

Chapter 2

Yoga as Sādhana (Practice)

As we move on from Part I to II of the *Yoga-Sūtras* (i.e., from *Samādhi Pāda* to *Sādhana Pāda*), we are inclined to think that we are passing from theory to practice. This does not, however, seem to be the salient, distinguishing feature of the two parts. The first part, as we have seen, is not without reference to practices. The second part, as we shall presently see, is not without theory. It would seem that Part I and II of *Yoga-Sūtras* are directed at two different types of people classified on the basis of Sāṃkhya-Yoga cosmology. The two types of people referred to here are those with two distinctively functioning minds, one unstable, restless, and evolving; the other with a threshold measure of stability to turn the mind inward from its evolutionary march to an involutionary retreat. Part II addresses those with still evolving minds, whereas Part I, it would seem, is for those who are ready for the involutionary turn.

In Part I, as we noted, Patañjali describes yoga as *samādhi* and discusses the means of attaining *samādhi*, its progressive stages, and their attendant mental states. While he asserts that practice of concentration (*abhyāsa*) coupled with development of the attitude of detachment and a sense of dispassionateness (*vairāgya*) are the means for the mind to reach a *samādhi* state, he does not discuss how one may learn to concentrate and promote dispassionateness (*vairāgya*) even though he refers to some of the hurdles and impediments and how they may be overcome. While introducing Part II, Vyāsa comments that the yoga as described in the first part is the yoga for those who are already in a position to concentrate their minds. Therefore, all that they have to do is to engage in practice (*abhyāsa*) of it so that they can reach *samādhi* and higher states of consciousness. However, there are others whose mind is not “concentrated.” How can these people be helped to focus their mind to practice yogic concentration? The second part addresses this question. Thus, we may note, Part I deals with yoga for those who are relatively advanced and adept in concentration and have relatively more focused minds, as required for yoga practice, whereas the Part II is concerned with the ways and means to help the ordinary and the less adept people with the usual restless minds to concentrate. The

former, it would appear, is for those who already reached the threshold levels of concentration and dispassionateness.

Kriyā-Yoga

The second part begins with the description of action-based practical yoga (*Kriyā-yoga*) for those with restless minds. The initiate starts with three basic practices. **Self-discipline (*tapas*), self-study (*svādhyāya*) and self-surrender through celestial love (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*, literally surrender to God), constitute yoga of action (*Kriyā-yoga*)** (II.1). *Kriyā-yoga* is thus the threefold practice involving ascetic practices, understanding of spiritual wisdom, and having unwavering faith in God. Here we are reminded again of the three traditionally advocated *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti* paths.

Tapas is generally translated as practice of austerities, the purpose of which appears to be one of gaining volitional strength or willpower so that one can control the customary longing to which she is habituated. It is a kind of deconditioning exercise to endure deprivation and to learn to deal with the pains and suffering that generally follow the denial of the physical needs and comforts one is used to enjoy. In short, *tapas* is the endurance test intended to develop one's willpower. However, as Vijñānabhikṣu explains, the austerity to be practiced by a yogin is that "which does not adversely affect the clarity of the mind" (Rukmani 1983, p. 1). In other words, the exercises in austerity may be those that help the clarity and focus of the mind to concentrate by developing the necessary willpower, and not those that confuse and distract the mind.

Svādhyāya is self-study to gain knowledge and understanding of truth. Traditionally, it is believed that such knowledge can be obtained by the study of relevant scriptures and repetitive utterance of mystic syllables like OM and other purifying *mantrās*. In its generality, *svādhyāya* may be understood as self-driven pursuit of knowledge. It is an exercise in knowing truth relative to the goal one is seeking.

Īśvara-praṇidhāna literally is self-surrender to God. Vyāsa takes it to mean "the offering up of all actions to the Supreme Teacher or the renunciation of the fruit of (all) these (actions)" (Woods 1914/2007, p. 203). It would seem that *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* implies self-denial through celestial love (*bhakti*). This is something that we find appropriately emphasized in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. In explaining Vyāsa's commentary on the *sūtra*, Vācaspati Miśra quotes from the *Gītā*: "You are concerned with actions only and never with fruits. Do not be one whose motive is the fruit of action. Nor let your attachment be to inaction" (Woods 1914/2007, p. 204). Such a denial of the self in action is believed to be possible by surrendering and devotion to God, which may be considered as celestial love.

Referring to the three attributes of *Kriyā-yoga*, Taimini (2005, p. 129) makes a passing remark, which points to an important aspect of yoga psychology, its holistic conception of the mind, that they correspond to "the triple nature of human

being”—volition, cognition, and emotion. *Tapas* is an exercise for developing willpower, as we interpreted it. *Svādhyāya* is a cognitive pursuit. And *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is emotionally tuned (driven) self-discipline.

Kleśas: Sources of Suffering

What does *Kriyā-yoga* actually accomplish? We are told that **the purpose of *Kriyā-yoga* is for leading [the person] to a state of *samādhi* by attenuating the *kleśas*** (II.2). The word *kleśa* generally refers to sorrow or something that brings suffering. In Yoga, *kleśas* are considered as hindrances that afflict and distract the mind, corrupt one's conduct, bias the person, disturb concentration, and cause obstructions to achieve *samādhi*. Therefore, minimizing and eventually eliminating and rooting out the *kleśas* is a necessary condition for cultivating dispassionateness and concentration and finally achieving states of *samādhi*. In Part I, as we have seen, Patañjali speaks about hurdles and hindrances to concentration, whereas in this part, the focus is on *kleśas* because the person is seen as situated in a sea of suffering. Consequently, the analysis here is primarily the common human predicament and the general causes of ignorance and suffering, and not the situational setbacks that a practicing yogin faces.

Now, what are the *kleśas* that corrupt the mind and hinder the pursuit of yoga? ***Avidyā* (ignorance), *asmitā* (the sense of 'I' or egoness), *rāga* (attachment), *dveṣa* (aversion), and *abhiniveśa* (will-to-live) are the five *kleśas* (hindrances)** (II.3).

Vyāsa comments that the *kleśas* are indeed five misconceptions of the mind, thoughts, and actions born of ignorance. They are one's misconstruals, erroneous apprehensions, or illusions. They are the root causes of the existential predicament of suffering. They feed on each other. For example, from ignorance comes attachment and attachment reinforces and perpetuates ignorance. *Kleśas* prolong the evolutionary process, promote the *guṇa* fermentation, and cause flooding of the cause–effect stream, activate karma, and continue the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

The central point is that *kleśas* are instrumental in creating states of mind that obstruct concentration and are antithetical to the attitude of dispassionateness (*vairāgya*) the yogin is expected to assiduously cultivate in order to move toward *samādhi* states. *Kleśas* tend to render the mind less stable and more perturbed and unsteady.

As Patañjali makes it explicit in the next *sūtra*, *avidyā* is the ground condition and all the other *kleśas* are manifestations of *avidyā*. We find in them the functioning of the three *guṇas*. Inasmuch as the three *guṇas* manifest their own forms, which are mutually opposed and inconsistent, we have a variety of mental states, depending on the proportionate presence and dominance of the *guṇas*, and the consequent persistent instability of the mind. Also, the variety of motivations that manifest in one's behavior springs from the mix of *guṇas*.

Patañjali states that ***avidyā* is the field (*kṣetram*) for the other *kleśas* to sprout, whether they are dormant, attenuated, intercepted or fully manifest** (II.4).

Thus, *avidyā*, the misunderstanding of truth is conceived as the source, the basic ground condition, and in a sense the “mother” of all hindrances and afflictions that cause pain, sorrow, and suffering. It permeates all afflictions. When *avidyā* dwindles, the other afflictions corrupting the mind also tend to disappear. Therefore, the remedy consists in discerning knowledge and true enlightenment that dispels the illusions engendered by ignorance. The *sūtras* also state that the *kleśas* come in four forms or states. The dormant state is one in which a *kleśa* rests in a potential form like a seed that would germinate when conducive conditions are present. A dormant *kleśa* would become an actual hindrance when it comes face-to-face with the appropriate object, which manifests it, like the rain helping the seed to sprout. However, for those whose seeds of *kleśas* are burnt by the fire of true knowledge, the *kleśas* like sterilized seeds do not sprout in one’s experience.

Kleśas are weakened and attenuated by cultivating their opposite states. As Vācaspati Miśra explains: “The opposite of the hindrances is the yoga of action; by the cultivation, by the following up, of this, the hindrances become overpowered, that is, attenuated” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 109). *Kleśas* are described as intercepted when a *kleśa* overpowered by another fails to manifest itself, just as, when a man is in love with a woman, any anger against her does not arise in him. A *kleśa* operational in a person is described as being in a fully operational manifest state.

What then is the *avidyā* that is believed to be the ground in which all *kleśas* grow, corrupt the mind, and hinder the march toward *samādhi*? ***Avidyā* is misconstrual of the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the sorrowful as pleasurable, and the nonself as the self** (II.5).

Avidyā is not absence of knowledge. Rather it refers to an altogether different category. Vyāsa concludes his comments on this *sūtra* with this observation: “*avidyā* is not a source-of-valid-ideas nor the negation of a source-of-valid-ideas, but another kind of thinking the reverse of knowledge” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 112). Dasgupta (2001) points out: “The conception of *avidyā* or nescience in Yoga is not negative, but it has a definite positive aspect. It means that kind of knowledge which is opposed to true knowledge” (p. 84). Thus, *avidyā* consists in the misconstrual of a phenomenal experience as something more than what it really is in actuality. According to Patañjali, this misconstrual is fourfold. First, it is the misconstrual of the phenomenal world of experience, which is merely an ever-changing effect, as truly enduring and eternal. Second, it is the mistaking of the impure such as the outward appearance of a woman’s body to the man in love with her as pure and beautiful belying its true composition behind the appearance. Third, it is mistaking as pleasurable what is in truth pain. Sensual indulgence may give rise to transient pleasure; but that pleasure is tainted by apprehension of pain in the future. Experiences of pleasure or pain leave their deposits in the unconscious as *saṃskāras*. These cause the passion for pleasure and ceaseless longing for it, and aversion to pain and anxiety to avoid it. Thus, what is momentarily experienced as pleasure is in truth a sequence in the perpetual flow of pain. Fourth, the final form of *avidyā* is the misconstrual of the nonself as the *self*. It consists in the conviction that the mind–body complex, especially the *buddhi* aspect of it colored by *tamas* and driven by *rajas* as the true and abiding *self*.

