

250 *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*

Consciousness can be seen as an object. It is knowable and perceptible. It is not self-illuminative like the seer.

Consciousness being the seedling of the seer, its growth and luminosity depend upon the seed, the light of the seer. Its own light is as that of the moon, which is reflected light from the sun. The seer represents the sun, and consciousness the moon. As a child feels strong and secure in the presence of its parents, consciousness, the child of the seer, draws its strength from the seer.

Consciousness, like the senses of perception, can normally see an object but not its own form. For an average person, the eyes pose as the seer when apprehending worldly objects. For an intellectual person, the eyes become the seen, and the mind the seer. For an enlightened person, mind and intelligence become objects for the consciousness. But for the wise seer, consciousness itself becomes the object perceived.

The seer can be subject and object at the same time; consciousness cannot. It may therefore be inferred that consciousness has no light of its own. When the borrowed light of consciousness is drawn back to its source, the seer, or soul, glows brilliantly.

(See II.19–20.)

## एकसमये चोभयानवधारणम् ।२०।

IV.20 *ekasamaye ca ubhaya anavadhāraṇam*

<i>ekasamaye</i>	at the same time
<i>ca</i>	and
<i>ubhaya</i>	of both
<i>anavadhāraṇam</i>	cannot comprehend, cannot be held with affirmation or assurance

*Consciousness cannot comprehend both the seer and itself at the same time.*

It cannot comprehend subject–object, observer–observed, or actor–witness at the same time, whereas the seer can.

Day and night cannot exist simultaneously. Similarly, restlessness and restfulness cannot co-exist in absolute juxtaposition. In between night and day there is dawn. In the same way, there is space between the flow of restlessness, *cittavṛtti* or *cittavāhinī*, and restfulness, *prasānta vṛtti* or *prasānta vāhinī*.

In between these two rivers of restlessness and restfulness, and underneath them, flows the concealed invisible secret river, the river of the soul. This is dawn, or the sudden arrival of enlightenment.

For a yogi, restlessness is the night and restfulness is the day. In between, there is a third state which is neither day nor night but dawn. It is the diffusion of consciousness, in which the rivers of restlessness and restfulness unite in the seat of absolute consciousness.

When the water of a lake is unruffled, the reflection of the moon on its surface is very clear. Similarly, when the lake of consciousness is serene, consciousness disseminates itself. This is known as a glimpse, or a reflection, of the soul.

The seer, being constant and unchangeable, can perceive the fluctuations as well as the serenity of his consciousness. If consciousness itself were self-luminous, it too could be the knower and the knowable. As it has not the power to be both, a wise yogi disciplines it, so that he may be alive to the light of the soul.

It is said in the *Bhagavad Gīta* (II.69) 'One who is self-controlled is awake when it appears night to all other beings, and what appears to him as night keeps others awake'. A yogic *sādhaka* thus realizes that when consciousness is active, the seer is asleep and when the seer is awake, it is night to the consciousness.

Similarly, in the *Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā*, the word *ha* is used to signify the seer as the 'sun', which never fades; while *tha* represents consciousness as the 'moon', which eternally waxes and wanes.

(See I.2, 33, 38, 47; III.10.)

## चित्तान्तरदृश्ये बुद्धिबुद्धेरतिप्रसङ्गः स्मृतिसंकरश्च ।२१।

IV.21 *cittāntaradr̥ṣye buddhibuddheḥ atiprasaṅgaḥ smṛtisankaraḥ ca*

<i>citta</i>	consciousness
<i>antaradr̥ṣye</i>	being knowable by another
<i>buddhibuddheḥ</i>	cognition of cognitions
<i>atiprasaṅgaḥ</i>	impertinence, rudeness, abundance, too many, superfluity
<i>smṛti</i>	memory
<i>sankaraḥ</i>	confusion, commingling
<i>ca</i>	and

If consciousness were manifold in one's being, each cognizing the other, the intelligence too would be manifold, so the projections of mind would be many, each having its own memory.

Plurality of consciousness would result in lack of understanding between one mind and another, leading to utter confusion and madness. Patañjali therefore concludes that consciousness is one and cannot be many.

As a tree has many branches, all connected to the trunk, the various wavelengths of thoughts are connected to a single consciousness. This consciousness remains pure and divine at its source in the spiritual heart. When it branches from the source towards the head, it is called created consciousness, *nirmīta citta*, which, being fresh, is untrained and uncultured. The moment it comes into contact with objects, it becomes tainted, creating moods in the thought-waves. These moods are the five fluctuations (*vṛttis*) and five afflictions (*klesas*) (see I.6 and II.3).

The early commentators on Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* borrowed terms for the various modes of consciousness from Buddhist philosophy. They are discerning knowledge (*vijñāna*), perceptive knowledge of joys and sorrows (*vedana*), resolution (*saṁjñā*), likeness and semblance (*rūpa*) and impression (*saṁskāra*). All these are monitored by *nirmīta citta*.

These moods should not be mistaken for a plurality of minds. The mind remains the same, but moods create an illusion of several minds. If the minds were really many, then each would have its own memory and intelligence. This becomes preposterous. Just as a room fitted with mirrors puzzles the onlooker, the idea of many minds causes confusion and absurdity.

The practice of yoga disciplines and cultures the consciousness of the head, by which it perfects the art of analysis (*śavītarka*), judges precisely (*śavīcāra*), experiences unalloyed bliss (*ānanda*), becomes auspicious (*śāsmī-tā*) and moves towards mature intelligence (consciousness of the heart) and unalloyed wisdom (*ṛtambharā prajñā*).

The two facets of consciousness have been beautifully and poetically explained in the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad* (section 3, canto 1 and 2). Two birds sit together on a fig tree. One hops restlessly from branch to branch, pecking at different fruits which are variously sour, bitter, salty, and sweet. Not finding the taste it wants, it becomes more and more agitated, flying to ever more far-flung branches. The other remains impassive, steady, silent and blissful. Gradually the taster of fruits draws nearer to his quiet companion and, wearying of his frantic search, also becomes calm, unconsciously losing the desire for fruit, and experiencing non-attachment, silence, rest and bliss.

