



## Yoga Sutra Work Pack

*yōgena yogo jñātavyo*

*Only through Yoga*

*Yoga is known*

*yogō yogāt pravartate |*

*Only through Yoga*

*Yoga progresses*

*yō'prama tastu yōgena*

*One who is patient*

*with Yoga*

*sā yoge ramate cīram ||*

*Enjoys the fruits*

*for a long time.*

*Chant from vyāsa's  
commentary to yoga sūtra III 6*

One common way of summarising the yoga sutra is as follows:

Chapter 1 (Samadhi Pada)  
- the Path. "Samadhi" =  
"putting it together".

It's possible to access the state of mind called "samadhi" and experience its quality. But the path/journey is more important than the goal, which is there as a carrot.

Chapter 2 (Sadhana Pada)  
- the Means. "Sadhana" =  
"means", "tools".

This is what you need to follow the path - the changes you have to make (and have to want to make).

Chapter 3 (Vibhuti Pada) -  
the Fruits. "Vibhuti" =  
"extra-ordinary".

What happens as a result of the changes brought by sadhana. When things change inside, you view the world in a different way; the senses have become heightened.

Chapter 4 (Kaivalya Pada) -  
the Goal. "Kaivalya" =  
"independence".

How to reach a quality of freedom/independence within a situation, regardless of the situation. The biggest problem is dealing with situations that develop from the past.

However, there is another way of looking at the Sutras, in terms of the mind:

Chapter 1

- knowing the mind.

Until I know I have a mind, I can make no progress. The mind has its own story - there is the "I", and there is the mind. The "I" is constant; the mind is not.

Chapter 2

- refining the mind.

The mind is a great analyst but a poor friend: it gives bad advice. Work at changing the body (eg through diet, asana), and this will refine the mind.

Chapter 3

- directing the mind.

Now the mind works for me.

I don't work for the mind.

Chapter 4

- going beyond the mind.

The mind is now part of a greater consciousness, rather than consciousness being part of the mind. According to yoga, the mind has the capacity to know, but doesn't have the capacity to understand. The mind can easily do several things at once, but finds it hard to stay with doing only one thing for any length of time.

*yōgena cītasyā padenā*

*vācām mālām śārīrāsya*

*ca vaidyakena |*

*yopākarottam pravaram*

*mūnīnām pātāñjalīm*

*prāñjali rānato'smi ||*

*'Coming from the lineage*

*of teachers who*

*transformed impurities of*

*the mind by yoga, of*

*speech by grammar and*

*of the body by medicine.*

*To patañjali I salute.'*

**YOGA SUTRA OF  
PATANJALI - CHAPTER I  
- 'INTEGRATION'**

The catur pādaḥ (four parts) which comprise the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali are often known as Rāja Yoga. Also one view of this text is that

Patañjali had four students and that the Yoga Sūtra is arranged in four pieces, for the students, each with a different role. In this context Patañjali has composed a complete and royal teaching on Yoga.

I will attempt to present an introduction to these teachings through which the student can form their own understanding. As is the tradition I offer my respects to Patañjali and the lineage of teachers who have helped to carry these insights to our age and culture. I acknowledge that we can only surmise as to exactly what Patañjali meant and thank my teacher TKV Desikachar for guiding me towards this understanding. We look first at Chapter One, titled samādhi pādaḥ its 51 verses reflect the theme of mindfulness. First by asking for our attention.

#### I-1

'Now follow the teachings of Yoga.'

"Now is the accepted time, not tomorrow, not some more convenient season.

It is today that our best work can be done and not some future day or future year. It is today that we fit ourselves for the greater usefulness of tomorrow.

Today is the seed time, now are the hours of work, and tomorrow comes the harvest and the playtime."

WEB Du Bois

Then by offering a direction for our attention with a definition of what Yoga is.

#### I-2

'Yoga is the containment of the activities the mind.'

The Yoga Sūtra next explores the idea of the mind as a tool with positive or negative possibilities.

#### I-5

'The activities are fivefold and from them arise disturbance or composure.'

"The mind is its own place, and in itself, can make heaven of Hell, and a hell of Heaven...."

John Milton

So what is the role for the mind?

#### I-16

'The highest dispassion is awareness of the source of life resulting in an absence of thirst for the forces of nature.'

Where do we start?

#### I-20

'For others faith precedes firmness, remembrance, integration and insight.'

