



SIVANANDA
Ashram Yoga Retreat
BAHAMAS



Patanjali Yoga Sutras Practical Guide

Course manual

Lesson 1

The disease, the cause of the disease, the healthy state and the remedy

Adi Shankaracharya explains that the goal of Yoga has to be explained, so that the practitioner will be interested in the practice. He takes the analogy of medicine or Ayurveda.

The goal or healthy state is the attainment of clear vision (Samyaga Darshana) of the knower abiding in its true nature or swaroopam as pure consciousness, which leads to freedom from suffering or liberation called **Kaivalya**.

This is explained in Sutra I.3:

Tada drastuh svarupe vasthanam

Then (when the goal of Yoga is attained) the seer is established in its own nature.

Truth itself is freedom. **The means** to attain the state of health - Swastha, which also means self-abidance is Yoga or concentration., wrong knowledge, is bondage or suffering.

The disease is samsara, the state of bondage to the suffering caused by desires, afflicting emotions, deep mental tendencies called vasanas etc in the process of cyclic transmigration. **The cause** of the state of samsara is ignorance, by which one identifies the eternal, pure Self or consciousness with the perishable, impure, non-self or matter - mind and body.

Suffering is the nature of experience - the union of the subject and the objects - thoughts or vrittis. The knower identifies with various thoughts, emotions, desires, bodily characteristics etc.

The five kleshas or roots of suffering:

The apparent union of the seer (consciousness) and the seen - mind is called **avidya** or ignorance. Due to the apparent union, which is caused by the reflection of consciousness in the intellect (the subtlest aspect of the mind) a reflection of consciousness appears in the mind, which is called **asmita**, or unqualified egoism, pure I am, or **aham vritti** - the thought of I.

The objects of creation also reflect in the intellect as vrittis, through the sense organs. Thus, in the intellect or mind, the association of the subject as aham vritti and the objects of creation as objects-vrittis takes place. This is called experience, involving subject perceiving objects.

The aham vritti becomes associated or identified with the objects vrittis and thus it becomes **ahamkara** or qualified egoism, identified with the attributes of the mind and

body, the fruits of **prarabdha karma** (present life karma manifesting as mental impressions and tendencies, bodily features etc).

From ahamkara emerge **raga and dvesha** or attachments and desires in terms of attraction to pleasures and aversion from pain. Finally comes **abhinivesha** or fear of death.

These are the five kleshas or roots of suffering. The purusha operating through the mind, identified with the various vrittis, experiences samsara, or the cycle of birth and death, which is full of pain, due to the kleshas.

Future suffering should be avoided:

In Sutra 2.16 we learn:

heyam duḥkham-anāgatam

The misery that has not yet manifested should be avoided.

Karma has been worked out, is being worked out, or is waiting to be worked out by one's actions. Karma that has already been incurred cannot be changed, but its misery can be avoided by positive thinking. Future pain can be avoided by carefully attending to present actions.

Essentially, future suffering is avoided by changing our relationship to painful past impressions and adhering to dharmic actions in the present and avoiding wrong actions which will generate future pain

The remedy - ashtanga Yoga or Yoga of eight limbs:

In sutra 2.28 we learn:

yogāṅgānuṣṭhānād-aśuddhi-kṣaye jñāna-dīptirāviveka-khyāteḥ

By practicing the various steps of Yoga, impurities are destroyed and spiritual illumination arises, which develops into awareness of reality.

The theoretical aspects of Yoga have been dealt with, Patanjali now points out that following the practical steps is necessary.

Impurities here means kleshas.

In sutra 2.29 we learn:

yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo 'ṣṭāvaṅgāni
Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi are the eight limbs.

Raja Yoga is sometimes called Ashtanga Yoga, or the Yoga of eight limbs. They translate, in the order given above, as self restraints (Yama), observances (Niyama), postures (Asana), regulation of breath (Pranayama), withdrawal of the senses from sense objects (Pratyahara), concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhyana) and the superconscious state (Samadhi).

The Yamas or restraints:

In sutra 2.30 we learn:

ahiṃsā-satyāsteya-brahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ

The yamas consist of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-acquisitiveness.

The Yamas are counteracting the kleshas. Their practice is based on analytical meditation and the capacity to perceive directly the evil effects of the kleshas and not to act upon the impulses arising from them. By not acting upon the impulses arising from the kleshas, the Yamas are practiced.

Overcome tomorrow's evil by today's self-exertion. Destroy unholy desires (Asubha Vasanas) through holy desires (Subha Vasanas). Slay unholy thoughts by holy thoughts, and gain victory over your destiny.

The first Yama: Ahimsa or non-violence

Ahimsa Paramo Dharma - Ahimsa is the highest Dharma.

Ahimsa is the main Yama, and the other Yamas are for perfecting it. Yama is the foundation of Yoga, and Ahimsa is the foundation of Yama, and therefore of Yoga. Its practice: In no way, in no capacity, in no fashion, not to cause pain to any being whether in thought, word or deed.

Ahimsa is not merely non-killing, Ahimsa is perfect harmlessness and positive love also. There is no excuse nor exception to the above rule. Ahimsa and Divinity are one. Ahimsa is universal love. It is pure love.