The yogi can learn from this. The tree represents the body, the two birds are the seer and consciousness, fruits are sprouted or secondary consciousness, and the different tastes of fruits are the five senses of perception which

form the fluctuations and afflictions in the wavelengths of the mind.

The steady bird is the eternal, pure, divine, omniscient seer. The other is the sprouted or secondary consciousness absorbed in desire and fulfilment, and exhibiting different moods and modes of thought. After experiencing a variety of pain and pleasure, the secondary consciousness changes its mood and modes, identifies its true nature, reconsiders and returns to rest on its source mind. This return of the consciousness from the seat of the head towards the seat of the spiritual heart is purity of consciousness, *divya citta*. This is yoga.

(See I.4-6, 17, 48; II.3-4.)

चित्तेप्रतिसंक्रमायास्तदाकारापत्तौ स्वबुद्धिसंवेदनम् ।२२।

IV.22 *citeḥ apratisaṁkramāyāḥ tadākārāpattau  
svabuddhisamvedanam*

<i>citeḥ</i>	the seer
<i>apratisaṁkramāyāḥ</i>	changeless, non-moving
<i>tad</i>	its
<i>ākāra</i>	form
<i>āpattau</i>	having accomplished, identified, assumed
<i>sva</i>	one's own
<i>buddhi</i>	intelligence
<i>samvedanam</i>	knows, assumes, identifies

*Consciousness distinguishes its own awareness and intelligence when it reflects and identifies its source – the changeless seer – and assumes his form.*

Through the accomplishment of pure consciousness comes knowledge of the unchangeable seer who rests on his own intelligence and nowhere else.

When consciousness no longer fluctuates, then its pure nature surfaces to comprehend itself. As stated in the commentary on IV.21, consciousness has two facets, one pure, divine and immutable, the other changeable, transient and exhibitiv. It has no light of its own but acts as a medium or agent between the seer and the objects seen. Due to ignorance, it does not realize that it is impersonating the seer. But the seer knows the movements of the consciousness.

When one facet of consciousness ceases to operate, it ends its contact with the external world and stops collecting impressions. The other facet is drawn

to the seer, and the two unite. Intelligence and consciousness merge in their abode – the *ātman*, and the soul comes face to face with itself.

A dirty mirror obscures reflection, a clean mirror reflects objects clearly. The illumined consciousness becomes purified and reflects objects exactly as they are. The reflector is called *bimba-pratibimba vāda*, or the exposition of double reflection. There is no difference between the source object and the reflected image. The soul reflects the soul. It is the fulfilment of yoga. *Citta* is identified with the seer. This is *svabuddhi samvedanam* or intuitive understanding of the inner voice.

An everyday example of our consciousness taking on the absolute quality and form of the object we observe, is when we gaze into the dancing flames of a fire, or at the waves of the sea, or the wind in the tree-tops. We feel totally immersed in watching, without thought or impatience, as though we ourselves were the unending waves or the flickering flames, or the wind-swept trees.

द्रष्टृद्रश्योपरक्तं चित्तं सर्वार्थम् ।२३।

IV.23 *draṣṭṛ dr̥śya uparaktam cittam sarvārtham*

<i>draṣṭṛ</i>	the knower, the seer
<i>dr̥śya</i>	the knowable, the seen
<i>uparaktam</i>	coloured, reflected, tainted, afflicted
<i>cittam</i>	consciousness
<i>sarvārtham</i>	all-pervading, cognizing, comprehending, apprehending

*Consciousness, reflected by the seer as well as by the seen, appears to be all-comprehending.*

Consciousness, being in conjunction both with the seer and the seen, appears to an average individual to be all-pervading, omniscient and real. When one is cultured and purified, one realizes that consciousness has no existence of its own but is dependent on the seer.

As the physical frame is the body of consciousness, so consciousness is the body of the seer. Consciousness is the bridge between nature and soul, and its conjunction is either illumined by the seer or tainted by the seen. The wise yogi frees consciousness from the qualities of nature; he keeps it clean so that it is reflected without distortion both by the seer and the seen.

When the waves of the sea subside, they lose their identities and become

the sea. Similarly, when the waves of the seer – the senses of perception, mind, intelligence and consciousness – subside, they lose their identities and merge in the ocean of the seer, for the seer to blaze forth independently. This is the sight of the soul.

For a clearer understanding of consciousness, we should read sūtras IV.22–25 as a group.

In IV.22, Patañjali explains that consciousness is no longer a subject but an object. It is not a knower but the known. As it is trained by *sādhana* towards maturity (*paripakva citta*), it gains purity (*suddha citta*) through pure intelligence (*suddha buddhi*).

Until now, consciousness was under the impression that it was the reflector (*bimba*) and all other images were its reflected reflections (*pratibimba*). This sūtra explains that consciousness in its immature state takes itself to be all-powerful and all-pervading, but the truth is that the seer is actually the reflector. Patañjali shows that the impersonating consciousness is transformed to the level of the seen, so that both the reflector and its reflection, *citta*, are identical.

It is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (VI.19) that as a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, so the sheaths of a cultured yogi do not shake. They remain untouched by the wind of desires for the seer to reflect his own glorious light, *ātma jyoti*, and to dwell in that light, *puruṣa jñāna*.

(See I.41; II.18, 23; IV.4.)

