

Sūtra 30

व्याधिस्त्यानसंशयप्रमादालस्याविरतिभ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्ध-
भूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानि चित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः ॥३०॥

Vyādhi-styāna-saṁśhaya-pramāda-ālasya-āvirati-bhrānti-darśhan-
ālabdha-bhūmikatv-ānavasthitatvāni chitta-vikṣhepās-te-’ntarāyāḥ

Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldliness, delusion, non-achievement of a yogic state, and instability are the distractions of the mind, and they are obstacles [in yoga].

व्याधि	<i>vyādhi</i>	sickness, illness, disease
स्त्यान	<i>styāna</i>	dullness or mental laziness
संशय	<i>saṁśhaya</i>	doubt
प्रमाद	<i>pramāda</i>	carelessness, negligence
आलस्य	<i>ālasya</i>	laziness, sloth
अविरति	<i>avirati</i>	non-abstention or worldliness
भ्रान्तिदर्शन	<i>bhrānti-darśhana</i>	delusion, confused ideas
अलब्धभूमिकत्व	<i>alabdha-bhūmikatva</i>	non-achievement of a yogic state
अनवस्थितत्वानि	<i>an-avasthitatvāni</i>	instability
चित्तविक्षेपाः	<i>chitta-vikṣhepāḥ</i>	distraction of the mind
ते	<i>te</i>	they
अन्तरायाः	<i>antarāyāḥ</i>	obstacles, impediments

What are those impediments that are overcome by the practice of Īshvara *praṇidhāna* (repetition of Om with faith and devotion)?

This *sūtra* lists the nine impediments that cause distraction of the *chitta* (mind field). As long as these *vikṣhepas* (distractions) exist in the mind, a yogi cannot break through the *vikṣhipta* (distracted) state of mind and enter *ekāgratā* (one-pointed concentration).

Any impediment in any form that appears in the mind field is a *vṛitti* (thought wave). *Vṛittis* are innumerable and are divided into five categories (see Sūtra I:6). To achieve *asamprañāta samādhi* (super-consciousness beyond all knowledge), all *vṛittis* should be eliminated. Naturally, the elimination of all *vṛittis* is also the elimination of all obstacles.

In the process of *sādhana* (spiritual practice), before the thoughtless state known as *asamprañāta samādhi* is achieved, there are some *vṛittis* that are conducive to *sādhana* and other *vṛittis* that obstruct *sādhana*. Examples of conducive thought waves are devotional thoughts, self study, and right understanding of scriptures.

In this *sūtra* the thought waves that are impediments to *sādhana* are classified into nine categories:

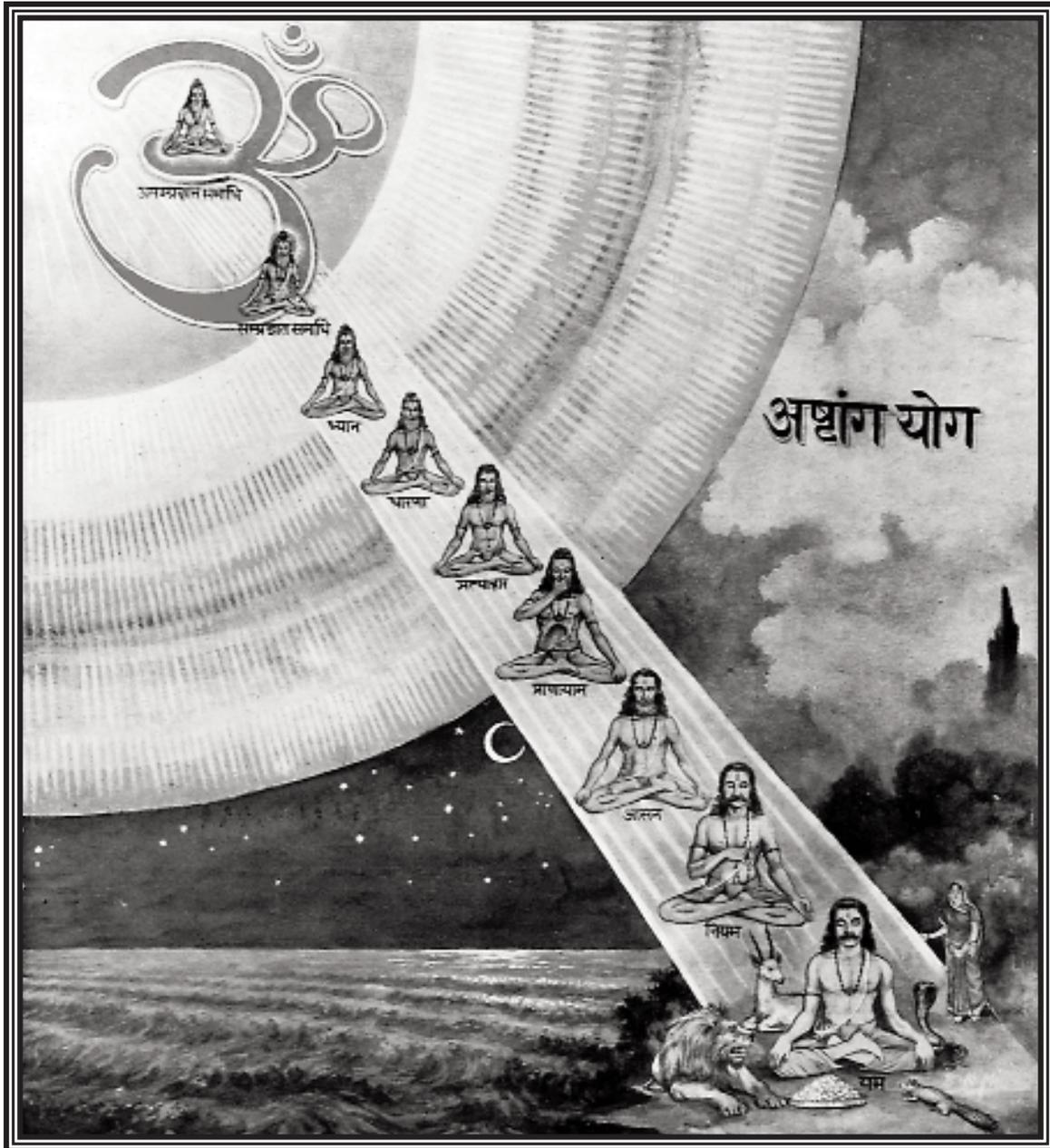
- 1. Vyādhi (disease or illness):** Sickness is an obstacle to meditation because the mind gets disturbed and agitated in sickness. The pain and discomfort of sickness distracts the mind from becoming one-pointed in meditation. In

