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PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS

Translation and Commentary in the Light of
Vedanta Scripture

by A. K. Aruna

PDF Preview

Upasana Yoga Media

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Thank you, A.K Aruna (Alan Kellogg), author and publisher

ISBN (PDF preview): 978-1-938597-10-7

Edited by, and with contributions from, John Warne

Published by
Upasana Yoga Media
Palm Desert, CA
www.UpasanaYoga.org

Invocation

योगेन चित्तस्य पदेन वाचां मलं शरीरस्य च वैद्यकेन।
योऽपाकरोत् तं प्रवरं मुनीनां पतञ्जलिं प्राञ्जलिरानतोऽस्मि॥

*Yogena cittasya padena vācāṃ malaṃ śarīrasya ca vaidyakena
Yo'pākarot taṃ pravaraṃ munīnāṃ patañjaliṃ prāñjalir ānato'smi*

I bow with hands folded to *Patañjali*, the best of sages who removes the impurity of the mind by his *Yoga*[-*sūtras*], of speech by his words [his grammar commentary called *Mahā-bhāṣya*], and of the body by his science of medicine [called *Caraka-pratisaṃskṛta*].

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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Preface | 11 |
| Introduction | 15 |
| <i>Patañjali's Yoga Sutras</i> | |
| Chapter 1 On Contemplation | |
| Introducing <i>Yoga</i> | 23 |
| General Definition of <i>Yoga</i> | 27 |
| The Goal of <i>Yoga</i> | 31 |
| What is the Essential Nature of Oneself | 32 |
| What is the Ego | 33 |
| How can Logic Help | 35 |
| How do I Know I am Simply the Witness | 39 |
| Life and Death | 40 |
| The 24/7 Reality | 42 |
| What is the Benefit | 45 |
| <i>Patañjali</i> Indicates This Witness Reality | 46 |
| Identification with Thought | 47 |
| The Nature of Thoughts | 49 |
| Repetition and Non-attachment | 62 |
| Two Forms of Contemplation | 68 |
| Contemplation on the Lord | 74 |
| The Nature of the Lord | 76 |
| Consciousness | 83 |

Contents

Chapter 1 On Contemplation (continued)

| | |
|---|-----|
| Distractions of the Mind | 88 |
| The Removal of Distractions | 89 |
| Clarity of Mind | 93 |
| Four Forms of Contemplation With Seed | 102 |
| Clarity and Knowledge | 112 |
| Contemplation Free of Seed | 121 |

Chapter 2 On Preparation

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Yoga</i> in Regard to Action | 127 |
| The Five Afflictions | 131 |
| The Affliction of Ignorance | 131 |
| The Affliction of I-notion | 133 |
| The Afflictions of Attachment and Aversion | 135 |
| The Affliction of Fear of Death | 137 |
| Giving Up Afflictions | 140 |
| <i>Karma</i> -Storage From the Afflictions | 141 |
| Giving Up Sorrow | 143 |
| Mutual Identification of Seer and Seen | 148 |
| The Nature of the Seen | 148 |
| The Nature of the Seer | 151 |
| The Seen's Relation to the Seer | 152 |
| Cause and Removal of Mutual Identification | 161 |
| The Eight Limbs of <i>Yoga</i> | 167 |

Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 2 On Preparation (continued) | |
| The 1 st Limb: Avoidances | 169 |
| The 2 nd Limb: Observances | 172 |
| Nurturing the Avoidances and Observances | 173 |
| The Components of the Avoidances | 175 |
| The Components of the Observances | 180 |
| The 3 rd Limb: Sitting Posture | 186 |
| The 4 th Limb: Controlling of Breath | 189 |
| The 5 th Limb: Withdrawal of the Senses | 192 |
| Chapter 3 On Accomplishments | 197 |
| The 6 th Limb: Restraining Thoughts | 199 |
| The Contemplation Process | 199 |
| The 7 th Limb: Retaining Thoughts | 202 |
| The 8 th Limb: Contemplation | 203 |
| Uniting (<i>Samyama</i>) of the Last Three Limbs | 204 |
| Which are the Internal Limbs of <i>Yoga</i> ? | 206 |
| Change Within Contemplation | 208 |
| Change Regarding All Objects | 214 |
| Accomplishments and Superpowers – <i>Siddhis</i> | 218 |
| <i>Samyama</i> on Change | 221 |
| <i>Samyamas</i> on the Seen and on the Seer | 224 |
| The Final Accomplishment is Freedom | 278 |
| Liberating Knowledge – <i>Kaivalya</i> | 297 |

Contents

Chapter 4 On Freedom

| | |
|---|-----|
| Causes of the Accomplishments | 303 |
| Action and the Mind | 305 |
| The Past and Future and the Present | 320 |
| Oneness Determines Entities | 323 |
| Contemplations from Science | 328 |
| Distinction of Objects and Thoughts | 332 |
| Distinction of Thoughts and Self | 338 |
| Knowledge as Freedom | 355 |

Appendixes

| | |
|---|-----------|
| A. Yoga Sutra Text | 369 |
| B. Sanskrit of Footnote Quotations | 89 |
| C. Reverse Index of Text to Footnotes | 451 |
| D. The Nature of the Mind | 463 |
| E. <i>Patañjali</i> 's Five Stages of Contemplation | 467 |
| F. Suggested Steps in Contemplation | 469 |
| G. Suggested Sutra Selections for Courses | 473 |
| H. Pronunciation Key for Sanskrit Transliteration Characters | 475 |

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Bibliography | 479 |
|--------------------|-----|

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| Index | 481 |
|-------------|-----|

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|
| About the Author | 95 |
|-------------------------------|-----------|

Preface

Yoga has been practiced for thousands of years by Indian spiritual seekers and saints. Yet, let us ask: Is there a single *yoga* text that specifically points out what those seekers and saints were actually contemplating in their *yoga* spiritual practice?

Most modern *yoga* texts, in English, are about *āsanas*—postures for physical strengthening, relaxation, stretching, and physical therapy. A few also highlight the benefits of these *āsanas* for relieving stress. Some introduce a little meditation, bringing in some spiritual words, such as *love*, *bliss*, and *divine*. Some present an *āsana* practice that includes a life of *yoga* off the mat. They may explain these spiritual ideas and life styles with a few examples. There is often not enough depth unfoldment of these ideas and their expressions into a life style. Sometimes they encourage the readers to imagine their own explanations—as if the seekers already know the answers they are seeking.

These texts do not fluently connect the student to the contemplative spiritual scriptures of India, for which India is so well known. In this way, these *yoga* texts are unlikely to bring the student to a clear sense of a broad, integrated, in-depth spiritual grounding that a full *yoga* encompasses.

There is one ancient *yoga* text, though, that is held to be the philosophical and contemplative basis of *yoga*. That text is the *Yoga Sūtras* by *Patañjali*. Its study has come to be called *Rāja Yoga*, meaning the Royal *Yoga*. It is a teaching of *yoga* appropriate for a king (*rājan*) learned in scripture yet not a renunciate, such as that taught to King *Janaka* by *Yājñna-valkya* in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* scripture and to Prince *Arjuna* by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. We would think, then, that the commentaries and literature surrounding the *Yoga Sūtras* would be steeped in the scriptures of India—but that is not the case.

The earliest extant and most influential Sanskrit commentary (*bhāṣya*) is by a man named *Vyāsa*. He does not quote any scripture. Instead, he sprinkles in his

commentary a few quotes from certain sages, culled mostly from the *Mahā-Bhārata* epic. The innumerable English translations and commentaries of these *sūtras* appear to only convey the spirituality, or lack thereof, of their many and varied authors. Even the scriptural leaning versions, such as the one by Bangali Baba (*The Yogasutra of Patanjali: With the Commentary of Vyasa*) and the one jointly by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (*How to Know God: The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*), sparingly connect the *sūtras* to specific scriptures. The effort here is to rectify this void.

There is also the purpose here to directly connect the many students and teachers of the Indian scriptures to the vast *yoga* community, and the *yoga* practitioners and teachers to the spiritual community.

Previously, the gulf between the two has been bridged only by the individual student or teacher on their own. Much of that effort has been through connecting a few of the topics in *yoga* to anecdotal stories of spiritual saints. Most of these stories revolve around the modern founders or practitioners of the teacher's lineage. These stories are more of a devotee's praise than a real grounding in a full *yoga* tradition dating back thousands of years.

The effort here is to formally bridge these two communities in all their myriad lineages with a common language and understanding. This is done through mapping the terminologies, *sūtras* (aphorisms), and topics of the *Yoga Sūtras* directly to the highly revered scriptures of India—namely, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

As such, this text is helpful both to spiritual students seeking expanded and specific guidance, and to various teachers researching technical tools to bridge the apparent gap between *yoga* and the Indian scriptures.

Coming from the United States, a different culture from *yoga*'s flowering ground, I was carefully and artfully introduced to these scriptures in 1976 by Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati (born 1930-). In India, I lived in the teacher's family (*guru-kula*) with over sixty other students for two and a half years.

The classes were five a day, six days a week. We studied Sanskrit; chanting; meditation; the *Bhagavad Gītā* with Śaṅkara's commentary; several introductory *Vedānta* texts, such as *Tattva-Bodha* and *Ātma-Bodha*; the *Upaniṣad* scriptures *Kena*, *Praśna*, *Īśāvāsyā*, *Muṇḍaka*, and portions of *Chāndogya* and *Bṛhad-āranyaka*; plus the three *Upaniṣads* *Kaṭha*, *Māṇḍūkya* with *Kārika*, and *Taittirīya* complete with Śaṅkara's commentaries. Finally, we studied the four initial *Vedānta Sūtras* with Śaṅkara's commentary—called the *Catur-Śruti*. We each have continued to study these and other texts as needed after our course. Many such long and short term courses have been conducted by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and by his students.

In the past ten years, I have created a five volume set of texts called *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*. The series, in a self-teaching format, unfolds the grammar of Sanskrit along with the *Bhagavad Gītā*. It includes a grammar book and a lesson book, plus a dictionary, a translation, and a grammatical analysis of all the verses of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

But it is not these thirty plus years that show in these pages. It is the thousands of years of continuous tradition that preserved and elaborated on this deep, scriptural teaching tradition.

I first read, more than thirty years ago, the *Yoga Sūtras* translated with *Vyāsa's* commentary by Bengali Baba. I did not then see how they could properly fit with *Vedānta* scripture. Four years ago, I wanted to bring the *yoga* of *Vedānta* to a wider audience. I envisioned the *Yoga Sūtras* as an introductory vehicle.

Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Tattvidananda had recently given talks on sections of the *Yoga Sūtras*. Listening to them, I saw the possibility of a way to link the *Yoga Sūtras* to the *yoga* of *Vedānta*.

Still, there are many *sūtras*, including the section in chapter three dealing with *yoga* superpowers, that on first glance appear incompatible with *Vedānta* scripture.

Setting aside my doubts, I started from the *sūtras'* beginning and, to my surprise I have to admit, found the way to reconcile each *sūtra* to *Vedānta*. In the process, I

found the available traditional commentaries to be of little use. None of them made an adequate attempt to base the *sūtras* on scripture. In fact, they took them in a different direction towards a later developing dualist philosophy called *Sāṅkhya*.

Instead, I took the topics and individual words that *Patañjali* employed and quite easily found their source and contextual development in *Vedānta* scripture that preceded these *sūtras*. I was surprised at the ease of this process, since this had not been attempted in print before, to my knowledge.

It is not easy to translate and comment on the *Yoga Sūtras*, while at the same time introduce and explain *Vedānta* scripture in one text. The reader has to bear with this apparent juggling process, but should quickly see the benefit. That benefit is not just understanding a traditional *yoga* text in a new way; it is seeing these *Yoga Sūtras* in a truly enlightening way as they were intended. It connects *yoga* back to its true beginning and purpose which the early seekers and saints embraced in their contemplations.

To convey this enlightening teaching to its current students, these *sūtras* are explained in clear contemporary language. The explanations are in keeping with our current culture and sciences—the same as was done in *Patañjali*'s time. As it was then, this work is presented as a current spiritual non-fiction meant for enlightenment.

I wish here to give adoration to my teacher, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, who is faithfully passing on this knowledge-tradition, renewing and reinvigorating it into the 21st century. I also wish to thank my editor, John Warne. John has studied Sanskrit and *Vedānta*, and has completed one of these long term courses. He corrected and questioned many of my expressions, as well as appropriately replaced or added many paragraphs where needed. Any faults or omissions in this text, though, are due to the rawness of my submitted material.

Introduction

Yoga is popular in the West as physical exercise, a centering technique, and physical therapy. In India, though, it is much better known as a spiritual discipline that connects the individual with the divine.

As a spiritual discipline, it spans two popular traditions—*Yoga* and *Vedānta*.

Vedānta is a non-dualist tradition—the reality basis of everything including oneself is only one, not many. Its authority is the *Upaniṣads* (abbreviated in this text as *Up.*), *Bhagavad Gītā* (*Bh. Gītā*), and the *Vedānta Sūtras*. Within *Vedānta*, *yoga* (in this text, *yoga* without capitalization refers to a characterization of useful practices within *Vedānta*) is presented as *karma-yoga* and as *jñāna-yoga*. *Karma-yoga* means spiritual discipline related to life's activities (*karma*). *Jñāna-yoga* relates to spiritual knowledge (*jñāna*) and its specific disciplines, such as the practice of renunciation, *sannyāsa*.

Yoga (in this text, *Yoga* with capitalization refers to the separate tradition or school of thought called *Yoga*) is a dualist tradition—there is no one reality basis of everything. Its authority includes these *Yoga Sūtras*. *Yoga* is presented as *kriyā-yoga* and *samādhi*. *Kriyā-yoga* is essentially the same as *karma-yoga*. *Samādhi* is the discipline of pursuing knowledge (*jñāna*) through contemplation. Here, *samādhi* may be pursued for scientific as well as spiritual knowledge. The differences in the world are real, so pursuing knowledge of these differences involves contemplating these subtle differences.

Although it will be argued here that there need be no essential separation between these two traditions, assuming the innate dualist understanding is preliminary to and can mature into a non-dual knowledge, an interesting twist has happened. The *Yoga Sūtras*, which are amenable to either tradition, have been subsumed by a pervasive early commentary that interprets the *sūtras* only through *Sāṅkhya*, a dualist scientific philosophy. This stops the disciplines in *Yoga* from further questioning the reasons

one believes in differences being ultimately real. Limiting *samādhi* (contemplation) to reaffirming *Sāṅkhya*'s dualist perspective, this *samādhi* becomes disconnected from the *samādhi* championed in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* that pursue knowledge to its ultimate conclusion in the one unifying reality of everything including oneself.

As a result, almost no one, even inside *Vedānta*, has since seen these *Yoga Sūtras* as easily being within the *Vedānta* tradition. These *sūtras* are taken as *Sāṅkhya Yoga*, instead of as *Vedānta Yoga*.

The reason for this is likely that *Vedānta* already has its own *sūtras*, the *Vedānta Sūtras*. *Sūtras* are typically written early within a tradition to outline and capture the essence of an oral tradition into writing. These succinct outlines are easily memorized and passed down through the various teaching lineages. Those *sūtras* help maintain the accurate continuity of their teaching traditions through succeeding generations. Each tradition has one set of *sūtras* to encapsulate its teaching. *Vedānta* has its *Vedānta Sūtras*, while *Yoga* lays claim to these *Yoga Sūtras* of *Patañjali*. Therefore, *Vedānta* does not need the *Yoga Sūtras* to be complete.

But *Yoga* needs *Vedānta Yoga* to really flower for the spiritual seeker. The commentary here will thus show that, when it comes to spiritual knowledge, it is much more meaningful to take the original *Yoga Sūtras* as *Vedānta Yoga*. This will be the more fulfilling approach to these *sūtras* for *yoga* spiritual seekers, who are the intended audience for this unique commentary.

The *sāṅkhya* and *Sāṅkhya*

It should first be noted that there is a difference between the Sanskrit word *sāṅkhya* and the name *Sāṅkhya* which applies to a particular philosophical doctrine. The word *sāṅkhya* (literally, *related to reckoning or grouping, related to explaining—sāṅkhyā*) means *enumeration* or *knowledge*.

As knowledge, the term *sāṅkhya* is used in the epic *Mahā-Bhārata* and in the

Bhagavad Gītā as the sacred knowledge handed down from the scriptures. In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where *Kṛṣṇa*'s teaching starts (verses 2.11 through 38, said therein to be dealing with 'sāṅkhya') the quotations, paraphrases, and teachings are directly from the *Upaniṣads*. Hence, the rest of the *mantras* in those non-dual *Upaniṣads*, in particular the *Kaṭha Up.*, cannot be disconnected from what is called *sāṅkhya* in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.ⁱ

Another use of the word *sāṅkhya* found in the *Mahā-Bhārata* epic was for describing a teaching that employs a methodology (*prakriyā*) of enumerating components or aspects (*tattvas*) of the universe, including the nascent scientific thinking that was developing.

With regard to *Vedānta*, there are various teaching methodologies (*prakriyās*). First, there is the primary *prakriyā* of imposition-sublation (*adhyāropa-apavāda*). This *prakriyā*, meant for unfolding the non-duality unique to *Advaita Vedānta*, describes the entire universe, including what the individual thinks he or she is, as

ⁱ Most of *Bh. Gītā* verses 2.11 through 2.38 are borrowed from or can be easily seen as based upon the *Kaṭha Up.*:

- B.G.* 2.11 with *K.U.* 1.2.22, 2.1.4 and 5;
- B.G.* 2.12 with *K.U.* 2.1.13 and 2.2.8;
- B.G.* 2.13 with *K.U.* 2.2.7;
- B.G.* 2.14 with *K.U.* 2.3.6;
- B.G.* 2.15 with *K.U.* 2.3.8;
- B.G.* 2.16 with *K.U.* 2.3.13;
- B.G.* 2.17 with *K.U.* 2.1.2;
- B.G.* 2.18 with *K.U.* 1.2.22;
- B.G.* 2.19 from *K.U.* 1.2.19;
- B.G.* 2.20 from *K.U.* 1.2.18;
- B.G.* 2.21 through 25 with *K.U.* 1.2.18 and 19;
- B.G.* 2.28 with *K.U.* 1.2.5 and 6;
- B.G.* 2.29 with *K.U.* 1.2.7;
- B.G.* 2.30 with *K.U.* 1.2.22;
- and *B.G.* 2.38 with *K.U.* 1.2.14 and 2.3.18.

consisting of two or more categories of everything. It then dismisses these categories as being absolutely real.

This *adhyāropa-apavāda prakriyā* consists of two components—*adhyāropa* (imposition) of a duality enumeration of the universe and its *apavāda* (sublation). By sublation (or subratiōn) is meant its dismissal as being absolutely real and its subordination to a broader, overarching truth.

Each of these two components is presented through one of several other *prakriyās*.

Adhyāropa (imposition) involves any of the *prakriyās* of seer-seen (*dṛk-dṛśya*), effect-cause (*kārya-kāraṇa*), three states of experience (*avasthā-traya*), the five embodiments (*pañca-kośa*), and so on. These *prakriyās* involve enumerating (*sāṅkhya*).

Apavāda (sublation) involves the *prakriyā* of negation (*neti-neti*), where the authority of the scripture is invoked by asserting, “It (the truth) is not this or that (enumeration).” It also involves the *prakriyā* of co-presence–co-absence (*anvaya-vyatireka*), where logic is employed to support the sublation claims.

We thus find the scriptures presenting the entire universe by enumerating the dualities of seer-seen, cause-effect, subtle-gross, and eater-eaten; the trio of the three worlds (heavens, atmosphere, and earth), three *guṇas*, three states of experiences (waking, dream, and deep sleep), and the three gross elements (red, white, and black, that is, fire, water, and earth in *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 6.4.5); the five elements (space, air, fire, water, and earth); the seven worlds, the seven *tattvas* or categories (objects, senses, mind, intellect, cosmic mind, unmanifest, and the *puruṣa* or cosmic person in *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* 3.10-11); the fourteen worlds; etcetera Any one of these presentations can be called a *sāṅkhya*.

The Yoga Sūtras through Sāṅkhya

With this scriptural background of employing enumerations to encompass the entire universe, many later philosophies and even science itself evolved. Indeed, the atheist

philosophy called *Sāṅkhya*, which elaborated on the gross-subtle, *guṇas*, elements, and *tattvas* (principles) to explain the universe, was considered around the start of the first millennium in India to be the science of the universe. Many of the arts, such as medicine, and other traditions, such as Buddhism and *Vedānta*, adopted in part or whole *Sāṅkhya*'s explanations of, or at least its approach to, the science of things.

