

Within the four chapters of the Yoga Sutra Patañjali offers numerous lists



Within the four chapters of the Yoga Sutra Patañjali offers numerous lists which can reflect nuances or gradings. Sometimes they are presented in shades of gross to subtle, as in the four Samāpatti, or at other points subtle to gross, as in the five Kleśa.

At other points, they can mark transitions from more external perceptive processes to more internal perceptive processes, as in the five Citta Vṛtti. Or, from a more externalised Sādhana to a more internalised Sādhana, as in from Kriyā Yoga to Aṣṭāṅga Yoga, or from Bāhya Aṅga to Antar Aṅga.

For example, below we can see that in Chapter Two Patañjali chooses to present a list for the five Kleśa, starting with defining the subtlest and most difficult to access insight into. From there he progresses onto defining and discussing each whilst moving from the subtlest of the Kleśa towards the grossest or most easily perceived of the five.

*"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."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 3*

*"Illusion is the field out
of which the others grow,
though they may appear
as if asleep, or arise weakly,
be inconsistent or dominant."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 4*

*"Avidyā is the illusion of recognising:
the ephemeral as the eternal,
the profane as the profound,
pain as pleasure and
the silhouette as the source."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5*

*"Egoity is when the
power of the Seer
and power of Seeing
are as if one essence."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6*

"Attachment is expecting pleasure."

– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 7

"Aversion is expecting suffering."

– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 8

*"Survival is self-prevailing
and constantly underpins,
even in the wise person."*

– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 9

Therefore,

given the subtlest is by nature the field from within which the others emerge, it may also be helpful for us as students of Yoga to explore their influence within our field of psychic activity, by reflecting on their power of expression and influence as if from gross to subtle.

With this in mind,

we can continue exploring the three recent quotes below on the five Kleśa, each offering an increasingly subtle meditative reflection around the source, expression and experience of the Kleśa from gross to subtle within and through our relationship with the world.

*"The outer layer of meditative reflection, as in Dhāraṇā,
can reveal psychic symptoms,
which we might compare to the branches of a tree,
such as confused attractions, confused aversions and the fear of loss."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verses 7-9*

*"Deeper layers of meditative reflection, as in Dhyānam,
can reveal a source for the symptoms,
which we might compare to the trunk from which these three branches grow.
Revealed is a confused sense of "I" Am-ness in terms of what we believe
to be as if one inner essence which empowers us to perceive."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6*

*"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."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5*

This means that the most obvious and recognisable in the Kleśa emergence path is the moment-to-moment impact of the seeming grossest, that of Abhiniveśā. This experience is a primary constant within our day-to-day relationships and detectably influences and biases our interactions within our self-constructed sense of our place in the world.

*"Fear and Insecurity feed on the leftovers
from the meals of past experiences."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 9*

From there,
we have Dvesa and the emotional energy inherent in its movement influencing our choices.

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

Followed by Raga,
and its emotional drive again influencing our choices.

*"Rāga is more about passion
for the outcome rather than
passion for the action in itself."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 7*

Behind these three grosser aspects of the Klesha lurks Asmita,
and its inevitable duality of the sense of I am, jousting with the sense of I am not.

*"That's our starting point...
This curious conjunction
of being Human and
yet human Being."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6*

Even behind these,
is the illusory power of Avidyā.

*"Avidyā is the illusion of experiencing
what feels real, as if it is actually true.
However, that we experience a feeling as real,
does not in fact actually mean that it is true.
So how to discern as to whether a feeling
that we experience as real, is really true?"
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5*

So where to start?

*"Building banks to channel
the flow of the river of
Kleśa is Kriyā Yoga.
Building a dam to block
the flow of Kleśa as
we journey upstream
going back to the source
of the flow is Aṣṭāṅga Yoga."
– Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 10*