

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*: Commentary on Chapter 1 - Samadhi Pada

Please note that work on this commentary is ongoing. I add stuff when I find the time (which at present is very limited). Your comments are welcome, but please don't expect miracles!

Present status is: Sanskrit text for all sutras;
translations for all sutras; word meanings and
commentary for 1-14, 30-39.

Latest update, 4th January 2003.

To read the Sanskrit text, you need a copy of the Sanskrit font I have used. It's public domain, and you can download what you need [here](#). Just add the font to your windows/fonts file.

If you don't want to download the Sanskrit font, you will still be able to read the translations and commentary sections as they use a standard font.

Main abbreviations are as follows (for a fuller list, see the [general introduction](#) to the commentary):

- B** B Bouanchaud, *The Essence of Yoga*
- D** *Patanjali's Yogasutras*, translated by TKV Desikachar
- F** *Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali*, in pages 288-310 of Georg Feuerstein, *The Yoga Tradition*
- H** Swami Hariharananda Aranya, *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali* (translated by P.N. Mukerji)
- R** Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore (eds.), *A Sourcebook in Indian Philosophy*, pages 453-485
- S** *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, translation and commentary by Sri Swami Satchidananda
- T** IK Taimni, *The Science of Yoga*
- V** Vyasa's *Yoga Bhasya*, as translated by PN Mukerji in Swami Hariharananda Aranya, *Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali*

YS 1.1 **atha yogànu÷àsanam**

atha - now; *yoga* - of yoga; *ànu÷àsanam* - exposition, instruction

Translations:

- [B] Now is set forth authoritative teaching on yoga.
- [D] Here begins the authoritative instruction on yoga.
- [F] Now [begins] the exposition of yoga.
- [H] Now then yoga is being explained.
- [R] Now a revised text of yoga.

[S] Now the exposition of yoga is being made.
[T] Now, an exposition of yoga [is to be made].

Commentary:

The word "*atha*" indicates a commitment on the part of the student, and on the part of the teacher. It makes it clear that the study of yoga is going to start NOW. This isn't just intellectual study - it includes practice as well. It is also study in which the teacher passes on what he himself learned from his teacher; so the tradition is very old. **V** identifies five states of mind, in all of which concentration (*samadhi*) is possible: restless, stupefied, distracted, one-pointed and arrested (see **B**, p. 4 for more details). However **V** points out that the "one-pointed" state is the only one from which progress towards enlightenment is possible.

S stresses that "It's not mere philosophy that Patanjali is about to expound, but rather direct instruction on how to practice yoga." Without practice, nothing can be achieved.

YS 1.2

yoga÷cittavçttinirodhap

yoga÷ = yoga; *citta* = of the mind-stuff; *vçtti* = modifications; *nirodhap* = restraint [S]

Translations:

[B] Yoga is the ability to direct and focus mental activity.

[D] Yoga is the ability to direct the mind exclusively toward an object and sustain that direction without any distractions.

[F] Yoga is the restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness.

[H] Yoga is the suppression of the modifications of the mind.

[R] Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications.

[S] The restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff is yoga.

[T] Yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind.

Commentary:

S explains that *citta* is "the sum total of mind". That is, it contains three levels of mental activity:

1. *ahamkàra* or "ego" the sense of being "me".

2. *buddhi* or "intellect". That is, the higher, intuitive mind.

3. *manas* or "lower mind". That is, the part of the mind that links with the senses.

It is the link with the senses that triggers off the modifications of the mind. Therefore if you can **control** these modifications you will not be bound by the outside world. **D**'s translation seems to fit very well with this explanation. **D** adds an explanation that the object in question can be internal or external; it can be concrete or abstract.

I confess that **T**'s explanation is so abstruse that I find it difficult to understand. The way I understand it is, the mind is always busy - so busy that in a sense you "can't see the wood for the trees". If you can find a way of reducing mental traffic to a single steady thought-stream, through yoga, the efficacy of the mind increases exponentially. (For which, see the next sutra.)

Note that Patanjali's definition of yoga is purely about mind. In the west, people tend to think of yoga simply as *àsana*-based. However, yoga is not a spiritual practice and nothing else. It enables spiritual practice. It's really a practical psychology - a tool for training the mind. In Indian traditional culture, Ayurveda is for the body; Yoga is for the mind; Vedànta is for the spirit.

YS 1.3

tadà drauñuṣ svarāpe 'vasthànam

tadà = then; *drauñuṣ* = the Seer (Self); *svarāpe* = in His own nature; *avasthànam* = abides

Translations:

[B] With the attainment of focused mind, the inner being establishes itself in all its reality.

[D] Then the ability to understand the object fully and correctly is apparent.

[F] Then the Seer [i.e. the transcendental Self] abides in [its] essential form..

[H] Then the Seer abides in itself.

[R] Then the seer stands in his own nature.

[S] Then the Seer [Self] abides in his own nature..

[T] Then the Seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature..

Commentary:

The word *draiññub* needs careful explaining. It means "seer" or "that which sees". This is the real "me", whose reality is usually clouded by the fluctuating mind. Another word for this Seer/Self is *puruṣa*, defined by Feuerstein, p. 608, as "the transcendental Self, Spirit, or pure Awareness, as opposed to the finite personality."

S explains, "You are that true Seer. You are not the body nor the mind. You are the Knower or Seer. You always see your mind and body acting in front of you. You know that the mind creates thoughts; it distinguishes and desires. The Seer *knows* that but is not involved in it." He compares the mind to a mirror which usually provides an imperfect reflection when the Seer looks in it, and which can provide a true reflection only when the mind is still. This is the state we should ideally be in.

V says, "At that time pure Consciousness - the Seer - abides in its own self, as it does in the state of liberation." H explains: "Pure Consciousness is the impartial witness of Buddhi and the latter appears to it as an object. The dominant Buddhi is the sense of 'I'" H also explains that complete cessation of all fluctuations is the state of *kaivalya* (see YS Chapter 4). "In *Nirodha*, suppression is for a temporary period, while in *Kaivalya* the mind disappears, never to appear again."

The word *avasthānam* carries the idea of "standing out" - the root "*stha*" has the same origin as our word "stand".

YS 1.4

vçtti sàràpyamitaratra

vçtti = mental activity, mental modifications; *sàràpyam* = identification; *itaratra* = otherwise, elsewhere, at other times

Translations:

[B] Otherwise, we identify with the activities of the mind.

[D] The ability to understand the object is simply replaced by the mind's conception of that object or by a total lack of comprehension.

[F] At other times [there is] conformity [of the Self] with the fluctuations.

[H] At other times the Seer appears to assume the form of the modification of the mind.

[R] Identification with modifications elsewhere.

[S] At other times [the Self appears to] assume the forms of the mental modifications.

[T] In other states there is assimilation [of the Seer] with the modifications [of the mind].

Commentary:

The Seer thinks that the *vçtti* are part of it because of the way the *Buddhi* has presented information to it. The *Buddhi* has been overwhelmed by the *vçtti*. This is the state we are normally in (*itaratra*).

S comments, "You seem to have lost your identity and have identified with your thoughts and body." S also says that if you eliminate all the things of the mind and body with which we identify ourselves, then we will realise that this pure "I" [i.e. *puruṣa*] is no different from any other pure "I". "The form and name are just different versions of the same energy.... And, according to the Yogic scientists like Patanjali - and even many modern scientists - behind the different forms of energy is one unchanging consciousness or spirit or Self." "Love thy neighbour as thyself" becomes possible when you see there's no difference between you and your neighbour. D says, "A disturbed mind can rarely follow a direction. If it ever does, comprehension of the object will be faulty."

YS 1.5

vrittayab pa^ṣcatayab kliuñākliuñāb

vrittayab = mental activities, modifications; *pa^ṣcatayab* = of five kinds; *kliuñāb* = producing suffering, painful; *akliuñāb* = not producing suffering, not painful

Translations:

[B] Mental activities are of five kinds, whether they produce suffering or not.

[D] There are five activities of the mind. Each of them can be beneficial and each can cause problems.

[F] The fluctuations are fivefold; afflicted or unafflicted.

[H] They fall into five varieties of which some are "*kliuñāb*" and the rest "*akliuñāb*".

[R] The modifications are five-fold; painful and not painful.

[S] There are five kinds of mental modifications which are either painful or painless.

[T] The modifications of the mind are five-fold and are painful or not-painful.

Commentary:

The *vṛtti* are not in themselves bad - they're part of life - so that's why their effects can be either positive or negative. **D** points out that you don't always see straight away whether these activities are beneficial or create problems. **D** also says, in his final comments on YS 1.11, that all five of these activities should be seen as interlinked parts of a single matrix, that each can at times be either beneficial or harmful, and that their effects can be either direct/immediate or indirect/occurring later.