Practice:

- **establishing the posture - visualization of the mountain.**
- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities - ahimsa.**
- **Concentration on the breath.**
- **Meditation on OM.**

An exercise for developing virtue

Examine your character. Pick up the defects you find in it, and find their opposites. Let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Try to develop this virtue by meditating on the abstract virtue of patience.

Regularly, every morning, at dawn sit down in the meditative posture. Sit in a solitary place for half an hour:

1. Think of patience
2. Think of its values (benefits)
3. Think of its practice under provocation (visualize)

4. Think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience (feel this in you, bring in the emotional content, feelings, which impress strongly in the subconscious mind).
5. End the meditation with a vow that “This patience, which is my true self, I will feel and show, today and every day”

Note: the virtue of patience is to be replaced by the virtue we desire to cultivate.

Lesson 2

The definition of Yoga

In Sutra I.2 we learn:

Yogaschittavrittinirodha

Yoga is inhibition of the mental processes

Yoga – refers to both Samprajnatah Samadhi (Ekagra or one pointed mind) in which the Rajasic and Tamasic Vrittis alone are restrained, and only the Sattvic ones remain, and Asamptajnatah Samadhi (Nirodha - cessation of vrittis) in which the Sattvic Vrittis are also restrained, and the mind merges into Pure Consciousness, or Purusha.

Chitta – is the support of the Vrittis like the ocean and waves (mind stuff). It is a modification of Sattva Guna, the power of knowledge or perception.

Vrittis – the transformations of the mind (whirlpools).

In Sutra I.4 we find: When the mind is not concentrated, the perceiver identifies with its modifications.

The Vrittis are either Klishta (meaning painful, derived from the term Kleshas or afflictions) or Aklishta, not painful.

The Klishta Vrittis originate in the Kleshas, or afflictions (ignorance, egoism, attraction, aversion, fear of death) and therefore are and will lead to nothing but pain.

These are the Rajasic and Tamasic Vrittis. They lead to involvement in Samsara, painful activity, founded on the delusion of the limitations imposed by the mind and seeking happiness outside in the fulfilment of desires. Rajas translates happiness or fulfilment to activity.

The Aklishta are Vrittis of wisdom, pure perceptions, or Sattvic. They lead away from Samsara, they produce Mumukshutvam, desire for liberation. Sattva translates happiness or fulfilment to freedom from limitations.

Nirodhah – restraint.

Meditation by devotion or surrender to Ishwara or God

In Sutra I.23 we learn:

Ishwara pranidhanad va

Or by devotion and self-surrender to God.

Success is rapid in attaining Asamprajnata Samadhi by devotion to Ishwara. The devotee should have total, ungrudging, unreserved self-surrender to Ishwara. He should entirely depend upon Ishwara. He should not keep any secret desire or egoism for his self-gratification. He should not expect any kind of reward, even admiration, gratitude,

thanks, for his services. He should completely dedicate himself and all his actions to the will of the Supreme Being. This is Ishwara pranidhana. It is true devotion.

In Sutra I.24 we learn:

**Klesha karma vipakasayair apamrstah purusha vishesa Ishwarah
Ishwara is that particular center of Divine Consciousness that is untouched by
misery, Karma, or desires.**

Ishwara is the immortal Self, or Purusha, with form. He is perceived as a being, and yet He is totally untouched by the ignorance of unhappiness (kleshas - afflictions), the law of cause and effect, and cravings (vasanas - latent desires). For Him, the opposites of the phenomenal world, such as pleasure and pain, do not exist.

It is just like the dream projected by the mind, with its sorrows, dream cause and effect etc, does not affect the mind.

In Sutra I.26 we learn:

**Sa purvesam api guruh kalenanavacchedat
Unlimited by time, He is the Teacher of all other teachers, from the most ancient
of times.**

The highest teacher is the Self, Purusha. All ancient sages, such as Jesus and Buddha, realised the Self. While they may have had earthly teachers, the Source of their vast knowledge was not of this plane. Living in a superconscious state, they had direct access to the Truth, that knowledge which is absolute.

In Sutra I.27 we learn:

**Tasya vachakah pranavah
He manifests in the word OM.**

Om is Pranava which means that by which God is perfectly praised.

In the Gita Lord Krishna says: I am Omkara. I am Pranava in all the vedas.

In the upanishads you will find: "Om is the bow, the mind is the arrow. Brahman is the target. Know this Brahman with concentration; hit the target with ekagrata (one pointedness of mind, or samprajnata samadhi); just as an arrow becomes one with the target, the individual soul will become identical with Brahman."

The Yamas or restraints - restraining the impulses of the kleshas.

The second Yama: Satyam or truthfulness:

God is Truth. He can be realized only by speaking truth and observing truth in thought, word and deed.

Fire burns everything; it is true to its nature. Water flows from higher level; the seed sprouts and becomes a tree; the scorpion stings; these are all true to their nature. This is Satyam. But man violates truth.

Satyam is defined as the state where the speech and thought are in conformity with the three Pramanas (categories of right knowledge): direct experience, inference, competent testimony.

In one's own mind, one knows it to be true, and then one speaks this to another. The speech should have no inaccuracy, and no incomplete information, and spoken with sincerity, with the intention of helping others.

If the intention behind the truthful statement is hurting, then it is not truthful.

Let one speak what is true, let one speak what is kind, let one not speak what is true and not kind or kind and not true.

