

Yoga Sutras
Summary and Important Vocabulary
Book I: On Samadhi
Sutras 1-18

At this auspicious moment the teachings begin:

Sutra 1: Now the teachings of yoga are being explained

yoga: union (with the Self); a discipline; teachings; a prescription for the end of suffering; both a process and a state; *samadhi*, which means “absorbed in super-consciousness” or “entranced in super-consciousness”

Yoga is defined:

Sutra 2: Yoga is the control of thought waves in the mind

nirodha: control; cessation; blocking; arresting; restraining

vritti: thought waves that are said to “revolve” in the mind

chitta: mind, which has five characteristics and four aspects.

Characteristics:

- restrained (*nirudha*)
- one pointed (*ekagra*)
- distracted (*vikshipta*)
- restless (*kshipta*)
- dull (*mudha*)

Aspects:

- “I” sense, ego (*ahamkara*)
- recording faculty involving the senses (*manas*)
- discriminating faculty, intellect (*buddhi*)
- field of consciousness, reflection of substratum (*chitta*)

Result of yoga:

Sutra 3: Then (when thought waves are controlled) the seer is established in his own true nature

Seer refers to the energy of consciousness or *chitti shakti*, the consciousness potential that is the same as the Self; “own true nature” is Self awareness.

guna: qualities of creations

kaivalya: liberation

asampragnata samadhi: ultimate stage of yoga resulting from the practice of *samadhi* beyond knowledge (I:18)

Our normal state of mind:

Sutra 4: In other states (when the seer is not established in his true nature), the seer appears the same as the thought waves in the mind

When the mind is not controlled, consciousness and thought appear as one. This serves the purpose of experience of the outer world (*bhoga*) and liberation from the pain of experience (*apavarga*).

Nature of thoughts:

Sutra 5: The thought waves are fivefold: some are painful and some are not painful

aklishta vritti: non pain producing thoughts

klistha vritti : pain producing thoughts are for individual experience. These are caused by five afflictions (*kleshas*) that create experience through the senses:

- ignorance, the root affliction (*avidya*)
- “I-sense” (*asmita*)
- attachment (*raga*)
- aversion (*dvesha*)
- fear, clinging to life (*abhinivesha*)

samskaras: thoughts and actions that result from *aklistha* and *klistha vritti* form the basis of our tendencies toward future thought and action.

Types of thought:

Sutra 6: (The five types of *vritti* are) valid proof, wrong cognition, imaginary cognition, sleep, and memory.

pramana: valid proof
viparyaya: wrong cognition
vikalpa: imaginary cognition
nidra: sleep
smritaya: memory

Categories of valid proof:

Sutra 7: The three categories of valid proof are direct perception, inference, and scriptural testimony.

pratyaksha: direct perception
anumana: inference
agama: testimony

Wrong knowledge is:

Sutra 8: Wrong knowledge is a false conception of an object, the real form of which does not correspond to the form established in the mind.

viparyaya: false conception, which gives wrong knowledge of an object

Imagination is:

Sutra 9: Knowledge based on verbal cognition only, without an external object, is called imaginary cognition.

vikalpa: a subjective thought process; a mental creation of a thought wave without support of an object.

Sleep is:

Sutra 10: The mental modification that is based on the absence of all cognition is dreamless sleep.

nidra: a thought wave in which consciousness is absorbed in *tamas guna* (inertia).

Memory is:

Sutra 11: Memory is that mental modification in which objects experienced are not lost or forgotten.

smriti: thoughts that recollect past experience

How thought waves (*vritti*) are controlled:

Sutra 12: They (the modifications) are controlled by practice and dispassion.

abhyasa: practice; effort required to become firmly grounded in one-pointed concentration

vairagya: dispassion; lack of mental coloring of experience; effortless blocking of the mind's habitual flow to the outer world

These two principles, *abhyasa* and *vairagya*, are the means for attaining peace. Practice strengthens virtue; *vairagya* rejects vice. Practice develops one-pointedness; *vairagya* turns away from multi-mindedness. The two together free the aspirant from bondage and establishes one in non-duality.

Practice is:

Sutra 13: Of those two (practice and dispassion), the effort for being firmly established in that state (of controlled thought waves) is called practice (*abhyasa*).

abhyasa: vigorous, enthusiastic effort to still the mind.