B says, "Mental activities produce suffering when they separate us from the yoga state. They reduce suffering when they draw us nearer to that state." **S** makes similar points, including this: "How are we to know whether our thoughts are selfless or not? We have to watch carefully the moment a thought-form arises in the mind. We become analysts. This itself is Yoga practice - watching our own thoughts and analyzing them."

T says that the "not-painful" thoughts are those that are actually neutral in character - e.g. noticing the existence of a tree while walking is a mere sense perception. It's the *vṛtti* that arouse any kind of emotion that are painful. In our ignorance we see pleasure in experiences which are a potential source of pain.

[Advance note: **V**'s commentary refers to the *kleśa* - so you will have to refer back to this sutra when studying YS 2, 2-9.]

YS 1.6

pramāḍa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayab

pramāḍa = right knowledge, understanding, correct mental grasp; *viparyaya* = misconception, error, wrong knowledge; *vikalpa* = verbal delusions, imagination, ideation; *nidrā* = deep (dreamless) sleep; *smṛtayab* = memory

Translations:

[B] The five mental activities are understanding, error, imagination, deep sleep and memory.

[D] The five activities are comprehension, misapprehension, imagination, deep sleep and memory.

[F] [The five types of fluctuation are:] knowledge, misconception, conceptualization, sleep, and memory.

[H] Pramāḍa viparyaya vikalpa nidrā smṛtayab .

[R] Real cognition, unreal cognition, imagination, deep sleep, and memory.

[S] They are right knowledge, misconception, conceptualization, sleep, and memory.

[T] [They are] right knowledge, wrong knowledge, fancy, sleep, and memory.

Commentary:

Each of these will be explained in sutras I.7-11. **B** gives a useful summation of each on p. 9. **H** says, in answer to the possible question, "What about dreams?" that a dream state is

primarily one of *viparyaya*, though *vikalpa*, *smṛti* and *pramāḍā* are also present; this differs from the normal waking state in which *pramāḍā* is the main *vṛtti*, although *vikalpa*, *viparyaya* and *smṛti* are also present. **H** defines *vikalpa* as "cognition of a thing which does not exist", and *smṛti* as "awareness again of previous cognitions". He uses the example of an elephant to illustrate: Your eyes see the shape and colour of this animal (large, two tails, grey...). Knowledge about its power of carrying loads, its power of movement, its way of life, its toughness, the trumpeting noise it makes, had previously been gathered by your sense organs and stored in the mind. *Citta* combines these fragments of knowledge after your eyes see the grey shape and produces the complete concept of "elephant". Your feelings of pleasure (or otherwise!) on seeing the elephant are also an action of *citta*, and are just a re-appearance of pervious feelings.

YS 1.7

pratyakànumàṅgamàḅ pramāḍāni

pratyaka = sensory perception; *anumàna* = inference, deduction; *àgamàḅ* = testimony worthy of faith, revelation; *pramāḍāni* = correct mental grasp

Translations:

[B] Understanding arises from sensory perception, inference, and faithful testimony.

[D] Comprehension is based on direct observation of the object, inference and reference to reliable authorities.

[F] Knowledge [can be derived from] perception, inference and testimony.

[H] Perception, inference and testimony constitute the *pramāḍās*.

[R] Perception, verbal cognition, and inference are real cognitions.

[S] The sources of right knowledge are direct perception, inference and scriptural testimony.

[T] [Facts of] right knowledge [are based on] direct cognition, inference or testimony.

Commentary:

For example - when you see flames, you know there is a fire; when you see smoke, you deduce there is a fire. **D**'s explanation is excellent - in fact can't be bettered: "The mind can register an object directly through the senses. When the available information is inadequate or incomplete for sensual perception, other faculties, such as logic and memory, may enable a more complete comprehension of the object to be inferred. When no direct comprehension is possible, reference to reliable authorities, such as a written text or a trusted individual, can enable comprehension indirectly. In such a way do we understand places, people or concepts outside our direct experiences. In a state of Yoga comprehension is different from comprehension at other times. It is closer to the true nature of the object."

B's explanation is clear. *Pratyakà* derives its information from the senses. *ànumàna*, mental grasp, derives information from induction, deduction, analysis, and is used when direct sensory perceptions are not available. *àgamàḅ* derives mainly from sacred texts: the testimony of an authority. (Note the order of importance in yoga. Vedānta would put them in a different order, with *àgamàḅ* at the top of the list.) These three modes of understanding are often interdependent - in fact it's rare for one to exist on its own. The "testimony" source is usually holy scriptures. This is often regarded as "revealed truth" - the truth has been revealed to the sages/saints by God. But - as **D** says - it can also be any reliable teacher.

YS 1.8

viparyayo mithyàjṣànamatadràpapratiiñham

viparyayaḅ = error, mistake, misconception, erroneous impression; *mithyà* = incorrect, false; *jṣànam* = knowledge, learning; *atadràpa* = on a form different from what it really is, not on that form; *pratiiñham* = based, established, possessing

Translations:

[B] Error is incorrect knowledge based on misinterpretation of reality.

[D] Misapprehension is that comprehension which is taken to be correct until more favourable conditions reveal the actual nature of the object.

[F] Misconception is erroneous knowledge not based on the [actual] appearance of the

[underlying object].

[H] *Viparyaya* or illusion is false knowledge formed of a thing as other than what it is.

[R] Unreal cognition is the knowing of the unreal, possessing a form not its own.

[S] Misconception occurs when knowledge of something is not based upon its true form.

[T] Wrong knowledge is a false conception of a thing whose real form does not correspond to such a mistaken conception.

Commentary:

For example, you see a rope and think it's a snake. Misconception can create problems - it leads to prejudices and false, misguided responses to situations. But it can have positive outcomes - if you realise your error it can lead to deeper reflection and thus to a more correct understanding. (B has some good points to make here). D rightly points out that "this is considered to be the most frequent activity of the mind." V links *viparyaya* with the *kleśas* (see YS II.3-9) as five forms of false cognition. H explains that "any misapprehension can be called a *viparyaya*, but those misconceptions which yogins consider to be the roots of miseries and eliminable, are regarded as *viparyayas* of the nature of affliction (*kleśa*).

YS 1.9

÷abdajṣānānupātā vastu÷ānyo vikalpaḥ

÷abda = word, speech, sound; jṣāna = cognizance, knowledge; anupātā = following upon, formed of; vastu = reality, of an object, of matter; ÷ānyap = without any, empty, unoccupied; vikalpaḥ = fancy, verbal delusion

Translations:

[B] Imagination is knowledge based on words that have no real, corresponding object.

[D] Imagination is the comprehension of an object based only on words and expressions, even though the object is absent.

[F] Conceptualization is without [perceivable] object, following verbal knowledge.

[H] The modification called "*Vikalpa*" is based on verbal cognition in regard to a thing which does not exist. (It is a kind of useful knowledge arising out of the meaning of a word but having no corresponding reality.)

[R] Imagination is followed in sequence by verbal expression and knowledge, and is devoid of substratum.

[S] An image that arises on hearing mere words without any reality[as its basis] is verbal delusion.

[T] An image conjured up by words without any substance behind it is fancy.

Commentary:

Vikalpa is the ability to conceptualise, analyse and create categories. It can be both positive and negative. It can create new ideas, but it can separate us from reality. With *Vikalpa* we are creating a distance between ourselves and direct experience.

D's explanation is very helpful: "This happens in the absence of any direct perception. Reference to the meaning, connotations or implications of descriptive words guides imagination towards comprehension. It may be further helped if the words are used poetically or oratorically. It can also arise through other means such as dreams, feelings and emotions. past experiences, stored as the memory, often contribute to this mental activity.

As S points out, in *viparyaya* there is at least an object which has caused the delusion. In *vikalpa*, however, there is no object, only words, but you still form an opinion based on the words. B has some good examples - a composer hearing the music of a new symphony in his head/heart; an architect creates a house in his mind. In oral tradition, ideas are transmitted in this way.

YS 1.10**abhàvapatryayàlambanà tamovrittirnidrà**

abhàva = nothingness, absence; *patryaya* = cognition, content of mind; *alambana* = support; [*tamas* = inertia] ; *vçttip* = modification of mind; *nidrà* = sleep

Translations:

[B] Deep sleep is a state of unconscious mental activity in which the four other mental activities are eclipsed.

[D] Deep sleep is when the mind is overcome with heaviness and no other activities are present.

[F] Sleep is a fluctuation founded on the idea (*patryaya*) of the nonoccurrence [of other contents of consciousness].

[H] Dreamless sleep is the mental modification produced by condition of inertia as the state of vacuity or negation (of waking and dreaming).

[R] Sleep is the mental modification which has for its objective substratum the cause of non-existence.

