

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

A Guide to Self-knowledge

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विभूति पादः
VIBHŪTI-PĀDAḤ

तस्यप्रशान्तवाहिता सभस्कारात् । ॥ १० ॥

10. tasyaprasānta-vāhitāsaṃskārāt

tasya – whose

prasānta – peaceful, calm

vāhitā – river

saṃskāra – impression

The flow of the stillness of mind gradually becomes a permanent impression.

As the calmness of mind without thought waves has become a permanent imprint (*saṃskāra*) in the consciousness through continuous practice, the mind becomes fluid and at the same time motionless – just as a swan glides on the water and does not seem to move. The meditator's consciousness flows in perfect peace and harmony. In what direction does it flow? Toward the Self, toward the *ātma*, and toward God.

The mirror of consciousness, which in "normal" life is polluted and blinded by the dust of thoughts, emotions, desires, cravings, has cleared and we can now see our true face, our true self, in it.

In this deep meditation the meditator is filled with light and bliss. They could remain like this for hours, and feel no fatigue, no pain in the body, nor desire for sleep. Instead of sleeping, they are immersed in *Yoga Nidra*, the "conscious sleep of the yogi".

Mahāprabhuji said in his *bhajan* "yogi jano ki yoga nidra" – in sleep the sun rises. What did he mean by this? That although the body outwardly looks like that of a sleeping person, the consciousness is wide awake and crystal clear.

Two prerequisites are necessary for this: *āsanāsiddhi* (body control and mastery of the meditation seat) and *chitta-vritti-nirodha* (stillness of the thought waves). For this, regular *prānāyāma* is an important preliminary practice. Some do not want to practice *prānāyāma* or *mantra* because it "annoys" them. This means that the mind is still very restless and uncontrolled and needs to be worked on. It is easier to get into deep meditation through *prānāyāma*. Gentle *prānāyāma*, such as *Ujjāyi Prānāyāma* and *Nādi Shodhana Prānāyāma* (as described in the book "Yoga in Daily Life – The System"), calms the autonomic nervous system and improves circulation. The brain and organs are supplied with more oxygen. The slower the breathing becomes, the deeper the concentration and inner peace. In *samādhi*, breathing even comes to an almost complete standstill.

As was said in the previous *sūtra*, when the rising impressions are covered by the imprint of tranquillity, one sinks deeper and deeper into meditation. In other words, the yogi rises higher and higher into the highest consciousness.

But it would still be a mistake to think that the goal has now been reached. The aspirant has realised the Self, but has not yet united with it, has not yet dissolved in it. *Vritti* and *samskāra* are at rest, but still there.

सर्वार्थतैकाग्रतयोः क्षयोदयौ चित्तस्य समाधिपरिणामः ॥ ११ ॥

11. sarvārthata-ikāgratayoḥkṣaya-udayaucittasyasamādhi-pariṇāmaḥ

sarva – everyone

artha – goal, related to

ekāgratā – focus

kṣaya–diminution

daya – ascend

citta– consciousness

samādhi – supreme consciousness

pariṇāma – transformation

By diminishing the distraction and keeping the mind focused on a single point, the transformation to higher consciousness can begin (*samādhi-pariṇāma*).

What is the *dharma* or function of consciousness (*chitta*)? The *dharma* of *chitta* is thinking (*chintana*). The continuous thinking, pondering, brooding and deliberating creates "waves" in the mind, or *chitta-vrittis*. By quieting the *chitta-vrittis* in meditation, the mind becomes *ekāgratā*, selectively focused and concentrated on a target object. This is the first step toward *samādhi*.

In this state of consciousness, external and internal disturbances can no longer harm the meditator. Why? Because there are no more *chitta-vrittis*, and therefore no reaction to disturbances and distractions.

Then the self recognises its reality in the inner mirror of the mind – this is the "self-knowledge" or "enlightenment". But the path does not end there! There are different stages of *samādhi*, and we are still on the lowest rungs.

ततः पुनः शान्तोदितौ तुल्यप्रत्ययौ चित्तस्यैकाग्रतापरिणामः ॥ १२ ॥

12. tataḥ punaḥ-śāntoditautulya-pratyayaucittasyaekāgratā-pariṇāmaḥ

tataḥ – accordingly

punaḥ – again

śānta – calmed, attained inner calm

udita – to arise, ascended

tulya – like

pratyaya – perception, acceptance

citta – consciousness

ekāgratā – focus, centre point

pariṇāma – transformation

When the rising and receding waves in the mind balance each other out, the alignment of consciousness to one-pointed concentration (*ekāgratā-pariṇāma*) takes place.

Through the practice of *dhāranā* and *dhyāna*, the mind becomes increasingly and gradually filled only with waves of harmony, inner peace and feelings of bliss. When the consciousness flows continuously in the direction of the object of meditation and finally unites with it, a fundamental change in consciousness takes place and the transformation to *samādhi* has begun.

एतेन भूतेन्द्रियेषु धर्मलक्षणवस्थापरिणामा व्याख्याताः ॥ १३ ॥

13. etenabhūtendriyeṣu dharma-lakṣaṇāvasthā-pariṇāmāvyākhyātāḥ

etena – through this

bhūta – the elements

indriya – sense faculty

dharma – task, principle, characteristic

lakṣaṇa – characteristic, attribute

avasthā – situation, condition

pariṇāmā – transformation

vyākhyā – explanation, commentary

This explains the changes in the elements and their perception in terms of their nature, characteristics and states.