However Patañjali reminds us that it is not easy to succeed in this venture.

#### I-21

'It is the intensity of the attempt that is important.'

#### I-22

'There are also distinctions of mildness, moderateness and intensity.'

Furthermore distractions appear within the mind and cause difficulties with their potential to disturb our sense of mindfulness.

#### I-30

'Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, over-indulgence, delusion, non-achievement and instability are obstacles which distract the mind.'

There are ways of working with distractions.

#### I-32

'For the purpose of countering them follow one truth.'

This can lay a foundation for development of the mind as a positive tool.

#### I-40

'Such a person has control from the smallest to the greatest.'

How can we know when this state of mindfulness is present?

#### I-47

'On the maturity of pure union there is the clear vision of the seer.'

This is said to lead to a state where:

#### I-48

'There the insight is filled with truth.'

What also happens to such a mind?

#### I-50

'The tendencies born from that oppose other tendencies.'

Finally, when the mind dissolves even this patterning:

#### I-51

'When even that is contained, all is contained; this is integration without seed.'

Thus with the last Sūtra we have returned to the starting point.

## I-2

'Yoga is the containment of the activities the mind.'

The mind has become the flawless jewel in the crown of our being.

So the first chapter of the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali has presented the nature of the mind, its fluctuations, problems and possibilities. This article is a brief introduction to the profound wisdom and insight within this chapter.

The next article introduces chapter two and its proposals for the means to steady the mind.

## YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI - CHAPTER II – 'THE MEANS'

This article looks at chapter two. Titled Sādhana Pādaḥ, its 55 verses reflect the theme of self responsibility in finding the means for accessing and maintaining mindfulness.

In chapter two of the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali is concerned with the means from the viewpoint of cultivating a relative stability through doing something ourselves. So that what is not possible becomes possible.

This is Sādhana, providing the means to reach somewhere we haven't reached before. How to proceed? Firstly by examining our everyday actions with the practice of Kriyā Yoga

### II-1

'The practice of Yoga requires temperance, self-inquiry and devotion to the divine.'

Kriyā Yoga can support mindfulness on the ways the

process of the mind expresses itself.

### II-2

'It is for the purpose of cultivating integration and reducing the afflictions.'

What are the Kleśā?

They are the basic emotional and mental responses which constantly affect the clarity of our actions. The Kleśā provide the dynamic framework for the relative self which is activated by the emanation from the absolute self within. It is the Kleśā activated by this emanation, which urge the organism to respond with apparent clarity and wisdom.

### II-3

'The afflictions are illusion, egoity, attachment, aversion and survival.'

We experience the Kleśā within the finite self in terms of I know, I am, I want, I reject, I fear.

Furthermore.

### II-4

'Illusion is the field for the others whether they are sleeping, weak, intermittent or aroused.'

Having described the Kleśā and the ways they can distort our view of reality Patañjali suggests a core means to harness their potential power.

### II-11

'Their activities are overcome by meditation.'

Through Dhyāna the energy of the Kleśā can be transformed firstly by becoming aware of the Kleśā process, our own process. Whether what emerges is beneficial or causes

problems is dependent upon our being conscious of the motivational forces which impel us through the mind and emotions.

The power of the ways they can affect us within our daily life can have adverse effects. As such the Kleśā are the seeds from which Duḥkha or a feeling of restriction in the mind and emotions manifests. Duḥkha is the feeling which arises when the absolute self is surrounded by something undesirable within the finite self.

Yoga is an investigation of Duḥkha and its effect within our life and relationships.

However Patañjali reminds us.

### II-15

'Indeed for the discriminating person all is suffering, due to the suffering from change, craving and tendencies and the opposition in the activities of the forces of nature.'

So where do we start?

Here Patañjali proposes four steps for our Sādhana.

The first is to become sensitive to the symptom which is Duḥkha.

### II-16

'The suffering yet to come must be overcome.'

The second step is to realise that this symptom has a cause which is Avidyā or misunderstanding.

### II-24

'Its cause is illusion.'

The third step is to appreciate that a solution is possible, Kaivalya or freedom.

### II-25

‘The absence of that is the absence of the conjunction; that giving up is The Seer in its purity.’

The fourth step is the means towards the solution.

## II-26

‘Unwavering discriminative awareness is the means for liberation.’

What tools can we use in this process?