[S] That mental modification supported by cognition of nothingness is sleep.

[T] That modification of the mind which is based on the absence of any content in its sleep.

Commentary:

This state is similar to *samadhi*, but *nidrà* is a tamasic state, whereas *samadhi* is sattvic. Also, as **T** says, there is a difference in the way the mind works. In the state of deep sleep, mental activity doesn't stop; but the brain is disengaged from the mind and thus doesn't record the activities of the mind. When the person wakes up, the brain and the mind re-engage (analogy of a car with the engine running but out of gear, therefore the car doesn't move). In deep sleep, says **T**, "the mental activity is transferred to a subtler vehicle and goes on as before. Only the brain has been put out of gear.... In the waking state, the brain is connected with the lower mind and by controlling the activity of the mind in the brain we can control its own activity." - this is *citta vçitti nirodhaç*. **V** points out that when we are awake, we recollect having been asleep (and having been affected favourably or adversely by it), and thus *nidrà* is a mental activity. **B** emphasises the importance of deep sleep as providing a time of mental refreshment and renewal.

YS 1.11**anubhàtaviùayàsaüpramoùaç smçtip**

anubhàta = experienced; *viùaya* = objects; *asaüpramoùaç* = not forgotten; *smçtip* = memory

Translations:

[B] Memory retains living experience.

[D] Memory is the mental retention of a conscious experience.

[F] Memory is the "nondeprivation" [i.e. retention] of experienced objects.

[H] Recollection is mental modification caused by reproduction of the previous impression of an object without adding anything from other sources.

[R] Memory is the not stealing away along with objective mental impression [retained] [i.e. the reproducing of not more than what has been impressed upon the mind.]

[S] When a mental modification of an object previously experienced and not forgotten comes back to consciousness, that is memory.

[T] Memory is not allowing an object which has been experienced to escape.

Commentary:

Our memory is intimately linked with emotion and it is very subjective. "Memory is knowledge born out of *samskàra* ." Once a memory has been laid down, it can surface at any time when rekindled for some reason. A memory can be of something real or something imagined; the latter is what happens in dreams. **V** says, "All memories arise out of impressions whether of right cognition, misapprehension, vague ideation, deep sleep or of former memory. The foregoing fluctuations are of the nature of pleasure, pain or stupefaction. These will be explained in connection with *kle÷as* or afflictions. Attachment follows pleasure, aversion follows pain, while stupefaction is nescience. All these

fluctuations must be shut out. When they are eliminated, then will be reached concentration."

YS 1.12 **abhyàsavairàgyàbhyàm tannirodhap**

abhyàsa = by practice; *vairàgyàbhyàm* = by non-attachment; *tat* = they; *nirodhap* = restrained

Translations:

[B] Control over the mind's fluctuations comes from persevering practice and non-attachment.

[D] The mind can reach the state of yoga through practice and detachment.

[F] The restriction of these [fluctuations is achieved] through [yogic] practice and dispassion.

[H] By practice and detachment these can be stopped.

[R] They are restrained by practice and desirelessness.

[S] These mental modifications are restrained by practice and non-attachment.

[T] Their suppression [is brought about] by persistent practice and non-attachment.

Commentary:

B emphasises that *abhyàsa* is persevering practice, always persevering in the chosen direction. Posture practice and breathing are only part of what is meant, and they are done to support the inner endeavour. From *abhyàsa*, *vairàgya* will develop. *Vairàgya* is "the stability and serenity that arise when we withdraw from passion."

S explains practice as the positive and detachment as the negative approach to thought control.

V's explanation is interesting. He says, "The stream of mind flows both ways: it flows towards good and it flows towards evil. That which flows on to perfect independence (*kaivalya*) down the plane of discriminative knowledge is named the stream of happiness. That which leads to rebirth and flows down the plane of indiscriminative ignorance is the stream of sin. Among the modifications the flow of the desirables is thinned by desirelessness; the flow of discrimination is rendered visible by habituating the mind to the experience of knowledge. Hence suppression of the mental modification is dependent upon both." [So **V** is reconnecting with YS 1.2] **H** reminds us that these two principles of yoga - practice and detachment - have also been cited in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and are the commonest ways of achieving *mokṣa*.

YS1.13 **tatra sthītau yatno 'bhyàsaḥ**

tatra = of these (two); *sthītau* = for being firmly established or fixed; steadiness; *yatnaḥ* = effort; endeavour; *abhyàsa* = practice

Translations:

[B] Persevering practice is the effort to attain and maintain the state of mental peace.

[D] Practice is basically the correct effort required to move towards, reach and maintain the state of Yoga.

[F] Practice is the exertion [toward gaining] stability in [that state of restriction]

[H] Exertion to acquire *sthīti* or a tranquil state of mind devoid of fluctuations is called practice.

[R] Of these, practice is the effort to ensure steadiness.

[S] Of these two, effort toward steadiness of mind is practice.

[T] Their suppression [is brought about] by persistent practice and non-attachment.

Commentary:

B's comment is thoughtful. In particular he emphasises the "great vigilance" that is necessary if we want to avoid all deviations. We have to be vigilant in all aspects of our lives - the food we eat, our relationships and activities. This persevering practice is a kind of

"intelligent apprenticeship" that "keeps us on our toes" regardless of obstacles in our way. It implies regular questioning of all aspects of our environment, including diet, relationships, etc. It also implies steering a straight course with neither too little nor too much energy, in spite of the continually eddying currents of our personal leanings and outside circumstances."

D says that the practice must be correctly learned from a competent teacher who fully understands the personal and social character of the student. Otherwise there can be no hope of success.

S observes that **P** means **continuous** practice. He also stresses the need for constant vigilance -- "You become eternally watchful, scrutinizing every thought, every word, and every action. [**P** clarifies this in the next sutra.]

T points out that the *abhyàsa* that **P** has in mind is Astanga Yoga (i.e. Yoga with eight limbs), although there are other systems of yoga, each with its own technique, sometimes shared with other systems, sometimes unique. **T** adds that since yoga is an experimental science, new techniques are constantly being devised and taught. In this way each advanced teacher "imparts a personal touch" to the teaching by adding some minor practices of his own.

V defines *sthiti* as "absence of fluctuations or undisturbed calmness" and "practice" as "the effort, the energy and the enthusiasm ... for achieving that state." [Which seems to indicate that he is putting strong emphasis on "exertion".] **H** expands on this by saying "The continuity of the mind devoid of all fluctuations is called *Pra-ànta-vàhità*. That is the highest state of tranquillity of the mind; the other forms of calmness are only secondary. As the practice improves, the tranquillity also increases. With one's aim fixed on *Pra-ànta-vàhità*. The effort to hold on to whatever placidity has been attained by one is called practice. The greater the energy and enthusiasm with which the effort is made, the sooner will the practice be established."

YS1.14 sa tu dārghakàlanairantaryasatkàràdaràsevito dçóhabhāmīḥ

saḥ = this, that, the latter; *tu* = but, however, and, indeed; *dārgha* = long; *kàla* = time, duration; *nairantarya* = without interruption; *satkàra* = with seriousness, earnestness; *àdara* [word not in S or T] = with respect; *àsevitaḥ* = nourished by, well attended to, practised; *dçóha* = firm; *bhāmīḥ* = ground.

Translations:

[B] Such a practice is firmly established only if one engages in it seriously and respectfully over a long and uninterrupted period.

[D] It is only when the correct practice is followed for a long time, without interruptions and with a quality of positive attitude and eagerness, that it can succeed.

[F] But this [practice] is firmly grounded [only after it has been] cultivated properly and for a long time uninterruptedly.

[H] That practice when cultivated for a long time without break and with devotion becomes firm in foundation.

[R] And this is firmly rooted, being well attended to for a long time without interruption and with devotion.

[S] Practice becomes firmly grounded when well attended to for a long time, without break and in all earnestness.

[T] It (*abhyàsa*) becomes firmly grounded on being continued for a long time, without interruption and with reverent devotion..

Commentary:

B says, "Persevering practice deeply transforms character and behavior." And he adds, "But the battle is not yet won! But, at least one's way of proceeding is built on solid foundations that will weather the storms raised by personal difficulties, sickness and old age."

H says, "The word 'constantly' implies practice, daily, and, if possible, every moment. Practice which is not broken by its opposite habit of restlessness, is constant practice."

T talks about the many people who make little or no progress on the path of yoga, because they lack the three prerequisites listed by **P** in this sutra. He writes at some length about each of the three.

YS1.15 dçùñànu÷ravikaviùayavitçùõasya va÷ikàrasamjçà

dçùña anu÷ravika viùaya vitçùõasya va÷ikàra samjçà

Translations:

[B] Nonattachment is the mastery of desire for perceived external objects, as well as for internal spiritual objects, heard or revealed.