Self-correction method (self analysis)

(From Twenty Important Spiritual Instructions: No. 18 - Self Analysis)

Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep a daily spiritual diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

Once you correct yourself, the necessity of brooding goes away. In the evening, after having done the day's work, sit for fifteen or twenty minutes and recollect what actions you had engaged in from morning till evening. Recollect what you did, how you did it, why you did it. Ask the question "why?" What was your ultimate object in performing every action? Was it only to help someone else? Was it only to fulfil your duties, etc, or was there something else also? What was your inner feeling when you engaged in each action? This kind of recollection and self-analysis is known as introspection. Daily introspection is very necessary for the spiritual seeker. For this purpose, set apart a certain time in the evening, sit and review the whole day's activities and try to go into its inner contents.

Note: Swadhyaya or study is a foundation or guidance for the reflection of self-analysis.

Practice:

- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities - Satyam.**
- **Concentration on the breath.**
- **Establishing the posture - visualization of the mountain.**
- **Meditation on OM.**
- **Self analysis. Practice self-analysis in regards to Ahimsa and Satyam daily before retiring to sleep. Have a separate notebook dedicated for this practice.**
- **Fill the spiritual diary daily before retiring to sleep.**

Lesson 3

The obstacles to meditation and their manifest symptoms (vikshepas).

In Sutra I.30 we learn:

**Vyadhi styana sanshaya pramadasya virati bhranti darshanalabdha
bhumikatvanavasthitatvani chitta vikshepas te'ntarayah**

The obstacles to Realisation are disease, mental dullness, doubt, indifference, laziness, craving for pleasure, delusion, inability to practice and maintain concentration, and restlessness of mind due to distractions.

Disease: If the body is not healthy, cosmic consciousness cannot be reached. The practice of asanas and pranayama wards off disease and helps to maintain alertness.

Mental dullness: the person becomes unfit to do any practice on account of inexperience in the line and lack of samskaras from previous births. It can be eradicated by pranayama, asanas and active habits.

Doubt is the indecisiveness of the mind. He will doubt whether the teachings of yoga is true or not. This can be dispelled by right knowledge, discrimination, self-enquiry, study of scriptures and by satsanga of mahatmas.

Various mental obstacles can be dispelled by the spiritual experiences that come through meditation.

Worldliness or craving for pleasure is the tendency of the mind which longs keenly for one or another sensual enjoyment on account of attachment. This is controlled by vairagya, looking into the faults of worldly objects, worldly life such as impermanence, disease, death, old age, miseries etc and constant satsanga with dispassionate mahatmas and study of books on vairagya.

Delusion is mistaking an undesirable state as the most desirable one due to illusion.

Instability of the mind does not allow the yogi to remain in the state of samadhi.

These obstacles do not come to those who do japa of Om.

Especially when progress seems to be at a standstill, it is essential to plod on doggedly with the practice. Yoga, like any other kind of learning, is never a straight ascent; there are ups and downs and plateaus. Bear this in mind, do not become discouraged, and be aware that all seekers encounter these same obstacles. They should be regarded as challenges which induce growth opportunities to develop strength. With regularity in practice, the mind eventually rights itself.

In Sutra I.31 we learn:

Dukha daurmanasyangam ejayatva shvasa prashvasa vikshepa saha bhuvaha
Mental pain, depression, physical nervousness, and irregular breathing are the symptoms of a distracted state of mind.

These are outward manifestations of an internal state of being. They are the result of the above-mentioned obstacles to meditation. They are also a way of life for many thousands who never undertake spiritual disciplines such as meditation and Yoga. But they can be thoroughly remedied by repetition of OM, surrender to the Lord, and regularity in practice. Even during periods when one's original enthusiasm wanes, continuing in the daily schedule of spiritual practice strengthens the will and builds positive spiritual habits, or samskaras. In due time, each test is passed and meditation is approached with renewed vigor.

The means to overcome the obstacles:

In Sutra I.29 we learn:

Tatah pratyak chetanadhigamo 'pyantarayabhavas ca
From (the repetition of OM) is gained enlightening introspection and elimination of all obstacles.

Through the grace of Iswara, the yogi will not get any disease. The divine grace will descend when one repeats Om and meditates on its meaning with concentration. Japa makes the mind inward, and removes all physical and mental obstacles. As Om and Iswara are inseparable, fixing the mind on Om means fixing the mind on Iswara. Doing japa on Om is the remembrance of Iswara.

The Yamas - restraining the impulses of the kleshas:

Asteya or non-stealing:

Desire or want is the root cause for stealing. Control desires and cravings. Reduce your wants. Taking paper, pins, pencil etc., from the office is stealing. Hoarding money too much is stealing. Eating too much or gluttony is stealing. Ever thinking of objects by increasing the wants is also stealing in the comprehensive sense. Keeping more things than are actually necessary is also stealing.

Aparigraha or non-covetousness:

Not desiring possessions (non-greed), by seeing the defects in doing so, such as acquiring them by effort, committing wrong actions due to the force of desires etc,

defending or securing them, maintaining them, losing them, becoming attached to them, depriving others of them etc.

Non-acceptance of gifts.

This practice enhances the clarity about the purpose of life being spiritual progress and ultimate freedom.