When this *Yoga Sūtras* text is interpreted from the background of the atheist philosophy of *Sāṅkhya*, it is taken as *Sāṅkhya Yoga*, an infusion of the theist tendencies of the majority of the Indian populous with the atheist philosophy and science of *Sāṅkhya*. This theist version of *Sāṅkhya* defines a world outlook through duality and the science of *Sāṅkhya*, while accepting a God as a separate, inactive participant in the world. Contemplation (*samādhi*) is the method to perfect this outlook in one's life.

The *Yoga Sūtras* through *sāṅkhya*

In this text, we will instead take these same *sūtras* from the background of the theist scriptures—with their nascent science of enumeration (*sāṅkhya*) and their non-dual vision of everything, and with contemplation as its method to help assimilate this non-dual vision.

Vedānta*, *Sāṅkhya*, and *Yoga Sūtras

Vedānta non-dualism says that the basis of all reality is the one *brahman* (literally, *the big* and *the reality*, and often capitalized as if it is a name for *reality*). This reality is also indicated by the terms: *Īśvara* (literally, *the ruler*, and commonly meaning *the Lord*), *puruṣa* (literally, *the one who pervades*, and commonly meaning *the Cosmic Person*), or *ātman* (literally, *the mover*, *pervader* or *devourer*, and commonly meaning *the self*).

I, the *ātman*, am in fact the reality of the universe, not other than the Lord. The diverse universe, in fact, simply appears to exist within this singular reality. In this

perspective all duality—all otherness and separation—is sub-rated as only existing *as if* and thus is not the absolute truth. This non-dualist perspective is uniquely Eastern.

Sāṅkhya dualism, on the other hand, claims that the basis of all reality is dual—more than one absolutely existing entity. The *puruṣa* is the reality of oneself, and there are countless *puruṣas*, with the Lord being one of them. Everything else is *prakṛti* or *pradhāna* (Nature). I, the *puruṣa*, am not any of the objects of the world. None of the objects and none of the other *puruṣas* are me. Duality—otherness and separation—is real. This dualist perspective is universally common, East and West, spiritual or not.

People in *yoga* love to read the *Bhagavad Gītā* for its sweeping non-dualist vision, whereas, they read the *Yoga Sūtras*, because, as its title suggests, it should be the philosophy of *yoga*. Some people gloss over the difference of non-duality from duality as not being important to them.

The majority of people, at least in the West, are by nurture dualist. They reconcile the non-dual *Bhagavad Gītā* to dualism by taking it as poetry, not as a spiritual science. Whereas, the people who wish to pursue non-dualism, consciously or not, reconcile for their spiritual needs the apparently dualist *Yoga Sūtras* to the *Bhagavad Gītā* by taking the *sūtras* to be aiming at an implicit mystical goal of non-duality—a *samādhi* in which differences temporarily disappear.

This text cuts through this felt dilemma—finally bringing *yoga* back home to its scriptural fountainhead, where the truth to be contemplated within *yoga* is clearly laid out and well reasoned, not mystical.

The Format

This text will connect over two hundred and fifty quotations from the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, and the *Bhagavad Gītā* to these *Yoga Sūtras*. The student is encouraged to read the footnotes since these are where the quotations are given. The footnotes also serve to interconnect related *Yoga Sūtras*, so the text can be better understood as a

consistent, integrated teaching, and not as a series of disconnected notions. If you do not investigate these footnotes and their quotations, half the purpose of this text will not be fulfilled.

These quotations are not meant to exhaust all the possible connections of these *sūtras* to the scriptures, but to help start this process for students and teachers. The student and the teacher are encouraged to investigate these quotations in their sources to see their contexts and surrounding teachings. Each quotation is always taken appropriately from its context.

The text is laid out in *sūtra* order. All the *Yoga Sūtras* are given. The original *sūtra* in *Devanāgarī* script is followed by its transliteration. Next, within square brackets, a word-for-word vocabulary is provided, and finally the translation followed by a commentary if required.

The vocabulary is ordered the same as the English in the *sūtra* translation. This will make it easy to match the vocabulary with the translation. If the same word is repeated in the *sūtra*, the vocabulary will repeat it too. Except for the pronouns, typically, the uninflected forms of the vocabulary are shown, while the following *sūtra* translation will additionally show the inbuilt inflected syntax of the prepositions and other parts of speech required to expand the Sanskrit vocabulary into an English sentence. By stripping the inflection from the Sanskrit words of the *sūtra*, this section will display the words as true vocabulary items. Compound words are either shown together with hyphenation or, more often, separately as individual vocabulary items, depending on the transparency of the relationship between the component words of the compound. The translation of each vocabulary item is contextual within the *sūtra* and sometimes shows an adjective as a verb. There may be other parts of speech conversions as well, because of this adopted convention of exactly matching the vocabulary to how they are rendered in a flowing English sentence.

The following literal *sūtra* translation (and the vocabulary) is shown in bold font. Embedded in each *sūtra* translation (and some of the vocabulary) are additional words in non-bold font that explain or expand the sense of the *sūtra*, or connect the topic to

other *sūtras*. After reading the entire translation, try reading just the bold words that are the bare words of the *sūtra*.

The footnotes containing the scriptural quotations are given in English, with their full Sanskrit provided in Appendix B. Each of these quotations has been freshly translated by the author. To help understand these bare quotes within their scriptural context, the author has occasionally added contextual explanations in square brackets.

The transliteration of Sanskrit words is here in keeping with the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) scheme (see Appendix H), for example, *sūtra*, instead of *sutra*. Additionally, individual Sanskrit words are shown in the form one would find them in a Sanskrit dictionary, for example, *ātman* (आत्मन् for self), *yogin* (योगिन् for yogi), and *draṣṭṛ* (द्रष्टृ for seer), instead of their commonly found nominative inflected forms—*ātmā*, *yogī*, and *draṣṭā*, respectively. There is one exception, though. The Sanskrit word *karman* is shown as *karma*, because it is more a part of our international vocabulary.

For those teachers who wish to use this version of the *Yoga Sūtras* to give classes, the translation of the *sūtras* as shown in Appendix A is available in a separate booklet format called, *Patanjali Yoga Sutras: A Translation in the Light of Vedanta Scripture*.

Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi

Chapter 1 On Contemplation

Introducing *Yoga*

अथ योगानुशासनम् ॥ (1.1)
atha yogānuśāsanam.

[*atha*—now; *anuśāsana*—traditional teaching; *yoga*—the means.]

Now¹ begins **the traditional teaching of *yoga* (the means, the preparation and application).**

In the spiritual literature of India, the ultimate human goal is called *mokṣa*² or *kaivalya*. This goal is freedom without any qualification, complete freedom in and of itself—encompassing everything in one’s universe in every way.

Every small goal in life finds its complete fulfillment in the attainment of this freedom alone.³ This goal is not tied to any cultural trappings or spiritual beliefs. It is

¹ “This use of the word ‘*atha*’ has the sense of the beginning (*adhikāra*) of a text.” (*Vyāsa’s Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 1.1).

² “‘*Mokṣa* (freedom)’ is remaining in one’s own self, once there is the removal of the cause for the arising of [*saṃsāra* in the form of] ignorance (*a-vidyā*) [which is the cause of], desire (*kāma*) [which is the cause of], action and its results (*karmā*) [in order to placate the felt sense of lack due to ignorance of the self as full and complete].” (*Taittirīya Up. Sāṅkara Bhāṣya* introduction).

³ “When one knows that same limitless *sukha* (fulfillment that is the nature of the self, of *ātman*)—which is to be grasped by the intellect, [yet] is not within the scope of the senses—and abiding [there in the *sukha*], never moving away from this truth [i.e., reality], having gained that which one knows is not bettered by another gain,

as applicable to any self-conscious creature anywhere in the universe, as it is to everyone on Earth. To recognize this one goal as alone fulfilling all goals takes a certain maturity, but there is no extraordinary qualification to initiate the study of the means which prepares one for this ultimate human pursuit. *Yoga* is this preparation.

The first word, *atha* (now), of these *sūtras* indicates the beginning of the teaching of *yoga*. ‘*Atha*’ also traditionally carries with it a sense of auspiciousness by its mere sound, and is used at the beginning of many important undertakings to invoke a grace for completing the undertaking and for the undertaking to be widely beneficial.

Sūtra style texts, such as *Patañjali*’s, are by design meant to briefly present a summary of a topic that has an already existing body of literature, oral or written, in which the topic is elaborated. To unfold and understand such a condensed text as this we need to rely on a valid means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) with regard to this text and this background literature.⁴

Intuition, a form of imagination,⁵ is not a valid means of knowledge with which to unfold this text. Proper unfoldment instead requires a background in the literature of which this text is a summary and, at the very least, familiarity with the Sanskrit language. Interpretations based on imagination or extrapolations of other translations in languages distanced from the original Sanskrit will be just that—imagination or even further abstractions from the original text. There are quite a few of these Western clones, with the author’s dash of inventiveness to capture its audience. Being exposed to and keeping in mind the contextual meaning and import of *yoga*, the student will quickly learn whether or not an author is going to be helpful.

Another approach with a long tradition that has been passed on through the most

and abiding in which [reality] one would not be affected—even by great pain—one knows that disassociation from association with sorrow to be what is called *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.21 through 23).

⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.9.

popular existing Sanskrit commentaries is to interpret these *sūtras* through a certain literature that came after them. That later literature was primarily the dualist *Sāṅkhya* work, called the *Sāṅkhya-kārika*, by *Īśvara-kṛṣṇa*. This philosophy is basically a mechanical dualism, not unlike the popular philosophies and theologies of today.

When one adopts this dualism as the basic philosophy underlying these *sūtras*, as was done in the most prominent commentary of this text by an author called *Vyāsa* (a common name in ancient India, as well as a word that means *editor* or *compiler*), then the inherent limitations and divisiveness of that dualist thinking will permeate these *sūtras* and may lead the student astray.

But what if the dualist thinking one has entertained since a child limits by its nature one's quest for freedom? If one is still seeking a fully satisfying truth after all these years, why not question these dualist assumptions? If dualism is by its nature divisive and not amenable to a complete freedom, then how could these dualist assumptions allow a text that purports to direct a student to unfettered freedom succeed? What is suggested here is that a dualist approach to this text is unnecessary since there is a better approach which avoids this limited, misleading, and divisive interpretation.

This better approach is more firmly based in tradition and follows an earlier literature that is the authority on the nature of freedom (*mokṣa*). That earlier literature is also the first to mention *yoga* and present it as a means for this freedom.⁶ That literature is the sacred *Upaniṣads*⁷ that predate these *sūtras* by many hundreds to

⁶ The technical term *yoga* is used in *Taittirīya Up.*, *Kaṭha Up.*, *Śvetāśvatara Up.*, *Kaivalya Up.*, and many others. The activities (*tapas*), values, and meditations that characterize *yoga* are indicated in nearly every *Upaniṣad* from *Īśā Up.*, *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.*, *Chāndogya Up.*, onwards.

⁷ “One's very self (*ātman*) is *brahman* (limitless reality). By clearly knowing that, there is [the *mokṣa* (freedom) said to be] the removal of [self-]ignorance. The *Upaniṣad* is undertaken for the sake of this knowledge of *brahman* (*brahma-vidyā*). This knowledge is called ‘*Upaniṣad*.’ [It is called *Upa-ni-ṣad* because] for those who are dedicated to that [knowledge], it loosens [the bonds of] entering a womb, birth, old age, etc., [finally] puts an end to that [*saṃsāra*, the life of unbecoming becoming] by leading [you] back to [yourself as] *brahman*, and, having done this, is the ultimate goal (*śreyas*) in this [knowledge].” (*Taittirīya Up. Sāṅkara Bhāṣya* introduction).

perhaps over a thousand years. Though it is more ancient than *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, it is more sophisticated and is quite new to most people interested in *yoga*. We will show how this approach to these *sūtras*, and to everything in your life, can be most enlightening.

The *Upaniṣads* clearly unfold a vision of a limitless reality, free of division. This vision pierces beyond cultures, environments, and histories. The *Upaniṣad* scripture is unlike the other scriptures of the world, because it is at once both a scripture and a science—a science of the nature of the spirit and the nature of the universe. It can then apply universally, as a science does, to all humankind—not just to a chosen, converted, or elite group. This science is different from the material sciences, since it is based on scripture (the report from someone who had realized its benefit) and the truth of one’s very nature. Though this spiritual science is not based on the senses, logic from sense perceptions, or doubt based experimentation—nor could it be—it is presented for peer review to the open minded in every society and every generation for the individual to benefit.

This scripture applies to the basic human condition of every individual, whether that person believes it or not, or thinks it otherwise or not. And it allows everyone else to believe or think as they will. The vision of these *Upaniṣads*, which is assumed here in these *sūtras*, was transmitted from generation to generation to be available to whoever can approach and assimilate it. No attempt to convert, coerce, or conquer for spreading the word is required. Its own benefit to those individuals who have assimilated it has and will sustain its teaching tradition.

Patañjali himself here indicates that there was this earlier body of literature from which he was summarizing this topic of *yoga*. The prefix ‘*anu-*’ in this initial *sūtra* is often used in the sense of *anurūpe*, meaning *in conformity with*. When applied to the term *śāśana* (teaching), it indicates that this will be the traditional teaching of *yoga*. This text is then meant to be in conformity with the prior traditional texts that deal with the topic of *yoga* and the topic of liberation, the goal of *yoga*.

The prior traditional texts we have available to us today are only the scriptures, in

particular the *Upaniṣads*, that delve deeply into the topic of the nature of reality, as well as the popular literatures that help convey this teaching—called *Purāṇas* (legends) and *Itihāsas* (epics) about the lives and teachings of people who were called *yogins*. By far the most acclaimed teaching on *yoga* is within the *Mahā-bhārata Itihāsa* called the *Bhagavad Gītā*, which deals directly with *yoga* and its ultimate goal, liberation, as taught by the Lord incarnate, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa*.

If we keep such texts as the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* as our principle reference while unfolding this terse work of *Patañjali*, then we will know we are understanding *Patañjali* as he intended—according to the same tradition that was before him, or contemporaneous (perhaps, as imagined by some academics, in the case of the *Bhagavad Gītā*), but not after him.

When going through these *sūtras*, please read the commentary and the many footnotes, since they provide the direct connections of this work with the sacred tradition in which this work is to be reconciled. The original Sanskrit in as easy a format to read as possible is given in Appendix B for those footnotes that are translations of mantras and verses from scripture, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and other original sources.

General Definition of *Yoga*

योगश् चित्त-वृत्ति-निरोधः ॥ (1.2)
yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ.

[*yoga*—means; *nirodha*—mastery; *vṛttis*—thoughts; *citta*—mind.]

***Yoga*⁸ (the means) is the mastery—discipline—of the thoughts of the mind.**

⁸ “They know *yoga* as that [final goal (*parāṃ gatim*)] which has a steady control (*dhāraṇā*) of the organs [of action and knowledge].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.3.11). “The six-fold *yoga* is said to be withdrawing (*pratyāhāra*) [the mind and senses], retaining (*dhyaṇa*) [the wanted thoughts] in contemplation, controlling the breath (*prāṇa-*

As a general definition of *yoga* it seems that the word *nirodha* is best rendered in its most general meaning, as *mastery*. Later in this text during the discussions on the final stages of *yoga* in which *samādhi* (contemplation) is discussed, the term *nirodha* is employed in a more specific technical sense as the culmination of *samādhi*. It is then best rendered in that context as *assimilation* or the dropping of ignorance and its various obstructions to freedom.

The ultimate goal of *yoga* is to know and be only the unafflicted reality⁹ that is the nature of oneself, the *puruṣa*,¹⁰ the person at the core of one’s being.¹¹ For this ultimate goal, the immediate goal of *yoga* is gaining clarity of mind that can eventually assimilate the knowledge of the nature of oneself.¹² This involves sufficient mastery (*nirodha*) of the thoughts of the mind.

Here, mastery does not mean suppression, rather a cognitive alertness allowing the most appropriate and helpful thinking to arise. This manifests outside the seat of meditation as propriety in action, both mental and physical, based on a clearer ascertainment of what is unconditional freedom. It is the mastery that a mature and informed person would command in a situation, as opposed to that of an immature or uninformed person. And this mastery is not for managing the external situation, but for managing the mind so that it remains a helpful tool, particularly with regard to intelligently seeking one’s ultimate goal in life.

āyāma), restraining (*dhāraṇā*) [the unwanted thoughts] in contemplation, contemplating with reason (*tarka*) [in keeping with the scriptures], and contemplation that culminates in assimilation (*samādhi*).” (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 6). “Sameness [of attitude (*buddhi*) towards results—whatever they are] is called *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.48). “Propriety in actions [i.e., acting within *dharma*, where the means are as important as the end] is [called] *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.50). “Disassociation (*viyoga*) from association with sorrow is what is called *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.23).

⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24, 1.25, 2.2, 2.3, 3.49, 3.50, and 3.54.

¹⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.3.

¹¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.29.

¹² *Yoga Sūtras* 1.30 through 41, and 1.46 through 48.

It must clearly be understood that mastery or discipline of the mind is not in any way subjugation or narrow confinement of the mind. That would be confusing physical discipline with mental discipline. The mind is naturally fleeting and fickle, and can jump across the universe in a split second.¹³ The mind cannot be contained like an unruly pet. Mental discipline instead is predominantly conceptual. The only restrictive aspect possible here is in making an informed choice to start and remain in this discipline of knowledge leading to the goal of *yoga*.

The word *nirodha* has the dictionary definitions of *nāśa* (destruction, disappearance), *pralaya* (resolution of an effect back into its material cause), and/or *pratirodha* (obstruction—mechanical or otherwise).¹⁴ Hence, in regard to the final goal of *yoga*, *final assimilation* would be an appropriate rendering of *nirodha*, since that final assimilation is a combination of a destruction of an ignorance that binds and a resolution of the effects of that ignorance to their objective cause—both realized through knowledge that frees and its assimilation. However, to reach that goal, the preliminary steps to this assimilation within *yoga* involve mastery of the mind.

The mastery of the thoughts of the mind here in *Patañjali*'s *yoga* is mechanical, via repetition (*abhyāsa*),¹⁵ sitting (*āsana*),¹⁶ and breath control (*prāṇāyāma*).¹⁷ It is cognitive via trust (*śraddhā*),¹⁸ study (*svādhyāya*),¹⁹ contemplation (*Īśvara-*

¹³ “O *Kṛṣṇa*, since the mind is very fleeting, distracting, strong and well-rooted, I think that its control is quite as difficult as that of the wind.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.34).

¹⁴ *Śabda-Stoma-Mahānidhi: A Sanskrit Dictionary by Tārānātha Bhaṭṭāchārya*.

¹⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.12.

¹⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.46.

¹⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.49.

¹⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.20.

¹⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

prañidhāna),²⁰ assimilation (*samādhi*),²¹ and clear knowledge (*prajñā*).²² The last of which, knowledge (*prajñā*), is the destruction (*nāśa*) of self-ignorance.

Mastery (*nirodha*) includes the ability to assimilate and stay on a particular thought or topic that does not hinder (*a-kliṣṭa*) the goal in *yoga* as well as the ability to counteract and refrain from a particular thought or topic that hinders (*kliṣṭa*).²³ This includes the ability to resolve (*pralaya*) cognitively all objects and the mind into the non-dual silence of their reality basis, into oneself. This mastery is a total commitment to a beneficial (*śreyas*) life of *yoga* and avoidance of what may be pleasurable (*preyas*), but not beneficial.

An equally good rendering of the term *nirodha* in this context is *discipline*. It involves not just restraint from what is not helpful (by clearly seeing its unhelpfulness from start to finish), but also the pursuit of what is helpful. The ultimate goal of *yoga* will be further characterized as liberation (*kaivalya*),²⁴ which is also said to be simply self-knowledge (*prajñā*).²⁵ In this way, the term *discipline* (*anuśāsana*) is also appropriate to the final goal of *yoga*, since it indicates the need for the mind to follow a methodology, a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*),²⁶ to reach its goal.

As the mind is finally the one that has to discipline itself, then this is self-discipline. No one else can make you study, contemplate, and know. You have to choose to discipline your mind, you have to follow this discipline, and you have to

²⁰ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.17, 1.23, 1.28, and 2.1.

²¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

²² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.48.

²³ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.5.

²⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.23 through 27.

²⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.48 and 4.26.

²⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

complete this discipline.²⁷ This is *Patañjali*'s *yoga*.

The Goal of *Yoga*

तदा द्रष्टुः स्व-रूपेऽवस्थानम् ॥ (1.3)
tadā draṣṭuḥ sva-rūpe'vasthānam.

[*tadā*—then; *draṣṭṛ*—witness; *avasthāna*—remains; *sva-rūpa*—its own nature.]

