



T Krishnamacharya & TKV Desikachar Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verses 1-4 Study Quotes Collated

"I am going to explain to you something else about the aphorisms, about their translation.

Many books or courses have been written about the treatise of Patañjali.

Some of them analyse the words one by one, trying to translate them separately, dissecting the text. This way of proceeding may be interesting, but unfortunately, it can also confuse instead of helping understanding of the text.

Why?

Because literally translating the aphorisms is nothing but a series of words glued together, in sentences that very often lack in consistency.

The ancient way of exposing was not translating them into a new language; it was mainly making the student grasp the sense of the aphorism.

In this case, the Sanskrit text is just a reminder,

a mnemonic that the teacher is not going to translate textually.

They are going to use it to develop the idea or the sense of the aphorism.

They will explain these notions,

sometimes even without referring to any word of the aphorism.

What is important is to give a teaching that is adapted to the level of understanding of the student."

- TKV Desikachar introducing the Yoga Sūtra

"There is no style to the Yoga Sūtra.

The only style is your style.

We can see this from the number of alternatives Patañjali proposes to give us strength of mind,

or allow us to do something we cannot do before."

- TKV Desikachar introducing the Yoga Sūtra

"The Yoga of Patañjali as a complete process of learning provides the best instrument for helping the individual know that he is more than a money making machine."

- TKV Desikachar introducing the Yoga Sūtra

"The original essence of the Yoga Sūtra was passed on by oral tradition.

First, you learn the rhythm of the Sūtra. This was in Saṃskṛta, first learning the words or Sūtra, then the meanings.

By learning to recite the Sūtra perfectly it was clear that you were earnest in wanting to learn their meanings.

The scheme would be to repeat it twice, in exactly the same tone used by the teacher.

This would take many years.

Thus these days it's difficult to expect to understand the Sūtra from a book or a course.

A Sūtra Class began with a dedication.

It had the effect of orienting the mind to the class and subject and could also be a dedication to a god, if accepted,

to remove obstacles, or if none, not to put any i.e. Gaṇeśa.

It is also a dedication to all one's teachers or all the teachers and the author of the text himself. Patañjali as in

- Pata that which falls and Añjali a position of offering as in Añjali Mudrā.

Something fell from above and became Patañjali.

The roots are in Indian mythology.

A god reclining on a bed of serpents was beseeched by the sages of old.

They had problems with Saṃskṛta grammar, Knowledge of disease and Peace of mind.

Thus in order to find a balance of body mind and speech they prayed to God.

Ānanta answered them and threw down something which was half-man up to the shoulders and above a head of many cobras.

This became the man Patañjali.

From this myth, three works are often attributed to him.

One of Grammar for speech, one of medicine for the body, one of Yoga for the mind.

Patañjali was regarded as an incarnation of the great Ānanta and the prayer salutes him and his work."

- TKV Desikachar introducing the Yoga Sūtra

"To define the word Yoga is very difficult, as the word is so adaptable.

A starting point would be Patañjali.

Patañjali removed all the complicated definitions and simplified it to:

'Making the best out of the most difficult object, the mind.'

His idea was to create a situation,

where the mind becomes more faithful than it is."

- TKV Desikachar introducing the Yoga Sūtra

"The Yoga Sūtra is divided into four chapters.
The first chapter, called Samādhi Pādaḥ,
assumes the aspirant has progressed adequately
to be in a state called Samāhita.
Such a person is not easily agitated.
They have a clearer perception to comprehend
concepts such as Īśvara and Vairāgya."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One

"The beauty of the Sūtra is that they are only related to the mind.
Thus they stand above various religions
and can be studied and related to by
all types of persons from all types of religions."
- TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One

