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PATANJALI YOGA SUTRAS

Translation and Commentary in the Light of
Vedanta Scripture

by A. K. Aruna

PDF version

Upasana Yoga Media

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Invocation

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

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

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

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Foreword

SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASWATI

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([Recommendation Letter](#))

The *Patañjali Yoga Sūtras* cannot be looked upon as a book on the philosophy of *Seśvara Sāṅkhya*. *Ādi Śāṅkara*, in his *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*, had discussed the Yoga School quoting certain *sūtras*, which are not found in Patañjali's book. Perhaps the *Patañjali Yoga Sūtras* formed a part of the syllabus for the people given to traditional Vedanta study. Even today, *jijñāsus*, who study at Kailash Ashram, study the *Patañjali Yoga Sūtras*, with various Sanskrit commentaries.

I am very happy that Sri Aruna, one of my senior students, is presenting the *Patañjali Yoga Sūtras* with a commentary in keeping with the Vedanta tradition. Very good in Sanskrit, Aruna's word for word translation of the meaning of the *sūtras* does not leave anything to be desired. With his commentary, the overall vision of Patañjali comes alive.

There are no authentic books in circulation on this important work on Yoga discipline. Aruna's book meets with the need in admirable measure. I congratulate him for his contribution to the pursuit of spiritual discipline.

Sw. Dayananda

18/8/2013

Preface

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

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

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

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

The earliest extant and most influential Sanskrit commentary (*bhāṣya*) is by a man named *Vyāsa*. He does not quote any scripture. Instead, he sprinkles in his commentary a few quotes from certain sages, culled mostly from the *Mahā-Bhārata* epic. The innumerable English translations and commentaries of these *sūtras* appear to only convey the spirituality, or lack thereof, of their many and varied authors. Even the scriptural leaning versions, such as the one by Bangali Baba (*The Yogasutra of Patanjali: With the Commentary of Vyasa*) and the one jointly by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood (*How to Know God: The Yoga*

Aphorisms of Patanjali), sparingly connect the *sūtras* to specific scriptures. The effort here is to rectify this void.

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

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

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

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

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

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

In the past ten years, I have created a five volume set of texts called *The Aruna Sanskrit Language Series*. The series, in a self-teaching format, unfolds the grammar of Sanskrit along

with the *Bhagavad Gītā*. It includes a grammar book and a lesson book, plus a dictionary, a translation, and a grammatical analysis of all the verses of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

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

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

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

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

Setting aside my doubts, I started from the *sūtras'* beginning and, to my surprise I have to admit, found the way to reconcile each *sūtra* to *Vedānta*. In the process, I found the available traditional commentaries to be of little use. None of them made an adequate attempt to base the *sūtras* on scripture. In fact, they took them in a different direction towards a later developing dualist philosophy called *Sāṅkhya*.

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

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

To convey this enlightening teaching to its current students, these *sūtras* are explained in clear contemporary language. The explanations are in keeping with our current culture and

Preface

sciences – the same as was done in *Patañjali*'s time. As it was then, this work is presented as a current spiritual non-fiction meant for enlightenment.

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

Although it will be argued here that there need be no essential separation between these two traditions, assuming the innate dualist understanding is preliminary to and can mature into a non-dual knowledge, an interesting twist has happened. The *Yoga Sūtras*, which are amenable to either tradition, have been subsumed by a pervasive early commentary that interprets the *sūtras* only through *Sāṅkhya*, a dualist scientific philosophy. This stops the disciplines in *Yoga* from further questioning the reasons one believes in differences being ultimately real. Limiting *samādhi* (contemplation) to reaffirming *Sāṅkhya*’s dualist perspective, this *samādhi* becomes disconnected from the *samādhi* championed in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* that pursue knowledge to its ultimate conclusion in the one unifying reality of everything including oneself.

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

Vedānta Yoga.

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

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

The *sāṅkhya* and *Sāṅkhya*

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

As knowledge, the term *sāṅkhya* is used in the epic *Mahā-Bhārata* and in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as the sacred knowledge handed down from the scriptures. In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where *Kṛṣṇa*'s teaching starts (verses 2.11 through 38, said therein to be dealing with '*sāṅkhya*') the quotations, paraphrases, and teachings are directly from the *Upaniṣads*. Hence, the rest of the *mantras* in those non-dual *Upaniṣads*, in particular the *Kaṭha Up.*, cannot be disconnected from what is called *sāṅkhya* in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.¹

¹ Most of *Bh. Gītā* verses 2.11–38 are borrowed from or can be easily seen as based upon the *Kaṭha Up.*:

B.G. 2.11 with *K.U.* 1.2.22, 2.1.4 & 5;

B.G. 2.12 with *K.U.* 2.1.13 & 2.2.8;

B.G. 2.13 with *K.U.* 2.2.7;

B.G. 2.14 with *K.U.* 2.3.6;

B.G. 2.15 with *K.U.* 2.3.8;

B.G. 2.16 with *K.U.* 2.3.13;

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

With regard to *Vedānta*, there are various teaching methodologies (*prakriyās*). First, there is the primary *prakriyā* of imposition-sublation (*adhyāropa-apavāda*). This *prakriyā*, meant for unfolding the non-duality unique to *Advaita Vedānta*, describes the entire universe, including what the individual thinks he or she is, as consisting of two or more categories of everything. It then dismisses these categories as being absolutely real.

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

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

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

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

We thus find the scriptures presenting the entire universe by enumerating the dualities of seer-seen, cause-effect, subtle-gross, and eater-eaten; the trio of the three worlds (heavens, atmosphere, and earth), three *guṇas*, three states of experiences (waking, dream, and deep sleep),

B.G. 2.17 with *K.U.* 2.1.2;
B.G. 2.18 with *K.U.* 1.2.22;
B.G. 2.19 from *K.U.* 1.2.19;
B.G. 2.20 from *K.U.* 1.2.18;
B.G. 2.21–25 with *K.U.* 1.2.18 & 19;
B.G. 2.28 with *K.U.* 1.2.5 & 6;
B.G. 2.29 with *K.U.* 1.2.7;
B.G. 2.30 with *K.U.* 1.2.22; and
B.G. 2.38 with *K.U.* 1.2.14 & 2.3.18.

and the three gross elements (red, white, and black, that is, fire, water, and earth in *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* 6.4.5); the five elements (space, air, fire, water, and earth); the seven worlds, the seven *tattvas* or categories (objects, senses, mind, intellect, cosmic mind, unmanifest, and the *puruṣa* or cosmic person in *Kaṭha-Upaniṣad* 3.10-11); the fourteen worlds; etcetera Any one of these presentations can be called a *sāṅkhya*.

The *Yoga Sūtras* through *Sāṅkhya*

With this scriptural background of employing enumerations to encompass the entire universe, many later philosophies and even science itself evolved. Indeed, the atheist philosophy called *Sāṅkhya*, which elaborated on the gross-subtle, *guṇas*, elements, and *tattvas* (principles) to explain the universe, was considered around the start of the first millennium in India to be the science of the universe. Many of the arts, such as medicine, and other traditions, such as Buddhism and *Vedānta*, adopted in part or whole *Sāṅkhya*'s explanations of, or at least its approach to, the science of things.

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

The *Yoga Sūtras* through *sāṅkhya*

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

Vedānta, Sāṅkhya, and Yoga Sūtras

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

pervader or *devourer*, and commonly meaning *the self*).

I, the *ātman*, am in fact the reality of the universe, not other than the Lord. The diverse universe, in fact, simply appears to exist within this singular reality. In this perspective all duality – all otherness and separation – is sub-rated as only existing *as if* and thus is not the absolute truth. This non-dualist perspective is uniquely Eastern.

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

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

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

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

The Format

This text will connect over two hundred and fifty quotations from the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads*, and the *Bhagavad Gītā* to these *Yoga Sūtras*. The student is encouraged to read the footnotes since these are where the quotations are given. The footnotes also serve to interconnect related *Yoga Sūtras*, so the text can be better understood as a consistent, integrated teaching, and not as a series of disconnected notions. If you do not investigate these footnotes and their quotations, half the purpose of this text will not be fulfilled.

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

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

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

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

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

The transliteration of Sanskrit words is here in keeping with the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST) scheme (see Appendix E), for example, *sūtra*, instead of *sutra*. Additionally, individual Sanskrit words are shown in the form one would find them in a Sanskrit

dictionary, for example, *ātman* (आत्मन् self), *yogin* (योगिन् yogi), and *draṣṭr* (द्रष्टृ seer), instead of their commonly found nominative inflected forms – *ātmā*, *yogī*, and *draṣṭā*, respectively. There is one exception, though. The Sanskrit word *karman* is shown as *karma*, because it is more a part of our international vocabulary.

Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi

Chapter 1 On Contemplation

Introducing *Yoga*

अथ योगानुशासनम् ॥(1.1)
atha yogānuśāsanam.

[*atha* – now; *anusāsana* – traditional teaching; *yoga* – the means.]

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

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

Every small goal in life finds its complete fulfillment in the attainment of this freedom alone.³

¹ ‘तां योगम् इति मन्यन्ते स्थिराम् इन्द्रिय-धारणाम्’ “This use of the word ‘*atha*’ has the sense of the beginning (*adhikāra*) of a text.” (*Vyāsa’s Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 1.1).

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

³ ‘सुखम् आत्यन्तिकं यत् तद् बुद्धि-ग्राह्यम् अतीन्द्रियम्। वेत्ति यत्र न च एव अयं स्थितः चलति तत्त्वतः॥’ “When one knows that same limitless *sukha* (fulfillment that is the nature of the self, of *ātman*) – which is to be grasped by the intellect, [yet] is not within the scope of the senses – and abiding [there in the *sukha*], never moving away from this truth [i.e., reality],” “यं लब्ध्वा च अपरं लाभं मन्यते न अधिकं ततः।

This goal is not tied to any cultural trappings or spiritual beliefs. It is as applicable to any self-conscious creature anywhere in the universe, as it is to everyone on Earth. To recognize this one goal as alone fulfilling all goals takes a certain maturity, but there is no extraordinary qualification to initiate the study of the means which prepares one for this ultimate human pursuit. *Yoga* is this preparation.

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

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

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

Another approach with a long tradition that has been passed on through the most popular existing Sanskrit commentaries is to interpret these *sūtras* through a certain literature that came after them. That later literature was primarily the dualist *Sāṅkhya* work, called the

यस्मिन् स्थितः न दुःखेन गुरुणा अपि विचाल्यते॥’ “...having gained that which one knows is not bettered by another gain, and abiding in which [reality] one would not be affected – even by great pain – one knows that disassociation from association with sorrow to be what is called *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.21–23).

⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.9.

Sāṅkhya-kārika, by *Īśvara-kṛṣṇa*. This philosophy is basically a mechanical dualism, not unlike the popular philosophies and theologies of today.

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

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

This better approach is more firmly based in tradition and follows an earlier literature that is the authority on the nature of freedom (*mokṣa*). That earlier literature is also the first to mention *yoga* and present it as a means for this freedom.⁶ That literature is the sacred *Upaniṣads*⁷ that predate these *sūtras* by many hundreds to perhaps over a thousand years. Though it is more ancient than *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, it is more sophisticated and is quite new to most people interested in *yoga*. We will show how this approach to these *sūtras*, and to everything in your

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

⁷ 'स्वयं च आत्मा ब्रह्म। तद्-विज्ञानात् अ-विद्या-निवृत्तिः इति, अतः ब्रह्म-विद्या-अर्थ-उपनिषद् आरभ्यते।' "One's very self (*ātman*) is *brahman* (limitless reality). By clearly knowing that, there is [the *mokṣa* (freedom) said to be] the removal of [self-]ignorance. The *Upaniṣad* is undertaken for the sake of this knowledge of *brahman* (*brahma-vidyā*)." 'उपनिषद् इति विद्या उच्यते, तद्-सेविनां गर्भ-जन्म-जरा-आदि-निशातनात्, तद्-अवसादनात् वा, ब्रह्मणः उपनिगमयित्वात्; उपनिषण्णं वा अस्यां (विद्यायां) परं श्रेयः॥' "This knowledge is called '*Upaniṣad*.' [It is called *Upa-ni-ṣad* because] for those who are dedicated to that [knowledge], it loosens [the bonds of] entering a womb, birth, old age, etc., [finally] puts an end to that [*saṃsāra*, the life of unbecoming becoming] by leading [you] back to [yourself as] *brahman*, and, having done this, is the ultimate goal (*śreyas*) in this [knowledge]." (*Taittirīya Up. Sāṅkara Bhāṣya* introduction).

life, can be most enlightening.

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

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

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

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

If we keep such texts as the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* as our principle reference

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

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

General Definition of *Yoga*

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

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

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

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

⁸ 'तां योगम् इति मन्यन्ते स्थिराम् इन्द्रिय-धारणाम्' "They know *yoga* as that [final goal (*parām gatim*)] which has a steady control (*dhāraṇā*) of the organs [of action and knowledge]." (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.3.11). 'प्रत्याहारः तथा, ध्यानं, प्राण-आयामः अथ, धारणा, तर्कः च एव समाधिः च षड्-अङ्गः योगः उच्यते' "The six-fold *yoga* is said to be withdrawing (*pratyāhāra*) [the mind and senses], retaining (*dhyāna*) [the wanted thoughts] in contemplation, controlling the breath (*prāṇa-āyāma*), restraining (*dhāraṇā*) [the unwanted thoughts] in contemplation, contemplating with reason (*tarka*) [in keeping with the scriptures], and contemplation that culminates in assimilation (*samādhi*)." (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 6). '(मनसः) समत्वं योग उच्यते' "Sameness [of attitude (*buddhi*) towards results – whatever they are] is called *yoga*." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.48). 'योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् (=कुशल-भावः, यथार्थता)' "Propriety in actions [i.e., acting within *dharma*, where the means are as important as the end] is [called] *yoga*." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.50). 'दुःख-संयोग-वियोगं योग-सञ्ज्ञितम्' "Disassociation (*vīyoga*) from association with sorrow is what is called *yoga*." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.23).

the dropping of ignorance and its various obstructions to freedom.

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

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

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

The word *nirodha* has the dictionary definitions of *nāśa* (destruction, disappearance), *pralaya* (resolution of an effect back into its material cause), and/or *pratirodha* (obstruction – mechanical or otherwise).¹⁴ Hence, in regard to the final goal of *yoga*, *final assimilation* would

⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24–25, 2.2–3, 3.49–50 & 54.

¹⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.3.

¹¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.29.

¹² *Yoga Sūtras* 1.30–41 & 46–48.

¹³ 'चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम्। तस्य अहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोः इव सु-दुष्-करम्' "O *Kṛṣṇa*, since the mind is very fleeting, distracting, strong and well-rooted, I think that its control is quite as difficult as that of the wind." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.34).

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

be an appropriate rendering of *nirodha*, since that final assimilation is a combination of a destruction of an ignorance that binds and a resolution of the effects of that ignorance to their objective cause – both realized through knowledge that frees and its assimilation. However, to reach that goal, the preliminary steps to this assimilation within *yoga* involve mastery of the mind.

The mastery of the thoughts of the mind here in *Patañjali's yoga* is mechanical, via repetition (*abhyāsa*),¹⁵ sitting (*āsana*),¹⁶ and breath control (*prāṇāyāma*).¹⁷ It is cognitive via trust (*śraddhā*),¹⁸ study (*svādhyāya*),¹⁹ contemplation (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*),²⁰ assimilation (*samādhi*),²¹ and clear knowledge (*prajñā*).²² The last of which, knowledge (*prajñā*), is the destruction (*nāśa*) of self-ignorance.

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

An equally good rendering of the term *nirodha* in this context is *discipline*. It involves not just restraint from what is not helpful (by clearly seeing its unhelpfulness from start to finish), but also the pursuit of what is helpful. The ultimate goal of *yoga* will be further characterized

¹⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.12.

¹⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.46.

¹⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.49.

¹⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.20.

¹⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

²⁰ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.17, 23 & 28, and 2.1.

²¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

²² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.48.