From *yoga*'s success **then**, the self, **the *draṣṭṛ* (witness)**²⁸ of thoughts and their objects, simply **remains in its own nature**.

It is critical to note that it is not said that the self goes or returns to some state it does not have now, or had earlier, or might have in the future. This success of *yoga* is not a becoming, or a return. It is simply remaining as one really is and always has been, without the mind's confusion. We will be told that the mind's confusion is a self-conception due to ignorance that is imposed upon the nature of the self, which the self does not and cannot have.²⁹ You do not have to become something you right now are not.

Clearly the body and the mind can be cleansed, but the belief that there is some cleansing process of the self that *yoga* achieves is nothing but further confusion about

²⁷ “The beneficial (*śreyas*) and the pleasurable (*preyas*) confront a person. The wise person examines and differentiates the two. The wise person [such as yourself] chooses the beneficial over the pleasurable. The mediocre chooses the pleasurable out of [the desire for] acquiring and protecting [experiences].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.2).

²⁸ “You cannot see the witness (*draṣṭṛ*) of all that is seen. ...This which is within all is your self (*ātman*). What is other than this suffers [destruction].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.4.2). “[Transparent like] water, the witness (*draṣṭṛ*) is one (*eka*), without a second (*a-dvaita*). This is what is viewed as reality (*brahman*), O King.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.32).

²⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

the nature of the self. The self is never sullied, and always is and will be free in every way. The goal of *yoga* is to eliminate or sublimate the false self-conception and enjoy the essential nature of oneself.

What is the Essential Nature of Oneself

The self has the most essential nature of the being that witnesses all thoughts that make up the mind and thereby witnesses all objects of those thoughts.³⁰ Any other nature the self may appear to have is subsidiary and related to the particular nature or content of these thoughts, or the character of the objects of these thoughts.

One may think one is a doctor or a janitor because of the knowledge and skills one has gained. One may think one is dull or smart because of the nature of one's intellect. One may think one is sorrowful or happy because of the content of one's emotive mind. One may think one is a man or a woman because of one's body. One may think one is a husband or a wife because of the spouse. One may think one is a bachelor or a bachelorette because of the absence of a spouse. One may think one is an employer or an employee because of one's activity. Whether employed, unemployed, unemployable, or retired, one may think one is rich, poor, or somewhere in-between, because of one's possessions. One may think one is an American or an Indian, a Westerner or an Easterner, and so on, because of one's geographic, political, social, or philosophical affiliations.

There is a body of literature that analyzes such claims with straight-forward reasoning that reveals a profound vision of the reality of oneself. What that vision is, and how this vision changes one's understanding of oneself and one's entire world will be shown in the next few pages. This vision encompasses every way one knows

³⁰ “The one who lights up this expanse consisting of the waking, dream, and deep sleep, etc. [the heavens, etc.], that reality (*brahman*) I am. Knowing this, one is free from all binds. Different from whatever is the experienced, the experiencer, and the experience, is the witness (*sākṣin*). It is pure awareness. It is I, ever calm.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 17,18).

oneself and the world.

In every perception, every experience of the world, one's self is there as the witness. One does not notice a difference between the witness through the eyes, the witness through the ears, or the witness through any of the other senses. Though the objects being witnessed and the senses differ, one's self as the witness is not different.

I see. I hear. I taste. In each of these, there am I. I am not two different persons. Each is but me as the witness accommodating every sense perception.

Most times, I am not thinking of myself as a witness. The particular thought of myself as a witness of a perception is itself a thought that comes and goes. Thinking that I am a witness is only occasionally there, such as when I notice myself acting out of character. Whereas, I clearly am there as the witness in every perception, whether I have a thought about that witnessing or not. About this I have no doubt.

As it is for perception, so it is for any thought. For every thought in the mind I am the witness. Without seeing myself as witness, I witness one thought after another. It is not that I witness one thought and someone else witnesses the next thought. Clearly I am the only witness of my thoughts. Even if I am not thinking of myself as the witness of my thoughts, I have no doubt I am there as the witness of every thought.

What is the Ego

Thoughts about myself as a perceiver or as a thinker are occasional. They come and go. When such thoughts come they take the form of defining me as the one who is witnessing the current perception (of objects or emotions) or the current thought. This defining myself limits me in time with respect to such and such perception or thought. These thoughts are what this teaching calls the ego. The ego is not some entity haunting within me. It is simply any thought I have about myself. The ego (*ahaṃ-kāra*), in other words, is only a type of thought that occurs in the mind. When it is not there, I am not consciously defining, not limiting, myself to what is

happening at any particular time.

This understanding of the ego is unique in that every other teaching presents the ego as some entity that is either the hero or villain in life. This is simply not the case. The ego is only a thought that occurs in the mind, like any other thought. When it occurs, I am its witness. When it does not occur, I am still the witness—the witness of the absence of an ego thought, whether as a non-ego thought or as the absence of any thought whatsoever.

Just as I witness each thought, I also witness their absence. At the time of their absence I am not, nor could I be, thinking of myself as the witness of the absence of thought. This would be an obvious contradiction. Nevertheless, I witness the absence of thought. This clearly must happen between every thought this mind entertains. This absence of thought may be for a micro second or hours. When for just a micro second, like the space between movie picture frames, the gaps go mainly unnoticed, yet, like the movie, they are still part of and characterize the experienced, the witnessed.

Extended periods of absence of thought happen each night I enjoy a good sleep. There is no ego thought occurring during this time, defining myself as being asleep, yet upon awakening I know I was asleep. When I am asked if I slept well, I do not need to consult anyone; I myself know if I did or did not. I was the witness of being asleep, even though no thought occurred during that time.

Myself as the witness is not something that comes and goes, whereas perceptions and thoughts do. My notions of myself as a doctor, janitor, smart, sorrowful, happy, married or not—these are thoughts that come and go and are ego thoughts that define me as one thing or another. These defining thoughts seem to limit myself to one status or condition, or another. But the truth is that no perception or thought can define or limit the very witness of them.

Ego thoughts could only truly define a witness if the objects of these thoughts were that witness. Objects of thought are limited to the form of the thought. They are within time and place, from a limited perspective, and couched in the language of the mind expressing as this particular thought.

But the real witness is not the object of an ego thought. It is the witness itself of an ego thought. It transcends, as it were, the ego thought, since it is ever the subject, while all types of thoughts and their absence come and go. As an object in the form of an ego thought, such an object can never be itself the witness I am. Any ego thought then can never truly define, never limit, me who is the witness of all perceptions, all thoughts, and all objects of thought.

The self-assessment that I need to get rid of the ego is itself another ego thought that defines the ego-me as a failure who has to improve, or whose ego thoughts have to go away. This makes little sense, since we need ego thoughts to survive in life. How would I know to feed this body unless I recognize I am the one who is hungry? If, without needing to change my language, I simply understand the expression “I am hungry” as meaning, in truth, “this body is hungry,” then what problem could such a thought be? We need these thoughts to transact in the world.

These ego thoughts, objectively understood, do not need to go away, nor would we want them to all go away. They do not limit me if they are objectively understood as meaning this body is such and such, or this thought is such and such. They do not really limit me if I, in fact, clearly know myself as not these perceptions or thoughts—I am not these objects, but instead am their witness.

How Can Logic Help

Now, how do I know that I am essentially the witness of everything and am not this particular body and mind being witnessed? If I am the latter then I am indeed limited. If I am both the witness and the latter, both this witness and this witnessed entity, then also I am indeed still limited in time and place. I would be the witness conditioned, and thus limited, by the witnessed. So, while it is clear from my perceptions and thinking that the witness is always there, what reason do I have to understand myself as only the witness and not the witnessed?

For this we need to apply correct logic toward our experiences to get at the essential nature of myself. We all have reasons for establishing what is real and what

is not real. Those reasons may vary, but the actual establishing of reality itself finally amounts to simply attributing one thing as real and another as not real.

The initial criterion for reality may be stated as: *We say one thing is not real and another is when we give up on the prior claim to reality and re-place that reality onto the other.* This is essentially the same we do for truth also. That is why this teaching holds that truth and reality are essentially one and the same. Hence its word for reality, ‘*satyam,*’ is also its word for truth.³¹ Though the reasons for attributing the truth/reality of a thing may vary, the essential criterion for truth/reality is our attribution of truth/reality upon one thing or another. In other words, it is we who impute truth/reality to things, not that things intrinsically gain or lose some attribute called reality.

An example of this attribution of truth/reality is this teaching literature’s classic example of snake and rope. In twilight, with enough light to see something but not enough to see clearly, one sees what he or she thinks is a snake. Upon closer examination with trust in the help of another who sees clearly, this person discovers it was only a rope. Here, the snake’s claim to reality (notice that it is the person who gave this claim, not the snake) lasted until the person re-placed that reality upon the rope (neither did the rope make this claim). When the rope gained that claim to reality, it did not in fact do anything or intrinsically gain anything. The rope had not lost and then regained its own nature (*sva-rūpa*). This *sva-rūpa* (its own nature) always was there—relatively speaking, of course, since the rope was created in time and will decay into something else. Nevertheless, the person now knows that what is there is a rope and it always was a rope, but initially or temporarily the person thought it was a snake.

Another example of this attribution of truth/reality is how for millenniums people

³¹ “Speak *satya* (truth). Follow *dharma* (universal justice and local customs).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 1.11.1). “*Satya* (reality) is [all pairs of opposites and adjectives, such as] *satya* (real) and *an-ṛta* (unreal). They say that whatever there is is [only] that *satya* (reality).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.6.1).

in the West thought the Earth was flat, until a thinker and scientist gave good reason to think that the Earth was round. Over time this new understanding became the truth, the reality, of the shape of the Earth for nearly all of us. It is not that the Earth became round; it always was round.

Like with the snake and rope, the facts did not change. Rather it was our cognitive understanding of the facts that changed. The effect is that the roundness of the Earth, which we now know existed before, exists now and will exist for some time in the future, outlasted the flatness of the Earth, which only existed before and was limited to only our thinking it to be so. Notice that the reality of a thing is only as good as the next good questioning of its claim to reality. If it survives that, then it lasts until the next, and so on. This has become the accepted position of our modern sciences in their careful referencing of claims of reality or truth in their theories.

But these two are either-or examples of claims to truth and reality. Much of life, though, is shades of gray, especially when categorizing the overall reality or truth of a situation or a thing. An extension, then, of this criterion of reality that provides for these shades of gray is: *What outlasts or survives another, in terms of time or valuation of that time, is more real than the other.* For example, a momentary spell of feeling satisfied is reduced in its overall truth or reality relative to the more pervasive spell of feeling unsatisfied. Therefore, thinking I am essentially unsatisfied is more likely than thinking I am essentially satisfied. That one is sometimes satisfied is true/real, but more often one seems to be unsatisfied. Both are equally real as experiences, but the more frequent one will prevail in one's understanding of his or her overall life.

This is an example of one thing being more true/real in our thinking than another, though the other cannot be totally dismissed as not real in our thinking. In this author's life, I am more a student of *Vedānta* (of the *Upaniṣads* and their analysis) than a janitor, which I was for a few years of my life. Because of this my life choices now are weighted, are valued, much more towards the perspective of a student of *Vedānta* than to that of a janitor. Of course one can be both, since they do not exclude

each other, and indeed for a time I was both—meaning my livelihood involved both.

If we want to examine the final reality basis of things, though, rather than just the temporary forms of their reality, then we can adapt a corollary of the above criterion of reality. That corollary is: *What a thing cannot give up is its essential reality, and what it can give up is not its essential reality.* This corollary employs the well-known *anvaya-vyatireka* (co-presence–co-absence) logic. The *anvaya* (co-presence) is in whose—the reason’s (the *hetu*’s)—presence something—the fact to be discerned (the *sādhya*)—invariably occurs; *vyatireka* (co-absence) is in whose absence that something invariably does not occur. This logic for getting at the essential nature of something is commonly used by all of us and is the basis of experimentation.

For example, in trying to discern what is the problem with a computer, we proceed by removing a feature we previously installed and seeing if an unwanted, new symptom stops—this is the *vyatireka* (co-absence). Then we add back in that feature and see if the symptom returns—this is the *anvaya* (co-presence). This process informs us of what exactly is the nature of the problem with the computer, or at least which feature holds the problem. This logic is transparently used throughout the scripture, often through story telling,³² to discover the more subtle, that is, the most pervasive and hence basic, truth or reality of what looks like just a composite. The logic ferrets out the hierarchy of dependencies between seemingly equal composites.

It is this final corollary that we will use to analyze the above claims as to who or

³² “ ‘Sir, how many deities sustain a creature? Which of them boast this [greatness]? And who is superior [in this] to those [deities]?’ To them he said, ‘This deity is Space, [as well as] Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Speech, Mind, Eye, and Ear. Boasting, they say, ‘By supporting this reed [of a body], we sustain [the creature].’ *Prāṇa* (Life-force), who is superior, said to them, ‘Do not fall to this delusion. I alone, dividing myself five ways [as *prāṇa* (outward exhalation), *apāna* (downward inhalation and energy), *vyāna* (dispersing circulation), *udāna* (upward ejecting energy including the ejecting of the subtle body upon death), and *samāna* (uniting digestion)] to support this reed [of a body] and sustain [the creature].’ They did not trust [this truth]. Confidently he starts rising out [of the body]. When he arises, then [helplessly] all the others rise; when he settles back, every one of them settles back. In the same way all bees [praise] the royal bee, who arises, [by] their rising and sit when [s]he sits, so to Speech, Mind, Eye, and Ear, being satisfied, praise *Prāṇa*.’ ” (*Prāśna Up.* 2.1 through 4).

what is the essential truth of the self. This corollary handles not only black or white, real or not real, but also shades of being more or less real/true. That is, it allows the dismissal of the more and more subtle natures of a thing, until one reaches the intrinsic nature of a thing which cannot ever be given up without the thing itself being lost. This corollary is applied to get at the essential reality, the essential truth, of a thing.

Whatever can, in terms of out-lasting, be dismissed or devalued as not, or less, real/true cannot ever be a thing's essential reality. What cannot ever be dismissed or devalued is, has been, and will be its essential reality. In other words, what is unreal can never be real (non-dismissible), nor can the real ever be unreal (dismissible).³³

How do I Know I am Simply the Witness

Now, the earlier question was: How do I know that I am essentially the witness of everything and am not this particular body, mind, and their activities being witnessed?

The claim that I am a doctor or janitor is only as true as the knowledge and skill that I have. This knowledge and skill set was acquired in time—before I did not have it, now I have it, and later when I retire and do not keep up with the knowledge and skills required I will lose it. Yet I am very much there before and after these acquirements and losses. I am more real than this knowledge and skill set. I can cease to be a doctor or janitor and I survive, but the doctor-me or janitor-me does not survive. The doctor-me or janitor-me are simply ego thoughts that come and go in life. The doctor-me, for example, disappears when I give attention to my wife. Then the husband-me occurs. The same process occurs for every other ego thought.

If I think I am dull or smart, then this claim is based on a relative scale that I adopt. In comparison to a child I may be smart; in comparison to a genius I may be dull. So

³³ “[The unreal] have a beginning and an end, [therefore] are time bound. ...The unreal (*a-sat*) has no being (*bhāva*) [of its own], and the real (*sat*) has no nonbeing (*a-bhāva*).” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.14 and 16).

if I am both these opposite claims at the same time, then I am absolutely neither of them. If I study, I will be smarter and less dull. If my mind is not used or degenerates in sickness, then I will be more dull and less smart. These claims wax and wane through out my life and my day, and depend upon with whom I am comparing myself. Dropping these claims of being more or less dull or smart, I remain. It's the same for sorrowful and happy. These wax and wane, yet I survive either of them.

Nor am I the child, the young adult, or the geriatric. The child may be me. The young adult may be me. The geriatric may be me. But since they each were, are or will be me, then I cannot be any one of them. I exist before and after each of these metamorphoses. These metamorphoses of the body, like the metamorphoses of the mind, come and go. Again, I am simply their witness.

Life and Death

The gain of this body and its loss are also considered in this inquiry as something that comes and goes for the individual who precedes and survives these events.³⁴

An individual has his or her peculiar nature because of what that individual did before to earn this particular embodiment—this form, condition, or situation. What I do in this life will determine what I get later, after the loss of this body.

This before-life and after-life existence of the individual is a belief (a truth claim), but so are many of the claims, such as I am this body, which we are dismissing here as not being the real I. Much of what we think we know is simply beliefs. Most of the information we have is personally untested, unverified by us, and simply believed to be so. We base many of our beliefs upon having read or heard about them from family and friends, from teachers in school, from a science journal, a novel, a self-help book, a newspaper, television, the Internet, or water-cooler gossip.

³⁴ “Just as a person discarding worn-out clothes takes on other new ones; similarly, the embodied one (*dehin*), discarding worn-out bodies, takes on other new ones.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.22).

Some people attempt to dismiss others' beliefs to prop up their own. They resort to a generalization that the simpler explanation is more likely the truth. This is appealing to what is called Ockham's razor, a principle of economy of explanation. I can simply dismiss someone else's beliefs, such as a before-life and an after-life, as unreal if those beliefs look too complicated for me. In a self-defining system such as mathematics, this is effectively applied. It is rarely applicable, though, outside such artificial systems. It is not that the principle of simplicity is necessarily wrong; rather the application of the principle in regard to beliefs is often too simple-minded, if not prejudiced. Many times, and you can contemplate this yourself, a person appealing to this principle is not, in fact, taking into account the complexity or insufficiency of explanation of their assumptions behind their own beliefs.

If, for example, one thinks that only what can scientifically be proved is real, then their world of the real is so tiny that it becomes nearly meaningless. When have they ever scientifically proved, or even scientifically established that it is provable, what is love, friendship, happiness, the identity of their parents and their relations, most of history, all of their imagined future, and on and on. Their world of the real quickly shrinks to a few sense perceptions they have had that they also know could be interpreted in an unknowable amount of ways—yet they think they are explaining the real world, the world of science, the supposed world we all live in.

This is why simply labeling other beliefs as unreal and clinging to one's own beliefs as real is not an ultimately satisfactory criterion for determining what is real and what is unreal.

Rather than simply preaching opposing beliefs or resorting to generalizations, we should instead appeal to reason and inquiry to show that a particular belief is more or less realistic. However, with regard to the belief in the existence of an individual's prior or future embodiment, it turns out that science or logic based on this life's experience has no scope to prove or dismiss prior or future lives. Science cannot design an experiment to test the truth or untruth of the existence of prior and future lives. Such beliefs are about a subject matter that is outside of the stated scope of

either science or reasoning to prove or disprove. Dismissing, in one’s own mind, one or more instances of a claim of a past life as a hoax is not equivalent to dismissing the possibility of past lives.

However, reasoning can dismiss the claim that I am the sum of or am any one of these embodiments—whether as a male or female, husband or wife, employer or employee, American or Indian, and so on—whether in the past, present, or future. The logic is that I survive these embodiments and take on other different embodiments. Before any one of these I was there, during I was there, and after I will be there, whether in this life, or any past or future life. And this logic applies whether one believes in a prior and after life, or not.

So if I am not any of these, then am I nothing? —No, I always was and am the witness of these adventitious acquirements, qualities, metamorphoses, and embodiments. If there are future embodiments I will be the witness of them too.

The 24/7 Reality

Even in detailed analysis, I am always the witness.³⁵ When I look at just a twenty-four hour period in this life, I am continually the witness. I witness all I experience while awake. In dream also nothing escapes my witnessing, since that alone can be what my dream is. In deep sleep when the conscious mind stops functioning, I experience the absence of any thing and can later clearly proclaim that I was sound asleep without a dream.³⁶ How else would I know that? So, deep sleep is also witnessed by me. This same witnessing of the absence of thought happens in moments of thoughtlessness, whether deliberate or not. In every moment of time I am the witness.

³⁵ ““O *Yājñavalkya*, when the sun has set, the moon has set, the fire has gone out, and speech has stopped, a person has what alone as a light?” —“The self (*ātman*) alone is his light. By the light that is the self alone, he sits, departs, does work, and returns.”” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.6).

³⁶ “[In deep sleep] it indeed does not see, [because though] indeed seeing it does not see, for there is no loss of vision for the witness (*draṣṭṛ*), since it is imperishable. Rather, there is no second thing other than it, which it could see as separate.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.23).

I witness their coming and going, so I cannot be these moment to moment thoughts and objects I witness. They dismiss themselves in dream and deep sleep every night. I need not do anything to get rid of them, since they give themselves up as possibly being my real nature every night, every moment. Even if I philosophize that I do not even exist, I am still there witnessing these philosophical, or religious, thoughts as they come and go. The same me, with and without these thoughts, is there before, during, and after every thought.

