

**“Patanjali Yoga Sutras” by Swami Prabhavanand**  
**Published by Sri Ramkrishna Math, Madras**

1. Sutras were composed when there were no books. The entire work had to be memorized and so it had to be expressed as tersely as possible.

**2. Yoga is control of thought waves in the mind (*chitta*).**

Explanation: Mind is made up of three components, *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahamkara*. *Manas* is the recording faculty which receives impressions gathered by the senses. *Buddhi* is the discriminative faculty which clarifies these impressions and reacts to them. *Ahamkara* is the ego sense which claims these impressions for its own and stores them up as individual knowledge. The mind seems to be intelligent and conscious. Yoga philosophy teaches that it is not. It has only a borrowed intelligence. The Atman is intelligence in itself, is pure consciousness. The mind merely reflects that consciousness and so appears to be conscious. Knowledge or perception is a thought wave (*vritti*) in the mind. All knowledge is therefore objective. Every perception arouses the ego sense, which says “I know this”. The ego sense is caused by the identification of the Atman with the mind, senses etc. The lake represents the mind and the bottom of the lake the Atman. Waves do not merely the surface of water, they also, by their continued action, build up banks of sand or pebbles on the lake bottom. They may be compared to the tendencies, potentialities and latent states which exist in the sub-conscious and unconscious areas of the mind called *samskara*. The *samskara* are built up by continued actions of the thought waves. Every mind, no matter what its present nature, can ultimately be disciplined and transformed and fit to attain the state of perfect yoga

**3. Then man abides in his real nature**

Explanation: When lake of mind becomes clear and still, man knows himself as really is, always was and always will be. He knows that he is Atman

**4. At other times, when he is not in the state of Yoga, man remains identified with thought waves in the mind**

**5. There are five kinds of thought waves -some painful, others not painful**

Explanation: A painful wave, is not necessarily a wave which seems painful, when it first arises in the mind, it is a wave which brings with it an increased degree of ignorance, addiction and bondage

**6. These five kinds of thought waves are: right knowledge, wrong knowledge, verbal delusion, sleep and memory**

**7. The right kind of knowledge are: direct perception, inference and scriptural testimony**

**8. Wrong knowledge is knowledge which is false and not based upon true nature of the object**

The classical example given in yoga literature is that of a piece of rope which is mistaken for a snake

**9. Verbal delusion arises when words do not correspond to reality**

A common form of verbal delusion is jumping to conclusions e.g. political speech

**10. Sleep is a wave of thought about nothingness**

Explanation: dreamless sleep is not an absence of thought waves in the mind, but a positive experience of nothingness. It can not, therefore be confused with the waveless state of yoga.

**11. Memory is when perceived objects are not forgotten, but come back to consciousness**

Memory is a kind of secondary thought wave . A wave of direct perception causes a smaller ripple or series of ripples. The thought wave of sleep also causes smaller ripples, which we call dreams. Dreaming is remembering in your sleep

**12. They are controlled by means of practice and non attachment**

**13. Practice is repeated effort to follow the disciplines which give permanent control of thought waves of the mind**

**14. Practice becomes firmly grounded when it has been cultivated for a long time, uninterruptedly, with earnest devotion**

**15. Non attachment is self-mastery; it is freedom from desire what is seen or heard**

Explanation12-15: The waves of mind can be made to flow in two opposite directions - either towards the objective world ("the will to desire) or toward true self knowledge ("the will to liberation"). Therefore both practice and non attachment are necessary. The spiritual disciplines are known as eight limbs of 'yoga'

**16. When, through knowledge of Atman, one ceases to desire any manifestation of Nature, then that is highest kind of non attachment**

Explanation: As per Bhagwad Gita,

Water flows continually into the ocean, but the ocean is not disturbed

Desires flow in the mind of the seer, but he is not disturbed

The seer knows peace...

He knows peace who has forgotten desire

He lives without cravings

Free from ego, free from pride

**II Yoga and its Practice**

1. Austerity, study and the dedication of the fruits of one's work to God: these are preliminary steps toward yoga
2. Thus we may cultivate the power of concentration and remove the obstacles to enlightenment which cause all sufferings
3. These obstacles - the causes of man's sufferings-are ignorance, egoism, attachment , aversion, and the desire to cling to life
4. Ignorance creates all other obstacles( to enlightenment). They may exist either in potential or vestigial (biology, not fully developed in mature animals) form or they may have been temporarily overcome or fully developed.

