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The Yoga Sutras Of Patanjali

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Chapter: 1 Samadhi Pada

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The Yoga Sutras Of Patanjali(पतंजलि योग-सूत्र)

Introduction

Yoga, in modern times, is often associated with physical postures, stretching exercises, and fitness regimes. However, its roots extend far beyond the superficial aspects of bodily movement. The ancient practice of yoga is a profound spiritual and philosophical discipline that aims at self-realization and the union of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. The practice of yoga in its truest form was codified thousands of years ago in the form of **Patanjali's Yoga Sutras**, a text that provides both a practical and philosophical roadmap for mastering the mind and achieving liberation from suffering.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, composed in Sanskrit, are a collection of 196 aphorisms, each containing immense wisdom packed into brief, concise sentences. These sutras (or "threads") weave together a system of spiritual practices designed to transform the mind, cultivate discipline, and awaken the practitioner to their true nature. What is remarkable about these sutras is their timeless relevance; they continue to offer insight and guidance to those who seek inner peace and self-mastery, even in today's fast-paced, modern world.

This book endeavors to offer an in-depth explanation of each of the 196 sutras, translating them from their original Sanskrit form while elucidating their meaning in a way that resonates with contemporary seekers. Throughout this book, we will explore not only the spiritual significance of the sutras but also how they can be applied in daily life for mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual growth. Whether you are just beginning your yoga journey or are well-versed in yogic philosophy, this text will serve as a valuable resource to deepen your understanding of the mind and its workings through the lens of yoga.

Who was Patanjali: The Sage of Yoga

Patanjali, the revered sage, is often credited with laying the foundation for modern yoga as we know it. While historical records about Patanjali's life are scarce and shrouded in mystery, he is believed to have lived sometime between 200 BCE and 400 CE. His exact identity and life remain enigmatic, with some sources suggesting that Patanjali might have been a single individual, while others propose that he was part of a lineage or school of thought that compiled the sutras over time. Regardless of the ambiguity surrounding his biography, Patanjali's work has left an indelible mark on the world of spirituality.

In addition to his contributions to yoga, Patanjali is also thought to have been a polymath, contributing to fields like grammar and medicine. His work in Sanskrit grammar, **the Mahabhashya**, is a key text that shaped the development of the language. Patanjali is thus sometimes referred to as a multi-faceted scholar who made significant contributions to Indian thought, ranging from linguistics to health and wellness through the discipline of Ayurveda. The depth and diversity of his contributions only enhance the reverence in which he is held.

What sets Patanjali apart from other spiritual teachers is his ability to distill vast and complex philosophical concepts into succinct, practical guidelines. The Yoga Sutras are not abstract theories but a series of concrete steps that anyone can follow to master the mind and attain higher states of consciousness. Patanjali's approach to yoga is systematic, methodical, and scientific in its precision, which is why his teachings have remained relevant and are practiced by millions across the globe even today.

Patanjali's Relevance in Today's Scientific World

Though the Yoga Sutras were written over two millennia ago, the wisdom they contain is strikingly relevant to today's scientific understanding of the mind and body. Modern fields like neuroscience, psychology, and behavioral science have begun to validate many of the insights that Patanjali articulated through his concise yet profound sutras. Patanjali's teachings on mental clarity, emotional regulation, and mindfulness have found strong echoes in contemporary scientific research, demonstrating the timelessness of his wisdom.

For instance, Patanjali's concept of "**Chitta Vritti Nirodha**", which translates to the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind, is paralleled by modern understandings of mindfulness and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). In CBT, individuals are taught to recognize their negative thought patterns and work to change them—this aligns closely with Patanjali's emphasis on stilling the mind and redirecting it toward higher consciousness. Moreover, **neuroscientific studies** on meditation have shown that regular meditation practices, such as those described in

the Yoga Sutras, can lead to positive changes in brain structure and function, particularly in areas related to attention, emotion regulation, and self-awareness.

The **practice of pranayama (breath control)**, one of the eight limbs of yoga outlined by Patanjali, has also been validated by modern science. Research shows that controlling the breath can activate the parasympathetic nervous system, reducing stress, improving heart health, and enhancing cognitive function. This directly supports Patanjali's claim that the mind and body can be controlled and harmonized through the disciplined practice of pranayama, which calms the nervous system and prepares the practitioner for deeper states of meditation.

In today's fast-paced, hyper-connected world, the teachings of Patanjali offer a valuable antidote to the mental chaos many of us experience. His methods provide tools for cultivating inner peace and mental resilience, which are increasingly recognized as essential components of mental and emotional well-being. Whether it's through mindfulness practices, meditation, or the regulation of the breath, Patanjali's ancient wisdom continues to offer practical solutions for modern challenges.

Patanjali's Notion of God (Ishvara)

Patanjali's treatment of **Ishvara** (God or a supreme consciousness) is unique in the realm of spiritual texts. While many religious systems present a personal, anthropomorphic God who is deeply involved in the affairs of the world, Patanjali's view is more abstract and philosophical. For Patanjali, Ishvara is not a deity who rewards or punishes but rather a special kind of consciousness that is pure, untainted, and eternal. Ishvara is a concept that transcends traditional definitions of God and serves as a focal point for meditation and devotion in the path of yoga.

In the Yoga Sutras, Ishvara is described as a being who is untouched by the afflictions of life, karma, or the fluctuations of the mind. This makes Ishvara a perfect model for the practitioner who seeks to attain the same state of purity and unchanging awareness. In Sutra 1.24, Patanjali defines Ishvara as "**Purusha vishesha,**" a special purusha (soul or consciousness) who is above the normal conditions of life, including time, suffering, and ignorance.