Asmitā (the sense of I, egoness) is the experience of identity of the power of seer and the power of seeing (II.6). *Asmitā* is personal identity engendered by the ego sense. It arises in the cognitive act of knowing, which consists in the reflection of the *puruṣa* illumining the *buddhi* in its manifest form (*citta-vṛtti*). The illumined *vṛtti* constitutes the awareness of the object whose form the *buddhi* has taken. Awareness involves illumination of the contents of the *buddhi* by the reflection of *puruṣa*. The power of seeing or observing is that of the *buddhi*, but the one who sees or observes is the *puruṣa*. The misapprehension of the instrument of knowing (*buddhi*) as the subject of knowing, “the knower” (the seer) is the source of egoness and the false sense of personal identity. As Vyāsa comments: “He who should fail to see that the Self [*puruṣa*] is other than the thinking-substance [*buddhi*], distinct in nature and in character and in consciousness and in other respects, would make the mistake of putting his own thinking-substance in the place of that [Self]” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 115). As Vijñānabhikṣu explains, it is because of the mutual superimposition of the mind on the *puruṣa* that the person has experience of I-ness as stated in *Sāṃkhya-Kārika* (20). “Therefore (because the sentient *puruṣa* is the non-doer; and the active *prakṛti* is insentient) due to the connection between the two, the insentient *prakṛti* appears as sentient and similarly though activity is in fact of the constituents (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) of *prakṛti*, the indifferent *puruṣa* appears as the doer” (Rukmani 2001, p. 28). Is there any difference between *avidyā* and *asmitā*? Both are illusory misconstruals; but the difference between the two is that *avidyā* is the cause where as *asmitā* is the effect.

Next in line among the *kleśas* is *raga* or attachment. Patañjali states **that which follows pleasure is attachment (*rāga*) (II.7).** *Rāga* is the pleasure principle; it is the passionate desire for pleasure and the means of attaining it. Attachment arises from the experience of pleasure or from the recall of such an experience in the past. *Rāga* may be seen as the effect of egoness (*asmitā*) in much the same sense as *avidyā* is the cause of *asmitā*.

That which follows sorrow (*duḥkha*) is aversion (*dveṣa*) (II.8). *Dveṣa* arises from suffering, the experience of pain and sorrow (*duḥkha*), or from the recall of pain. Aversion is not merely the desire to avoid pain but it also engenders hatred and desire of vengeance.

According to Patañjali, ***abhiniveśa* (will-to-live), driven by its own nature, afflicts even the wise and learned (II.9).** The ardent desire to live, the craving for life, with the associated fear of death is instinctive to all living beings in that it is driven by itself. The yoga thinkers take this as evidence for a previous life because such a fear of death would only exist in one who had the experience of death. This affliction is found all the way from the “unspeakably stupid” to the wisest because, as Vyāsa says, it is the result of the *saṃskāra*, born of previous experience of death, “is alike in both fortunate and unfortunate” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 118).

It would seem that the false identity one assumes following the misconstrual of the mind as the true *self* is the central and core affliction from which spring the other states that corrupt the mind. From this false identity, one develops the sense of the ego. From the ego arise attachment (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*). Even though *abhiniveśa*, the will-to-live and the fear of death, are described as instinctive and

driven by their own nature, they may also be seen as springing from the ego (Dasgupta 1920/2001).

Kleśas, as we have seen, are the special forms of *avidyā*, which afflict our minds. They are misconstruals precipitated by the constituent *guṇas*. The afflictions are behind our actions (*karma*) whether virtuous (*dharma*) or otherwise. Actions produce *saṃskāras* that in turn make the person perform future actions. This is a cyclic process that goes on and on until the person breaks the circle by such consummate practices as yoga or until a natural catastrophe (*pralaya*) strikes, and all the minds with their accumulated afflictions revert back to their original source in *prakṛti*. When the evolution of *prakṛti* restarts after the *pralaya*, according to Yoga, the minds with their inlaid afflictions resurface to continue the cycle of birth and death.

It may be noted that all the states of the mind (*vṛttis*) are not afflicted by the manifestations of *avidyā*. Some *vṛttis* are afflicted (*kliṣṭavṛttis*) and some are unafflicted (*akliṣṭa*). Practice of concentration and cultivation of dispassionateness are conducive to creating conditions for gaining true knowledge which dispels *avidyā* and along with it the rest of afflictions. We are reminded that the *akliṣṭa* (unafflicted) states are not the same as virtuous actions because all actions, whether virtuous or otherwise, spring from afflictions (Dasgupta 1920/2001, pp. 87–88).

In the following two *sūtras* (10–11), Patañjali tells us how we may overcome the *kleśas* afflicting the mind. ***Kleśas in their unmanifest subtle (potential) state are overcome when the mind becomes inactive and finds its place in prakṛti in its primordial state*** (II.10). When the mind ceases its generally incessant activity and dissolves itself in its source, the *prakṛti*, the *kleśas* like burnt seeds come to rest with the minds. In Sāṃkhya-Yoga, the person, as a psychically functioning being, is primarily a product of the *evolution* of *prakṛti*. In a sense, the pinnacle of evolution is the human mind. Conjoined with *puruṣa* in the person, the mind has the possibility to invert or reverse the process of its evolution, a process which may be called *involution*. Involution, as Vyāsa explains, is inverse-propagation (*pratiprasava*) (Vyāsa, II.2). Whereas evolution is driven by the increasing instability of the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—involution takes place by the increasing stability of them promoted by the dominance of *sattva* over the other *guṇas*, the ultimate result being the state of *kaivalya*, where there is total *sattva* dominance. *Kaivalya* is then the state when the mind of the yogin achieves total stability by complete suppression of the other two *guṇas*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. This is the final stage of *involution* for the person, where the mind merges back into the primary matter of *prakṛti*, leaving the *puruṣa* alone unencumbered by and disentangled from the mind in its multiple manifestations. Evolution may be thus seen as essentially an encumbrance, clouding of consciousness by *prakṛti*, whereas *involution* serves the purpose of unclouding *puruṣa* by the mind so as to realize and redeem itself. Perhaps it may be said with some metaphorical justification that *prakṛti* in its evolutionary phase “enslaves” or “imprisons” the *puruṣa* in the person by its manifestations. In the involutionary phase, however, the person moves progressively to a condition where the *puruṣa* becomes free from the encumbrances of *prakṛti*, and the latter is returned to its primordial condition. This then appears to be the cosmic conundrum of creation and dissolution.

Kleśas in the manifest (active) forms may be overcome by meditation (II.11). Patañjali thus appears to refer to two levels of *kleśas*, those that are manifest and are in a gross form and those that are not so manifest but remain subtle. If the former is the active level, the latter is the latent level, more like a seed. *Kriyā-yoga*, as we have seen, can help attenuate and weaken the *kleśas*, but cannot completely destroy them. Their complete eradication takes place at the time of *kaivalya*, the state of enlightenment and self-realization. In *sūtra* (II.10), Patañjali is referring to such total eradication of *kleśas*. In the following *sūtra* (II.11), he is suggesting the process to disable the *kleśas* that survive the practice of *Kriyā-yoga*. By constant practice of meditation (*dhyaṇa*), we are told, the *kleśas* are deactivated like burned seeds unfit to germinate. The mind tainted by *kleśas* may be cleaned first by simple wash (*Kriyā-yoga*) that removes surface stains and then by a special wash (meditation) to remove the deeper (*sūkṣma*) stains.

Karmāśaya: The Receptacle of Karma

Now, Patañjali goes on to deal in *sūtras* 12, 13, and 14 with the question why is it so necessary to destroy the *kleśas*. Pointing out that *kleśas* are a continuous source of pain, Patañjali provides a theory of behavioral causation and postulates the existence of *karmāśaya*, a permanent depository of accumulated karma. *Karmāśaya* is the receptacle of one's past actions as well as the womb of dispositions to act in future. In a sense, it is the pervasive unconscious that has profound and dynamic impact on the life and living of the person now and later.

Karmāśaya (the receptacle of karma), which is the source of all that happens in this or future lives, is rooted in kleśas (II.12). *Karmāśaya* is the depository of all the effects of one's thoughts, passions, and actions, and it is the womb of all the dispositions to act. As Taimni (2005) says, "the important point to note here is that though this 'causal' vehicle [*karmāśaya*] is the immediate or effective cause of the present and future lives and from it, to a great extent, flow the experiences which constitute those lives, still, the real or ultimate cause of these experiences are the *kleśas*. Because, it is the *kleśas* which are responsible for the continuous generation of karmas and the causal vehicle merely serves as a mechanism for adjusting the effects of these karmas" (pp. 158–159).

In Yoga psychology, one's thoughts, passions, and actions generate karma, and karma is colored and even driven by the *kleśas*. A person's present behavior is on the one hand prompted by the past karma and on the other hand it generates new karma which in turn affects future behavior. In a sense, therefore, one's current behavior is determined and controlled by past experiences, and future behavior is conditioned by the present and past experiences. *Karmāśaya* is the receptacle of karma and the depository of dispositions to act. It thus controls the process of behavioral causation and is of crucial importance in understanding the behavior of beings.

Yoga, as we noted earlier, subscribes to the doctrine of reincarnation and the continuity of the mind after the dissolution of the body. Along with the mind, the

karmāśaya, its unconscious surround, survives, and influences/causes the future births and lives. Consequently, the person may not reap the consequences of his/her actions now or later in this life. Certain karma is typically meant for future lives. Yoga classifies karma into several categories and identifies those actions (karma) that bear results in the present life and those that are likely to fortify in future lives. What is interesting here is the recognition that one's behavior is not random and unpredictable. If we know one's past fully, then we can pretty much predict what is likely to happen in future. As long as one is afflicted with *kleśas*, the only way karma once deposited can be emptied from the *karmāśaya* is by bringing it to "fruition". Once registered in "life's ledger," karma debit may be erased only by paying it.