²³ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.5.

as liberation (*kaivalya*),²⁴ which is also said to be simply self-knowledge (*prajñā*).²⁵ In this way, the term *discipline* (*anusāsana*) is also appropriate to the final goal of *yoga*, since it indicates the need for the mind to follow a methodology, a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*),²⁶ to reach its goal.

As the mind is finally the one that has to discipline itself, then this is self-discipline. No one else can make you study, contemplate, and know. You have to choose to discipline your mind, you have to follow this discipline, and you have to complete this discipline.²⁷ This is *Patañjali's yoga*.

The Goal of Yoga

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

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

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

²⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.23–27.

²⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.48 & 4.26.

²⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

²⁷ 'श्रेयः च प्रेयः च मनुष्यम् एतः तौ सम्परीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः। श्रेयः हि धीरः अभि प्रेयसः वृणीते प्रेयः मन्दः योग-क्षेमाद् (शरीर-आदि-उपचय-रक्षणत्) वृणीते' "The beneficial (*śreyas*) and the pleasurable (*preyas*) confront a person. The wise person examines and differentiates the two. The wise person [such as yourself] chooses the beneficial over the pleasurable. The mediocre chooses the pleasurable out of [the desire for] acquiring and protecting [experiences]." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.2).

²⁸ 'न दृष्टेः द्रष्टारं पश्येः।...एषः ते आत्मा सर्व-अन्तरः अतः अन्यद् आर्तं (=विनाशि)' "You cannot see the witness (*draṣṭṛ*) of all that is seen. ...This which is within all is your self (*ātman*). What is other than this suffers [destruction]." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.4.2). 'सलिलः (=स्वच्छीभूतः सलिलः इव) एकः द्रष्टा अ-द्वैतः भवति, एषः ब्रह्म-लोकः सम्राट्' "[Transparent like] water, the witness (*draṣṭṛ*) is one (*eka*), without a second (*a-dvaita*). This is what is viewed as reality (*brahman*), O King." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.32).

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

Clearly the body and the mind can be cleansed, but the belief that there is some cleansing process of the self that *yoga* achieves is nothing but further confusion about the nature of the self. The self is never sullied, and always is and will be free in every way. The goal of *yoga* is to eliminate or sublimate the false self-conception and enjoy the essential nature of oneself.

What is the Essential Nature of Oneself

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

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

²⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

³⁰ 'जाग्रत्-स्वप्न-सुषुप्ति-आदि-प्रपञ्चं यद् प्रकासते। तद् ब्रह्म अहम् इति ज्ञात्वा सर्व-बन्धैः प्रमुच्यते॥' "The one who lights up this expanse consisting of the waking, dream, and deep sleep, etc. [the heavens, etc.], that reality (*brahman*) I am. Knowing this, one is free from all binds. 'त्रिषु धामसु यद् भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगः च यद् भवेत्। तेभ्यः वि-लक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रः अहं सदा शिवः' "Different from whatever is the experienced, the experiencer, and the experience, is the witness (*sākṣin*). It is pure awareness. It is I, ever calm." (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.17–18).

between, because of one's possessions. One may think one is an American or an Indian, a Westerner or an Easterner, and so on, because of one's geographic, political, social, or philosophical affiliations.

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

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

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

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

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

What is the Ego

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

mind. When it is not there, I am not consciously defining, not limiting, myself to what is happening at any particular time.

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

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

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

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

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

But the real witness is not the object of an ego thought. It is the witness itself of an ego thought. It transcends, as it were, the ego thought, since it is ever the subject, while all types of thoughts and their absence come and go. As an object in the form of an ego thought, such an

object can never be itself the witness I am. Any ego thought then can never truly define, never limit, me who is the witness of all perceptions, all thoughts, and all objects of thought.

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

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

How Can Logic Help

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

For this we need to apply correct logic toward our experiences to get at the essential nature of myself. We all have reasons for establishing what is real and what is not real. Those reasons may vary, but the actual establishing of reality itself finally amounts to simply attributing one thing as real and another as not real.

The initial criterion for reality may be stated as: *We say one thing is not real and another is when we give up on the prior claim to reality and re-place that reality onto the other.* This is essentially the same we do for truth also. That is why this teaching holds that truth and reality are essentially one and the same. Hence its word for reality, ‘*satyam*,’ is also its word for truth.³¹

³¹ ‘सत्यं वद। धर्मं चर’ “Speak *satya* (truth). Follow *dharma* (universal justice and local customs).”

Though the reasons for attributing the truth/reality of a thing may vary, the essential criterion for truth/reality is our attribution of truth/reality upon one thing or another. In other words, it is we who impute truth/reality to things, not that things intrinsically gain or lose some attribute called reality.

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

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

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

(*Taittirīya Up.* 1.11.1). 'सत्यं च अन्-ऋतं च सत्यम् अभवत्। यद् इदं किञ्च। तत् सत्यम् इति आचक्षते' "*Satya* (reality) is [all pairs of opposites and adjectives, such as] *satya* (real) and *an-rta* (unreal). They say that whatever there is is [only] that *satya* (reality)." (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.6.1).

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

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

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

For example, in trying to discern what is the problem with a computer, we proceed by removing a feature we previously installed and seeing if an unwanted, new symptom stops – this is the *vyatireka* (co-absence). Then we add back in that feature and see if the symptom returns – this is the *anvaya* (co-presence). This process informs us of what exactly is the nature of the problem with the computer, or at least which feature holds the problem. This logic is

transparently used throughout the scripture, often through story telling,³² to discover the more subtle, that is, the most pervasive and hence basic, truth or reality of what looks like just a composite. The logic ferrets out the hierarchy of dependencies between seemingly equal composites.

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

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

³² 'भगवन्, कति एव देवाः प्रजां विधारयन्ते, कतरे एतत् प्रकाशयन्ते, कः पुनः एषां वरिष्ठः इति॥' "'Sir, how many deities sustain a creature? Which of them boast this [greatness]? And who is superior [in this] to those [deities]?" 'तस्मै सः ह उवाच। आकाशः ह वै एषः देवः वायुः अग्निः आपः पृथिवी वाक् मनः चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च। ते प्रकाश्य अभिवदन्ति वयम् एतद् बाणम् अवष्टभ्य विधारयामः॥' "To them he said, 'This deity is Space, [as well as] Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Speech, Mind, Eye, and Ear. Boasting, they say, 'By supporting this reed [of a body], we sustain [the creature].'" 'तान् वरिष्ठः प्राणः उवाच। मा मोहम् आपद्यथ, अहम् एव एतत् पञ्चधा आत्मानं प्रविभज्य एतद् बाणम् अवष्टभ्य विधारयामि इति, ते अ-श्रद्धाणाः बभूवुः॥' "*Prāṇa* (Life-force), who is superior, said to them, 'Do not fall to this delusion. I alone, dividing myself five ways [as *prāṇa* (outward exhalation), *apāna* (downward inhalation and energy), *vyāna* (dispersing circulation), *udāna* (upward ejecting energy including the ejecting of the subtle body upon death), and *samāna* (uniting digestion)] to support this reed [of a body] and sustain [the creature].' They did not trust [this truth]." 'सः अभिमानात् ऊर्ध्वम् उत्क्रामते इव, तस्मिन् उत्क्रामति अथ इतरे सर्वे एव उत्क्रामन्ते, तस्मिन् च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वे एव प्रातिष्ठन्ते।' "Confidently he starts rising out [of the body]. When he arises, then [helplessly] all the others rise; when he settles back, every one of them settles back." 'तद् यथा मक्षिकाः मधुकर-राजानम् उत्क्रामन्तं सर्वाः एव उत्क्रामन्ते, तस्मिन् च प्रतिष्ठमाने सर्वाः एव प्रातिष्ठन्ते, एवं वाक् मनः चक्षुः श्रोत्रं च ते प्रीताः प्राणं स्तुवन्ति' "In the same way all bees [praise] the royal bee, who arises, [by] their rising and sit when [s]he sits, so to Speech, Mind, Eye, and Ear, being satisfied, praise *Prāṇa*." (*Praśna Up.* 2.1-4).

³³ '(अ-सतः) आगम-अपायिनः अनित्याः॥...न अ-सतः विद्यते भावः न अ-भावः विद्यते सतः' "[The unreal] have a beginning and an end, [therefore] are time bound. ...The unreal (*a-sat*) has no being (*bhāva*) [of its own],

How do I Know I am Simply the Witness

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

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

If I think I am dull or smart, then this claim is based on a relative scale that I adopt. In comparison to a child I may be smart; in comparison to a genius I may be dull. So if I am both these opposite claims at the same time, then I am absolutely neither of them. If I study, I will be smarter and less dull. If my mind is not used or degenerates in sickness, then I will be more dull and less smart. These claims wax and wane through out my life and my day, and depend upon with whom I am comparing myself. Dropping these claims of being more or less dull or smart, I remain. It's the same for sorrowful and happy. These wax and wane, yet I survive either of them.

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

Life and Death

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

and the real (*sat*) has no nonbeing (*a-bhāva*).” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.14 & 16).

³⁴ 'वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरः अपराणि। तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णानि अन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही' "Just

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

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

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

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

This is why simply labeling other beliefs as unreal and clinging to one's own beliefs as real

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

is not an ultimately satisfactory criterion for determining what is real and what is unreal.

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

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

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

The 24/7 Reality

Even in detailed analysis, I am always the witness.³⁵ When I look at just a twenty-four hour period in this life, I am continually the witness. I witness all I experience while awake. In dream also nothing escapes my witnessing, since that alone can be what my dream is. In deep sleep when the conscious mind stops functioning, I experience the absence of any thing and can later

³⁵ 'अस्तम् इते आदित्ये याज्ञवल्क्य, चन्द्रमसि अस्तम् इते, शान्ते अग्नौ, शान्तायां वाचि किं ज्योतिः एव अयं पुरुषः इति' "'O *Yājñavalkya*, when the sun has set, the moon has set, the fire has gone out, and speech has stopped, a person has what alone as a light?" "' – आत्मा एव अस्य ज्योतिः भवति इति, आत्मना एव इयं ज्योतिषा आस्ते पल्ययते (=परि-अयते) कर्म कुरुते विपल्येति (=विपरि-एति)' "' – The self (*ātman*) alone is his light. By the light that is the self alone, he sits, departs, does work, and returns.'" (*Bṛhad-āranyaka Up.* 4.3.6).

clearly proclaim that I was sound asleep without a dream.³⁶ How else would I know that? So, deep sleep is also witnessed by me. This same witnessing of the absence of thought happens in moments of thoughtlessness, whether deliberate or not. In every moment of time I am the witness.

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

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

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

³⁶ 'यद् द्वे तद् न पश्यति पश्यन् वै तद् न पश्यति, न हि द्रष्टुः दृष्टेः विपरिलोपः विद्यते अ-विनाशित्वात्। न तु तद् द्वितीयम् अस्ति ततः अन्यद् विभक्तं यद् पश्येत्' "[In deep sleep] it indeed does not see, [because though] indeed seeing it does not see, for there is no loss of vision for the witness (*drastr*), since it is imperishable. Rather, there is no second thing other than it, which it could see as separate." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.23).

³⁷ 'न तु एव अहं जातु न आसं न त्वं न इमे जन-अधिपाः। न च एव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयम् अतः परम्' "Never [was there a time that] I was not, nor you, nor these kings. Nor will any of us cease to exist hereafter." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.12).

³⁸ 'यत्र हि द्वैतम् इव भवति तद् इतरः इतरं जिघ्रति, तद् इतरः इतरं पश्यति, तद् इतरः इतरं शृणोति, तद् इतरः इतरम् अभिवदति, तद् इतरः इतरं मनुते, तद् इतरः इतरं विजानाति।' "Because where there is as if duality, there something smells something. There something sees something. There something hears something. There something speaks something. There something thinks something. There something knows

If one were to make the better claim, then it would be that I am the reality that allows me to ever be the witnesser. ‘Being’ is not relational, whereas ‘witness’ is. I am the existence that witnesses all that can be witnessed. I am essentially existence itself³⁹ that expresses as the witness of all.

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

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

something.” ‘यत्र वा अस्य सर्वम् आत्मा एव अभूत् तत् केन कं जिघ्रेत्, तत् केन कं पश्येत्, तत् केन कं शृणुयात्, तत् केन कम् अभिवदेत्, तत् केन कं मन्वीत्, तत् केन कं विजानीयात्। येन इदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात्। विज्ञातारम् अरे केन विजानीयात्’ “But where [upon the dissolution of the universe] everything is one’s self (*ātman*), there, how would one smell what? There, how would one see what? There, how would one hear what? There, how would one speak what? There, how would one think what? There, how would one know what?” ‘येन इदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयात्। विज्ञातारम् अरे केन विजानीयात्’ “How would one know that by which one knows all this? How, my dear, would one know the knower?” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.4.14).

³⁹ ‘मयि एव सकलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्। मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद् ब्रह्म अ-द्वयम् अस्मि अहम्’ “In me alone is born everything. In me everything remains. In me everything resolves. That without-a-second reality (*brahman*) am I.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.19).

⁴⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.21.

because, as this teaching, that is, the scripture that forms the basis of this teaching, will unfold, I alone cannot but be all of this existence, this reality.

What is the Benefit

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

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

Once the knowledge of my real self as unlimited reality itself is fully assimilated, a freedom from limitation, from all afflictions is attained.⁴³ And that freedom is more real than the bondage

⁴¹ 'एषः सर्वेषु भूतेषु गूढः आत्मा न प्रकाशते' "This self (*ātman*) hidden [by unreal ignorance] in all beings does not appear." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.12).

⁴² 'सद् एव सोम्य इदम् अग्रे आसीत् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयम्' "Existence (*sat*) alone, my dear, was this in the beginning, one only without a second." (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1).

⁴³ 'अ-विनाशि तु तद् विद्धि येन सर्वम् इदं ततम्। विनाशम् अव्ययस्य अस्य न कश्चित् कर्तुम् अर्हति' "By which [reality] all this [the time-bound unreal, including this mind-body complex] is pervaded, know that [timeless and real] to be indestructible. Nothing is able to bring about the destruction of this that does

I thought I was subject to, since I always was, am, and will be free from these limitations and afflictions as ever being their witness, whereas the sense of bondage comes to an end. Freedom is another expression of the truth, the reality of myself.

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

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

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

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

***Patañjali* Indicates This Witness Reality**

Patañjali only touches here on the nature of this reality – with just the one telling word *draṣṭṛ* (witness). Later he will also present this self as untouched by the afflictions of ignorance, the I-notion, attachment, aversion, and the fear of death;⁴⁴ pure perception or consciousness;⁴⁵ the

not change.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.17).

⁴⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24, 2.3 & 10, and 4.30.

⁴⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.20 & 4.34.

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

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

Identification with Thought

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

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

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

This, which we will see in the second chapter, is the fundamental ignorance in the form of a

⁴⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 3.53 & 55.

⁴⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

⁴⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.49.

⁴⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 4.18–19.

⁵⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

⁵¹ 'चित्तम् एव हि संसारः तद् प्रयत्नेन शोधतेत्। यद्-चित्तः तद्-मयः भवति गुह्यम् एतद् सनातनम्' "The mind (*citta*) alone indeed is one's transient existence (*samsāra*). One should make effort to clean it up. In whatever way one thinks, that one becomes. This is an eternal mystery!" (*Maitrāyaṇī Up.* 1.9).

mutual imposing of natures between the seer and the seen, the witness and the witnessed. This is a clear statement of the fundamental problem.

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

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

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

The Nature of Thoughts

वृत्तयः पञ्चतय्यः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः॥(1.5)
vr̥ttayaḥ pañcatayaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ.