Explanation: As per Bhagwat Gita "Think about sense objects, will attach you to sense objects; Grow attached, and you become addicted; Thwart (frustrate) your addiction, it turn to anger; Be angry, and you confuse your mind,; Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience; Forget experience, you loose discrimination; Loose discrimination, and you miss life's only purpose

5. To regard the non eternal as eternal, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant and non Atman as atman -this is ignorance
6. To identify consciousness with that which merely reflects consciousness-this is egoism
7. Attachment is that which dwells upon leasure

8. Aversion is that which dwells upon pain
9. The desire to cling to life is inherent both in the ignorant and learned. This is because the mind retains impressions of death experience from many previous incarnations
10. When these obstacles have been reduced to a vestigial (trace, evidence slight amount) form, they can be destroyed by resolving the mind back into primal cause.
11. In their fully developed form, they can be overcome through meditation
12. A man's latent tendencies have been created by his past thoughts and actions. These tendencies will bear fruits, both in this life and in life to come
13. So long as the cause exists, it will bear fruits-such as re birth, a long or short life, and the experiences of pleasure and pain
14. Experiences of pleasure and pain are the fruits of merit and demerit, respectively
15. But the man of spiritual discrimination regards all these experiences as painful. For even the enjoyment of present pleasure is painful, since we already fear its loss. Past pleasure is painful because renewed cravings arise from the impressions it has left upon the mind. And how any happiness can be lasting if it depends only upon our moods? For these moods are constantly changing as one or another of the ever warring gunas seizes control of the mind
16. The pain which is yet to come may be avoided (through karmas which we are now creating)
17. The pain is caused by false identification of the experiencer, with the object of the experience. It may be avoided
18. The object of experience is composed of the three gunas-the principles of illumination (sattwa), activity (rajas) and inertia (tamas). From these the whole universe has evolved together with the instruments of knowledge -such as mind, senses, etc and the objects perceived - such as the physical elements. The universe existing order that the experiencer may experience it, and thus become liberated.
19. The Gunas pass through four states-gross, subtle, primal and unevolved
20. The Atman- the experiencer-is pure consciousness. It appears changing colors of the mind. In reality, it is unchangeable
21. The object of experience exists only to serve the purpose of the Atman
22. Though the object of experience becomes unreal to him who has reached the stage of liberation, it remains real to other beings
23. The Atman -the experiencer-is identified with the Prakriti- the object of experience-in order that the true nature of both Prakriti and Atman may be known
24. This identification is caused by ignorance
25. When ignorance is destroyed, this identification ceases. Then bondage is at an end and the experiencer is independent and free
26. Ignorance is destroyed by awakening to knowledge of the Atman, until no trace of illusion remains
27. The experiencer gains the knowledge in seven stages, advancing towards the highest. Explanation: Seven stages are (A) The realization that the source of all spiritual wisdom is inside ourselves (B) The cessation of pain caused by

our attachment or aversion to the phenomena of the external universe (C) Samadhi-complete realization of, and union with the Atman (D) Return to consciousness of objective universe from Samadhi (E) Realisation that the mind and the objective world have both ended their services to the experiencer (F) Stored up impressions within the mind, and the gunas themselves, fall away forever (G) State of eternal existence in union with the Atman

