

Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali as translated by BKS Iyengar*

Chapter I Samādhi Pāda

śrīmat Patañjali mahāmunaye namaḥ
atha Pātañjala yoga sūtra pāṭhaḥ
atha samādhi pādaḥ

I.1. atha yogānuśāsanam
atha yogānuśāsanam

With prayers for divine blessings, now begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga.

I.2. yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ
yogaścittavṛtti nirodhaḥ

Yoga is the cessation of movements in the consciousness.

I.3 tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam
tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpevāsthānam

Then, the seer dwells in his own true splendour.

I.4. vṛtti sārūpyam itaratra
vṛttisārūpyamitaratra

At other times, the seer identifies with the fluctuating consciousness.

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- I.5. vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭā akliṣṭāḥ
vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ

The movements of consciousness are fivefold. They may be cognizable or non-cognizable, painful or non-painful.

- I.6. pramāṇa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayaḥ
pramāṇaviparyayavikalpanidrāsmṛtayaḥ

They are caused by correct knowledge, illusion, delusion, sleep and memory.

- I.7. pratyakṣa anumāna āgamāḥ pramāṇāni
pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni

Correct knowledge is direct, inferred or proven as factual.

- I.8. viparyayaḥ mithyājñānam atadrūpa pratiṣṭham
viparyayo mithyājñānamatadrūpapратиṣṭham

Illusory or erroneous knowledge is based on non-fact or the non-real.

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I.9. śabdajñāna anupātī vastuśūnyaḥ vikalpaḥ
śabdajñānānupātī vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ

Verbal knowledge devoid of substance is fancy or imagination.

I.10. abhāva pratyaya ālambanā vṛttiḥ nidrā
abhāvapratyayālambanā vṛttirnidrā

Sleep is the non-deliberate absence of thought-waves or knowledge.

I.11. anubhūta viṣaya asaṁpramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ
anubhūtaviṣayāsaṁpramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ

Memory is the unmodified recollection of words and experiences.

I.12. abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ
abhyāsavairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ

Practice and detachment are the means to still the movements of consciousness.

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I.13. tatra sthitau yatnaḥ abhyāsaḥ
tatra sthitau yatno¹bhyāsaḥ

Practice is the steadfast effort to still these fluctuations.

I.14. sa tu dīrghakāla nairantarya satkāra āsevitaḥ dṛḍhabhūmiḥ
sa tu dīrghakālanairantaryasatkārāsevito dṛḍhabhūmiḥ

Long, uninterrupted, alert practice is the firm foundation for restraining the fluctuations.

I.15 dṛṣṭa ānuśravika viṣaya vitrṣṇasya vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam
dṛṣṭānuśravikaviṣayavitrṣṇasya vaśīkārasamjñā vairāgyam

Renunciation is the practice of detachment from desires.

I.16. tatparaṁ puruṣakhyāteḥ guṇavaitrṣṇyam
tatparaṁ puruṣakhyāterguṇavaitrṣṇyam

The ultimate renunciation is when one transcends the qualities of nature and perceives the soul.

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I.17. vitarka vicāra ānanda asmitārūpa anugamāt saṁprajñātaḥ
vitarkavicārānandāsmitārūpānugamāt saṁprajñātaḥ

Practice and detachment develop four types of samādhi: self-analysis, synthesis, bliss, and the experience of pure being.

I.18. virāmapratyaya abhyāsapūrvaḥ saṁskāraśeṣaḥ anyaḥ
virāmapratyayābhyāsapūrvaḥ saṁskāraśeṣo ṅyaḥ

The void arising in these experiences is another samādhi. Hidden impressions lie dormant, but spring up during moments of awareness, creating fluctuations and disturbing the purity of the consciousness.

I.19. bhavapratyayaḥ videha prakṛtilayānām
bhavapratyayo videhaprakṛtilayānām

In this state, one may experience bodilessness, or become merged in nature. This may lead to isolation or to a state of loneliness.

I.20. śraddhā vīrya smṛti samādhiprajñā pūrvakaḥ itareṣām
śraddhāvīryasmṛtisamādhiprajñāpūrvaka itareṣām

Practice must be pursued with trust, confidence, vigour, keen memory and power of absorption to break this spiritual complacency.

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I.21. tīvrasamvegānām āsannaḥ
tīvrasamvegānāmāsannaḥ

The goal is near for those who are supremely vigorous and intense in practice.

I.22. mṛdu madhya adhimātratvāt tataḥ api viśeṣaḥ
mṛdumadhyādhimātratvāt tato ṛpi viśeṣaḥ

There are differences between those who are mild, average and keen in their practices.

I.23. Īśvara praṇidhānāt vā
Īśvarapraṇidhānādvā

Or, the citta may be restrained by profound meditation upon God and total surrender to Him.

I.24. kleśa karma vipāka āśayaīḥ aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣaḥ Īśvaraḥ
kleśakarmavipākāśayairaparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣaviśeṣa Īśvaraḥ

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

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I.25. tatra niratiśayaṃ sarvajñabījam
tatra niratiśayaṃ sarvajñabījam

God is the unexcelled seed of all knowledge.

I.26. sa eṣaḥ pūrveṣāṃ api guruḥ kālena anavacchedāt
sa eṣa pūrveṣāṃapi guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt

God is the first, foremost and absolute guru, unconditioned by time.

I.27. tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ
tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ

He is represented by the sacred syllable āum, called praṇava.

I.28. tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanam
tajjapastadarthabhāvanam

The mantra āum is to be repeated constantly, with feeling, realizing its full significance.

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I.29. tataḥ pratyakcetana adhigamaḥ api antarāya abhāvaḥ ca
tataḥ pratyakcetanādhigamo'pyantarāyābhāvaśca

Meditation on God with the repetition of āum removes obstacles to the mastery of the inner self.