तदसंख्येयवासनाभिचित्रमपि परार्थं संहत्यकारित्वात् ।२४।

IV.24 *tat asāṅkhyeya vāsanābhiḥ citram api parārtham saṁhatyakāritvāt*

<i>tat</i>	that
<i>asāṅkhyeya</i>	innumerable
<i>vāsanābhiḥ</i>	knowledge derived from memory, impressions, desires, trust
<i>citram</i>	variegated, filled with, equipped
<i>api</i>	although
<i>parārtham</i>	for the sake of another
<i>saṁhatya</i>	well knitted, firmly united, closely allied
<i>kāritvāt</i>	on account of it, because of it

*Though the fabric of consciousness is interwoven with innumerable desires and*

subconscious impressions, it exists for the seer on account of its proximity to the seer as well as to the objective world.

Though consciousness has been clouded with impressions (*samskāras*) throughout eternity, its aim is not only to satisfy the desires of the senses (*bhoga*) but also to further the emancipation (*apavarga*) of the soul.

Consciousness is tied by a hidden force both to the seer and to nature. It is well equipped to reach the seer, though it has no ambition of its own except to serve its Lord.

Consciousness has innumerable tendencies and impressions derived from memory, among which longing for pleasures and freedom from pleasures stand out. They are desired impressions. From this, it becomes clear that consciousness, being close to nature and spirit, feels that it does not exist for its own sake but for the sake of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. In the same way that a lover of God offers food, clothes and comforts as if they were essential to God, consciousness wants to satisfy its Lord with the pleasures of the world. Once consciousness is cultured through yogic discipline, it becomes ripe and illumined. It realizes that the seer is not interested in objects of pleasure and opts to serve with detachment. Now that it understands its inner value, it realizes the triviality of nature's pleasures and turns towards the path of Self-Realization. Thus transformed, it begins its journey towards emancipation.

If one's *karmas* are good, they awaken curiosity and guide it towards the path of *kaivalya*; they reward one's effort with the vision of the soul. Yogic practices speed up this process, beginning with the conquest of the body and ending in the vision of the soul. This is salvation.

(See I.41; II.18-19; 22-23; IV.18, 27.)

विशेषदर्शिन आत्मभावभावनानिवृत्तिः ।२५।

IV.25 *viśeṣadarsinaḥ ātmabhāva bhāvanānivr̥t̥tiḥ*

<i>viśeṣa</i>	distinction, specific quality, peculiarity
<i>darsinaḥ</i>	to whom, who sees, the seer
<i>ātmabhāva</i>	the ideas of the seer, the thought of the seer
<i>bhāvanā</i>	feeling, reflection
<i>nivr̥t̥tiḥ</i>	return, disappearance, emancipation

For one who realizes the distinction between *citta* and *ātmā*, the sense of separation between the two disappears.

When the difference between consciousness (*citta*) and the projector of the consciousness (*citi*) is recognized, the search for Self-Realization ends.

From IV.15 to IV.25, Patañjali takes the *sādhaka* progressively to the realization that consciousness is not the all-knower, but simply an instrument of the soul.

For one who is not sure of the difference between consciousness and soul (*citta* and *citi*), an analogy is given; the blades of grass which shoot up during the rainy season prove the existence of the hidden seeds.

In this sūtra Patañjali explains that the seed of the soul (*ātma bīja*) is sown at the right time for the knowledge of the soul (*ātma jñāna*) to be firmly established. As we mistake a rope for a snake at first glance, but realize upon examination that it is a rope, consciousness at this stage realizes that it is not all-knowing but an instrument of the soul. *Avidyā* is vanquished and the practitioner thoroughly understands objective as well as subjective knowledge, without colourization. Here all moods and modes cease to flow, and consciousness is elevated to the optimum degree to behold the exalted state of the seer. The yogi is no longer drawn towards the temptations of the world. His search for the self ends. He becomes a master of yoga and a master of himself. He is *yogeshvara*. This is the substance (*svarūpa*) of yoga and a distinct attribute of the seer (*viśeṣa darsinaḥ*).

(See I.47; II.10, 12; III.56.)

तदा विवेकनिम्नं कैवल्यप्राग्भारं चित्तम् ।२६।

IV.26 *tadā vivekanimnam kaivalya prāgbhāram cittam*

<i>tadā</i>	then
<i>vivekanimnam</i>	flow of exalted intelligence in consciousness
<i>kaivalya</i>	indivisible state of existence, emancipation
<i>prāg</i>	towards
<i>bhāram</i>	gravitation, influence, importance
<i>cittam</i>	consciousness

Then consciousness is drawn strongly towards the seer or the soul due to the gravitational force of its exalted intelligence.

When the exalted intelligence is ablaze, consciousness is illumined; it

becomes free and tinged with the divine (*citta suddhi*). Due to this divine light, *citta*, with its exalted intelligence, is drawn as if by a magnet towards its source: the indivisible seer who is alone, free and full.

Before reaching the state of exalted intelligence, consciousness is attracted more towards the pleasures of the world. When intelligence is free from doubts and prejudices, it gravitates towards the absolute seer.

As a farmer builds dykes between his fields to regulate the flow of water, exalted intelligence builds a dyke for the consciousness, so that it does not move again towards the world, but turns and flows towards union with the divine seer. This is *kaivalya*, an existence filled with freedom and beatitude. Such a yogi becomes a king amongst men.

Here, I should like to draw the reader's attention to Patañjali's use of the word 'gravitation', showing that in his day science was not behind modern western scientific thought; indeed, it may have been its precursor.

(See I.49; II.25-26; III.55 and IV.29.)

तच्छिद्रेषु प्रत्ययान्तराणि संस्कारेभ्यः ॥२७॥

IV.27 *tat cchidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṃskārebhyaḥ*

<i>tat</i>	that
<i>cchidreṣu</i>	a hole, slit, pore, fissure, defect, rent, flaw, fault, opening
<i>pratyaya</i>	going towards, belief, firm conviction, trust, reliance, confidence, content, notion
<i>antarāṇi</i>	interval, space, intermission
<i>saṃskārebhyaḥ</i>	from impression

*Notwithstanding this progress, if one is careless during the interval, a fissure arises due to past hidden impressions, creating division between the consciousness and the seer.*

The force of past impressions may create loopholes in the form of intellectual pride or other varying moods or modes of thought, which breach the consciousness and disturb the harmony and serenity of oneness with the pure Self (*ātmabhāva*).