Practice:

- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities - Asteya and Aparigraha.**
- **Concentration on the breath.**
- **Meditation on OM.**
- **Self analysis continued.**
- **The spiritual diary continued.**

Lesson 4

The restraining of the vrittis in the chitta is by Abhyasa and Vairagya:

In Sutra I.12 we learn:

Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tan nirodhah

Their (of chitta vrittis) control is brought about by practice and non-attachment.

The different forms of mental modifications which bring about pain can be controlled in two ways.

The first is **abhyasa** which is practice or repetition. A change of character occurs only through formation of new habits. Abhyasa cuts the new spiritual path for the mind to move on.

The second way is through **vairagya** or non-attachment, or elimination of emotional reactions to situations and individuals. Non attachment does not mean there should not be love or compassion, but rather that emotional thought waves are ignored. The vrittis may arise, but they are observed in a disinterested fashion, then put aside.

The negative afflicting emotions are called pratibandhas or obstacles and are the results of papa karmas, or past wrong adharmic activities. Vairagya helps to purify these obstacles. By adhering to the Yogic moral precepts and developing discrimination, one can learn to disidentify with these vrittis, which is non-attachment.

Abhyasa (practice is defined):

In Sutra I.13 we learn:

Tatra sthitau yatno'bhyasah

Of these (abhyasa and vairagya), practice is the effort to secure steadiness of the modifications of the mind.

The effort to restrain all the vrittis of the mind and to make the mind steady like the flame of a lamp in a windless place is abhyasa. To drive the mind back to its source - hridaya guha, the cave of the mind in the heart, and get it absorbed in the Atman is abhyasa. To make the mind inward and remove its outgoing tendencies is abhyasa.

In Sutra I.14 we learn:

Sa tu dirgha kala nairantarya sat karasevito drdha bhumih

Practice becomes firmly grounded on being continued over a long period of time, without interruption and with sincere devotion.

If there are interruptions in the practice of stilling the mind, or if the effort is not continued over many many years, the results will only be temporary, and all progress will fade. Practice must be constant. It must also be done with an attitude of earnestness. Only when there is true desire to reach the goal is success assured.

Vairagya (dispassion) is defined:

In Sutra I.15 we learn:

Drstanusravika visaya vitrsnasya vasi kara sanjna vairagyam

Detachment is consciousness of self mastery of one who has no thirst for any objects either seen or heard about.

Non attachment is a state of the mind. It is indifference to objects of the world. It involves being unaffected by the pull of likes and dislikes, attractions and aversions. Whenever the mind acquires a taste for a particular sensation of pleasure, it becomes attached to it. The mind recalls the experience and desires repetition of it. It is this craving that creates pain.

The state of vairagya does not necessarily mean cessation of life in society; it involves separating oneself from the binding emotions of that life.

Renunciation is a great aid to the attainment of vairagya. By giving up objects of the senses the mind is quickly stilled. But it is best to remember that non attachment is not synonymous with not having. One can own nothing and yet be full of desires. If a person is fond of cherry ice cream, binding his hands and taping his mouth will not keep his mind from dwelling on this treat.

The basis of vairagya is the internal realization of the worthlessness of the external world (i.e. the limitations and impermanence of all experiences and the bondage generated from their enjoyments). This is called **viveka** or discrimination. Objects and desires then automatically fall away.

But renunciation does not mean running away from society, duties and responsibilities, as is sometimes assumed. It means carrying on with one's duties in a dispassionate, unattached way.

By leading a life of dharma, in accordance with the Yogic virtues, not being carried away by the force of afflicting emotions and desires, one attains purity and steadiness of mind which enables the mind to enter the state of deep meditation.

Pratyahara - withdrawal of the senses:

In Sutra 2.54 we learn:

sva-viṣayāsaṃprayoge citta-svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṇām pratyāhāraḥ
Pratyahara is the imitation of the mind by the senses, which comes by withdrawing the senses from their objects.

In meditation the mind is withdrawn from external stimulation so that it can be at peace. Pratyahara, the fifth limb of Yoga, involves the same thing with the senses. Whatever objects are agitating to the senses are simply eliminated from sensory contact. The eyes do not watch a stimulating film. The ears are not given an opportunity to hear music that raises feelings of discontent. The tongue is given no opportunity to taste food that is detrimental. In this way the mind is much less likely to take on thought forms which are detrimental since the sense organs arise. A good portion of the more difficult aspects of discipline can be dealt with in this way, and the mind is more easily stilled.

Dharana - concentration:

In Sutra 3.1 we learn:

deshabandhashchittasya dharana
Dharana is fixing the mind on one object.

The object of dharana, concentration, may be external or it may be an internal plexus or chakra. It may also be a Mantra. If there is difficulty in keeping the mind within a limited area of focus in the early stages of practice, one may keep it moving within a broader circumscribed area of focus which is narrowed as greater control is gained. When the mind can be limited to one point, it is concentrated.

In dharana the mind is focused on an object (cognition of an object or vritti), a succession of vrittis carrying the same content. Occasionally and interfering vritti will appear. Then the mind needs to be gathered again and focused on the object of meditation. There is effort, application of will.

The mind is allowed to move in associations of the object.

The Yamas - restraining the impulses of the kleshas:

Brahmacharya:

The conduct of a Yogic student. This is composed of the following elements:

Dedication to the study of the Yogic scriptures, teachings and Japa (repetition of God's name).

