brings Duḥkha.
The right response Viveka.
One is a hasty assessment and one is wanting to find out more.
One is 'assuming I know I proceed',
the other is 'wishing to know I proceed'."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6

"What is unpleasant is not desired.
The response of the mind is then to move away from it.
Whether in fact such a step did prevent Duḥkha is not immediately evident."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 8

"Aversion is expecting suffering."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 8

"Duḥkha is the consequence
of Dveṣa from such as,
getting what you are not expecting or,
getting other than what you are expecting."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 8

"This Sūtra describes the origin of Duḥkha.
Duḥkha arises because of change, greed and conditioning.
Besides the Guṇa cause inherent changes unexpectedly.
This disturbs balance and Duḥkha follows."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 15

"Good habits can be as enslaving as bad ones
and can also lead to Duḥkha."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 15

"The way to better oneself is not to ponder over the past but to look ahead.
Even Duḥkha is a great teacher.
In fact it is the first and important step in the ladder of Viveka or clarity.
The greatness of Patañjali is to look at Duḥkha as the stepping stone to success."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16

"The only Duḥkha that matters is that which is about to come.
Things that have happened or are happening must be accepted."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16

"In our journey towards foresight
lies the quandary of whether we can
grasp our past sufferings positively,
or be negatively held within their clasp."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16

"Duḥkha is the Space in the Heart
feeling constricted because of
'not getting what I want', or
'getting what I don't want'. "
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16

"The arrangement of Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two involves four components:
1. Duḥkha – What is it that I want to avoid?
2. Avidyā/Samyoga – Association or from where has this come?
3. Kaivalya/Viveka – Where should we be in order to be free from this association?
4. Viveka/Aṣṭāṅga – What is the way?
What is the discipline that will give Viveka, not just for a moment, but there all the time?
This is the place of Yoga."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verses 16 - 28

"What causes Duḥkha?
In the school of Sāṃkhya it arises from within, or from external influences,
or from extraordinary phenomena such as drought, storm, earthquake.
However, the experience of Duḥkha is not the same for everyone.
The same circumstance may not bring Duḥkha in everyone.
Hence the cause of Duḥkha is association. Association implies "two",
that which is "associated to" and that which is the "cause of association."
In Yoga they are known as Draṣṭṛ and Dṛśya;
that which perceives and that which is perceived.
The next three Sūtra describe them.
How these two get associated is a subject matter of great debate.
Suffice it to say that this mystery is the Lord's will."
- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 17

"What is the nature of the Dṛśya or what can be perceived?

It has three qualities; it reveals, it acts, it has substance.

It has many components, the objects known and the means to know them.

They serve two roles.

When in strong association with the perceiver they produce pleasure or pain –

when this association is absent they let the perceiver visualise its own nature.

Experience of pleasure or pain is by the perceiver.

Freedom from them is also its fundamental situation.

This freedom is no different from Mukti."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 18

"Who is suffering?

Who is recognising it?

What can release this suffering?"

- T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 23

"The association with the world full of form and change starts with the mind.

Suffering caused because of this association is an eye opener.

Who is suffering?

Who is recognising it?

What can release this suffering?

All these questions exist because of this association,

even though it may often be painful"

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 23

"Where there is Duḥkha, there is Avidyā."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24

"Yoga is not just about engaging

the overt nature of the symptoms,

but also engaging with the

covert cause of the symptoms."

- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24

"Some define their experience of life by seeking Duḥkha,

some by seeking Sukha.

The Yoga Practitioner sees both as Avidyā

and defines their experience of life by seeking

what lies beyond duality through unwavering Viveka."

– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 26

"Recognising AND accepting one's Duḥkha is the first Prajñā.

Once you have accepted this you are free to find out where it is coming from."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 27

"To start with, Nimitta is usually an external agency, but this external agency must itself also be linked to some Nimitta. In early life for example, our parents, friends or teachers can be a Nimitta.

As to Yoga, the best external Nimitta is a teacher. Here, the teacher's role is to help guide you towards your internal Nimitta, in that the teacher will get to know you and support you with the appropriate means for your journey from outer to inner. From this process, a mirror for Nimitta can be through any number of things, for example Dharma or even Duḥkha can offer guidance."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 3

"Sukha and Duḥkha cannot be there at the same time."
- T Krishnamacharya on Bhagavad Gītā Chapter Thirteen verse 21

"When we see something that we want and are able to get it, there is no Duḥkha. If we are unable to get it, this is the beginning of Duḥkha. Very often people have this type of Duḥkha even when they are trying to improve their lives. They become so thirsty for understanding that they are unable to get understanding as quickly as they desire."
- TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Three Page 39

"In Yoga one of the first levels of Prajñā, wisdom, is the awareness and understanding that we are disturbed. It is the first truth that we need to understand because very often Duḥkha goes unrecognised."
- TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Three Page 41

"The only Duḥkha that matters is that which is about to come. Things that have happened or are happening must be accepted."
- TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Five Page 74