"The study of Yoga is a vast undertaking that
requires sustained effort and guidance.
The term Atha signifies auspicious beginning,
uninterrupted continuity, and an appropriate end.
Another aspect of Atha is Saṁkalpa,
which in Vedic tradition is the decision to initiate
something important and to ensure that it is completed
at any cost, without distraction or deviation."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Yoga is a Saṁskāra, a process that prepares us to realize
the things we wish to achieve at various moments in life.
For instance, when children approach school age
parents must prepare them to make the adjustment from
being at home to being with other children and teachers.
This cannot be done suddenly, some orientation is necessary.
This is a Saṁskāra.
Yoga is a Saṁskāra in that it equips us
to realize our greatest potential.
If we wish, it can prepare us for and lead
us to the beatitude of the divine presence."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Yoga is Anu-Śāsana Śāstra.
It is experiential, not speculative,
it is ancient, with its origin in the Veda.
Sages followed the Vedic teachings and
transmitted their experience to their students.
The students, in turn, learned and experienced the teachings
in their own lives, and thus became competent to teach.
In this way the lineage of Yoga teachers is established."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"One of the most notable sages in this lineage, Patañjali, respecting Vedic tradition and blessed with proximity to the Lord, presented this teaching in the form of the Yoga Sūtra, enabling succeeding generations of Yoga teachers and students to transmit their own experiences in a systematic and structured way.

It is because of this that every aspirant of Yoga pays homage and respect to Ānanta, the spirit of Patañjali, before proceeding with Yoga Saṃskāra."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"The Saṃskāra of Yoga prepares one for Ātma Vidyā and is open to everyone."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Yoga has no prerequisites except that one must have a teacher and have faith in Īśvara, the first teacher."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Atha – Now in the sense of nowness.

By convention let there be something auspicious.

The Sūtra are different in the sense of not having a prayer dedication in the first Sūtra.

Thus Atha fills this role.

Particularly the letter 'A' which is a dedication.

"Of sounds I am the first letter A."

Bhagavad Gītā Chapter Ten verse 33

Now I am going to tell you something about Yoga.

A serious discussion as you, the students, are ready.

This also refers to the student's previous attempts at learning, which will now be clarified."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"A student might have tried to study problems of the mind to try to bring an understanding of equilibrium.

The teacher says 'now I will teach you'.

The first Sūtra also acts as a key for the memory to link all the Yoga Sūtra.

So no confusion with the Brahma Sūtra, etc."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Anu-Śāsanam – Śāsanam text of authority.
Thus it was in the past and is continuous
and will be there in the future.
It is not new and will always be valid.
No reference is made to it being an inquiry into Yoga.
On the contrary it is given as an absolute teaching.
Emphasis is given to the use and choice of words.
They are placed and given in context very carefully.
Thus the meaning is very clear.
However the Sūtra require a great teacher to explain and give comments.
This presumes a great knowledge of Saṃskṛta as well.
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"The mind functions at five levels.
Mostly it functions in such a way that we hardly notice it.
So much happens, so many ideas, perceptions
come and go that very often we lose track.
It is like a monkey that is drunk and somebody is poking it.
It is distraught and cannot comprehend anything.
In Yoga this level of functioning is called Kṣipta."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"A slightly better condition than Kṣipta
is what is called Mūḍha.
Here the mind is like a dull, sleepy, heavy buffalo.
There is hardly any inclination to act, to respond, or to observe.
This could be a temporary situation or a more regular affair.
There are many reasons for this–"
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"Another way the mind functions is called Vikṣipta.
We act but we have doubts;
distractions come about,
there are obstacles.
The set direction does not look right
and we don't know what to do about it."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"The fourth way the mind functions is called Ekāgratā.
Here clarity has come about
and we have direction and are able to proceed.
What we want to do is much clearer
and distractions hardly matter.
This is also called Dhāraṇā which was explained earlier.
Yoga is actually the beginning of Ekāgratā.
Yoga suggests means to create conditions that gradually
move the Kṣipta level of mind towards Ekāgratā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"The word Nirodha also means "restraint".
It is not by restraining the mind that it will move and
become involved in a particular direction of choice.
It is the other way round; that is,
so strongly and intensely the mind has moved toward
one area and has become absorbed in one area
that there is no "infiltration".
Therefore Nirodha meaning "restraint",
is just an effect of Nirodha meaning "complete absorption"."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 1