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

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

The word *kliṣṭa*, as well as its negative *a-kliṣṭa*, is an adjectival form of the noun *kleśa* (affliction). *Kliṣṭa* refers to those thoughts that sustain the *kleśas*,⁵³ while *a-kliṣṭa* refers to those

⁵² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

⁵³ ‘क्लेश-हेतु- (क्लेश-निमित्त)’ “What occasions the afflictions” (*Vyāsa’s Patañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 1.5,

thoughts that counter-act the *kleśas*. And to be free of the *kleśas*, the final goal of *yoga*, is to be the perfect *puruṣa* (person, self), the very nature of the Lord.⁵⁴

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

A-kliṣṭa, in its fullest understanding, thus means what is other than what hinders one's progress in *yoga*. However, it may also mean what is neutral – neither hindering nor helpful. Much of how we live life is neutral to our conscious goals in life, and this can be part of our aimless getting along in life without making any progress. But here, it will be shown that *karma-yoga* is very much a part of *yoga*.⁵⁵ Thus, how one understands the entire world, how one understands oneself, and how one bases all choices in life become centered on one's understanding of realities, which is the crux of this teaching. In that all-embracing world view including everything in everyway,⁵⁶ neutrality – ineffective action and thought – becomes less and less. *A-kliṣṭa* then becomes a matter of living entirely the understanding born of this teaching, and therefore means that which is always helpful in one's progress in *yoga*.

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

and *Śaṅkara's Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya Vivaraṇa* 1.5).

⁵⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24–25, 2.2–3, 3.49–50 & 54, and 4.30.

⁵⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

⁵⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.54.

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

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

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

These five can be taken as just five categories of thought that *Patañjali* wants to highlight, while not covering all possible types of thought. Alternatively, as we will take them here, they may be taken broadly so that they do cover all possible thoughts.

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

प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि॥(1.7)
pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni.

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

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

becomes a unique source of knowledge.

Pramāṇa means *knowledge* or, more literally, *a means of knowledge*. Direct perception by way of any of the five sense organs (hearing, seeing, touching, tasting, or smelling) and valid inference, by themselves, do not hinder one's progress. Scripture understood in its full context, as well as direct perception and inference in support of the scripture, help one's progress in *yoga*.

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

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

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

When you hear someone say something, you directly gain knowledge of that person's words. This is a direct perception through hearing. As with seeing, our knowledge through hearing is

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

If *Patañjali* really meant simple verbal testimony here, then he could have used the much more generic term *śabda*, or *śabda-jñāna*, (words or verbal-knowledge). Instead, he uses the term *āgama* which literally means *what comes*, and in practical usage usually means *tradition* or *scripture* – what has been handed down from beginningless time and is not considered authored, not created new by a specific human being. Knowledge from scripture is both not contradicted nor gained by any other source.

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

The *āgamas* are these scriptures, the *Vedas* including their *Upaniṣads*, but also are the later *Purāṇas* (legends) and *Iti-hāsas* (epics) that relay the scriptural teachings in a popular format for all the people of India. But those later texts’ authority is only so much as they do not contradict the scriptures, especially concerning the topics of these *Yoga Sūtras*, namely, the nature of the self (*ātman*, *draṣṭṛ*), the Lord (*Īśvara*), and the teaching (*jñāna*) including *yoga*. To represent the *Purāṇas* and *Iti-hāsas*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* has been chosen because it is specifically held in the highest esteem regarding the teaching of the Lord and of *yoga*. The many quotations in this book are from the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The glossing over of *āgama pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) to mean simple verbal testimony

may imply or assert that whatever any *yoga* teacher says is to be taken as the gospel – because they said it. This is just uncritical thinking and can steal your life away. Always be careful of those who say, “Just trust me.”

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

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

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

This scripture is viewed as a manual of knowledge that comes along⁵⁷ in every cycle of

⁵⁷ ‘प्रजा-पतिः लोकान् अभ्यतपत् तेषां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्रावृहद् अग्निं पृथिव्याः वायुम् अन्तरिक्षाद् आदित्यं दिवः॥’ “The Lord of creatures (*Prajā-pati*) contemplated (*abhi-atapat*) the worlds. While they were being contemplated, He extracted their essences – Fire from the earth, Wind from the sky, the Sun from the heavens.” ‘सः एताः तिस्रो देवताः अभ्यतपत् तासां तप्यमानानां रसान् प्रावृहद् अग्नेः ऋचो वायोः यजूंषि सामानि आदित्यात्’ “He contemplated these three deities. While they were being contemplated, He extracted Their essences [the three *Veda* hymn forms] – the *Rg* [i.e., chanted] verses from Fire, *Yajur* prose from Wind, *Soman* [i.e., sung] verses from the Sun.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 4.17.1–2).

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

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

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

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

One comes to look at scripture intelligently – not blindly. This is well laid out in the ancient

⁵⁸ ‘एक-एकं जालं बहुधा विकुर्वन् अस्मिन् क्षेत्रे संहरति एषः देवः। भूयः सृष्ट्वा पतयः (=प्रजा-पतयः) तथा ईशः सर्व-आधि-पत्यं कुरुते महा-आत्मा’ “Repeatedly spreading out the net (*jāla*) [i.e., the *Indra-jāla*, the blinding net of appearances] one after another, this Lord (*deva*) withdraws it into this ground (*kṣetra*) [i.e., into itself]. Repeatedly manifesting (*śṛṣṭvā*) [the manifestations of creation] via the Lords of creatures (*Prajā-patis*) [in each cycle], the Lord (*Īśa*) as the limitless self (*mahā-ātman*) continues the over-lordship (*ādhipatyam kurute*) of all [through these appearances].” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.3).

science of scriptural analysis, called *mīmāṃsā*. The *mīmāṃsā* of the *Upaniṣads* (*Uttara-mīmāṃsā*), the science of the *Upaniṣad* scriptures, is otherwise known as *Vedānta*, and *yoga* is the preparation for assimilating this *Vedānta*, according to the *Kaivalya Upaniṣad*.⁵⁹

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

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

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

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

Mithyā-jñāna literally means *falsely-knowing*. For example, an error in perception would be thinking a rope in bad light is a snake. An error in assumption or inference would be one that does not amount to valid indirect knowledge. An error regarding what is not available for perception and thus inference would be, for example, thinking that oneself is just this body-

⁵⁹ ‘न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेन एके अ-मृतत्वम् आनशुः। परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां विभ्राजते यद् यतयः विशन्ति॥’ “Not by action, progeny, or wealth, but by renunciation they attain immortality – beyond heaven and hidden in the cave [of the heart/intellect]. Into this which shines there enter those who apply [appropriate] effort.” ‘वेदान्त-विज्ञान-सुनिश्चित-अर्थाः सन्न्यास-योगात् यतयः शुद्ध-सत्त्वाः। ते ब्रह्म-लोकेषु परान्त-काले परामृताः परिमुच्यन्ति सर्वे’ “Having clearly ascertained the meaning of the science (*viññāna*) of *Vedānta* and who have clarity of mind (*śuddha-sattva*) through the *yoga* of renunciation (*sannyāsa*), at the time of death they all are free and beyond mortality in the world(s) of *brahman*.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.3-4).

⁶⁰ ‘न हि ज्ञानेन स-दृशं पवित्रम् इह विद्यते। तत् स्वयं योग-संसिद्धः कालेन आत्मनि विन्दति’ “In this world, indeed, there is no purifier equal to knowledge. In time, the one who is prepared by *yoga* [and has a proper teacher] gains that [knowledge] easily in [one’s prepared] mind.” (*Bh. Gītā* 4.38).

⁶¹ ‘दूरम् एते विपरीते विषूची अ-विद्या या च विद्या इति ज्ञाता’ “These two, known as ignorance (*a-vidyā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*), are widely opposed (*viparīta*) and diverging [leading to bondage and to freedom, respectively].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.4).

mind complex. Error is not knowing the actual nature of whatever is the subject matter of the cognition and then imposing one's imagination upon it, thinking that this is its real nature.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.42.

⁶³ ‘प्राण-आदिभिः अनन्तैः तु भावैः एतैः विकल्पितः। माया एषा तस्य देवस्य (=जीव-आत्मनः) यया अयं मोहितः स्वयम्’ “[The self] is imagined (*vikalpita*) as these countless things such as the life-force (*prāṇa*), etc. This is the apparition (*māyā*) of that shining one (*deva*) [the self], by which that very one itself is deluded.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.19).

of enlighten us, instead of resolving their meaning in the truth of oneself as their implied meaning.

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

Similarly, statements such as “I am all knowledge” make sense when taken to mean I am the reality that is the effortless witnessing that lights up all thoughts in this and every mind. Whereas, an imagination of this would be thinking that I (this mind) should know in detail everything in the universe. Such imaginations are frequently seen in current *yoga* literature. Our self-conceptions should be in line with reality.

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

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

It is language itself, the vehicle of the mind, that forms the divisions of everything known and unknown in the entire universe by naming and categorizing. The expression of everything

⁶⁴ ‘यथा सोम्य एकेन लोह-मणिना सर्वं लोहमयं विज्ञातं स्याद् वाचा-आरम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं लोहितम् इति एव सत्यम्’ “Just as, my dear, everything made of clay [e.g., a clay pot] is known through this one lump of clay, being a modification (*vikāra*) in name only (*nāmadheya*), based on words (*vācā-ārambhaṇa*), the ‘clay’ alone is their reality (*satya*). Just as, my dear, everything made of metal (*loha* – often referring to either iron, copper, or gold) is known through this one lump of metal, being a modification in name only, based on words, the ‘metal’ alone is their reality.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.1.4–5).

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

Because of our human ability of naming by way of our many languages by different humans, in different circumstances, in varying perspectives with different sense acuities and language associations, the various forms of the universe are conceived quite different from each other. What to speak of how different these forms are from the perspective of the countless other creatures (from dolphins to insects) whose minds and thus languages, so to speak, are incomparably different. Being subject to countless, changing perspectives in time and place, and so without a single definitive form to be found anywhere – otherwise called being indefinable (*a-nirvacanīya*), not categorically and absolutely definable – then this universe is understood in this teaching as more a fiction, a mere appearance (*māyā*), than an absolute fact.⁶⁵ Because we

⁶⁵ ‘रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपः बभूव तद् अस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय। इद्रः मायाभिः पुरु-रूपः ईयते युक्ताः हि अस्य हरयः शताः दश’ “‘Lord (*Indra*) was the reflection in every form, for revealing that form of His. By appearances (*māyās*) [in each cycle of manifestation] the Lord (*Indra*) is taken as multi-formed, because of His harnessed hundreds of ten horses (*haris*) [i.e., the ten organs of action and knowledge]’ (*Rg Veda* 6.47.18). ‘रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपः बभूव तद् अस्य रूपं प्रतिचक्षणाय। इद्रः मायाभिः पुरु-रूपः ईयते युक्ताः हि अस्य हरयः शताः दश’ “He indeed is the horses [the organs], He indeed is the ten and the thousands [of creatures], many and countless.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.19). ‘स्वप्न-जागरिते स्थाने हि एकम् आहुः मनीषिणः। भेदानां हि समत्वेन प्रसिद्धेन एव हेतुना॥’ “The wise say the dream and waking worlds are the same, because there is a well-known, logical similarity of their different objects.” ‘आदौ अन्ते च यन न अस्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत् तथा। वितथैः सदृशाः सन्तः अ-वितथाः इव लक्षिताः॥’ “[Namely] what is not there before and after is in that same way [i.e., not there] in the present also. Those [objects in the waking world] are regarded [by the unwise] as not false, [even] while being similar [in nature] to the false [mirages, etc.] [which are also unreal even during their appearance].” ‘स-प्रयोजनता तेषां स्वप्ने विप्रतिपद्यते। तस्माद् आदि-अन्तवत्त्वेन मिथ्या एव खलु ते स्मृताः’ “[Additionally] their having a [real, i.e., lasting] utility is contradicted in dream [e.g., despite a supposedly real evening meal that satisfies hunger, one can then dream one is starving]. Therefore, by having a beginning and an end, they are taught (*smṛta*) to indeed exist falsely (*mithyā*).” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.4-7). ‘कल्पयति आत्मना आत्मानम् आत्मा देवः स्व-मायया। सः एव बुध्यते भेदान् इति वेदान्त-निश्चयः’ “The shining self imagines (*kalpayati*) itself by itself via its own *māyā*. It alone knows the different objects. This is the determination of the *Vedāntas* (i.e., *Upaniṣads*).” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.12).

can change our perspective about anything and everything, then no one perspective about any object or any thought can define or limit what is truly reality.

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁶⁶ ‘योगः अस्ति...न च अति-स्वप्न-शीलस्य’ “*Yoga* is not there for one who sleeps too much.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.16).

⁶⁷ ‘यत्र सुप्तः न कञ्चन कामं कामयते न कञ्चन स्वप्नं पश्यति तत् सुषुप्तम्। सुषुप्त-स्थानः एकी-भूतः प्रज्ञान-घनः एव आनन्दमयः हि आनन्द-भुक् चेतो-मुखः प्राज्ञः तृतीयः पादः’ “Where the one who is asleep neither desires any object nor sees any dream, that is deep sleep. Whose world is the deep sleep, who has [therein] become one as pure cognition alone [without an object], who is peaceful as an enjoyer of the peace [of oneself] [via the absence of disturbance], who is the portal to the experience [of the other two worlds: dream and waking] – this one is [called] *prājña* and is the third quarter [of *Om* and of *ātman*].” (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 5).

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

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

Memory is not a form of new knowledge, but is just the bringing up of the subject matter of a prior knowledge or prior experience, imagined or otherwise, stored in the mind (*see* Appendix A). Memory is required to progress in *yoga* since it is what keeps the teaching at the forefront of one’s understanding of everything in one’s universe. Remembered erroneous conclusions and falsified imaginations need to be re-evaluated and dropped in the light of new knowledge.

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

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

Repetition and Non-attachment

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

⁶⁸ See commentaries on *Yoga Sūtras* 4.12 & 19.

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

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

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

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

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

⁶⁹ 'स्व-देहम् अरणि कृत्वा प्रणवं च उत्तर-अरणिम्। ध्यान-निर्मथन-अभ्यासाद् देवं पश्येत् निगूढवत्' "Making one's body the fire-making block of wood and *praṇava* (i.e., *Om*) the upper churning stick, by the repetition (*abhyāsa*) of churning which is contemplation (*dhyāna*), the shining self (*deva*) becomes evident, as though [previously] hidden within." (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.14). 'आत्मानम् अरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं च उत्तर-अरणिम्। ज्ञान-निर्मथन-अभ्यासात् पापं दहति पण्डितः' "Making one's body the fire-making block of wood and *praṇava* the upper churning stick, by the repetition (*abhyāsa*) of churning which is knowledge (*jñāna*), the wise burn their *karma* demerit." (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.11). 'मनो दुर्-निग्रहं चलम्। अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते' "The mind is fleeting and difficult to master. But, O *Arjuna*, with repetition (*abhyāsa*) and with non-attachment (*vairāgya*), it is mastered." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.35).

⁷⁰ 'अ-विद्यायां बहुधा वर्तमानाः वयं कृत-अर्थाः इति अभिमन्यन्ति बालाः। यत् (=यस्मात् एवं) कर्मिणः न (तत्त्वं) प्रवेदयन्ति रागात् तेन आतुराः क्षीण-लोकाः च्यवन्ते' "Continuing variously in ignorance, the immature boast 'we have attained the goal.' Since engaged in activities, they do not try to gain knowledge due to attachment (*rāga*). Suffering afflictions because of that, they fall back when [what it took to gain] their world (*loka*) [i.e., their human embodiment, heaven, etc.] is exhausted." (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.2.9).

of freedom.⁷¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.50.

⁷² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.20.

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

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

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

These are not rewards given by the scripture or overseen by the sages who revealed the scripture. These are rewards inherent in the intelligent cosmic order of the universe, the

⁷³ ‘ध्यायतः विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गः तेषु उपजायते। सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधः अभिजायते॥’ “For a person who mentally dwells on objects, attachment to them arises; from attachment arises desire [i.e., requirements in order to be happy and anticipations of their fruition]; from [thwarted] anticipations arises anger;” ‘क्रोधाद् भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृति-विभ्रमः। स्मृति-भ्रंशाद् बुद्धि-नाशः बुद्धि-नाशात् (पुमान्) प्रणश्यति’ “...from anger is delusion [i.e., error in judgment]; from delusion is lapse of memory; from lapse of memory is lapse of intellect; from lapse of intellect [what distinguishes the human condition] the person is destroyed [i.e., the unique human opportunity to attain what is truly beneficial is completely wasted, and the person remains in *saṃsāra* (the life of unbecoming becoming)].” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.62–63).

