

## What the Four Chapters of Yogasastra say

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Aabahu Purushakaram  
Sankachakrasidharinam |  
Sahasra Sirasam Svetam  
Pranamami Patanjelimo ||

**P**atanjala Yoga Sastra is of four chapters (Padas). The first, —Samadhi Pada—deals with the means of attaining mental clarity (Chitta Suddhi) and the subsequent use of such a clear mind for different kinds of intense concentration (Samadhi). Since, mental clarity is not possible for a person with a diseased body, weak senses and one engaged in indiscriminate (Adharmic) activities, the second Pada deals mainly with certain prerequisites to Yoga (Purvanga) and the means and efforts necessary for attaining a healthy and sensitive body. These practices are known as Bahiranga sadhana. The third chapter is confined to the means of the refinement of mental perception and intense concentration, leading to the mastery of the mysteries of nature (Prakriti) and a consequent acquisition of immense super-natural powers (Vibhuti). The last chapter, Kaivalya Pada, describes the evolution of a detached mind, yearning or gravitating towards Independence or Isolation (Kaivalya), resulting in the height of happiness (Sukhanta) and absolute mental peace (Praniprasava). It could therefore be observed that the Yogasastra at once deals with monastic (dharmic), physical, physiological, psychological, materialistic (Purushartha) and spiritual. It shows the way for happiness, both worldly (Iha) and that (Para)

arising out of renunciation (apavarga). The Maharishi further narrates the incidental benefits at each step to encourage the Abhyasi to tread the path of Yoga, — the milestones mentioned at appropriate places also helps him to check for himself the progress he is making—or the lack of it (Alabdhumikatva), and work towards the different levels of spiritual evolution.

Chitta is always in some active or knowing state (Vrithi) or the other. Yoga, in one sense, is the maintaining of one idea in the mind, to the exclusion (Nirodha) of all others.

### COMBINATION OF GUNAS

It consists, as has been mentioned, of three basic gunas or constituent characteristics, viz., Sattwa, which has the function of clarity (Prakhyā), incessant activity (Pravriti) and Inertia (Sthitih). But these three constituents do not work in isolation, though they have mutually opposing functions.

Because of a number of factors, such as Prarabdha, acquired habits (samskaras), type of food, associational influences (Sanga) etc., the predominance of each of the gunas varies from person to person and also from time to time, making distinct personalities with fluctuating overtones, among people at large. It is however the contention of the great Rishi that it is possible to change the mental make up of individuals and also reduce the violent painful gyrations of the mind (klesa) by Yogic practice. What are the permutations

and combinations of gunas and human personality?

According to Vyasa, when Chitta is primarily constituted by purity (Sattwa), but influenced equally by Rajas and Tamas, such a person tends towards the acquisition of power, prestige, property and pleasurable experiences through the senses. It is because of this opposing characteristics of Rajas and Tamas, resulting in continuous distraction—a distraction which prevents his mind from contemplating on pure self or Ishwara one gets occasionally withdrawn, but is repeatedly addicted to power (Aiswarya) or objects of senses (Vishaya).

### WHEN THE MIND BECOMES PURE

If on the other hand, he is predominantly influenced by Tamas alone, again caused by inborn traits (Prarabha), food and association, he is inclined towards corruption or unlawful acts (Adharma), suffers from confusion and ignorance (Agnana), infatuation (Avairagya), weakness and a disbelief in everything beyond the impure sensual perception—such as Purusha or the cosmic entity, Iswara. When however, by the practice of Yoga with the Niyamas, if the veil of Tamas (Tamovavaranam) is methodically reduced, and only a trace of Rajas remains as an influence, such a Sathwic person acquires a high degree of mental clarity, and consequently tends towards order and virtue (Dharma), wisdom (gnana), Vairagya progressive (detachment) and supreme power (Aiswarya). Then, even as the trace of Rajas is removed by further practice of contemplation (Antharanga sadhana), the Chitta becomes pure (Sattwic); realizes the distinction between Intellect (Budhi) and pure intelligence principle (Purusha). His mind becomes so sharp (Kusala) that by directing his mental energies, he gets a thorough understanding of every and all