[D] At the highest level there is an absence of any cravings, either for the fulfilment of the senses or for extraordinary experiences.

[F] Dispassion is the certainty of mastery of [the *yogin* who is] without thirst for visible and revealed [or invisible] things.

[H] When the mind loses all desire for objects seen or described in the scriptures it acquires a state of utter desirelessness which is called detachment.

[R] Desirelessness is the consciousness of supremacy in him who is free from thirst for perceptible and scriptural enjoyments.

[S] The consciousness of self-mastery in one who is free from craving for objects seen or heard about is non-attachment.

[T] The consciousness of perfect mastery (of desires) in the case of one who has ceased to crave for objects, seen or unseen, is *vairàgya*.

Commentary:

YS1.16 tatparaü puruàakhyàterguõavaitçùõyam

Translations:

[B] At its highest level, nonattachment means having no desire for any of the constituent qualities of nature, because one has become conscious of the spiritual principle.

[D] When an individual has achieved complete understanding of his true self, he will no longer be disturbed by the distracting influences within and around him.

[F] The higher [form] of this [dispassion] is the nonthirsting for [Nature's] constituents, [which results] from the vision of the Self..

[H] Indifference to the guõas or the constituent principles achieved through a knowledge of the nature of the puruàa is called paravairagya (supreme detachment).

[R] The same is higher, when there is indifference to the "qualities", due to the knowledge of the *puruàa*.

[S] When there is non-thirst for even the gunas (constituents of Nature) due to realization of the Purush (true Self), that is supreme non-attachment.

[T] That is the highest *vairàgya* in which, on account of the awareness of the *Puruàa*, there is cessation of the least desire for the *guõas*.

Commentary:

YS1.17 vitarkavicàrànanandàsmitàràpànugamàtsaüprajàtàp

Translations:

[B] Perfect contemplation with full consciousness of the object passes, becoming reflective contemplation, then intuitive, then beatific, and lastly, full consciousness of self in the experience.

[D] Then the object is gradually understood fully. At first it is at a more superficial level. In time comprehension becomes deeper. And finally it is total. There is pure joy in reaching such a depth of understanding. For then the individual is so much at one with the object that he is oblivious to his surroundings.

[F] [The ecstasy arising out of the state of restriction] is conscious by being connected with cogitation, reflection, bliss, or I-am-ness..

[H] When concentration is reached with the help of vitarka, vicàra, ànanda and asmità, it is called samprajàta-samàdhi.

[R] The cognitive trance is accompanied by the appearances of philosophical curiosity, meditation, elation, and egoism.

[S] Samprajnata samadhi (distinguished contemplation) is accompanied by reasoning, reflecting, rejoicing and pure I-am-ness.

[T] *Samprajàta-samàdhi* is that which is accompanied by reasoning, reflection, bliss and sense of pure being.

Commentary:

YS1.18 viràma pratyayàbhyàsapàrvap saüskàrà÷eùo 'nyap

Translations:

[B] Regular immersion in contemplation without mental fluctuation brings contemplation in which only mental permeation subsists.

[D] The usual mental disturbances are absent. However memories of the past continue.

[F] The other [type of ecstasy] has a residuum of activators; [it follows] the former [conscious ecstasy] upon the practice of the idea of cessation.

[H] Asamprajàta-samàdhi is the other kind of samàdhi which arises through constant practice of para-vairàgya which brings about the disappearance of all fluctuations of the

mind wherein only the latent impressions remain.

[R] Preceded by the constant repetition of the notion of cessation is the other; in which the residual potencies only remain.

[S] By the firmly convinced practice of the complete cessation of the mental modifications, the impressions only remain. This is the other samadhi [asamprajnata or non-distinguished].

[T] The remnant impression left in the mind on the dropping of the *Pratyaya* after previous practice is the other (i.e. *Asaiprajāta-samādhi*).

Commentary:

YS1.19 bhavapratyayo videha prakṣtilayānām

Translations:

[B] This stage is innate for two kinds of predestined beings: "those without a body" and "those who are reabsorbed into original matter."

[D] There will be some who are born in a state of Yoga. They need not practise or discipline themselves.

[F] [The ecstasy of those who have] merged with Nature and [of those who are] bodiless [arises from the persistence of] the idea of becoming..

[H] While in the case of the videhas or the discarnates and of the prakṣtilayas or those subsisting in their elemental constituents, it is caused by nescience which results in objective existence.

[R] [This] is caused by objective existence for the *videhas* and *prakṣtilayas*.

[S] Those who merely leave their physical bodies and attain the state of celestial deities, or those who get merged in Nature, have rebirth.

[T] Of those who are *Videhas* and *Prakṣtilayas* birth is the cause.

Commentary:

YS1.20 ūraddhāvārasmcṭisamādhiprajāpārvaka itareṇām

Translations:

[B] For the others, faith engenders energy that reinforces the memory, allowing concentration on wisdom.

[D] Through faith, which will give sufficient energy to achieve success against all odds, direction will be maintained. The realisation of the goal of Yoga is a matter of time.

[F] [The supraconscious ecstasy] of the other [*yogins* whose path is referred to in aphorism 1.18] is preceded by faith, energy, mindfulness, [conscious] ecstasy, and wisdom.

[H] Others (who follow the path of the prescribed effort) adopt the means of reverential faith, energy, repeated recollection, concentration and real knowledge (and thus attain *asamprajāta-samādhi*).

[R] For others it is preceded by faith, energy, memory, trance, and discernment.

[S] To the others, this *asamprajnata samadhi* could come through faith, strength, memory, contemplation or by discernment.

[T] (In the case) of others it is preceded by faith, energy, memory and high intelligence necessary for *Samādhi*.

Commentary:

YS1.21 tāvrasaüvegānāmāsannaḥ

Translations:

[B] For those impelled by intense ardour, the goal is near.

[D] The more intense the faith and the effort, the closer the goal.

[F] [The supraconscious ecstasy] is close for [those *yogins* who are] extremely intense [in their practice of Yoga].

[H] Yogins with intense ardour achieve concentration and the result thereof quickly.

[R] Proximate for those whose consciousness of supremacy is keen.

[S] To the keen and intent practitioner this [samadhi] comes very quickly.

[T] It (*Samàdhi*) is nearest to those whose desire (for *Samàdhi*) is intensely strong.

Commentary:

YS1.22 mçdumadyàdhimàtratvattato 'pi vi-èuap

Translations:

[B] There still remains a difference based on distinct temperaments: gentle, moderate, and lively.

[D] Inevitably the depth of faith varies with different individuals and at different times with the same individual. The results will reflect these variations.

[F] Because [their intensity can be] modest, middling, or excessive, there is hence also a difference [in how close *yogins* may be to the supraconscious ecstasy].

[H] On account of the methods being slow, medium and speedy, even among those yogins who have intense ardour, there are differences.

[R] There is a further differentiation also -- mild, middling, and intense.

[S] The time necessary for success further depends on whether the practice is mild, medium or intense.

[T] A further differentiation (arises) by reason of the mild, medium and intense (nature of means employed).

Commentary:

YS1.23 ã÷varapraõidhànàdvà

Translations:

[B] Otherwise, the goal is attained by active devotion to God.

[D] Offering regular prayers to God with a feeling of submission to his power, surely enables the state of Yoga to be achieved.

[F] Or [supraconscious ecstasy is gained] through devotion to the Lord.

[H] From special devotion to ã÷vara also (concentration becomes imminent).

[R] Or, by feeling the omnipresence of God (ã÷vara).

[S] Or [samadhi is attained] by devotion with total dedication to God [Isvara].

[T] Or by self-surrender to God.

Commentary:

YS1.24 kle÷akarmavipàkà÷ayairaparàmçùñap puruùavi÷eua ã÷varap

Translations:

[B] God is a supreme being free from all causes of suffering -- from actions, their consequences, and all latency.

[D] God is the Supreme Being whose actions are never based on misapprehension.

[F] The Lord is a special Self [because He is] untouched by the causes-of-affliction, action and its fruition, and the deposits [in the depth of memory that gives rise to thoughts, desires, and so on].

[H] ã÷vara is a particular puruùà unaffected by affliction, deed, result of action or the latent

impressions thereof.

[R] *ä÷vara* is a distinct *puruàa*, untouched by the vehicles of affliction, action, and fruition.

[S] Isvara is the supreme Purusha, unaffected by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions or by any inner impressions of desires.

[T] *ä÷vara* is a particular *Puruàa* who is untouched by the afflictions of life, actions and the results and impressions produced by these actions.

Commentary:

YS1.25 tatra nirati÷ayaü sarvajñabãjam

Translations:

[B] Unsubjected to time, God is the spiritual guide even for the ancients.

[D] He knows everything there is to be known.

[F] In Him the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed.