There is never a time I was not, nor will not be. This is the statement made by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* in the beginning of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This was not a claim made because He is a special person, a reincarnation of the Lord. This was given as a teaching to *Arjuna*, his student, that this is the truth of *Arjuna* himself, the truth of the self—never was the self not, nor will it not be.³⁷

However, my self consciously being the witness is itself a relative claim as it is always in relation to what I am witnessing. When there is nothing to witness, such as during sleep, I am not claiming this existence as a witness. It is only later, upon re-awaking, that I can re-claim that existence as the witness of thought or of thoughtlessness. If there is, in fact, no second existent thing to witness, there can then be no witnessor-witnessing-witnessed relationship. So while being the witness is more true/real than any other claim, it is itself not the absolute.³⁸

If one were to make the better claim, then it would be that I am the reality that

³⁷ “Never [was there a time that] I was not, nor you, nor these kings. Nor will any of us cease to exist hereafter.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.12).

³⁸ “Because where there is as if duality, there something smells something. There something sees something. There something hears something. There something speaks something. There something thinks something. There something knows something. But where [upon the dissolution of the universe] everything is one’s self (*ātman*), there, how would one smell what? There, how would one see what? There, how would one hear what? There, how would one speak what? There, how would one think what? There, how would one know what? How would one know that by which one knows all this? How, my dear, would one know the knower?” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.4.14).

allows me to ever be the witnessor. ‘Being’ is not relational, whereas ‘witness’ is. I am the existence that witnesses all that can be witnessed. I am essentially existence itself³⁹ that expresses as the witness of all.

We will see later that the claim of the existence of any thing is itself based on the fact of it being witnessed. I am the source of the attribution of existence to all I witness, in the same way as I am the source of the attribution of reality to the various claims I had of my relative existence as a doctor, janitor, and etcetera. I am the being, the witness, who attributes all of reality to my universe of experience. None of this universe of experience lies outside of the reality I attribute to them, I lend to them, so that they may shine within my awareness of them. Being the witness of these experiences, they fall within my awareness. Yet they, independently, cannot be my nature as they are but the witnessed, the seen.⁴⁰ Essentially, they are only the reality I lend to them.

Acknowledging the fact that all things shine within the existence I am is a non-erroneous lending of my existence to these objects of experience. But if I attribute to them a degree or level of reality, such as imaginary, practical, or absolute, that they do not merit, then this is an erroneous attribution of the object’s existence. Simply making such an error, though, does not necessarily afflict me. It will afflict me, however, if this erroneous attribution of reality makes me erroneously take myself to be inadequate, unworthy, and insecure as a consequence. This is because, as this teaching, that is, the scripture that forms the basis of this teaching, will unfold, I alone cannot but be all of this existence, this reality.

What is the Benefit

So what? What is the useful result of this inquiry? The benefit is knowing that all

³⁹ “In me alone is born everything. In me everything remains. In me everything resolves. That without-a-second reality (*brahman*) am I.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 19).

⁴⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.21.

limitation, all that I do not want, everything that afflicts me, is something that is witnessed by me. Being more real than the limitations, I am not them. Any identification I have with these is sub-rated, (dismissed as less real) by this incontrovertible, unshakable knowledge that I am their witness. Any limitation is not me. What I do not want is not me. Any affliction I appear to have is not me. Any notion I have about myself is not me.

I am not even limited by other conscious beings, since these so-called other beings are just the bodies I see and the minds I encounter. I cannot and do not witness the witness that they are.⁴¹ The witness is the one reality that cannot admit a second. For every witnessed thing there are innumerable other witnessed things to limit it. For the witness alone that possibility of being limited is not there. In this way the literature that guides this inquiry unfolds this witness reality as the only reality, the one without a second that has always been just this only reality.⁴² This witness is reality itself without limit. It is not inside you—it is the essential you, you are this reality, and this reality cannot be without you. It is all that is real, because it is reality itself. All beings, all of time and space, are within the scope of this witness, this reality. This limitless reality, even if taken as the Lord, is not other than you. How could it be otherwise and still be limitless?

Once the knowledge of my real self as unlimited reality itself is fully assimilated, a freedom from limitation, from all afflictions is attained.⁴³ And that freedom is more real than the bondage I thought I was subject to, since I always was, am, and will be free from these limitations and afflictions as ever being their witness, whereas the

⁴¹ “This self (*ātman*) hidden [by unreal ignorance] in all beings does not appear.” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.12).

⁴² “Existence (*sat*) alone, my dear, was this in the beginning, one only without a second.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1).

⁴³ “By which [reality] all this [the time-bound unreal, including this mind-body complex] is pervaded, know that [timeless and real] to be indestructible. Nothing is able to bring about the destruction of this that does not change.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.17).

sense of bondage comes to an end. Freedom is another expression of the truth, the reality of myself.

So when someone wonders why you are trying to figure out who you are, thinking that this is something obvious and that you are wasting your time, then this small discussion may help you understand what this inquiry is.

Not that you need to convince others, though. If you think you need to convince others that you are right (or at least okay), then you have not fully understood this teaching. Nor could you, or can you, convince others if they have not started to question their own erroneous assumptions about themselves.

By the way, this is one of the reasons this teaching has been called the most secret of secrets. There can be no conversion of the multitudes. The truth is already everywhere available, 24/7, but few see it. That makes it the most secret of secrets. Seekers of this complete freedom have to come to discover this truth by correcting their vision, correcting their thinking. None can help the seeker, unless the seeker sincerely asks for help. But such seekers are few; most people simply struggle to survive in their short lifetime, clinging to a myriad of beliefs to console and comfort them in the struggle. That is what life is.

Until one does this inquiry, one only has a vague, unverifiable belief in who one thinks one is. This belief lasts only until the next good question, but most people avoid these questions and avoid those who bring up these questions. It is unsettling to be reminded that you do not really know who you really are.

***Patañjali* Indicates This Witness Reality**

Patañjali only touches here on the nature of this reality—with just the one telling word *draṣṭṛ* (witness). Later he will also present this self as untouched by the afflictions of ignorance, the I-notion, attachment, aversion, and the fear of death;⁴⁴

⁴⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24, 2.3, 2.10, and 4.30.

pure perception or consciousness;⁴⁵ the one reality in which all else is the very same, as not other;⁴⁶ then again as time-less, pure and satisfied;⁴⁷ the presiding presence in and the witness of everything;⁴⁸ and finally as the immutable and the self-revealing.⁴⁹ This is the significant minimum to point out the exact nature of oneself and all of reality according to the vision of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*. *Patañjali* assumes that one has been exposed to this teaching of the nature of reality, since that exposure⁵⁰ (self-study, *svādhyāya*) is the initial and essential step in *yoga*, and that one is now ready to contemplate upon it to help assimilate this knowledge in one's life.

What *Patañjali* writes in these *sūtras* will then clearly follow from this background. Without this background, we end up with the less helpful translations and interpretations, replete with vague terminologies and mystical claims that fill *yoga* bookshelves. But now, with this understanding of what the inquiry is and what the topic of the contemplation should be, we can proceed as, we assume, *Patañjali* would have wanted us to proceed.

Identification with Thought

वृत्ति-सा-रूप्यम् इतरत्र ॥ (1.4)
vṛtti-sā-rūpyam itaratra.

⁴⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.20 and 4.34.

⁴⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 3.53 and 55.

⁴⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

⁴⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.49.

⁴⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 4.18 and 19.

⁵⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

[*itaratra*—on the other hand; *sā-rūpya*—has the same form; *vṛttis*—thoughts.]

On the other hand, until *yoga*'s success, **one** erroneously believes he or she **has the same form as the thoughts** of the mind.⁵¹

This, which we will see in the second chapter, is the fundamental ignorance in the form of a mutual imposing of natures between the seer and the seen, the witness and the witnessed. This is a clear statement of the fundamental problem.

It is not the problem that thoughts (*vṛttis*) appear, but that one assumes the same form (*sā-rūpya*) of these thoughts: “I am a doctor,” “I am upset,” “I am not satisfied,” and so on. This mis-identification means the thoughts control and define the person, instead of the other way around.

It will be shown later that simply mechanically stopping thoughts will not keep them from coming back.⁵² So the goal of *yoga* is not stopping thoughts, as many think it is. If simply stopping thought is *yoga*, then a sleep, drugs, or coma is instant *yoga*. This is why *Patañjali* next goes on to describe the nature and quality of thoughts, and which to pursue and which to avoid, since it is not *that* you think, which we all—whether a great *yogin* or not—obviously do in our own ways, but *how* you think that is the problem addressed by *yoga*.

Another meaning for *itaratra* is *at other times*. But this would convey the sense that the *yogin* resides in the seer sometimes and is identified with thoughts at other times. This sense of the word only weakens the earlier *sūtra* to merely indicating an intermediate stage of on again off again experience of meditative peace in the self. This mediocre expression of the goal of *yoga* would not have been the intent of *Patañjali* at the defining start of this text.

⁵¹ “The mind (*citta*) alone indeed is one’s transient existence (*samsāra*). One should make effort to clean it up. In whatever way one thinks, that one becomes. This is an eternal mystery!” (*Maitrāyaṇī Up.* 1.9).

⁵² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

The Nature of Thoughts

वृत्तयः पञ्चतयः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः ॥ (1.5)
vṛttayaḥ pañcatayaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ.

[*vṛttis*—thoughts; *pañcataya*—of five types; *kliṣṭa*—hinder; *a-kliṣṭa*—do not hinder.]

These thoughts are of five types, and either hinder or do not hinder one’s progress in *yoga*.

The word *kliṣṭa*, as well as its negative *a-kliṣṭa*, is an adjectival form of the noun *kleśa* (affliction). *Kliṣṭa* refers to those thoughts that sustain the *kleśas*,⁵³ while *a-kliṣṭa* refers to those thoughts that counter-act the *kleśas*. And to be free of the *kleśas*, the final goal of *yoga*, is to be the perfect *puruṣa* (person, self), the very nature of the Lord.⁵⁴

In this context, with reference to the goal of *yoga*, we are defining *kliṣṭa* as what hinders one’s progress in *yoga*, rather than the dictionary meanings as *afflicted* or *painful*. Those definitions miss the intent of this section which is to present thoughts as either helpful or not towards the goal of *yoga*. It is a mistake to say that some thoughts may be painful (*kliṣṭa*) and thus they should all be removed. That interpretation is based on duality and a fear of thoughts, of thinking. Mind is not your enemy in *yoga*; it is your tool and friend.

A-kliṣṭa, in its fullest understanding, thus means what is other than what hinders one’s progress in *yoga*. However, it may also mean what is neutral—neither hindering nor helpful. Much of how we live life is neutral to our conscious goals in life, and this

⁵³ “*Kleśa-hetu* (what occasions [*nimitta*] the afflictions)” (*Vyāsa’s Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 1.5, and *Śaṅkara’s Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya Vivaraṇa* 1.5).

⁵⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24, 1.25, 2.2, 2.3, 3.49, 3.50, 3.54, and 4.30.

can be part of our aimless getting along in life without making any progress. But here, it will be shown that *karma-yoga* is very much a part of *yoga*.⁵⁵ Thus, how one understands the entire world, how one understands oneself, and how one bases all choices in life become centered on one's understanding of realities, which is the crux of this teaching. In that all-embracing world view including everything in every way,⁵⁶ neutrality—ineffective action and thought—becomes less and less. *A-kliṣṭa* then becomes a matter of living entirely the understanding born of this teaching, and therefore means that which is always helpful in one's progress in *yoga*.

This distinction, then, between *kliṣṭa* and *a-kliṣṭa* is central to *citta-vṛtti-nirodha* (mastery or discipline in thinking). And this is more to the point of *nirodha* than is *nir-vikalpa-samādhi* which will be discussed later, and which is simply an unavoidable result of this discipline. This *sūtra* is often glossed over by the commentators and translators of these *sūtras*, and not clearly connected as it should be to the preceding *sūtras* (where the goal and the problem are stated) and following *sūtras* (where the means are stated).

प्रमाण-विपर्यय-विकल्प-निद्रा-स्मृतयः ॥ (1.6)
pramāṇa-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidrā-smṛtayah.

[*pramāṇa*—knowledge; *viparyaya*—error; *vikalpa*—imagination; *nidrā*—sleep; *smṛti*—memory.]

These five types of thoughts are knowledge, error, imagination, sleep, and memory.

These five can be taken as just five categories of thought that *Patañjali* wants to highlight, while not covering all possible types of thought. Alternatively, as we will

⁵⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

⁵⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.54.

take them here, they may be taken broadly so that they do cover all possible thoughts.

As broad categories of all thought, then, any thought that is factually connected to and is about a stimulus would be knowledge. For example, an emotion, which is a perception of a mental state (the stimulus), would be included in knowledge (*pramāṇa*). If a thought has no connection to a stimulus, it would be an imagination. But if that imagination is then taken as factually connecting to some stimulus, then that imagination would instead be an error. If there was no conscious thought of any stimulus at a given time, then a non-conscious experiential thought that this factually occurred would be later consciously recalled as having been sleep. If none of the above strictly applies, then it would be a thought about one of those first four types of thought. This would be what we call a memory. We do not directly remember stimuli. Instead, we only recollect right now a past experience (thought)—whether the experience is about a stimulus factually, imaginatively, or falsely, or it is about the lack of a stimulus.

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि ॥ (1.7)
pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni.

[*pramāṇa*—knowledge; *pratyakṣa*—direct knowledge; *anumāna*—indirect knowledge; *āgama*—scripture.]

Knowledge is either direct knowledge—direct sense perception of their objects and perception of one’s mental states; **indirect knowledge**—various inferences based on direct knowledge, other inferences, or on scripture; **or scripture**, literally, truth *that has come down* from beginningless time through tradition—scriptural knowledge of those things that are not within the scope of perception and thus inference. In this way scripture becomes a unique source of knowledge.

Pramāṇa means *knowledge* or, more literally, *a means of knowledge*. Direct perception by way of any of the five sense organs (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, or smelling) and valid inference, by themselves, do not hinder one’s progress.

Scripture understood in its full context, as well as direct perception and inference in support of the scripture, help one's progress in *yoga*.

Later philosophers, including some philosophically minded *Vedāntins*, technically distinguish from this broad term of *anumāna* (inference) three more means of knowledge: *upamāna* (comparison), for example, upon seeing a wild ox in the forest, there arises the knowledge, “this is like a cow”; *arthāpatti* (presumption), for example, this person remains hefty but is not seen to eat during the day, so there arises the knowledge, “this person must eat at night”; and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception), for example, on a well lit ground, because of not seeing a pot, there arises the knowledge, “a pot is not there.” These extra technical distinctions in logic are simply included here in *Patañjali*'s use of the word *anumāna* (inference). *Śaṅkara* in his authoritative commentaries on the major *Upaniṣads* routinely lists just the three means of knowledge, as found here in this *sūtra*.

In regard to the final means of knowledge, latter day philosophers of India have stretched *āgama* beyond the scriptures to mean any knowledge that comes from verbal testimony. This is an unreliable extrapolation of this essential means of knowledge. The classic definition of an independent means of knowledge is that it is both not contradicted (*a-bādhita*) by another means of knowledge and not gained (*an-adhigata*) by another means of knowledge. With these two criteria, simple verbal testimony from a person does not stand up as a means of knowledge.

First, what someone tells you is often contradicted later. Also what someone tells you can be just as well known to you directly either by perception or by your own inference of the object this person is talking about. Then again, what was the source of that person's knowledge they are relaying to you? That source was likely either their perceptions or their inferences, but perhaps it was also imagination or error. So the truth of their words is only the truth of those other two means of knowledge, nothing more. If the person is knowledgeably relaying the scripture to you, then that is the passing along of the *āgama* (scripture, tradition).

When you hear someone say something, you directly gain knowledge of that

person’s words. This is a direct perception through hearing. As with seeing, our knowledge through hearing is in the thought-form of words, for example, “this person is saying this...”. From that perceptual knowledge you may have anywhere from a strong belief to a strong disbelief in regard to what you think those words are referring. The result is this verbal testimony has the added aspect of inference. That is, since this person has always relayed true statements to me before, I accept what I believe this person is saying now. If the person had lied to me before, I may not take what I believe this person is saying as true. The person is giving verbal testimony to me in either case, so the only difference is my assumptions and inferences about that person. In other words, inference plays too crucial a role here to accept simple verbal testimony as an independent means of valid knowledge.

If *Patañjali* really meant simple verbal testimony here, then he could have used the much more generic term *śabda*, or *śabda-jñāna*, (words or verbal-knowledge). Instead, he uses the term *āgama* which literally means *what comes*, and in practical usage usually means *tradition* or *scripture*—what has been handed down from beginningless time and is not considered authored, not created new by a specific human being. Knowledge from scripture is neither contradicted nor gained by any other source.

The other scriptures of the world are admittedly written by men and deal mainly with specific events, dreams, or visions that were perceptual or could be as well inferred. They have a history and a date of creation, even though they may be considered inspired by God. They can easily be seen as borrowing inspiration and expressions from each other and from other indigenous traditions that have not survived intact. Many of these scriptures are stories that include moral guidance. Whereas, the scriptures this text relates to are metaphysical teachings, not otherwise knowable.

The *āgamas* are these scriptures, the *Vedas* including their *Upaniṣads*, but also are the later *Purāṇas* (legends) and *Iti-hāsas* (epics) that relay the scriptural teachings in a popular format for all the people of India. But those later texts’ authority is only so

much as they do not contradict the scriptures, especially concerning the topics of these *Yoga Sūtras*, namely, the nature of the self (*ātman*, *draṣṭṛ*), the Lord (*Īśvara*), and the teaching (*jñāna*) including *yoga*. To represent the *Purāṇas* and *Iti-hāsas*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* has been chosen because it is specifically held in the highest esteem regarding the teaching of the Lord and of *yoga*. The many quotations in this book are from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The glossing over of *āgama pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) to mean simple verbal testimony may imply or assert that whatever any *yoga* teacher says is to be taken as the gospel—because they said it. This is just uncritical thinking and can steal your life away. Always be careful of those who say, “Just trust me.”

We instead believe that *Patañjali* wished to explicitly establish from the start of these *sūtras* the *prāmāṇya* (validity) of the scripture, which is the critical authority with regard to *kaivalya* (liberation), the knowledge of the self, and what is its helpful means (*yoga*).

What in the scripture is a means of knowledge then? When the scripture in this tradition talks about heaven, the existence and nature of heaven cannot be contradicted (in this life) by direct perception and thus by inference, nor gained by those other two means of knowledge. *Yoga* perception of subtle things, such as heaven, is, for others, the *yogin*’s verbal testimony, or, in any case, is not a common means of knowledge. If it is believed, it would fall under direct perception of the *yogin*. If it clearly contradicts scripture, it would be taken in this tradition as mistaken. If it is in keeping with the scripture, it is a restatement of the scripture.

When this scripture talks about *dharma* (universal order) it does not present it as a set of moral mandates writ large in stone or divine dreams. The scripture unfolds *dharma* as a universal law and a psychological principle operating in the universe by way of a mechanism, called *karma*. *Karma* connects causes, such as a past action, to their effects, though a passage of time may intervene. This is a teaching of realities, not a thou shalt. We perceive the effects of *karma*, but only a scripture can authoritatively present the subtle reality behind the perception. In this way, this

scripture is uniquely presented as a means of knowledge for gaining understanding of subtle truths essential for human maturity, not something to be blindly, unquestioningly believed or followed.

This scripture is viewed as a manual of knowledge that comes along⁵⁷ in every cycle of manifestation of the universe.⁵⁸ It comes with the universe and is thus not originally authored by any human, but is only naturally re-revealed in each creation cycle through sages, whose teachings were orally preserved until written down in recent times. Being viewed as not coming from a particular person or persons, but rather from the Lord, then trust can be more easily given. This scripture could not be for the profit of some person or institution. Nor would it only be from some person’s perspective and information, where it could become irrelevant or outdated. Being directly from the timeless Lord, these preserved teachings are not taken as simple verbal testimony.

When the scripture talks about rivers, cities, plants, flying machines, math techniques, and other types of topics, it has no exclusive *prāmāṇya* (validity), since these may as well be ascertained through perception and inference by those people in those times, and in our generation through perception and inference via geology, archeology, paleontology, or the other sciences. These are not what are being pointed out as the knowledge being conveyed by the scripture. But being a part of the scripture, these types of statement are simply taken as true, and beneficial in some

⁵⁷ “The Lord of creatures (*Prajā-pati*) contemplated (*abhi-atapat*) the worlds. While they were being contemplated, He extracted their essences—Fire from the earth, Wind from the sky, the Sun from the heavens. He contemplated these three deities. While they were being contemplated, He extracted Their essences [the three *Veda* hymn forms] —the *Rg* [i.e., chanted] verses from Fire, *Yajur* prose from Wind, *Soman* [i.e., sung] verses from the Sun.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 4.17.1 and 2).