This sūtra shows a way to combat old impressions which may influence the consciousness and fissure it.

Patañjali cautions that even for the supreme intelligence, the subconscious

*samskāras* may surface in this intermediate stage and sway the consciousness.

Patañjali advises yogis who wish to be free from worldly life to be constantly vigilant in order to overcome these old habits, lest their consciousness waver between the desire for perfection and actual perfection. The uninterrupted practice of yoga unconditionally vanquishes these fissures in consciousness, and eradicates doubts and prejudices, so that pure wisdom may shine.

(Consciousness in evolved souls is dealt with in I.18, wherein the yogi is on the threshold of *sabija* and *nirbija samādhis*.)

In the *Bhagavad Gīta* II.59, Lord Kṛṣṇa says that inherent desire persists as a fissure even in the most austere renunciate. Only the vision of the Supreme resolves these latent faults forever. From that moment no worldly desire or temptation can endanger the equanimity and virtue of the yogi.

(See I.50; III.55-56.)

हानमेषां कुशवदुक्तम् ॥२८॥

IV.28 *hānam eṣāṃ kleśavat uktam*

<i>hānam</i>	abandonment, extinction, harm, deficiency, damage
<i>eṣāṃ</i>	of these
<i>kleśavat</i>	afflictions
<i>uktam</i>	uttered, spoken, said

*In the same way as the sādhanika strives to be free from afflictions, the yogi must handle these latent impressions judiciously to extinguish them.*

The gap between consciousness and the seer can breed disharmony and disturbance in one's self. As fire is deprived of fuel, the yogi has to remove the latent impressions from the consciousness and extinguish them, for it to be in harmony with the seer.

Patañjali advises the yogi to eradicate disturbances by reintroducing yogic disciplines with faith, vigour and vitality. As the *sādhanika* earlier strove to rid himself of the afflictions of *avidyā*, *asmīā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa* and *abhiniveśa*, the exalted yogi must, through practice, press, dry out and close the perforations in the consciousness.

IV.27 stated that subconscious impressions surface in the form of intellectual pride, which hinders progress towards the goal of union with the divine seer. As roasted seeds do not germinate, so the fire of wisdom must burn

out impressions and ambitions, ending their power to generate disturbing thoughts so that the consciousness maintains its union with the seer forever.

प्रसंख्यानोऽप्यकुसीदस्य सर्वथा विवेकख्यातेर्धर्ममेघः समाधिः ॥२९॥

IV.29 *prasamkhyāne api akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāteḥ dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ*

<i>prasamkhyāne</i>	highest form of intelligence, evolution, enumeration, reflection, deep meditation
<i>api</i>	even
<i>akusīdasya</i>	free from desires and aversions, one who has no selfish interest or motivation
<i>sarvathā</i>	constant, wholly, entirely, at all times
<i>vivekakhyāteḥ</i>	with awareness, discrimination and attentive intelligence
<i>dharmameghaḥ</i>	rain cloud of virtue, delightful fragrant virtue, rain cloud of justice, showering of <i>dharma</i>
<i>samādhiḥ</i>	supreme spirit, union putting together

*The yogi who has no interest even in this highest state of evolution, and maintains supreme attentive, discriminative awareness, attains dharmameghaḥ samādhi: he contemplates the fragrance of virtue and justice.*

When the stream of virtue pours in torrents and the consciousness is washed clean of bias, prejudice and ambition, the light of the soul dawns. This is *dharma megha samādhi*: the fruit of the practice of yoga.

If the yogi, knowing that the highest form of intelligence is also a hindrance, remains uninterested even in this enlightened wisdom as well as in spiritual attainments, virtuousness descends upon him like torrential rain, washing away his individual personality. His only ambition now is to sustain spiritual health. He has purity and clarity. His personality has been transformed. He becomes humane, universal and divine. He lives forever in *dharma megha samādhi*\*, unsurpassed bliss.

\* A cloud has two facets. It may cover the sky without bringing rain. This makes the atmosphere gloomy and people become inactive and dull. But if the cloud bursts into rain, the atmosphere is cleared, the sun shines, and people go out to work joyfully.

Similarly, the yogi should not make the consciousness quiet in a *tāmasic* way, but in an alert, *sattvic* way to shine forth brilliantly to live in the delightful, fragrant rain-cloud of virtue.

He has renounced everything, and is a *viveki* (one who distinguishes the invisible soul from the visible world), a *jñānin* (sage), a *vairāgin* (renunciate), and a *bhaktan* (divine devotee). Now he has attained *nirbija samādhi*.

(See I.16, 49-50; III.50, 55-56.)

ततः कुशकर्मनिवृत्तिः ॥३०॥

IV.30 *tataḥ kleśa karma nivṛttiḥ*

<i>tataḥ</i>	thereafter, thence
<i>kleśa</i>	afflictions
<i>karma</i>	action
<i>nivṛttiḥ</i>	return, disappear, abstaining from action, cessation from worldly concerns and being engaged in the field of emancipation, bliss and beatitude

*Then comes the end of afflictions and of karma.*

The effect of *dharma megha samādhi* is freedom, freedom from the five afflictions and fluctuations. It is the highest form of intelligence and evolution.

From this rain-cloud of virtue, afflictions cease of their own accord and in their place, divine actions with no reactions flow forth like a river from the yogi. This is freedom.

*Avidyā*, the mother of afflictions, is eradicated, root and branch, along with residual subliminal impressions. The *sādhaka* will not now deviate from the path of divinity nor perform an act that binds, hinders or preconditions his consciousness. He is free from the bondage of *karma*.

