

# The Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali

## Chapter One Samādhi Pādaḥ



### The Wisdom of the West as a guide to appreciating the Wisdom of the East

It is offered in the spirit of Paramparā with an appreciation  
for my years of learning in India with TKV Desikachar.

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The Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali

**Aphorisms** on Yoga compiled by Patañjali

"A short saying often contains much wisdom."

- Sophocles

Chapter One Title

samādhi-pādaḥ I

The Section on **Integration**.

"It is no longer enough to be smart — all the technological tools in the world add meaning and value only if they enhance our core values, the deepest part of our heart.

Acquiring knowledge is no guarantee of practical, useful application.

Wisdom implies a mature integration of appropriate knowledge, a seasoned ability to filter the inessential from the essential."

- Doc Childre and Deborah Rozman

## Annotated through Ten Themed Sections

### 1. Nirodha or Containment - verses 1-4

Chapter One verse 1

atha yoga-anu-śāsanam I

**Now** follow the teachings of Yoga.

"Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season.

It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year.

It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow.

Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime."

- WEB Du Bois

Chapter One verse 2

yogaḥ citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ I

Yoga is the **containment** of fluctuations in the psyche.

"The present contains nothing more than the past, and what is found in the effect is already in the cause."

- Henri Louis Bergson

Chapter One verse 3

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe-avasthānam |

Then the **seer** abides in its own character.

"We have a hunger of the mind which  
asks for knowledge of all around us,  
and the more we gain, the more is our desire;  
the more we see, the more we are capable of seeing."

- Maria Mitchell

Chapter One verse 4

vṛtti-sārūpyam-itaratra |

At all **other** times conformity with the fluctuations.

"We are all inclined to judge  
ourselves by our ideals;  
others, by their acts."

- Harold Nicolson

## 2. Citta or Psyche – verses 5-11

Chapter One verse 5

vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭa-akliṣṭāḥ |

The **movements** are fivefold  
and they afflict or don't afflict.

"The mind is its own place  
and in itself,  
can make heaven of Hell  
and a hell of Heaven."

- John Milton

Chapter One verse 6

pramāṇa-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidrā-smṛtayaḥ |

**They** are right perception, wrong perception,  
imagination, deep sleep and memory.

"Common sense is the knack of  
seeing things as they are,  
and doing things as  
they ought to be done."

- Harriet Beecher Stowe

Chapter One verse 7

pratyakṣa-anumāna-āgamāḥ pramāṇāni |

**Right perception** is through the senses, inference and testimony.

"If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite."

- William Blake

Chapter One verse 8

viparyayaḥ mithyā-jñānam-atad-rūpa-pratiṣṭham |

**Wrong perception** is false knowledge not established in form.

"If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people."

- Virginia Woolfe

Chapter One verse 9

śabda-jñāna-anupātī vastu-śūnyaḥ vikalpaḥ |

**Imagination** is knowledge following words empty of substance.

"Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere."

- Carl Sagan

Chapter One verse 10

abhāva-pratyaya-ālambanā tamaḥ vṛttiḥ nidrā |

**Deep sleep** is the fluctuation of obscurity supporting a non-appearance of psychic activity.

"Happiness, it seems to me, consists of two things: first, in being where you belong, and second -- and best -- in comfortably going through everyday life, that is, having had a good night's sleep and not being hurt by new shoes."

- Theodor Fontane

Chapter One verse 11

anubhūta-viśaya-asampramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ |

**Memory** is the retention of the experience of an object.

"'I have done that,' says my memory.  
'I cannot have done that' -- says my pride, and remains adamant.  
At last -- memory yields...."

- Fredrich Wilhelm Nietzsche

### 3. Abhyāsa & Vairāgya or Practice & Dispassion – verses 12-16

Chapter One verse 12

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tat-nirodhaḥ |

By both **practice and dispassion** that contained.

"Self-respect is the fruit of discipline;  
the sense of dignity grows  
with the ability to say no to oneself...."

- Abraham J Heschel

Chapter One verse 13

tatra sthitau yatnaḥ abhyāsaḥ |

**Practice** is the effort to remain there.

"To listen is an effort,  
and just to hear is no merit.  
A duck hears also."