Self-discipline, control of senses, purity, morality. Leading a life of service dedicated to the moral codes of dharma (Yamas and Niyamas), rather than activity motivated by raga - dvesha.

Seeing Brahman, God or the Self in others, rather than a physical body. This thins out one's own identity with the physical body, which generates bondage.

Practice:

- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities - Brahmacharya.**
- **Concentration on the breath.**
- **Meditation on OM.**
- **self analysis continued.**
- **the spiritual diary continued.**

Lesson 5

The operations of karma:

In Sutra 2.13 we learn:

sati mūle tad-vipāko jātyāyur-bhogaḥ

As long as the root remains, the Karma must be fulfilled, resulting in various social situations, lifespans and experiences.

Each must reap what he sows. Various life experiences are due to the karmic situations that each has earned for himself by his thoughts, words and deeds, determined by Iswara.

Sanchita karma is the accumulated, unexhausted karmas of the past. A portion of sanchita manifests as the present life karma or prarabdha karma. While going through prarabdha karma, having a physical body to experience the fruits of one's actions, one generates fresh karma called agami karma. At the completion of prarabdha karma or death of the physical body, agami karma joins sanchita karma, which is therefore never exhausted, until one attains knowledge.

In the waking state one experiences bala or strong karmic fruits and produces fresh karma. In the dream state abala or weak karmic fruits manifest, but one does not create fresh karma as the organs of actions are not functional. In deep sleep there is no experience nor production of karma. Prarabdha karma is responsible for waking out of sleep.

Negative karma which manifests as obstacles etc, is neutralised by performance of good deeds and sadhana.

In Sutra 2.14 we learn:

te hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ puṇyāpuṇya-hetuvāt

They have pleasure or pain as their fruit, according to whether their cause is virtue or vice.

Understanding this, the yogi strives to do only good actions and to accept peacefully the ill that comes his way so that all his seeds of Karma are burned and no new ones are sown. The Yogi perceives pleasure as pain as well.

In Sutra 2.15 we learn:

pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇa-vṛtti-virodhācca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ

To those who are discriminating, every action brings pain due to anticipation of loss, new desires, or conflicts arising out of the interaction between the mind and the three qualities of nature.

The wise man realizes that no happiness is to be found in the material world, for pain eventually arises from all actions. Where there is lack of discrimination, happiness is accompanied by the fear of its loss; and since change is a law of nature, loss is inevitable. When not concerned with loss, the mind is often conjuring up new ideas, and there is no happiness until those are satisfied, which is, again, immediately followed by fear of loss. The uncentered mind is never at rest for it is ever caught in the play of the qualities of nature-purity, activity and lethargy. Peace can only be found beyond the phenomenal world.

The yogi's sensitivity to pain is due to his power of discrimination between the real and unreal, permanent and impermanent which is due to purity or sattva. He is like the tissue of the eyeball, and the ignorant is like the rough skin.

In Sutra 2.16 we learn:

heyam duḥkham-anāgatam

The misery that has not yet manifested should be avoided.

Karma has been worked out, is being worked out, or is waiting to be worked out by one's actions. Karma that has already been incurred cannot be changed, but its misery can be avoided by positive thinking. Future pain can be avoided by carefully attending to present actions.

When a person is identifying with this illusory world, the ego predominates, and he acts without wisdom, incurring new Karma for himself.

Pratipaksha Bhavana - the positive always overcomes the negative:

In Sutra 2.33 we learn:

vitarka-bādhane pratipakṣa-bhāvanam

When negative or harmful thoughts disturb the mind, they can be overcome by constant pondering over their opposites.

The yogi is ever alert, always watching his mind. When he sees useless thought waves arising, he immediately replaces them with positive thoughts, thus creating new mental habits that are conducive to spiritual growth.

In Sutra 2.34 we learn:

**vitarkā hiṃsādayaḥ kṛta-kāritānumoditā lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakā
mṛdu-madhyādhimātrā duḥkhājñānānanta-phalā iti pratipakṣa-bhāvanam**
**Negative thoughts and emotions, such as violence, whether committed, abetted,
or caused through greed, anger or delusion, and whether present in mild, medium
or great intensity, result in endless pain and ignorance. Thus there is the
necessity for pondering over the opposites.**

All thoughts, emotions and actions that are in the opposition to the basic tenets of the yamas and niyamas bring about the Karma of further pain and ignorance (papa karmas). This is true whether the action is actually carried out, remains in thought form, or is incited in others. Whatever the cause, whatever the degree of involvement, Karma is still incurred, That is why it is necessary to substitute positive and sublime thoughts the moment negative ones are caught arising in the mind.

Practice of pratipaksha bhavana:

Lust - Brahmacharya, mumukshutva

Anger - love, forgiveness, mercy, friendship, ahimsa.

Pride - humility.

Greed - generosity, contentment, aparigraha.

Jealousy - nobility, magnanimity, generosity

Harshness - mildness

Attachment - vairagya

The practice of autosuggestions for purification of the subconscious mind:

General autosuggestion: Day by day, in every way, I am getting better and better by God's Grace.

Repeat 20 times upon wakeup and falling asleep, when the subconscious mind is open and the conscious-reason mind is not fully active.

Specific autosuggestions:

Points to consider when creating specific autosuggestions:

1. The goal we want to accomplish should be reasonable, within the scope of our faith.
2. Avoid the mention of the ailment or difficulty the autosuggestion is aiming to relieve.