28. As soon as all impurities have been removed by the practice of spiritual disciplines- the "limbs" of yoga- a man's spiritual vision, opens to the light giving knowledge of the Atman
29. The eight limbs of yoga are: the various forms of abstention from evil doing (yama), the various observances (niyamas) postures(asana), control of the prana (pranayama), withdrawal of the mind from sense objects (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana) and absorption in the Atman(Samadhi)
30. Yama is absence from harming others, from falsehood, from theft, from incontinence (Indiscipline with regard to sensuous pleasures), and from greed
31. These form of absence are basic rules of conduct. They may be practiced without any reservations as to time, place, purpose, or caste rules
32. The niyamas (observances) are purity (physical and mental), contentment, mortification, study and devotion to God
33. To be free from thoughts that distract one from yoga, thoughts of an opposite kind must be cultivated
34. The obstacles of yoga -such as acts of violence and untruth - may be directly created or indirectly caused or approved, they may be motivated by greed, anger or self interest, they may be small or moderate or great, but they never cease to result in pain and ignorance. One should overcome distracting thoughts by remembering this
35. When a man becomes steadfast in his absence from harming others, then all living creatures will cease to feel enmity in his presence
36. When a man becomes steadfast in his absence from falsehood he gets the power of obtaining for himself and others the fruits of good deeds, without having to perform the deeds themselves
37. When a man becomes steadfast in his absence from theft, all wealth comes to him
38. When a man becomes steadfast in his absence from incontinence (Indiscipline with regard to sensuous pleasures), he acquires spiritual energy
39. When a man becomes steadfast in his absence from greed, he gains knowledge of his past, present and future existences
40. As a result of purity, there arises indifference toward the body and disgust from physical intercourse with others
41. moreover, one achieves unification of the heart, cheerfulness of mind, the power of concentration, control of passions and fitness for vision of the Atman
42. as a result of contentment, one gains supreme happiness
43. As a result of mortification (Sub due physical urges by self discipline), impurities are removed. Then special powers come to the body and the sense organs (e.g. clairvoyance i.e Apparent power to perceive things) that are not

- present to the senses, telepathy, levitation i.e The act of raising (a body) from the ground by presumably spiritualistic means
44. As a result of study , including repeating mantram, one obtains the vision of that aspect of god which one has chosen to worship
  45. As a result of devotion to god, one achieves Samadhi. Explanation 44& 45 aphorism refer to *bhaktiyog*
  46. posture (asana) is to be seated in a position which is firm but relaxed
  47. Posture becomes firm and relaxed through control of the natural tendencies of the body, and through meditation on the infinite
  48. thereafter one is no longer troubled by the dualities of sense experience , e.g pleasure and pain
  49. After mastering posture, one must practice control of the prana (pranayam) by stopping the motions of inhalation and exhalation
  50. The breath may be stopped externally, or internally, or checked in mid motion, and regulated according to place , time and a fixed number of moments, so that stoppage is either protracted ( i.e Relatively long in duration) or brief
  51. The forth kind of pranayam is the stoppage of the breath which is caused by concentration upon external or internal objects. Explanation: three operations of pranayam are inhalation, exhalation, and suspension of the breath for a certain fixed number of moments, but this fourth operation is involuntary(done without consciousness) and natural
  52. As a result of this covering of the Inner light is removed. Explanation: The Inner light is the light of spiritual discrimination between the real and unreal. 'The covering' is made up of the ignorance produced by our past karmas
  53. The mind gains the power of concentration (dharana)
  54. When the mind is withdrawn from the sense objects, the sense organs also withdraw themselves from their respective objects and thus are said to imitate the mind. This is known as pratyahara
  55. Thence arises complete mastery over the senses

### Chapter 3: POWERS

The first five "limbs " of Yoga have been discussed in chapter2. three remain: concentration(dharana),Meditation(dhyana) and absorbtion(samadhi)

1. 6<sup>th</sup> limb-concentration (dharana) is holding the mind within a center of spiritual consciousness in the body, or fixing it on some devine form, either within the body outside it
2. 7<sup>th</sup> limb- meditation(dhyana) is an unbroken flow of thought toward the object of concentration
3. 8<sup>th</sup> limb- When in meditation, the true nature of object shines forth, not distorted by the mind of the perceiver, that is absorbtion(Samadhi)
4. When these three -concentration, meditation and absorbtion- are brought to bear one subject, they are called 'samyam'
5. Through mastery of samyam comes the light of knowledge
6. It must be applied stage by stage
7. These three are more direct aids to experience than the five limbs previously described
8. but even these are not direct aids to the seedless Samadhi (nirvikalpa)

