

Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Translation by Chester Messenger

Samadhi Pada I: Contemplation and Meditation

Patanjali opens with a blessing for those seeking union (Yoga) with the supreme. Here the Seer/meditator/Yogi/self is equated to the soul and the concept of ego mind is introduced. The ego mind is composed of mind, intelligence and the ego which makes up the illusory self. When one learns to restrain or subjugate the ego mind then pure soul awareness becomes possible or knowledge of the true self becomes possible. The illusory self is manifested as five fluctuations or fivefold movements.

1] A blessing to those seeking instruction on joining (Yoga) with the Supreme Spirit.

== Definition of Yoga ==

2] Union (integration) of the self to the Supreme is the result of restraining fluctuations of the ego mind, controlling cognition and annihilating the ego.

3] Then, at that time, the Soul (Seer) dwells in a state of radiance.

4] At other times, the Seer, (Soul) identifies with the mind's behavior of constant modification and fluctuation.

== Obstacles to union with the Supreme ==

5] The mind modifications are composed of fivefold movements that are either afflicting or unafflicting, distressing or undistressing, pleasing or painful, troubling or untroubling, disturbing or undisturbing.

6] The fivefold movements manifest as valid knowledge, perversion, imagination, dreamless sleep, and memory.

7] Valid knowledge is achieved through direct perception, or the act of reasoning from factual knowledge and evidence, and from sacred texts or teachers knowledgeable of scripture and that which can be proven or verified.

8] Perversion is actually unreal knowledge based on beholding not one's own form, but that which occupies illusion.

9] Imagination is fanciful verbal knowledge invented in sequence that is devoid of substance, meaning or existence.

10] Dreamless sleep is the means of going toward the true reliable abode of knowing the complete essence of one's eternal condition of non-existence, the thought-wave of feeling non-being. Dreamless sleep is the closest one comes to letting the self fall away.

11] Memory is not allowing to slip away things experienced and is the recollection of perceptions, imaginations, thoughts, objects, senses and interactions with others.

-= Overcoming the obstacles to union -=

12] The art of Yoga is the repeated practice of restraining the fivefold movements so one can detach from desires and achieve ultimate freedom.

13] Practice is the continuous effort to achieve perfect restraint of these fivefold movements.

14] To become firmly rooted with the Supreme requires that the practice be performed with zeal, dedication, and devotion continuously for a long time, without interruption.

15] Listen and perceive this transmission of ancient testimony to achieving supreme joy and contentment through freedom from desires. To obtain union with the Supreme one must detach from desires and passions, for true understanding is accomplished by subjugating and controlling the fluctuations of the mind.

16] The highest, most excellent supreme perception of pure soul awareness is achieved by transcending the three qualities of nature; (light, inertia and vibration).

17] To actually distinguish true soul awareness one must grasp the four stages: It begins with self-analysis then personal insight transcending logic through meditation leading to blissful elation and finally universal consciousness.

18] A lesser soul awareness is often achieved during meditation and practice that achieves a balance of mind with impressions registering below the threshold of consciousness. The intelligence is stilled but the impure awareness experiences visions or lucid dreams.

19] This lesser state of soul awareness has its origins in the incorporeal realm of non-material existence which is the realm of spirit and law. Failure to transcend this state of being leads to isolation or a merging with nature.

20] To continue progressing to pure soul awareness requires reverent faith, moral strength, keen memory and supreme devotion to profound meditation to achieve perfect absorption of thoughts and awareness of real knowledge acquired through intense contemplation.

21] Pure soul awareness is near for those who continue to practice cheerfully and with intensity.

22] Some proceed with mild effort, moderate effort or zealous effort and these levels of effort determine the speed one achieves pure soul awareness.

-= Surrender to God is the ultimate approach to union -=

23] The carnal mind can be transcended into pure soul awareness by profound prayer and meditation upon God and total surrender to God.

24] God is the seat of Supreme Being, totally free from conflicts, unaffected by actions and untouched by cause and effect.

25] God is the unsurpassed and unrivaled one source of omniscient wisdom, transcendent, yet unfolds the entirety of omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence.

26] God is the unlimited, unbounded, undefined source of all knowledge and is the foremost absolute

guru untouched by time.