"We are always experiencing Duḥkha even though some of us might not be seeking clarity."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Five Page 79

"When the mind thinks it is seeing rather than the Puruṣa there is Avidyā, and this is the beginning of Duḥkha."
- TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Six Page 85

"If we have a problem which persists,
It might be because we don't know
what is the real basis or cause of the problem.
In terms of Yoga, if we have Duḥkha,
something is behind it."
– TKV Desikachar 'A Session for Questions' Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Sixteen Page 221

"Sāṃkhya proposes a permanent solution to suffering.
If we look and see.
And see what produces what we see."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"Duḥkha and the absence of Duḥkha on
the mental level is due to Saṃskāra and Pariṇāma.
With no Saṃskāra the mind is dead.
With no Pariṇāma the mind is not alive.
With the two we try to strike a balance,
to have the two in harmony."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"When Saṃskāra takes one view and
Pariṇāma another there is friction.
Coming to Madras is Pariṇāma,
being unable to have those things you had before causes friction.
When you want those things you are used to through Saṃskāra,
then the Pariṇāma which caused this can bring Duḥkha."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"The process of Cikitsā has two parts:
1. Rakṣaṇa Krama
I am healthy and don't want to be sick.
By not doing anything there will be no Rakṣaṇam.
For example:
Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 16
heyam duḥkham anāgatam
I'm alright now,
but I must be careful so I don't get sick tomorrow.
This is Rakṣaṇa Krama."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Duḥkha is the expression of a problem.
Duḥkha is an emotion, it could be an illusion."
– From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"We usually start seeking because we have something which we do not want: suffering.
Suffering pushes us to seek."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"Suffering is basically either the result of the absence of something that we want,
or the presence of something that we don't want."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"Any technique that can help to pacify suffering is wonderful,
but unfortunately only temporary.
Any technique that will develop clarity is precious,
since it contributes to resolving the cause of suffering ."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"There are three responses to suffering:
– to pacify
– to resolve
– to dissolve
It is the level of suffering that will determine the response."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"Pain and suffering are linked,
but no more pain does not necessarily mean no more suffering.
There are people who have a little pain and a lot of suffering.
However, there are others who, despite a lot of pain, suffer very little.
What is it that can do this? "
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"A good deal of suffering stems from the fact that we often take one moment for the whole story. A particular action done by someone at a particular moment should not be confused with the whole person. The person may have made a mistake and done some wrong, but there were surely other moments, other actions which brought some good.
We should never try to ignore suffering, but we can try to relativize it, see it in a wider context.
If the shoe pinches, we should try to find out where it pinches, but also look at the good points. We don't have to throw it away...."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"How can we evolve in order to change our relationship with suffering?
One important factor is replacement. The capacity to replace something within ourselves by something else will affect our relationship with suffering. If we are incapable of this then our relationship with suffering will not evolve.
For example, if we had a bad relationship with our mother in childhood this may dominate our feelings and thoughts concerning her. Every time we are reminded of this relationship the bad things come to the surface – the way she treated us, what we had to endure and so on. This is the way it happens naturally.
But we can also consider the positive things that must have come out of the relationship, the most important, for instance – the gift of life by the mother to the child. We cannot change the bad childhood experiences, but, if we can replace one way of looking at it by some new way, there may be a change in our suffering."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"We need to evolve.
Evolution is like a river.
When we see the river at the source the water is so clean, so pure, almost blue.
As it comes closer and closer to the ocean it becomes a different river,
we don't want to go near it because it is so dirty.
This is the natural flow, from up to down.
But where does this river get its water from?
It comes from the snow up in the mountains.
Where does the snow come from?
From the clouds. Where do these clouds come from?
From the ocean where all the dirty water goes.
There is some magic which is done in the ocean.
It can absorb all this dirt and gives such fresh water.
In our tradition, they say that when things get too dirty,
when disorder comes to a limit, when suffering is too widespread,
something will happen."
– TKV Desikachar from unedited manuscript for 'What are We Seeking?'

"So in many Yoga schools the beginning of change is suffering.
We find ourselves in a situation that we don't like.
Even if we can do 500 Āsana or recite the Yoga Sūtra this suffering can be there.
It is the absence of suffering that is the measure of Yoga."
- TKV Desikachar

"The role of Sādhana such
as Mudrā, Mantra and Nyāsa,
are to take one beyond Duḥkha,
rather than take one out of Vikṣepa."
- 108 Yoga Practice Pointers

"Duḥkha is the starting point for the
Yoga journey of four junctures from:
the symptom, as in Duḥkha or suffering,
to the cause, as in Avidyā or illusion,
to the goal, as in Kaivalya or independence;
via the tools, as in Aṣṭāṅga or 8 limbed path,
for the means, as in Viveka or discernment.
This ancient fourfold process is at the heart of
the teachings in Yoga, Āyurveda & Buddhism."
- 108 Study Path Pointers