⁷⁴ ‘याम् इमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्य् अ-विपश्चितः। वेद-वाद-रताः पार्थ न अन्यद् अस्ति इति वादिनः॥’ “O *Arjuna*, the unwise – who remain engrossed in [the bulk of] the words of the *Vedas* [dealing with heaven-going, and gaining power, wealth, and progeny], arguing that there is nothing more,” ‘काम-आत्मानः स्वर्ग-परा जन्म-कर्म-फल-प्रदाम्। क्रिया-विशेष-बहुलां भोग-ऐश्वर्य-गतिं प्रति’ “...who are full of desires [i.e., requirements/anticipations] and who hold heaven as primary – they spout flowery discourse full of special rituals [directed] toward gaining power and objects of consumption, [but] yield [further] birth as a result of their actions.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.42–43).

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁷⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.7–8.

provide this mastery.

तत्-परं पुरुष-ख्यातेर् गुण-वैतृष्यम्॥(1.16)
tat-param puruṣa-khyāter guṇa-vaitṛṣyam.

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

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

Non-attachment culminates within the knowledge that I am this limitless reality which is one without a second. Its culmination is also the same knowledge that what appears is but the reality that I am. In the wake of this knowledge, all objects – here indicated by the term *guṇas* – are known to be nothing more than their appearance to my five senses within my awareness.⁷⁸ The objects come and go, and I remain the same reality, not in need of them for my existence (though

⁷⁶ ‘यः (देवः) च स्व-भावं (=प्रकृति-भावं) पचति विश्व-योनिः पाच्यान् च सर्वान् परिणामयेत् यः। सर्वम् एतद् विश्वम् अधितिष्ठति एकः गुणान् च सर्वान् विनियोजयेत् यः॥’ “[The Lord, the *deva*] who is the source of the universe, who ripens itself [i.e., the *prakṛti* within it] [into manifestation], who matures all those fit to be matured [according to their *karma*], and who provides all the *guṇas* (constituents and their characteristics) – this one presides in this entire universe.” ‘गुण-अन्वयः (तु) यः (जीवः) फल-कर्म-कर्ता कृतस्य तस्य सः च उपभोक्ता। सः विश्व-रूपः त्रि-गुणः त्रि-वर्त्मा प्राण-अधिपः (एव) सञ्चरति स्व-कर्मभिः’ “...[Whereas] the [individual] who identifies with the *guṇas*, who takes oneself alone [instead of the Lord] as the creator and enjoyer of the results of that action, wanders [in *saṃsāra*] as every form [thus identified with] consisting of the three *guṇas* within the three paths [up to heavens, across to human births, or down to lower births], according to one’s own actions, ruling [only] one’s own life.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.5 & 7).

⁷⁷ ‘सः ह उवाच गार्ग्यः, यः एव असौ आदित्ये पुरुषः एतम् एव अहं ब्रह्म उपासे इति, सः ह उवाच अजात-शत्रुः मा मा एतस्मिन् संवदिष्टाः...’ “*Gārgya* said, ‘That *puruṣa* who is in the sun [as its being] I worship as reality (*brahman*).’ *Ajāta-satru* replied, ‘No, do not talk about this [which I already know]...’ (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.1.2 ...to end of the Chapter in 2.1.20). ‘सः वै अयं पुरुषः सर्वासु पूर्षु पुरिषयः न एनेन किञ्चन अनावृत् न एनेन किञ्चन अ-संवृत्तम्’ “That indeed is *puruṣa*, who resides in the body (*puri-śaya*) in all compounds (*purs*) [i.e., in all bodies as their ruler and being]. There is nothing that is not covered by [i.e., included in] this [*puruṣa*].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.18).

⁷⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.21.

this temporary body and mind complex has basic needs), or for my fulfillment. With them I am complete; without them I am complete. This is a fully assimilated non-attachment towards all.

Two Forms of Contemplation

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

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

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

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

⁸⁰ ‘आगमस्य अ-विरोधेन ऊहनं तर्कः उच्यते’ “Reasoning not in opposition to scripture (*āgama*) is called *tarka*.” (*Amṛta-nāda Up.* 17).

⁸¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.33–34.

⁸² ‘विज्ञानम् आनन्दं ब्रह्म, रातिः-दातुः पर-अयणम्, तिष्ठमानस्य तद-विदः इति’ “Reality (*brahman*) is knowledge (*vijñāna*) and fullness (*ānanda*), the ultimate goal of the one who gives oblation and of the one who abiding [therein] knows that [reality].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.9.28.7). “This is its limitless fullness (*ānanda*). The beings who [take themselves] as other (*anya*) survive upon a limited measure (*mātra*) of this fullness (*ānanda*).” ‘सः एकः ब्रह्म-लोके आनन्दः यः च श्रोत्रियः अ-वृजिनः अ-काम-हतः, अथ एषः एव परमः आनन्दः, एषः ब्रह्म-लोकः, सम्राट् इति ह उवाच याज्ञवल्क्यः’ “...That is the one complete (*eka*) fullness (*ānanda*) in the world of *brahman*, [which is the same fullness of] the one who is steeped in this teaching (*śrotriya*), who is without fault and untouched by desire (*a-kāma-hata*). Now this is the ultimate fullness (*ānanda*). This [fullness] is the world which is *brahman*, O king,’ said *Yājñavalkya*.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.32–33). ‘सत्यं ज्ञानम् अन्-अन्तं ब्रह्म’ “*Brahman* is limitless[ness] (*an-anta*) reality (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). ‘रसः वै सः। रसं हि एव अयं लब्ध्वा आनन्दी भवति’ “That indeed is the essence (*rasa*) [of everything, of names and forms], because having attained this essence (*rasa*) one is complete (*ānandin*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.7.1). ‘स एकः ब्रह्मणः आनन्दः। श्रोत्रियस्य च अ-काम-हतस्य’ “This is the one complete (*eka*) fullness (*ānanda*) of Lord *Brahman*, and of the one who is steeped in this teaching (*śrotriya*) and untouched by desire (*a-kāma-hata*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.8.1). ‘आनन्दं ब्रह्मणः विद्वान्। न बिभेति कुतश्चन इति’ “The one who knows the fullness of

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

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

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

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

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

[i.e., who is] *brahman* does not fear of anything.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.9.1).

⁸³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 4.20.

⁸⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.54.

the teaching says about the essential me. It culminates in the subsequent form of *samādhi* – “I am the witness that is limitless existence-fullness.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Temporary *a-saṁprajñāta samādhi* (contemplation without an assimilated knowledge) follows from the birth – the nature of the particular embodiments – of certain subtle

⁸⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.3.

⁸⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.51.

⁸⁷ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.3–4.

beings in a heaven because of efforts in *yoga* in their prior birth, **and of all beings who are temporarily absorbed in unmanifest nature**, until their next manifestation.

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

Similarly, one may have this temporary *samādhi* while experiencing certain embodiments other than this current human embodiment. In some heavenly, subtle embodiments these pre-earned rewards are experienced. And, of course, during each period of universal dissolution, everyone's mind is naturally absorbed.

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

श्रद्धा-वीर्य-स्मृति-समाधि-प्रज्ञा-पूर्वक इतरेषाम्॥(1.20)
śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣām.

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

For the rest of us right here and now in this life, success in *yoga* follows from trust⁸⁸ in

⁸⁸ 'यदा वै श्रद्धधाति अथ मनुते, न अ-श्रद्धधन् मनुते, श्रद्धधद् एव मनुते, श्रद्धा तु एव विजिज्ञासितव्या इति, श्रद्धां भगवः विजिज्ञासे इति॥' "'When indeed one trusts (*śraddadhāti*), in this way one thinks. Not trusting, one does not [so] think. Trusting alone one thinks. So trust (*śraddhā*) itself is to be understood.' – 'Sir, I desire to know *śraddhā*.'" 'यदा वै निस्तिष्ठति अथ श्रद्धधाति, न अ-निस्तिष्ठन् श्रद्धधाति, निस्तिष्ठन् एव श्रद्धधाति, निष्ठा (=तत्परत्वं) तु एव विजिज्ञासितव्या' " – 'When indeed one is dedicated (*nistīṣṭhati*), in this way one trusts. Not dedicating [oneself], one does no trust. Dedicating alone one trusts. So dedication (*niṣṭhā*) itself is to be understood.'" (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.19.1 & 20.1).

the scripture as a means of knowledge, the same as one trusts one's perception and logic; **tenacity** in this pursuit; **memory** – continuous retention of the teaching; **contemplation** on the teaching; **and** finally **assimilated knowledge** of the self.

Notice here that the temporary form of *samādhi*, the *a-samprajñāta samādhi*, is not the final step for the path of the *yogin*. *Prajñā* (knowledge) is the final goal of *yoga* according to the progression indicated by *Patañjali*'s sequential ordering of these steps in the compound word *śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka*.

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

[*saṁvega* – tenacity; *tīvra* – acute; *āsanna* – quickly succeeds.]

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

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

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

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

⁸⁹ 'ब्रह्म-चर्यम् अ-हिंसां च अ-परिग्रहं च सत्यं च यत्नेन हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः' "Commitment to study (*brahma-cārya*), non-violence, renunciation, and truthfulness – O may you always observe (*rakṣataḥ*) [these] with effort." (*Āruṇeya Up.* 3).

⁹⁰ 'युक्तः कर्म-फलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिम् आप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्। अ-युक्तः काम-कारेण फले सक्तः निबध्यते' "Giving up [the notion of control over] the result of action, the *yogin* attains a peace born of [the degree of] commitment; [whereas] not [committed to] *yoga*, attached to result(s) by the pressure of requirements, that one is bound." (*Bh. Gītā* 5.12).

Contemplation on the Lord

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

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

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

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

Now, specifically, which scriptural topics to contemplate upon are presented. The first and primary topic is the Lord, the *eka-tattva* (the one reality), since the Lord is the clearest and most inclusive way to understand the real nature of the *puruṣa*, oneself. We naturally think ourselves

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

⁹² 'वीत-राग-भय-क्रोधाः मन्मयाः माम् उपाश्रिताः। बहवः ज्ञान-तपसा पूताः मद्-भावम् आगताः।' "Freed from longing, fear, and anger, having taken refuge in Me [by] being Me alone, and purified by the discipline that is knowledge – many have attained My nature [i.e., complete freedom]." (*Bh. Gītā* 4.10).

to be limited and identified with the body and mind. Therefore, to contemplate the limitless *puruṣa*, which is the reality one is, *Patañjali* suggests that we contemplate the Lord – in the way this tradition presents the Lord. This will be given in the next nine *sūtras*.

The Nature of the Lord

क्लेश-कर्म-विपाकाशयैर् अपरामृष्टः पुरुष-विशेष ईश्वरः॥(1.24)
kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair a-parāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa īśvaraḥ.

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

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

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

The compound word *puruṣa-viśeṣa* can also mean *the excellent puruṣa*, *the perfect puruṣa*. This is exactly who the Lord is – the *puruṣa* understood in its perfect limitless nature. The Lord, then, is not a means for attaining one’s perfect nature; the Lord *is* one’s perfect nature. This bold truth reverberates across the scriptures, and should not be missed by any student of *yoga*.

⁹³ ‘समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्। विनश्यत्सु अ-विनश्यन्तं यः पश्यति सः पश्यति॥’ “The one who sees the Lord [Me] as remaining the same in all beings, and as not being destroyed among those [bodies] being destroyed – that one [alone] sees.” ‘समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितम् ईश्वरम्। न हिनस्ति आत्मना आत्मानं (=स्वेन एव स्वम्) ततः याति परां गतिम्’ “Because, seeing [Me] the Lord as remaining the same (*sama*) everywhere [as the self of all], one does not by oneself [i.e., through the mind] destroy [i.e., lose sight of] the self [since that self is the all-pervasive Me] and, hence, attains the ultimate end [i.e., the end of *samsāra*].” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.27–28).

⁹⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.3–9.

⁹⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.12, 4.6–7.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

⁹⁶ 'एषः सर्व-ईश्वरः एषः सर्वज्ञः एषः अन्तर-यामी एषः योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभव-अप्ययो हि भूतानाम्' "This is the Lord of all. This is the knower of all (*sarva-jñā*). This is the ruler within (*antar-yāmin*). This is the womb (*yonī*), the source, and resolution of all beings." (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 6).

knower of all).⁹⁷

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

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

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

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

⁹⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.49.

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

The Lord is also the teacher⁹⁸ of everyone before, now, and later, since the Lord, being the cause of all, including time, is not limited by time,⁹⁹ and since the Lord is the knower in the seat of the intellect of all beings.¹⁰⁰

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

⁹⁸ 'इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवान् अहम् अव्ययम्' "I [*Kṛṣṇa*, as the Lord] taught [in the beginning] this unchanging *yoga* to *Vivasvat* (the sun deity)." (*Bh. Gītā* 4.1).

⁹⁹ 'पुरुषः एव इदं सर्वम्। यद् भूतम् यद् च भव्यम्। उत अ-मृतत्वस्य ईषानः' "All this is *puruṣa* alone – whatever was and will be. It is the Lord of immortality." (*Puruṣa Sūkta, Ṛg Veda* 10.90.2). 'तद् एतद् ब्रह्म अ-पूर्वम् अन्-अपरम् अन्-अन्तरम् अ-बाह्यम्, अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म सर्व-अनुभूः इति अनुशासनम्' "That very reality (*brahman*) is without a prior and without a posterior, without an inside and without an outside. This reality (*brahman*) is the self (*ātman*) who experiences all (*sarva-anubhū*) [i.e., who according to their form exists as all]. This is the traditional teaching (*anusāsana*)." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.5.19).

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

¹⁰¹ 'सः ह उवाच यद् ऊर्ध्वं गार्गी दिवः यद् अवाक् पृथिव्याः यद् अन्तरा द्यावा-पृथिवी इमे यद् भूतं च भवच् च भविष्यच् च इति आचक्षते आकाशे तद् ओतं च प्रोतं च' "He [*Yājñā-vaikya*] replied, 'In space (*ākāśa*) [alone] is woven warp (*ota*) and woof (*protā*) [i.e., lengthwise and crosswise] [all] this, O *Gārgī*, which is above the heavens, below the earth, between the heavens and earth, and which they call the past, the present, and the future.'" (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.8.4).

turn limit the Lord, since the Lord alone is that reality.¹⁰²

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

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

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः॥(1.27)
tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ.

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

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

Om is presented and unfolded in the *Upaniṣad* scriptures as the limitless reality called *brahman*

¹⁰² ‘मद्-स्थानि सर्व-भूतानि न च अहं तेषु अवस्थितः॥ न च मद्-स्थानि भूतानि...भूत-भूत् न च भूत-स्थः मम आत्मा भूत-भावनः’
“All beings exist in [i.e., are because of] Me, but I am not in [i.e., because of] them. [Yet] [as separate] beings they do not exist in Me. My self (*ātman*) produces [all] things [all names and forms], sustains [all] things, but does not exist in [i.e., is not dependent upon] these things.”
(*Bh. Gītā* 9.4–5).

¹⁰³ ‘प्रणवं हि ईश्वरं विद्यात् सर्वस्य हृदये स्थितम्। सर्व-व्यापिनम् ओंकारं मत्वा धीरः न शोचति’ “Know *praṇava* (i.e., *Om*) to be the Lord (*Īśvara*), present in the intellect of all. Knowing *Om* as the all-pervasive (Lord), the wise person does not grieve.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 1.28).