In the *Bhagavad Gīta* (VI.5), Lord Kṛṣṇa says that each individual has to cultivate himself to become enlightened, and to learn not to degrade himself, for the Self alone is the friend of the individual self, and the Self alone is the enemy of the egotistical self.

As the light of a lamp fades as the oil runs out, so the lamp of the mind is extinguished as its fuel, the actions producing joys and sorrows, is exhausted.

As *nirmāṇa citta* is extinguished of its own accord, its root motivation is burnt out leaving no opportunity for the production of effects. The cycle of cause and effect is at an end, and the yogi is freed from the grip of nature. Even in this liberated state, he will not forego his practices. He will continue

to maintain them as a divine command, so that the freedom earned may not be lost by neglect\*.

(See I.3-5, 47; II.12, 20-21, 24, 52; III.55-56; IV.3, 4 and 25.)

तदा सर्वावरणमलापेतस्य ज्ञानस्यानन्त्याच्चेयमल्पम् ।३१।

IV.31 *tadā sarva āvaraṇa malāpetasya jñānasya ānāntyāt jñeyam alpam*

<i>tadā</i>	then
<i>sarva</i>	all
<i>āvaraṇa</i>	veil, covering, concealing, surrounding, enclosing, interrupting
<i>mala</i>	impurities
<i>āpetasya</i>	devoid of, bereft of, deprived of, removed
<i>jñānasya</i>	of knowledge
<i>ānāntyāt</i>	because of infinity
<i>jñeyam</i>	the knowable
<i>alpam</i>	small, little, trivial

*Then, when the veils of impurities are removed, the highest, subjective, pure, infinite knowledge is attained, and the knowable, the finite, appears as trivial.*

The stream of virtue eradicates all the veils of impurities. The yogi is devoid of doubts, preconceptions and prejudices. The infinite light of the soul illumines him continuously, and his consciousness and the seer become one. For him, knowledge gained through the organs of cognition and through consciousness are insignificant compared with the infinite wisdom emanating from the soul.

This sūtra describes the characteristics of the yogi who is devoid of afflicting actions. His head becomes clear and his heart clean and pure as crystal.

When the clouds disperse, the sky becomes clear. When the sun is bright, no other light is required. When the light of the soul blazes, the yogi does not need mind or intelligence to develop knowledge.

\* In II.16, Patañjali spoke of avoidable future pains. There, he urged the *sādhaka* to train his intelligence through right understanding and cultivation of right action from the moment he begins yoga. In this sūtra, as the consciousness has been fully ripened, he cautions the yogi that if fissures are formed in the *citta*, afflictions will affect him instantaneously and not at a future time.

His knowledge springs eternally from the seed of all knowledge (*ātman*) as *jñāna gaṅgā* (perennial river of wisdom), and he perceives directly. He has reached the state of fulfilment.

(See I.3, 47; II.22, 52; III.49, 56.)

ततः कृतार्थानां परिणामक्रमसमाप्तिर्गुणानाम् ।३२।

IV.32 *tataḥ kṛtārthānām pariṇāmakrama samāptiḥ guṇānām*

<i>tataḥ</i>	thence, by that
<i>kṛtārthānām</i>	having fulfilled their duties
<i>pariṇāmā</i>	change, alteration, transformation, expansion
<i>krama</i>	regular process, course, order, service, succession
<i>samāptiḥ</i>	the end
<i>guṇānām</i>	qualities of nature, <i>sattva</i> , <i>rajas</i> and <i>tamas</i>

*When dharmameghaḥ samādhi is attained, qualities of nature (guṇas) come to rest. Having fulfilled their purpose, their sequence of successive mutations is at an end.*

Having transformed the yogi's consciousness by the radiation of the rays of the soul, the orderly mutations and rhythmic sequences of the qualities of nature, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* come to an end. Their tasks are fulfilled, and they return to nature.

The essence of intelligence and the essence of consciousness both now retire to rest in the abode of the soul. The master, the seer or the soul, is independent. He keeps the *guṇas* in abeyance, or uses them when necessary. They willingly serve him as devoted servants, without influencing him as before, and without interfering in his true glory.

(See II.18, 22-24.)

क्षणप्रतियोगी परिणामापरान्तनिर्ग्राहः क्रमः ।३३।

IV.33 *kṣaṇa pratiyogī pariṇāma aparānta nirgrāhyaḥ kramah*

<i>kṣaṇa</i>	moments
<i>pratiyogī</i>	uninterrupted sequences, corresponding to, related to, co-operating with, equally matched, counteracting
<i>pariṇāma</i>	change, transformation, alteration, expansion
<i>aparānta</i>	at the end
<i>nirgrāhyaḥ</i>	distinctly recognizable, entirely apprehensible, entirely comprehensible
<i>kramah</i>	regular process, course, order, series, succession

As the mutations of the guṇas cease to function, time, the uninterrupted movement of moments, stops. This deconstruction of the flow of time is comprehensible only at this final stage of emancipation.

The sequence of time is related to the order of movements of the *guṇas* of nature. Only the yogi recognizes this inter-relationship and is free from *guṇas*.

The uninterrupted succession of moments is called time. These movements of moments and the uninterrupted mutation of the *guṇas* of nature are distinctly recognizable at the culminating point of transformation.

The average person is not aware of moments: he understands their movement as past, present and future. When moments slip away from one's awareness, one lives in movements. Memory begins to exert its influence, and consciousness is felt at this juncture in the movements of time.

The perfect yogi lives in the moment without getting involved in movements: the movements of moments are arrested, and psychological and chronological time come to an end. Living in the moment, the yogi sees the seer. This is evolution. Nature eternally helps the intelligence and consciousness towards evolution (*pariṇāma nityan*), while the seer remains eternally changeless (*kūṭastha nityan*). (See IV.21 with reference to the *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*. The first bird, as seer, was called *kūṭastha nityan* as it remained steady and still; the other, as consciousness (*pariṇāma nityan*) was constantly moving in the effort to reach the first one.)