[H] In him the seed of omniscience has reached its utmost development which cannot be exceeded.

[R] In Him the seed of the omniscient is not exceeded.

[S] In Him is the complete manifestation of the seed of omniscience.

[T] in Him is the highest limit of Omniscience.

Commentary:

YS1.26 sa eua pãrveuàmapi guruñ kàlenànavacchedat

Translations:

[B] God (*ä÷vara*) is the unequalled source of all knowledge.

[D] God is eternal. In fact he is the ultimate teacher. He is the source of Guidance for all teachers: past, present and future.

[F] By virtue of [His] continuity over time, [the Lord] was also the mentor of the earlier [adepts of Yoga].

[H] The teacher of former teachers, because with him there is no limitation by time (to his omnipotence).

[R] He is the teacher of the ancients too, not being limited by time.

[S] Unconditioned by time, He is the teacher of even the most ancient teachers.

[T] Being unconditioned by time He is Teacher even of the Ancients.

Commentary:

YS1.27 tasya vácakañ praõavañ

Translations:

[B] Its expression is the "sacred syllable".

[D] In the way most appropriate to the qualities of God.

[F] His symbol is the "pronouncement" [i.e. the sacred syllable *om*].

[H] The sacred word designating him is *praõava* or the mystic syllable *OM*.

[R] The sacred word connotes him.

[S] The word expressive of Isvara is the mystic sound *OM* [Note: *OM* is God's name as well as form.]

[T] His designator is "Om".

Commentary:

Translations:

- [B] Repeating the sacred syllable and pondering its meaning lead to its understanding.
[D] In order to relate to God it is necessary to regularly address him properly and reflect on his qualities.
[F] The recitation of that [sacred syllable leads to] the contemplation of its meaning.
[H] Repeat it and contemplate upon its meaning.
[R] Its repetition and the understanding of its meaning.
[S] To repeat it with reflection upon its meaning is an aid.
[T] Its constant repetition and meditation on its meaning.

Commentary:

YS1.29 tataḥ pratyakvetanàdhigamo 'pyantaràyàbhàva÷ca

Translations:

- [B] It is then that one understands the self and gradually clears inner obstacles.
[D] The individual will in time perceive his true nature. He will not be disturbed by any interruptions that may arise in his journey to the state of Yoga.
[F] Thence [follows] the attainment of [habitual] inward-mindedness and also the disappearance of the obstacles [mentioned in the next aphorism].
[H] From that comes realisation of the individual Self and the obstacles are resolved.
[R] Thence the understanding of the individual self and the absence of obstacles too.
[S] From this practice all the obstacles disappear and simultaneously dawns knowledge of the inner Self.
[T] From it (result) the disappearance of obstacles and turning inward of consciousness.

Commentary:

YS1.30 vyàdhi styàna saü÷aya pramàdàlasyàvirati
bhràntidar÷anàlabdhabhàmikatvànāvasthitatvànī cittavikùepàste'ntarayāḥ

vyàdhi = illness/sickness; *styàna* = mental stagnation/incompetence; *saü÷aya* = doubts/doubt; *pramàda* = lack of foresight/delusion; *alasya* = fatigue, sloth; *avirati* = overindulgence/non-abstention; *bhràntidar÷ana* = illusions about one's true state of mind/erroneous conception; *alabdhabhàmikatva* = lack of perseverance/non-attainment of any yogic state; *anāvasthitatvànī* = regression/instability to stay in a yogic state; *cittavikùepàḥ* = distractions of the mind-stuff; *te* = these; *antarayāḥ* = obstacles

[The definitions of the nine obstacles are those of D/H.]

Translations:

- [B] The inner obstacles that disperse the mind are sickness, mental inertia, doubt, haste, apathy, intemperance, errors in judgement of oneself, lack of perseverance, and the inability to stay at a level once reached.
[D] There are nine types of interruptions to developing mental clarity: illness, mental stagnation, doubts, lack of foresight, fatigue, over indulgence, illusions about one's true state of mind, lack of perseverance and regression. They are obstacles because they cause mental disturbances and encourage distractions.
[F] Sickness, languor, doubt, heedlessness, sloth, dissipation, false vision, nonattainment of the stages [of yoga], and instability [in these stages] are the distractions of consciousness; these are the obstacles.
[H] Sickness, incompetence, doubt, delusion, sloth, non-abstention, erroneous conception, non-attainment of any yogic stage, and instability to stay in a yogic state, these distractions

of the mind are the impediments.

[R] Disease, languor, indecision, carelessness, sloth, sensuality, -- these, causing distractions, are the obstacles, mistaken notion, missing the point, instability

[S] Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, failure to reach firm ground and slipping from the ground gained -- these distractions of the mind-stuff are the obstacles.

[T] Disease, languor, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldly-mindedness, delusion, non-achievement of a stage, instability, these (nine) cause the distraction of the mind and they are the obstacles.

Some Preliminary Thoughts :

This seems to me to be a very important sutra, but there is so much in it that you need a long time to study it and - eventually - to understand it.

First you need to try and understand what the meaning of "obstacles" (*antarāyāḥ*) actually is, and that's not easy! These "obstacles" are not the same as the "*kleśas*" of YS 2.3, so **S** is not helpful in using "obstacle" as a translation for *antarāyāḥ* in YS 1.30 as well! My understanding of the difference is this: The "*kleśas*" are things that get in the way of proper understanding - they are aspects of the "*viparyaya*" (misapprehension) that is listed in YS 1.6 as one of the modifications of the mind. But the "obstacles" (*antarāyāḥ*) of YS 1.30 are things that interrupt or hold back your progress in yoga; they are not so much things OF the mind (which have an effect like a distorting mirror so that you can't see clearly) as things that AFFECT the mind (which you are probably more aware of). If this explanation is right, it means that the nine "obstacles" of YS1.30 are easier to confront and maybe reduce or eliminate than the five "*kleśas*" whose presence you may not even be aware of. I think it also means that reduction or elimination of the "obstacles" is a way of beginning to reduce and eliminate the "*kleśas*".

Commentary:

S says these are kind of like a chain. The first obstacle is physical disease; this has an effect on your mind, making it weaker, and thus open to doubt; and so on. He also makes quite a good point - that it's a natural law that we need to be challenged in order to understand our own capacities. If we overcome an obstacle we become stronger.

D simply comments, "The more we are vulnerable to these interruptions the more difficult it is to reach a state of Yoga."

V says that the nine obstacles "arise with the fluctuations of the mind" and that if they are absent, "the fluctuations do not arise." He also explains what each of the nine words means (I am missing this bit out as I hope that the double-definition of each word above in the Translation section has done this job already). **H** has quite a helpful explanation of **V**. He says "Destruction of the impediments and the mind being fully concentrated are the same thing." He then shows that you really have to tackle these obstacles in order, beginning with bodily ailments, (a point similar to **S**'s "chain") and suggests that the best means to tackle each obstacle is "*vārya*" (energy, enthusiasm, vitality).

T, for once, has an explanation that I can easily understand. He says that the average person has a mind that is constantly turned outwards towards what is going on in the world, and is thus easily and constantly distracted. But a Yogin has to develop an inward-turned mind, free from the delusory impressions of the outer world.. The nine obstacles are all things that are likely to deflect the yogin from his purpose by drawing his attention to the things of the outer world. **T** then goes on to explain each of the obstacles in some detail. Finally he says that these nine "obstacles" are obstacles of a particular type - Patanjali called them "*cittavikūṣpāḥ*" - which hinder the practice of "*dhāraṇā*", "*dhyāna*" and "*samadhi*". As **T** points out, "There are other kinds of obstacles too. Every serious defect of character can become an obstacle. Karma can place obstacles in the path of the aspirant which make the practice of Yoga for the time being impossible. . . . These different kinds of obstacles are dealt with in their proper places." Patanjali is dealing with these nine obstacles in this

Chapter because it is the "Samadhi Pada", and he has to discuss all the factors involved in understanding "Samadhi".

I hope you now feel a bit clearer about this Sutra. It has taken me a while, but at least I feel clearer in MY mind!!

YS1.31 dupkha daurmanasyaigamejayatva÷vāsa pra÷vāsa vik÷epa sahabhuvap

dupkha = distress; *daurmanasya* = despair; *aigamejayatva* = trembling of the body; *÷vāsa* = [disturbed] inhalation; *pra÷vāsa* = [disturbed] exhalation; *vik÷epa* = mental distractions; *sahabhuvap* = accompaniments

Translations:

[D] All these interruptions produce one or more of the following symptoms: mental discomfort, negative thinking, the inability to be at ease in different body postures and difficulty in controlling one's breath.

[F] Pain, depression, tremor of the limbs, and [wrong] inhalation and exhalation are accompanying [symptoms] of the distractions.