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

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

Consciousness

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

¹⁰⁴ ‘न अन्तः-प्रज्ञं न बहिः-प्रज्ञं न उभयतः-प्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञान-घनं न प्रज्ञं न अ-प्रज्ञम्।’ “They know the [so called] fourth (*caturtha*) [quarter of *Om* and of *ātman*] to be neither conscious of the internal [i.e., mind and the dream world], the external [i.e., external objects and the waking world] nor in between, nor a pure cognition alone (*prajñāna-ghana*) [without an object in deep sleep], neither conscious nor non-conscious,” ‘अ-दृश्यम् अ-व्यवहार्यम् अ-ग्राह्यम् अ-लक्षणम् अ-चिन्त्यम् अ-व्यपदेश्यम् एक-आत्म-प्रत्यय-सारं प्रपञ्च-उपशमं शान्तं शिवम् अ-द्वैतं चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते सः आत्मा सः विज्ञेयः’ “...neither seen, acted upon nor graspable, neither inferred, thought about nor describable [since] it is the essence of the cognition of the one self [in all three experiences of waking, dream, and deep sleep], in whom the universe resolves, peaceful and pleasing (*sāntam śivam*) [because it is] without a second. That is the self (*ātman*). That is what is to be known.” (*Māṇḍūkya Up.* 1.7).

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

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

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

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

n sound with its variations requires the opening of the lips with some shaping of the mouth, though the breath is only out the nose.

In order for there to be language, there have to be separable words. By extension, the silence before and after words is represented by the silence between repetitions of *Om*. We will see in the following commentary that the entire diversity of the universe can be appreciated as the names we give to distinguish phenomenal appearances from each other.

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

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

तज्-जपस् तद्-अर्थ-भावनम्॥(1.28)
taj-japas tad-artha-bhāvanam.

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

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

Your neighbor, unless he or she has studied the scripture, is probably not going to give you verbal testimony yielding knowledge about the meaning of *Om*. Only the scripture and its commentaries talk meaningfully and with authority about *Om*. This is why *āgama pramāṇa*, a scripture, is important to be correctly understood. It is not reasonable to think you can read a contemporary *yoga* book, close your eyes, repeat *Om*, and attain the ultimate non-dual goal of

yoga.

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

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

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

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

From that contemplation, one indeed comes to know the conscious being, the consciousness, at the center¹⁰⁶ of one's being, and one's obstacles to liberation as the knowledge of that limitless reality disappear by one's understanding and by grace gained through this ultimate worship of the Lord as one's self.¹⁰⁷

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

¹⁰⁶ 'कश्चिद् धीरः प्रत्यग्-आत्मानम् ऐक्षद् आवृत्त-चक्षुः (=न हि बाह्य-विषय-आलोचन-परत्वम्) अ-मृतत्वम् इच्छन्' "The one discriminating person, seeking freedom from death, who had directed the attention within [i.e., sought in terms of knowledge instead of possessions] came to know [as clear as seeing] (*aikṣat*) the self within (*pratyak-ātman*).” (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.1.1).

¹⁰⁷ 'चतुर्-विधा भजन्ते मां जनाः सु-कृतिनः अर्जुन। आर्तः जिज्ञासुः अर्थ-अर्थी ज्ञानी च भरत-ऋषभ॥' "Fourfold are the people who do adaptive action and who seek Me, O *Arjuna*. [These four kinds of *bhaktas* (devotees) are] the one who is seized by trouble, the one who requires security, the one who wants to know [Me], and the *jñānin* (one who knows) [Me], O *Arjuna*." 'तेषां ज्ञानी नित्य-युक्तः एक-भक्तिः विशिष्यते। प्रियः हि ज्ञानिनः अत्यर्थम् (=अतिशयेन) अहं सः च मम प्रियः॥' "Among them, the *jñānin* – who is always united [in Me] and whose worship (*bhakti*) is of the one [Lord as everything] – is distinguished, because I [the self of all] am totally beloved to that *jñānin* and that one is [totally] beloved to Me." 'उदाराः सर्वे एव एते ज्ञानी तु आत्मा एव मे मतम्। आस्थितः सः हि युक्त-आत्मा माम् एव अन्-उत्तमां गतिम्॥' "All [four] indeed are exalted, but the *jñānin* is *ātman* (Myself) alone. That is My vision. Because that one, whose mind is absorbed [in Me], has attained the goal that is but Me, beyond which there is

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

Distractions of the Mind

व्याधि-स्त्यान-संशय-प्रमादालस्याविरति-भ्रान्ति-दर्शनालब्ध-भूमिकत्वानवस्थितत्वानि चित्त-विक्षेपास्
तेऽन्तरायाः॥(1.30)
*vyādhi-styāna-saṁśaya-pramādālasyaāvīrati-bhrānti-darśanālabdha-
bhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni citta-vikṣepās te'ntarāyāḥ.*

none.” (*Bh. Gītā* 7.16–18).

¹⁰⁸ ‘प्रशान्त-आत्मा (=प्रशान्त-मनाः) विगत-भीः ब्रह्म-चारि-व्रते स्थितः। मनः संयम्य मद्-चित्तः युक्तः आसीत् मद्-परः’ “Being of clear mind, without fear, and firm in one’s vow of seeking *brahman* [i.e., *brahma-cārya*], mastering the mind – may the *yogin* sit, thinking of Me [through My teaching], having Me as the ultimate.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.14).

¹⁰⁹ ‘ब्रह्म-विद् आप्नोति परम्।...सत्यं ज्ञानम् अन्-अन्तं ब्रह्म। यः वेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमन् (=परमे व्योम्नि)। सः अश्रुते सर्वान् कामान् सह’ “The knower of *brahman* obtains the ultimate. ...*Brahman* is limitless reality-consciousness. The one who knows the one existing [as though] hidden (*nihita*) in the intellect (*guhā*), in this limitless space [i.e., in this limitless expanse that lights up all thought therein], satisfies at once all desires.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). ‘तत् (सत्-ब्रह्म) त्वम् असि’ “That [*brahman*] you are.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.8.7...). ‘तद् इदम् अपि एतर्हि यः एवं वेद अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि इति सः इदं सर्वं भवति’ “So even now the one who knows ‘I am *brahman*,’ that one is all this [universe].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.10).

[*te* – those; *antarāyas* – obstacles; *vikṣepas* – distractions; *citta* – mind; *vyādhi* – dis-ease; *styāna* – lack of mental acumen; *saṁśaya* – doubt; *pramāda* – inattention; *ālasya* – laziness; *a-virati* – intemperance; *bhrānti-darśana* – erroneous understanding; *a-labdha-bhūmikatva* – not attaining success at the stages; *an-avasthitatva* – lack of stability.]

Those obstacles, which are distractions of the mind, are dis-ease mental and physical; lack of mental acumen; doubt; inattention; laziness of body and mind; intemperance – an inability to abstain from the excessive attraction to objects of desire; erroneous understanding; not attaining success at the stages in one’s progress in *yoga*; and lack of stability at various stages of progress one has made in *yoga*.

दुःख-दौर्मनस्याङ्गम्-एजयत्व-श्वास-प्रश्वासा विक्षेप-सह-भुवः॥(1.31)

duḥkha-daurmanasyāṅgam ejayatva-śvāsa-praśvāsā vikṣepa-saha-bhuvah.

[*saha-bhū* – arising together with; *vikṣepa* – distraction; *duḥkha* – sorrow; *daurmanasya* – despair; *śvāsa* – inhalation; *praśvāsa* – exhalation; *ejayatva* – causing agitation; *aṅga* – body.]

Arising together with distraction of the mind are sorrow, despair, and unsteady inhalation and exhalation causing agitation to the body, which in turn further agitates the mind.

These two *sūtras* list twelve factors that distract the mind in this discipline. They are another expression of the five afflictions (*kleśas*). The scriptural literature has a number of ways of expressing the obstacles to gaining freedom in life. These two *sūtras* list many of them, however, the other *sūtras* tend to use the more succinct expression as the five *kleśas* – ignorance (*a-vidyā*), a possessive I-notion (*asmitā*), binding desire for (*rāga*) and against (*dveṣa*) objects and situations, and fear of death (*abhiniveśa*).¹¹⁰

The detailed listing of the distractions here initiates a process in aspirants for addressing what they find most distracting from their goals, starting with health onwards. More importantly, these two *sūtras* connect those distractions that affect the body to the fact that they in turn affect

¹¹⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.3.

the mind. This is where they become obstructions to *yoga*. One only needs adequate health to embark on this path. This is sometimes mistaken by those who believe that the body has to be perfected before meditation can even be taught or attempted.

Considering that traditionally one takes to the spiritual path fulltime in one's later years as the final stage in life upon retirement – as a *vāna-prastha* (moving out of the family house to a private or public hermitage in the woods) or as a *sannyāsin* (a secluded or wandering renunciate) – imperfect health (flexibility, energy level, and so on) is not likely to have been seen as an unmanageable obstacle in *yoga*.

The Removal of Distractions

तत्-प्रतिषेधार्थम् एक-तत्त्वाभ्यासः॥(1.32)
tat-pratiṣedhārtham eka-tattvābhyāsaḥ.

[*tad-pratiṣedha-artha* – for removing these; *abhyāsa* – repetition; *eka-tattva* – one reality.]

For removing these distractions of the mind there is **repetition** of keeping the mind **on the one reality** – the Lord that is at the center of oneself as the completely free *puruṣa*, the conscious being that is the truth of oneself, the only *draṣṭr* (witness).

Some commentaries and most translations weaken this *eka-tattva* by taking it to mean *only one object* of contemplation. But this will be completely addressed in *Yoga Sūtras* 1.35 and 1.39. On the other hand, the ultimate *tattva* (reality) – the Lord understood as the completely free *puruṣa* that is oneself – has already been introduced and said to be appreciated as the remover of obstacles in the preceding *sūtra* 1.29. That *tattva*, the completely free *puruṣa*, and not some one object of desire is the goal of *kaivalya* (liberation). Therefore, its importance here as the key to removing distractions, to removing unsteadiness of the mind and objective self-acceptance of all that occurs in the mind, which is the goal of *samādhi* and hence of *yoga* itself, has to be and is included here.

Yoga is a method for attaining a goal that is already possessed, for attaining the perfect nature of oneself. This already attained goal is not appreciated due to ignorance of that nature resulting in misidentifying oneself with the various beliefs and opinions in the mind. This method begins

and ends with contemplating the already, always present ultimate nature of the self. At first it may be helpful to appreciate this as the Lord. Finally, it is appreciated as the real nature of oneself.

It is like finding out that you are a twin by having your long lost twin come to your door and first simply tell you and then explain how you are twins. Initially, since the person looks a lot like you, you can understand how that person might be your twin, but finally you end up appreciating that you are the twin to this person. You were a twin before you knew you were a twin. You become the twin by appreciating the very fact itself, nothing else.

Only listening to the knowledge, listening to the teaching, not any change to the self, is required on your part. Contemplation on the ultimate person, at first, as the Lord – the person that you in fact are, and ultimately as the limitless reality within oneself – is the principle technique of *Patañjali's yoga*. If you do not get it when you listen to the teaching, then there are a number of steps in *yoga* you can take to explain and clear any doubts.

Many of the commentators and most of the translators assume that *Patañjali* advocates a version of dualist *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. Their aversion to appreciating the Lord as the pure *puruṣa* that is oneself is understandable. Understandable, because that identity is not acceptable to *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, which holds that there is no Lord. Moreover *Sāṅkhya* says the *puruṣas* are many and separate, without being able to give a satisfactory explanation of how these *puruṣas* can be both *nir-guṇa* (attributeless) and yet somehow many and separate from each other. *Many* and *separate*, themselves, are attributes.

The so-called *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* philosophy also cannot accept the identity of the Lord and the self. They talk about a Lord as a separate, special *puruṣa* that one can pretend is in one's heart, but who is not really there. That Lord sits somewhere staring, a unique non-action contact (*saṃyoga*) of the witnessing Lord, upon the witnessed *pradhāna* (unmanifest nature in non-evolving equilibrium) and somehow agitates the components (*guṇas*) within it into manifestation in the form of this evolving universe, with the purpose of being of service to the many *puruṣas*.

Sāṅkhya and *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* both accept this agitation into manifestation of an insentient entity. Both are very odd in that they rely on this literally impossible phenomenon to prop up their thesis of the distinction between the self (*puruṣa*) and an insentient nature that can evolve. Even if they hold that the unmanifest nature (*pradhāna*) is kind-of sentient by the presence of a

sentient-like component (*sattva*), still their philosophy also holds that the *puruṣa* is *nir-guṇa* (attributeless) and so could not be something that stares itself in contact with anything else!

Their philosophy, for this reason, seems quaint and is logically inconsistent. This may be why so many *yogins* spend more of their time practicing *yoga* than thinking about the philosophy behind those practices. *Patañjali* does not propose or argue for any dualist philosophy in any of these *sūtras*. *Patañjali* never uses the term *sāṅkhya* in any of these *sūtras*. The dualist views are all *Īśvara-kṛṣṇa*'s contributions that have been assumed to be behind *Patañjali*'s *yoga* by later commentators. *Īśvara-kṛṣṇa* was a later philosopher who formulated a version of dualist philosophy called *Sāṅkhya*.

In regard to the Lord, *Patañjali* himself has no such reservation in offering many *sūtras* on this *eka-tattva* – eight so far and many more to follow. This can be taken as an indication that *Patañjali* was not an advocate of *Sāṅkhya* philosophy or a *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* philosophy. *Patañjali*, just as many Indian writers and commentators, did borrow common terminologies from the scriptures and also from each other. But borrowing some terminology does not necessarily entail accepting any of the philosophies that share these common terms.

Rather, *Patañjali* appears here as simply an advocate of *yoga* that includes *samādhi* (contemplation) and an appreciation of an intelligent Lord as a means for equipping the mind to attain *kaivalya* (liberation). The vast majority of seekers in India accept that *kaivalya* means a Lord that really is in one's heart. They grow up with a shrine in their homes, parents who understand that Lord in the heart, and a habit of going to temple to affirm that Lord's presence. The iconography of these temples clearly adheres to this concept. The seeker enters from the external world into the religious environs of the temple. At the center of the temple is a dark enclosure (the mind in ignorance of the Lord) wherein the Lord's presence is illumined by the lamp (of knowledge).

Patañjali clearly takes an approach that accepts the same tenants as the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the other great and earlier, or perhaps contemporary, text on *yoga*. *Patañjali* expounds on the nuances of *samādhi*, which was only lightly touched upon in the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* is clearly based on *Upaniṣad* teachings and uses some of the same terminology as the original *Upaniṣads*. *Sāṅkhya* philosophy also borrowed from and elaborated upon the terminologies of the *Upaniṣads*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* clearly teaches a real, not a

pretend, identity of the limitless Lord and the limitless self. Please see this author's works on the *Bhagavad Gītā* for more on this topic.

Clarity of Mind

मैत्री-करुणा-मुदितोपेक्षाणां सुख-दुःख-पुण्यापुण्य-विषयाणां भावनातश् चित्त-प्रसादनम्॥(1.33)
*maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇyāpuṇya-viṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaś citta-
 prasādanam.*

[*prasādana* – clarity; *citta* – mind; *bhāvanātas* – through cultivating; *maitrī* – goodwill; *sukha-viṣaya* – the joyful; *karuṇā* – compassion; *duḥkha[-viṣaya]* – the sorrowful; *mudita* – approval; *puṇya[-viṣaya]* – the meritorious; *upekṣa* – allowance; *a-puṇya[-viṣaya]* – the non-meritorious.]

This **clarity**, which is *sthiti* (steadiness), **of mind** is also **through** the value structures of **cultivating goodwill**¹¹¹ instead of **envy towards the joyful**, **compassion** instead of **advantage towards the sorrowful**, **approval** instead of **jealousy towards the meritorious**, and **allowance** instead of **contempt towards the non-meritorious**.