⁵⁸ “Repeatedly spreading out the net (*jāla*) [i.e., the *Indra-jāla*, the blinding net of appearances] one after another, this Lord (*deva*) withdraws it into this ground (*ksetra*) [i.e., into itself]. Repeatedly manifesting (*srstvā*) [the manifestations of creation] via the Lords of creatures (*Prajā-patis*) [in each cycle], the Lord (*Īśa*) as the limitless self (*mahā-ātman*) continues the over-lordship (*ādhipatyam kurute*) of all [through these appearances].” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.3).

way to someone.

If the scripture said “fire is cold,” that statement would, on the face of it, be wrong because it contradicts our perception. In taking the scripture as true (otherwise called *śraddhā*, trust), then one would look for another meaning for such statements within their context that would not contradict perception and logic.

The *āgama* (scripture) thus only has validity in those statements about what would not be contradicted by another means of knowledge and not be otherwise gained by direct perception or by inference. That is why it stands on its own as a separate, independent means of knowledge, and why it forms the third *pramāṇa*. It remains a valid means of knowledge, no matter the expanse of the frontiers of mankind’s sciences. It can never become ill-relevant or replaced.

One comes to look at scripture intelligently—not blindly. This is well laid out in the ancient science of scriptural analysis, called *mīmāṃsā*. The *mīmāṃsā* of the *Upaniṣads* (*Uttara-mīmāṃsā*), the science of the *Upaniṣad* scriptures, is otherwise known as *Vedānta*, and *yoga* is the preparation for assimilating this *Vedānta*, according to the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*.⁵⁹

The ultimate knowledge taught in the scripture is the one that finally frees the individual from *saṃsāra* (the unbecoming life of becoming). The preparation of the mind so that it can quickly assimilate this freeing knowledge is called *yoga*.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ “Not by action, progeny, or wealth, but by renunciation they attain immortality—beyond heaven and hidden in the cave [of the heart/intellect]. Into this which shines there enter those who apply [appropriate] effort. Having clearly ascertained the meaning of the science (*vijñāna*) of *Vedānta* and who have clarity of mind (*śuddha-sattva*) through the *yoga* of renunciation (*sannyāsa*), at the time of death they all are free and beyond mortality in the world(s) of *brahman*.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 3 and 4).

⁶⁰ “In this world, indeed, there is no purifier equal to knowledge. In time, the one who is prepared by *yoga* [and has a proper teacher] gains that [knowledge] easily in [one’s prepared] mind.” (*Bh. Gītā* 4.38).

विपर्ययो मिथ्या-ज्ञानम् अ-तद्-रूप-प्रतिष्ठम् ॥ (1.8)
viparyayo mithyā-jñānam a-tad-rūpa-pratiṣṭham.

[*viparyaya*—error; *mithyā-jñāna*—false conclusion; *a-tad-rūpa-pratiṣṭha*—not based on the actual form of its object.]

Error⁶¹ is a false conclusion not based on the actual form of its object.

Mithyā-jñāna literally means *falsely-knowing*. For example, an error in perception would be thinking a rope in bad light is a snake. An error in assumption or inference would be one that does not amount to valid indirect knowledge. An error regarding what is not available for perception and thus inference would be, for example, thinking that one’s self is just this body-mind complex. Error is not knowing the actual nature of whatever is the subject matter of the cognition and then imposing one’s imagination upon it, thinking that this is its real nature.

Error hinders progress in *yoga*, so it is *kliṣṭa*, though we may learn from our mistakes. If that learning takes place, then that learning would be due to one of the *pramāṇas*. It would be about what is learned, not the mistake. If the mistake is learned, then that would just be repeating it.

शब्द-ज्ञानानुपाती वस्तु-शून्यो विकल्पः ॥ (1.9)
śabda-jñānānupātī vastu-śūnyo vikalpaḥ.

[*vikalpa*—imagination; *anupātin*—based; *śabda-jñāna*—verbal knowledge; *śūnya*—lacks; *vastu*—object.]

Imagination is based on and does not lead beyond **verbal knowledge and lacks an** actual, separate **object**.

⁶¹ “These two, known as ignorance (*a-vidyā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*), are widely opposed (*viparīta*) and diverging [leading to bondage and to freedom, respectively].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.4).

Imagination is any belief or statement that amounts to only the meanings of the words it is couched in and does not actually attain its intended object. For example, “The self (has a measure which) is infinite” is an imagination, instead of the correct, “The self has no measure,” because the mind cannot attain an actual conception of an infinite measure.

We use imagination to educate as well as entertain, such as in mythical or fictional stories, and imagination can be a part of scriptural *upāsanās* (meditations). As long as one understands the intended purport of these statements and does not blindly assume the validity of the literal details, these do not hinder progress in *yoga* and can even help.

Imagination is also technically present in much of what we believe,⁶² especially regarding what is subtle. But, regarding subtle matters that must be understood instead of believed, imagination hinders progress in *yoga*.⁶³ It is also why in this study we have to go beyond the words, which can as well add imaginations about oneself based on their literal meanings, instead of enlighten us, instead of resolving their meaning in the truth of oneself as their implied meaning.

In the above example, “The self is infinite” only amounts to a mere concept in my mind about infinity, simply a thought, that I then equate with myself. This only expresses that I am some thought in my mind, which itself misses its target by an infinite measure. Whereas, “The self has no measure” is a negation of any limit that my mind can think of as being applicable to myself. This removes erroneous concepts I have about myself, such as I am just this body or this thought in my mind.

Similarly, statements such as “I am all knowledge” make sense when taken to mean I am the reality that is the effortless witnessing that lights up all thoughts in this and

⁶² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.42.

⁶³ “[The self] is imagined (*vikalpita*) as these countless things such as the life-force (*prāṇa*), etc. This is the apparition (*māyā*) of that shining one (*deva*) [the self], by which that very one itself is deluded.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.19).

every mind. Whereas, an imagination of this would be thinking that I (this mind) should know in detail everything in the universe. Such imaginations are frequently seen in current *yoga* literature. Our self-conceptions should be in line with reality.

Imagination (*vikalpa*), when given a status of reality, becomes error (*viparyaya*). Hence error (*viparyaya*) is sometimes called imagination (*vikalpa*), because error has both ignorance and imagination as its basis. It is a covering of the fact (the ignorance) and then projecting, superimposing, something else in its place (the imagination). Imagination with ignorance is hindering, since it limits one’s progress in clear understanding of realities. Imagination with knowledge is at worst non-hindering, like the enjoyment of reading a book of fiction.

Imagination is what is being pointed out in the daring and significant *āgama* (scripture) statements that everything of the universe, of course including this mind and body complex, is no more than hanging on the tip of the tongue.⁶⁴

It is language itself, the vehicle of the mind, that forms the divisions of everything known and unknown in the entire universe by naming and categorizing. The expression of everything being only a name (*nāmadheya*) is the basis of the later expression of everything being only names and forms (*nāma-rūpa*). Here, the forms (*rūpas*) are simply the phenomenal sense perceptions, not separate from their word-names that occur in the mind, because of the way the senses and mind are made. This same expression, *nāma-rūpa*, can as well be taken as “whose form/nature (*rūpa*) is but a name (*nāman*).”

Because of our human ability of naming by way of our many languages by different humans, in different circumstances, in varying perspectives with different

⁶⁴ “Just as, my dear, everything made of clay [e.g., a clay pot] is known through this one lump of clay, being a modification (*vikāra*) in name only (*nāmadheya*), based on words (*vācā-ārambhaṇa*), the ‘clay’ alone is their reality (*satya*). Just as, my dear, everything made of metal (*loha*—often referring to either iron, copper, or gold) is known through this one lump of metal, being a modification in name only, based on words, the ‘metal’ alone is their reality.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.1.4 and 5).

sense acuities and language associations, the various forms of the universe are conceived quite different from each other. What to speak of how different these forms are from the perspective of the countless other creatures (from dolphins to insects) whose minds and thus languages, so to speak, are incomparably different. Being subject to countless, changing perspectives in time and place, and so without a single definitive form to be found anywhere—otherwise called being indefinable (*a-nirvacanīya*), not categorically and absolutely definable—then this universe is understood in this teaching as more a fiction, a mere appearance (*māyā*), than an absolute fact.⁶⁵ Because we can change our perspective about anything and everything, then no one perspective about any object or any thought can define or limit what is truly reality.

Language and imagination can imprison, by way of error, one who is ignorant of realities, but has no power to imprison one who no longer is ignorant of realities. So, though language and imagination do not in fact hinder a person, are *a-kliṣṭa*, finally, it is only ignorance, and what sustains ignorance, that hinders a person.

⁶⁵ “‘Lord (*Indra*) was the reflection in every form, for revealing that form of His. By appearances (*māyās*) [in each cycle of manifestation] the Lord (*Indra*) is taken as multi-formed, because of His harnessed hundreds of ten horses (*haris*) [i.e., the ten organs of action and knowledge]’ (*Rg Veda* 6.47.18). He indeed is the horses [the organs], He indeed is the ten and the thousands [of creatures], many and countless.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.19). “The wise say the dream and waking worlds are the same, because there is a well-known, logical similarity of their different objects. [Namely] what is not there before and after is in that same way [i.e., not there] in the present also. Those [objects in the waking world] are regarded [by the unwise] as not false, [even] while being similar [in nature] to the false [mirages, etc.] [which are also unreal even during their appearance]. [Additionally] their having a [real, i.e., lasting] utility is contradicted in dream [e.g., despite a supposedly real evening meal that satisfies hunger, one can then dream one is starving]. Therefore, by having a beginning and an end, they are taught (*smṛta*) to indeed exist falsely (*mithyā*).” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.4 through 7). “The shining self imagines (*kalpayati*) itself by itself via its own *māyā*. It alone knows the different objects. This is the determination of the *Vedāntas* (i.e., *Upaniṣads*).” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.12).

अ-भाव-प्रत्ययालम्बना वृत्तिर् निद्रा ॥ (1.10)
a-bhāva-pratyayālambanā vṛttir nidrā.

[*nidrā*—sleep; *vṛtti*—mental state; *ālabhana*—based; *pratyaya*—cognition; *a-bhāva*—absence.]

Sleep is a mental state that is based on the cognition of absence of any object of thought, such that, “I knew nothing at that time.”

Sleep in moderation does not hinder progress, but excessive sleep and certainly absent-mindedness in one’s activities may hinder progress in *yoga*.⁶⁶ But sleep here should not be understood as the physiological condition of resting; it is rather the cognitive state of the mind that occurs during dreamless sleep, when the mind does not manifest any thought.⁶⁷ Later we will see that a clear understanding of sleep, of the reality therein, helps one’s progress in *yoga*.

अनुभूत-विषयासंप्रमोषः स्मृतिः ॥ (1.11)
anubhūta-viṣayāsaṃpramoṣaḥ smṛtiḥ.

[*smṛti*—memory; *a-saṃpramoṣa*—not losing; *viṣaya*—object; *anubhūta*—experienced before.]

Memory is not losing in the mind **an object experienced before**.

Memory is not a form of new knowledge, but is just the bringing up of the subject

⁶⁶ “*Yoga* is not there for one who sleeps too much.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.16).

⁶⁷ “Where the one who is asleep neither desires any object nor sees any dream, that is deep sleep. Whose world is the deep sleep, who has [therein] become one as pure cognition alone [without an object], who is peaceful as an enjoyer of the peace [of oneself] [via the absence of disturbance], who is the portal to the experience [of the other two worlds: dream and waking]—this one is [called] *prājña* and is the third quarter [of *Om* and of *ātman*].” (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 1.5).

matter of a prior knowledge or prior experience, imagined or otherwise, stored in the mind (*see* Appendix D). Memory is required to progress in *yoga* since it is what keeps the teaching at the forefront of one’s understanding of everything in one’s universe. Remembered erroneous conclusions and falsified imaginations need to be re-evaluated and dropped in the light of new knowledge.

Simply remembering the teaching, though useful, is not the goal of *yoga*. The teaching has to be converted to knowledge (*pramāṇa*), not to just a parroting, out loud or to oneself, of the mere words of the teaching. This is why memory is here listed as different from *pramāṇa*.

Later it will be shown that memory is the nature of the past, while imagination is the nature of the future. The present is the realm of knowledge, error and sleep. That knowledge and the essence (the reality) of the present are one and the same.⁶⁸ This is the nature of the teaching—it keeps getting deeper into the nature of reality around and within us, until clarity within the one reality that encompasses and includes all is one’s presence.

Repetition and Non-attachment

अभ्यास-वैराग्याभ्यां तन्-निरोधः ॥ (1.12)
abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tan-nirodhaḥ.

[*tad-nirodha*—discipline of these; *abhyāsa*—repetition; *vairāgya*—non-attachment.]

The discipline of these thoughts is by repetition⁶⁹ and by non-attachment,⁷⁰ which together lead to contemplation and a contemplative life.

⁶⁸ See commentaries on *Yoga Sūtras* 4.12 and 4.19.

⁶⁹ “Making one’s body the fire-making block of wood and *praṇava* (i.e., *Om*) the upper churning stick, by the repetition (*abhyāsa*) of churning which is contemplation (*dhyāna*), the shining self (*deva*) becomes evident, as

Both *abhyāsa* (repetition) and *vairāgya* (non-attachment) will be defined in the following *sūtras*. What is to be repeated and how, plus the nature and importance of non-attachment will be fully dealt with in the rest of the *sūtras*.

Initially, these two are repetition of what helps (*a-kliṣṭa*) one's progress in *yoga*, and non-attachment to what hinders (*kliṣṭa*). Ultimately, it requires non-attachment to even what previously helped one's progress, but later stands in the way. This discipline, which is *yoga*, brought about by repetition and non-attachment, becomes the contemplation described shortly.

The goal of this discipline, of *yoga*, is oneself free of errors in thinking due to ignorance of one's essential nature. But, unless *yoga* is taken as the end, as knowledge itself, what is only a means is just that—a means. It should not be taken as the end in itself. This is why people can get stuck in doing *yoga* and remain unfulfilled thinking there is nothing more. What is more is the ultimate goal of *yoga*, for which *yoga* is just a means that should be used until the goal is reached. Finally, one needs to be non-attached to *yoga* in order to arrive at one's ultimate goal of freedom.⁷¹

तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः ॥ (1.13)
tatra sthitau yatno'bhyaśaḥ.

though [previously] hidden within.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.14). “Making one's body the fire-making block of wood and *praṇava* the upper churning stick, by the repetition (*abhyāsa*) of churning which is knowledge (*jñāna*), the wise burn their *karma* demerit.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 11). “The mind is fleeting and difficult to master. But, O *Arjuna*, with repetition (*abhyāsa*) and with non-attachment (*vairāgya*), it is mastered.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.35).

⁷⁰ “Continuing variously in ignorance, the immature boast ‘we have attained the goal.’ Since engaged in activities, they do not try to gain knowledge due to attachment (*rāga*). Suffering afflictions because of that, they fall back when [what it took to gain] their world (*loka*) [i.e., their human embodiment, heaven, etc.] is exhausted.” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.2.9).

⁷¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.50.

[*abhyāsa*—repetition; *yatna*—effort; *sthiti*—remaining; *tatra*—in that.]

Repetition is mental and physical effort in remaining in that discipline.

स तु दीर्घ-काल-नैरन्तर्य-सत्कारासेवितो दृढ-भूमिः ॥ (1.14)
sa tu dīrgha-kāla-nairantarya-satkārāsevito dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ.

[*tu*—but; *saḥ*—it; *āsevita*—thoroughly attended to; *sat-kāra*—utmost respect; *nairantarya*—no interruption; *dīrgha-kāla*—long time; *dṛḍha-bhūmi*—firm success.]

But, lest one think otherwise, it, repetition, is to be thoroughly attended to with utmost respect and no interruption for a long enough time until firm success.

Sat-kāra (utmost respect) refers to *śraddhā*⁷² (trust in the words of the teaching and the teacher), rather than just politeness or reverence. It is taking the teaching, the discipline, as *sat* (true, fact). The teaching is not some unapproachable, divine mystery at which one can only bow. It being true or in keeping with the truth, one just undertakes this discipline, and it will provide its benefit in keeping with one's *karma*. It is this approach to *yoga* that distinguishes *yogins* from academicians, the merely curious, or those who like to exercise in groups, or to have some quiet time.

दृष्टानुश्रविक-विषय-वितृष्णस्य वशी-कार-संज्ञा वैराग्यम् ॥ (1.15)
dr̥ṣṭānuśravika-viṣaya-vitṛṣṇasya vaśī-kāra-saṃjñā vairāgyam.

⁷² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.20.

[*vairāgya*—non-attachment; *saṃjñā*—known; *vaśī-kāra*—mastery; *vitṛṣṇa*—desire; *viṣaya*—objects; *drṣṭa*—seen; *ānuśravika*—repeatedly heard from scriptures.]

Non-attachment is known as mastery over the desire for objects⁷³ seen or repeatedly heard from scriptures, such as the subtle, pleasant realms of nature called heaven.⁷⁴

The scripture (*āgama* or *śruti*) talks not only about complete freedom, but also, while one is still within the throws of duality, how to make the best of it in a way that does not hinder your progress, your maturity, in the long run. The scripture’s view of the long run is over innumerable lifetimes. Just to finally come to the teaching found in this tradition is said to take a cosmically long time. Once you get to the teaching, though, final maturity can come quickly enough. This will be discussed shortly. Along the way, relatively short term rewards are mentioned for living a life that is in keeping with this maturing process. This maturing process is living a life of universal values (*dharma*), gaining a cosmic perspective on life and the universe, and engaging in certain prayers and acts that have special efficacy, not otherwise known than through scripture.

These are not rewards given by the scripture or overseen by the sages who revealed

⁷³ “For a person who mentally dwells on objects, attachment to them arises; from attachment arises desire [i.e., requirements in order to be happy and anticipations of their fruition]; from [thwarted] anticipations arises anger; from anger is delusion [i.e., error in judgment]; from delusion is lapse of memory; from lapse of memory is lapse of intellect; from lapse of intellect [what distinguishes the human condition] the person is destroyed [i.e., the unique human opportunity to attain what is truly beneficial is completely wasted, and the person remains in *saṃsāra* (the life of unbecoming becoming)].” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.62 and 63).

⁷⁴ “O *Arjuna*, the unwise—who remain engrossed in [the bulk of] the words of the *Vedas* [dealing with heaven-going, and gaining power, wealth, and progeny], arguing that there is nothing more, who are full of desires [i.e., requirements/anticipations] and who hold heaven as primary—they spout flowery discourse full of special rituals [directed] toward gaining power and objects of consumption, [but] yield [further] birth as a result of their actions.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.42 and 43).

the scripture. These are rewards inherent in the intelligent cosmic order of the universe, the manifestation of the Lord. They are seen to be as natural and objective as are the laws of science. These rewards, such as heaven, are all temporary, though a stay there may last for ages. If there is a going up, there will be a return, and around the cycle one goes.

How could it make sense that one gets an everlasting heaven or an everlasting hell based on the actions or beliefs in the few years of one's life? In this tradition, you only get what you have earned, no more and no less. These scriptures are objective and reasonable even in their spirituality.

The student addressed here, as well as the student addressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, is the one who has been on that up and down track for eons, and now chooses to get off. Consumerism, even on the spiritual side, can ensnare the human heart only so long. Eventually one discovers that it is complete freedom that one really wants, and will finally satisfy. This discovery takes *vairāgya* (non-attachment).

Vairāgya (non-attachment) is not absence of desire or lack of passion, as often translated. This *sūtra* clearly states that *vairāgya* is a mastery over desires, not their absence. When at peace by not being overpowered by desire (*rāga*) and aversion (*dveṣa*), two of the *kleśas* (afflictions),⁷⁵ the mind naturally has clarity (*prasāda*). When agitated and overpowered by desire and aversion, it is said to have color (*rāga*)—the mind is as though stormy red or foreboding black. The mastery over this coloring is *vairāgya* (literally, *the state of not being colored/affected*).

The discipline is not avoiding agitation, desires, or aversions. This will surely fail, since the circumstances that can trigger these *kleśas* are situations and objects outside of one's control. One has to cultivate a discipline of mind which will render stressful, desirable, or adverse situations and objects impotent. With eyes open, come what may—what comes being what naturally comes according to one's *karma*—one remains at peace.

⁷⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.7 and 8.