One of the key practices Patanjali outlines is **Ishvara Pranidhana**, or surrender to this higher consciousness. For many practitioners, this involves dedicating their efforts to a higher cause or force, whether that is conceptualized as a personal God or a universal ideal of perfection. Patanjali's inclusion of Ishvara in the Yoga Sutras demonstrates the spiritual flexibility of his teachings; those who are inclined toward devotional practices can engage with Ishvara as a personal deity, while those who prefer a more philosophical approach can meditate on Ishvara as the embodiment of pure, unchanging consciousness.

What makes Patanjali's notion of God especially relevant today is its universality. In an increasingly globalized world where people from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds come together, Patanjali's non-sectarian and flexible approach to the divine provides a framework for spiritual practice that is inclusive and adaptable to different belief systems. Whether one believes in a personal God or views Ishvara as a guiding principle of consciousness, Patanjali's teachings offer a path toward inner realization and connection with the infinite.

Content In this Book

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras consist of **196 sutras (aphorisms)** in total. These are divided into four chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1 : Samadhi Pada – 51 sutras

Chapter 2 :Sadhana Pada – 55 sutras

Chapter 3 :Vibhuti Pada – 56 sutras

Chapter 4 :Kaivalya Pada – 34 sutras

Each chapter focuses on different aspects of yoga philosophy and practice, guiding the practitioner from understanding the nature of the mind to achieving ultimate liberation (Kaivalya).

Chapter 1: Samadhi Pada (On Contemplation)

The first chapter of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, **Samadhi Pada**, is primarily concerned with the concept of **samadhi**, a state of meditative absorption or enlightenment. This chapter introduces the philosophical foundation of yoga and focuses on the nature of the mind, consciousness, and the process of achieving higher states of awareness.

Patanjali begins by defining yoga in the famous second sutra: **“Yogaś citta vṛtti nirodhaḥ”** – *Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind*. In this sutra, Patanjali highlights the ultimate goal of yoga: to quiet the restless waves of thoughts and emotions that disturb our inner peace. When the mind is free from these disturbances, the practitioner can experience their true nature, which is pure consciousness or the **self**.

Samadhi Pada outlines the obstacles that prevent the mind from reaching this state of stillness, such as ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and the fear of death. Patanjali also introduces the **concept of Ishvara** (a form of God or supreme consciousness) as a guide and focal point for meditation.

This chapter is an introduction to the nature of yoga, offering insight into what happens when the mind is fully controlled and the practitioner reaches a state of pure awareness. **Samadhi**, the chapter's namesake, represents the highest state of consciousness, in which the practitioner becomes one with the object of meditation, transcending the ego and achieving a state of bliss and unity.

Sutra 1.1

Atha Yoganushasanam

अथ योगानुशासनम्

Now, the discipline of yoga is explained.

This opening sutra serves as an invocation to the teachings of yoga, marking the beginning of an important spiritual journey. The word "Atha" signifies a fresh start, indicating that the student is now ready to dive into the systematic discipline of yoga after having prepared mentally and emotionally. It implies that the previous knowledge or spiritual development has brought the practitioner to this point where they are capable of receiving and understanding the teachings of yoga. The term "Yoganushasanam" refers to the discipline and structured path of yoga, emphasizing that this is a disciplined practice that requires commitment, perseverance, and dedication. In this sutra, Patanjali invites the practitioner to embark on this sacred and transformational journey.

Sutra 1.2

Yogash chitta vritti nirodhah

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः

Yoga is the stilling of the fluctuations of the mind.

This is perhaps the most famous and fundamental sutra in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras. It succinctly defines the essence of yoga as the cessation of the mental turbulence (chitta vritti) that constantly occurs in the mind. Our mind is usually filled with thoughts, emotions, desires, and distractions, which prevent us from perceiving reality clearly. The fluctuations of the mind (vrittis) are the various mental states and disturbances that take us away from our true self. Yoga, according to Patanjali, is the process of quieting these fluctuations so that we can experience inner peace, mental clarity, and ultimately, the realization of the true self (Purusha). This state of nirodhah, or mental stillness, is the key to spiritual liberation. By controlling and transcending these modifications, one can achieve a calm, undisturbed mind capable of experiencing higher states of consciousness.

Sutra 1.3

Tada drashtuh svarupe avasthanam

तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम्

Then, the seer abides in their own true nature.

Once the mind's fluctuations have been stilled through the practice of yoga, the practitioner begins to experience a state of pure awareness. The "seer" in this context refers to the true self or pure consciousness, often called the "Purusha" in the Yoga Sutras. In ordinary life, our awareness is clouded by the distractions of the mind, and we mistakenly identify with the ego, body, or external objects. However, when the vrittis are stilled, we can rest in our true nature, which is pure, undisturbed consciousness. This state of abiding in one's true nature is the ultimate goal of yoga. It is a state of self-realization, where we are no longer identified with the transient aspects of existence (thoughts, emotions, physical body) and instead experience the eternal, unchanging self. This sutra reflects the transformational power of yoga, offering a path to inner freedom and self-awareness.

Sutra 1.4

Vritti sarupyam itaratra

वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र

Otherwise, the self identifies with the fluctuating states of mind.

When the mind is not controlled or stilled, the seer (the true self) identifies with the constantly changing mental states. This identification with the fluctuations of the mind is what leads to suffering, confusion, and ignorance. Instead of recognizing our true nature as pure consciousness, we become entangled with our thoughts, emotions, and sensory experiences. This mistaken identification creates a false sense of self, where we associate our identity with the ego, the body, and external experiences. These vrittis—thought patterns—can either be positive, negative, or neutral, but as long as the mind is caught up in them, the true self is obscured. In this way, Patanjali explains the source of human suffering and the importance of calming the mind to free ourselves from these attachments. By mastering the mind, we cease to be swayed by these mental fluctuations and can experience life from a place of inner peace and clarity.