These attitudes – based on the universal value structure called *dharma* (universal justice) in the scripture – uphold an objective, non-distracting, and supportive relationship with oneself, other people, other living beings, and all situations around us. The student's objective is to assimilate this teaching in all thinking, attitudes, and behavior. It is a way of life, not a philosophy. These and other values that support a more open and contemplative mind are fully developed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

The values noted in this *sūtra* are the student's tools in addressing and assessing his or her attitudes toward him or herself as well as toward the world. Goodwill toward oneself is not self-indulgence. It is personal honesty and a commitment to integrate the various aspects of the psyche. It is a commitment to emotional maturity and inner growth. We envy another's joy when we place unwarranted value on another's possession or achievement. So neither the joy or the envy is justified. Therefore to bear goodwill to oneself is to always have the highest value in mind, or easily available.

¹¹¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.23.

Compassion, actually empathy, is a natural and honest human connection to all living things. Compassion toward oneself is easily overdone; we tend to be extremely forgiving of our mistakes, even more so than we are of others. It takes a sensitive, uncompromising objectivity to evaluate our underlying motivations. Often our sorrow toward ourselves, our feelings of self-pity, voice our childish sense of entitlement and a more basic sense of worthlessness and unlovability. Feeling unworthy can influence our attitudes expressing judgment.

There is no healthy mind incapable of entertaining the full range of human behavior, from abject depravity to saintly beatitude. What makes a difference is a life of allowance, objectivity, and unconditional understanding. Again this works both in relationship to our self and to the world. The clarity, the steadiness of mind this *sūtra* suggests, is gained by the development and nurturing of *buddhi*, of the intellect, the higher mind which is non-reactive, non-judgmental, understanding, bright, enthusiastic, and cheerful. This teaching that addresses the self, the Lord, and the world in terms of the benevolent whole is a proven, teachable sharing of spiritual truth.

प्रच्छर्दन-विधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य॥(1.34)
pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyāṃ vā prāṇasya.

[*vā* – also; *pracchardana* – exhalation; *vidhāraṇa* – retention; *prāṇa* – breath.]

This steadiness of mind is **also through** the practice of controlling **the exhalation and retention of the breath**, which naturally calms the restlessness of the mind.¹¹²

More details and the purpose of this, as it relates to the other steps towards contemplation within the eight limbs (*aṣṭāṅga*) of *yoga*, will be presented in *Yoga Sutras* 2.49 through 52. This is the second time breath has been mentioned in this chapter (*see Yoga Sutras* 1.31). In the second chapter the topic of breath will be covered, and in the third (*Yoga Sutras* 3.31) it is again taken up with reference to the gain of calm. Breath control is important and should be considered and

¹¹² ‘प्राणान् प्रपीड्य इह संयुक्त-चेष्टः क्षीणे प्राणे नासिकया उच्छ्वसीत। दुष्ट-अश्व-युक्तम् इव वाहम् एनं विद्वान् मनः धारयेत् अ-प्रमत्तः’ “Restraining the organs of acting and sensing (the *prāṇas*), [thus] whose activities are disciplined, one should [sit and gently] breathe through the nostrils when one’s activity has diminished. Without indifference, the informed one should hold this mind, like it was the reins attached to unruly horses [i.e., the organs].” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 2.9).

practiced in order to promote a composed, meditative mind. This is not an attempt to raise *kuṇḍalinī* (the coiled energy at the base of the spine) here. We are simply making an honest effort to own up to our already perfect self, free of ignorance, sorrow, and fear.

विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिर् उत्पन्ना मनसः स्थिति-निबन्धनी॥(1.35)
viśayavatī vā pravṛttir utpannā manasaḥ sthiti-nibandhanī.

[*vā* – also; *utpanna* – developing; *pravṛtti* – concerted mental pursuit; *viśayavatin* – having but one object; *nibandhanin* – brings about; *sthiti* – steadiness; *manas* – mind.]

Also developing a concerted mental pursuit having but one object, recommended by scripture or by one’s teacher, **brings about a steadiness of mind.**

विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती॥(1.36)
viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī.

[*vā* – also; *jyotiṣmatin* – having the light; *vi-śoka* – free of sorrow.]

Also developing a concerted mental pursuit **having the light**,¹¹³ which is one’s conscious being, the light of all lights as its contemplation, **which is free of** all limitations including **sorrow**,¹¹⁴ brings about a steadiness of mind.

¹¹³ ‘अथ यद् अतः परः दिवः ज्योतिः दीप्यते विश्वतः पृष्ठेषु सर्वतः पृष्ठेषु अन्-उत्तमेषु उत्तमेषु लोकेषु इदं वाव तद् यद् इदम् अस्मिन् अन्तः पुरुषे ज्योतिः’ “Now, the light (*jyotis*) which shines above this heaven, in the highest and unsurpassed regions above the universe, above all, is indeed this very same light within the person.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 3.13.7). ‘ज्योतिषाम् अपि तद् ज्योतिः तमसः परम् उच्यते’ “It is the light of lights [i.e., the solely self-revealing conscious being by which even the sun is revealed] said to be beyond darkness [or ignorance, as it reveals both].” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.17).

¹¹⁴ ‘न अस्य (देहस्य) जरया एतद् (अन्तर्-आकाशः ब्रह्म) जीर्यति, न वधेन अस्य हन्यते। एतत् सत्यं ब्रह्म-पुरम्, अस्मिन् कामाः समाहिताः॥’ “By the aging of that [body], this [‘space within the heart,’ *brahman*] does not age. By the destruction of that, this is not destroyed. This is the true city of *brahman* [i.e., the true body not other than *brahman*]. In this are placed [all] desires.” ‘एषः आत्मा अपहृत-पाप्मा वि-जरः वि-मृत्युः वि-शोकः वि-जिघत्सः अ-पिपासः सत्य-कामः सत्य-सङ्कल्पः॥’ “This is *ātman* not affected by painful results, free of aging, free of death, free of sorrow (*vi-śoka*), free of hunger and thirst, [in which reality] desire and choice are realized.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.1.5). ‘हृद्-पुण्डरीकं वि-रजं वि-शुद्धं विचिन्त्य, मध्ये (च) वि-शोदं वि-

This is contemplating the very nature of the awareful being that is oneself. This needs the person to understand that the shining being within is none other than the perfect *puruṣa*, the Lord. So instead of the contemplation upon the Lord as the perfect person in *sūtra* 1.23, this is upon the being within as the perfect person. Of course, they are the same, but this takes the understanding of the scripture. This is well taught in the scriptures, such as in the footnote quotations to this *sūtra*. *Patañjali* has already directed the seeker to the scripture (*āgama*) and he specifically indicates which scriptures by the terminology he uses – *vyotis* and *viśoka*. The commentator *Vyāsa* using the term *hr̥daya-puṇḍarīka* indicates the *mantra* from *Kaivalya Upaniṣad* which uses the equivalent term *hr̥d-puṇḍarīka*.

Imagine the person who knows not the scripture behind these *sūtras* trying to contemplate some painless light inside his or her head. It is irresponsible to not indicate to seekers what this *viśoka vyotis* really is.

वीत-राग-विषयं वा चित्तम्॥(1.37)
vīta-rāga-viṣayaṃ vā cittam.

[*citta* – mind; *vā* – also; *vīta-rāga* – no attachment; *viṣayas* – objects.]

The mind also attains steadiness when it has no attachment¹¹⁵ towards objects.

Objects are manifestations of the *tattvas* (evolutes) of the world, in *Sāṅkhya* terminology. Thus attachment to objects, such as contemplating on the *tattvas* just to gain specific objects or powers, would be *kliṣṭa* (what hinders one's progress in *yoga*).¹¹⁶ These objects should instead

शोकं (परम-ईश्वरं विचिन्त्य) 'Contemplating [until] the lotus like heart (*hr̥d-puṇḍarīka*) (i.e., the open, mature mind arisen from the mundane mire) is free of agitation and pure, [then] *madhye* (within that) upon the bright one (*viśada*), free of sorrow (*viśoka*) [the Lord (*Parameśvara*)]." (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.6).

¹¹⁵ 'सम्प्राप्य एनम् ऋषयः ज्ञान-तृप्ताः कृत-आत्मानः वीत-रागाः प्रशान्ताः। ते सर्व-गं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीराः युक्त-आत्मानः सर्वम् एव आविशन्ति' "Having completely attained this [*brahman*], the sages were satisfied in knowledge. Their mind being prepared, they were free of attachments (*vīta-rāga*) and naturally cheerful. Having gained everywhere the all-pervasive and [always] united in [contemplation of the limitless] *ātman*, those wise ones become everything!" (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.2.5).

¹¹⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.37.

be contemplated in order to see their limitations. These limitations, no matter how grand, are not one's self, nor can they make a difference in or improve one's self in any way, shape, or form.

स्वप्न-निद्रा-ज्ञानालम्बनं वा॥(1.38)
svapna-nidrā-jñānālambanaṃ vā.

[*vā* – also; *ālambana* – basis; *jñāna* – knowledge; *svapna* – dream; *nidrā* – sleep.]

The mind **also** attains steadiness when **it has as its basis the knowledge of dream and sleep** states, as taught in the *Upaniṣads*¹¹⁷ as part of the unfoldment of the one conscious being that unites all experiences.

Like the Lord in reference to this entire waking world, I, the dreamer, can see myself as the Lord of the dream world, as its source and substance. Then in deep sleep, which is also just me, this dream world as well as the waking world resolves, like the universe resolves into an unmanifest state in the reality we call the Lord, until the next big-bang – in our case, the clang of the alarm clock. In this way one can come to assimilate how one can be that same reality from which the universe appears and into which it resolves. All this, as taught by the *Upaniṣads*, can be meditated upon with the help of *Om*, also called the *ālambana* (basis).¹¹⁸

The *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, especially, presents the nature of the self, of reality, via the three states of experience, waking-dreaming-sleeping. It says the conscious being that in-forms all three states, that is always there, unaffected before, during, and after each of the appearances of

¹¹⁷ *Brahma, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Kaivalya, Māṇḍūkya, Nṛsiṃha-Pūrva-Tāpanīya, Nṛsiṃha-Uttara-Tāpanīya, Prasna, Rāma-Uttara-Tāpanīya, and Sarva-upaniṣat-sāra Upaniṣads.*

¹¹⁸ 'सर्वे वेदाः यत् पदम् आमनन्ति तपांसि सर्वाणि च यद् वदन्ति। यद् इच्छन्तः ब्रह्म-चर्यं चरन्ति तत् ते पदं संग्रहेण ब्रवीमि ओम् इति एतत्॥' "The abode (*pada*) which all the *Vedas* proclaim, which all prayerful disciplines speak, and desiring which they take to a life of seeking *brahman*, that abode I tell to you in brief is this *Om* [i.e., what has *Om* as its indicating symbol]." '...एतद् आलम्बनं श्रेष्ठम् एतद् आलम्बनं परम्। एतद् आलम्बनं ज्ञात्वा ब्रह्म-लोके महीयते' "...This basis (*ālambana*) [i.e., *āśraya*, what one seeks refuge in] is the best, this basis is the ultimate. Knowing this basis [and thus being *brahman*] one becomes exalted [absolutely] in the world that is *brahman* (*brahma-loka*) [or, relatively, in the highest heaven called *brahma-loka*]." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.15 & 17).

these three states, is the reality of oneself, the reality of *brahman* (the infinite). So these experiences within waking life that we cling to as if they make or break us are, in comparison to the reality of oneself, no more real than dreams. These experiences are simply movements of the mind that come and go in its restlessness. This understanding is what is to be contemplated during recitation of *Om* in meditation. Every thought, every experience, is the same as this *Om* arising in awareness, remaining for a moment in awareness, then resolving back within the awareful being, within oneself. It is temporary; oneself alone is permanent and untainted by the appearances of thoughts.

These are not poetic statements that life is *like* a dream, but statements of fact about all our experiences, namely that all of life has a nature not essentially different from a dream – as simply the movement of the mind. This is reality based teaching. This and similar analyses of dream and deep sleep in the *Upaniṣads* is what *Patañjali* is referring to here in this *sūtra*, and again why scripture (*āgama*) is to be studied with the help of a skilled teacher.¹¹⁹

The superficial commentary of *Vyāsa* on these last several *sūtras* led to a lack of independent analysis by the following commentators and translators. They completely miss the connection of these very important topics to their clear development in the scriptures. This allows a few translators to imagine that the ancient *yogins* were into psychotherapeutic dream analysis. This imagination cannot be laid at the feet of *Vyāsa*, though, as it is perhaps more a wish by those translators to make their medieval *Sāṅkhya* based interpretations sound current.

The teaching analyses dream not for therapeutic experiences but for its lesson in understanding what is the reality of this world, the dream, and oneself – the waker and dreamer.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ 'न नरेण अ-वरेण प्रोक्तः एषः सु-विज्ञेयः बहुधा चिन्त्यमानः। अन्-अन्य-प्रोक्ते गतिः अत्र न अस्ति' "(Though) contemplating (*cintyamāna*) a lot, one finds this *ātman* explained by an inferior teacher difficult to know. When taught by one who knows it as himself (*an-anya*), there is no going wrong (*gati*)."
(*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.8).

¹²⁰ 'तस्य वै एतस्य पुरुषस्य द्वे एव स्थाने भवतः, इदं (भवत्-जन्म) च पर-लोक-स्थानं (शरीरादि-भूत-जन्मानि) च, सन्ध्यं तृतीयं स्वप्न-स्थानं, तस्मिन् सन्ध्ये स्थाने तिष्ठन् एते उभे स्थाने पश्यति इदं च पर-लोक-स्थानं च।' "[*Yājñā-valkyā* replied to King *Janaka*:] Indeed that person (*puruṣa*) has only two abodes, this [life] and the other world [all other past and future lives]. Dream, a third, is their junction. Residing in that junction abode he sees both those abodes, this and the other life." 'अथ यथा-आक्रमः अयं पर-लोक-स्थाने भवति तम् (कर्म) आक्रमम् आक्रम्य उभयान् पाप्मनः आनन्दान् च पश्यति,' "Now, whatever brings one into the other life he takes that

यथाभिमत-ध्यानाद् वा॥(1.39)
yathābhimata-dhyānād vā.

[*vā* – also; *dhyāna* – retaining a single pointed inquiry in contemplation; *yathā-abhimata* – any object one likes.]

The mind also attains steadiness through retaining a single pointed inquiry in contemplation on any object one likes, and thus staying put upon that object for a time.

One has to start somewhere. If only objects you desire attract you, then contemplate upon them in order to eventually appreciate their limitations through the teaching.

परमाणु-परम-महत्त्वान्तोऽस्य वशी-कारः॥(1.40)
paramāṇu-parama-mahattvānto'sya vaśī-kārah.

[*vaśī-kāra* – mastery; *asya* – of this; *anta* – extends; *parama-aṇu* – most minute; *parama-mahattva* – most pervasive.]

Mastery in the form of *vairāgya* (non-attachment) of this mind extends from the most minute to the most pervasive.

Mastery or control is not to be understood as power over individual things. Such a power and its craving, imagined to be a part of *yoga* or not, can only be based on the erroneous belief that objects, including this body and mind, can provide the satisfaction-full freedom which is the real goal of *yoga* and is the natural goal of everyone, whether they fully recognize it or not. Mastery, as had already been explained in *Yoga Sūtra* 1.15, here concerns the ability to pursue what is conducive and avoid what is not conducive to *yoga*. It is the *nirodha* (discipline) of the thoughts of the mind indicated in *Yoga Sūtra* 1.2 as the definition of *yoga*.

The power this individual body and mind can have over even a tiny portion of the universe

[*karma*] and experiences sorrows and joys.” ‘सः यत्र प्रस्वपिति, अस्य लोकस्य सर्व-अवतः मात्राम् अपादाय स्वयं (स्थूल-शरीरं) विहृत्य, स्वयं (स्वप्न-शरीरं) निर्माय, स्वेन भासा (वासना-आत्मक-अन्तःकरण-वृत्ति-प्रकाशेन) स्वेन ज्योतिषा प्रस्वपिति, अत्र अयं पुरुषः (आत्मा) स्वयं ज्योतिः भवति’ “When he dreams, he takes a little of this supportive world, abandons his own [physical body], creates himself [a dream body], and dreams as his own luster [dream] by his own light (*vyotis*). Here, the person is his own light.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.3.9).

is a pittance. The real mastery is freeing oneself from the notions that these things of the universe are an addition to or subtraction from me, are to be pursued and possessed, or feared and avoided. It is complete independence, a lack of dependence on anything.¹²¹ This complete mastery entails the appreciation that all this is not other than the reality that is oneself.