[R] Pain, despair, shakiness, inspiration and expiration are the companions of these distractions.

[S] Accompaniments to the mental distractions include distress, despair, trembling of the body, and disturbed breathing.

[T] (mental) pain, despair, nervousness and hard breathing are the symptoms of a distracted condition of mind.

Commentary:

As **S** points out, we all experience these symptoms at one time or another, and they prevent concentration or meditation. So we have to work on these things to reduce them, and this is done by right diet, proper rest and exercise.

The following eight sutras explain how the nine "interruptions/obstacles" and their symptoms can be controlled.

YS1.32 tat prati÷edhārtham eka tattvābhyāsaḥ

tat = their; *prati÷edha* = prevention; *artham* = for; *eka* = single; *tattva* = subject; *abhyāsaḥ* = practice

Translations:

[D] If one can select an appropriate means to steady the mind and practise this, whatever the provocations, the interruptions cannot take root.

[F] In order to counteract these [distractions, the yogin should resort to] the practice [of concentrating] on a single principle.

[H] For their stoppage (i.e. of distractions) practice of (concentration on) a single principle should be made.

[R] For their prevention, habituation to one truth.

[S] The practice of concentration on a single subject [or the use of one technique] is the best way to prevent the obstacles and their accompaniments.

[T] For removing these obstacles there (should be) constant practice of one principle.

Commentary:

T explains that "the object [of the *abhyāsaḥ*] is the reversal of the tendency of the mind to run constantly after a multitude of objects in the outer world and to develop the capacity to pursue constantly one objective inside within the realm of consciousness." **T** also says that the exercises suggested by **P** will allow both of these objectives to develop together.

S points out that the nature of the object of concentration doesn't matter; it's the goal that matters. "Stick to one thing and forge ahead with that. Why do you want to have this one-pointed concentration? To make the mind clear so you can transcend it. You are not

going to cling to the object but just use it as a ladder to climb up." **S** also points out that **P** "is interested in the goal and not the paths." **P** suggests various paths, but leaves it to you to choose the path that suits you. "That is why yoga is appreciated by everyone. Nobody can deny the Yoga philosophy because it has something to suit everyone." He uses the metaphor of digging a well to illustrate this point: "There's no value in digging shallow wells in a hundred places. Decide on one place and dig deep. Even if you encounter a rock, use dynamite and keep going down."

H comments on the interpretation of *eka tattva* = one principle/reality. He says that the "quality of contemplation" is of more importance than the object of contemplation". You can choose whatever object you like, but it should be the **only** object of contemplation. He does suggest that "for practice of one principle, *āvara* and I-sense [*ahamkāra*] are best, but that it's really up to the individual to choose. By concentrating on one principle "the mind easily gets tranquil. When it is co-ordinated with inhalation and exhalation of breath, ordinary breathing turns into Yogic breathing and when that is mastered, one is not easily perturbed by afflictions."

The purpose of Vyasa's commentary on this *sutra* is to controvert those who argue that the mind is transitory and that each thought is unconnected with any other.

YS1.33 maitrā karunā muditopekūānāi sukha duḥkha punyāpunyā viūayānam bhāvanātaḥ citta prasādanāi

maitrā = friendliness; *karunā* = compassion; *mudita* = delight/gladness; *upekūānāi* = disregard/indifference; *sukha* = happy/happiness, joy; *duḥkha* = unhappy/sorrow, misery; *punya* = virtuous/virtue; *apunya* = wicked/vice; *viūayānam* = in the case of/(having for their) objects; *bhāvanātaḥ* = by cultivating attitudes; *citta* = mind-stuff/(of) mind; *prasādanāi* = undisturbed calmness/clarification, purification

Translations:

[D] In daily life we see people who are happier than we are, people who are less happy. Some may be doing praiseworthy things and others causing problems. Whatever may be our usual attitude towards such people and their actions, if we can be pleased with others who are happier than ourselves, compassionate towards those who are unhappy, joyful with those doing praiseworthy things and remain undisturbed by the errors of others, our minds will be very tranquil.

[F] The projection of friendliness, compassion, gladness and equanimity toward things - [be they] joyful, sorrowful, meritorious or demeritorious - [leads to] the pacification of consciousness

[H] The mind becomes purified by the cultivation of feelings of amity, compassion, goodwill and indifference respectively towards happy, miserable, virtuous and sinful creatures.

[R] By cultivating habits of friendliness, compassion, complacency and indifference towards happiness, misery, virtue, and vice, respectively, the mind becomes pure.

[S] By cultivating attitudes of friendliness toward the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and disregard toward the wicked, the mind-stuff retains its undisturbed calmness.

[T] The mind becomes clarified by cultivating attitudes of friendliness, compassion, gladness and indifference respectively towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice.

Commentary:

V says that by following these precepts the mind becomes pure, and "a purified mind becoming one-pointed eventually attains serenity."

S commends this *sutra* as being the one most useful in giving guidance on how to live. Our goal is to have a serene mind, which will be ours if we use the appropriate attitude to the four basic types of individuals.

T points out the dangers of becoming callous in our attitudes towards others, which will create unhappiness for others as well as ourselves. He also comments on **P**'s advice to be indifferent towards vice, saying that **P** is not giving advice for people in general, but advice for the practical student of yoga who aspires towards enlightenment. Because this is a difficult thing to achieve, the yoga practitioner cannot afford to waste his resources on trying to reform the wicked; this task can wait until **after** he has achieved enlightenment.

H says much the same as the others. He ends with the comment, "To overlook the lapses of others is indifference. It is not a positive thinking but restraining the mind from dwelling on the frailties of others."

YS1.34 **pracchardana vidhàranàbhyàü vâ pràõasya**

pracchardana = exhalation/(by) ejection, expiration; *vidhàranàbhyàü* = (and) by retention; *vâ* = or; *pràõasya* = of the breath.

Translations:

[D] The practice of breathing exercises involving extended exhalation might be helpful.

[F] Or [the restriction of the fluctuations of consciousness is achieved] through expulsion and retention of the breath (*prana*) [according to yogic rules].

[H] By exhaling and restraining the breath also (the mind is calmed).

[R] Optionally, by expulsion and retention of breath.

[S] Or that calm is retained by the controlled exhalation or retention of the breath.

[T] Or by the expiration and retention of the breath.

Commentary:

D notes that pranayama techniques must be correctly taught and guided. [See **D**'s [chapter on Pranayama in Heart of Yoga](#).]

V explains: "Exhaling or expulsion is the ejection of the internal air through the apertures of the nose by a special kind of effort. Restraining or Pranayama is retention of the breath. The mind can also be calmed or stabilised by these methods."

H stresses that breathing practice must be accompanied by an attempt to make the mind vacant; this calms the mind. He also says that exhalation is the key: the body and chest must be kept still, with the abdominal muscles only responsible for inhalation and exhalation. "Then, to remain as far as possible in that vacant state of the mind is Pranayama." It is during exhalation that you can get the feeling of the ego disentangling itself from the body. "To practise this method, the breath should be exhaled with prolonged and appropriate effort. The whole body and the chest should be kept still and inhalation and exhalation should be done by the movement of abdominal muscles. When this is practised assiduously for some time, a happy feeling or feeling of lightness spreads all over the body."

S is a bit less prescriptive, simply pointing out that, "whatever be the agitation in the mind, regulating the breath will help." In other words, by regulating the breath, we can control the mind. **S** also says that though some pranayama specialists say that Patanjali referred to holding the breath out, Patanjali didn't go into detail about breathing exercises, and probably just meant that we should watch and regulate the breath.

T refers to [YS II 49-53](#) for more on Pranayama, saying that in I 34, **P** is just making a general point about preliminary practices, which have only the effect of purifying the *nadis*, and thus calming the mind.

YS1.35 **viàayavatã vâ pravçttir utpannà manasà sthiti nibandhanã**

viàayavatã = sense perception/sensuous; *vâ*= or; *pravçttir* = experienced by the senses/function, occupation, pursuit; *utpannà* = brought about/arisen; *manasà* = of the mind; *sthiti* = steadiness; *nibandhanã* = cause/binder (of), helpful in establishing.

Translations:

[D] By regular enquiry into the role of the senses we can reduce mental distortions.

[F] Or [the condition of restriction comes about when] an object-centred activity has arisen that holds the mind in steadiness.

[H] The development of higher objective perceptions called *viàayavatã* also bring about tranquillity of mind.

[R] Or, higher sense activity appearing, mental steadiness results .

[S] Or the concentration on subtle sense perceptions can cause steadiness of mind.

[T] Coming into activity of (higher) senses also becomes helpful in establishing steadiness of mind.