Sutra 1.5

Vrittayah panchatayah klishtah aklishtah

वृत्तयः पञ्चतय्यः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः

The modifications of the mind are fivefold, and they can be either painful or non-painful.

Patanjali here introduces the five categories of mental modifications, or vrittis, that occur in the mind. These vrittis can either cause suffering (klishta) or be neutral and non-painful (aklishta). The painful vrittis are those that arise from ignorance, attachment, and ego, while the non-painful ones are more neutral and may not disturb the mind in the same way. Regardless of whether the

vrittis are painful or non-painful, they all represent fluctuations of the mind that obscure the true self. The practice of yoga aims to transcend all mental modifications, not just those that cause suffering. By understanding the nature of these five vrittis and how they influence our perception of reality, we can begin to cultivate awareness and gradually reduce their impact on our consciousness. This awareness is key in progressing toward the state of mental stillness described in Sutra 1.2.

Sutra 1.6

Pramana viparyaya vikalpa nidra smritayah

प्रमाण विपर्यय विकल्प निद्रा स्मृतयः

The five fluctuations of the mind are: correct knowledge, incorrect knowledge, imagination, sleep, and memory.

In this sutra, Patanjali outlines the five types of mental modifications or vrittis. These are:

1. **Pramana (correct knowledge)**: This refers to perceptions and thoughts that are accurate reflections of reality, based on direct experience, inference, or authoritative testimony.
2. **Viparyaya (incorrect knowledge)**: This is a state of misunderstanding or misperception, where one holds a belief that does not correspond to the true nature of reality.
3. **Vikalpa (imagination)**: This refers to the creation of mental images or concepts that do not correspond to actual reality. Imagination can be a useful tool, but it can also distort our perception.
4. **Nidra (sleep)**: While sleep is a necessary part of life, Patanjali classifies it as a vritti because the mind is still active during sleep, albeit in a dormant state.
5. **Smriti (memory)**: Memory is the mental retention of past experiences. While essential for functioning, memories can also distort our perception of the present by coloring it with past experiences.

Understanding these five types of vrittis allows the practitioner to begin recognizing them in daily life and ultimately transcend them through disciplined practice.

Sutra 1.7

Pratyaksha anumana agamah pramanani

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि

Right knowledge is based on direct perception, inference, and authoritative testimony.

Here, Patanjali explains the sources of valid knowledge (Pramana). He identifies three main ways we acquire accurate knowledge:

1. **Pratyaksha (direct perception)**: This is knowledge gained through direct sensory experience, such as seeing, hearing, or touching something. It is immediate and not influenced by interpretation or imagination.
2. **Anumana (inference)**: Inference is knowledge derived from logical deduction or reasoning. For example, seeing smoke and inferring that there must be fire.
3. **Agama (authoritative testimony)**: This is knowledge received from a trusted source, such as scriptures, teachers, or experts. When we rely on someone else's experience or wisdom, it falls under this category.

By distinguishing between valid sources of knowledge, Patanjali helps practitioners understand how to discern truth from illusion. These sources are essential in the path of yoga because the goal is to perceive reality as it is, without being influenced by incorrect or distorted knowledge.

Sutra 1.8

Viparyayah mithya jnanam atadrupa pratishtam

विपर्ययो मिथ्याज्ञानमतद्रूपप्रतिष्ठम्

Incorrect knowledge is false understanding, not based on the true form of the object.

This sutra deals with **Viparyaya** or incorrect knowledge. It occurs when we misperceive reality, seeing things not as they are but as something else. An example could be mistaking a rope for a snake in dim light. This misperception leads to wrong conclusions and actions. Viparyaya results from incomplete information, personal biases, or past conditioning. It obstructs mental clarity, making us hold beliefs and assumptions that do not correspond to the truth. In the path of yoga, recognizing and eliminating incorrect knowledge is essential for attaining higher levels of consciousness and self-awareness.

Sutra 1.9

Shabda jnana anupati vastu shunyah vikalpah

शब्दज्ञानानुपाती वस्तुशून्यो विकल्पः

Imagination is knowledge based on words without a corresponding reality.

Vikalpa refers to imagination or conceptualization that lacks a grounding in reality. It is when the mind creates ideas, thoughts, or beliefs that are based on words or concepts rather than direct experience. For example, imagining a mythical creature after hearing about it in a story. While

imagination can be creative, Patanjali notes that it can also mislead us when it forms ideas about things that don't truly exist or when we mistake conceptual knowledge for actual truth. In yoga, we strive to go beyond imagination to experience reality directly and fully, rather than being caught up in mental fabrications.

Sutra 1.10

Abhava pratyaya alambana vrittih nidra

अभावप्रत्ययालम्बना वृत्तिर्निद्रा

Sleep is a state of mind that is based on the absence of wakeful consciousness.

Nidra or sleep is considered one of the five mental modifications or vrittis. During sleep, the mind is not active in the usual sense of perceiving objects or ideas, but it remains present in a state of absence or unconsciousness. Patanjali mentions sleep as a mental state because the mind is still functioning, though without direct awareness or sensory engagement. Sleep is necessary for the body and mind, but overidentification with sleep or neglecting wakeful awareness can hinder spiritual progress. Yogis are encouraged to bring mindfulness even to states like sleep, recognizing it as a temporary mental state rather than an aspect of the true self.

Sutra 1.11

Anubhuta vishaya asampramoshah smritih

अनुभूतविषयासम्प्रमोषः स्मृतिः

Memory is the retention of experiences and impressions.

Smriti refers to memory, which is the ability to retain and recall past experiences or information. Memory plays a crucial role in shaping our thoughts, actions, and even our perception of the present moment. While memory can be helpful for learning and functioning, it can also be a source of attachment and distortion. For instance, past experiences can influence how we view current situations, leading to biased judgments. In yoga, one aims to transcend the limitations of memory by living fully in the present moment and not allowing past impressions (samskaras) to dictate one's actions or state of mind. A balanced mind acknowledges memory but does not cling to it.