27] Aum (OM) is the sacred syllable signifying God and is the fulfillment of divinity and stands for the praise of the divine.

28] The mantra Aum is to be repeated with reverent feeling with the aim of realizing its identifying purpose,

29] Thus removing the obstacles to acquiring the mastery of pure soul awareness.

30] The obstacles to pure soul awareness are disease, procrastination, doubt, carelessness, laziness, attachment to sensual gratification, delusion, departing from practice and an unfocused mind.

31] These obstacles exist at the same time with unhappiness, despair, unsteadiness of the body and irregular breathing which further scatters the mind and causes distractions.

32] To prevent these obstacles, one should practice with single-mindedness the real state of truth so as to perceive the principal doctrine of essential nature thus revealing the very essence of pure soul awareness.

33] But by being joyfull, glad, friendly, compassionate and merciful coupled with indifference to happiness and sorrow, virtue and vice, one will become infused with a graceful diffusion of pure soul awareness leading to a favorable disposition.

-= Techniques in restraining the fivefold movements =-

34] Helpful in restraining the fivefold movements is proper breath practice. This is done by steady slow exhalation followed by a pause before softly inhaling. This breath practice helps calm the mind and connect to soul awareness.

35] Also progress can be advanced by contemplating an object with total absorption thus producing a mind state resembling the mind's foundational origins.

36] Or, a tranquil state of mind can be the result of contemplating a luminous light of infinite brightness which is free from sorrow or grief.

37] Pure soul awareness is achieved by unattachement to objects, desires and passions.

38] In order to distinguish the gross from the eternal be cognizant of the three states of mind. The dreamless state of non-being, the dream state of delusion and the wakeful state of intelligent awareness.

39] Mind discipline can also be developed by meditation on a selected thing that is desireable and pleasing according to one's wishes or taste.

-= Benefits from using the techniques =-

40] Mastery over passions and the fivefold movements brings the power over the infinitesimal to the Infinite.

41] By transcending the three qualities of nature; (light, inertia and vibration) and mastering the fivefold movements, the Yogi becomes like a flawless crystal gem exhibiting the characteristics of

worthiness, wisdom, politeness, courtesy and distinguished nobleness. The Yogi is transformed into accepting that the knower, the instrument of knowing, and that which is known are not separate but are just modifications of the original form.

42] At this stage the Yogi becomes totally engrossed in thoughtful transformation as the word, its purpose, and the knowledge of the word become intermingled and mixed together such that the Yogi is transcendent of judgement. Instead the Yogi becomes the observer of reality.

43] Now the Yogi is of the purest mind, cleansed of memory, devoid of the former nature, allowing the purest form of soul awareness to be as it is, unreflecting and unconsidered, without analysis or logic.

-= Subtle techniques for achieving pure soul awareness =-

44] In addition to contemplating objects and pleasing subjects, there are two other techniques of investigation. Both are related to the meditation of subtle things (such as ego, intelligence, time, space or causation) but one involves deliberate contemplation and the other is contemplation of the subtle without reflection or consideration. One involves logic and discrimination, the other intuition and a knowing transcendent of gross thought.

45] Either technique of meditating on subtle things will lead to the ending of fluctuations revealing pure soul awareness, having no characteristic markings but only displaying its unmanifested form.

46] Both techniques require profound meditation seeded by the core of being.

47] But when the Yogi is skilled in profound reflection without seeds, profound knowledge manifests as undisturbed pure flow of the union between the supreme awareness and individualized awareness, admitting maximum passage of clear bright light without diffusion or distortion, accompanied by serenity of disposition.

-= Achieving ultimate transcendent wisdom =-

48] The yogi's awareness now resides in insightful wisdom, full of truth and intellectual essence.

49] This insightful wisdom has the special property of being beyond wisdom achieved by traditional means. This special wisdom is first hand intuitive knowledge of the Supreme and can not be gained by conjecture or inference.

50] Now that the Yogi is born of supreme wisdom, previous formations of the mind become subliminal and the pure truth impedes future gross impressions.

51] Even this new truth bearing light must be suppressed in order to achieve permanent seedless identity with the absolute supreme. By detaching from the supreme wisdom the Yogi drops away the remaining illusions of self and only the universal supreme soul blazes without form in pristine clarity.