However, as the next *sūtra* states, there is a way out to deal with karmic deposits by learning about how the *karmāśaya* leads to the continuance of the cycle of birth and death. **As long as there is the root [*kleśas*], it [*karmāśaya*] functions generating birth, determining the duration of life and the nature of experience** (II.13).

Kleśas are the roots that help nurture the *karmāśaya* and make it functional, karma and yielding its fruits. When these roots are cut, the karmic deposits become like seeds that are husked or burnt, which are completely incapable of sprouting. As Vyāsa comments, "the latent deposits of karma, when encased within hindrances, are propogative of fruition, but neither the winnowed hindrances nor seed in the condition of having been burned by the Elevation (*prasamkhyāna*) [is propogative]" (Woods 1914/2007, p. 123).

It follows that the *kleśas* not only cause and sustain the *karmāśaya*, they also control the results flowing from it. This has twin implications. First, *kleśas* are primary determinants in programming life in its various facets and in determining one's behavior in predictable ways. Second, by dealing with them, such as eradicating them, the program can be altered. Here then is the escape from the otherwise pervasive determinism that pervades behavior.

They [birth, longevity and experiences in life] have as their fruit pain or pleasure depending on whether their cause is meritorious (*puṇya*) or of demerit (*pāpa*) (II.14).

What one experiences as pain or pleasure is a matter of the antecedent actions whether they are virtuous or violative of right conduct. While pain is experienced as anguish to be avoided and pleasure is pursued as a joyous act, Yoga suggests that both kinds of experiences are to be avoided because what appears as pleasure turns out at the end as a source of pain. As Vācaspati Miśra explains, "neither joy nor extreme anguish can exist without the other" (Woods 1914/2007, p. 132). Pain is that which is "inherently adverse" to the progress of the person in pursuit of self-realization. Therefore, the yogin sees only pain even when she encounters pleasure because it is also adverse to her goal.

The Existential Anguish

The existential anguish is the anxiety to desist pain and long for pleasure. Why so? Why is pain such a pervasive human condition? Patañjali answers:

To the discriminating (*vivekaniāḥ*) all is suffering (*duḥkha*) because pain is the natural result of manifest changes (*pariṇāma*), anxieties (*tāpa*), and latent dispositions (*saṃskāras*) and because of the conflicting states of mind engendered by the conflicting *guṇas* (*guṇa-vṛtti-virodha*) (II.15).

This *sūtra* succinctly summarizes the central thesis of Yoga regarding the human predicament of pervasive suffering. As in Buddhism, we find in Yoga the basic assumption that humans are situated in a sea of suffering. The discerning and the wise see this even when they find themselves in what others see as pleasurable conditions; and they attempt to cross it whereas the unwise and deluded drown themselves in them exhausted by vain attempts to avoid pain and experience pleasure. The discriminating persons see suffering and pain, beset by the evolving changes, in the anxieties experienced, in the conditioning *saṃskāras* disposing them to act in certain ways, and in the conflicting states of mind manifested by the unstable *guṇas* constituting it.

Change (*pariṇāma*) is the natural process of the evolving *prakṛti*. Whether recognized or not, we are situated in a system that is constantly changing, a system in a state of perpetual flux. Change here is the natural law. It is a misconstrual (*avidyā*) of major magnitude to expect persistent pleasure in the passing phantoms of momentary experience of pleasure. As Vyāsa comments, in each and every case, the experience of pleasure engenders passion (*rāga*), attachment to the object associated with it, and the consequent greed and longing for it. Passion prompts action, and action leaves behind deposits of karma. Similarly, experience of pain is accompanied by aversion to the object causing pain. Attachment and aversion, as stated previously, are *kleśas* that are the root causes of pain and suffering. Vyāsa also refers to the often mentioned statement that seeking pleasure in a sensory object is *avidyā*. Pleasure is permeated by passion and is impossible without it. All acts of pleasure lead to karma that is deposited in *karmāśaya*. A man experiencing pleasure not only gets attached to it, but he also feels aversion to those that result in pain to him. Unable to prevent the causes of pain, he misconstrues and rationalizes.

The thirst for pleasure is not quenched by sensory enjoyment. Such enjoyment on the one hand increases passion and on the other hand sharpens the skills of senses to seek and serve those pleasures. In the process, like the man fleeing from a scorpion, fearing its painful bite, gets bitten by a poisonous snake, and ends up with more frightening consequences. Therefore, attempts to seek pleasure or escape from pain are not the right means for avoiding *pariṇāma duḥkha*, suffering caused by the changing states. Sensory gratification of pleasure cannot quench the thirst for pleasure because each gratification of pleasure increases the desire for more, like pouring ghee into the sacrificial fire increases the fire rather than diminishing it.

Anxiety (*tāpa*) is another common cause of pain. It works in the same way as *pariṇāma duḥkha*. *Duḥkha* caused by anxiety, as Vyāsa says, is the one permeated

by aversion (*dveṣa*). Aversion leads to greed and misconstrual from which arise the latent deposits in *karmāśaya* contributing to the continuation of the cycle of karma and its fruition in later life.

saṃskāras are subliminally registered and stored experiences of pleasure and pain. They are carriers of karma. They help cause the experience of pleasure and pain as inevitable results at the appropriate time in the life of the person. Each time a person experiences pleasure, a *saṃskāra* of that experience is generated. Similarly, the pain experience results in a *saṃskāra* of the painful experience and the disposition to avoid it. As mentioned earlier, pleasure and pain are permeated by passion and aversion, so are *saṃskāras* of pain and pleasure. When a *saṃskāra* results in the experience of pleasure or pain, that experience in turn generates another *saṃskāra*, and thus, the stream of phenomenal experience of pleasure and pain continues to flood the life of the person unless one takes decisive steps to arrest the continuous accretion of karma and stop the further addition and reinforcement of *saṃskāras*.

As the commentators explain, the stream of experience with its unseen beginning and end does not normally bother and distress except the discerning person (*vivekaniḥ*), who alone is sufficiently sensitive, like a thread of wool or a particle of dust that does not trouble the rest of the body as it does when it touches the eyeball.

Guṇa-vṛtti-virodha is the fourth source of perennial pain. It refers to the conflicting states of mind caused by the three *guṇas*—*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*—each with its own characteristic effects on the mind of the person. The changes in one's state of mind are a consequence of the changes in the functioning and dominance of the respective *guṇas*. In Yoga theory, the functioning of the *guṇas* is constantly changing. So are the states of mind. The changing *vṛttis* generated by the opposing *guṇas* manifest conflicting states of mind. These are seen by the discriminating person as essentially painful in nature.

The seed of all this pain is *avidyā*, the misconstrual of what one experiences. To overcome the misconstrual, one needs focused insight (*samyag darśanam*) and right knowledge. Vyāsa refers to the metaphor of medicine and suggests the fourfold division of suffering—(1) The disease is *saṃsāra* with the symptom of pain. (2) The cause is the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. (3) The goal (the health condition) is liberation, freedom from the bondage of *saṃsāra*, and pain resulting from it. (4) And the remedy is focused insight to dispel *avidyā* and gain one's true identity as distinct from the associated world (*pradhāna*) of *prakṛti*. In such a state of liberation (*mokṣa*), there is absolute cessation of all pain; the seer abides in oneself as stated in *sūtra* I.3.

Patañjali points out that **the pain to overcome is the one yet to come** (II.16). Pain is seen as threefold—(1) the pain experienced in the past, (2) the pain that is being experienced at present, and (3) the pain yet to come in future. Of the three, the third, the pain yet to come, is the only kind that one can and may seek to overcome. The past pain was already experienced; therefore, it is not something to overcome. Likewise, the pain being experienced cannot be stopped. What is left therefore is the pain yet to come. So the concern of the yogin is to eradicate the pain which is in the future.

It is the entanglement of the person with the objects of her experience that is the prime source of pain. It is the commingling and the consequent confusion between the subject and the object that causes pain. As Patañjali says: **The cause of the pain to be overcome is the association (*saṃyoga*) between the seer and the seen** (II.17).

The Seer and the Seen

The seer is the *puruṣa*. *Puruṣa* is the witness of what goes on in the mind (*buddhi*). What is seen are the objects presented by the *buddhi*. The person becomes aware of reflections of the *puruṣa* in the associated *buddhi*. *Buddhi* channeled through the senses takes the form of proximate objects. What undergoes modifications in this process is the *sattva* component of the *buddhi* influenced by the other two *guṇas*. *Puruṣa* by its association with the *sattva* of the *buddhi* is taken as the owner of the image reflected by the *buddhi* in the form its *sattva* takes and thus has the experience of the perceived object. As Vācaspati Miśra explains, “the Seer, enjoying within himself the pleasure and other [experience] offered by the *sattva* of the thinking-substance which has entered into mutation in the form of various things, becomes the proprietor. And the *sattva* of the thinking-substance [having mutations] of such a kind becomes his property. So this same *sattva* of the thinking-substance, containing the forms of the various things, becomes the object-of-sight; and being like a magnet, it becomes the property of the Self whose nature is seeing and who is the proprietor” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 141).

The embodied *puruṣa*, i.e., the person, tends to identify *puruṣa* with the mind-body complex; and such mistaken identity is the source of pain and suffering. What are seen are the objects as they manifest in the *buddhi*. In having the experience, the person confuses and misconstrues the mind with the *puruṣa* and mistakes the nature of *prakṛti* with that of *puruṣa*. This is the existential entanglement perpetuated by the association of the *puruṣa* with the *buddhi*—an entanglement that is the cause of the pain to be overcome. Vyāsa points out that the *rajas* component of the mind disturbs the *sattva* component. When the *sattva* of the *buddhi* is disturbed, the *puruṣa* being associated with it is also seen as disturbed. There is thus the apparent suffering of *puruṣa* precipitated by this entanglement. The remedy is separation of the two by the realization of the distinctiveness of the seer (*puruṣa*) and the seen (*buddhi*). Traveling on the road of *saṃsāra* is like treading the path filled with thorns. Therefore, one should avoid that path or protect oneself with proper shoes so that no thorn can pierce the sole.