Evolution takes place in a moment. Moment implies instant while movement implies time. When change comes, it arrives at once in a moment, only after a series of efforts involving movements of time. Transformation does not come without effort. As change is noticeable to an average individual, so the end transformation is distinguishable to a yogi by virtue of his pure wisdom: *dharma megha samādhi*. He is free from time, place and

space while others remain trapped in this net. He is neither attracted towards nature nor disturbed by it. He is now a divine yogi.

(See II.18; III.13, 15, 53.)

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यं स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा

चितिशक्तिरिति ।३४।

IV.34 *puruṣārtha śūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapratīṣṭhā vā citīśaktiḥ iti*

<i>puruṣārtha</i>	fourfold aims of man; discharging one's duties and obligations to oneself, one's family, society and country ( <i>dharma</i> ); pursuit of vocation or profession, following one's means of livelihood and acquisition of wealth ( <i>artha</i> ); cultured and artistic pursuits, love and gratification of desires ( <i>kāma</i> ); emancipation or liberation from worldly life ( <i>mokṣa</i> )
<i>śūnyānām</i>	devoid of
<i>guṇānām</i>	of the three fundamental qualities
<i>pratiprasavaḥ</i>	involution, re-absorption, going back into the original form
<i>kaivalyam</i>	liberation, emancipation, beatitude
<i>svarūpa</i>	in one's own nature
<i>pratīṣṭhā</i>	establishment, installation, consecration, completion
<i>vā</i>	or
<i>citīśaktiḥ</i>	the power of pure consciousness
<i>iti</i>	that is all

Kaivalya, liberation, comes when the yogi has fulfilled the *puruṣārthas*, the fourfold aims of life, and has transcended the *guṇas*. Aims and *guṇas* return to their source, and consciousness is established in its own natural purity.

The yogi with the stream of virtuous knowledge is devoid of all aims of life as he is free from the qualities of nature. *Puruṣārthas* are man's four aims in life: *dharma* (science of duty), *artha* (purpose and means of life), *kāma* (enjoyments of life) and *mokṣa* (freedom from worldly pleasures). They leave the fulfilled seer and merge in nature.

Patañjali speaks of the *puruṣārthas* only in the very last sūtra. This may puzzle the aspirant. Patañjali is an immortal being who accepted human incarnation with its joys and sorrows, attachments and aversions, in order to live through emotional upheavals and intellectual weaknesses to help us to overcome these obstacles and guide us to freedom. Awareness of the aims of life may have been unconsciously hidden in his heart, to surface only at the end of his work. But his thoughts on the *puruṣārthas* are implicitly contained in the earlier chapters, and expressed clearly at the end. So I feel that the four *pādas* are, consciously or unconsciously, founded on these four aims and stages of activity.

The first *pāda* deals with *dharma*, the science of disciplining the fluctuations of the consciousness. For this reason, it begins with the code of conduct, *Yogānusāsanam*. The second *pāda* gives detailed information regarding this practice and the purpose (*artha*) behind this discipline. Here, the purpose of yoga is physical health and contentment so that one may enjoy the pleasures of the world or seek emancipation (see II.18). The third *pāda* explains the hidden wealth in the form of extraordinary powers which come through yogic practices, tempting one to make use of them for worldly joys (*kāma*) rather than for spiritual purposes. The fourth *pāda* speaks of cultivating actions which cannot produce reactions, and of renouncing the attractions of yogic powers, so that consciousness may dissolve in the light of the soul (*mokṣa*) for the very Being to shine forth.

As Patañjali ends his work with *mokṣa*, the culmination of the four aims, it is perhaps worth considering the social, cultural and civic conditions of his time which still apply to our lives today. The yogis and sages of India formulated ways and means for creating a harmonious and peaceful life by classifying men's minds according to their avocations (*varṇas*), their stages of life (*āśramas*) and their aims in life (*puruṣārthas*).

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad Gīta* (IV.13) that men are born according to their acquired moral, mental, intellectual and spiritual growth. These are known as duties of communities (*varṇa dharma*). *Varṇa* is the psychological characteristic of man according to his words, thoughts and deeds. The word means colour, cover, abode, sort, kind and quality. The four orders are divided according to man's different stages of evolution; they are *brāhmaṇa* (priestly class), *kṣatriya* (warrior class), *vaiśya* (merchant class), and *śūdra* (working class). In the civic sense, they are divisions of labour and not a rigid caste system as they are often held to be.

Again, according to the *Bhagavad Gīta* (VIII.40-44), 'serenity, faith, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forbearance, uprightness and knowledge to lead a pure and divine life' are said to be the characteristics of a *brāhmaṇa*. A *brāhmaṇa* is one who knows about the Self (*puruṣa*), and has understood and realized the divinity in himself.

'Heroism, vigour, firmness, resourcefulness, generosity, fighting for the

right and upholding justice to maintain truth' are the allotted functions of a *kṣatriya*.

'One who cultivates, tends and looks after the needs of society, conserves, is thrifty and frugal, but struggles to earn wisdom and virtue according to his mental capacity' is a *vaiśya*; while one 'who is servile, a sycophant, submissive and labours hard', is a *śūdra*.

These mental characteristics consciously or unconsciously exist even today in all types of vocation. Here is an example of this, applied to yogic discipline. In the beginning of practice, it is a great struggle and effort and one has to sweat profusely in body and brain to get a grasp of it. It is almost like manual labour. This is *śūdra dharma*.

The second stage of evolution in yogic practice begins when one consciously sets out to accumulate experience in order to teach, so as to earn a living. This is *vaiśya dharma*.

When one builds up courage and becomes firm in striving further to develop skill and mastery over the subject, then one gains the authority to share one's knowledge and experience and to maintain and uphold the subtle refinements of the art. Then one's *sādhana* is that of the *kṣatriya*.