Established practice is:

Sutra 14: It (persistent practice) becomes firmly grounded when it has been practiced for a long, uninterrupted time with earnest devotion.

Practice (*abhyasa*) that goes on for a long time, without interruption, and is done with respect and devotion is called firmly grounded, or established.

Dispassion is:

Sutra 15: One who has lost all cravings for the objects of experience, whether seen or heard as described in scriptures, acquires perfect mastery of desires, which is called dispassion.

vairagya: “free from any mental coloring” or “free from attachment and aversion” or “free from all coloring pertaining to the objects of the mind.”

Supreme dispassion is:

Sutra 16: That (dispassion) is supreme when, due to the knowledge of the Self, freedom from all desires for the *guna* is achieved.

paravairaga: cessation of all cravings; purity (*sattwa*) is predominant in the intellect (*buddhi*). When *viveka khyati* (discriminative wisdom or the perception of the difference between the mind/intellect and consciousness) advances, the knowledge of the separateness of the *gunas* from the Self becomes firm. Then *darmamegha samadhi*, which is described as the state of mind entranced in the rain cloud of virtue and the knowledge of the nature of all things, dawns. The super-conscious trance beyond all knowledge (*asamprajnata samadhi*) follows. Without supreme dispassion, *asamprajnata samadhi* cannot be realized. The culmination of knowledge is supreme dispassion and liberation follows.

Super-consciousness is:

Sutra 17: Complete high consciousness (*samprajnata samadhi*) is that which is accompanied by reasoning, reflection, ecstasy, and pure “I-sense.”

samadhi: mental absorption or trance; mind completely absorbed in the object of concentration; control (*nirodha*) of the restless and dull thought waves in the mind; further deepened state of concentration (*dharana*) following meditation (*dhyana*)

samprajnata samadhi: trance of deep and perfect knowing; four levels:

- *savitarka*: reasoning on gross thought; knowledge of name (*shabda*), form (*artha*), and meaning (*jnana*)
- *savichara*: reflection on subtle thought; knowledge of space (*dasha*), time (*kala*) and causation (*nimitta*) and their roots ie *tanmatra* (subtle energies of the elements) and *ahamkar* (ego sense)

- *sananda*: absorbed in bliss; knowledge of purity of universal intellect is experienced through the ego
- *sasmita*: absorbed in universal intellect (*mahat* or *asmita matra*); knowledge of universal I-sense

alambana: support for the mind to focus: mind needs a support because it seeks for form and cannot conceive of the formless infinite.

sabija samadhi: absorption that has a “seed” of support

samapatti: absorption with seed, classified according to the object of concentration:

grahya: objective; both *savitarka* (reasoning) and *savichara* (reflection); gross and subtle object is the seed

grahana: instrumental; *sananda* (with bliss); *ahamkar* (ego sense) is the instrument or seed

grahitri: subjective; *sasmita* (with I-sense alone); universal I-sense itself is the seed

vishesha: particular; 16 *tattwas* (principles from Samkhya):

mahabhutas: 5 gross elements ie space, air, fire, water, earth

karmendriyas: 5 organs of action ie hands, feet, organs of speech, elimination, and reproduction

jnanendriyas: 5 cognitive senses ie smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, hearing

manas: 1 mind that functions with the senses; recording faculty of mind

avishesha: general; 6 *tattwas* (principles from Samkhya):

tanmatra: 5 subtle elements that produce the gross elements

ahamkar: 1 ego or identifying principle

linga matra: indicator; 1 *tattwa* (principle from Samkhya); universal intellect (*mahat*)

alinga: without indicator; 1 *tattwa* (principle from Samkhya); *prakriti* or *mula prakriti* or

pradhana ie nature or matter

What is the other kind of higher consciousness:

Sutra 18: Persistent practice of the highest non-attachement brings cessation of all though waves, leaving only remnant impressions (of cessation) in the mind. This is the other kind of higher consciousness (*asamprajnata samadhi*).

asamprajnata samadhi: trance beyond all knowledge including

dharmamega samadhi: trance of cloud pouring virtue that bridges from *samprajnata samadhi* to

asamprajnata samadhi: absorption in the infinite that when practiced leads to

kaivalya: liberation