- Igor Stravinsky

Chapter One verse 14

saḥ tu dīrgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkāra-ādarā-āsevitaḥ dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ |

Moreover, this stage firm when **attended** to without interruption,  
with reverence and enthusiasm over a long time.

"You got to be careful if you don't know where you're going,  
because you might not get there...."

- Yogi Berra

Chapter One verse 15

dṛṣṭa-anuśravika-viśaya-vitṛṣṇasya vaśīkāra-saṃjñā-vairāgyam |

Absence of **thirst** towards objects,  
either as seen or following heard spiritual teachings,  
is the acknowledgement of the mastery of dispassion.

"Good as drink is, it ends in thirst."

- Irish Proverb

### Chapter One verse 16

tat-param puruṣa-khyāteḥ guṇa-vaitṛṣṇyam ।

That highest is an absence of thirst for the attributes of nature,  
from a recognition of the **animating principle**.

"A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe,  
a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself,  
his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest,  
a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness.

This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our  
personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us.

Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of  
compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty...."

- Albert Einstein

## 4. Saṃprajñāta or Total Knowing – verses 17-19

### Chapter One verse 17

vitarka-vicāra-ānanda-asmitā-  
rūpa-anugamāt-saṃprajñātaḥ ।

Total **insight** follows the form of gross deliberation,  
subtle reflection, joy and the sense of 'I' am-ness.

"What we do not understand we do not possess."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

### Chapter One verse 18

virāma-pratyaya-abhyāsa-pūrvāḥ saṃskāra-śeṣaḥ anyaḥ ।

The other, preceded by the practice of **cessation** of psychic activity,  
has a remainder of tendencies.

"Cessation of work is not accompanied  
by cessation of expenses."

- Cato the Elder

### Chapter One verse 19

bhava-pratyayaḥ videha-prakṛti-layānām ।

Psychic activities will **re-emerge** for those discarnate  
or absorbed in the process of matter.

"Change is the constant,  
the signal for rebirth,  
the egg of the phoenix."

- Christina Baldwin

## 5. Śraddhā or Faith - verses 20-22

### Chapter One verse 20

śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvakaḥ itareśām |

For others **faith** precedes vigour,  
mindfulness, integration and knowing.

"I have one life and one chance to make it count for something.  
I'm free to choose what that something is,  
and the something I've chosen is my faith.  
Now, my faith goes beyond theology and religion  
and requires considerable work and effort.  
My faith demands -- this is not optional --  
my faith demands that I do whatever I can,  
wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can  
with whatever I have to try to make a difference...."

- Jimmy Carter

### Chapter One verse 21

tīvra-saṃvegānām-āsannaḥ |

It is near for those with extreme **ardour**.

"Children are remarkable for their intelligence and ardour,  
for their curiosity, their intolerance of shams,  
the clarity and ruthlessness of their vision."

- Aldous Huxley

### Chapter One verse 22

mṛdu-madhya-adhimātratvāt-tataḥ api viśeṣaḥ |

Hence also **distinctions** of  
mildness, moderateness and extremeness.

"'I may be stupid,' interrupted the colonel,  
'but the distinction escapes me.  
I guess I'm pretty stupid,  
because the distinction escapes me.'"

- Joseph Heller

## 6. Īśvara or the Lord - verses 23-28

Chapter One verse 23

īśvara-praṇidhānāt-vā I

Or, from **dedication** to the Lord.

"I know the price of success: dedication, hard work, and an unremitting devotion to the things you want to see happen...."

- Frank Lloyd Wright

Chapter One verse 24

kleśa-karma-vipāka-āśayaḥ aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ I

The **Lord** is a distinctive animating principle untouched by afflictions, actions, results and deposits.

"Modern man no longer regards Nature as in any sense divine and feels perfectly free to behave toward her as an overwhelming conqueror and tyrant."

- Aldous Huxley

Chapter One verse 25

tatra niratiśayaṃ sarva-jña-bijam I

There the seed of all knowing is **unsurpassed**.

"An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law...."

- Martin Luther King Jr

Chapter One verse 26

sa eśa pūrveṣāṃ-api guruḥ kālena-anavacchedāt I

That, which not separated by time, also the **teacher** for all predecessors.