9. When the vision of the lower Samadhi is suppressed by an act of conscious control, so that there are no longer any thoughts or visions in the mind, that is the achievement of control of the thought waves of the mind
  10. When this suppression of thought waves becomes continuous, the mind's flow is calm
  11. When all mental distractions disappear and the mind becomes one pointed, it enters the state called Samadhi
  12. The mind becomes one pointed when similar thought waves arise in succession without any gaps between them
- Explanation- if the mind can be made to flow uninterruptedly toward the same object for twelve seconds this may be called concentration, if 12\*12 seconds it may be called meditation, if it continues for 12\*12\*12 seconds in same state it may be called in lower Samadhi and if continues to 12\*12\*12\*12 sec (5 hours forty five minutes and thirty six seconds), this will lead to nirvikalpa samadhi
13. In this state, it passes beyond three kinds of changes which takes place in subtle or gross matter, and in organs: change of form, change of time and change of condition
  14. A compound object has attributes and is, subject to change, either past. Present or yet to be manifested
  15. The succession of these changes is the cause of manifold evolution
  16. (start of Occult Powers description ): By making samyam on three kinds of changes, one obtains knowledge of past and future
  17. By making samyama on the sound of a word, one's perception of its meaning, and one's reaction to it three things which are ordinarily confused one obtains understanding of all sounds uttered by living beings ( i.e. all foreign languages and the sound by all animals
  18. By making samyama on previous thought waves, one obtains knowledge of one's past lives
  19. By making samyama on distinguishing marks of another man's body, one obtains knowledge of the nature of his mind
  20. But not of its contents, because that is not the object of the samyama
  21. If one makes samyama on the form of one's body, obstructing its perceptibility and separating its power of manifestation from the eyes of the beholder, then one's body becomes invisible
  22. Thus, also, its sounds cease to be heard
  23. By making samyama on two kinds of karma- that which will bear fruit and that which will not bear fruit until later- or by recognizing the portents of death, a yogi may know the exact time of his separation from the body
  24. By making samyama on friendliness, compassion, etc one develops the powers of these qualities
  25. by making samyama on any kind of strength, such, as that of elephant, one obtains that strength
  26. By making samyama on the Inner light (light of the lotus within the heart) one obtains knowledge of what is subtle, hidden, or far distant
  27. By making samyama on the sun, one gains knowledge of the cosmic spaces
  28. By making samyama on the moon, one gains knowledge of the arrangement of the stars
  29. By making samyama on the polestar, one gains knowledge of motion of the stars

30. By making samyama on the nose, one gains knowledge of the constitution of the body
31. By making samyama on the hollow of the throat one stills hunger and thirst
32. By making samyama on the tube within the chest , one acquires absolute motionless
33. By making samyama on the radiance within the back of the head (not radiance of the seventh lotus , the highest center of spiritual consciousness) , one becomes able to see the celestial beings
34. All these powers of knowledge may also come to one whose mind is spontaneously enlightened through purity
35. By making samyama on the heart , one gains knowledge of the contents of the mind
36. The power of enjoyment arises from a failure to discriminate between the Atman and the sattwa guna, which is totally different. The sattwa guna is the agent of the atman, which is independent , existing only for its own sake. By making samyama on the independence of the atman, one gains knowledge of the Atman
37. Hence one gains the knowledge due to spontaneous enlightenment, and obtains supernatural powers of hearing, touch, sight, taste and smell
38. They are powers in worldly state, but they are obstacles to Samadhi
39. When the bonds of the mind caused by karma have been loosened , the Yogi can enter into the body of another by knowledge of operation of its nerve - currents
40. By controlling the nerve currents that govern lungs and upper part of the body, the yogi can walk on water and swamps (Drench or submerge or be drenched or submerged), or on thorns ( a sharp pointed tip) and similar objects, and he can die at will
41. By controlling the force which governs the prana, he can surround himself with a blaze of light
42. By making samyama on the relation between the ear and the ether , one obtains supernatural powers of hearing
43. By making samyama on the relation between the body and the ether , or by acquiring through meditation the lightness of cotton fibre, the yogi can fly through the air
44. By making samyama on the thought waves of the mind when it is separated from the body-the state known as the great disincarnation -all coverings can be removed from the light of knowledge
45. By making samyama on the gross and subtle forms of the elements, on their essential characteristics and inherence of the gunas in them, and on the experiences they provide for the individual, one gains mastery of the elements
46. Hence one gains the power of becoming as tiny as an atom and all similar powers; also perfection of the body, which is no longer subject to the obstruction of the elements
47. Perfection of the body includes beauty, grace , strength and hardness of a thunderbolt
48. By making samyama on the transformation that the sense organs undergo when they contact objects, on power of illumination of sense objects , on the