I.30. vyādhi styāna saṁśaya pramāda ālasya avirati bhrāntidarśana
alabdhabhūmikatva anavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepaḥ te antarāyāḥ
vyādhistyānasamśaya pramādālasya'virati bhrāntidarśanālabdha
bhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepāste 'ntarāyāḥ

These obstacles are disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, indiscipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, and backsliding.

I.31. duḥkha daurmanasya aṅgamejayatva śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa
sahabhavaḥ
duḥkhadaurmanasyaṅgamejayatvaśvāsapraśvāsā vikṣepasahabhavaḥ

Sorrow, despair, unsteadiness of the body and irregular breathing further distract the citta.

I.32. tatpratishedhārtham ekatattva abhyāsaḥ
tatpratishedhārthamekatattvābhyāsaḥ

Adherence to single-minded effort prevents these impediments.

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I.33. mairī karuṇā muditā upekṣāṇām sukha duḥkha puṇya apuṇya
viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaḥ cittaprasādanam
mairīkaruṇāmuditopekṣāṇām sukhaduḥkhapuṇyāpuṇya viṣayāṇām
bhāvanātaścittaprasādanam

Through cultivation of friendliness, compassion, joy, and indifference to pleasure and pain, virtue and vice respectively, the consciousness becomes favourably disposed, serene and benevolent.

I.34. pracchardana vidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya
pracchardanavidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya

Or, by maintaining the pensive state felt at the time of soft and steady exhalation and during passive retention after exhalation.

I.35. viṣayavatī vā pravṛttiḥ utpannā manasaḥ sthiti nibandhanī
viṣayavatī vā pravṛttirutpannā manasaḥ sthitinibandhanī

Or, by contemplating an object that helps to maintain steadiness of mind and consciousness.

I.36. viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī
viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī

Or, inner stability is gained by contemplating a luminous, sorrowless, effulgent light.

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I.37. vītarāga viṣayaṁ vā cittam
vītarāgaviṣayaṁ vā cittam

Or, by contemplating on enlightened sages who are free from desires and attachments, calm and tranquil, or by contemplating divine objects.

I.38. svapna nidrā jñāna ālambanaṁ vā
svapnanidrājñānālambanaṁ vā

Or, by recollecting and contemplating the experiences of dream-filled or dreamless sleep during a watchful, waking state.

I.39. yathābhimata dhyānāt vā
yathābhimatadhyānādvā

Or, by meditating on any desired object conducive to steadiness of consciousness.

I.40. paramāṇu paramamahattvāntaḥ asya vaśīkāraḥ
paramāṇuparamamahattvānto asya vaśīkāraḥ

Mastery of contemplation brings the power to extend from the finest particle to the greatest.

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- I.41. kṣīṇavṛtṭeḥ abhijātasya iva maṇeḥ grahīṭṛ grahaṇa grāhyeṣu tatstha
tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ
kṣīṇavṛtṭerabhijātasyeva maṇergrahīṭṛgrahaṇagrāhyeṣu
tatsthatadañjanatā samāpattiḥ

The yogi realizes that the knower, the instrument of knowing and the known are one, himself, the seer. Like a pure transparent jewel, he reflects an unsullied purity.

- I.42. tatra śabda artha jñāna vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ
tatra śabdārthajñānavikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ

At this stage, called savitarkā samāpatti, the word, meaning and content are blended, and become special knowledge.

- I.43. smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnya iva arthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarka
smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnyevārthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā

In nirvitarka samāpatti, the difference between memory and intellectual illumination is disclosed; memory is cleansed and consciousness shines without reflection.

- I.44. etayaiva savicāra nirvicāra ca sūkṣmaviṣayā vyākhyātā
etayaiva savicārā nirvicārā ca sūkṣma viṣayā vyākhyātā

The contemplation of subtle aspects is similarly explained as deliberate (savicāra samāpatti) or non-deliberate (nirvicāra samāpatti).

* © 1993 Iyengar, B.K.S. Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali. Thorsons/Harper Collins Publishers.
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I.45. sūkṣmaviṣayatvaṁ ca aliṅga paryavasānam
sūkṣmaviṣayatvaṁ cāliṅgaparyavasānam

The subtlest level of nature (prakṛti) is consciousness. When consciousness dissolves in nature, it loses all marks and becomes pure.

I.46. tā eva sabījaḥ samādhiḥ
tā eva sabījaḥ samādhiḥ

The states of samādhi described in the previous sūtras are dependent upon a support or seed, and are termed sabīja.

I.47. nirvicāra vaiśāradye adhyātmaprasādaḥ
nirvicāravaiśāradye adhyātmaprasādaḥ

From proficiency in nirvicāra samāpatti comes purity. Sattva or luminosity flows undisturbed, kindling the spiritual light of the self.

I.48. ṛtaṁbharā tatra prajñā
ṛtaṁbharā tatra prajñā

When consciousness dwells in wisdom, a truth-bearing state of direct spiritual perception dawns.

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I.49. śruta anumāna prajñābhyām anyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt
śrutānumānaprajñābhyāmanyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt

This truth-bearing knowledge and wisdom is distinct from and beyond the knowledge gleaned from books, testimony, or inference.

I.50. tajjaḥ saṁskāraḥ anyasaṁskāra pratibandhī
tajjaḥ saṁskāro ṅyasaṁskārapratibandhī

A new life begins with this truth-bearing light. Previous impressions are left behind and new ones are prevented.

I.51. tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhāt nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ
tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhānnirbījaḥ samādhiḥ

When that new light of wisdom is also relinquished, seedless samādhi dawns.

iti samādhi padaḥ