The next *sūtra* deals with the nature of the seen, the observed, the object-of-sight. **The nature of the seen is the lucidity, activity and inert stability. It is constituted by the elements and senses. It has for its purpose the experience and liberation of the *puruṣa*** (II.18).

The above *sūtra* is a succinct description of the phenomenal world of one's experience based on Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy. The properties of the phenomenal world, the qualia, are the manifestations of the three basic attributes (*guṇas*) of

prakṛti. *Sattva* is considered luminous, the lucidity that enables the object to be seen. Therefore, luminosity may be understood to mean the information content of the object. *Rajas* is that attribute of *prakṛti*, which manifests activity; it is the energy component of matter. *Tamas* is that which obstructs the light of *sattva* as well as the activity of *rajas* and tends to veil information, inhibit action, and make the object inert. *Tamas* literally means darkness. As darkness, it stands for ignorance as opposed to the light and lucidity of *sattva*. As inactivity, *tamas* is opposed to *rajas*. At a given time, one *guṇa* may be prominent and others play a subsidiary role. However, each of the *guṇas* retains its distinctive power, which continues to influence the manifest form. Thus, there is mutual influence of the *guṇas* in all the manifestations of *prakṛti*, we find in the world.

The phenomenal world is constituted by the basic elements of materiality and the senses. What is seen has a true material base outside of the mind, processed by the sensory organs. The object-of-sight, what is seen, exists in Yoga theory to serve the *puruṣa* as his experience, and at the same time, it also serves as a vehicle for liberation. If the *guṇas* are the primary cause of the manifest world of phenomena, the purpose of serving the *puruṣa* is the efficient cause. Vyāsa clarifies that, though the objects of the world are for the experience and liberation of the *puruṣa*, what is truly bound is not the *puruṣa* before release and liberation, but it is the *buddhi* which serves the purpose of the *puruṣa*. In a sense, therefore, life is the play of *puruṣa* who engages the vehicle *buddhi* to ride on to the destination of liberation experiencing on the way the multitude of *prakṛti*'s manifestations. Until that goal of liberation is reached, the *buddhi* is in bondage to serve the *puruṣa*. However, inasmuch the *puruṣa* is the witness of this journey, it would appear as if they belong to the *puruṣa*. "Bondage is of the thinking-substance only and is the failure to attain the purposes of the Self. Release is the termination of the purpose of the Self. Thus it is that processes-of-knowing and processes-of-retention and comprehensions-of-particulars (*ūha*) and removals-of-faults (*apoha*) and real-knowledge and the will-to-live, [all] existing in the thinking-substance, are assumed to exist in the Self. For he as we know has the experience of the results of these" (Woods 1914/2007, p. 145).

In the following *sūtra* Patañjali refers to the different phases in the evolution of the phenomenal world; and Vyāsa in his commentary on it elaborates the evolution of the objects of the world from the three *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. **The *guṇas* manifest in forms that are differentiated and individuated (*viśeṣa*) and as undifferentiated and individualized (*aviśeṣa*) and in forms that reveal its cause (*liṅga*) and those with no such indication (*aliṅga*) (II.19).**

As Vyāsa explains, the differentiated and particularized ones are sixteen. They include the five cognitive and five conative senses and the mind (*manas*). The undifferentiated forms are the sense of I or ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and the five *tanmātras* (*gandha*, *rasa*, *rūpa sparśa*, and *śabda*). From the *tanmātras* evolve the five gross elements and their compounds. *Prakṛti* in its primordial state is *aliṅga* and its first manifestation, the *sattva* dominant *mahat* (the great being, the undifferentiated *buddhi*) is *liṅga*.

Having thus explained the observed, Patañjali goes on to say what the observer is. **The seer is consciousness-as-such, but he is also the witness to what is present in the mind** (II.20). Vyāsa explains that though the *puruṣa* is consciousness-as-such, it also witnesses the reflections in the *buddhi* and thus enables the person to become aware of them. *Puruṣa* is neither homogeneous nor heterogeneous with *buddhi*. *Buddhi* undergoes constant change whereas there is no such change in *puruṣa*. Again, *buddhi* serves the purpose of another than work for itself, whereas *puruṣa* exists for itself. Inasmuch as *puruṣa* witnesses and is aware of what goes in the mind, it may not be considered completely homogeneous.

Patañjali suggests that **the seen (the world of phenomena) exists for the sake of the seer (*puruṣa*)** (II.21). *Puruṣa*, as mentioned earlier, is consciousness-as-such. The observed object (phenomenon of experience) exists for and serves the purpose of *puruṣa* in the sense that the act of observing takes place with the commingling of the object and *puruṣa* in the person, i.e., when the object becomes the object of *puruṣa*'s seeing. The object becomes knowable to the person only in the presence of *puruṣa*. In other words, *puruṣa* bestows consciousness on the object. As Vijñānabhikṣu explains in *Yoga-Vārttika*, because of the act of knowing of *puruṣa* "an object becomes fit to be seen only when it becomes its (*puruṣa*'s) object. Everyone is agreed that the purpose of (the existence) of all objects is their becoming knowable (objects of consciousness); therefore it is for its (*puruṣa*'s) sake that the true nature of *guṇas* (objects) exists" (Rukmani 2001, p. 147).

Vyāsa in his commentary on the *sūtra* points out that once the seer has the experience of the object and achieves liberation, the object disappears but is not destroyed. For the *puruṣa* in a state of liberation, the object ceases to exist, but "it (object) does not utterly cease to be."

The next *sūtra* gives the reason why the object is not destroyed with the liberation of the *puruṣa*. **Though the object no longer serves the purpose of the *puruṣa* (after its liberation) and therefore ceases to be the object-of-sight for that *puruṣa*, it does not cease to exist because it is common to others (*puruṣas*)** (II.22).

This is the basic postulate of Sāṃkhya-Yoga dualism, an assertion of the reality of the objects of *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* in its various manifestations serves *puruṣa*, but it has its own independent existence beyond the *puruṣa*. When an object serves the purpose of a *puruṣa*, it ceases to be seen by that *puruṣa*. This does not imply that the object ceases to exist because there is plurality of *puruṣas*. Besides this *puruṣa* there are others, who have not achieved liberation. Therefore, the object can be the object-of-sight for another *puruṣa*. Thus, the objects of the world continuously change; however, their commingling with *puruṣas* is constant. In other words, even though the phenomenalized object ceases from time to time, the object itself remains permanent. For this reason, it is said that the association/commingling (*saṃyogah*) of *buddhi* and *puruṣa* when considered in this generality is said to be without beginning.

Person as Embodied Consciousness

What is the nature of the commingling (*saṃyogah*) of *puruṣa* and *buddhi*? What purpose does such commingling serve? Patañjali answers: **Commingling helps [the person] to become aware of the powers of the property and the proprietor of that property** (II.23).

The proprietor here refers to *puruṣa*, consciousness, the possessor of the property, and property to *buddhi* (mind) the container of the content of consciousness. The coming together of the two in an act of cognition is for the purpose of revealing their true natures. When the commingling of the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* gives rise to the awareness of the object, there is experience. When there is the realization of the true nature of consciousness-as-such, the seer (*puruṣa*), it is liberation (*mokṣa*). In other words, *puruṣa* commingles with *buddhi* for the purpose of seeing (knowing) the object. When the object is known, the *puruṣa* has an experience of the object. However, when this commingling leads to the awareness of the seer (*puruṣa*), as distinct from the object seen, there is liberation. Thus, the commingling of the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* have two effects—one of knowing the object (experience) and the other of realizing the *self* or consciousness-as-such. The cause of bondage is the failure to see the difference between the two; once that difference is seen, the association between *puruṣa* and *buddhi* comes to an end in a state of *kaivalya*.

The commingling may be seen as the embodiment of consciousness in the person. The association between the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* in the person results in temporary entanglement of the two and the clouding of *puruṣa* consciousness. **The cause is *avidyā*** (II.24). As Vyāsa explains, *avidyā* refers to the biasing influence, the misconstruals (*viparyaya-jñāna*), arising in the mind possessed by the unconscious *saṃskāra*-complex of *vāsanās*. In the person, the *puruṣa* is the witness to what goes on in the mind, and this is the association between the two. This commingling of the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* in the person gives rise to the proprietor–property relationship. That is the entanglement that precipitates the existential predicament of suffering and pain.

Mistaking of this relationship as one’s own true nature and the failure to see that it is not a true relationship is the misconstrual engendered by the unconscious *vāsanās*. We may note that the emphasis here is on the dispositions to misconstrue rather than misconstruals as such that were referred to in earlier *sūtras*. Vyāsa justifies this by saying that the latent dispositions, the unconscious complexes (*vāsanās*), are the affects of *avidyā* and therefore have their origin in *avidyā*. It is these unconscious complexes that bring about the association between the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi* repeatedly birth after birth even when there is an apparent outward cessation of their association. As Śaṅkara explains: “Actual illusion is never a cause of the functioning because it does not exist before the rise of the mind (*buddhi*), and so it is taught that it is the *saṃskāra*-complex of illusion which is the cause of the conjunction of *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*” (Leggett 1983, p. 83).

Buddhi possessed of *vāsanās* is in bondage and cannot help to fulfill the goal of *puruṣa* liberation in the person by self-realization. Only by realization of true

knowledge does *buddhi* fulfill the purpose of *puruṣa*. Until this happens, the cycle of *saṃsāra* and the continued commingling of *puruṣa* and *buddhi* go unabated.

Having thus identified the disease as suffering and its cause as the entanglement (*samyogaḥ*) of *puruṣa* with *buddhi* brought about by *avidyā*, Patañjali goes on to suggest that the healthy state is one where, in the absence of *avidyā*, there is no entanglement.