Sutra 1.12

Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tannirodhah

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः

The fluctuations of the mind are controlled by practice and non-attachment.

This sutra introduces two key principles for controlling the mental modifications (vrittis): **Abhyasa (practice)** and **Vairagya (non-attachment)**.

1. **Abhyasa** refers to consistent and diligent effort to cultivate mental discipline and focus. It is through sustained practice that one can develop control over the mind and bring it to a state of calm and steadiness.
2. **Vairagya** is the practice of detachment or non-attachment. It involves letting go of desires and attachments that cause mental disturbances. Through vairagya, one learns not to cling to fleeting experiences or emotions, which leads to greater inner peace.

Together, these two principles create a balanced approach: regular, focused effort combined with the ability to remain unaffected by success or failure, joy or sorrow.

Sutra 1.13

Tatra sthitau yatnah abhyasah

तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः

Practice is the effort to stay in that state of mental calm.

In this sutra, Patanjali explains that **Abhyasa**, or practice, refers specifically to the effort to maintain mental steadiness and concentration. This is not just about performing yoga postures or meditation sporadically, but rather about cultivating a consistent and ongoing commitment to quieting the mind. Through regular, sustained effort, the mind becomes increasingly stable, and the practitioner begins to experience moments of peace and clarity. This continuous practice requires both discipline and patience, as the fluctuations of the mind do not cease easily. But over time, with persistence, one's ability to remain in a state of mental calm strengthens.

Sutra 1.14

Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya satkara asevitaḥ dridha bhūmih

स तु दीर्घकाल नैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः

That practice, when done for a long time, without interruption, and with reverence, becomes firmly grounded.

Patanjali highlights the key elements of effective **Abhyasa (practice)**. It must be:

1. **Dirgha kala (long-term)**: Practice must be sustained over a significant period. Quick results are unlikely; instead, yoga requires patience and perseverance.
2. **Nairantarya (uninterrupted)**: Practice should be continuous and consistent, without long gaps that disrupt the momentum.
3. **Satkara (with reverence)**: Practice should be approached with sincerity, respect, and dedication. It's not just about going through the motions but about engaging fully and with devotion.

When these conditions are met, the practice becomes firmly rooted and begins to produce lasting results, leading the practitioner to a deeper state of inner calm and self-awareness.

Sutra 1.15

Drishtanushravika vishaya vitrishnasya vashikara samjna vairagyam

दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णस्य वशीकारसञ्ज्ञा वैराग्यम्

Non-attachment is the mastery of desire for both seen and unseen objects.

In this sutra, Patanjali expands on the concept of **Vairagya (non-attachment)**. It involves letting go of desire for both material objects and the pleasures or experiences that we have heard of (unseen objects). Whether the attachment is to physical things, like wealth or comfort, or to spiritual aspirations, such as attaining heaven or mystical powers, non-attachment means freeing oneself from craving or longing for them. True vairagya is achieved when one reaches the state of **Vashikara (mastery)**, where the desire for worldly and otherworldly pleasures no longer has any pull on the individual. This detachment allows the practitioner to focus fully on the path of yoga without being distracted by desires or fears.

Sutra 1.16

Tat param purusha khyater guna vaitrishnyam

तत्परं पुरुषख्यातेर्गुणवैतृष्यम्

The highest form of non-attachment is when one transcends the qualities of nature (gunas) through knowledge of the true self (Purusha).

In this sutra, Patanjali describes the highest level of non-attachment, where even the attachment to the **gunas** (the three qualities of nature: sattva, rajas, and tamas) is transcended. At this stage, the practitioner attains knowledge of **Purusha** (the true self) and recognizes that the fluctuations of nature, including the mind and body, do not define them. This level of non-attachment goes

beyond worldly desires and encompasses the fundamental qualities that make up all of existence. The practitioner no longer identifies with any aspect of the material world and rests fully in the knowledge of their eternal, unchanging nature. This leads to liberation (kaivalya), where one is free from all bonds of nature.

Sutra 1.17

Vitarka vichara ananda asmita rupa anugamat samprajnatah

वितर्कविचारानन्दास्मितारूपानुगमात्सम्प्रज्ञातः

Concentration with reasoning, reflection, bliss, and a sense of 'I-ness' is called Samprajnata Samadhi.

This sutra introduces the concept of **Samprajnata Samadhi**, which is a state of higher consciousness that is attained through focused concentration. There are four stages or components of this state:

1. **Vitarka (reasoning)**: This is the initial stage where concentration is accompanied by reasoning or intellectual understanding of gross objects.
2. **Vichara (reflection)**: At this level, the mind moves beyond gross objects to subtler forms of understanding and contemplation.
3. **Ananda (bliss)**: As concentration deepens, the practitioner experiences a state of bliss, a serene and joyous mental state free from disturbances.
4. **Asmita (sense of 'I-ness')**: Even in this deep state of concentration, there is still a subtle awareness of individual selfhood or identity.

This is a stage of consciousness where the mind is highly focused, and yet there remains some sense of individuality or ego. The practitioner is still aware of their own existence in relation to the object of meditation. This form of Samadhi is a powerful state but still involves some form of mental activity and individuality.

Sutra 1.18

Virama pratyaya abhyasa purvah samskara shesha anyah

विरामप्रत्ययाभ्यासपूर्वः संस्कारशेषोऽन्यः

Another type of Samadhi is Asamprajnata Samadhi, which is preceded by the practice of ceasing all mental activity, leaving only subconscious impressions.