Another word for *vairāgya* is *non-affectment*, not allowing external situations and objects to control, to affect, your mind without your permission. So you, that is, your understanding of yourself and the world, have charge (*vaśī-kāra*) of your mind, not the other way around. The understanding of the nature of objects, the mind, and the true nature of oneself which this teaching unfolds, when held in a clear mind with the aid of the practices in these pages, will provide this mastery.

तत्-परं पुरुष-ख्यातेर् गुण-वैतृष्यम् ॥ (1.16)

tat-param puruṣa-khyāter guṇa-vaitṛṣnyam.

[*tat-para*—ultimate of that; *guṇa-vaitṛṣnya*—non-attachment to the three constituents of all of nature; *khyāti*—discernment; *puruṣa*—self.]

The ultimate of that non-attachment is non-attachment to the *guṇas*⁷⁶ (three constituents of all of nature), by discernment of the true nature of the *puruṣa*⁷⁷ (self).

Non-attachment culminates within the knowledge that I am this limitless reality which is one without a second. Its culmination is also the same knowledge that what appears

⁷⁶ “[The Lord, the *deva*] who is the source of the universe, who ripens itself [i.e., the *prakṛti* within it] [into manifestation], who matures all those fit to be matured [according to their *karma*], and who provides all the *guṇas* (constituents and their characteristics)—this one presides in this entire universe. ...[Whereas] the [individual] who identifies with the *guṇas*, who takes oneself alone [instead of the Lord] as the creator and enjoyer of the results of that action, wanders [in *samsāra*] as every form [thus identified with] consisting of the three *guṇas* within the three paths [up to heavens, across to human births, or down to lower births], according to one’s own actions, ruling [only] one’s own life.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.5 and 7).

⁷⁷ “*Gārgya* said, ‘That *puruṣa* who is in the sun [as its being] I worship as reality (*brahman*).’ *Ajāta-satru* replied, ‘No, do not talk about this [which I already know]’ ...” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.1.2 ...to end of the Chapter in 2.1.20). “That indeed is *puruṣa*, who resides in the body (*puri-śaya*) in all compounds (*purs*) [i.e., in all bodies as their ruler and being]. There is nothing that is not covered by [i.e., included in] this [*puruṣa*].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.18).

is but the reality that I am. In the wake of this knowledge, all objects—here indicated by the term *guṇas*—are known to be nothing more than their appearance to my five senses within my awareness.⁷⁸ The objects come and go, and I remain the same reality, not in need of them for my existence (though this temporary body and mind complex has basic needs), or for my fulfillment. With them I am complete; without them I am complete. This is a fully assimilated non-attachment towards all.

Two Forms of Contemplation

वितर्क-विचारानन्दास्मिता-रूपानुगमात् संप्रज्ञातः ॥ (1.17)
vitarka-vicārānandāsmitā-rūpānugamāt saṃprajñātaḥ.

[*saṃprajñāta*—deliberative; *anugama*—appropriately following; *rūpa*—form; *vitarka*—reasoning; *vicāra*—inquiry; *ānanda*—fullness; *asmitā*—the sense of “I am.”]

Samādhi (contemplation) is called **deliberative** when it is **through appropriately following a form**⁷⁹ **of reasoning**⁸⁰ in keeping with scripture, such as in *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana*,⁸¹ **and inquiry** through the scripture **into fullness**,⁸²

⁷⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.21.

⁷⁹ This word, *rūpa* (a form), is missing in some manuscripts.

⁸⁰ “Reasoning not in opposition to scripture (*āgama*) is called *tarka*.” (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 17).

⁸¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.33 and 34.

⁸² “Reality (*brahman*) is knowledge (*vijñāna*) and fullness (*ānanda*), the ultimate goal of the one who gives oblation and of the one who abiding [therein] knows that [reality].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.9.28.7). “This is its limitless fullness (*ānanda*). The beings who [take themselves] as other (*anya*) survive upon a limited measure (*mātra*) of this fullness (*ānanda*). ... That is the one complete (*eka*) fullness (*ānanda*) in the world of *brahman*, [which is the same fullness of] the one who is steeped in this teaching (*śrotṛiya*), who is without fault and untouched by desire (*a-kāma-hata*). Now this is the ultimate fullness (*ānanda*). This [fullness] is the world which is *brahman*, O king,” said *Yājñavalkya*.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.32 and 33). “*Brahman* is

which is the basic nature of the self expressing in the *sattva* (non-dull and non-agitated mind), **and on the sense of “I am,”** a recognition of the reality basis in the self, the is-ness or is-notion present in every cognition.⁸³

The terms *vitarka* (reasoning) and *vicāra* (inquiry) connect to the second and third means of knowledge available in contemplation, namely, *anumāna* (indirect knowledge, inference) and *āgama* (scripture), respectively. The first means of knowledge, *pratyakṣa* (sense perception and perception of mental states) is not employed in contemplation, though some modern instructors bring in *pratyakṣa*, such as incense fragrance, Indian music, invoking emotions, etc. The preparation within the seat of contemplation here will instead involve the withdrawal of the senses, called *pratyāhāra*.⁸⁴ If *pratyakṣa* is continued in contemplation, then *pratyāhāra* has not been completed.

One is not gathering information or figuring out what is true or not in contemplation. Instead, one is re-viewing what one already understands so it is more fully appreciated and assimilated with certitude.

The type of *samādhi* in this *sūtra* is what we normally understand as contemplation. It involves reasoning and instruction from the scripture. It is not the initial questioning, reasoning, and instruction themselves, though, since these would have already been attended to in first exposing oneself to the teaching and then thinking over how it applies in clearing all possible doubts, called *śravaṇa* (listening) and *manana* (understanding), respectively.

limitless[ness] (*an-anta*) reality (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). “That indeed is the essence (*rasa*) [of everything, of names and forms], because having attained this essence (*rasa*) one is complete (*ānandin*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.7.1). “This is the one complete (*eka*) fullness (*ānanda*) of Lord *Brahman*, and of the one who is steeped in this teaching (*śrotriya*) and untouched by desire (*a-kāma-hata*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.8.1). “The one who knows the fullness of [i.e., who is] *brahman* does not fear of anything.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.9.1).

⁸³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 4.20.

⁸⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.54.

In the contemplation here, it involves just a few words to bring to mind what one knows from these words to help get past some mental obstacle to one’s assimilation of this teaching. It involves the two essential aspects of oneself—*sat* (existence) and *ānanda* (fullness). I exist without limit, and I am completely satisfied. These two go straight to the fruit of this knowledge, namely, my existence is without limit, is without loss or destruction, and my fulfillment is without limit and always available. This appreciation starts with seeing the logical fallacy in the notions I have about myself as being this or that thought in my mind. It then moves on to what the teaching says about the essential me. It culminates in the subsequent form of *samādhi*—“I am the witness that is limitless existence-fullness.”

The forms of this contemplation are to be appropriately followed, in that they should be in keeping with the teaching, with the appropriate means of knowledge. The teaching is the *āgama* (scripture) with reasoning based on the scripture and which supports the scripture. These forms of contemplation are thus grounded in a proven teaching tradition and in reality.

The word *samādhi* means *that in which (everything) resolves (samādhīyate yasmin iti samādhīḥ)*. *Samādhi* is not in any sense a stopping of the mind, since there is no real resolution in temporarily stopping something. It is instead resolving (*pralaya*) everything including the mind as non-limitations into the limitless reality of oneself. Preceded by inquiry into the goal of *yoga* that is the unafflicted *puruṣa* as the nature of oneself, contemplation is the employment of the reasoning and deliberation therein to bring this inquiry into focus, and then remaining there to appreciate and assimilate the truth of oneself. The only resolution that can happen in contemplation is the resolving of the doubts and other forms of obstacles that has kept one from appreciating the fruit of this inquiry. The inquiry results in clarity in the knowledge of oneself, the witness, as limitless, fulfilling existence. One’s psychological baggage that seems to stand in the way of appreciating this truth is then laid bare to be dismissed (sub-rated) in the light of this clear knowledge.

This is the *samādhi* presented here. The mental obstacles to freedom are what are

destroyed here. There is no imagined destruction of *karma* linkage that then prevents the mind from restarting again after *samādhi*. This latter, popular interpretation of a mechanical destruction of the mind within *samādhi* is a result of being hand-cuffed by a limited philosophy of duality. Duality is where the mind is believed to be as real as the self, therefore is a real problem that has to be overcome, and so must be mechanically destroyed in order for the self to surface and be free.

But, since here the overcoming is by *prajñā* (knowledge), there can be no mechanical destruction. The only destruction that knowledge can do is the destruction of ignorance. Knowledge cannot destroy what is a fact; it is simply for revealing what is the fact. This discerning of the difference between the results of action and the results of knowledge is essential in gaining clarity on the proper means in this endeavor.

विराम-प्रत्ययाभ्यास-पूर्वः संस्कार-शेषोऽन्यः ॥ (1.18)
virāma-pratyayābhyāsa-pūrvah saṁskāra-śeṣo 'nyah.

[*anya*—other; *pūrva*—preceded; *abhyāsa*—repetition; *virāma*—quietude; *pratyayas*—cognitions; *saṁskāras*—latent tendencies; *śeṣa*—remain.]

The other *samādhi* is called *a-saṁprajñāta* (free from deliberation), preceded by repetition of the *saṁprajñāta* (deliberative) contemplation, results in the quietude of even those cognitions from *saṁprajñāta* contemplation. Nevertheless, latent tendencies—habitual potentials caused by prior ignorance and its crop, the seeds of affliction⁸⁵—remain, until *nir-bīja samādhi*⁸⁶ (contemplation free of seed) through *puruṣa-khyāti* (discernment of the true nature of the self) that is *kaivalya* (freedom).

⁸⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.3.

⁸⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.51.

This *samādhi* is really just the result of the prior when the words within the prior *samādhi* drop and only their implied meaning abides. Their implied meaning is only oneself free of limiting identifications (*sārūpya*)⁸⁷ with thoughts. So, here, there is only oneself. This dropping of words and quiet appreciation of being this limitless reality can happen without all doubts being cleared. Doubts, as manifestations of latent tendencies, may not arise at that time and so one gets a quiet—but temporary—resolution. Later, these doubts and their repercussions re-surface and again one will want to continue one’s contemplation.

भव-प्रत्ययो वि-देह-प्रकृति-लयानाम् ॥ (1.19)
bhava-pratyayo vi-deha-prakṛti-layānām.

[*pratyaya*—follows; *bhava*—birth; *vi-dehas*—subtle beings; *prakṛti-layas*—beings who have been absorbed in unmanifest nature.]

Temporary *a-samprajñāta samādhi* (contemplation without an assimilated knowledge) **follows from the birth**—the nature of the particular embodiments—**of certain subtle beings** in a heaven because of efforts in *yoga* in their prior birth, **and of all beings who are temporarily absorbed in unmanifest nature**, until their next manifestation.

When the preceding contemplations end, if one continues to limit oneself and one’s reality to what one witnesses, this is because of the latent tendencies to assume that limiting ego thoughts are true. These tendencies are there because the fundamental ignorance, from which those tendencies are a manifestation, remains. A temporary *samādhi* is just another witnessed experience from which to grow.

Similarly, one may have this temporary *samādhi* while experiencing certain embodiments other than this current human embodiment. In some heavenly, subtle

⁸⁷ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.3 and 4.

embodiments these pre-earned rewards are experienced. And, of course, during each period of universal dissolution, everyone’s mind is naturally absorbed.

This *sūtra* is simply to explain the traditional stories in the Indian epics and legends about certain individuals, *yogis* who, after their earthly bodies die, continue in the subtle realms of *saṃsāra*. These would include the ethereal *siddhas* (accomplished beings) mentioned in *sūtra* 3.32, though not all of these *siddhas* would necessarily be *śrotriya*s (exposed to and able to teach the methodology of this tradition). They may have been natural shamans who could easily go into a trance that could simulate an *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*.

श्रद्धा-वीर्य-स्मृति-समाधि-प्रज्ञा-पूर्वक इतरेषाम् ॥ (1.20)

śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣām.

[*itaras*—the rest of us; *pūrvaka*—follows; *śraddhā*—trust; *vīrya*—tenacity; *smṛti*—memory; *samādhi*—contemplation; *prajñā*—assimilated knowledge.]

For the rest of us right here and now in this life, success in *yoga* follows from **trust**⁸⁸ in the scripture as a means of knowledge, the same as one trusts one’s perception and logic; **tenacity** in this pursuit; **memory**—continuous retention of the teaching; **contemplation** on the teaching; **and** finally **assimilated knowledge** of the self.

Notice here that the temporary form of *samādhi*, the *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*, is not the final step for the path of the *yogin*. *Prajñā* (knowledge) is the final goal of *yoga* according to the progression indicated by *Patañjali*’s sequential ordering of these

⁸⁸ “‘When indeed one trusts (*śraddadhāti*), in this way one thinks. Not trusting, one does not [so] think. Trusting alone one thinks. So trust (*śraddhā*) itself is to be understood.’ —‘Sir, I desire to know *śraddhā*.’ —‘When indeed one is dedicated (*nistiṣṭhati*), in this way one trusts. Not dedicating [oneself], one does no trust. Dedicating alone one trusts. So dedication (*niṣṭhā*) itself is to be understood.’” (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.19.1 and 20.1).

steps in the compound word *śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka*.

तीव्र-संवेगानाम् आसन्नः ॥ (1.21)
tīvra-saṃvegānām āsannaḥ.

[*saṃvega*—tenacity; *tīvra*—acute; *āsanna*—quickly succeeds.]

For those whose tenacity in repetition and non-attachment is acute, *samādhi* (contemplation) quickly succeeds.⁸⁹

मृदु-मध्याधि-मात्रत्वात् ततोऽपि विशेषः ॥ (1.22)
mṛdu-madhyādhi-mātratvāt tato'pi viśeṣaḥ.

[*tataḥ api*—and thus; *viśeṣa*—distinction; *mṛdu*—weak; *madhya*—middling; *adhi-mātratvas*—strong measures.]

And thus there is distinction due to weak, middling, or strong measures of tenacity in repetition and non-attachment.⁹⁰

Contemplation on the Lord

ईश्वर-प्रणिधानाद् वा ॥ (1.23)
īśvara-praṇidhānād vā.

⁸⁹ “Commitment to study (*brahma-cārya*), non-violence, renunciation, and truthfulness—O may you always observe (*rakṣataḥ*) [these] with effort.” (*Āruneya Up.* 3).

⁹⁰ “Giving up [the notion of control over] the result of action, the *yogin* attains a peace born of [the degree of] commitment; [whereas] not [committed to] *yoga*, attached to result(s) by the pressure of requirements, that one is bound.” (*Bh. Gītā* 5.12).

[*vā*—also; *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*—contemplation on the Lord.]

The discipline of thoughts through repetition and non-attachment succeeds **also**⁹¹ **by contemplation on the Lord**, since the Lord is the *puruṣa* (self) in its completely free and fully understood nature.⁹²

The general principles within *yoga* practice have been given, namely, repetition (*abhyāsa*) of the practices presented in this text derived from scripture and non-attachment (*vairāgya*) to what hinders progress in *yoga*. What seems to hinder progress needs to be objectively reexamined and either reintegrated or dropped. Tenacity in these practices was indicated to impress upon the seeker their importance in succeeding quickly in *yoga*. Also stated were the initial and deeper levels within contemplation that lies at the core of *yoga*. These levels in contemplation will be further discussed in this chapter (*sūtras* 1.42 through 51). The source of the topics to contemplate (namely, scripture) as well as what to avoid (namely, error) were also indicated.

Now, specifically, which scriptural topics to contemplate upon are presented. The first and primary topic is the Lord, the *eka-tattva* (the one reality), since the Lord is the clearest and most inclusive way to understand the real nature of the *puruṣa*, oneself. We naturally think ourselves to be limited and identified with the body and mind. Therefore, to contemplate the limitless *puruṣa*, which is the reality one is, *Patañjali* suggests that we contemplate the Lord—in the way this tradition presents

⁹¹ The Sanskrit particle ‘*vā*’ expresses one of two meanings—the exclusive ‘or’ (*vikalpa-artha*) or the inclusive ‘and/or’ (*samuccaya-artha*). Its primary sense is the exclusive ‘or,’ the latter is secondary. The word ‘or’ in English is nearly always exclusive, whereas the English words ‘and,’ ‘also,’ and ‘besides’ are inclusive, meaning one may pick one or the other or both of what they conjunct. Quite often the difference between exclusive ‘or’ and inclusive ‘also’ in these *sūtras* is very important to understand. Therefore, where in the following *sūtras* the word ‘*vā*’ contextually has only an exclusive sense, then we will deliberately render the word as the exclusive ‘or,’ otherwise we will use the inclusive ‘also’ or ‘and.’

⁹² “Freed from longing, fear, and anger, having taken refuge in Me [by] being Me alone, and purified by the discipline that is knowledge—many have attained My nature [i.e., complete freedom].” (*Bh. Gītā* 4.10).

the Lord. This will be given in the next nine *sūtras*.

The Nature of the Lord

क्लेश-कर्म-विपाकाशयैर् अ-परामृष्टः पुरुष-विशेष ईश्वरः ॥ (1.24)
kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair a-parāmr̥ṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ.

[*Īśvara*—Lord; *viśeṣa*—characterized; *puruṣa*—self; *a-parāmr̥ṣṭa*—untouched; *kleśas*—afflictions; *karma*—action; *vipāka*—fruition; *āśaya*—store-house.]

The Lord⁹³ is characterized as the *puruṣa* (self) untouched by the afflictions of ignorance and its crop—the I-notion, attachment, aversion, and the fear of death⁹⁴—and by action along with its fruition and store-house waiting to fructify.⁹⁵

This is why the Lord is the *puruṣa* in its completely free nature and fullest understanding. Gaining knowledge of this *puruṣa* as one’s self is the goal of *yoga*. This is not the attainment of a God-like state or status, and this is not an imagination or wishful thinking that I will be similar or near to God. It is no less than the knowledge that I am exactly that limitless *puruṣa*.

The compound word *puruṣa-viśeṣa* can also mean *the excellent puruṣa, the perfect puruṣa*. This is exactly who the Lord is—the *puruṣa* understood in its perfect limitless

⁹³ “The one who sees the Lord [Me] as remaining the same in all beings, and as not being destroyed among those [bodies] being destroyed—that one [alone] sees. Because, seeing [Me] the Lord as remaining the same (*sama*) everywhere [as the self of all], one does not by oneself [i.e., through the mind] destroy [i.e., lose sight of] the self [since that self is the all-pervasive Me] and, hence, attains the ultimate end [i.e., the end of *samsāra*].” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.27 and 28).

⁹⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.3 through 2.9.

⁹⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.12, 4.6, and 4.7.

nature. The Lord, then, is not a means for attaining one’s perfect nature; the Lord *is* one’s perfect nature. This bold truth reverberates across the scriptures, and should not be missed by any student of *yoga*.

The qualities we attribute to the Lord as the source, sustenance, and resolution of the cycles of the universe, of course, are applicable only in relationship to the Lord’s manifestation as the total, and not to our individual body-mind complexes. The essential nature of this Lord—not the Lord’s nature as we think of it through those cosmic attributes—is the limitless *puruṣa*, and that also is the essential nature of oneself as limitless reality.

The word *viśeṣa* often also means *an adjective, a word to describe*. Here, *Īśvara* (the Lord) when understood in its full implication is descriptive of the *puruṣa*. The term ‘Lord’ is the least limiting term, at least in this tradition, that one can give to reality, to the *puruṣa*. The Lord is the most accurately expansive description of inherently indescribable reality—reality that cannot be circumscribed in words, in notions.

When the compound *puruṣa-viśeṣa*, here, is rendered instead as *the special puruṣa* by a commentator or translator, then you know you are reading a dualist rendering of these *sūtras*. This dualist vision amounts to a notion about God as a separate being, better than you, of course. With this perspective, you could never be the completely free *puruṣa* that is the goal of *yoga*.

The dualist vision is naturally there for everyone, including those in the Abrahamic religions, the dualist sects within theist Hinduism, and even many neo-*Vedāntins*. By ‘neo-*Vedāntins*’ we mean those who filter and fit the scripture to seem more amenable to a secular or a Western spiritual seeking audience. They are often the ones who claim that all religions are the same, and represent *Vedānta* as another belief system with nothing too foreign, too threatening to other belief systems. For them, the *Upaniṣads* are not a unique means of knowledge, but are just an additional set of scriptures, perhaps as believable as others.

A motivated student, however, will discover the keys to the scripture and to him or

herself through *Vedānta* and *Patañjali*'s vision as presented herein. One of the keys is relating the totality of the Lord in its essence to the essence that is the reality of the individual. Westerners would need to learn how to expand their understanding of a Lord to this fullest of extent, to encompass everything including oneself. The following *sūtras* and their commentary will help.

