

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

A Guide to Self-knowledge

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24. kle a-karma-vip ka-a ayair-apar mri a puru avi e a vara

kle a – disturbance, suffering, problems

karma – deeds

vip ka – fruits of karma

a ayai – residue.

residue apar mri a – not connected, untouched

puru a – self

vi e a – special, particular

vara – God

Unaffected by suffering, karmas and effects of karmas is shvara, the Supreme Self.

All life on this earth is bound by karmas. Even the saints and great yogis, who have attained the highest consciousness and are free from karmas, were formerly bound by them. shvara, however, was never touched by karma and never will be. Therefore, a realiser can never compare themselves with shvara, just as a river cannot be compared to the ocean. The Realised One is like a river that unites with the ocean – but the ocean is infinite.

The saints and realised masters serve as the medium of the divine power. They are, as it were, the currents that lead us to the ocean if we follow them.

25. tatranirati aya sarva-jñā-b jam

tatra – this

nirati aya – nothing is greater

sarva – everything

jñā – knowledge

b ja – seed, origin

Nothing is greater than shvara. He is the source of all knowledge.

All created things, all life, come from God and exist in Him – nothing is greater than Him. God is the source of all knowledge, absolute being and absolute reality. Yoga is a way to experience the highest Self and attain the highest consciousness. But a prerequisite for this is the guidance of a Self-realised Master – see the explanation of the next s tra:

26. sap rve m-apiguru k lena-anavacched t

sa – this

p rve m – from the ancestors

api – also

guru – teacher, master

k lena (k la) – time, death

anavacched t – not limited, perpetual

Unlimited by time, He is the supreme Guru since eternity.

Therefore, in the mantra it is said:

gururbrahm gururvi nu gurur devo mahe vara .
gururs ksh tpara brahma tasmai r guravenama

The Guru is Brahm , the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru is Shiva;
the Guru is truly Parabrahman (the Supreme Self);
to that Guru I bow.

Brahm – Vishnu – Mahesha(Creator – Sustainer – Liberator) represent the three aspects in which the formless Absolute (Param tmaor shvara) manifests. In the Guru these three fundamental principles are united and at the same time transcended as the manifested cosmic Self.

GUmeansdarkness, and RUmeans light. The Guru is not the person, but rather the cosmic principle manifested in human form who leads the consciousness from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge. It is inconsequential what nation or religion they belong to. The person who has awakened the light of the tma in themselves – the Realised One – becomes the Master, the Guru. The Guru offers protection at all stages of our path, for the Self-realised and shvaraare one. Only with the Guru's grace and guidance can we safely and wholesomely pass through the astral planes and realise the highest knowledge.

When you think of the Guru, the Guru qualities flow to you. This is a lawful process. When you think of an enemy, hostile feelings awaken in you, fear and anger flood you. If, on the other hand, you remember a friend, you are filled with love, harmony and joy. When you think of food, you gain an appetite, and when you think of sleep, you soon grow tired.

The same is true of meditation. By concentrating on a saint, a realised one, their realisation manifests in you. That is why it is said:

dhy nam lam guru m rti

The root of meditation is the figure of the Guru.

What is the "form" of the Guru? This does not mean a physical body or a person.

In a mantra the Guru is described very clearly:

brahm' nandam param sukhada

kaivalamjñ nam rti

dvandv' t ta gaganasad i a tattva

masy dilak yia

Its form is divine bliss,
perfect knowledge, supreme wisdom,
like the infinite sky.

He is above all duality.

That is my goal.

Those who have experienced God and has awakened divine love within themselves have no more ambiguities. Their consciousness is infinite, free, and no longer shrouded in the mists of ignorance. In them, doubt and dualism no longer exist. They are in oneness – like the cloudless sky stretching over all without distinction. The consciousness of a realised one or saint who has realised santabh vais pure and clear like k sha (ether, sky, space). The aim of the disciple is to become one in consciousness with this Master.

eka nitya vimala acala

sarvadh s k ibh ta

bh v` t tam trigu arahita

sadguru ta nam mya

He is the only one (God), eternal, pure, unchangeable,
the omnipresent witness who lives in every heart.

He is above the bhavas and gunas.
To this divine Master I bow down.

27. tasyav caka pra ava

tasya – whose

v caka – name

pra ava – sound (OM)

It manifests itself in the sound OM.

Pranava is another name for the sacred syllable OM. Everything comes from OM – everything is OM. The mantra OM is the first revelation of the Supreme Self as vibration. Hence, OM is said to be the "primordial sound" or the "name of God". The whole universe has come into being from this original divine impulse and is sustained by its energy.

Tuls das speaks of the great significance of the name in his famous work,
R m yana:

R mn mmanid padhar j hadehar dvar

Tuls bh tarab herah j c hasiujiy r

To enlighten your self within and without,

place the bead of the divine name on the threshold of your door.

The doorstep is the lips and tongue. With this verse Tuls das reminds:

"The mantra (the name of God) is your most precious treasure. Repeat it without ceasing.