क्षीण-वृत्तेर् अभिजातस्येव मणेर् ग्रहीतृ-ग्रहण-ग्राह्येषु तत्-स्थ-तद्-अञ्जनता समापत्तिः॥(1.41)
kṣīṇa-vṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grahītṛ-grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu tat-stha-tad-añjanatā samāpattiḥ.

[*samāpatti* – contemplation; *vṛttis* – thoughts; *kṣīṇa* – have waned; *tat-añjanatā* – what makes clearly evident that; *tat-stha* – which it rests upon; *grahītṛ* – knower; *grahaṇa* – knowing; *grāhya* – known; *iva* – like; *abhijāta maṇi* – quality crystal ball.]

The contemplation of one whose distracting thoughts have waned is what makes clearly evident that which it rests upon, whether that be the knower – the notion of I as a knower, the knowing – the senses and the mind, or the known – the object, like a quality crystal ball clearly takes on the exact color of whatever it rests on.

This is the immediate goal of *yoga* – a sufficiently clean and clear mind that can easily assimilate, can easily take on the truth of, any truth it rests upon, like a clear crystal takes on the exact color of any object it rests upon.

Four Forms of Contemplation With Seed

तत्र शब्दार्थ-ज्ञान-विकल्पैः सङ्कीर्णा स-वितर्का समापत्तिः॥(1.42)
tatra śabdārtha-jñāna-vikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā sa-vitarkā samāpattiḥ.

¹²¹ 'यः तु आत्म-रतिः एव स्याद् आत्म-तृप्तः च मानवः। आत्मनि एव च सन्तुष्टः तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते॥' "Whereas, the person who would find pleasure within the self alone, be satisfied with the self, and be contented in the self alone – that one has nothing [yet] to be done." 'न एव तस्य कृतेन अर्थः न अ-कृतेन इह कश्चन। न च अस्य सर्व-भूतेषु कश्चिद् अर्थ-व्यपाश्रयः' "For that [person] in this world, there is, indeed, no goal by doing, nor by not doing. Nor for that one is there any dependence for [any] thing towards any being." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.17-18).

[*tatra* – there; *samāpatti* – contemplation; *saṅkīrṇa* – mixed up; *vikalpa* – imagination; *śabda* – word; *artha* – perceptual or logical object; *jñāna* – idea; *sa-vitarka* – with reasoning.]

There in contemplation, **the contemplation that is mixed up with imagination based on word, the perceptual or logical object, and its related idea is called *sa-vitarka* (with reasoning)**, a part of *saṃprajñāta samādhi*.

स्मृति-परिशुद्धौ स्वरूप-शून्येवार्थमात्र-निर्भासा निर्-वितर्का ॥(1.43)
smṛti-pariśuddhau sva-rūpa-śūnyevārtha-mātra-nirbhāsā nir-vitarkā.

[*pariśuddhi* – purified; *smṛti* – memory; *nirbhāsa* – illumination; *artha-mātra* – only the perceptual or logical object; *iva* – as if; *śūnya* – had no; *sva-rūpa* – form of its own; *nir-vitarka* – free of reasoning.]

When purified of memory of word and idea, the *samāpatti* (contemplation) that is **the illumination of only the perceptual or logical object** in assimilated knowledge of the nature of the object free from erroneous mental projections, **as if the mind had no form of its own, is called *nir-vitarka* (free of reasoning)**, also a part of *saṃprajñāta samādhi* because it is as if, so the mind is still subtly there.

All objects of the universe, including the senses and mind with all its various ideas and notions, are but name and form, as the scripture never tires in pointing out. This getting past the name and form in the mind to their reality, their *is-ness*,¹²² that is not separate from oneself is this being purified of memory of word and idea. The terms *word* and *idea* in these *sūtras* are the equivalent of the scripture's terms *name* and *form*, respectively. The term *memory* is used because memory alone can be the vehicle to introduce into the current moment a name connected to a particular form learned in the past. Language, the matching of word with a form, is a skill learned in a culture over time that is retained in memory and applied to the current moment at hand. This language is the tool to distinguish objects through these different names and forms. If these distinguished objects are then given (are hypothesized to have) a reality beyond the

¹²² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.17.

reality of the applied names and forms from memory, then one is making a mistake of creating a reality for objects that is not there.

An example of such a mistake is hearing a noise in my room at night and bringing to mind the thought of a monster as actually existing in my room. When I know the thought as simply a thought, then it can be objectively investigated appropriately. When I believe, however, that there is an existing monster simply based on that thought, then this is a mistake.

A more subtle and devastating example is thinking of my body and becoming worried that I am ageing, thus I am subject to death, to disappear.

When I correctly know this body is simply a perceptual notion I have in the current moment, and when I correctly know that this notion is bound up with memories of a past body and with imaginations of an uncertain future body, and when I correctly know that the notion that I am this body is a mistake, then I can objectively see that this body is now something that may be called old but it is not me. This body is intrinsically only existing right now. There is no age for this current appearance other than the present moment. The reality of time and the flow of time will be analyzed in the later chapters to reveal this understanding.¹²³ Though the momentary appearance of this body may be given the name old, still I do not then become old.

However, if I believe that this body now is the same as the body in the past memories of it and is the same as the body in the imagined uncertain future notions of it, and therefore it is a single continuous entity that is continually ageing till death, and this ageing till death is myself ageing, then this is a devastating, death-dealing mistake.

Believing that the current appearance of this body is a single continuous entity, external to and completely independent from thought and its content, is a mistake that does not necessarily cause a problem. This is just misidentifying a factual object (the current appearance of this body) with an imaginary object fading to its death. Thinking that what happens to this external entity is happening to me, to the notion I have of myself as the knower of these thoughts and entities, however, is a mistake that causes a problem. This latter mistake makes myself appear to be unduly limited and necessarily subjects this mind to baseless anxiety and fear – all because of shallow, loose thinking that mixes up entities and realities. This is misidentifying oneself with a factual or imaginary object – limiting oneself to whatever problem that object appears to have.

¹²³ See commentaries on *Yoga Sūtras* 3.16 & 52, 4.12-14 & 33.

The moment, which is pure cognition, is the reality of oneself that is timeless (time-free) and limitless, whereas memory is of the past and imagination is of the future. These latter two are limited since they are simply thoughts in time that will go away in time. When contemplating the nature of the objects of the world, such as this body or the mind, in keeping with the teaching, one is objectively seeing their inherent limitations as simply names and forms. One sees their limitations as not belonging to or affecting the single reality in which they temporarily manifest as names and forms. This is the preliminary *sa-vicāra* contemplation.

Then, in *nir-vicāra*, one finally comes to appreciate the pure is-ness of the object as the same “I am,” the same is-ness of oneself, *sat-cit* (reality-consciousness), the reality in which these objects manifest. At the moment of appreciating this single reality basis of objects, one is not imagining separate, real existences for the contents of thoughts beyond their mere appearances in the moment, whether those contents be the memories of the names and forms that constitute the objects, or that content be another thought with the name and form of “I am now contemplating.” At that timeless moment, in other words, there is no notion distinguishing the thinker, thinking, and thought. The thought here is only of the nature of the object as is-ness. Hence, the normal activity of the mind employing its distinguishing names to various forms is missing, and is here said to be as though not there. Of course, it is there as the non-reflexive, non-distinguishing, non-dual thought of is-ness.

Many commentators and translators imagine that contemplating an object free of word and idea, free of name and form, is some special *yoga* vision that yields some kind of supernormal knowledge about that object. But think about that claim. Isn't it that, when you remove word and idea, the object in fact can only disappear? How could it appear in contemplation without any form whatsoever? It cannot. Thus, how could there then be any special super vision that yields supernormal knowledge about the object by such contemplation? If there is no form, there can be no supernormal information about the object. That supernormal information also would have to be without name and form too, if it were, in fact, part of this contemplation. How could that be information at all?

Does the author claim that he or she has this super vision? Or, are they claiming that some *yogins* are said to have these super power? Can you attain complete freedom in your life which is the goal of *yoga* simply by believing anecdotal stories about some *yogins* somewhere else or in the past? Do you really believe you also have the stuff to attain those rare powers yourself?

Please think about such claims. Isn't the scripture's explanation given above the obvious way to understand these *sūtras*? Contemplating anything free of name and form can only be the scripture's vision of non-dual reality, pure is-ness. This alone is a teaching grounded in reality and clarity that can actually help you, not something grounded in mysticism – if there is such an oxymoron.

एतयैव स-विचारा निर्-विचारा च सूक्ष्म-विषया व्याख्याता॥(1.44)
etayaiva sa-vicārā nir-vicārā ca sūkṣma-viṣayā vyākhyātā.

[*etayā eva* – in that same way alone; *sūkṣma-viṣayas* – subtle objects; *vyākhyātā* – is explained; *sa-vicāra* – with inquiry; *ca* – and; *nir-vicāra* – free of inquiry.]

In that same way alone, mixed and not mixed with word and idea – with name and form – *samāpatti* (contemplation) **in regard also to scriptural subtle objects is explained as being *sa-vicāra* (with inquiry) and *nir-vicāra* (free of inquiry)**. Both are a part of *saṃprajñāta samādhi*.

Inquiry (*vicāra*) is a term used for scriptural analysis of subtle objects not otherwise known through the senses, and thus not knowable by any logic (*vitarka*) based on sense perceptions.

Scriptural or divine objects, such as heaven or a particular form of a deity, though subtle in nature, are still objects. They are just not objects of the senses. They are either completely or mostly objects of the mind. Divine visions, such as when one dies and gets into heaven, are possible at that time by a provided subtle eye sight. Such subtle sights, sounds, etcetera would not be unlike the perceptions we have here within our dreams. These divine subtle objects, though, have no more intrinsic reality than the so-called mundane subtle objects, such as everyday thoughts, dreams, and so on. They both have the same subtle nature.

Even scriptural objects are but name and form alone. This getting past the name and form to their reality, their is-ness, that is not separate from oneself is this being purified of memory of word and idea. When contemplating the limited nature of the subtle objects presented in the scripture – which perception and logic cannot reach, such as the heavens or the subtlest nature of common objects (such as all objects being only a manifestation of the Lord), and, in keeping with the teaching, dismissing those limitations as not constituting separate real entities – one starts to appreciate the objective reality of the subtle object, freed of one's mistaken or

incomplete perspectives.

One then can ultimately come to appreciate the pure awareness of the subtle object as being the same “I am aware” awareness of the self, *sat-cit* (reality-consciousness). One gains a glimpse of the ultimate goal of *yoga*. At that time, one is not consciously aware of the thought process going on, of “I am now contemplating.”

Fully appreciating mundane or divine objects all the way to their is-ness are not anything like the fanciful imaginations that we read in modern *yoga* advertising brochures. Neither are they like *Arjuna*’s divine vision given to him by Lord *Kṛṣṇa* in the eleventh chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.¹²⁴ That divine vision was of forms that *Arjuna* could give names to. That was not a vision free of names and forms, free of memory of word and idea.

Seeing *artha-mātra*, an object purely free of erroneous mental projections, is not some mystical capacity hidden from others. Anything like an x-ray vision is still well within names and forms. All names and forms are projections, whether from x-ray vision, dream, or through the senses. A real vision, free of names and forms, can only be a non-sensory appreciation, understanding, of the is-ness of the object. That vision, then, only frees when it is clearly known that this is-ness is but the same is-ness of all objects, and is but the same is-ness of oneself (*asmitā*), and that is oneself.

Included in scriptural objects or topics are, of course, *Īśvara* (the Lord), *ātman* (oneself), and *brahman* (limitless reality). They are also, initially, only the notions we have about them, and, as such, have no more intrinsic reality than their subtle nature as thoughts. Inquiry into their real nature, though, through the scripture supported by reasoning, reveals their true nature through an expanded meaning of the words, free from erroneous notions that appeared to limit them. They are all nothing but limitless is-ness. They are the *puruṣa*, the being which alone is *kaivalya*

¹²⁴ ‘अर्जुनः उवाच। पश्यामि देवान् तव देव देहे सर्वान् तथा भूत-विशेष-सङ्घान्। ब्रह्माणम् ईशं कमल-आसन-स्थम् ऋषीन् च सर्वान् उर-गान् च दिव्यान्॥’ “*Arjuna* said: ‘O Lord, I see in Your body all the deities and hosts of different types of beings, [and] all the sages and celestial serpents.’ ‘अन्-एक-बाहु-उदर-वक्र-नेत्रं पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतः अन्-अन्त-रूपम्। न अन्तं न मध्यं न पुनः तव आदिं पश्यामि विश्व-ईश्वर विश्व-रूपम्॥’ “I see You as having countless [bodies with] arms, bellies, mouths and eyes – whose forms are endless in all directions. And I see not Your end, nor middle, nor beginning, O Lord of the Universe whose form is the universe.” (*Bh. Gītā* 11.15-16).

(freedom).

सूक्ष्म-विषयत्वं चालिङ्ग-पर्यवसानम्॥(1.45)
sūkṣma-viṣayatvaṃ cāliṅga-paryavasānam.

[*ca* – and; *sūkṣma-viṣayatva* – nature of being a subtle object; *paryavasāna* – reaches up to; *a-liṅga* – unmanifest.]

And the nature of being a subtle object reaches¹²⁵ up to, but does not include, **the unmanifest** total, also called *prakṛti*, *pradhāna*, or *a-vyakta* (unmanifest nature).

One can contemplate on one single object, such as an annoying habit one may have, particularly if it blocks doubt-free knowledge and one needs to get past that single sticking point to gain clarity in knowledge. This *sūtra*, however, indicates that, in general, one should move from contemplating innumerable single manifest objects to contemplating their subtle, uniting totality as presented in the scripture. Since this mind cannot comprehend much more than one object at a time, then this contemplation would be on the subtle nature that unites these objects (*see Yoga Sūtra* 4.14).

All these contemplations based on the understanding of reality in the scripture, based on reasoning in keeping with the scripture (*vitarka*) and inquiry into the scripture (*vicāra*), are a subtle progression, leading to more subtle clarity of mind.¹²⁶ These contemplations connect the individual to the cosmos, and like the meditations in the *Upaniṣads*, called *upāsanas*, are meant to make the mind more subtle (pervasive) and amenable to the truth of all of reality.

The *puruṣa* is subtle but is never an object. In the scripture (*āgama*), which *Patañjali* accepts as a means of knowledge, it is called the subtlest (*sūkṣmatara*)¹²⁷ and is the reality basis (*satya*)

¹²⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.19.

¹²⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.47–48.

¹²⁷ 'बृहत् च तद् दिव्यम् अचिन्त्यरूपं सूक्ष्मात् च तत् सूक्ष्मतरं विभाति। दूरात् सु-दूरे तद् इह अन्तिके च पश्यत्सु इह एव निहितं गुहायाम्' "That limitless (*brhat*) [i.e., *brahman*] is the shining one [that lights up everything], not available as a form of thought, [yet] variously reveals [itself] as the subtlest (*sūkṣmatara*) of the subtle [in each and every thought]. Existing very far from what is remote [in terms of distance or time] and close to [i.e., closer than] here [i.e., than every thought right now], it exists [as

of even *prakṛti*.¹²⁸ *Prakṛti*, being *a-līṅga* (unmanifest) and not oneself, is what naturally cannot be an object of contemplation. The term *paravasāna* (meaning *reaching culmination at*) is thus here used exclusively, not inclusively. Subtle objects for meditation include everything subtle up to but not including *prakṛti*.

The *puruṣa*, however, though the subtlest but not an object, is one's self and so not totally unknown. Hence, it can be appreciated not as an object,¹²⁹ but as oneself free of limiting concepts and thus always clearly available, including in quiet contemplation, in *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*.¹³⁰

See Appendix B for a chart presenting the different names and forms of these stages of contemplation given by *Patañjali*.