In contrast to **Samprajnata Samadhi**, **Asamprajnata Samadhi** is a state where all mental activities and fluctuations have ceased completely. The mind becomes entirely still, and there is

no longer any reasoning, reflection, bliss, or sense of individuality. This state is reached through intense practice, where the practitioner learns to quiet the mind to the point where only the **samskaras** (subconscious impressions) remain, and even they are on the verge of dissolution. In this state, the practitioner experiences pure awareness without any mental constructs or dualities. This is a deeper form of Samadhi that leads to the highest states of spiritual realization and liberation.

Sutra 1.19

Bhava pratyayo videha prakriti layanam

भावप्रत्ययो विदेहप्रकृतिलयानाम्

For those who are born without a physical body or who are merged in nature, Samadhi is experienced as a result of their natural state.

This sutra describes a category of beings who are naturally inclined towards Samadhi. These beings, known as **videhas** (disembodied beings) or **prakriti layas** (those merged in the elements of nature), do not experience the same material conditions as ordinary humans. They are either without physical bodies or have transcended the physical world through their connection to nature. For these beings, Samadhi is not something they attain through practice but is part of their inherent state of being. They are naturally free from the disturbances of the mind and enjoy a higher state of consciousness by their very nature. However, despite this state, they are not necessarily fully liberated until they attain knowledge of the true self (Purusha).

Sutra 1.20

Shraddha virya smriti samadhi prajna purvaka itaresam

श्रद्धावीर्यस्मृतिसमाधिप्रज्ञापूर्वक इतरेषाम्

For others, Samadhi is preceded by faith, energy, memory, concentration, and wisdom.

This sutra explains that for those who are not naturally inclined toward Samadhi, there is a systematic path to follow. The five key qualities required to reach Samadhi are:

1. **Shraddha (faith)**: Faith in the practice and the teachings of yoga gives the practitioner the motivation to continue on the path, even when progress is slow or obstacles arise.
2. **Virya (energy or effort)**: Sustained effort and energy are necessary to remain dedicated to the practice over time.
3. **Smriti (memory or mindfulness)**: Mindfulness is the ability to retain and reflect on past experiences, lessons, and insights, which helps the practitioner stay focused.

4. **Samadhi (concentration)**: This refers to the deep, unwavering focus on the object of meditation.
5. **Prajna (wisdom)**: This is the intuitive understanding or wisdom that arises from deep meditation and spiritual practice.

Together, these qualities form the foundation for advancing toward Samadhi for ordinary practitioners.

Sutra 1.21

Tivra samveganam asannah

तीव्रसंवेगानामासन्नः

For those who are intensely committed, Samadhi is near.

In this sutra, Patanjali emphasizes that the speed at which one attains Samadhi depends on the intensity of one's commitment and effort. **Tivra samvega** refers to an intense, urgent drive or determination to achieve the goal of yoga. For those who approach their practice with fervent dedication, Samadhi can be reached more quickly. The more intense the focus and devotion to the path, the closer the practitioner will be to achieving Samadhi. This underscores the importance of not just practicing yoga but doing so with passion and unwavering determination.

Sutra 1.22

Mridu madhya adhimatra tatopi visheshah

मृदुमध्यमाधिमात्रा ततोऽपि विशेषः

The success of reaching Samadhi depends on whether the intensity of effort is mild, medium, or intense.

Here, Patanjali expands on the previous sutra by explaining that the degree of progress toward Samadhi depends on the level of intensity with which one practices. He identifies three types of practitioners:

1. **Mridu (mild)**: These practitioners have a relaxed approach and may progress slowly due to their lack of intense commitment.
2. **Madhya (medium)**: Those in this category have a moderate level of commitment and will progress at a steady pace.
3. **Adhimatra (intense)**: Practitioners with intense dedication and effort will progress more rapidly toward Samadhi.

Patanjali emphasizes that the more intense and focused one's practice, the faster and more complete the results will be.

Sutra 1.23

Ishvara pranidhanad va
ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा

Or; by surrender to God, Samadhi can be attained.

Patanjali introduces the concept of **Ishvara Pranidhana**, or surrender to God, as an alternative path to Samadhi. **Ishvara** represents a supreme being, or pure consciousness, who is free from all limitations of time, space, and karmic influence. By surrendering the ego and dedicating all actions, thoughts, and emotions to a higher power, the practitioner can experience Samadhi more easily. This path involves developing complete trust in the divine and relinquishing control over outcomes, which can lead to deep spiritual transformation. For many practitioners, devotion to God becomes the guiding force that leads them to the ultimate state of union and liberation.

Sutra 1.24

Klesha karma vipaka ashayaih apamrishtah purusha vishesha Ishvarah

क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः

Ishvara is a special kind of Purusha, untouched by the afflictions of life, actions, the results of actions, and desires.

In this sutra, Patanjali describes **Ishvara** as a unique form of **Purusha** (the true self) that is completely free from the limitations and afflictions that bind ordinary beings. Unlike humans, who are subject to **kleshas** (mental afflictions), **karma** (actions and their consequences), and **ashaya** (the latent impressions and desires that shape our experiences), Ishvara exists in a state of absolute purity and freedom. Ishvara is not influenced by the laws of cause and effect and remains eternally liberated and unchanging. This makes Ishvara an ideal object of meditation for those who wish to transcend the limitations of ordinary life and attain the highest states of consciousness.

Sutra 1.25

Tatra niratishayam sarvajna bijam

तत्र निरतिशयं सर्वज्ञबीजम्

In Ishvara is the seed of omniscience.

Patanjali describes **Ishvara** as the source of all-knowing, or **sarvajna**. This omniscience is inherent in Ishvara, meaning that Ishvara possesses complete and perfect knowledge of all things, past, present, and future. Because Ishvara is free from the limitations of time, space, and karma, this divine consciousness holds the seed of ultimate wisdom. For practitioners, meditating on Ishvara can open the doors to greater understanding and insight. By aligning with the omniscient nature of Ishvara, the practitioner begins to transcend the limitations of ordinary perception and tap into the higher truths of existence.