3. Immediate commencement of getting better.
4. Rapid progress.
5. Complete and permanent cure.
6. No use of words that have hesitant connotation such as maybe, I will try etc.

Best when used together (just before or after) the general autosuggestion.

The Niyamas: establishing pure, Yogic lifestyle habits:

In Sutra 2.32 we learn:

śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ

The niyamas consist of cleanliness, contentment, austerity, self-study and self-surrender.

The first Niyama: Saucha - cleanliness or purity:

Purity is of two kinds, internal purity and external purity. Freedom from Raga-dvesha, purity of intentions and purity of Bhava or attitude constitute internal purity.

Purity of body through bath, etc., purity of clothes (having dedicated meditation clothes of a pure nature), purity of surroundings like the house and its neighborhood (having an altar, doing arati, pure atmosphere), constitute external purity.

Internal purity is more important than external purity. Internal purity makes the mind one-pointed, bestows serenity, cheerfulness, joy etc.

Practices

- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities – Saucha**
- **Concentration on the breath**
- **Meditation on OM**
- **Self-analysis continued**

Lesson 6

Kriya Yoga:

In Sutra 2.1 we learn:

tapas-svādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ

Austerity, self-study, and surrender to God constitute Kriya Yoga.

Tapas - austerity

Without tapas one cannot achieve yoga or samadhi, because tapas is that which purifies the mind from rajasic and tamasic vrittis that originate in the ripening of the fruits of karma and kleshas - roots of suffering, from which the karmas emerge. Ignorance generates desires which generates actions to possess the objects of desires.

Impure vrittis (klishta vrittis) originate in the kleshas. If vrittis are clothes, kleshas are the dye coloring the cloth.

Tapas weakens the bonds of the impurities to the subconscious mind, like a person beating on a cloth, or impurities of the body are released in a cleanse.

Austerity does not mean physical abuse or severe rigors. It refers to strict control of the senses in order to conserve energy for higher pursuits. Austerity in this sense means fasting occasionally, rising early to meditate instead of sleeping late, and reducing certain physical comforts for the sake of greater control of mind. It also means titiksha, or withstanding the pain caused by the pairs of opposites with patient fortitude.

Swadhyaya - self study

Study of the scriptures and other spiritual works keeps the mind flowing in the desired direction.

Here it primarily means study of the upanishads, referring to Jnana Yoga.

Iswara Pranidhana - self-surrender to God

In surrendering to God one also surrenders the fruit of work performed. This leads to Karma Yoga, the path of selfless service, in which one regards oneself as the instrument of God, and serves humanity with no thoughts of either credit or blame.

One's actions are aligned with the Yamas and Niyamas or dharma rather than attractions and aversions.

Offering of one's actions and fruits to God. Offering of the actions - as devotion to God, dharma, truth etc. Offering of fruits - accepting all fruits as Iswara's prasada.

Iswara Pranidhana as the practice of Bhakti Yoga – devotion to the chosen Divinity or Ishtha Devata.

Perform a short Puja and or Arati (dedication of light) daily

Simple Puja for daily practice:

Have preferably a separate space for meditation and worship. Have an altar with the images of the Ishta Devata or Divine aspect/s and Gurus and spiritually uplifting images or objects. The altar should be aesthetically uplifting for you. There should be:

- a candle or oil lamp,
- incense holder and incense,
- arati candle or lamp,
- Small bell
- flowers for offering,
- prasad - fruits or sweet preparations,
- rosaries for decorations.
- Cup or bowl with clean water and a small spoon.

Steps of the Puja:

Light and incense: light the lamp / candle, arati lamp / candle and light and offer the incense.

Powders: If you have the three sacred powders with you (Vibhuti - holy ash (grey), Sandalwood (yellow - brown) and Kumkum (red), then repeat once: **Om Keshavaya Namah** and apply the Vibhuti powder, then Sandalwood paste and then Kumkum powder.

Purification: Take the water cup with the spoon, saying each of the following three mantras, take a little water in the spoon and place in your right hand and sip a little, the rest sprinkle above your head all around.

Om Achyutaya Namah

Om Anantaya Namah

Om Govindaya Namah

Offering flowers: Take a flower in your right hand and place it by your heart. Ring the bell with your left hand. Repeat the following mantras while offering flowers:

Om...Om...Om... Om Gam Ganapataye Namah - offer flower to Lord Ganesha and take a new flower,

Om Gum Gurubhyo Namah - offer flowers to the Gurus and take a new flower,

Om Aim Saraswatyai Namah - offer a flower to Mother Saraswati. Offer flowers to any other Deities on your altar with their respective mantras.

Prasad: offer the fruits or sweet preparation to the Lord and Gurus on a dedicated plate on the altar.

Arati - offering of light - conclude with the Arati mantras waving the arati lamp with the right hand and ringing the bell in the left hand. At the end take the light with your palms into your third eye and heart centers three times. Offer the light to others before taking yourself, if more participants are there.

Conclusion: Prostrate and then eat the Prasad and distribute to others if there are more participants.