aspects of Prakriti—if he so desires. This stage is called the Dharma Megha—a mind full of order—and his understanding of everything is absolutely true (Rtambhara Pragna) and hence uncontradicted. He realizes directly that the self (Atman) has a nonchanging character (Aparinamitwa), has the power of pure consciousness alone (Drisimatra), uncontaminated by various mental presentations; unrestricted in its understanding (Anantha) and is different from his own Sattwic mind. This is distinctive knowledge (Vivekakyati) the highest realisation of a knowing mind. But, when even this realisation or knowledge (Pragna)—which is still an experience of the mind—is excluded by the Chitta, it is called Nirbija Samadhi as there is nothing to understand or realize (Asampragnatham). In that state, the Chitta just remains dormant with the constituent gunas in an unmanifest stage (Pratiprasava) and the Atman stays put as it were in its true form, transcending time and the cycle of birth and death both physical and psychological. Yogis, Rishis, Vedantins go into ecstasy, trying to explain this Nirodha Samadhi and could only say it is indescribable and cannot be comprehended by an ordinary mind. It is true that Nirbija Samadhi may be an ideal, but it is a logical conclusion of the progression of Yogic sadhana. The primary benefit of Yogasadhana is uncontradicted knowledge (Pragna) and the incidental benefit is the corresponding reduction in physical and mental afflictions (Klesa).

### YOGABHYASIS — TWO CLASSES

As mentioned earlier, those engaged in the practice of Yoga can be classified into two — those earnest to get into the path of Yoga (Yogarukshu) and those who are already in the path of Yoga (Yogarudha) — which

category of people have a balanced mind (Samahita Chitta) and as such are fit for Samadhi. However even they can attain samadhi only by Antarangasadhana, or the practice of one-pointedness (Ekagra). To facilitate them, Patanjali advocates specific Yogic practices on one distinct principle (Ekatatwabhyasa), suggested by the Sastras for cleansing the mind.

that can be attempted by many, however, requires proper guidance and consistency. An awareness of Prana movement (sanchara) is necessary.

*Prachardhana Vidharanabhyam Va  
Pranasya ||*

### TO GET MENTAL FIXITY

(3) There is yet another one called Vishayavati Pravritihi. It is common knowledge that objects are 'perceived' by the senses—they are felt, smelt, seen, heard and tasted. However, without the objects, it has been found that Yogis could get the various sensations—of a higher order—by Samyama on specific centres or places in the body, from where the sensations arise. It is possible, under proper guidance, to focuss attention on these specific centres to get mental fixity. Nasagra or beginning of nose is the spot from where smell is believed to originate. Similarly one can direct attention to the middle of the eyebrows (Bhruvadhya)—the centre of sight, which practice, called Rupa Pravritihi is necessary for meditation of devotees on Paradevatas. When such one-pointed attention leads to intense concentration, the sensations one gets are superior and are out of the ordinary (Divya),

*Vishayavati va Pravritirutpanna  
Manasasthithi  
Nibandhini ||*

(4) Another practice calls for attention on the principle of light (Jyotis), called Jyotishmaui Vrithi. It is the realization of Yogis that all higher and divine experiences take place in the region of the heart (Hridaya). It is said that the heart-lotus (Hridaya-kamala), normally is closed and looks suspended but luminous—as vividly described in Prushasuktha.

*Padmakosa pradikasam  
Hridayam cha Abhayadho Mukham |*

(1) The attitude one should develop towards all others is taken up first. Since a Yogi is after self-realisation, he should develop a mind which is not distracted by attitudes of others towards him or among themselves. Thus it is prescribed that he should develop a spirit of friendliness (Maitri) towards those that are contented and happy (Sukhi). Then there are those who suffer (Dukka) from the three kinds of afflictions (Taapatrya) and he would have extreme compassion (Karuna) for them. Towards those who tread the path of virtue (Punya) engaged in prescribed duties and selfless service, he extends a spirit of goodwill and appreciation (Mudita). But towards the majority who are influenced by Tamas — those that are steeped in vice, — he will be indifferent (Upeksha) — an indifference arising out of benevolence. This attitudinal change in a Yogabhyasi, gives rise to an untainted virtuous mind. And a purified mind thus becomes one-pointed and eventually attains serenity.