Sutra 1.26

Sa purvesham api guruh kalena anavacchedat

स पूर्वेषामपि गुरुः कालेनानवच्छेदात्

Ishvara is the teacher of even the ancient teachers, being unlimited by time.

In this sutra, Patanjali further emphasizes the timeless nature of **Ishvara**. Ishvara is the teacher, or **guru**, of all the great sages and spiritual masters who have ever existed. Unlike ordinary beings, who are bound by the constraints of time, Ishvara exists beyond time and space, making this divine consciousness the eternal source of wisdom. Even the greatest spiritual teachers of the past have drawn their knowledge from Ishvara, and by meditating on Ishvara, practitioners can connect to this timeless, infinite source of wisdom and guidance. Ishvara is the eternal guru, whose presence transcends the boundaries of history and continues to guide spiritual seekers throughout time.

Sutra 1.27

Tasya vachakah pranavah

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः

The expression of Ishvara is the sacred syllable Om.

Here, Patanjali introduces the **Om (Pranava)** as the verbal symbol representing **Ishvara**. **Om** is considered the primordial sound, the vibration that underlies all creation. It is the most sacred of all mantras and is believed to encapsulate the essence of the divine. By chanting or meditating on Om, practitioners can attune themselves to the divine presence of Ishvara. This sacred syllable

carries profound spiritual significance, and through its repetition, one can connect to the higher vibrations of the universe, aligning with the divine and moving closer to the experience of Samadhi. Om serves as a bridge between the practitioner and the ultimate reality of Ishvara.

Sutra 1.28

Tajjapah tadartha bhavanam

तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्

Repetition of Om and contemplation of its meaning leads to the realization of Ishvara.

Patanjali explains that the key to realizing **Ishvara** is the **japa** (repetition) of **Om**, combined with deep contemplation of its meaning. Simply chanting Om without understanding its significance will not bring about spiritual transformation. One must meditate on the profound meaning behind the syllable—its representation of the ultimate truth and the divine presence that pervades all of existence. By continuously chanting Om with full awareness of its meaning, the practitioner gradually attains a deeper connection with Ishvara. This practice purifies the mind and leads to the direct experience of the divine.

Sutra 1.29

Tatah pratyak chetanadhigamah api antarayah abhavash cha

ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च

Through this practice, inner consciousness is realized, and obstacles are removed.

This sutra explains the results of meditating on **Om** and contemplating its meaning. By doing so, the practitioner achieves a state of **pratyak chetana**—an inward awareness or realization of the true self, which is beyond the ego and the fluctuations of the mind. This practice also helps to remove the **antarayah** (obstacles) that hinder spiritual progress. These obstacles include doubt, distractions, laziness, and other mental afflictions. As the mind becomes more focused and purified through the practice of Om, these hindrances naturally dissolve, allowing the practitioner to advance toward higher states of consciousness and ultimately toward Samadhi.

Sutra 1.30

Vyadhi styana samsaya pramada alasya avirati bhranti darshana alabdhabhumikatva anavasthitatvani chitta vikshepah te antarayah

व्याधिस्त्यानसंसयप्रमादालस्याविरतिभ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानि

चित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः

The obstacles that cause mental distractions are disease, laziness, doubt, carelessness, procrastination, sensual indulgence, false perceptions, failure to attain concentration, and instability in maintaining concentration.

Here, Patanjali lists the nine **antarayas** (obstacles) that prevent the mind from achieving concentration and spiritual progress. These obstacles are:

1. **Vyadhi (disease)**: Physical illness can distract the mind and make it difficult to concentrate.
2. **Styana (laziness)**: Mental dullness or lack of motivation can hinder progress.
3. **Samsaya (doubt)**: Uncertainty or skepticism about the path or one's own abilities can weaken commitment.
4. **Pramada (carelessness)**: Negligence or lack of mindfulness can lead to distractions and mistakes.
5. **Alasya (procrastination)**: Putting off practice due to laziness or lack of urgency.
6. **Avirati (sensual indulgence)**: Overindulgence in sensual pleasures can cloud the mind and lead to attachment.
7. **Bhranti Darshana (false perceptions)**: Misunderstandings or delusions can lead one astray.
8. **Alabdhabhumikatva (failure to attain concentration)**: Difficulty in reaching deeper states of meditation.
9. **Anavasthitatva (instability in maintaining concentration)**: Even if concentration is achieved, the inability to sustain it for long periods of time.

These obstacles create mental fluctuations, preventing the practitioner from achieving the clarity and focus needed for spiritual progress.

Sutra 1.31

Dukha daurmanasya angamejayatva shvasa prashvasa viksepa sahabhuvah

दुःखदौर्मनस्याङ्गमेजयत्वश्वासप्रश्वासा विक्षेपसहभुवः

Suffering, depression, restlessness of the body, and irregular breathing are the symptoms that accompany distractions.

Patanjali explains that the mental distractions caused by the **antarayas** manifest as physical and emotional symptoms. These include:

1. **Dukha (suffering or pain)**: Both physical and mental suffering arise from the disturbance of the mind.

2. **Daurmanasya (depression or dissatisfaction):** Emotional disturbance and dissatisfaction with life.
3. **Angamejayatva (restlessness of the body):** Physical agitation or inability to sit still.
4. **Shvasa Prashvasa (irregular breathing):** Disturbed or uneven breathing patterns, which indicate a lack of mental peace.

These symptoms are signs that the mind is distracted and not in a state of balance. By addressing these distractions and obstacles, the practitioner can return to a state of calm and concentration.

Sutra 1.32

Tat pratishedha artham eka tattva abhyasah

तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः

To overcome these obstacles, one should practice meditation on a single principle.