If one further proceeds in his practices in order to experience the indivisible, exalted and absolute state of Being (*jīvātman*) which is the body of the Universal Spirit (Paramātman), and surrenders to Him in word, thought and deed, one is a *brāhmaṇa* in yogic *sādhana*. This is the religious fervour of yoga – the aim of each practitioner.

Man's life is similarly divided into four stages of development. They are that of the student (*brahmacharyaśrama*), the ordinary householder (*gṛhasth-āśrama*), the householder who begins to learn non-attachment (*vānaprasth-āśrama*), and finally that of the man detached from worldly thoughts and attached to God (*sannyāsāśrama*). The hundred-year span of man's life is divided into four parts, each of 25 years, so that one may adjust one's life to evolve through these fourfold stages and fourfold objectives of life towards the experience of True Being.

The aims (*puruṣārthas*) are *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa*.

*Dharma* is the careful observation of one's ethical, social, intellectual and religious duties in daily life. Strictly speaking this is taught at the level of studentship, but it must be followed throughout life; without this religious quality in daily life, spiritual attainment is not possible.

*Artha* is acquisition of wealth in order to progress towards higher pursuits of life including understanding the main purpose of life. If one does not earn one's own way, dependence on another will lead to a parasitic life. One is not meant to be greedy while accumulating wealth, but only to meet one's needs, so that one's body is kept nourished so that one may be free from worries and anxieties. In this stage one also finds a partner with whom to lead a householder's life. One comes to understand human love through

individual friendship and compassion, so that one may later develop a universal fellowship leading to the realization of divine love. The householder is expected to fulfil his responsibilities of bringing up his children and helping his fellow men. Therefore, married life has never been considered a hindrance to happiness, to divine love or to the union with the Supreme Soul.

*Kāma* means enjoyment of the pleasures of life provided one does not lose physical health, or harmony and balance of mind. The Self cannot be experienced by a weakling, and the body, the temple of the soul, has to be treated with care and respect. *Āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *dhyāna*, therefore, are essential to purify the body, stabilize the mind and clarify the intelligence. One must learn to use the body as a bow, and *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *dhyāna* as arrows to be aimed at the target – the seer or the soul.

*Mokṣa* means liberation, freedom from the bondage of worldly pleasures. It is the experience of emancipation and beatitude, possible only when one is free from physical, psychological, intellectual and environmental afflictions (see I.30–31), and from poverty, ignorance and pride. In this state one realizes that power, knowledge, wealth and pleasure are merely passing phases. Each individual has to work hard to free himself from the qualities of nature (*guṇas*) in order to master them and become a *guṇātītan*. This is the very essence of life, a state of indivisible, infinite, full, unalloyed bliss.

These aims involve virtuous actions and are linked with the qualities of nature and the growth of consciousness. When the goal of freedom is attained, the restricting qualities of consciousness and nature cease to exist. At this point of fulfilment, the yogi realizes that the seeker, the seer and the instrument used to cognize the seer is *ātman*. This absoluteness of consciousness is nothing but the seer. Now, he is established in his own nature. This is *kaivalyāvasthā*.

The practice of yoga serves all aims of life. Through the proper use of the organs of action, senses of perception, mind, ego, intelligence and consciousness, their purpose of serving their Lord, the seer, comes to an end, and these vestments of the seer, along with the qualities of nature, involute and withdraw, to merge in the root of nature (*mūla-prakṛti*).

There, they are held and isolated. By this, the *citta* becomes pure and supreme. In this supreme state, *citta* divinely merges in the abode of the seer so that the seer can shine forth in his pristine, pure and untainted state of aloneness. Now, the yogi shines as a king amongst men. He is crowned with spiritual wisdom. He is a *kṛtārthan*, a fulfilled soul, who has learned to control the property of nature. He brings purity of intelligence (see III.56) into himself. He is now free from the rhythmic mutation of *guṇas*, of time, and thus free from aims and objects as his search for the soul ends. All the twenty-four principles of nature (see II.19) move back into nature and the twenty-fifth, the seer, stands alone, in *kaivalyam*. He is one without a

second, he lives in benevolent freedom and beatitude. With this power of pure consciousness, *citta śakti*, he surrenders completely to the seed of all seers, *Paramātmā* or God.

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the *Bhagavad Gīta* XVIII.61–62, explains that ‘the Supreme Ruler abides in the hearts of all beings and guides them, mounting them on wheels of knowledge for spiritual evolution’. He says: ‘one who has earned this divine knowledge should seek refuge by surrendering all actions as well as himself to the Supreme Spirit or God’, so that he journeys from Self-Realization towards God-Realization.

Patañjali began the journey towards the spiritual kingdom with the word *aita* meaning ‘now’. He ends with the word *it*, meaning ‘that is all’. The yogi has reached his goal.

Here ends the exposition of *kaivalya*, the fourth *pāda* of Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*.

# Epilogue

Here end the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali, the greatest thinker India has ever known, speaking to us across the ages, at a time when mankind, with its technical and social progress, and its paucity of human and spiritual values, is at a crossroads.

With the ending of the sūtras comes the hope of a new beginning, a new age, a rekindling of interest in Patañjali's universal philosophy, which aims for the good of all mankind.

My words would indeed be in vain if, towards the end of this century, yoga had not become so resoundingly successful, and so widely practised. But yoga is no longer regarded as a 'fringe' subject merely for the elite few, though it deals in transcendentals. It is not a will-o'-the-wisp theory, but tangible, scientific and of proven value. The flame of yoga has lighted for *sādhakas* all over the world the way to physical health, mental strength and spiritual growth.

India is believed to be the mother of civilization. Patañjali is known as the father of yoga. In our own invocatory prayers, we call him a patriarch, spiritual father of many generations, and a revered sage.