The transformation in consciousness also causes a change in the perception of the external world. Likewise, matter itself is also subject to change in its properties,

characteristics and states over time.

How can we imagine this? For example, when clay is formed into a vase, the shape, characteristics and condition of the clay change. The vase has different characteristics than the raw clay. If water is poured on the earth, it seeps away. But if we pour water into a vase made of fired clay, it does not flow out. So, a distinct change in the object has occurred. However, a new change in the state and characteristics of the vase can occur at any time, for example, if it breaks. Each change is only an intermediate state. No state is for eternity.

Change and evolution in the outer world and in consciousness are natural processes and inevitable. Therefore, don't get stuck and don't hold on to anything. Let it flow, let it come and let it go.

The self, however, which is the observer and witness of all states and changes, never changes.

शान्तोदिताव्यपदेश्यधर्मानुपातीधर्मी ॥ १४ ॥

14. śāntoditāvyapadeśya-dharmānupātīdharmī

śānta – calmed

udita– arising

avyapadeśya – the unmanifest

dharma – order; law, duty

anupātī – based on, following

dharmī – bearer of the quality, substance

The transformations, be they dormant (= past), active (= present) or non-manifest (= future), are based on the carrier of the qualities (*dharmī*).

Patanjali speaks here of the three times, past, present and future, which are closely intertwined. In the events of the past, the present situation has already been created, and the events of the present shape the future. Both past and future exist interwoven with the present.

Dharmi here refers to the "observer", who knows that everything is in flux and impermanent. The change is only external, not in relation to the essence and reality. An example: a piece of gold is made into a piece of jewellery by the goldsmith. The form has changed, but in fact it is always just gold. However, as long as the "observer" identifies with the properties, they are bound to them.

When all the changes have taken place, the qualities dissolve. As already explained in Part 1, *Samādhi-Pāda, sūtra2*, this is illustrated in the parable of fire in wood: in a piece of wood, fire exists as a dormant property. Through friction, the fire is awakened. As soon as the wood is burned, the fire falls asleep again and goes out. Another example: in a storm, the waves in the ocean go up – if the storm calms, the tides also calm. Where do the waves come from? From the ocean. And where did they go? Back into the ocean. Similarly, it happens with our *vruttis*. They rise, create agitation, and after some time they calm down again.

Patanjali wants to tell us here: look deep inside yourself, how many qualities exist in you without you being aware of it? The forces that sleep in the subconscious are like a "black box". We don't know what kind they are. They are still dormant, but that does not mean they are harmless. Their energy can also be destructive.

We are literally sitting on a "bomb" that could go off at any time. Or, to use another image: we are in a boat on a stormy sea. How many storms exist within us? How many surges of emotions— anger, rage, love, jealousy, desires, greed, passion – rise up again and again and overtake us? But as long as such "storms" and "surges" exist within us, we cannot attain *samādhi*.

क्रमान्यत्वंपरिणामान्यत्वेहेतुः ॥ १५ ॥

15. kramānyatvampariṇāmānyatvehetuḥ

krama – sequence, succession

anyatva – diversity

pariṇāma – change, transformation

hetuḥ – cause, reason

The differences in the transformations are based on the differences in the sequence.

Sometimes students ask me, "I am only one – why do I have so many problems?" Patanjali explains the reason. One cause can produce several effects over time. Take a cotton plant as an example. From the field to the store where you buy a T-shirt, cotton goes through several stages: harvesting, cleaning, spinning, sewing, transportation, etc. Each stage brings a change, different properties and states, a different name, a different function. Each person is also in multiple relationships: a woman is at once a daughter, a sister, a mother, an aunt, a grandmother, etc. In reality, she is only one person.

But the cause of all conditions is in reality only one: *yourself*. If your identification with yourself is dissolved, all problems are solved.

Through constant practice and perfection of *samyama* – concentration, meditation and *samādhi* – consciousness expands, and the meditator gains knowledge and insight into levels that are closed to waking consciousness. In the following *sūtras*, Patanjali enumerates the amazing powers (*siddhis*) that can be attained through *samyama*.

परिणामत्रयसंभयमादतीतानागतज्ञानम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. pariṇāma-traya-saṃyamād-atītānāgata-jñānam

pariṇāma – change, transformation

traya – threefold, tripartite

saṃyama (saṃyamāt) – collection, discipline, control

atīta – past, passed away

anāgata – future

jñānam – knowledge

***Samyama* on the three types of transformations gives knowledge of the past and future.**

The three kinds of transformations mean the changes in the state of an object or person over time. *Parināma* also means result. As a result of the control and immobilisation of the *vrittis* combined with concentration on the passage of time, the yogi in meditation receives knowledge of the past and future.

You don't need an oracle, astrologers or psychics to tell you the future. Explore your subconscious in meditation. Meditation is the only direct access to the subconscious. The best method for this is the technique of "*Self-Inquiry Meditation*" (see the step-by-step instructions in the book "*Yoga in Daily Life – The System*").

Dive deep into your inner world, meditate, and see what is going on inside you. The waves, the qualities, do not exist by themselves without *dharmi*, the carrier of the qualities. The problems of the past, present and future would not be there if *you* were not there. Your past and your past lives existed only because *you* were there. There will be a future for you because *you* will be there. That is, as long as you exist as an individual, these states also exist. But once your individual consciousness dissolves in the divine consciousness, everything is solved. "No bamboo, no flute, no noise," says a well-known saying.