Without it (*avidyā*) there is no entanglement; the *puruṣa* is in the liberated state (*kaivalya*) (II.25). With the overcoming of *avidyā* (ignorance) and realization of the misconstrual of false identity between the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi*, there would be an end to the entanglement between the two, and the *puruṣa* attains the state of liberation. *Kaivalya* is the ultimate state of self-realization where the *puruṣa* abides in its own nature. With the *buddhi* having fulfilled the purpose of clearing the *puruṣa* from its clouding, the *puruṣa* suffers no further bondage. It is a state of complete dissociation between the two leaving no possibility for any future entanglement of the *puruṣa* with *guṇas*. Thus, there is complete cessation of suffering for good in a state of self-realization.

How can one overcome *avidyā* and remove the entanglement of *puruṣa* and *buddhi*? **The way to remove entanglement is continuous cultivation of discriminating insight (*viveka-khyāti*)** (II.26). As Vyāsa elaborates, *viveka-khyāti* consists in cultivating insight to become aware of the difference between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*, which is masked by *avidyā* and its manifestations. The *kleśas* born of *avidyā* hinder the continuous and uninterrupted flow of correct knowledge. Therefore, the false perceptions and erroneous knowledge prompted by *rajas* should be reduced to the condition of burnt seeds and rendered impotent so that they would not sprout later. The continuous cultivation of discriminative insight is an exercise in cleansing the mind of its impurities, to repress *rajas* and strengthen *sattva*. As Vācaspati Mīśra explains: “The discriminative discernment (*viveka-khyāti*), which in concentration has reached the utmost perfection of cultivation for a long time, uninterruptedly, and with earnest attention (and which) has direct perception and has uprooted erroneous perceptions together with their subconscious impressions, (and which is thus) unwavering—this is the means of escape” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 170).

Patañjali speaks of sevenfold insight. **For him [who cultivates *viveka-khyāti*] the insight achieved is seven-fold, reaching perfection in stages** (II.27). The discriminating insight of the yogin achieved by removing all the taints formed by *kleśas* and purifying the mind of its defilements takes the following seven distinctive forms culminating in ultimate self-realization. (1) There is complete understanding of the impediments to be avoided; and there is nothing more to be known. (2) The causes of these have been totally eliminated; there are none to be destroyed any more. (3) There is realization in *samādhi* of the difference between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. (4) Discriminating insight is fully cultivated. (5) Having fulfilled its purpose, the *buddhi* has no further role to play. (6) The *guṇas* having lost their support tumble down, like the *buddhi* in their source. (7) And thus detached from the *guṇas* the *puruṣa* abides in its own, unstained, and unencumbered by any commingling and *buddhi*—*prakṛti* entanglement.

One cannot achieve perfection in discriminating insight without continuous practice. So Patañjali goes on to say in the next *sūtra*: **When the different steps of yoga are followed and the impurities [of the mind] disappear, there arises the glowing light of knowledge (*jñāna-dīpti*) culminating in the discriminating insight** (II.28).

With yoga practice, as Vyāsa explains, there is gradual cessation of the five *kleśas*. In proportion to the attenuation of the *kleśas* and the removal of the impurities inflicted by them on the mind, there is the increasing intensity of the light of knowledge leading up to perfect insight, discriminating the *puruṣa* from the *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. There is then right knowledge and removal of all erroneous perceptions. Yoga practice thus helps to disentangle the *puruṣa* and dissociate (*viyoga*) it from the *buddhi* and the myriad manifestations of *guṇas*. Yoga may be said to be the cause of the dissociation in the same sense as the axe is considered the cause of cutting the tree from its roots.

The discriminating insight leading to the disentanglement of the *puruṣa* and the *prakṛti* is self-realization. It is so because the *puruṣa* as consciousness-as-such is no longer a witness to the changing states of *prakṛti*. Rather the *puruṣa* sees and experiences itself. It is, as we would like to think, a state of knowing by being, one in which there is no gap between knowing and being for the embodied person, who is thus liberated.

Eightfold Yoga Practice

In the following *sūtras*, Patañjali describes the yoga path and the eight steps for reaching the goal of yoga, which is one of realizing the *puruṣa* within. From the psychological perspective, it is one of realizing consciousness-as-such unencumbered with any phenomenal awareness or its vestiges, a state of *nirodha*. According to Patañjali, ***yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* are the eight limbs (*aṅga*) of yoga** (II.29). These are steps described as limbs because they are considered to be organically linked, and as Vyāsa points out “these must be performed in succession” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 177). The first five are the preparatory, and the last three are the final stages in yoga practice.

Yama is practicing self-restraint. ***Yama* is abstaining from injury, falsehood, stealing, sex and possession** (II.30). *Yamas* are what the yogin ought not to do. They are injunctions against wrong conduct. Vyāsa explains that “abstinence from injury means abstinence from malice toward all living creatures in every way and at all times. And the other abstentions and observances are rooted in it” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 178). *Yama* is thus practice of nonviolence in thought and action. It involves nonexploitation of others for one’s benefit.

When practiced without any exception on grounds of class, place, time or other obligations, they constitute the great vow (*mahā-vratam*) (II.31). In this *sūtra*, Patañjali clarifies that the *yamas* at their best are universal and applicable to all and in all circumstances notwithstanding the traditional context-driven exceptions that are taken for granted. For example, a fisherman is traditionally not considered as causing injury when he is fishing or a soldier in battle killing the

enemy. For the yogin taking the great vow, abstinence, however, is absolute, unqualified, and unconditional.

Niyama is determination to adhere to a code of conduct. In yoga, it consists in the fivefold performance of duties. ***Niyama* is observance of cleanliness (*sauca*), contentment (*santoṣa*), austerity (*tapas*), self-study (*svādhyāya*) and devotion to God (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*)** (II.32). *Niyamas* are what the yogin should do. They are prescriptions of good conduct. As Vyāsa comments, cleanliness is both *external* such as cleaning oneself with water or consuming unadulterated food and *internal*, which is cleaning the mind of all its taints and blemishes. Contentment is the joy of limiting oneself with that which is within reach and not hankering after things beyond the necessities. Austerity consists of practices that enable one to withstand extreme situations such as hunger, cold temperatures, and discomforting postures. Self-study is learning about the ways of self-realization, which includes learning from study of scriptural texts and recitation of sacred syllable OM. *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is celestial love, which consists in self-surrender by dedicating oneself for a higher cause or purpose in the name of God. In an important sense, it is an exercise in altruism of transcending the ego-compulsions. Recall that the last three of the recommended moral observances are essentially the same as *Kriyā-yoga* as stated in *sūtra* II.1. *Niyama* is therefore practice of *Kriyā-yoga* with clean body and pure mind.

If there is an impediment [in the way of following *yamas* and *niyamas*] from perverse thoughts, there should be cultivation of their counterpart [ideas] (II.33). Here then is the recognition of the fact that practice of *yamas* and observance of *niyamas* are not as easy as said. Conditioned as one is by life's temptations, cultivation of right habits and attitudes is often impeded by thoughts and actions that are contrary to the vows taken by the person committed to the practice of yoga. Patañjali suggests a positive plan of action to overcome such perversions in one's thought and actions. It is a kind of therapeutic tool to counter the impediments. The central principle here is that undesirable behavior can be attenuated by pondering over and cultivating its opposite.

Patañjali points out that **perversities such as [acts of] violence, whether inflicted by oneself or through others or abetted/approved, whether caused by greed, anger or delusion, and whether mild, medium or intense, result in endless pain and ignorance. Hence the need for pondering over their opposites** (II.34).

Taking the perversity of violence as an example, Patañjali refers to three kinds of violence—violence caused directly by oneself or violence perpetuated through someone else or simply abetting and approving violence whoever is the cause of it. Then, he suggests that the violence may be instigated by greed, anger, or a deluded state of the mind. Again, the resultant violence may be mild, moderate, or intense. Thus, there are twenty-seven main forms of violence such as anger-driven intense violence indulged by oneself. In fact, they can be further divisions such as mildly intense violation. The point here is that in all the forms violence there is a perversity of the mind causing pain and perpetuating ignorance that need to be countered by cultivating in one's conduct the opposite of violence, which is love.

When the perversities are attenuated and rendered impotent and unproductive in manifesting pervert behavior because of the cultivation of their opposites, the yogin acquires powers that indicate his mastery. For example, **on being firmly grounded in nonviolence (*ahiṃsā*), there is in his presence giving up of enmity (*vairatyāgaḥ*)** (II.35).

When the yogin reaches perfection in abstaining from violence in all its forms, he becomes a person in whose presence there is no enmity or hostility. In other words, the yogin by his very presence wards off violence around him. Others in his presence imbibe nonviolence and manifest it in their conduct. Thus, the yogin in a state of perfection not only transforms herself, but also those around her. Mahatma Gandhi is a supreme example of this.

On being firmly grounded in truthfulness (*satya-pratiṣṭhāyām*), she controls the actions and their consequences (II.36). As Vyāsa explains, when a yogin reaches perfection in abstaining from falsehood and firmly grounded in truthfulness, then, “what he says (*vāk*) comes true” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 186).

Similarly, **on being firmly grounded in nonstealing (honesty) all jewels (precious things) come to him** (II.37). **On being firmly grounded in sexual abstinence (*brahmacarya*), he gains energy (*vīrya*)** (II.38). **On reaching perfection in nonpossessiveness, there is knowledge of conditions of birth** (II.39). As Vyāsa points out, when a yogin reaches a firm state of nonacquisitiveness, he finds answers to questions such as these: “Who was I? How was I? Or what [can] this birth be? Or how [can] this [birth] be? Or what shall we become? Or how shall we become?” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 187).

Now, Patañjali goes on to describe what happens when the yogin reaches perfection in practicing each of the *niyamas*. **From cleanliness (of the body) arise disgust for one’s body and no (desire) for intercourse (contact) with others** (II.40). **From purity of *sattva* (mind) arise cheerfulness (*saumanasya*) and one-pointedness of the mind, control of the senses and fitness for the sight of the self** (II.41). As a result of internal cleanliness, there is purity of the *sattva guṇa* in the mind. Because of that purity, the mind becomes cheerful and focused, gains control over the activities of the senses, and thus becomes fit to have the knowledge of the *self* (*ātman*).

From contentment, there is attainment of unexcelled pleasure (II.42). Vyāsa, quoting from a *Purāṇa* explains: “What constitutes the pleasure of love in this world and what the supreme pleasure of heaven are both not to be compared with the sixteenth part of the pleasure of dwindled craving (*tṛṣṇā*)” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 189).