Ayurveda (science of life), the body is explained in terms of three *doṣhas* and eight *dhātus*, plus the *rasas* and *karaṇas*. *Doṣhas* (bodily humors, literally “faults”) are three: *vata* (air), *pitta* (fire), and *kapha* (water). The *dhātus* (literally “marks”) are the eight constituents of the body such as blood, flesh, and bones. *Rasa* (literally “juice”) refers to the fluids of the body such as gastric juices and hormones. *Karaṇas* (literally “division” or “part”) refers to mental aspects of the body, the *antaḥkaraṇa* (internal instruments of cognition), such as the cognitive senses, the intellect, and the recording faculty of the mind. If there is an imbalance in the equilibrium of *doṣhas*, *dhātus*, or *rasas*, it creates sickness in the body. Sickness in the body distracts the mind and is therefore an impediment to *sādhana*.

2. **Styāna (dullness or inability to focus):** Due to mental dullness, the mind becomes filled with restless distractions. A restless mind is the opposite of a one-pointed mind; the restless mind cannot stay constantly focused on one thing. When the mind jumps from one thing to another, it is an obstacle to concentration.
3. **Samśhaya (doubt):** In doubt, the mind moves back and forth between two possibilities. For example, it questions whether the practice of yoga is correct or not, whether the teachings or the teacher are right or wrong, or whether success is possible or not. When the mind doubts in this way, it greatly weakens the efficacy of yoga as passed on from guru to disciple. *Śhraddhā* (faith) is the opposite of *samśhaya* (doubt), and it is listed first in the attributes for yoga practice (Sūtra I:20).
4. **Pramāda (carelessness or negligence):** *Pramāda* is an irregular life pattern. In the practices of yoga, such as *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (observances), progress in yoga is obstructed when rules are not properly observed or when one is careless. Instead, practicing yoga requires discipline, which creates a firm foundation for spiritual growth.
5. **Ālasya (laziness):** One does not feel inclined to practice yoga when the body is weighed down by an excess of *kapha* (mucus or fat), or when the mind is weighed down by an excess of *tamas guṇa* (inertia).
6. **A-virati (lack of enthusiasm or worldliness):** The mind gets attracted to the objects of senses and forgets their evil effects. This strong attraction of the senses for worldly objects prevents one from practicing yoga (concentration and contemplation).
7. **Bhrānti-darśhana (delusion or confused ideas):** *Bhrānti-darśhana* is a state of *viparyaya jñāna* (wrong knowledge). Examples of wrong knowledge are taking truth as untruth, seeing things that are not actually there, and thinking that the teachings of the *guru* or the scriptures of yoga are not the proper means of attainment. This leads to a state of delusion or confusion such as believing that one is enlightened when it is not the case. These confused ideas are impediments to *sādhana*.

8. **A-labdha-bhūmikatva (non-achievement of a yogic state):** When an aspirant has not yet achieved a certain stage of yoga, in spite of regularly practicing yoga, he or she can lose hope of ever achieving success in yoga practice. This lack of hope is an impediment to yoga.
9. **An-avasthitatva (instability):** The initial successes of yoga are unstable. After achieving a certain state of yoga, aspirants often fail to maintain themselves there for a given period time due to ignorance, forgetfulness, or lack of heedfulness. If this instability is not overcome, one falls back many times and eventually loses interest in yoga practice.

These nine obstacles to *sādhana* are accompanied by five symptoms that are described in the next *sūtra*.



Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (Eight Limbed Yoga)

Yama – Restraints (non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, control of vital energy, and non-hoarding)

Niyama – Observances (purity, contentment, discipline, Self-study, and surrender to God)

Āsana – Posture or seat

Prāṇāyāma – Breath control

Pratyāhāra – Withdrawal of the mind from the senses

Dhāraṇā – Concentration

Dhyāna – Meditation

Samādhi – Super-consciousness, divided into two categories: samprajñāta (with knowledge) and asamprajñāta (beyond knowledge)