



The path of Raja (Royal) Yoga, also called Astanga (8-limbed) Yoga, consists of:

1. Yamas. Restraints.

Ahimsa. Non-violence towards self or other beings.

Satya. Tell the truth – do not lie to ones self or to other beings.

Asteya. Refrain from stealing from ones self or from others.

Brahmacharya. Refrain from lusting outside of a relationship.

Aparigraha. Non-attachment. This means to live in the world, and to fully enjoy, but not to be a slave to attachments. One can enjoy life fully, and also be totally free.

2. Niyamas. Observances.

Saucha. Cleanliness. This refers to purity of mind, body, emotions, and spirit, the clear light of being.

Santosha. Contentment. Everything is as it should be.

Tapasya. Duty. Let there be unity within, without, to oneself, and to all. All one. Do not delay in carrying out ones duty. This is responsibility, discipline. It is a joy to be one, to manifest love.

Swadhyaya. Self-study. Realize the facts. All are one, yet separate, and again one, depending on the point of view. We are full manifestations of the Supreme. It is a play of the Divine. All are one, all Divine. Love is the answer, path, goal. Discover and be in a state of Swabhava (natural state).

Ishwara Pranidhana. Devotion to the Supreme. All One. Vibhuti (powers) manifest.

3. Asana. Literally means Seat. Postures should be comfortable, to facilitate all the 8 limbs of Raja Yoga). Asana and Pranayama (fourth limb) go together closely. Proper practice of Asana will assist in making the yogi strong, to be well, to enjoy life, and to realize the joy and purpose in life. Proper anatomical alignment, to improve health, power, and well-being is emphasized.

4. Pranayama. Breath. Life power through the breath. Prana means Life energy. Yama means cessation of life, a different phase. Prana is breathing in, out, Yama is the pause between each cycle. It is very interesting to realize that the heart literally rides on the diaphragm.

5. Pratyahara. Centering, to bring the senses and awareness within, to quiet the mind. One can successfully focus on the outside world if one is calm and centered within. It is important to note that concentration on Ajna, the sixth chakra (third eye), is integral to quiet and peace within, and also awareness of within and without can be achieved.

6. Dharana. Concentration on an object or person.

7. Dhyana. Full union with the person or object of meditation. Two are one, yet again two. Union is achieved with the object or person). Duality and the veil of mind (Maya) is overcome, and union is achieved. Dadaji says that 20 minutes of Dhyana yoga can help to purify the body, to heal.

8. Samadhi. Full union with all. This is a natural state (Swabhava). Kaivalya is total liberation. There is some vibration in Kaivalya state. Above this, from a certain point of view, is Satyanarayana state, where there is no vibration. All vibration comes from this state, and is inseparable from this state. According to Dadaji, full attunement (Satyanarayana state) can be sustained only for a period of about twenty minutes at a time, in order to maintain the body in this world. Satya = Truth. Narayana = Creator .

Organization of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

These sutras are in four parts (padas). Pada means foot.

- 1. Samadhi Pada I: Contemplation and Meditation
- 2. Sadhana Pada II: The Steps To Union
- 3. Vibhuti Pada III: Union Achieved And Its Results
- 4. Kaivalya Pada IV: Illumination and Freedom

We will start with the first pada, Samadhi. We will not take too much time to discuss the Yoga Sutras, but we will address them. Students are encouraged to study on their own. All the padas are very succinct, about three to four pages long each. All of them can be read in about one hour, or a lifetime.

They are available to download for free at my website, or at the translators website, online. There are numerous translations available online, and published in books with commentary. I prefer to study the sutras in their simplest form, without commentary. The Bhavagad Gita is another work to study.

Guidelines for the practice of Asanas.

No food two to three hours before asana practice. No liquids 15 minutes before asana practice (but hydrate thoroughly with pure water before class. It's OK to drink water during class if you must. This is for your comfort during yoga class.

Yoga mat or blanket is helpful but not necessary, depending on the surface. I don't use props because I want to be free to do yoga anywhere. For the gym classes, please bring a yoga mat and blanket.

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