From (observing) austerities (*tapas*) impurities dwindle away and the body and senses become perfect and gain supernormal abilities (*siddhis*) (II.43). Commenting on this *sūtra*, Vyāsa says that by performing *tapas* and observing austerities, one can get rid of the impurities of the body and senses and thus acquire some *siddhis* like telepathy.

From self-study there is communion (*samprayoga*) with the desired deity (I.44). **From celestial love, there is perfection in *samādhi*** (II.45). Vyāsa explains that as a result of celestial love and devotion to God (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*), one

achieves perfection in entering the state of *samādhi*, and consequently, the yogin is able to know all that she wants to know and her insight sees things as they really are.

Having described *yamas* and *niyamas* and the benefits of practicing them, Patañjali goes on to discuss the next step, *āsana*, the physical postures the yogin should practice. First of all, *āsana* [should be] **steady and comfortable** (II.46).

The purpose of practicing certain postures is not one of developing the body. *Āsana* in Patañjali yoga is not an exercise in physical culture. Rather it is part of the process to quieten the mind and help concentrate and focus attention in the desired manner. As one attempts to concentrate, the body should not be a distracting factor. *Āsanas* are recommended for this purpose. By emphasizing at the outset that *āsana* should be steady and comfortable, Patañjali is suggesting that the body posture of the practicing yogin should be an aid in reaching the set goal of steadiness of the mind. In so doing, Patañjali acknowledges the reciprocal influence of bodily states on the mind.

In the following *sūtra*, Patañjali points out that the perfection in *āsana* results from **relaxation of effort and meditation on ananta (infinity)** (II.47). *Āsana*, to serve its purpose, should be effortless. One does not have to exercise his volition to stay in that posture. *Ananta* means limitlessness. It also refers to the Lord of Serpents in Hindu mythology who balances the earth on his hood. In either case, the *sūtra* points to undisturbed steadiness and balance of posture achieved effortlessly by focusing the mind on *ananta*.

Patañjali goes on to say that **from that [perfection in *āsana*], he (yogin) becomes immune to opposites** (II.48). As a consequence of perfecting the practice of posture (*āsana*), the yogin gains the ability to withstand extremes such as heat and cold.

When there is this (perfection in posture), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breath), interrupting the flow of inspiration and expiration [follows] (II.49). After perfecting physical posture, the yogin moves on to restrain and control breathing by systematically interrupting the normal flow of breathing in and out. This exercise in breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) is the fourth step in yoga practice.

Patañjali points out that ***Prāṇāyāma* has internal, external and blocked manifestations; regulated by place, time and frequency, [it becomes] prolonged and subtle (*sukṣma*)** (II.50). This *sūtra* succinctly describes the variety of breathing exercises first in terms of manifestation, whether inhaling (*pūraka*) or exhaling (*recaka*) or just withholding the breath (*kumbhaka*). There are modulations of these in terms of place where the exercise is performed, the time taken or the duration of each phase, and the number of inhalations and exhalations in a given period. The practice of *prāṇāyāma* in all its different forms becomes progressively long in duration and subtle. As Vācaspati Miśra reminds us, subtle does not mean weak, but something achieved by finest concentration and greatest effort.

Over and above the three forms referred to so far, Patañjali mentions the fourth type, which transcends the others. **The fourth (*prāṇāyāma*) goes beyond the external (*recaka*) and internal (*pūraka*) forms** (II.51).

The mastery of this form comes after gaining proficiency in *recaka* and *pūraka* forms. The fourth kind like the *kumbhaka* involves suspension of breath, but is different from it in that it is practiced by itself and not along with and in between

inhalation and exhalation exercises as is the case with *kumbhaka*. For this reason, the fourth form of *prāṇāyāma* is called *kevala kumbhaka*. It is believed to be the highest and most advanced form of *prāṇāyāma*.

As a result of that [excellence in *prāṇāyāma*] the cover that veils the light [of knowledge] is weakened/destroyed (II.52). (Also) the mind becomes fit for concentration (II.53). The yogin who practices breath control progressively overcomes karma and the defilements of the mind that cover and veil the discriminating insight. Thus, *prāṇāyāma* is believed to purify the mind and make it fit for receiving the discriminating insight (*viveka-khyāti*). Therefore, it is said in *Manusmṛiti*: “There is no *tapas* higher than *prāṇāyāma*; from it come purification from taints, and the light of knowledge” (quoted from Leggett 1983, p. 132). Gaining perfection in breath control makes it easy for the yogin to focus her mind and concentrate on the object of contemplation.

In recent years, a number of studies are made to examine the effects of breathing exercises on physical health and the functions of the body. However, it is clear from this *sūtra* that Patañjali’s emphasis here is on concentration and the beneficial effects of *prāṇāyāma* on mind control. Unfortunately, this aspect of *prāṇāyāma*, which has tremendous potential for understanding mental functions, is little explored. In fact, one of the important features of yoga is the recognition of psychophysical causation that the bodily functions affect the mind and that the mental process influence physical states of the body.

Now, Patañjali goes on to describe what *pratyāhāra* is about. ***Pratyāhāra* is withdrawal of the senses from their objects imitating as it were the mind (II.54).** When the senses are withdrawn from their objects, the senses act like the mind. When the mind is restricted, the senses become restricted; and no other effort is required to control them. *Pratyāhāra* is therefore an exercise to limit the sensory feed to the mind. It involves cultivating a state of dissociation where the mind becomes disconnected with the sensory inputs that it ordinarily receives. The yogin in meditation does not hear the bell ringing in his vicinity because he has learnt through *pratyāhāra* how to shut the mind from reaching out to the sensory inputs. It may be kept in perspective, however, in Yoga as in Advaita Vedānta, the perceptual process consists in the mind taking the form of objects in its perceptual field. The mind is said to go out to the object via the sensory apparatus. Consequently, withdrawal of the senses effectively means shutting out the mind from taking the forms of the object. *Pratyāhāra* may also be seen as internal focus of the mind restrained or disengaging itself from sensory inputs.

From this [withdrawal] ensues the complete mastery of the senses (II.55). In his commentary on this *sūtra*, Vyāsa refers to four levels of control over the senses. The first level is the level of nonattachment to the sensory pleasures, overcoming the sensory indulgence, and not becoming slave to temptations. The second level is the ability to regulate the sensory contact so that he receives the inputs only when he desires. The third level involves the feeling of absence of pain or pleasure associated with sense–object contact. The final level is the complete lack of activity of the senses achieved by one-pointed concentration of the mind. This is what results in the highest control and complete mastery of senses as recommended by Patañjali.

***Samyama*: Meditation**

It is interesting to note that Patañjali closes Part II, *Sādhana-Pāda*, devoted to the discussion of the practice part of yoga as the title indicates, after discussing the first five steps (*angās*), which proceed from the control of conduct (*yama*) to the control of the senses (*pratyāhāra*), without considering the last three steps—*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*—that involve the direct control of the mind. The reason given sometimes for this is that the first five steps are the preliminaries that only indirectly aid the yogin, whereas the last three are the essentials that directly lead the yogin on the path. In other words, the first five are aids for the yogin to enable her to practice the essential three. Another way of looking at this is that the first five deal with the control of the external causes that distract the mind, whereas the last three are concerned with the internal control of the mind. It can be argued that the so-called external aids help connect the body and the mind, whereas the internal control refers to the link between consciousness and the mind. Also, it stands to reason to think that the Part II of *Yoga-Sūtras* is for the less developed person with a relatively unstable mind and that the five “preliminary” or “indirect” or “external” steps are meant for them. The final three steps are the necessary steps for all yogins seeking *kaivalya*. In any case, by breaking the yogic steps this way, Patañjali makes it unambiguous (1) that *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* are qualitatively different from the steps described in Part II and that (2) the vast array of supernormal abilities referred to in Part III and the ultimate goal of attaining *kaivalya* to be described in the last part are dependent on practicing them. As Vācaspati Miśra explains, the third part deals with supernormal powers and these are accomplished by practicing together these three—*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* in a three-stage process called *samyama*. However, we need to recognize that some of the psychic powers like telepathy may emerge from some of the preliminary practices as well.

What is *dhāraṇā*? ***Dhāraṇā* is confining the mind to a place** (III.1). *Dhāraṇā*, which is generally translated as concentration, is focused attention. It consists in fixing the mind on an object, internizing it as it were in one place (*deśa-bandha*). The recommended places include the area of the navel, tip of the nose or the tongue, the heart-lotus or the aura in the head. Focused attention of the mind, as Vyāsa comments, refers to a mental state (*vṛtti*) such as perceiving an object. One practicing attentional control cannot focus attention in a vacuum. Practice of attention needs an object to focus. And focusing helps to restrain the mind from wandering. Thus, *dhāraṇā* is focused attention.

Dhyāna is prolonged, continuous *dhāraṇā* on a single object. **Uninterrupted flow of focused attention on an object is *dhyāna*** (III.2). If concentration or centering the mind on the tip of the nose is *dhāraṇā*, continuing that concentration over an extended period of time without the mind wandering to other objects is *dhyāna*, which is generally translated as contemplation. Continued concentration, which flows like a stream uninterrupted by mind’s excursions to other areas, is contemplation. Thus, prolonged attention on a focused object results in *dhyāna*.

When the contemplating mind, emptied of itself, shines forth nothing but the intended object (the object on which attention is focused), it is *samādhi* (III.3). *Dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* are mental exercises that help focus the mind on an object, unwavering and for a prolonged period of time. *Samādhi* is a state of the mind resulting from the continued, unwavering concentration on a single object where the mind loses itself as it were by merging or becoming identical with the object in focus. What Patañjali calls *svarūpa śūnya*, i.e., having no form, refers to the disappearance of self-awareness in the awareness of the subject, which indicates the merging of the subject with the object of knowing. I would like to think that *samādhi* refers to more than a state; it is a process that binds knowing and being because *samādhi* is not spoken of as all or none, but one that admits of different grades. The highest state of *samādhi* is a complete sense of identity of the subject and the object, the knower, and the known.