## II-28

‘Following the limbs of Yoga the impurities diminish and Understanding illuminates up to discriminative awareness.’

What are the eight aspects of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

## II-29

‘Restraints, observances, posture, breath control, withholding the senses, concentration, meditation and integration are the eight limbs.’

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga involves a deep enquiry into the relationships we have with society, ourselves, our body, breath, senses and our mental patterns.

This investigation, moving from the gross to the subtle aspects, from what is external towards what is internal, bring a sense of Viveka or discrimination in to the way we interact through the energies of speech, body and mind. Viveka is a spontaneous discrimination in action rather than reflection through Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

So Patañjali has presented a process by which we can move from a state of distraction to one of clarity. In this process the starting point is Kriyā Yoga

by laying a foundation for our enquiry and practice. This base prepares us psychologically for the more intensive demands of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga. Without this base we are building a structure without an understanding of our inner climate and the vagaries of the mind. It is through the roots of Kriyā Yoga that Aṣṭāṅga Yoga can grow. From Aṣṭāṅga Yoga comes the refinement of Viveka or the ability to see both sides of a situation whilst acting.

Thus the second chapter of the Yoga Sūtra of the Patañjali has presented the nature of the forces which impel, compel and repel us through the process of the mind. With the means to appreciate where are coming from we are given tools to work with our process.

This article is a brief introduction to the profound wisdom and insight within this chapter.

## YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI - CHAPTER III – ‘EXTRA-ORDINARY VIEW’

This article looks at chapter three. Titled vibhūti pādaḥ, its 55 verses explore the possibilities of a mind with refined qualities of mindfulness and clarity. Here it is not the experiences which control the mind. The mind is able to focus in a particular direction and be free from the effects of disturbances.

The student in the third chapter has experienced the nature of the silent mind and has a strength and view which is beyond the range of normal perception. The questions in this chapter are firstly, what

are the possibilities for a mind with this potential and secondly, how does this relate to yoga.

## III-3

‘In a state of fusion the meditator’s self image is absent and the meditation alone shines forth.’

What develops from this practice?

## III-5

‘Gnostic insights arise out of the mastery of this practice.’

Furthermore,

## III-10

‘The impressions within such a mind can be likened to a calm flow.’

Although peaceful, this flow is also so powerful as to inhibit impressions of distraction.

## III-12

‘The mind is so one pointed that past and present thoughts remain constant and always linked with meditation.’

With the mind in this powerful state much is possible. It even appears that patañjali tempts us with indications of what such a mind can achieve.

## III-16

‘Through fusion of the mind into the process of change, knowledge of past and future arises.’

This power can be used to explore areas such as universal phenomena.

## III-28

‘Through fusion of the mind onto the pole star, movement of the other stars is known.’

Or, to explore the psychic phenomena.

### III-29

'Through fusion of the mind into the plexus of the navel, knowledge of the body arises.'

Or, to explore the psychic phenomena.

### III-32

'Through fusion of the mind into the light within the head, visions of divine beings arises.'

However, these powers are ultimate obstacles.

### III-37

'These powers become obstacles within everyday life.'

In fact these hard wrought acquisitions have to be surrendered in order to move towards a more important goal.

"For an individual who may revert to a state of distraction, this extraordinary knowledge and the capabilities acquired through samyama are worth possessing.

But for one who seeks nothing less than a sustained state of Yoga the results of samyama are obstacles in themselves."

YS III 37 - TKV Desikachar

### III-50

'Through dispassion towards powers, the seeds of impurities dwindle and liberation arises.'

For patañjali freedom remains the final goal in spite of all the powers and status arising from their possession.

This is further emphasised with a definition of liberation in the last Sūtra.

### III-55

'When the mind is so clear, as if to merge with spirit, liberation ensues.'

To summarise, in this chapter patañjali has indicated what a mind with this clarity and strength is capable of. With the mind as a sharp tool we can achieve the super-natural, the extra-ordinary. However, this does not solve our fundamental problem, that of *duḥkha* (sorrow) and *avidyā* (confused values). Therefore these powers do not ultimately mean much to patañjali. Furthermore these can become a distraction, within everyday life, and draw a person away from the ultimate purpose of yoga practice and study.

This article is a brief introduction to the profound wisdom and insight within the third chapter of the yoga sūtra of patañjali.