The practice of prayer

As children, we pray to our parents, elders and guardians at the time of our need: we seek their help, their guidance. When we grow into adolescence, we learn to pray to ourselves to our latent abilities and strength: we try to be self-supported without being dependent on others' aid. But there is a limitation to this prayer. When we feel that we are in need of something else which is beyond our capacity, which is not always humanly possible, we resign ourselves to God, and pray for His help, for His guidance. Evidently, we feel His response: an all potent Inner Force that listens to our prayers and fulfils our wish the moment we are a little sincere and faithful.

Essentially, prayer should be selfless as far as possible. We should first pray for the good of others, for welfare and peace of the world and for our own spiritual evolution; we should pray for the eradication of our evil qualities, for wisdom and knowledge, for goodness and saintliness.

Asato Ma Sat Gamaya

Tamaso Ma Jyotirgamaya

Mrityor Ma Amritam Gamaya

Lead me on from unreal to Real, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality.

This is the best prayer; the prayer for the Light, for the Truth, for Immortality. The foremost prayer of an aspirant should be for the removal of his ignorance. His goal is to realise the Truth and to free himself from the meshes of those that are unreal. His goal is to realise his essential divine nature.

Universal Prayer

O Adorable Lord of Mercy and Love !

Salutations and prostrations unto Thee.

Thou art Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient.

Thou art Sat-Chid-Ananda.

Thou art Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute.

Thou art the Indweller of all beings.

Grant us an understanding heart,

Equal vision, balanced mind,

Faith, devotion and wisdom.

Grant us inner spiritual strength

To resist temptation and to control the mind.

Free us from egoism, lust, anger, greed, hatred and jealousy.

Fill our hearts with divine virtues.

Let us behold Thee in all these names and forms.

Let us serve Thee in all these names and forms.

Let us ever remember Thee.

Let us ever sing Thy glories.

Let Thy Name be ever on our lips.

Let us abide in Thee for ever and ever.

Swami Sivananda

The Niyamas – establishing pure, Yogic habits:

The second Niyama – Santosha or contentment:

Contentment (santosha) cuts at the root of all desires. It gives success in the practice of yama. It gives peace and one pointedness of mind. A contented man is satisfied with his lot, he is happy in whatever condition he is placed, he does not crave for things he has not got.

It is also the control of the complaining or fault-finding nature of the mind.

Practices

- **Meditation to cultivate divine qualities – Santosha**
- **Concentration on the breath**
- **Meditation on OM**
- **Introducing the practice of Karma Yoga**
- **Prayer**
- **Introducing the practice of Puja and Arati**

Arati - offering of light

Jaya jaya āratī Vighnavināyaka Vighnavināyaka śrī Gaṇeśa

Jaya jaya āratī Subrahmaṇya Subrahmaṇya kārṭikeya

Jaya jaya āratī Veṅugopāla Veṅugopāla Veṅulola Pāpavidūra navanīta cora

Jaya jaya āratī Venkaṭarāmaṇa Venkaṭarāmaṇa saṅkaṭaharaṇa Sītā Rāma Rādhe śyāma

Jaya jaya āratī Gaurī manohara Gaurī manohara bhavānī śaṅkara Sāmba Sadāśiva Umā Maheśvara

Jaya jaya āratī Rāja Rājeśvarī Rāja Rājeśvarī Tripura Sundarī Mahā Lakṣmī Mahā Sarasvatī Mahā Kālī Mahā Śakti

Jaya jaya āratī Āñjaneya Āñjaneya Hanūmānta

Jaya jaya āratī Dattātreya Dattātreya Trimūrti avatāra

Jaya jaya āratī Ādityāya Ādityāya Bhāskarāya

Jaya jaya āratī Senīśvaraya Senīśvaraya Bhāskarāya

Jaya jaya āratī Śaṅkarācārya Śaṅkarācārya advaita gurave

Jaya jaya āratī Sadguru nātha Sadguru nātha Śivānanda

Jaya jaya āratī Viṣṇudevānanda Viṣṇudevānanda Viṣṇudevānanda

Jaya jaya āratī Agastya munaye Agastya munaye śrīrāmapriyāya

Jaya jaya āratī Ayyapā svāmiye Ayyappā svāmiye dharmaśāstave

Jaya jaya āratī Jesus gurave Moses gurave Buddha gurave Jaya jaya āratī Moḥammed gurave Guru nānak gurave Samasta gurubhyo namaḥ

Jaya jaya āratī Veṅugopāla

Om na tatra sūryo bhāti Na candratāarakam
Nemā vidyuto bhānti kuto'yamagniḥ
Tvameva bhāntam anubhāti sarvam Tasya bhāsā sarvamidam vibhāti
Om gaṅge ca yamune caiva Godāvāri Sarasvatī Narmade sindhu kāveri
Namastubhyaṃ namo namaḥ

Dedication Song

Tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva
Tvameva bandhuś ca sakhā tvameva
Tvameva vidyā draviṇaṃ tvameva
Tvameva sarvaṃ mama deva deva
Kāyena vācā manasendriyairvā Buddhyātmanā vā prakṛtessvabhāvāt
Karomi yadyat sakalaṃ parasmai Nārāyaṇāyeti samarpayāmi

Sarva dharmān parityajya Māmekam śaraṇaṃ vraja Ahaṃ tvā sarva pāpebhyaḥ
Mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

Lesson 7

Devotion to the Ishta Devata – chosen Divinity - Mantras:

There are two types of Mantras for Japa:

Saguna mantras on the Lord with qualities.

Nirguna mantras - on the abstract Brahman or Atman.