The three [*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*] rolled into one is *saṁyama* (III.4). Woods translates *saṁyama* as constraint, which is literally true. However, inasmuch as *saṁyama* refers to all the stages in the meditative exercise, it actually refers to meditation in its fullness or totality. *Saṁyama* is of course constraint in the sense that the mind is constrained to a point and is eventually “emptied” of its usual content. Vācaspati explains that this technical term (*saṁyama*) is used “for brevity’s sake” because it would be tedious to repeat each time all the three (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*). So it would seem that there is perfect justification for considering *saṁyama* in Patañjali yoga as practicing meditation in its totality, which refers to the process of binding knowing and being, as we suggested.

Dhāraṇā is focused attention; *dhyāna* is prolonged attention focused on an object. *Samādhi* is a resultant consummate process in which the distinction between the knowing subject and the object tends to progressively disappear; only the object of focus is in awareness; and the subject is “absorbed” in it. The three together refer to meditation, which is thus essentially a process of manipulation of attention in a particular manner to achieve the state of fusion of knowing and being, the merger of the knower and the known.

By practicing meditation successfully, the yogin gains insight. **Mastery of meditation (*saṁyama*) results in getting luminosity of *prajñā*** (III.5). As Vyāsa comments, the insight thus gained is proportional to the progress one makes on the meditative path.

Its [meditation] use is by stages (III.6). Meditation is a complex process. Its mastery or progress is in stages. Therefore, it is unwise to rush or skip some of the stages even if one is fortunate to experience an advanced stage quite early. The nature of the successive stages is best known to the practitioner herself and cannot be mandated in absolute terms. As Vyāsa points out: “By yoga, yoga must be known.” Therefore, the yogin is his own guide.

The three [*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*] are direct aids relative to the others [*yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*] (III.7). Vācaspati Miśra explains why the three components of meditation are considered direct aids. “These three means of attainment, inasmuch as their object is the same as [the object of the yoga] to be accomplished, are direct aids” (Woods 1914/2007, p. 208).

Thus, it is clear that the goal of yoga is the control of the mind so as to access consciousness-as-such, whereas the goal of the other five aids is to control the body so as to help control the mind. As mentioned earlier, it would seem that the preliminary practices are for connecting the mind and body while meditation itself has to do with the connection of the purified mind with consciousness.

Patañjali clarifies this point in the next *sūtra*. **Even these (*dhāraṇā*, *dhyaṇa* and *samādhi*) are external aids to the seedless (*samādhi*)** (III.8). This is so because, as Vyāsa says, seedless *samādhi*, which is a state of completely noncognitive mind, occurs even when *dhāraṇā*, *dhyaṇa* and *samādhi* are not present. At this point, it may be appropriate to summarize here the yoga thesis on the different states of the mind, from its usual mundane *vṛttis* to its ultimate seedless state of *samādhi*.

In his comments on the very first *sūtra* of the *Yoga-Sūtras*, Vyāsa refers to five basic kinds of mental states. They are, as mentioned earlier, *kṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *vikṣipta*, *ekāgra*, and *niruddha*. The *kṣipta* is the restless, wandering mind, driven more by its *rajas*. The mind in this state is passionate rather than enlightened. It is unstable, oscillating, and fickle. Even during moments of concentration, it is more passion-driven than truth-oriented. *Mūḍha* is an ignorance enveloped and infatuated state dominated by *tamas*. The mind in that state is masked by false notions of self, stability, and truth not anchored in reality principle. Vyāsa unambiguously states that these two states “have nothing to do with yoga.” They are nonyogic states that yoga is expected to control. The third kind, *vikṣipta*, is the distracted mind. It is steady at one moment and restless in the other. *Vikṣipta* is perhaps the most common state experienced by average individuals. In this state, even when people long to do the right thing, they tend to relapse into and cannot resist the opposite evil. For they tend to choose the pleasurable actions and avoid the discomforting ones. This state also is inconsistent with the yogic quest, which is essentially truth-seeking beyond momentary states of pain and pleasure.

Ekāgratā is focused attention that steers the mind away from the phenomenal flux of sensations as well as internally driven influences of *saṃskāras*. The ordinary mind is conditioned and contained, driven and determined by the sensory inputs it receives from outside and the internally generated imagery prompted in part by memory, unconscious impulses, and instinctive propensities (*saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*). All these are not intrinsic to consciousness. They are not absolutely truth bearing. They often bias truth and cloud consciousness. Focused attention helps one to gain volitional control over the mind and regulate its activity, which is otherwise determined by the intensity and form of sensory inputs, which are themselves colored, conditioned, and biased by *saṃskāras*. *Ekāgratā* helps to decondition the person and deconstruct the sensorially constructed reality by attenuating the afflictions (*kleśa*) that impede the mind, cloud consciousness and give false or incomplete knowledge. With the practice of *ekāgratā* one is led to states of *samprajñāta samādhi*. In these states, *tamas* and *rajas* recede into the background, and *sattva* comes into the forefront and prominence. In other words, with *ekāgratā* the mind is gradually purified of its defilements and becomes fit to reflect within it consciousness-as-such. In its ultimate perfection/purity in seedless *samādhi*, the mind is nearly identical with and indistinguishable from consciousness-as-such.

This is the *niruddha* state leading the yogin to the goal of *kaivalya*. It may be said that during normal cognitive states, the mind takes the form of objects in its focus. In the state of *asamprajñāta*, it takes the form of consciousness-as-such. Knowledge (*prajñā*) arising in transcendental states of *samādhi* is intrinsically truth bearing, self-certifying, and authentic because of the fusion of knowing and being within oneself.

What do we mean by “fusion of knowing and being”? A *samādhi* state is one where there is progressive identification of the knowing subject with the known object. Such an identification brings about the fusion of knowing and being in that there is no longer a gap between knowing and being in the yogin, no divide between thought and action, belief and behavior. It exemplifies the Upaniṣadic statement “to know Brahman is to be Brahman.”

Yoga system meticulously traces the different stages as the yogin moves from rudimentary *samādhi* states to the final *niruddha* state. In this developmental process, the early states are cognitive and supercognitive and are called collectively as *samprajñāta samādhi*. In these states, the mind is centered on a physical object or an internal image or thought. It is not without any content. However, the mind does not oscillate between objects. It is fixated, focused, and without distraction. Four distinctive stages of *samprajñāta samādhi* are mentioned. These distinctions appear to relate on the one hand to the subtlety of the object in focus, which is inversely related to evolutionary manifestations, and to the cognitive and intentionality aspects of mentation on the other. The first stage is one where the mind is focused on a physical object, a clearly cognitive and intentional state. This is known as *vitarkānugata*. Then, the focus shifts to the subtle elements constituting the objects, i.e., *tanmātras*. This is *vicārānugata*. This state is also intentional. When this stage is mastered, the internal senses giving rise to the experience of the object become the focus of attention. The concern here is with the process of knowing rather than the object of knowledge. This stage is called *ānandānugata*. The final stage of *samprajñāta samādhi* is *asmitānugata*, where the focus of attention is the ego or the “I-ness”, which is at the root of cognitive awareness. The attentional object in this state is the knowing subject. In mastering this state, the yogin reaches a supercognitive nonintentional state. Thus, the attentional exercises of the yogin lead her from the gradual emptying of the mind from perceptual experience, beginning with gross physical properties culminating in the overcoming of the ego sense. During the advanced stage of *samprajñāta samādhi*, the object on which the yogin focuses her attention loses all its manifest, determinate characteristics. Her ego is suppressed, and the object or the effect of meditation exists in its potential form like a seed. The mind becomes completely steady and flows without the turbulent currents of appearing and disappearing objects in their manifold manifestations. The mind in this stage may be considered to be transcognitive and not yet reaching the noncognitive transcendental state because the cognitive content exists as a potential or seed in the unconscious.

The *niruddha* state is one in which the yogin is able to restrain the mind completely and arrest all its fluctuations. The mind in such a state goes beyond *samprajñāta samādhi*; and even the subterranean unconscious potencies and

propensities are arrested. The mind becomes completely empty of all cognitive content in its actual manifest forms as well as in the unmanifest, potential seed form. This state is called *asampraññāta samādhi* or seedless *samādhi*. Thus, we find the yogin transforming her mind from cognitive through the transcognitive to the noncognitive state of *niruddha* as she reaches a state of *kaivalya*. In the noncognitive transcendental state of seedless *samādhi*, even the final three steps of yoga—*dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*—lose their direct relevance. Therefore, it is said that they are only external aids to *asampraññāta samādhi*.

The mind by its very nature, as we have seen, is in a state of fluctuations; and yoga is a method to gain control over them. In yoga theory, the mind is composed of three *guṇas* like all other material things. It is in the nature of *guṇas* to cause change. The mind changes taking the form of cognizing objects. The act of cognition, therefore, consists in the transformation of the mind. Now, it may be asked, what kind of transformation does the mind undergo, what form does it take in the *niruddha* state. The next *sūtra* attempts to draw attention to this aspect.

“Nirodha pariṇāma” means *anvaya* (co-occurrence), in the *citta* at the time of *nirodha kṣaṇa*, of the *abhibhava* [suppression of *vyutthāna saṃskāras*] and *pradurbhāva* (rise) of *nirodha saṃskāra* (III.9). It would seem that the evolution of *nirodha* (*nirodha pariṇāma*) involves manifestation of an increasingly expanding duration of the gap that exists between the outgoing (*vyutthāna*) and the incoming impressions (*saṃskāra*) (III.9). Literal translation of this *sūtra* makes it hardly intelligible. Therefore, our rendering above is meant to be substantially true rather than literally accurate. Despite the difficulty in translating this *sūtra*, we cannot miss its importance because it throws light on the nonintentional state of consciousness-as-such or pure consciousness.

We need to keep in perspective that Patañjali is dealing here with a state of mind that is already developed to the *sampraññāta* level of unwavering focused attention. In other words, the yogin has achieved control over the cognitive activity of the mind. But, as we have seen, the mind also experiences transcognitive states precipitated by the subterranean unconscious *saṃskāras*. Each mental act results in a *saṃskāra*. Even the *nirodha* act of the mind, which suppresses the emergence of any cognitive content in the mind, also results in its own *saṃskāra*.