In the next s tra, Patanjali also makes it clear how important the constant

repetition of the mantra is for the experience and realisation of the divine principle (guru-tattva).

28. taj-japas-tad-artha-bh vanam

tat – this, this

japa – repeat, remember

artha – meaning

bh vanam – with feeling, with understanding

OM should be repeated with devotion and awareness of its meaning.

A mantra without OM is like a body without a soul, and without mantra meditation is without life, like a stone statue. The mantra should not be merely repeated automatically and thoughtlessly, but with "bh vanam" – with feeling and awareness of its meaning. It is not the quantity that is important, but the quality. It is not important to "recite" the mantra hundreds of times a day – what is important is that we are aware of its meaning and direct all our feelings towards it.

Realise that the whole universe is contained in the syllable "A-U-M". Supreme consciousness and supreme knowledge, all the revelations of the Divine Self – Brahm , Vishnu, Mahesh, Shakti and Purusha, all the saints and divine incarnations – are present in this vibration which pervades and radiates through us when we utter, chant or even think the sacred syllable OM.

True wealth lies in creative, uplifting, understanding, wise, kind thoughts, feelings, and words. These are the true treasures that God gives us. Let us thank God for the grace to think and speak His holy name. Of all living beings on earth, only we human beings are capable of this, because only we have attained the height of consciousness necessary for

this. If, however, we, who are called and capable of the highest consciousness, think and speak impure, malicious, and harmful thoughts and words, we no longer deserve to be called human beings!

By silently repeating a mantra in the mind, speaking it aloud or chanting it, it fills the body, mind and soul with its energy, meaning and perfection.

Let us take the mantra as an example:

OMPrabhu D pnirañjansaba duhkha bhañjan
May the pure divine consciousness and light
free me from all misfortune and suffering.

Or the peace mantra, in which we pray for the whole world, for all living beings and for ourselves.

asatom sadgamaya

Lead us from unreality to reality.

tamasom jyotirgamaya

Lead us from darkness to light.

mrityorm amritamgamaya

Lead us from death to immortality.

sarve amsvastirbhavatu

May all living creatures be happy.

sarve m ntirbhavatu

May all living beings be at peace.

sarve mmangalambhavatu

May all living beings attain unity.

sarve mp rnambhavatu

May all living beings attain wisdom.

lok hsamast hsukhinobhavantu

May happiness be in all the world.

Although we are the most evolved beings on earth, we are limited creatures. We do not know our future and destiny. By repeating the mantra with feeling and attention and remembering its meaning, we can overcome the kleshas (disturbances or difficulties) resulting from our karmas and change our destiny for the better. The vibration of the mantra, which we repeat continuously and consciously, permeates the whole body, and begins to vibrate in every cell. By repeating the name of God with trust and faith, reverence, and deep respect, our entire being is eventually transformed. Shape and form will one day pass away – but the name remains. There is a very telling story from the Indian epic R m yana which shows that sometimes the name is even more powerful than the person themselves.

When God R ma and the army of monkeys under his leader Hanum n reached the coast one day on their way to Sri Lanka, where S ta was imprisoned, they did not know how to cross the sea. Finally, Hanum n took a stone, wrote the name "R ma" on it, and threw it into the sea – and behold, the stone floated on the waves. Immediately all the monkeys in Hanuman's army picked up stones, wrote "R ma" on them, and threw them into the water to form a floating bridge on which they could cross the ocean.

R ma himself followed the example, took a stone, wrote his name on it and threw it into the water. But in horror he saw his stone sink into the water! A second attempt met with the same failure. Ashamed and uncertain, R ma turned to Hanum n and asked him why he, of all people, was not able to make the stones float like everyone else.

Hanuman, however, only laughed and said: "Lord, that is as clear as day. What you let fall from your divine hands must perish. Your task is to graciously hold everything in the universe and to reject nothing from you. But we act by faith in the power of thy holy name, therefore our stones float."

Then Rama also smiled and said, "Hanuman, this is the effect of your bhakti and devotion."

A 48km-long stone formation between India and Sri Lanka that connects the two countries underwater is clearly visible in NASA satellite photos and is called Ram Setu (Rama's Bridge) or, because of its advanced age, "Adam's Bridge".

An aspirant should always maintain and uphold their inner attitude and feelings (bhava). The bhava is like the prices in the market: if the price rises, the value of the goods increases – if the price falls, the profit decreases.

For example, if you own 100 kg of iron and 1 kg of iron costs \$10 on the market, you own the equivalent of \$1,000. If the market price drops to 5\$ the next day, you have become poorer by 500\$ overnight, although you still have the same amount of iron in your storeroom. If, on the other hand, the price per kilo rises to \$15, you can be happy about a gain of \$500.

The commodity remains the same; the price determines profit or loss. Similarly, your spiritual progress depends on your appreciation, faith, and trust – in the Master, in God and in the practices.