### YOGA SUTRA OF PATANJALI - CHAPTER 4 'INDEPENDENCE'

This article looks at chapter four, called *Kaivalya Pada*. Its 34 verses bring us back to the heart of Yoga, the notion of *Kaivalya* or freedom. Having acquired strength, clarity, power and insight, we have amassed treasures from our practices, gained fruits from our endeavours. What do we do with these attributes, knowing that ultimately they can bind us more than if we had not possessed them. Patanjali reminds us in chapter three that these hard wrought acquisitions have to be surrendered in order to move towards a more important goal. This is the focus and final teaching in the Raj quartet,

Giving up what we have gained so that we are able to transcend that aspect of ourselves which seeks to gain, albeit, 'spiritual' wisdom.

"What the mind accomplishes is of little consequence;  
what is important is that the inner self should experience an accession of power,  
that universal energy called *cit*, which is the life source of the individual."

'Land of a Thousand Buddhas'- Theos Barnard.

Patanjali begins by discussing how the powers are acquired:

### IV-1

'Extraordinary powers come with birth or are attained through special herbs, specific incantations, certain austerities and the practice of meditation.'

However,

### IV-6

'Of these five the power obtained through meditation is free of unconscious impressions.'

By contrast,

### IV-7

'Whereas the action of others are influenced by unconscious impressions'

Where do these impressions come from?

### IV-10

'The desire for self preservation is fundamental to existence so the unconscious impressions from which it arises must be beginningless.'

However they can be influenced by understanding

the patterns by which we create them.

#### **IV-11**

'Unconscious impressions are formed by different experiences provoking responses based on our past actions. Sensitivity to our actions and habits breaks this pattern.'

But this sensitivity is dependent upon our desire to look at ourselves.

#### **IV-17**

'Perception depends on the presence of what is to be seen, on our state of mind and our desire to see.'

Yet this mind which we call the perceiver is constantly changing so is it that which really sees?

#### **IV-18**

'Only that which does not change can observe change. The mind changes the Self does not. The activities of the mind are always known to the Self.'

Furthermore the mind is likened to the Self.

#### **IV-24**

'Even though the mind has countless patterns it functions only in association with a higher force.'

How do we realise that force which cannot be known by the mind?

#### **IV-25**

'Interacting with the Self in mind and not the mind in self ends the search for the nature of the Self.'

What arises from this realisation?

#### **IV-26**

'The mind naturally gravitates towards a state of wisdom.'

Are we now free from unconscious impressions?

#### **IV-27**

'There can be breaks in this flow of clarity.'

What to do in these moments?

#### **IV-28**

'Come back to practices discussed previously.'

What happens when we experience unwavering clarity?

#### **IV-29**

'The highest clarity, which transcends all knowledge, brings forth a state of 'cloud pouring truth', a rainfall of the highest bliss.'

What arises from this?

#### **IV-30**

'The mind is cleansed from all misunderstanding.'

Also,

#### **IV-31**

'Because nothing clouds the mind what is still to be known is insignificant.'

Furthermore,

#### **IV-32**

'The mind is freed from its constant flux or changing states of energy.'

Finally,

#### **IV-34**

'The mind having no purpose to fulfil withdraws and the Self is established in its own power.'

With this final transformation we have come back to the point from which Patanjali

began by asking for our attention in chapter I Sutra 1 and defining Yoga as,

#### **I-2**

'Yoga is the containment of the minds activities.'

Except that along the path he has started with what we see as mind and its problems. He then introduces practices to help stabilise the mind and develop clarity. Then refining this clarity through reflective and penetrative meditations. Finally he brought the student to the point where the mind is receptive to the experience of the absolute Self.

For this royal teaching I salute Patanjali. For guidance in understanding the Yoga Sutra I thank my teacher TKV Desikachar. However, errors are from my lack of understanding not from my teachers.

**Paul Harvey**

Paul has been involved in the practice and study of Yoga over the past three decades and has led workshops, seminars and retreats in the UK, Europe, Israel, Canada and the US. Meeting his teacher, TKV Desikachar in 1976 led to a two-year stay in India and many visits since then to continue his personal work and studies with him. To complement this, he undertook in 1987 a foundation course in Core Process Psychotherapy plus a further four years with the Transpersonal Psychology Centre. He directs a Yoga centre, teaches Yoga and Chanting, leads retreats, workshops and Yatra or Spiritual Journeys to India.