This fuller understanding of the Lord is also a means to a sense of universal community, social and ecological responsibility, and emotional health. These benefits will in turn help further mature the students so that their understanding of the Lord can finally expand to the identity of self and Lord. That identity is the resolution of the misconception of duality and isolation.

तत्र निर्-अतिशयं सर्व-ज्ञ-बीजम् ॥ (1.25)
tatra nir-atiśayaṃ sarva-jñā-bījam.

[*tatra*—in that; *bīja*—seed; *sarva-jñā*—knowing all; *nir-atiśaya*—unsurpassed.]

In that Lord the seed—capacity—of knowing all⁹⁶ is unsurpassed.

In the scripture (*āgama*), the Lord is understood as the material and efficient cause of the universe, pervading the cycles of manifestation. By material cause is meant that the Lord is the very reality, the existence, (*sat*) of everything that manifests. No separate material is necessary for creation. There is no *prakṛti* or *pradhāna* (unmanifest and manifest Mother Nature) apart from this reality (*sat*). In this understanding, there is not even a creation, a separation of the created from a creator. There is only a manifestation of a universe to the senses from the perspective of each individual totally within the only reality which we call the Lord.

⁹⁶ “This is the Lord of all. This is the knower of all (*sarva-jñā*). This is the ruler within (*antar-yāmin*). This is the womb (*yonī*), the source, and resolution of all beings.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 6).

By efficient cause is meant that the Lord is the intelligence according to which this well-ordered manifestation occurs. The common example given for a material and efficient cause is the making of a clay pot. There, the clay itself is the material cause, and the intelligent potter is the efficient cause. In this example, the material and efficient causes are separate. The example where they are not separate is dreaming. You are the material of your dream world. Your dream world material does not exist apart from you, the dreamer. And you, as the intelligent dreamer, are the efficient cause of the dream.

The material (*upādāna*) and efficient (*nimitta*) cause (*kāraṇa*) of the universe is none other than that which the scriptures call the limitless Lord. All the intelligence (*jñāna*) expressed as the amazing order (*dharma*) of this particular universe, from the quantum to the celestial, is only an aspect, just one manifestation, of the intelligence (*jñapti-svarūpa*, *the nature of the source of knowing*, that expresses as intelligence) that is the Lord. It is this same *jñapti-svarūpa* that is the nature of one's self, the nature of the witness-*puruṣa*, the *sarva-jñātṛtva* (the very nature of the knower of all).⁹⁷

This may at first be an unexpected understanding of the Lord and the universe. The Lord and the universe and the self are not inherently separate things. Atheists and materialist scientists are accommodated in this sophisticated model. Here, the universe is but a reoccurring manifestation of the Lord. There is no separation between the universe and the Lord, any more than there can be separation between a clay pot and clay. There is one intelligence that accounts for both the manifestation of the pot and the manifestation of the universe. A Lord is not needed to explain the world; the manifestation of the world is nothing but what could be called a Lord. The 'Lord' is just a respectful name we give to the singular reality of everything and of oneself. You can call it the quantum soup of everything, if you include yourself as that soup and understand that all time and space is that soup, that reality. And within

⁹⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.49.

that soup, that reality, there can be no distinctions.

To a human being operating totally within the science of this one current manifestation, the appearance of the re-manifested universe from the unmanifest would naturally and scientifically look as if it were spontaneous. Within the model of our present science of multi-dimensional space and multiverses, it would not be necessary to postulate an external Lord. Nor does this scriptural tradition here in its purest form envision an external Lord.

The expression of the Lord in our spiritual lives, though, is not limited to explaining our scientific life. Our total human life includes science, community, empathy, and love. One can construct a scientific universe model that is without an external Lord, but one can also construct a scientific universe model that includes an intrinsic Lord as the only material and order of this universe, a highly unifying and satisfying principle. The Indian tradition says that science and Lord need not and cannot exclude one another.

पूर्वेषाम् अपि गुरुः कालेनानवच्छेदात् ॥ (1.26)
pūrveṣām api guruḥ kālenānavacchedāt.

[*api*—also; *guru*—teacher; *pūrvas*—everyone before; *an-avaccheda*—not limited; *kāla*—time.]

The Lord **is also the teacher**⁹⁸ **of everyone before**, now, and later, **since** the Lord, being the cause of all, including time, **is not limited by time**,⁹⁹ and since

⁹⁸ “I [*Kṛṣṇa*, as the Lord] taught [in the beginning] this unchanging *yoga* to *Vivasvat* (the sun deity).” (*Bh. Gītā* 4.1).

⁹⁹ “All this is *puruṣa* alone—whatever was and will be. It is the Lord of immortality.” (*Puruṣa Sūkta*, *R̥g Veda* 10.90.2). “That very reality (*brahman*) is without a prior and without a posterior, without an inside and without an outside. This reality (*brahman*) is the self (*ātman*) who experiences all (*sarva-anubhū*) [i.e., who according to their form exists as all]. This is the traditional teaching (*anuśāsana*).” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.19).

the Lord is the knower in the seat of the intellect of all beings.¹⁰⁰

That which is not limited by time, must also be free from space (*ākāśa*), since time and space (including the objects that change within space) are inseparable and mutually dependent aspects making up the warp and woof¹⁰¹ of the limiting adjunct (*upādhi*) we call the universe. The Lord is thus time-free and space-free. Whether time or space is there or not, the Lord, the unconditional existence itself, is there. The Lord is free from, yet sustains, the universe. Sustains here is the sense that the Lord alone is the reality and is the truth of the limited reality this universe enjoys. The Lord alone lends this universe its limited reality. Nothing can exist apart from reality, from the Lord, whereas reality is not dependent on or limited by any thing. Things have no reality apart from the reality the Lord lends them, but that loaned reality does not in turn limit the Lord, since the Lord alone is that reality.¹⁰²

The dream is a very helpful example for loaned reality. We assign reality to the objects in our dream, but we are not circumscribed and made smaller by those dream objects. You think of them, and in that way alone they exist in dream. You think of them differently, and they change. No man-eating creature or horrendous catastrophe has ever succeeded in harming or destroying you, the dreamer and the waker. Only the dream changes or ends. The reality of these dream objects and experiences, including the role you play as an actor in the dream, resolves back into you the waker or deep sleeper, unscratched.

¹⁰⁰ “[This limitless reality (*brahman*)] is knowledge (*jñāna*), what is to be known, and the result to be attained by knowledge. It abides in the center (*hrd*) of everything [and is to be known in this intellect].” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.17).

¹⁰¹ “He [*Yājñā-valkya*] replied, ‘In space (*ākāśa*) [alone] is woven warp (*ota*) and woof (*protā*) [i.e., lengthwise and crosswise] [all] this, O *Gārgī*, which is above the heavens, below the earth, between the heavens and earth, and which they call the past, the present, and the future.’” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.8.4).

¹⁰² “All beings exist in [i.e., are because of] Me, but I am not in [i.e., because of] them. [Yet] [as separate] beings they do not exist in Me. My self (*ātman*) produces [all] things [all names and forms], sustains [all] things, but does not exist in [i.e., is not dependent upon] these things.” (*Bh. Gītā* 9.4 and 5).

Dream appearances shine in the borrowed light of you the dreamer, and do not exist independent from you the dreamer, nor limit you the dreamer. You pervade and survive the dream, pervade and survive the deep sleep, and pervade and survive the waking world. You supersede all these. You outlast them as the reality that witnesses all states of experience, and are thus free from all sense of limitations. The ability to objectify sleep, dream, and waking in the light of the unchanging presence of the self underlying the three states is enough to support your understanding of your limit-less nature. No more or other experience, including thought-less *samādhi*, is required to assimilate this teaching.

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः ॥ (1.27)

tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ.

[*vācaka*—expressive name; *tasya*—of that; *praṇava*—syllable *Om*.]

The expressive name of that Lord is the syllable *Om*.¹⁰³

Om is presented and unfolded in the *Upaniṣad* scriptures as the limitless reality called *brahman* (literally, *the big*, from the Sanskrit verbal root *bṛh*,) and as the reality which is one’s self (*ātman*). Through its three component sounds *a–u–m* (*a* and *u* equaling *o*), on *Om* are super-imposed the three apparent states of oneself and all experience: waking-consciousness (*a*), dream-consciousness (*u*), and sleep-consciousness (*m*). A so-called “fourth” state of oneself is reality as consciousness itself, the silent basis before, during, and after those three—from which they are produced, in which they are sustained, and back into which (without having left) they resolve.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ “Know *praṇava* (i.e., *Om*) to be the Lord (*Īśvara*), present in the intellect of all. Knowing *Om* as the all-pervasive (Lord), the wise person does not grieve.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 1.28).

¹⁰⁴ “They know the [so called] fourth [quarter of *Om* and of *ātman*] to be neither conscious of the internal [i.e., mind and the dream world], the external [i.e., external objects and the waking world] nor in between, nor a pure

The student can keep in mind that the *Upaniṣad* tradition is the basis for *Patañjali*. *Om* is the name for *brahman* (limitless reality) in the *Upaniṣads*. *Patañjali*'s use of this name for the Lord clearly indicates that *Patañjali* is referring to the Lord in its limitless reality as *brahman*, not as the role of creator, sustainer, and resolver of the manifestations of the universe, nor simply as a God to be prayed to.

Consciousness

In the West, particularly within philosophy and psychology, the English word ‘consciousness’ is often used synonymously with (*human*) *thought*, *self-conscious thought*, *mindfulness*, or *mind*. Sometimes it is expressed as *knowing that one knows*. This is not how this commentary is using the word consciousness. Here, we are using it in the same way we find it in the reliable *Vedānta* texts, especially scripture translations. This is because the *Vedānta* scriptures present a unique understanding of the mind and knowledge that is not readily found in the West.

Here, initially, the word ‘consciousness’ should be understood in its natural grammatical sense (and this is why *Vedāntins* choose to use this word) so it better fits the *Vedānta* scriptures’ meaning of its terms—*cit* and *caitanya*. That grammatical sense is the *-ness*, both the essence and reality, of being *conscious of*. Multiple thoughts, experiences, or minds cannot be called ‘multiple consciousnesses’—a word having a suffix that does not easily allow a plural form. So ‘consciousness’ is not an ideal word for what we all understand to be a thought or a mind. At best the word ‘consciousness’ could indicate a particular type of thought, such as thoughts about oneself in relationship to others. But this is nowhere near what *Vedānta* means by *cit* and *caitanya*. The Sanskrit term *citta* (literally, *what is witnessed*), which *Patañjali*

cognition alone (*prajñāna-ghana*) [without an object in deep sleep], neither conscious nor non-conscious, neither seen, acted upon nor graspable, neither inferred, thought about nor describable [since] it is the essence of the cognition of the one self [in all three experiences of waking, dream, and deep sleep], in whom the universe resolves, peaceful and pleasing (*śāntam śivam*) [because it is] without a second. That is the self (*ātman*). That is what is to be known.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 1.7).

uses throughout these *sūtras* and which certain Western scholars translate as consciousness, is rendered everywhere else in Sanskrit literature by native speakers as *thought* or *mind*, as it is here.

Caitanya (consciousness) is not the conscious or witnessed thoughts themselves, rather the witnessing-being of conscious thoughts. It is the conscious-ness; the witness of, or witnessing capacity for, thoughts. With this initial understanding, this commentary will expand the meaning of the word ‘consciousness’ to bring out its full meaning that indicates *brahman*, the unchanging reality revealed in the teaching on *Om*. With the same meaning, an alternate rendering of the terms *cit* and *caitanya* is the word ‘awareness.’ These two words—consciousness and awareness—will be used interchangeably.

Om is presented in this tradition as the entirety of language, hence of all knowledge and, in the final analysis, of everything, of everything distinguished and known to us through language and mind. The initial sound *a* is the simplest linguistic sound that can be made by opening and letting out breath from the back of the mouth without any other modification of the effort within the mouth. The linguistic sound *u* is that same sound modified by the rounding constriction of the last part of the mouth, the lips, as the breath is being expelled. The linguistic sound *m* is produced with the lips closed and the breath expelled out the nose. I am using the term ‘linguistic’ sound to indicate the sounds we use for language, not the other sounds we can make with the breath, such as expelling breath out of the mouth or nose while simply breathing.

The entirety of linguistic sounds the vocal apparatus can make is represented then by the range of modifications of the vibration sounds of the vocal cords from the back of the mouth to the front, from *a* to *u*. The only other linguistic sounds are those made with the nose, namely *n* and *m*. The linguistic sound *m* is the simplest of the nasals, requiring no effort in the mouth. The *n* sound with its variations requires the opening of the lips with some shaping of the mouth, though the breath is only out the nose.

In order for there to be language, there have to be separable words. By extension, the silence before and after words is represented by the silence between repetitions of

Om. We will see in the following commentary that the entire diversity of the universe can be appreciated as the names we give to distinguish phenomenal appearances from each other.

In this way *Om* indicates the Lord, the entirety of experiences, the ultimate reality (*brahman*), all of language, all of knowledge, and the whole of the universe. Repeating this sound *Om* and contemplating upon it, upon its many meanings and on its meaning as oneself, addresses the central topic within the spiritual teaching tradition.

Care must be taken, though, because it may have gathered a power by its utterance through billions of repetitions over thousands of years. As a single word *mantra* it is traditionally recommended only to renunciates, *sannyāsins*, because its essential meaning resolves everything of language, knowledge, and the universe to their silent basis, their final resolution—the ultimate renunciation. For those of us who live a more active life in society, the sound *Om* is combined with other sacred words, such as the *mantra*, *Om īśāya namaḥ* (meaning, *Om, I surrender [the body, mind, and actions] to the universal Lord*), which supports our most helpful actions and thoughts.

तज्-जपस् तद्-अर्थ-भावनम् ॥ (1.28)

taj-japas tad-artha-bhāvanam.

[*japa*—oral or mental repetition; *tad*—that; *bhāvana*—contemplation; *tad-artha*—its meaning.]

One should do **oral or mental repetition of that *praṇava* (*Om*), and contemplation on its meaning**, as unfolded in the *Upaniṣad* scripture.

Your neighbor, unless he or she has studied the scripture, is probably not going to give you verbal testimony yielding knowledge about the meaning of *Om*. Only the scripture and its commentaries talk meaningfully and with authority about *Om*. This is why *āgama pramāṇa*, as scripture, is important to be correctly understood. It is not

reasonable to think you can read a contemporary *yoga* book, close your eyes, repeat *Om*, and attain the ultimate non-dual goal of *yoga*.

The vast majority of the translations of and commentaries on these *sūtras* avoid the scriptures either because they do not understand them and their intimate connection with these *sūtras*, or the authors think the scriptures renders *yoga* less marketable in secular societies.

The teachings about *prāṇava*, about *Om*, are important enough to be given in many *Upaniṣads*.¹⁰⁵ This *sūtra* directs the student to them.

ततः प्रत्यक्-चेतनाधिगमोऽप्य् अन्तरायाभावश् च ॥ (1.29)
tataḥ pratyak-cetanādhigamo'py antarāyābhāvaś ca.

[*tataḥ*—from that; *api*—indeed; *adhigama*—comes to know; *cetana*—conscious being; *pratyak*—center; *ca*—and; *antarāyas*—obstacles; *a-bhāva*—disappear.]

From that contemplation, **one indeed comes to know the conscious being**, the consciousness, **at the center**¹⁰⁶ of one’s being, **and** one’s **obstacles** to liberation as the knowledge of that limitless reality **disappear** by one’s understanding and by grace gained through this ultimate worship of the Lord as one’s self.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Amṛta-bindu*, *Atharva-śikhā*, *Atharva-śira*, *Brahma*, *Chāndogya*, *Dhyāna-bindu*, *Kaivalya*, *Kaṭha*, *Maitrāyaṇa*, *Māṇḍūkya*, *Nāda-bindu*, *Nṛsiṃha-Pūrva-Tāpanīya*, *Nṛsiṃha-Uttara-Tāpanīya*, *Prāṇava*, *Praśna*, *Rāma-Uttara-Tāpanīya*, *Śaunaka*, *Taittirīya*, and *Yoga-tattva Upaniṣads*.

¹⁰⁶ “The one discriminating person, seeking freedom from death, who had directed the attention within [i.e., sought in terms of knowledge instead of possessions] came to know [as clear as seeing] (*aikṣat*) the self within (*pratyak-ātman*).” (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.1.1).

¹⁰⁷ “Fourfold are the people who do adaptive action and who seek Me, O *Arjuna*. [These four kinds of *bhaktas* (devotees) are] the one who is seized by trouble, the one who requires security, the one who wants to know [Me], and the *jñānin* (one who knows) [Me], O *Arjuna*. Among them, the *jñānin*—who is always united [in Me] and whose worship (*bhakti*) is of the one [Lord as everything]—is distinguished, because I [the self of all] am

By contemplation on the essential nature of the Lord,¹⁰⁸ one comes to know the conscious being at the center of oneself, which is the reality of everything.¹⁰⁹ Grace is said to be attained by chanting the name of and by contemplating the nature of the Lord. That grace can be seen as the opportunity and motivation to come to terms with the facts of one’s spiritual and emotional growth. It may play a part in removing psychological and other obstacles to gaining this knowledge. The obstacles are the limitations we impose upon ourselves because we think we are limited. The Lord is the limitless presence that we are saying is our true nature and we are contemplating as already being in fact our own true nature. How could those obstacles not be attenuated by this practice (*abhyāsa*)? The obstacles are our well-ingrained imaginations about ourselves that we believe are true; they manifest as distractions of the mind and self-defeating thoughts that hinder our progress in *yoga*.

totally beloved to that *jñānin* and that one is [totally] beloved to Me. All [four] indeed are exalted, but the *jñānin* is *ātman* (Myself) alone. That is My vision. Because that one, whose mind is absorbed [in Me], has attained the goal that is but Me, beyond which there is none.” (*Bh. Gītā* 7.16 through 18).

¹⁰⁸ “Being of clear mind, without fear, and firm in one’s vow of seeking *brahman* [i.e., *brahma-cārya*], mastering the mind—may the *yogin* sit, thinking of Me [through My teaching], having Me as the ultimate.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.14).

¹⁰⁹ “The knower of *brahman* obtains the ultimate. ...*Brahman* is limitless reality-consciousness. The one who knows the one existing [as though] hidden (*nihita*) in the intellect (*guhā*), in this limitless space [i.e., in this limitless expanse that lights up all thought therein], satisfies at once all desires.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). “That [*brahman*] you are.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.8.7...). “So even now the one who knows ‘I am *brahman*,’ that one is all this [universe].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.10).

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**Patanjali Yoga Sutras:  
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(ebook preview)  
by A.K. Aruna**

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# Sanskrit of Footnote Quotations

(The *sandhis* between words are split for easier comprehension)

## Chapter 1

- 1 अथ इति अयम् अधिकार-अर्थः (=आरम्भ-अर्थः) (*Vyāsa's Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 1.1).
- 2 अ-विद्या-काम-कर्म-उपादान-हेतु-निवृत्तौ स्व-आत्मनि अवस्थानं मोक्षः इति (*Taittirīya Up. Śāṅkara Bhāṣya* introduction).
- 3 सुखम् आत्यन्तिकं यद् तद् बुद्धि-ग्राह्यम् अतीन्द्रियम्। वेत्ति यत्र न च एव अयं स्थितः चलति तत्त्वतः॥ यं लब्ध्वा च अ-परं लाभं मन्यते न अधिकं ततः। यस्मिन् स्थितः न दुःखेन गुरुणा अपि विचाल्यते॥ तं विद्यात् दुःख-संयोग-वियोगं योग-संज्ञितम् (*Bh. Gītā* 6.21 through 23).
- 7 स्वयं च आत्मा ब्रह्म। तद्-विज्ञानात् अ-विद्या-निवृत्तिः इति ब्रह्म-विद्या-अर्थ-उपनिषद् आरभ्यते। उपनिषद् इति विद्या उच्यते। तद्-शीलिनां गर्भ-जन्म-जरा-आदि-निशातनात् तद्-अवसादनात् वा, ब्रह्मणः वा उपनिगमयितृत्वात्, उपनिषण्णं वा अस्यां (विद्यायां) परं श्रेयः इति (*Taittirīya Up. Śāṅkara Bhāṣya* introduction).
- 8 तां योगम् इति मन्यन्ते स्थिराम् इन्द्रिय-धारणाम् (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.3.11). प्रत्याहारः तथा, ध्यानं, प्राण-आयामः अथ, धारणा, तर्कः च एव समाधिः च षड्-अङ्गः योगः उच्यते (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 6). (मनसः) समत्वं योगः उच्यते (*Bh. Gītā* 2.48). योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् (=कुशल-भावः, यथार्थता) (*Bh. Gītā* 2.50). दुःख-संयोग-वियोगं योग-संज्ञितम् (*Bh. Gītā* 6.23).
- 13 चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवत् दृढम्। तस्य अहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोः इव सुदुष्करम् (*Bh. Gītā* 6.34).
- 27 श्रेयः च प्रेयः च मनुष्यम् आ-इतः तौ सम्परीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः। श्रेयः हि धीरः अभि प्रेयसः वृणीते प्रेयः मन्दः योग-क्षेमात् (=शरीर-आदि-उपचय-रक्षणात्) वृणीते (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.2).