His *Yoga Sūtras* is a concise work, eloquent in style, with a minimum of words and an unparalleled wealth of meaning.

The sūtras are terse. Yet they are full of gems of wisdom on which to ponder and by which to live. Patañjali has studied the human condition in depth and shown why man suffers, and how he may overcome his sufferings – how each of us can lead a fuller and happier life.

He was the analyst of consciousness, and its various states and moods. His methodology proves an original mind, a clear, penetrating intellect and an astounding analytical ability.

He offers us a total model of consciousness, both in its internal and external aspects; how it turns outwards, how it turns inwards, and how it may repose quietly within itself. He offers us a clear explanation of the natural and physical world wherever it relates to consciousness, sense awareness and human action. He offers a graduated method of evolution and transcendence of consciousness. He describes differences between individuals according to the three qualities of nature, and explains how each one, according to his aptitude and state of intelligence, may integrate himself through the quest for freedom. Interestingly, he does not consider people

to be fundamentally different at heart. He leads us from the particular and differentiated to the Absolute and Indivisible.

Yet, he is not a dry psychologist or philosopher. He leads us not into the labyrinthine ramifications of the mind and consciousness but into our inner selves, where we may seek shelter and peace. This peace is eternally present in the core of our being, waiting for us, guiding us, sometimes hidden, sometimes chiding, sometimes welcoming. We find this inner peace through our yoga practice.

Patañjali does not omit India's unique traditional contribution to human upliftment, the techniques of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* which play their role in bringing about the states of *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, after the firm foundation has been laid through *yama* and *niyama*. A life which does not include these becomes mechanical, theoretical and static.

The *Yoga Sūtras* are set in a universal context as a guide to human existence, valid for all. Doesn't everyone seek to avoid pain and find pleasure? Patañjali's pedagogical method is uniquely practical: he provides a minimum of 'what' and a maximum of 'how'. He shows us, step by step, how to grow from our life's afflictions towards freedom. Reading and re-reading the sūtras, we notice how often he throws out a lifeline, so that everyone may catch it somewhere. Each chapter explains, sheds light on and integrates the other chapters.

Senses and mind are brought under control by practice. Through practice we overcome afflictions and develop stability and mature intelligence. Through mature intelligence comes renunciation. Patañjali is totally impartial in exploring how one succeeds or why one fails. 'Do this', he says 'and you will see for yourself.' He promises us no material rewards; the most alluring prizes are to be shunned.

Whether or not we reach the goal in this life, the journey in yoga to self-culture is itself worth the effort: we all want refinement in our intelligence and progress in our way of thinking. As we end the *kaivalya pāda*, our lasting impression is of light, fragrance, clarity, simplicity, and unrelenting resolve. Though Patañjali is an austere teacher, he is a wholly compassionate guide, always at our elbow.

Ultimately, the yoga system of Patañjali cannot be compared to other traditional or modern structures of thought, knowledge or wisdom. His work has absolute integrity and permanence and is not to be judged from the outside. Only the practitioner, if he practises with faith and renounces with love, will discover its truth.

If we follow Patañjali's teachings meticulously and diligently, and contemplate their inner meaning in the depths of our own inner selves, we will learn to understand both ourselves and others in a new light. Let us now briefly summarize how this comes about.

According to yoga, there are three qualities of nature (*guṇas*) which per-

meate the mind (*manas*), the intelligence (*buddhi*) and the consciousness (*citta*). Intelligence may in turn be categorized in three tiers – subtle (*sūkṣma*), subtler (*atī sūkṣma*) and the most subtle (*parama sūkṣma*). These can be interpreted as being 'average, sharp and intensely sharp' intellectual sensitivities.

Patañjali thus defines various states of intelligence and awareness of consciousness, so that one who practises yoga will be able to recognize his level of personal evolution and, through practice, transcend it till he reaches the very core of being – the seer. From then on he lives in the abode of the soul. This source has no beginning and no end. It is an eternal, uninterrupted flow of the life-force.

Consciousness (*citta*) has seven facets. They are: emerging, restraining, created, tranquil, attentive, fissured and finally pure, eternal or divine (*vyut-thāna*, *nīrodha*, *nīrmāṇa*, *praśānta*, *ekāgratā*, *chidra* and finally, *śuddha*, *nitya* or *divya*).

If a practitioner uncovers these seven aspects of consciousness, he reaches that exalted, indivisible state of existence where the search for self ends and the seeker becomes the seer.

Patañjali addresses each type of *sādhaka* according to his level of intelligence and awareness. For those of average intellect, he explains five types of afflictions (*kleśas*) and the ways in which they cause disturbances in the *citta*. For those of sharp intellect, he stresses the study of the five fluctuations (*ṛttis*) which may lead to afflictions. In speaking to the most keenly sensitive, he explains the fissures which may occur in the very well of consciousness. He guides each level of practitioner, in ways appropriate to his own evolution, in overcoming the obstacles he encounters on his path of spiritual growth.

Patañjali threads his themes throughout the work, and certain ideas recur. Each time they recur, one is given a slightly different, and deeper, insight. For example, in discussing the effects of actions (*karmaphala*), he explains that though these may vary slightly, their content remains intact (compare II.13–14 with IV.1–2). Almost identical explanations are given in II.20 and IV.18. For those of average intellect, he speaks of sorrows and pains which have yet to come and can be avoided by discipline (II.16); for those of the most subtle and sensitive intellect, he explains that the effect of fissures created in the consciousness is experienced at once (IV.28). And he gives identical ways of overcoming afflictions and disturbances in I.23, 29; II.11 and IV.6 – but by now, one's understanding is deeper and more subtle.

These examples are not exhaustive. In the future, it will be fruitful to make a further comparative study of the sūtras and their relevance in various fields – for example, the education of children.

The initial disciplining of a child through the 'don'ts' and 'do's' is comparable to the *yamas* and *niyamas*. As he grows older he is encouraged to play