Commentary:

D's version seems easy to understand but it doesn't address the concept of higher sense-perceptions which appears in the other translations. V/H, S and T (with V as the ultimate source) all say that, for example, by concentrating on the tip of the nose you can eventually arouse a higher/subtler sense of smell. H also gives the example of still being able to see an image with your eyes shut, if you have successfully concentrated on it with your eyes open.

I have to confess that I haven't experienced any of these heightened sensory perceptions - but this is probably because I don't concentrate hard enough, or because I haven't practised for long enough.

YS1.36

vi÷okà vâ jyotiùmatã

vi÷okà = blissful/sorrowless, serene; *vâ* = or; *jyotiùmatã* = the supreme light/luminous.

Translations:

[D] When we enquire into what life is and what keeps us alive, we may find some solace for our mental distractions.

[F] Or [restriction is achieved by mental activities that are] sorrowless and illuminating.

[H] Or by perception which is free from sorrow and is radiant (stability of mind can also be produced).

[R] Or, the state of painless lucidity.

[S] Or by concentrating on the supreme, ever-blissful Light within.

[T] Also (through) serene or luminous (states experienced within).

Commentary:

This is an incredibly elliptical *sutra*!

V explains: "Contemplation practised on the innermost core of the heart brings about knowledge of Buddhi.... Similarly, the mind engrossed in the thought of pure I-sense appears like a waveless ocean, placid and limitless, which is pure I-sense all over." H's commentary on V says, "The method of gradually reaching the contemplation of Buddhi-sattva or pure I-sense is first to imagine in the 'lotus', i.e. core of the heart, called the abode of Brahman, the presence of a limitless uninterrupted expanse of clear effulgence like the sky."

I find this interesting because it **may** explain my occasional experience of bright blue, when my eyes are shut and when my mind is especially calm.

Further on, H advises, "First imagine in your heart a limitless, sky-like or transparent effulgence; then think that the self is within that, i.e. 'I am spread all over it'. Such thought brings ineffable bliss."

S asks us to imagine a "brilliant light" inside our hearts, representing "Divine Consciousness". He adds that though we have to imagine it at first, it will eventually become a reality.

YS1.37**vāta rāga viūayaü vā cittam**

vāta = free from; *rāga* = attachment; *viūayaü* = for sense objects/(having for its) object; *vā* =or; *cittaiü* = mind-stuff/mind.

Translations:

[D] When we are confronted with problems, the counsel of someone who has mastered similar problems can be a great help.

[F] Or [restriction is achieved when] consciousness is directed toward [those beings who have] conquered attachment.

[H] Or (contemplating) on a mind which is free from desires (the devotee's mind gets stabilised).

[R] Or, the mind having desirelessness for its object.

[S] Or by concentrating on a great soul's mind which is totally freed from attachment to sense objects.

[T] Also the mind fixed on those who are free from attachment.

Note: For **P**'s definition of *rāga*, see YS II.7

Commentary:

V simply says, "If a Yogin meditates on a passionless mind he also attains stability of mind." This, as **H** comments, is because "a mind free from passion finds it easy to be unattached and free." **H** also says, "If one's own mind can be freed from desires, and thus free from thought, and if that state of the mind can be mastered by practice, then also the mind becomes free from attachment to objects. This is really practising detachment."

This seems to sum it up very well, and very clearly. **S** says much the same, but doesn't say it so well. **D**'s note is worth mentioning - that you can choose either a living or dead person as your focus. **T**, for once, is down-to-earth in his commentary. One useful thing that he says is "We should note that Patanjali recommends meditation not on an abstract virtue but on the virtue as embodied in a human personality. There is a definite reason for this. In the first place a beginner who is still trying to acquire steadiness of mind is not likely to derive much benefit from meditation on an abstract virtue.... Secondly, earnest meditation on such a personality puts us in rapport with that personality and brings about a flow of power and influence which accelerates our progress."

So all you have to do is identify an appropriate person - probably a yoga teacher e.g. Krishnamacharya, or a spiritual teacher such as Jesus. If I were to choose Jesus I think the Beatitudes would be a good object of meditation. I know bits of them, but I would need to learn them by heart.

YS1.38**svapna nidra jñānāmbanai vā**

svapna = dream/dream state; *nidra* = deep sleep/state of dreamless sleep; *jñāna* = experience/knowledge; *āmbanai* = to hold attention/(having for its) support; *vā* = or/also

Translations:

[D] Enquiry into dreams and sleep and our experiences during or around these states can help to clarify some of our problems.

[F] Or [restriction is achieved when consciousness] rests on insights [arising from] dreams and sleep.

[H] Or by taking as the object of meditation the images of dreams or the state of dreamless sleep (the mind of the yogin gets stabilised).

[R] Or, having the knowledge of dream and sleep as its object of study.

[S] Or by concentrating on an experience had during dream or deep sleep.

[T] Also the mind depending upon the knowledge derived from dreams or dreamless sleep.

Commentary:

H thinks this may be a suitable option for some people. If I understand him correctly, he suggests that **if** a suitable image appears in a dream, you can use it as an object of contemplation when awake. He also seems to suggest that - if you have the ability - you can actually contemplate the object while still dreaming (a sort of "lucid dreaming", presumably). As for using deep sleep as a focus, **H** says you take the tamasic feeling of deep sleep as your object of contemplation.

This seems a bit improbable to me. Or at any rate I don't think I would find this option appropriate for me!

T's explanation delves into the "astral world" of theosophy, and doesn't appeal to me at all. As usual **D** has a helpfully down-to-earth comment. He points out that sometimes "even the most ordinary, day to day occurrences are not always clear to us", but that a good night's sleep can create a very different perspective.

I feel I haven't fully got to grips with this sutra. Maybe I need to sleep on it!!

YS1.39

yathAbhimatadhyAnAdvA

yatha = as; *abhimata* = per choice [or desire]/desired; *dhyàna* = by meditating; *và* = or

Translations:

[D] Any enquiry of interest can calm the mind.

[F] Or [restriction is achieved] through meditation (*dhyàna*) as desired.

[H] Or by contemplating on whatsoever thing one may like (the mind becomes stable).

[R] Or, by meditating according to one's predilection.

[S] Or by meditating on anything one chooses that is elevating .

[T] Or by meditation as desired.

Commentary:

H comments, "Such is the habit of the mind that if it can be stabilised for some length of time on any particular thing, it can be stabilised on other things also." However, as **S** points out, if you can get advice from someone else with the right knowledge, that makes more sense than faffing about and trying this and that in an aimless way. **T** makes the point that different methods suit different people, so if you can find an object of contemplation towards which you are genuinely attracted, it will obviously make the practice of meditation much easier. But **T** also sensibly adds the caveat that a little experimentation is OK, but constant chopping and changing is counterproductive.

I just wish I could settle permanently on an appropriate object of contemplation. I think thought that either 1.35 or 1.37 provides what I need.

YS1.40

paramàõuparamamahattvânto 'sya va÷ākàraḥ

Translations:

[B] Control of the mind then extends to the infinitely small and the infinitely vast.

[D] When one reaches this state, nothing is beyond comprehension. The mind can follow and help understand the simple and the complex, the infinite and the infinitesimal, the perceptible and the imperceptible.

[F] His mastery [extends] from the most minute to the greatest magnitude.

[H] When the mind develops the power of stabilising on the smallest size as well as on the greatest one, then the mind comes under control.

[R] His power reaches down to the minutest, and up to the largest.

[S] Gradually, one's mastery in concentration extends from the primal atom to the greatest magnitude.

[T] His mastery extends from the finest atom to the greatest infinity.

Commentary:

YS1.41

kũãõavçtterabhijätasyeva maõergrahãtçgrahaõagràhyeùu tatsthatadaçjanatà samàpattip

Translations:

[B] As fluctuations subside, the contemplative mind becomes transparent like a gem, and reflects the object, whether it is that which perceives, the instrument of perception, or the object perceived.

[D] When the mind is free from distraction, it is possible for all the mental processes to be involved in the object of enquiry. As one remains in this state, gradually one becomes totally immersed in the object. The mind, then, like a flawless diamond reflects only the features of the object and nothing else.

[F] [In the case of a consciousness whose] fluctuations have dwindled [and which has become] like a transparent jewel, [there comes about] -- in regard to the "grasper," "grasping," and the "grasped" -- [a state of] coincidence with that on which [consciousness] abides and by which [consciousness] is "anointed."

[H] When the fluctuations of the mind are weakened the mind appears to take on the features of the object of meditation -- whether it be the cogniser (grahità). the instrument of cognition (grahaõa) or the object cognised (grahya) -- as does a transparent jewel, and this identification is called samàpatti or engrossment.

[R] Becoming like a transparent crystal on the modifications disappearing, the mind acquires the power of thought-transformation (*samàpatti*), the power of appearing in the shape of whatever object is presented to it, be it the knower, the knowable, or the act of knowing.