"Why not let people differ about their answers to the great mysteries of the Universe? Let each seek one's own way to the highest, to one's own sense of supreme loyalty in life, one's ideal of life. Let each philosophy, each world-view bring forth its truth and beauty to a larger perspective, that people may grow in vision, stature and dedication...."

- Algernon Black

Chapter One verse 27

tasya vācakah praṇavaḥ |

Its expression is **sacred**.

"Your sacred space is where you can  
find yourself again and again...."

- Joseph Campbell

Chapter One verse 28

tat-japaḥ-tat-artha-bhāvanam |

That **repetition** is for cultivation of its purpose.

"Repetition of the same thought or physical action  
develops into a habit which, repeated frequently enough,  
becomes an automatic reflex."

- Dr Norman Vincent Peale

## 7. Vikṣepa or Distraction - verses 29-31

Chapter One verse 29

tataḥ pratyak-cetanā-adhigamaḥ api-antarāya-abhāvaḥ ca |

From that turning inwards **consciousness** is realised  
and also the non-appearance of the interventions.

"We do not believe in ourselves until someone  
reveals that deep inside us is valuable, worth listening to,  
worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch.  
Once we believe in ourselves we can risk  
curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or  
any experience that reveals the human spirit...."

- ee cummings

Chapter One verse 30

vyādhi-styāna-saṁśaya-pramāda-ālasya-avirati-bhrānti-darśana-  
alabdha-bhūmikatva-anavasthitatvāni citta-vikṣepāḥ te-antarāyāḥ |

These **interventions** which distract the psyche are disorder,  
dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, over-indulgence,  
fallacious views, non-attainment of a stage and losing stability.

"There are as many nights as days, and the one  
is just as long as the other in the year's course.  
Even a happy life cannot be without a measure of  
darkness, and the word 'happy' would lose its  
meaning if it were not balanced by sadness..."

- Carl Jung

Chapter One verse 31

duḥkha-daurmanasya-aṅgam-ejayatva-śvāsa-praśvāsāḥ vikṣepa-sahabhavaḥ |

Suffering, negative thinking and unsteadiness in body and inhalation and exhalation accompany the **distractions**.

"The truth is that our finest moments are most likely to occur when we are feeling deeply uncomfortable, unhappy, or unfulfilled. For it is only in such moments, propelled by our discomfort, that we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for different ways or truer answers...."

- M Scott Peck

## 8. Eka Tattva or One Principle – verses 32-39

Chapter One verse 32

tat-pratiṣedha-artham-eka-tattva-abhyāsaḥ |

For that purpose of counteracting them practice one **principle**.

"Like all dreamers I confuse disenchantment with truth...."

- Jean-Paul Sartre

Chapter One verse 33

maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣānām sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayānām

bhāvanātaḥ citta-prasādanam |

The psyche can be calmed by **cultivating** as an object friendliness, compassion, gladness and disinterest within happiness, suffering, virtue and vice.

"What you are as a single person, you will be as a married person, only to a greater degree. Any negative character trait will be intensified in a marriage relationship, because you will feel free to let your guard down -- that person has committed himself to you and you no longer have to worry about scaring him off...."

- Josh McDowell

Chapter One verse 34

pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya |

Or, through both lengthening the exhale and holding out of the **breath**.

"Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart....."

- William Wordsworth

Chapter One verse 35

viṣayavatī vā pravṛttiḥ utpannā manasaḥ sthiti-nibandhinī |

Or, on finer **cognition** as an object binding the mind, stay arises.

"Each contact with a human being is so rare, so precious, one should preserve it...."

- Anais Nin

Chapter One verse 36

viśokā vā jyotiśmatī |

Or, on that **luminescence** which is free from sorrow.

"Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog,  
when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in  
and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way  
toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line,  
and you waited with beating heart for something to happen?  
I was like that ship before my education began,  
only I was without compass or sounding line,  
and no way of knowing how near the harbor was.  
"Light! Give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul,  
and the light of love shone on me in that very hour...."

- Helen Keller

Chapter One verse 37

vīta-rāga-viṣayaṃ vā cittam |

Or, as an object, a psyche free from **attraction**.

"The fewer facts you have in support of an opinion,  
the stronger your emotional attachment to that opinion."