Patanjali offers a solution to the obstacles and distractions: **Eka Tattva Abhyasa**, or the practice of focusing on a single principle. This principle could be a mantra (like Om), a deity, the breath, or any object of meditation that helps to steady the mind. By consistently concentrating on this single point, the mind becomes more focused, and the distractions gradually lose their power. This practice helps the practitioner develop deeper concentration and control over the mental fluctuations, leading to greater clarity and progress on the spiritual path.

Sutra 1.33

**Maitri karuna muditopekshanam sukha dukha punya apunya vishayanam bhavanatah
chitta prasadanam**

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातः चित्तप्रसादनम्

By cultivating attitudes of friendliness, compassion, gladness, and equanimity toward people who are happy, suffering, virtuous, or non-virtuous, the mind becomes calm.

This sutra advises us to adopt four attitudes to different types of people:

- **Maitri (friendliness)** toward those who are happy.
- **Karuna (compassion)** toward those who are suffering.
- **Mudita (gladness)** toward the virtuous.
- **Upeksha (equanimity)** toward the non-virtuous.

By practicing these, the mind can achieve tranquility and avoid disturbances caused by emotional reactions to others.

Sutra 1.34

Prachchhardana vidharanabhyam va pranayama

प्रच्छर्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणायामः

Or by controlling the exhalation and the retention of the breath, the mind can be made calm.

This sutra emphasizes breath control (Pranayama) as a tool to calm the mind. By focusing on the breath, particularly on exhalation and holding the breath, the mind becomes steady, and distractions are reduced.

Sutra 1.34

Prachchhardana vidharanabhyam va pranayama

प्रच्छर्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणायामः

Or by controlling the exhalation and the retention of the breath, the mind can be made calm.

Patanjali suggests that controlling the **prana** (breath) through **pranayama** helps calm the mind and reduce distractions. Specifically, focusing on **prachchhardana** (exhalation) and **vidharana** (breath retention) creates a sense of internal peace and steadiness. This technique is important because the breath and the mind are closely connected; by calming the breath, we can calm the mind. **Pranayama** helps clear mental clutter and prepares the mind for deeper meditation.

Sutra 1.35

Vishayavati va pravrittir utpanna manasah sthiti nibandhani

विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना मनसः स्थितिनिबन्धिनी

Or the mind can become calm by focusing on subtle sensory experiences.

In this sutra, Patanjali offers another approach to calming the mind by focusing on **vishayavati pravrittir** (subtle sensory experiences). These are experiences that transcend the ordinary five senses and involve deep inner perception. By concentrating on these subtle experiences—such as sound, light, or a feeling of warmth—the mind becomes absorbed, leading to a tranquil state. This method works because it shifts attention away from distractions and towards the subtle,

calming aspects of perception. There is another meditation technique called ‘Trataka’. It is also a part of the calming mind.

Sutra 1.36

Vishoka va jyotishmati

विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती

Or by meditating on the inner light that is free from sorrow, the mind becomes steady.

This sutra introduces the concept of **jyotishmati** (inner light). Patanjali suggests focusing on a radiant, sorrow-free light within—often interpreted as the light of the heart or the soul. This light symbolizes purity and clarity, and meditating on it helps eliminate **vishoka** (sorrow). This practice enables the mind to become steady and free from emotional turbulence. By focusing on the pure light within, practitioners can move beyond worldly suffering and connect with their true inner essence.

Sutra 1.37

Vita raga vishayam va chittam

वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम्

Or the mind becomes stable by focusing on the consciousness of someone who has transcended attachments.

In this sutra, Patanjali recommends contemplating the **chitta** (consciousness) of someone who has overcome **raga** (attachments) and desires. By reflecting on the state of a person who is detached and free from worldly desires, a practitioner can absorb their qualities. This mental focus on a person with pure consciousness helps steady one's own mind and cultivates a state of equanimity and peace.

Sutra 1.38

Svapna nidra jnana alambanam va

स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा

Or the mind can be calmed by focusing on knowledge gained in dreams or deep sleep.

This sutra presents an interesting idea: focusing on **jnana** (knowledge) derived from **svapna** (dreams) or **nidra** (deep sleep). These states often reveal subconscious insights or intuitive wisdom. By meditating on the revelations or peaceful experiences from dreams or sleep, the mind can become tranquil. This approach recognizes that our subconscious often holds truths and understandings that can guide us toward mental clarity.

Sutra 1.39

Yatha abhimata dhyanat va

यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा

Or by meditating on any object of one's choice that is elevating.

Patanjali offers a flexible option here: **dhyanat** (meditation) on **yatha abhimata** (any chosen object). This allows practitioners to choose an object that naturally elevates and calms their mind. The key is sustained focus on something inspiring or comforting. This can be anything from a deity, a natural scene, or a mantra, as long as it brings peace and upliftment to the practitioner.

Sutra 1.40

Paramanu paramamahattva antah asya vashikarah

परमाणुपरममहत्त्वान्तोऽस्य वशीकारः

The mind can become steady by focusing on anything, from the smallest atom to the largest object.

In this sutra, Patanjali illustrates the expansive power of the mind. Whether focusing on the smallest unit of matter (**paramanu**) or the vastness of the universe (**paramamahattva**), the mind can become controlled and focused. This ability to shift attention from micro to macro creates mastery (**vashikarah**) over the mind's tendencies and leads to deep concentration.

Sutra 1.41

Kshina vritti abhijatasyeva maner grahitri grahana grahyeshu tatstha tada anjanata samapattih

क्षीणवृत्तेरभिजातस्येव मनेर्ग्रहीतृग्रहणग्राह्येषु तत्स्थ तदञ्जनता समापत्तिः

When the mind becomes free of distractions, it takes on the quality of the object being observed, like a crystal that takes on the color of what it is placed next to.