[S] Just as the naturally pure crystal assumes shapes and colours of objects placed near it, so the Yogi's mind, with its totally weakened modifications, becomes clear and balanced and attains the state devoid of differentiation between knower, knowable and knowledge. This culmination of meditation is samadhi.

[T] In the case of one whose *Citta-Vçttis* have been almost annihilated, fusion or entire absorption in one another of the cognizer, cognition and cognized is brought about as in the case of a transparent jewel (resting on a coloured surface).

Commentary:

YS1.42

tatra ÷abdàrthajçànavikalpaip saikãrõà savitarkà samàpattip

Translations:

[B] It then becomes contemplation with a mixed approach, in which representations of the object remain: its name, its essence, and the knowledge one has of it.

[D] Initially, because of our past experiences and ideas, our understanding of the object is distorted.

[F] [When] conceptual knowledge, [based on] the intent of words, [is present] in this [ecstatic state of coincidence between subject and object], [then it is called] "coincidence interspersed with cogitation."

[H] The engrossment, in which there is the mixture of word, its meaning (i.e. the object) and its knowledge, is known as savitarkà samàpatti.

[R] There the thought-transformation in which the options of word, meaning, and idea are mixed up, is called indistinct (verbal).

[S] The samadhi in which name, form and knowledge of them is mixed is called savitarka samadhi, or samadhi with deliberation.

[T] *Savitarka Samàdhi* is that in which knowledge based only on words, real knowledge and ordinary knowledge based on sense perception or reasoning are present in a mixed state and

the mind alternates between them.

Commentary:

YS1.43 smṛtipari÷uddhau svarāpa÷ānyevārthamātranirbhāsà nirvitarkà

Translations:

[B] Beyond the mixed approach stage, contemplation manifests the exact nature of the object. Memory is totally purified, as if the mind were stripped of its identity.

[D] When the direction of the mind towards the object is sustained, the ideas and memories of the past gradually recede. The mind becomes crystal clear and one with the object. At this moment there is no feeling of oneself. This is pure preception.

[F] On the purification of [the depths of] memory, [which has become] empty of its essence as it were, [and when] the object [of meditation] alone shines forth, [then this ecstatic state is called] "supracogitative"..

[H] When the memory is purified, the mind appears to be devoid of its own nature (i.e. of reflective consciousness) and only the object (on which it is contemplating) remains illuminated. This kind of engrossment is called nirvitarkà samāpatti.

[R] Distinct [i.e. wordless] thought-transformation is that in which the mind shines out as the object alone on the cessation of memory, and, [as] it were, devoid of its own nature.

[S] When the memory is well purified, the knowledge of the object of concentration shines alone, devoid of the distinction of name and quality. This is nirvitarka samadhi, or samadhi without deliberation.

[T] On the clarification of memory, when the mind loses its essential nature (subjectivity) as it were, and the real knowledge of the object alone shines (through the mind) *Nirvitarka Samādhi* is attained.

Commentary:

YS1.44 etayaiva savicàrà nirvicàrà ca sākūmaviùayà vyākhyàtà

Translations:

[B] Such contemplation intuitively grasps subtle objects in their reality and beyond.

[D] This process is possible with any type of object, at any level of perception, whether superficial and general or in depth and specific.

[F] Thus, by this [cogitative ecstasy, the other two basic types of ecstasy] -- the "reflective" and the "suprareflective" -- are explained; [these have] subtle objects [as meditative props].

[H] By this (foregoing) the savicàra and nirvicàra engrossments whose objects are subtle are also explained.

[R] By this the meditative and the ultra-meditative, having the subtle for their objects, are also described.

[S] In the same way, savicara (reflective) and nirvicara (super or non-reflective) samadhis, which are practised upon subtle objects, are explained.

[T] By this (what has been said in the two previous *Sātras*) *Samādhis* of *Savicàra*, *Nirvicàra* and subtler stages (I.17) have also been explained.

Commentary:

YS1.45 sākūmaviùayatvaü cālīgāparyavasānam

Translations:

[B] Subtlety of the object is limitless, except that it must manifest itself.

[D] Except that the mind cannot comprehend the very source of perception within us, its

objects can be unlimited.

[F] And the subtle objects terminate in the Undifferentiate.

[H] Subtlety pertaining to objects culminates in a-liṅga or the unmanifested.

[R] And the province of the subtle reaches up to the numinal.

[S] The subtlety of possible objects of concentration ends only at the undefinable.

[T] The province of *Samādhi* concerned with subtle objects extends up to the *Aliṅga* stage of the *Guḍas*.

Commentary:

YS1.46 tā eva sabājaḥ samadhiḥ

Translations:

[B] These four contemplative stages comprise contemplation with seed.

[D] All these processes of directing the mind involve an object of enquiry.

[F] These [types of ecstatic coincidence between subject and object] verily [belong to the class of] "ecstasy with seed".

[H] These are the only kinds of objective concentrations.

[R] They are the seeded trance only.

[S] All these samadhis are sabija (with seed), which could bring one back into bondage or mental disturbance.

[T] They (stages corresponding to subtle objects) constitute only *Samādhi* with "seed".

Commentary:

YS1.47 nirvicāravaiḥ āradye 'dhyātmaprasādaḥ

Translations:

[B] With the mastery of the fourth seed of contemplation, the inner being appears in all clarity and serenity.

[D] Then the individual begins to truly know himself.

[F] When there is lucidity in the suprarreflective [type of ecstasy, then this is called] "of the inner being".

[H] On gaining proficiency in nirvicāra, purity in the inner instruments of cognition is developed.

[R] The undisturbed flow of the ultra-meditative causes subjective luminosity.

[S] In the purity of nirvicāra samadhi, the supreme Self shines.

[T] On attaining the utmost purity of the *Nirvicāra* stage (of *Samādhi*) there is the dawning of the spiritual light.

Commentary:

YS1.48 cetañbharā tatra prajñā

Translations:

[B] Now the outflowing of supreme knowledge is absolute truth.

[D] Then, what he sees and shares with others is free from error.

[F] In this [state of utmost lucidity], insight is truth-bearing.

[H] The knowledge that is gained in that state is called cetañbharā (filled with truth).

[R] Therein the faculty of essential cognition.

[S] This is cetañbhara prajña, or the absolute true consciousness.

[T] There, the consciousness is Truth-and-Right-bearing.

Commentary:

YS1.49

÷rutànumànaprajṣàbhyàmanyaviùayà vi÷eùàrthatvāt

Translations:

[B] This supreme knowledge grasps the intrinsic nature of the object, which differs from the correct knowledge that tradition and inference bring.

[D] His knowledge is no longer based on memory or inference. It is spontaneous, direct and at both a level and an intensity that is beyond the ordinary.

[F] The scope [of this truth-bearing insight] is distinct from the insight [gained from] tradition and inference, [because of its] particular purposiveness.

[H] Is different from that derived from testimony or through inference, because it relates to particulars (of objects).

[R] It has different objects from those of verbal and inferential cognition, as it refers to particulars.

[S] This special truth is totally different from knowledge gained by hearing, study of scripture or inference.

[T] The knowledge based on inference or testimony is different from direct knowledge obtained in the higher states of consciousness (I.48) because it is confined to a particular object (or aspect).

Commentary:

YS1.50

tajjaḥ saüskàro 'nyasaükàrapratibandhã

Translations:

[B] Mental permeation born of direct knowledge opposes all other mental permeation.

[D] As this newly acquired quality of the mind gradually strengthens, it dominates the other mental tendencies which are based on misapprehensions.

[F] The activator springing from that [truth-bearing insight] obstructs the other activators [residing in the depths of consciousness].

[H] The latent impression born of such knowledge is opposed to the formation of other latent impressions.

[R] Residual potencies born therefrom impede other residual potencies.

[S] The impression produced by this samadhi wipes out all other impressions.

[T] The impression produced by it (*Sabãja Samàdhi*) stands in the way of other impressions.

Commentary:

YS1.51

tasyàpi nirodhe sarvanirodhànnirbãjajḥ samàdhiḥ

Translations:

[B] In passing beyond this last kind of mental permeation, seedless contemplation appears.

[D] The mind reaches a state when it has no impressions of any sort. It is open, clear, simply transparent.

[F] Upon the restriction of even this [activator, there ensues], owing to the restriction of all [contents of consciousness], the ecstasy without seed.

[H] By the stoppage of that too (on account of the elimination of the latent impressions of samprajṣàna) objectless concentration takes place through suppression of all modifications.

[R] By the suppression of that, too, all beings suppresses, comes the seedless trance.

[S] When even this impression is wiped out, every impression is totally wiped out and

there is nirbija [seedless] samadhi.

[T] On suppression of even that owing to suppression of all (modifications of the mind)
"Seedless" *samàdhi* is attained.

Commentary:

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Any comments?