- Anonymous

Chapter One verse 38

svapna-nidrā-jñāna- ālambanaṃ vā |

Or, by supporting with knowledge of **dreams** and deep sleep.

"We all dream; we do not understand our dreams,  
yet we act as if nothing strange goes on in our sleep minds,  
strange at least by comparison with the logical,  
purposeful doings of our minds when we are awake."

- Erich Fromm

Chapter One verse 39

yathā-abhimata-dhyānāt-vā |

Or, from meditation on what is **appropriate**.

"Whatever you do, do with all your might."

- Marcus Tullius Cicero

## 9. Sabīja or With Seed – verses 40-46

Chapter One verse 40

parama-aṅu-parama-mahattva-antaḥ asya vaśīkāraḥ |

A person has **mastery** from the most minute to the most greatest.

"The highest possible stage in moral culture is when we recognize that we ought to control our thoughts."

- Charles Darwin

Chapter One verse 41

kṣīṇa-vṛtteḥ abhijātasya-iva maṇeḥ grahīṭṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu  
tat-stha-tat-añjanatā samāpattiḥ |

When movement is reduced,  
as if a precious gem that assumes the colour of an object,  
that staying with that which is grasping,  
the process of grasping and  
that which is grasped is **unity**.

"Beware that you do not lose the substance by grasping at the shadow."

- Aesop's Fables

Chapter One verse 42

tatra śabda-artha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ saṃkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ |

There word, purpose, knowledge and imagination **interspersed**,  
unity unrefined profound reasoning.

"The great majority love in others only what they lend him,  
their own selves, their version of him...."

- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Chapter One verse 43

smṛti-pariśuddhau svarūpa-śūnya-eva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsā nirvitarkā |

Refined gross deliberation is when the memory is **purified**,  
as if empty of its own character,  
so that only the purpose shines forth.

"The whole of science is nothing more  
than a refinement of everyday thinking."

- Albert Einstein

Chapter One verse 44

etayā-eva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣma-viṣayā vyākhyātā |

By this, thus the process of subtle reflection  
without and with refinement for **subtle** objects is explained.

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts;  
but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates."

- Henry David Thoreau

Chapter One verse 45

sūkṣma-viṣayatvaṃ ca-aliṅga-paryavasānam |

And the ultimate limit of subtle objects is the **unmanifest**.

"The universe is full of magical things,  
patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper...."

- Eden Phillpotts

Chapter One verse 46

tāḥ eva sabijaḥ samādhiḥ |

These thus, are indeed integration with **seed**.

"If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom,  
then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are  
the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow...."

- Rachel Carson

## 10. Nirbīja or Without Seed – verses 47-51

Chapter One verse 47

nirvicāra-vaiśāradye-adhyātma-prasādaḥ |

On the maturity of refined subtle reflection  
the **serenity** is from the inner essence.

"Vision is the art of seeing the invisible...."

- Jonathan Swift

Chapter One verse 48

ṛtaṃ-bharā tatra prajñā |

There the **knowing** bears truth.

"A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

### Chapter One verse 49

śruta-anumāna-prajñābhyām-anya-viśayā viśeṣa-arthatvāt |

It is different from the insight based on oral transmission and inference,  
as the purpose of the object is **distinct**.

"Suit the action to the word,  
the word to the action;  
with this special observance,  
that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature."

- William Shakespeare

### Chapter One verse 50

tat-jaḥ saṃskāra-anya-saṃskāra-pratibandhī |

The **tendencies** born from that oppose other tendencies.

"Most people are more comfortable  
with old problems than with new solutions."

- Anonymous

### Chapter One verse 51

tasya-api nirodhe sarva-nirodhāt-nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ ||

When even that is contained, all is contained;  
this is integration **without seed**.

"When my mind is still and  
alone with the beating of my heart,  
I can find a quiet assurance,  
an inner peace, in the core of my being.  
It can face the doubt, the loneliness, the anxiety,  
Can accept these harsh realities and can even grow  
Because of these challenges to my essential being."

- Paul Beattie

### Chapter One Closing Verse

iti pātañjala yoga darśane samādhi-pādaḥ ||

Thus Patañjali's view of Yoga in the section on **Integration**.

"Through meditation and  
by giving full attention to one thing at a time,  
we can learn to direct attention where we choose."

- Eknath Easwaran

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