Patanjali describes a state called **samapatti** (absorption), where the mind, free from **vritti** (distractions), becomes one with the object of meditation. This is like a crystal that reflects the color of any object placed next to it. In this state, the boundaries between the **grahitri** (the perceiver), **grahana** (the act of perception), and **grahya** (the object) dissolve, leading to a perfect union with the object of focus.

Sutra 1.42

Tatra shabda artha jnana vikalpah sankirna savitarka samapattih

तत्र शब्दार्थज्ञानविकल्पैः संकीर्णा सवितर्का समापत्तिः

In this state, the mind is mixed with verbal knowledge, meaning, and imagination. This is called Savitarka Samapatti (meditative absorption with thought).

Here, Patanjali explains **savitarka samapatti**, a level of meditative absorption where **vikalpa** (verbal thoughts), **shabda** (words), and **arthajna** (meaning) are still present. The mind is engaged with concepts and reasoning, and the meditative state is still influenced by thoughts.

Sutra 1.43

Smriti parisuddhau svarupa shunyeva artha matra nirbhasa nirvitarka

स्मृतिपरिशुद्धौ स्वरूपशून्येवार्थमात्रनिर्भासा निर्वितर्का

When the memory is purified, the mind appears to be devoid of its own nature, and only the object of meditation shines. This is Nirvitarka Samapatti (meditative absorption without thought).

In **nirvitarka samapatti**, the memory (**smriti**) is purified, and the mind is free from thoughts and reasoning. Only the **artha matra** (essence of the object) shines forth. The practitioner experiences a state where the mind's personal characteristics dissolve, and only the object of meditation remains.

Sutra 1.44

Etayaiva savichara nirvichara cha sukshma vishaya vyakhyata

एतयैव सविचारा निर्विचारा च सूक्ष्मविषया व्याख्याता

In the same way, Savichara (with subtle thought) and Nirvichara (without subtle thought) Samapatti are explained for more subtle objects of meditation.

This sutra extends the previous explanation to more **sukshma vishaya** (subtle objects). **Savichara samapatti** involves subtle reasoning, while **nirvichara samapatti** is free from such thoughts. These are more refined stages of meditative absorption, dealing with deeper, more abstract objects.

Sutra 1.45

Sukshma vishayatvam cha alinga paryavasanam

सूक्ष्मविषयत्वं चालिङ्गपर्यवसानम्

The subtleness of objects extends up to the unmanifest.

Patanjali explains that meditation can progress to such subtle levels that it reaches **alinga** (the unmanifest), which is beyond physical form or material existence. This indicates that the mind can meditate on even the most abstract and subtle realities, including those without form.

Sutra 1.46

Ta eva sabijah samadhih

त एवासबीजः समाधिः

All these states are known as Sabija Samadhi (meditation with seed).

Patanjali summarizes that all the previous states of meditative absorption, whether involving thought or subtle perception, are considered **sabijah samadhi** (samadhi with seed). In this state, there is still an object or seed of focus.

Sutra 1.47

Nirvichara vaisaradye adhyatma prasadah

निर्विचारवैशारद्येऽध्यात्मप्रसादः

When Nirvichara Samapatti (absorption without subtle thought) is perfected, clarity of the inner self is attained.

As **nirvichara samapatti** deepens and is perfected, it leads to **adhyatma prasadah** (clarity of the inner self). This clarity arises because the mind is no longer clouded by thoughts, emotions, or distractions, and the practitioner experiences a profound understanding of their true inner nature.

Sutra 1.48

Ritambhara tatra prajna

ऋतम्भरा तत्र प्रज्ञा

In that state, the knowledge that arises is filled with truth.

In this state of deep meditative absorption, **ritambhara prajna** (truth-bearing wisdom) arises. This is a form of direct knowledge or wisdom that is perfectly aligned with reality, untainted by subjective biases or misconceptions. The practitioner sees things as they truly are.

Sutra 1.49

Shruta anumana prajna byam anya vishaya vishesha arthatvat

श्रुतानुमानप्रज्ञाभ्यामन्यविषयाविशेषार्थत्वात्

This knowledge is different from knowledge gained through study or inference because it pertains to specific objects.

Ritambhara prajna is distinct from knowledge gained through **shruta** (hearing or study) and **anumana** (inference or logic). It is a form of direct, experiential knowledge, rather than intellectual understanding. This wisdom arises from direct perception of the truth.

Sutra 1.50

Tajjah samskarah anya samskara pratibandhi

तज्जः संस्कारोऽन्यसंस्कारप्रतिबन्धी

The impressions produced by this state of knowledge prevent other impressions from arising.

The **samskara** (mental impressions) created by **ritambhara prajna** are so powerful that they inhibit or block other, more distracting samskaras. This helps maintain a state of purity and clarity in the mind, reducing the impact of past karmic impressions.

Sutra 1.51

Tasya api nirodhe sarva nirodhat nirbijah samadhih

तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधात् निर्वीजः समाधिः

When even this impression is restrained, and all impressions are controlled, Nirbija Samadhi (meditation without seed) is attained.

In the final stage, even the impressions of **sabijah samadhi** are restrained, leading to **nirbija samadhi** (samadhi without seed). In this state, the mind is completely free from any objects of focus, impressions, or seeds, leading to the highest form of meditation where pure consciousness remains. Patanjali asserts that attaining a steady state of being is crucial for achieving liberation (moksha). This steady state refers to a profound sense of inner peace, stability, and clarity that arises from consistent practice and self-awareness. When individuals cultivate this state, they transcend the fluctuations of the mind and the external distractions that lead to suffering. This steadfastness enables practitioners to experience life from a place of wisdom and compassion, free from the burdens of attachment and ignorance. Ultimately, achieving this steady state is a vital step toward liberation, allowing individuals to fully embrace their true nature and the unity of all existence.