- 28 न दृष्टेः द्रष्टारं पश्येः।...एषः ते आत्मा सर्व-अन्तरः, अतः अन्यद् आर्तम् (=विनाशि) (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 3.4.2). सलिलः (=स्वच्छीभूतः सलिलः इव) एकः द्रष्टा अ-द्वैतः भवति, एषः ब्रह्म-लोकः सम्राट् इति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.3.32).
- 30 जाग्रत्-स्वप्न-सुषुप्ति-आदि-प्रपञ्चं यद् प्रकासते। तद् ब्रह्म अहम् इति ज्ञात्वा सर्व-बन्धैः प्रमुच्यते॥ त्रिषु धामसु यद् भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगः च यद् भवेत्। तेभ्यः वि-लक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रः अहं सदा शिवः (*Kaivalya Up.* 17 and 18).
- 31 सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर (*Taittirīya Up.* 1.11.1). सत्यं च अन्-ऋतं च। सत्यं अभवत्। यद् इदं किञ्च। तद् सत्यम् इति आचक्षते (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.6.1).
- 32 भगवान्, कति एव देवाः प्रजां विधारयन्ते, कतरे एतत् प्रकाशयन्ते, कः पुनर् एषां वरिष्ठः इति॥ तस्मै सः होवाच आकाशः ह वै एषः देवः वायुर् अग्निः आपः पृथिवी वाक् मनस् चक्षुर् श्रोत्रं च। ते प्रकाश्य अभिवदन्ति वयम् एतत् बाणम् अवष्टभ्य विधारयामः॥ तान् वरिष्ठः प्राणः उवाच। मा मोहम् आपद्यथ, अहम् एव एतत् पञ्चधा आत्मानं प्रविभज्य एतत् बाणम् अवष्टभ्य विधारयामि इति, ते अश्रद्धधानाः बभूवुः॥ सः अभिमानात् ऊर्ध्वम् उत्क्रमते इव, तस्मिन् उत्क्रामति अथ इतरे सर्वे एव उत्क्रामन्ते, तस्मिन् च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वे एव प्रातिष्ठन्ते। तद्-यथा मक्षिकाः मधुकर-राजानम् उत्क्रामन्तं सर्वाः एव उत्क्रामन्ते, तस्मिन् च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वाः एव प्रातिष्ठन्ते, एवं वाक् मनस् चक्षुर् श्रोत्रं च ते प्रीताः प्राणं स्तुन्वन्ति (*Praśna Up.* 2.1 through 4).
- 33 (अ-सतः) आगम-अपायिनः अ-नित्याः॥...न अ-सतः विद्यते भावः न अ-भावः विद्यते सतः (*Bh. Gītā* 2.14 and 16).
- 34 वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरः अपराणि। तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही (*Bh. Gītā* 2.22).
- 35 अस्तम् इते आदित्ये याज्ञवल्क्य, चन्द्रमसि अस्तम् इते, शान्ते अग्नौ, शान्तायां वाचि किं ज्योतिः एव अयं पुरुषः इति -- आत्मा एव अस्य ज्योतिः भवति इति, आत्मना एव अयं जोतिषा आस्ते पल्ययते (=परि-अयते) कर्म कुरुते विपल्येति (=विपरि-एति) इति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.3.6).
- 36 यद् वै तद् न पश्यति पश्यन् वै तद् न पश्यति, न हि द्रष्टुः दृष्टेः विपरिलोपः विद्यते अ-विनाशित्वात्। न तु तद् द्वितीयम् अस्ति ततः अन्यद् विभक्तं यत् पश्येत् (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.3.23).
- 37 न तु एव अहं जातु न आसं न त्वं न इमे जन-अधिपाः। न च एव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयम् अतः परम् (*Bh. Gītā* 2.12).

38 यत्र हि द्वैतम् इव भवति तद् इतरः इतरं जिघ्रति, तद् इतरः इतरं पश्यति, तद् इतरः इतरं शृणोति, तद् इतरः इतरम् अभिवदति, तद् इतरः इतरं मनुते, तद् इतरः इतरं विजानाति। यत्र वा अस्य सर्वम् आत्मा एव अभुत् तत् केन कं जिघ्रेत्, तत् केन कं पश्येत्, तत् केन कं शृणुयात्, तत् केन कम् अभिवदेत्, तत् केन कं मन्वीत्, तत् केन कं विजानीयात्। येन इदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयत्। विज्ञातारम् अरे केन विजानीयात् इति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 2.4.14).

39 मयि एव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्। मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद् ब्रह्म अ-द्वयम् अस्मि अहम् (*Kaivalya Up.* 19).

41 एषः सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढः आत्मा न प्रकाशते (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.12).

42 सद् एव सोम्य इदम् अग्रे आसीत् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयम् (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1).

43 अ-विनाशि तु तद् विद्धि येन सर्वम् इदं ततम्। विनाशम् अ-व्ययस्य अस्य न कश्चित् कर्तुम् अर्हति (*Bh. Gītā* 2.17).

51 चित्तम् एव हि संसारः तद् प्रयत्नेन शोधयेत्। यद्-चित्तः तद्-मयः भवति गुह्यम् एतद् सनातनम् (*Maitrāyaṇī Up.* 1.9).

57 प्रजा-पतिः लोकान् अभ्यतपत् तेषां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्रावृहत् अग्निं पृथिव्याः वायुम् अन्तरिक्षात् आदित्यं दिवः॥ सः एताः तिस्रः देवताः अभ्यतपत् तासां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्रावृहत् अग्रेः ऋचः वायोः यजूषि सामनि आदित्यात् (*Chāndogya Up.* 4.17.1 and 2).

58 एक-एकं जालं बहुधा विकुर्वन् अस्मिन् क्षेत्रे संहरति एषः देवः। भूयः सृष्ट्वा पतयः (=प्रजा-पतयः) तथा ईशः सर्व-आधि-पत्यं कुरुते महा-आत्मा (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.3).

59 न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेन एके अ-मृतत्वम् आनशुः। परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां विभ्राजते यद् यतयः विशन्ति॥ वेदान्त-विज्ञान-सुनिश्चित-अर्थाः सन्न्यास-योगात् यतयः शुद्ध-सत्त्वाः। ते ब्रह्म-लोकेषु परान्त-काले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे (*Kaivalya Up.* 3 and 4).

60 न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रम् इह विद्यते। तद् स्वयं योग-संसिद्धः कालेन आत्मनि विन्दति (*Bh. Gītā* 4.38).

61 दूरम् एते विपरीते विषूची अविद्या या च विद्या इति ज्ञाता (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.4).

63 प्राण-आदिभिः अनन्तैः च भावैः एतैः विकल्पितः। माया एषा तस्य देवस्य (=जीव-आत्मनः) यया संमोहितः स्वयम् (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.19).

64 यथा सोम्य एकेन मृत्-पिण्डेन सर्वं मृन्मयं विज्ञातं स्याद् वाचा-आरम्भणं विकारः नामधेयं मृत्तिका इति एव सत्यम्। यथा सोम्य एकेन लोह-मणिना सर्वं लोहमयं विज्ञातं स्याद् वाचा-आरम्भणं विकारः नामधेयं लोहम् इति एव सत्यम् (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.1.4 and 5).

65 रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपः बभूव तद् अस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय। इन्द्रः मायाभिः पुरु-रूपः ईयते युक्ताः हि अस्य हरयः शताः दश॥ इति (*Rg Veda* 6.47.18)। अयं वै हरयः, अयं वै दश च सहस्राणि, बहूनि च अन्-अन्तानि च (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 2.5.19)। स्वप्न-जागरित-स्थाने हि एकम् आहुः मनीषिणः। भेदानां हि समत्वेन प्रसिद्धेन एव हेतुना॥ आदौ अन्ते च यद् न अस्ति वर्तमाने अपि तद् तथा। वितथैः सदृशाः सन्तः अ-वितथाः इव लक्षिताः॥ स-प्रयोजनता तेषां स्वप्ने विप्रतिपद्यते। तस्मात् आदि-अन्तवत्त्वेन मिथ्या एव खलु ते स्मृताः (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.5 through 7). कल्पयति आत्मना आत्मानम् आत्मा देवः स्व-मायया। सः एव बुध्यते भेदान् इति वेदान्त-निश्चयः (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.12).

66 योगः अस्ति...न च अति-स्वप्न-शीलस्य (*Bh. Gītā* 6.16).

67 यत्र सुप्तः न कञ्चन कामं कामयते न कञ्चन स्वप्नं पश्यति तत् सुषुप्तम्। सुषुप्त-स्थानः एकीभूतः प्रज्ञान-घनः एव आनन्दमयः हि आनन्द-भूक् चेतो-मुखः प्राज्ञः तृतीयः पादः (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 1.5).

69 स्व-देहम् अरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं च उत्तर-अरणिम्। ध्यान-निर्मथन-अभ्यासाद् देवं पश्येत् निगूढवत् (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.14). आत्मानम् अरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं च उत्तर-अरणिम्। ज्ञान-निर्मथन-अभ्यासात् पापं दहति पण्डितः (*Kaivalya Up.* 11). मनः दुर-निग्रहं चलम्। अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते (*Bh. Gītā* 6.35).

70 अ-विद्यायां बहुधा वर्तमानाः वयं कृत-अर्थाः इति अभिमन्यन्ति बालाः। यत् कर्मिणः न प्रवेदयन्ति रागात् तेन आतुराः क्षीण-लोकाः च्यवन्ते (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.2.9).

73 ध्यायतः विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गः तेषु उपजायते। सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधः अभिजायते॥ क्रोधाद् भवति संमोहः संमोहात् स्मृति-विभ्रमः। स्मृति-भ्रंशाद् बुद्धि-नाशः बुद्धिनाशात् (पुमान्) प्रणश्यति (*Bh. Gītā* 2.62 and 63).

74 याम् इमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्ति अ-विपश्चितः। वेद-वाद-रताः पार्थ न अन्यद् अस्ति इति वादिनः। काम-आत्मानः स्वर्ग-पराः जन्म-कर्म-फल-प्रदाम्। क्रिया-विशेष-बहुलां भोग-ऐश्वर्य-गतिं प्रति (*Bh. Gītā* 2.42 and 43).

76 यः च स्व-भावं पचति विश्व-योनिः पाच्यान् च सर्वान् परिणामयेत् यः। सर्वम् एतद् विश्वम् अधितिष्ठति एकः गुणान् च सर्वान् विनियोजयेत् यः॥...गुण-अन्वयः यः फल-कर्म-कर्ता कृतस्य तस्य एव सः च उपभोक्ता। सः विश्व-रूपः त्रि-गुणः त्रि-वर्त्मा प्राण-अधिपः सञ्चरति स्व-कर्मभिः (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.5 and 7).

77 सः ह उवाच गार्ग्यः, यः एव असौ आदित्ये पुरुषः एतम् एव अहं ब्रह्म उपासे इति, सः ह उवाच अजातशत्रुः मा मा एतस्मिन् संवदिष्टाः... (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 2.1.2... to end of the Chapter in 2.6.3). सः वै अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पूर्षु पुरिशयः, न एनेन किंचन अन्-आवृतम् (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 2.5.18).

80 आगमस्य अ-विरोधेन ऊहनं तर्कः उच्यते (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 17).

82 विज्ञानम् आनन्दं ब्रह्म, रातिः-दातुः पर-अयणम्, तिष्ठमानस्य तद्-विदः इति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 3.9.28.7). एषः अस्य परमः आनन्दः, एतस्य एव आनन्दस्य अन्यानि भूतानि मात्राम् उपजीवन्ति॥ ...सः एकः ब्रह्म-लोके आनन्दः, यः च श्रोत्रियः अ-वृजिनः अ-काम-हतः, अथ एषः परमः आनन्दः, एषः ब्रह्म-लोकः, सम्राट् -- इति याज्ञवल्क्यः (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.3.32 and 33). सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं ब्रह्म (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). रसः वै सः। रसं हि एव अयं लब्ध्वा आनन्दी भवति (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.7.1). सः एकः ब्रह्मणः आनन्दः। श्रोत्रियस्य च अ-काम-हतस्य (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.8.1). आनन्दं ब्रह्मणः विद्वान्। न बिभेति कुतश्चन इति (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.9.1).

88 यदा वै श्रद्धधाति अथ मनुते, न अ-श्रद्धधन् मनुते, श्रद्धधद् एव मनुते, श्रद्धा तु एव विजिज्ञासितव्या इति, श्रद्धां भगवः विजिज्ञासे इति। यदा वै निस्तिष्ठति अथ श्रद्धधाति, न अ-निस्तिष्ठन् श्रद्धधाति, निस्तिष्ठन् एव श्रद्धधाति, निष्ठा (=तत्परत्वम्) तु एव विजिज्ञासितव्या (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.19.1 and 20.1).

89 ब्रह्मचर्यम् अहिंसां च अपरिग्रहं च सत्यं च यत्नेन हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः इति (*Āruṇeya Up.* 3).

90 युक्तः कर्म-फलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिम् आप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्। अ-युक्तः काम-कारेण फले सक्तः निबध्यते (*Bh. Gītā* 5.12).

91 वीत-राग-भय-क्रोधाः मन्मयाः माम् उपाश्रिताः। बहवः ज्ञान-तपसा पूताः मद्-भावम् आगताः (*Bh. Gītā* 4.10).

93 समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्। विनश्यत्सु अ-विनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति सः पश्यति। समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितम् ईश्वरम्। न हिनस्ति आत्मना आत्मानं ततः याति परां गतिम् (*Bh. Gītā* 13.27 and 28).

96 एषः सर्वेश्वरः एषः सर्वज्ञः एषः अन्तर्यामी एषः योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभव-अप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 6).

98 इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् अहम् अव्ययम् (*Bh. Gītā* 4.1).

99 पुरुषः एव इदं सर्वम्। यद् भूतम् यद् च भव्यम्। उत अ-मृतत्वस्य ईषानः (*Puruṣa Sūkta, Rg Veda* 10.90.2). तद् एतद् ब्रह्म अ-पूर्वम् अन्-अपरम् अन्-अन्तम् अ-बाह्यम्, अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म सर्व-अनुभूः इति अनुशासनम् (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 2.5.19).

100 (तद् परं ब्रह्म) ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञान-गम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्टितम् (*Bh. Gītā* 13.17).

101 सः ह उवाच यद् ऊर्ध्वं गार्गी दिवः यद् अवाक् पृथिव्याः यद् अन्तरा द्यावा-पृथिवी इमे यद् भूतं च भवत् च भविष्यत् च इति आचक्षते आकाशे तद् ओतं च प्रोतं च इति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 3.8.4).

102 मद्-स्थानि सर्व-भूतानि न च अहं तेषु अवस्थितः॥ न च मद्-स्थानि भूतानि...भूत-भृत् न च भूत-स्थः मम आत्मा भूत-भावनः (*Bh. Gītā* 9.4 and 5).

103 प्रणवं हि ईश्वरं विद्यात् सर्वस्य हृदि संस्थितम्। सर्व-व्यापिनम् ओङ्कारं मत्वा धीरः न शोचति (*Māndūkya Up. Kārikā* 1.28).

104 न अन्तः-प्रज्ञं न बहिष्-प्रज्ञं न उभयतः-प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञान-घनं न प्रज्ञं न अ-प्रज्ञम्। अ-दृष्टम् अ-व्यवहार्यम् अ-ग्राह्यम् अ-लक्षणम् अ-चिन्त्यम् अ-व्यपदेश्यम् एक-आत्म-प्रत्यय-सारं प्रपञ्च-उपशमं शान्तं शिवम् अ-द्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते सः आत्मा सः विज्ञेयः (*Māndūkya Up.* 1.7).

106 कश्चिद् धीरः प्रत्यग्-आत्मानम् ऐक्षत् आवृत-चक्षुः अमृतम् इच्छन् (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.1.1).

107 चतुर्-विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सुकृतिनः अर्जुन। आर्तः जिज्ञासुः अर्थार्थी ज्ञानी च भरत-ऋषभ॥ तेषां ज्ञानी नित्य-युक्तः एक-भक्तिः विशिष्यते। प्रियः हि ज्ञानिनः अत्यर्थम् अहं सः च मम प्रियः॥ उदाराः सर्वे एव एते ज्ञानी तु आत्मा एव मे मतम्। आस्थितः सः हि युक्त-आत्मा माम् एव अनुत्तमां गतिम् (*Bh. Gītā* 7.16 through 18).

108 प्रशान्त-आत्मा (=प्रशान्त-मनः) विगत-भीः ब्रह्म-चारि-व्रते स्थितः। मनः संयम्य मद्-चित्तः युक्तः आसीत् मद्-परः (*Bh. Gītā* 6.14).

109 ब्रह्म-विद् आप्नोति परम्।...सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं ब्रह्म। यः वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् (=परमे व्योम्नि)। सः अश्रुते सर्वान् कामान् सह (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). तत् (ब्रह्मन्) त्वम् असि (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.8.7...). तद् इदम् अपि एतर्हि यः एवं वेद, अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि इति, सः इदं सर्वं भवति (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 1.4.10).

# About the Author

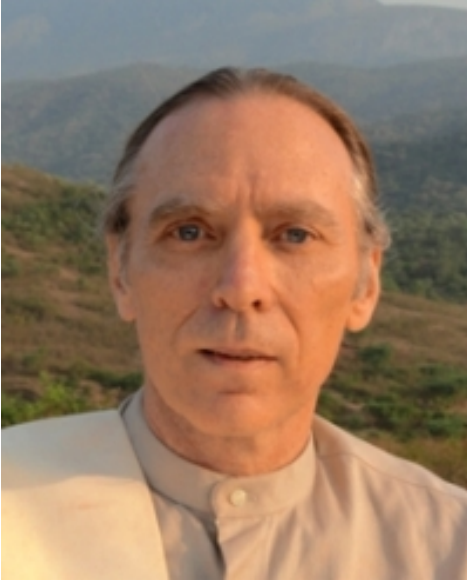


Photo by Cassia Reis, GayatriYoga.eu

A.K. Aruna started his studies in Advaita Vedanta and the Sanskrit language in 1976 at an intensive three-year program in a traditional gurukulam, outside Bombay, India, under Shri Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati, the most renowned Sanskrit and Advaita Vedanta scholar of the past century. Stepping outside his academic background in Western philosophy, Aruna immersed himself in the deepest, oldest spiritual tradition in the world. This detailed study opened his eyes. In this ancient teaching, Aruna found a complete merging of the intellect and heart. From that point on, he dedicated his life to the inclusive vision of Vedanta.

Returning to his native United States, Aruna earned a master's degree in South Asian languages and literature from the University of Washington. Aruna later studied computer languages, becoming a programmer and manager of information technology in San Diego, California. Retiring to India in 2000, Aruna dedicated himself to studies in Advaita Vedanta and the Sanskrit Language. He created a set of tools for those students interested in a thorough study of Sanskrit to better understand the Bhagavad Gita. These tools consist of a

five-book set under the title, *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*. They are: *The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Reference*; *The Aruna Sanskrit Grammar Coursebook: 64 Lessons Based on the Bhagavad Gita*; *The Bhagavad Gita Dictionary*; *The Bhagavad Gita Reader: Sanskrit/English Parallel Text*; and *The Bhagavad Gita Sanskrit Key: Verse-by-Verse Grammar & Vocabulary*. Additionally, there is now a reading and pronunciation guide, *The Sanskrit Reading Tutor: Read It, Click It, Hear It!* Using these tools, Aruna has been teaching Sanskrit at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulams in both South India and in the U.S.

Aruna has lived and studied in a traditional teaching gurukulam for over nine years in India and two years in the U.S. Wishing to help yoga students ground the traditional purpose of yoga in the revered scriptures of India, Aruna releases *Patanjali Yoga Sutras: Translation and Commentary in the Light of Vedanta Scripture*. This presents the yoga discipline as its practitioners in the ancient scriptures understood and practiced.