"What is Yoga?
Yoga is Nirodha of the different activities
and fluctuations of the mind,
the leader of the senses.
Nirodha is to completely cover.
Thus this Sūtra implies the Nirodha of
involvement of the mind in objects that
distract from a chosen direction of contemplation."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Citta Vṛtti Nirodha, the state of mind
in which no distractions arise from undesirable
external stimuli and the individual is able to
choose an object of focus, ideally Īśvara."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The ideal Dhyāna,
which becomes easier with practice,
requires certain preparations to reduce
the tendency of the mind to be distracted,
either by being jumpy and agitated, or dull and inert.
Chief among these preparations are proper diet and Prāṇāyāma."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Another term for Citta Vṛtti Nirodha is Dhyāna,
the state of mind in which an individual focuses on,
visualises and remains with Īśvara."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The Veda speak eloquently of the lotus in one's heart, where Īśvara resides.
It is only when the mind is quiet, clear, and steady that we can
reach into and visualise this most intimate part of ourselves.
Yoga as a Saṃskāra leads to Yoga as a means to experience this.
The experience of Dhyānam, in this ideal sense,
eventually evolves into Samādhi – total absorption in Īśvara."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Who does not seek a situation where he is able to understand things clearly, discover new things, and remove or clear away wrong perceptions?

If there is one thing that can be said about what happens in the state of Nirodha it is this:
one sees and one knows."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2 is a Lakṣaṇa Sūtra in that it describes the characteristics of Yoga as Citta Vṛtti Nirodha."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2 is not Yoga Sarva Citta Vṛtti Nirodha. This is a relative Sūtra, which allows for a gradual evolution."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga has many meanings in the Bhagavad Gītā, Upaniṣat, Saṃskṛta Grammar, etc.

It is defined again in the Sūtra.

Yoga is the movement of the mind in one direction. It presumes:

1. There is something in each of us called mind.
2. This mind has many movements or activities.
3. It is possible to channelise these movements through certain actions.
4. When we accept movement we accept time and space – moving something from A to B. There are realities.
5. In accepting Vṛtti we also accept the idea of an object.
6. We can fix the mind so it confines itself to an object."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Cit is always the same.
Nirodha always refers to Citta.
Thus Cit is a witness.
What changes is only Citta."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The mind is subject to change or Pariṇāma and as such can be channelised.
Certain movements can be emphasised or de-emphasised."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"The mind is like a fluid,
which can modify into different things.
A sense of change.

Thus restraining modifications is channelising."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga is stopping the mind from becoming involved,
in activities that distract one from a chosen direction."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Nirodha is a restraining of OTHER things,
not a cessation of activity."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Restraint is in the sense of
if I am here I am not elsewhere."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Yoga directs the mind to what is happening now."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 2

"Right Yoga is a vine of pleasant fragrance.
Wrong Yoga is a sharp pointed arrow – avoid it."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3

"During such a moment, without distractions,
the power of the source of perception,
full of clarity and completeness, shines forth."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3

"The Yoga Sūtra says so much about the mind,
but little about the self.
What can be shared can be expressed,
what cannot be shared cannot be expressed."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3

"In the Yoga state we experience
what is beyond the mind."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3

"When the mind is very clear,
you get the message from deep inside."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 3

"What is the nature of distraction?"
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Working together with and directed by past impressions,
the three Guṇa, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas determine
whether the mind is calm, agitated or dull."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Past impressions also determine the mind's direction and quality of perception."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Sages say that the fruits of this vine are three
wisdom, wealth and joy.

Those free of desire pick wisdom

Those full of desire pick money

Those full of devotion pick the fruit of joy.

These are what the world is seeking
whether rushing forth or keeping still

But once you know the essence
of this triple bearing vine

There is no need to choose among its flavours.

Bhīṣma said Yoga's lord is Kṛṣṇa,
beloved of all the gods

Patañjali said hold back your mind to silence the din

Nāthamuni, too, said follow the Yoga path
away from sickness, ignorance and fear.

I remember the friend of Yogavalli – Nārāyaṇa

four armed friend with bow, sword, club, discus and conch."

– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"When the mind is not very clear,
you only get the message from the mind."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"In Sūtra Three and Four the mind is operating.

In Sūtra Three the mind is the means.

In Sūtra Four the mind is the means and the boss."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Whatever perceives is always right,
it is the mind that colours what we see."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"Yoga presumes for most people that mind is the same,
always planning ahead or basing itself on what has happened."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4

"If there is not a strong link to that which is inside,
the stronger force becomes the outside,
and we are pulled by and to that."

– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 4