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	atha samādhipādaḥ	
	atha sādhanapādaḥ	
	atha vibhūtipādaḥ	
	atha kaivalyapādaḥ	
	atha samādhipādaḥ	
atha yogānuśāsanam	1	
	atha sādhanapādaḥ	
tapāḥ svādhyāya		
īśvarapraṇidhānāni		
kriyāyogaḥ	1	
	atha vibhūtipādaḥ	
deśabandhaḥ cittasyā		
dhāraṇā	1	
	atha kaivalyapādaḥ	
janma ośadhi mantra		
tapāḥ samādhijāḥ		
siddhayaḥ	1	
	atha samādhipādaḥ	
atha yogānuśāsanam	1	
yogaḥ cittavṛttinirodhaḥ	2	
	atha sādhanapādaḥ	
tapāḥ svādhyāya		
īśvarapraṇidhānāni		
kriyāyogaḥ	1	
samādhibhāvanārthaḥ kleśa		
tanūkaraṇārthaśca	2	
	atha vibhūtipādaḥ	
deśabandhaḥ cittasyā		
dhāraṇā	1	
tatra pratyayaikatānātā		
dhyānam	2	
	atha kaivalyapādaḥ	
 janma ośadhi mantra tapāḥ  
 samādhijāḥ – siddhayaḥ | 1 |  
 jātyantarapariṇāmaḥ

prakṛtyāpūrāt | 2 |  
 || atha samādhipādaḥ ||  
 atha yogānuśāsanam | 1 |  
 yogaḥ cittavṛttinirodhaḥ | 2 |  
 tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe  
 avasthānam | 3 |  
 || atha sādhanapādaḥ ||  
 tapāḥ svādhyāya  
 īśvarapraṇidhānāni  
 kriyāyogaḥ | 1 |  
 samādhibhāvanārthaḥ kleśa  
 tanūkaraṇārthaśca | 2 |  
 avidyā asmitā rāga dveṣa  
 abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ | 3 |  
 || atha vibhūtipādaḥ ||  
 deśabandhaḥ cittasyā  
 dhāraṇā | 1 |  
 tatra pratyayaikatānātā  
 dhyānam | 2 |  
 tadeva arthamātranirbhāsam  
 svarūpaśūnyamiva  
 samādhiḥ | 3 |  
 || atha kaivalyapādaḥ ||  
 janma ośadhi mantra tapāḥ  
 samādhijāḥ – siddhayaḥ | 1 |  
 jātyantarapariṇāmaḥ  
 prakṛtyāpūrāt | 2 |  
 nimittamaprayojakaḥ  
 prakṛtīnāḥ varaṇabhedastu  
 tataḥ kṣetrikavat | 3 |  
 || atha samādhipādaḥ ||  
 atha yogānuśāsanam | 1 |  
 yogaḥ cittavṛttinirodhaḥ | 2 |  
 tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe  
 avasthānam | 3 |

vṛttisārūpyam itaratra | 4 |  
 || atha sādhanapādaḥ ||  
 tapāḥ svādhyāya  
 īśvarapraṇidhānāni  
 kriyāyogaḥ | 1 |  
 samādhibhāvanārthaḥ kleśa  
 tanūkaraṇārthaśca | 2 |  
 avidyā asmitā rāga dveṣa  
 abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ | 3 |  
 avidyā kṣetram uttareṣāḥ  
 prasupta tanu vicchinna  
 udārāṇām | 4 |  
 || atha vibhūtipādaḥ ||  
 deśabandhaḥ cittasyā  
 dhāraṇā | 1 |  
 tatra pratyayaikatānātā  
 dhyānam | 2 |  
 tadeva arthamātranirbhāsam  
 svarūpaśūnyamiva  
 samādhiḥ | 3 |  
 trayamekatrā samyamāḥ | 4 |  
 || atha kaivalyapādaḥ ||  
 janma ośadhi mantra tapāḥ  
 samādhijāḥ – siddhayaḥ | 1 |  
 jātyantarapariṇāmaḥ  
 prakṛtyāpūrāt | 2 |  
 nimittamaprayojakaḥ  
 prakṛtīnāḥ varaṇabhedastu  
 tataḥ kṣetrikavat | 3 |  
 nirmāṇacittāni  
 asmitāmātrāt | 4 |

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