*Maitri Karuna Mudita Upekshanam  
Sukha Dukka Punya Apunyanam  
Bhavanatas Chittapresadanam*

### TO CALM THE MIND

(2) Yoga these days is much associated with Asanas and Pranayama. Patanjali suggests a special Pranayama for the calming of an agitated mind. Here the one object of contemplation is Prana itself. In this practice the emphasis is on breath control, especially, long inhalation (Prachardhana) and retention after exhalation (Vidharana). This practice

It is here, the various feelings associated with the ego (Ahanta, Asmita etc.) are said to be established. It is also the seat of Paramatma.

*Tasya Sikhaya Madhya Paramathma  
Vyavastihaha |*

#### ATTENTION ON THE HEART REGION

By directing attention to the heart region (after considerable practice of Pranayama) and particularly to the centre and 'imaging' Atman in the form of a bright spot of light (Jyotis), one's consciousness gets close to Atman and the mind becomes free from sorrow.

*Visoka va Jyotimati |*

5. Shedding desire (Vita raaga) for external objects add sensation (visaya), by constant enquiry is also another method, which is very important for Yogabhyasis. Alternatively, it is recommended that one can repeatedly be thinking of a person who is desireless. God in His boundless compassion creates great spiritual souls for the benefit of every generation as objects for contemplation and subsequent emulation. Thus, many devotees of extraordinary spiritual personages do get mental clarity by constantly thinking about their saviour or Guru.

*Vitaraga Vishayam va chittam |*

6. It is every one's experience that out of sound sleep, one gets a relaxed and clear mind. This is called Sathwa Nidra. In some Vedantic literatures, it is said that in such a Nidra, the Jiva gets merged (Melana) with the Universal Lord. By constantly remembering the pleasant restful feeling of sleep, one can get a degree of mental peace. Further there are many pious people or devotees who, once in a life time or infrequently, get a divine dream (Divya Swapna) and experience a blissful feeling (Ananda), the like of which they or others have not experienced in their normal waking state. By not ignoring it but constantly taking support in that divine vision, one can cultivate calmness of mind.

*Swapna Nidra Gnana Alambanam va |*

7. The various rituals, upasanas etc. in the Sastras are all intended for ekagra. The Hindu religion is of tencriticised for the multiplicity of objects of worship or deities, even as our Vedas proclaim the one Iswara.

This is mainly to take care of the differences in inclination even among these religiously minded. Recognizing this, different methods of worship (Matha) have come into vogue. Adi Sankara is credited with establishing six such major schools of worship (Shanmatha) which are Ganapathya, Soura, Vaisnavya, Saiva, Saktha and Kaumara. These well known Mathas are still prevalent in many Hindu families and societies. This meditation (dhyana) as per one's tradition and practices (Abimata) also is a help in Yoga.

*Yetha Abhimata Dhyanat va |*

The above Yogic practices, help mental clarity and fixity of mind. When once an Abhyasi is able to get fixity easily, then other knowing states (vrithis) become reduced (kshina). Such a mind is compared to a high quality jewel (Spathikamani) and can grasp any idea or object presented to it, just as a transparent spotless Spatika takes on the hue of any object near it. The Yogi can then fix his mind on anything, from the minutest to the most complicated idea. This Sadhana, by which the mind becomes merged, as it were, with the object of contemplation is called Samapathi or Sabija Samadhi.

#### WHAT OF THE FICKLE?

These practices are valid, as mentioned earlier, for Samahita Chittas. But, what of those, whose mind are constantly roving on external objects and always fickle (Vyuthana), suffering from afflictions (klesa), but have a spiritual yearning. For such beginners who wish to take to yoga (Yogarurukshu), Patanjali recommends Kriya Yoga, in the second chapter, Sadhana Pada. It is of importance and interest to people at large.

Even here, different schools of sadhana are prevalent. I propose to explain the methodology (Paddhati) of our Acharya, based on his vast erudition, experience and Varidic tradition, in the coming issues.