Saguna Mantras:

Om Gam Ganapataye Namah - prostrations to the great Lord Ganesha



Om Namah Shivaya - prostrations to Lord Siva



Om Namo Narayanaya - prostrations to Lord Vishnu (Narayana)



Om Sri Ramaya Namah - prostrations to Lord Rama



Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya - prostrations to Lord Krishna



Om Sri Durgayai Namah - prostrations to the mother Durga



Om Sri Maha Lakshmyai Namah - prostrations to the great mother Lakshmi



Om Aim Saraswatyai Namah - prostrations to the goddess Saraswati



Nirguna Mantras:

Om

Soham

Pranayama – control of the vital energy

In Sutra 2.49 we learn:

tasmin sati Śvāsa-prāśvāsayor-gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ

The next step is pranayama, which is the control of the inhalation and exhalation of breath.

The fourth limb of Raja Yoga is pranayama, which includes specific breathing exercises for heating and cooling the body, raising its energy levels, or relaxation. Prana, the vital energy, may be obtained from food and water, but the primary source is the air that is breathed. Control of it is directly linked with control of the mind (the movement of the psychic subtle prana results in the movements or vrittis of the mind). Because of its power, the techniques should be practiced under the guidance of a teacher. The awakening of the kundalini as a means of Self-Realisation depends on control over the breath and therefore the prana.

In Sutra 2.50 we learn:

bahyābhyantara-stambha-vṛttir deśa-kāla-saṅkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭo dīrgha-sūkṣmaḥ

Pranayama is inhalation, exhalation or retention of breath; it is regulated by place, time and number, and (becomes progressively) prolonged and subtle.

Here all the variations in pranayama are given, each yielding a different result. With practice, each breath and retention are prolonged and made more silent, and the yogi develops more control and concentration.

In Sutra 2.51 we learn:

bāhyābhyantara-viśayākṣepī caturthaḥ

The fourth type (of pranayama) goes beyond the sphere of inhalation and exhalation.

Beyond inhalation, exhalation and retention is the fourth type of pranayama, which involves actually directing the subtle prana, rather than the breath itself. When this is achieved, the flow of external breathing stops, and the yogi is able to move his prana in such a way as to awaken the great psychic force of kundalini. This is called kevala kumbhaka, where there is retention of breath with no inhalation or exhalation.

In Sutra 2.52 we learn:

tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśāvaram

That unveils the light.

The fourth type of pranayama, that which activates the kundalini, brings Illumination. It clears the mind from the ignorance caused by the karma that covers the light of knowledge so that the Inner Light can shine.

In Sutra 2.53 we learn:

dhāraṇāsu ca योग्याता मनसाḥ

And makes the mind fit for dharana (concentration).

Pranayama is the link between the physical and mental disciplines. While the action is physical, the effect is to make the mind calm, lucid and steady.

Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi - concentration, meditation and superconsciousness

In Sutra 3.1 we learn:

deshabandhashchittasya dharana

Dharana is fixing the mind on one object.

The object of dharana, concentration, may be external or it may be an internal plexus or chakra. It may also be a Mantra. If there is difficulty in keeping the mind within a limited area of focus in the early stages of practice, one may keep it moving within a broader circumscribed area of focus which is narrowed as greater control is gained. When the mind can be limited to one point, it is concentrated. In dharana the mind is focused on an object (cognition of an object or vritti), a succession of vrittis carrying the same content. Occasionally and interfering vritti will appear. Then the mind needs to be gathered again and focused on the object of meditation. There is effort, application of will. The mind is allowed to move in associations of the object.

In Sutra 3.2 we learn:

tatra pratyayaikatanata dhyanam

An unbroken flow of perception between the mind and objects is dhyana, meditation.

In meditation the mind is not distracted but holds steadily to the object of concentration. No other thoughts enter the mind. The mind will not swerve anymore from the object of meditation. There will be no more interfering vrittis. There will be no more effort. The mind is not moving in associations of the objects here.

In Sutra 3.3 we learn:

tad evarthamatranirbhasan svaroopashoonyam iva samadhih

When consciousness of subject and object disappears and only the meaning remains, it is called samadhi.

Samadhi is a merging (samapatti) of the mind into the essence of the object of meditation. Nothing exists but that pure awareness.

In the process of dharana, dhyana and samadhi the distance between the perceiver and perceived is getting smaller and smaller, like a magnifying glass.

In samadhi the asmita vritti of the perceiver is restrained, only the object remains. Subjectivity disappears and perceiver-perceived become one. One does not know the object of meditation, but becomes it.

An Exercise For Developing Virtue

Examine your character. Pick up the defects you find in it, and find their opposites. Let us say that you suffer from irritability. The opposite of irritability is patience. Try to develop this virtue by meditating on the abstract virtue of patience.

Regularly, every morning, at dawn sit down in the meditative posture. Sit in a solitary place for half an hour:

1. Think of patience
2. Think of its values
3. Think of its practice under provocation
4. Think of yourself as perfectly patient, a model of patience
5. End the meditation with a vow that "This patience, which is my true self, I will feel and show, today and every day"

Thus, take one point each day (or for a longer period of time). Think about that point steadily, without letting the mind wander.

Practice:

Meditation to cultivate divine qualities - patience.

Concentration on the breath.

Meditation on a chosen Deity mantra.