- ego sense, on the gunas which constitute the organs, and on the experiences they provide for the individual, one gains mastery of the organs
49. hence the body gains the power of movement as rapid as that of the mind, the power of using the sense organs outside the confines of the body , and the mastery of Prakriti
  50. By making samyama on the discrimination between the sattwa and the Atmana, one gains omnipotence (Having unlimited power) and omniscience (infinitely wise)
  51. By giving up these powers, the seed of evil (ignorance) is destroyed and liberation follows
  52. When tempted by the invisible beings in high places, let the yogi feel neither allured nor flattered ; for he is in danger of being caught once more in ignorance
  53. By making samyama on single moments and on their consequences in time , one gains discriminative knowledge
  54. Thus one is able to distinguish between two exactly similar objects, which can not be distinguished by their species , characteristic marks , or their position in space
  55. This discriminative knowledge delivers a man from the bondage of ignorance . It comprehends all objects simultaneously , at every moment of their existence and in all their modifications
  56. Perfection is attained when the mind becomes as pure as the Atman itself

#### **IV. LIBERATION**

1. The psychic powers may be obtained either by birth, or by means of drugs, or by the power of words, or by practice of austerities, or by concentration
2. The transformation of one species into another is caused by the inflwing of nature
3. Good or bad deeds are not the direct causes of transformation. They only act as breakers of the obstacles to natural evolution; just as a farmer breakdowns the obstacles in a water course, so that water flows through by its own nature
4. the ego sense alone can create minds
5. Though the activities of the different created minds are various, the one original mind controls them all.
6. Of the various types of mind, only that which is purified by Samadhi is freed from all latent impressions of karma and from all cravings
7. Karma of a Yogi is neither white or black. The karma of others is of three kinds: white, black or mixed
8. Of the tendencies produced by these three kinds of karma, only those are manifested for which the conditions are favorable
9. Because of our memory of past tendencies , the chain of cause and effect is not broken by change of species , space or time
10. since desire to exist has always been present ,our tendencies can not have had any beginning
11. Our subconscious tendencies depend upon cause and effect . They have their basis in the mind, and they are stimulated (Cause to do; cause to act in a specified manner)by the sense objects. If all these are removed , the tendencies are destroyed

12. There is the form and expression we call "past" and the form and expression we call "future";, both exist within the object , at all times. Form and expression vary according to time -past present and future
13. They are either manifest or subtle, according to the nature of the gunas
14. Since the gunas work together within every change of form and expression, there is a unity in all things
15. and 15 A The same object is perceived in different ways by different minds. Therefore the mind must be other than the object. The object can not be said to be dependent on the perception of a single mind. For, if this were the case, the object could be said to be non-existent when that single mind was not perceiving it
16. an object is known or unknown , depending upon the moods of the mind
17. Because the Atman , the lord of the mind , is unchangeable, the mind's fluctuations are always known to it.
18. The mind is not self-luminous, since it is an object of perception
19. And since it can not perceive both subject and object simultaneously
20. if one postulates a second mind to perceive the first, then one would have to postulate an infinite number of minds;and this would cause confusion of memory
21. The pure consciousness of the Atman is unchangeable. As the reflection of its consciousness falls upon the mind , the mind takes the form of the Atman and appears to be conscious
22. The mind is able to perceive because it reflects both the Atman and the objects of the perception
23. Though the mind has innumerable impressions and desires, it acts only to serve another, the Atman; for being a compound substance , it can not act independently , and for its own sake
24. The man of discrimination ceases to regard the mind as the Atman
25. when the mind is bent on the practice of discrimination , it moves towards liberation
26. distractions due to past impressions may arise if the mind relaxes its discrimination , even a little
27. They may be overcome in the same manner as the obstacles to enlightenment
28. he who remains distracted even when he is in possession of all psychic powers, achieves, as the result of perfect discrimination, that samadhi which is called the "cloud of virtue"
29. Thence come cessation of ignorance, the cause of suffering , and freedom from the power of karma
30. Then the whole universe , with its all objects of sense knowledge , becomes as nothing in comparison to that infinite knowledge which is free from all obstructions and impurities
31. Then the sequence of mutations of the gunas comes to an end, for they have fulfilled their purpose
32. this is the sequence of the mutations which takes place at every moment, but which are only perceived at the end of a series
33. Since the gunas no longer have any purpose to serve the Atman, they resolve themselves into Prakriti. This is liberation. The atman shines forth in its own pristine nature, as pure consciousness