Saṃskāras are different from *vṛttis*. When *vṛttis* are suppressed by voluntary control of cognitive activity, *saṃskāras* are not also controlled automatically because “they are not of the nature of acts of cognition” (Rukmani 1998, p. 15). The *niruddha* exercise is an effort to control and suppress the *saṃskāras* as well. It is assumed that the mind undergoes transformations as one *saṃskāra* recedes and another rises. However, there is a point in between the appearance of one and the disappearance of the other, when the mind takes no form. *Nirodha* results in expanding the duration of this point in which the mind has taken no form, whether conscious *vṛtti* or unconscious *saṃskāra*. In other words, the mind is then devoid of any content, conscious or unconscious. This is the seedless or *asampraññāta* state of the mind. With no content of its own, the mind comes face-to-face, as it were with consciousness and reflects consciousness-as-such.

As Vijñānabhikṣu explains, cognitions “are not the material cause of subliminal impressions (*saṁskāras*); therefore, even when the cognitions are restricted, the subliminal impressions are not restrained, the idea is that acts of cognition are only efficient causes (and not material causes; therefore, even when there is disappearance of the act of cognition, the cause for the removal of its subliminal impressions is to be sought elsewhere” (Rukmani 1998, p. 17). For this reason, the control of cognitive activity achieved at the *samprajñāta* state is not sufficient to reach a state of *niruddha*. This involves another step and in some respects qualitatively different from the previous ones. Consequently, *asamprajñāta samādhi* may be seen as qualitatively different from *samprajñāta samādhi*.

With continuous practice and experience of *nirodha pariṇāma*, the mind of the yogin gets habituated to enter into *niruddha* state with ease and stay in it for longer durations. **The mind flows peacefully following the *nirodha saṁskāra*** (III.10). The mind is the theater with changing scenes and characters. Normal cognitive activity is the enactment of the script provided by the sensory inputs, which is edited and guided by the behind-the-scenes *saṁskāras*, which are essentially feedback loops of past enactments. When the yogin learns to restrict the sensory inputs, there is no script to follow. Therefore, there is increasing dependence on the behind-the-scenes prompting of *saṁskāras*. As the yogin attempts to restrict the rising of the *saṁskāras* due to past cognitive activity, there arises the *saṁskāra* of *nirodha* (suppression). With practice, *nirodha saṁskāra* is reinforced and the cognitive *saṁskāras* get weakened. With the proficiency in *nirodha pariṇāma*, the cognitive *saṁskāras* are overwhelmed by *nirodha saṁskāra*, and the mind flows peacefully as the turbulence generated by the sensory inputs and the *saṁskāras* subsides.

Attention is what guides the mind. Attention may be wandering or focused. With attention wandering, the mind is distracted. Focused attention makes the mind stable. **The dwindling of distractions by focused attention of the mind leads to the evolution of *samādhi* state (*samādhi pariṇāma*)** (III.11). With practice of yoga, the wandering mind becomes focused and absorbed in the object of cognition. This is *samādhi pariṇāma*, the movement of the mind into *samādhi* state. As Vyāsa explains, the transition of the mind into the state of *samādhi* is not abrupt and sudden but gradually evolving because one cannot control distractions or achieve one-pointedness of the mind in an instant. Practice decreases the wandering and strengthens one-pointedness of the mind.

When the yogin in a *samādhi* state with a focused mind has identical cognitions successively over a period of time without any distractions or intrusions of different cognitions, she is said to enter into the one-pointed focus state. ***Ekāgratā pariṇāma* is a state of the mind where the subsiding and uprising cognitions are alike** (III.12). The subsiding is the previously present idea/precept and the uprising is the one to follow. The mind, which underlies both, connects the two without a break and experiences no separateness of the two. This continuity of uninterrupted connection and identity between the two is the essence of one-pointed focus. **Again, when the subsiding and uprising cognitions are similar, the mind is focused** (III.13).

The rest of Part III deals primarily with a variety of psychic powers that could be developed by doing *saṁyama* on appropriate objects.

Summary

The second part of *Yoga-Sūtras*, it would seem, is directed at the aspirant rather than the adept in yoga. It begins therefore with the description of practical and rudimentary practices known as *Kriyā-yoga*, which is meant to be the entry point in the long journey of the yogin. *Kriyā-yoga* essentially constitutes the preliminary self-conditioning of the person with threefold activities that involve training for (a) volitional control by ascetic practices (*tapas*), cognitive control via self-study (*svādhyāya*), and overcoming of ego-driven passion through celestial love (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*). These preliminary practices imply that the yogin would go through a long, life-transforming process that calls for a radical shift in one's self-perceptions, goals, and activities. It is a process of moving away from the habitual engagement with the ego-driven self and the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of pain. *Tapas* is a test of endurance needed for the pursuit. *Svādhyāya* is meant to generate the necessary cognitive conviction to endure the inevitable stress of the intended practice; and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is the pragmatic belief in God that bestows the necessary emotional support for shifting from the ego-driven lifestyle to an altruist worldview of detachment and dispassionateness.

Such self-transformation is necessary to reach the goal of *samādhi*. The habitual lifestyle is a serious impediment on the path of reaching *samādhi*. With the attendant overpowering *kleśas* that are organically linked with each other, life becomes a whirlpool of suffering. The root cause of suffering is *avidyā*, a congenital condition of misconstrual of one's true nature. It is driven by the ego principle (*asmitā*) fueled by passion (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*) and sustained by the ubiquitous will-to-live (*abhiniveśa*). It is essential to overcome these natural impediments to *samādhi* for marching ahead on the path of yoga. This may be achieved by reversing the course and changing the corrupt lifestyle with meditative practices. Reversing the course of impediments involves a kind of deconditioning that attenuates the *kleśas* associated with the actions leading to suffering. One needs to develop discriminating insight into the causes of suffering and engage in necessary practices for removing the *kleśas* that defile and corrupt life and cause suffering.

Ignorance is at the root of all defilements. Ignorance is embedded in the conflation of the observer and the observed, the subject and the object, in the person. *Puruṣa* is the observer, and the empirical world of experience, a manifestation of *prakṛti*, is the observed. With the commingling of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* in the person, there arises the occasion for possible conflation and misidentification of the two. The material manifestations of the world through sensory engagement are double-edged. They can give rise to sensory experience and situate the person in *saṃsāra* and confine her to a whirlpool of unending suffering or enable the *puruṣa* to find its true freedom, liberated from the limitations accrued from the commingling with the *puruṣa*. In the former case, there is the misidentification of the observer with the observed, the mistaking the power of observing, which belongs to the empirical realm of the *prakṛti*, for the power of observer, the mistaking of the witness (self) as the participant, and the consequent misattribution of material

qualities to nonmaterial *self*. The liberation consists in the realization of the difference between the two and their relative roles in the person. Cultivation of such discriminative insight (*viveka-khyāti*) is possible by the practice of yoga.

Patañjali suggests eightfold practices that enable the person to gain the discriminative insight that dispels ignorance and gives one a true understanding of the nature of reality. The question is whether the discriminative insight sought by the person practicing yoga is simply knowledge about the nature of reality, viz the fundamental difference between conscious being (*puruṣa*) and the material reality (*prakṛti*), or something more.

Knowledge can be obtained by *śravaṇa*, learning, and can be reinforced by *manana*, rational understanding. Yoga does something more to the person than merely giving her information and knowledge. Information and knowledge, including the philosophy behind yoga, are something that one can acquire without the yogic exercises. Also, it is arguable whether one who has no grasp of yoga-related philosophy would end up with the so-called discriminative insight after yoga practice that gives her the distinctive differentiation between the power of seeing and the seer. Rather such knowledge appears to be a prerequisite in the traditional practice of yoga. What yoga practice does is the transformation of the person consistent with that knowledge. In the human condition, there is no reflexive relation between knowing and being, between belief and behavior. There is room for dissociation between them. Most of us know that lying is bad; but hardly anyone can truthfully say that they never lied. Almost everyone who smokes knows that smoking is bad for health. Therefore, it would seem that it is not enough that one knows the difference between the true self and the ego masquerading as the self. She should act as one who realizes the difference. In other words, the knowledge gained should transform the person. Therefore, it stands to reason to assume that yoga practice is a means for bridging the existential gap between knowing and being and that yoga is as much a technique for the transformation of the person as it is a source of new knowledge.

Yoga is both a philosophy of life and a transformational psychology. It may be that the two are somehow linked. However, it is possible to distinguish the two. One may believe in the validity of yogic techniques and practices as effective means for personal transformation, meaning that meditative practices enable one to bridge the existential gap between knowing being, without at the same time believing in yoga philosophy. The fact that other philosophical systems, which make different assumptions about human nature and have little difficulty in accepting yoga practices, lend credibility to the view that yoga theory and yoga practice may be seen as distinct. Indeed meditative realization by Buddhist monks results in an all together different philosophical perspective. It is not the realization of the self, but realization of nonself.

While a number of interpretations of yoga are possible and legitimate and that thinkers committed to a wide variety of philosophical persuasions and religious affiliations may practice and uphold and believe in yoga, it would seem that almost every informed yoga scholar knows that yoga is not synonymous with physical postures that are widely publicized and practiced today as yoga. *Āsanās* are a

preliminary external aid to the practice of concentration and one-pointed attention (*ekāgratā*). This point is often missed even in some of the popular yoga programs in India. That several of the yoga practices are found to have beneficial somatic effects is no proof of the validity of the claim that they are a vital and essential part of yoga. The bodily well-being is just a prerequisite and not the essence of yoga. The goal of yoga is not physical fitness, but realization of consciousness-as-such. Self-realization or accessing of consciousness-as-such is facilitated by proper understanding of the link between body, mind, and consciousness and their relative roles in promoting excellence and perfection in the person. The truncated yoga confined mainly to postural practices may be useful for those seeking physical fitness, but it misses out on more profound benefits, psychological and spiritual, in promoting cognitive excellence, psychosomatic well-being, and positive personal transformation.

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