ता एव स-बीजः समाधिः॥(1.46)
tā eva sa-bījaḥ samādhiḥ.

[*tāḥ* – these; *eva* – indeed; *samādhi* – contemplation; *sa-bīja* – that retains the seed.]

These four *samāpattis* are indeed each a contemplation that retains the seed of ignorance and its afflictions, as long as that assimilated knowledge is not complete by including everything and oneself.

though] hidden (*nihita*) here itself in the conscious intellect.” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.1.7).

¹²⁸ ‘मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यात् मायिनं च मह-ईश्वरम्’ “Whereas one should know *māyā* as mother nature (*prakṛti*), and the limitless Lord as having *māyā* within.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 4.10). ‘देवी हि एषा गुणमयी मम माया दूर-अत्यया। माम् एव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायाम् एतां तरन्ति ते’ “Because, this My (*devi*) *māyā* – in the form of the [three] *guṇas* and coming from [Me] the Lord – is difficult to cross. [Therefore, giving up all else in *māyā*,] those who seek only Me [as themselves] cross over this *māyā*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 7.14).

¹²⁹ ‘यद् एव साक्षाद् अ-परोक्षाद् ब्रह्म...एषः ते आत्मा सर्व-अन्तरः।’ “The *brahman* which is immediate (*sākṣāt*) [as the witness] and not remote (*a-parokṣāt*) [as the one non-dual reality] ...is this your self (*ātman*) that is within all.” ‘...न दृष्टेः द्रष्टारं पश्येः, न श्रुतेः श्रोतारं शृणुयाः, न मतेः मन्तारं मन्वीथाः, न विज्ञातेः विज्ञातारं विजानीयाः’ “...You cannot see the witness (*draṣṭṛ*) of all that is seen, cannot hear the hearer of all that is heard, cannot think of the thinker of all that is thought, nor can you know the knower of all that is known.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.4.2).

¹³⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

The four *sa-bīja samāpattis*, in order of subtlety, were contemplation on common objects with reasoning (*sa-vitarka*) culminating in contemplation free of reasoning (*nir-vitarka*), and contemplation on subtle scriptural objects with inquiry (*sa-vicāra*) culminating in contemplation free of inquiry (*nir-vicāra*).

These reasonings and inquires, though helping (*a-kliṣṭa*) one's progress in *yoga*, are nevertheless within the realm of the fundamental ignorance (*a-vidyā*) that is there from birth. Until the fundamental ignorance goes, every thought one entertains, even if it is scriptural, will be within the skewed perspective of this original ignorance.

How can a singular ignorance affect all thoughts? The reason is because this ignorance concerns the very nature of the seer of all thoughts, as well as the reality of all thoughts and their content.¹³¹ This fundamental ignorance takes what is unreal as real and the real as no better than the unreal.¹³²

This is why one can listen to this teaching over and over and gain more clarity and more maturity, but there is yet no complete solution, no appreciation of complete freedom in one's life, no acknowledgement of fearlessness as one's being. The fundamental ignorance has to completely go. It cannot be *kind of gone*.¹³³

This fundamental ignorance (including the teaching to get out of ignorance)¹³⁴ and its

¹³¹ 'ये तु एतद् अभ्यस्यन्तः न अनुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतं (=अनुशासनम्)। सर्व-ज्ञान-विमूढान् तान् विद्धि नष्टान् अचेतसः' "Whereas, those who are cynical, who do not follow this, My teaching, know them – who are [thus] variously confused in all [other areas of] knowledge [because they do not know who the 'I' is] and lacking discernment – as lost." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.32).

¹³² *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

¹³³ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.54.

¹³⁴ 'द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद् ब्रह्म-विदः वदन्ति परा च एव अ-परा च॥' "There are two types of knowledge (*vidyā*) to be known, say those who know scripture – unlimited (*para*) and limited (*a-para*).” 'तत्र अ-परा ऋग्-वेदः यजुर्-वेदः साम-वेदः अथर्व-वेदः शिक्षा कल्पः व्याकरणं निरुक्तं छन्दो ज्योतिषम् इति।' "Concerning these two, the limited is the *R̥g Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, and *Atharva Veda*; and the sciences of pronunciation, rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astrology [for understanding the scriptural texts and performing their rituals at the proper time].” 'अथ परा यया तद् अक्षरं (ब्रह्म) अधिगम्यते' "Then, the unlimited is by which [*brahma-vidyā* (knowledge of limitless reality)] one attains that imperishable [*brahman*]." (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.1.4-5).

resulting afflictions are the seeds (*bījas*)¹³⁵ that need to be rendered totally impotent for this teaching to finally bless. The teaching in all the *Vedas*, including their *Upaniṣads*, are just so many words, until their meaning is assimilated as clear knowledge – that knowledge alone is *para-vidyā* (knowledge of the unlimited).¹³⁶ Even in quiet contemplation (*a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*) one's ignorance remains as latent tendencies to raise doubts and confusion upon coming out of these temporary *samādhis*. Nevertheless, these *samādhis* are included in the limbs of *yoga* (see *Yoga Sūtras* 3.1 through 3.8), and they serve their purpose in bringing discipline and clarity to the mind and thus making it contemplative.

Being contemplative allows this vision of truth to take hold in one's life. Being ever contemplative – never outside of clear, valid thinking – is a spontaneous expression of, or conducive to, the complete assimilation of this teaching.

Clarity and Knowledge

निर्-विचार-वैशारद्ये ऽध्य-आत्म-प्रसादः॥(1.47)
nir-vicāra-vaiśāradye'dhyātma-prasādaḥ.

[*vaiśāradya* – mastery; *nir-vicāra* – free of inquiry; *prasāda* – clarity; *adhyātman* – mind.]

When there is mastery in the free of inquiry *samāpatti*, there is clarity¹³⁷ of mind.

¹³⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24 & 50–51, and 2.3–4.

¹³⁶ 'यावान् अर्थः उद-पाने सर्वतः सम्प्लुत-उदके। तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य (परम-अर्थ-तत्त्वं) विजानतः' "For a contemplative person who knows [*sat* (reality)], there is as much usefulness in all the *Vedas* as [there is] in a small watering hole [in a once-dry river bed, when the river is] in a flood everywhere [i.e., seeing the truth everywhere, one is no longer dependent on the *Vedas*.]" (*Bh. Gītā* 2.46).

¹³⁷ 'राग-द्वेष-वियुक्तेः तु विषयान् इन्द्रियैः चरन्। आत्म-वश्यैः विषय-आत्मा (=विषय-चित्तः) प्रसादम् अधिगच्छति॥' "Whereas, moving among the objects with the senses under authority of the intellect and freed from [being overpowered by] attraction and repulsion (*rāga-dveṣa*), the one whose mind is disciplined attains clarity (*prasāda*)." 'प्रसादे सर्व-दुःखानां हानिः अस्य उपजायते। प्रसन्न-चेतसः हि आशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते' "When there is clarity (*prasāda*), there comes the destruction of all one's sorrows [in the form of guilt and hurt] because, for the one whose mind is clear (*prasanna*), the [self-]knowledge [which destroys the

Here is pointed out the immediate goal of *nir-vicāra samādhi*. It is clarity of mind. And this clarity can ultimately culminate in knowledge as *nir-bīja samādhi*.¹³⁸

ऋतं-भरा तत्र प्रज्ञा॥(1.48)
ṛtaṃ-bharā tatra prajñā.

[*tatra* – when that takes place; *prajñā* – knowledge; *ṛtaṃ-bhara* – bears the truth.]

When that takes place – when there is sufficient clarity of mind – one’s **knowledge bears the truth.**

Here, it is not exactly explicit what is the source of this *prajñā* (knowledge). Some say that *samādhi* is a source of knowledge, but that is not said by *Patañjali*. He has given three sources of knowledge (*pramāṇas*): *pratyakṣa* (direct perception), *anumāna* (indirect knowledge), and *āgama* (scripture).¹³⁹ *Samādhi* has been exhaustively presented here as a method of clarifying and steadying the mind, which is an instrument in all three *pramāṇas*. In particular, *samādhi* has here been clearly presented as a means of gaining clarity with the two means of knowledge one is employing in these contemplations, namely the last two, reasoning (*vitarka*) and inquiry into the scripture (*vicāra*). Just as it has been indicated that the *a-liṅga* (unmanifest) cannot be an object of *samāpatti* or *samādhi*, so also the *puruṣa* (self), which is the witness of everything, cannot itself be an object of *samādhi*.

The *grahītr* (knower)¹⁴⁰ as an object of contemplation that is talked about in each of the preceding *samāpattis* has been carefully limited as just a notion about oneself as a *grahītr* (knower), not the actual self that witnesses this mind’s notions. Thus, *samādhi* cannot be a unique means of knowledge of the *puruṣa*. And it is knowledge of the *puruṣa* that will be said to be *kaivalya* (freedom).

In this *sūtra*, when *Patañjali* uses the word *prajñā* (knowledge), one should understand it is

sorrow] quickly becomes firm.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.64–65).

¹³⁸ See commentaries on *Yoga Sūtras* 1.51 & 3.9.

¹³⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

¹⁴⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.41.

a kind of knowledge, or rather an understanding drawn from *āgama* (scripture) in keeping with reason. It is an understanding that lacks full clarity that one will expand upon. It is an understanding one brings to the *samādhi* that can be and eventually is made clear by this method of clarifying the mind in regard to whatever is the object of the contemplation.

To know certain things we either do or we do not have to also contemplate them. For example, we do not have to contemplate on one plus one equals two, since, once clearly explained, there is nothing more to clarify. But contemplation is helpful to clearly understand subtle topics as to how they should be incorporated in one's world view. In particular, this *samādhi* taught here is helpful in owning up to the subtlest nature of the universe as one's very self.

The purpose of *samādhi* is indicated here by joining the prefix *pra-*, meaning *thoroughly*, with the Sanskrit verbal root *jñā*, meaning *to know*. Thus this *sūtra* indicates that the knowledge of subtle things does not bear its fruit of truth until it becomes thoroughly clear. This is the purpose of *samādhi* – to gain that clarity if it is not already there.

When it comes to knowing the self, the process is one of dropping concepts about the self that necessarily limit the self. I have knowledge of myself, namely, that I exist, but it is not clear due to being mixed up with innumerable limiting notions about myself.

This is not a blind dropping of any and all concepts; it is one of clearly understanding the inadequacies in these concepts as applying to the self. The way of approaching self-knowledge is given in the scripture as *neti-neti* (*not this, not that*)¹⁴¹ – I am not the things I think I love, not the body, not the mind, nor the ego which is just one aspect of the mind. But the end of this *neti-neti* is not nothingness or thoughtlessness. *Neti-neti* is directed at oneself, and the self can never be unknown, never be denied, and thus never dropped. The culmination of *neti-neti* is just being oneself, without limiting concepts of oneself.

This is described in the scriptures as knowledge. In the case of self-knowledge, the self is its own *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), called *svataḥ prāmāṇya* (self-revealing – see the commentary on *Yoga Sūtras* 4.19 and 4.20), like any source of light does not require another

¹⁴¹ 'अथ अतः आदेशः नेति नेति (=न इति न इति)' "Now therefore the teaching [of *brahman*] – 'Not this, not that (*neti neti*).'" (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.3.6). 'सः एषः नेति नेति आत्मा, अ-गृह्यः न हि गृह्यते (मनसा)...' "This very *ātman* is not this, not that (*neti neti*). [That is] what is not able to be grasped [as an object and by words] is not grasped [by the mind], ..." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 3.9.26, 4.2.4, 4.4.22 & 4.5.15).

source of light to physically illumine it. In other words, the self, which illumines everything including the concepts in the mind, also illumines itself, or more precisely, does not require another source to illumine it. This is the most direct knowledge – *sāksāt a-parokṣāt* (immediate and not remote) – requiring no other instrument to reveal itself. But this self-revealing is not what one may think must come in an imagined white heat of meditation. It is not a unique meditative experience which makes the meditator somehow transformed or super-sensitive. The self-revealing reality, is-ness, is always present in every thought and between every thought – in “Pot is,” “Body is,” “I am,” everything is the is-ness I am. “Pot,” “Body,” “I” are just adjectives (*upādhis*)¹⁴² that make no division, no limitation in is-ness. Any more added to that knowledge will limit oneself. And until this is assimilated, even “I am infinite” is a limiting imagination (see *Yoga Sūtra* 1.9).

Here, *samādhi* becomes an *upāya* (means) to this end, through gaining clarity on the inapplicability of one’s own life-long and unexamined concepts of oneself through the words of the scripture that point out what the self is not.

And that is also why ultimate non-attachment (*para-vairāgya*) towards these near and dear concepts wrapped up with one’s ego is involved in this process so that they can be dropped once falsified. Knowing oneself is unlike other applications of seeking knowledge, such as learning one plus one equals two, where non-attachment plays no role. This is how and why ultimate non-attachment (*para-vairāgya*) is required¹⁴³ to assimilate self-knowledge.

श्रुतानुमान-प्रज्ञाभ्याम् अन्य-विषया विशेषार्थत्वात्॥(1.49)
śrutānumāna-prajñābhyām anya-viṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt.

[*arthatva* – object; *viśeṣa* – unique; *viṣaya* – object; *anya* – other; *prajñā* – knowledge; *śrutas* – words of the scripture heard; *anumānas* – inferences.]

Since the object of this *prajñā* (assimilated knowledge), being the very nature of everything and oneself, is **unique** – is not an object or goal that can be defined or inferred by words, or objectified with the senses – its **object is other than** the direct **knowledge**

¹⁴² *Yoga Sūtra* 3.14.

¹⁴³ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.12–16.

of the words of the scripture heard or the inferences made.

Words of the scripture and the supporting logic, the two means of knowledge brought into contemplation, cannot directly reveal the self. The self is instead self-revealing as I.¹⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it takes words, takes teaching, to remove mistakes we have imposed on the self-revealing I.

This process of listening to the words of the scripture with their supporting logic, which together remove mistakes, can also be expressed as a going beyond the words¹⁴⁵ to get to their implicit meaning, which points to the reality of oneself.

It is not a pursuit of learning how to discuss the topic of *yoga*, not a PhD course, nor a training to be a lecturer. It is rather a pursuit to be a *yogin* and attain the goal of *yoga*, which is liberation

¹⁴⁴ ‘न अयम् आत्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यः न मेधया न बहना श्रुतेन। यम् एव एषः वृणुते तेन लभ्यः तस्य एषः आत्मा विवृणुते तन् स्वाम्’ “This *ātman* is not attained by reciting [scripture], nor by memory [i.e., memorization] [of the scripture], nor by many [texts including the scripture] being heard. What one [i.e., the *a-kāma* – the one who has no other desire] chooses [i.e., appropriately commits completely to], by that [*ātman* so chosen] is it attained, [since] this *ātman* [self-]reveals its [true] form [as the limitless witness] to that one [alone].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.23, *Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.2.3).

¹⁴⁵ ‘अन्-एजद् एकं मनसः जवीयः न एनद् देवाः आप्रवन् पूर्वम् अर्षत्’ “This one, [though] not moving, is faster than the mind. The deities [in the body] [i.e., the senses] do not reach it, who [being all-pervasive] has already reached [everywhere].” (*Īśā Up.* 4). ‘यतः वाचः निवर्तन्ते। अ-प्राप्य मनसा सह। आनन्दं ब्रह्मणः विद्वान्। न विभेति कुतश्चन’ “From which, words along with thought return having not grasped, that fullness (*ānanda*) of *brahman* the wise person [knows as one’s self]. This person has no fear from anything [as there is no second thing to fear].” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.9.1). ‘न चक्षुषा गृह्यते न अपि वाचा न अन्यैः देवैः (इतर-इन्द्रियैः) तपसा कर्मणा वा’ “It is not attained by the eye, nor by speech, nor by the other deities [i.e., the other senses], nor by prayerful discipline or ritual.” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.1.8). ‘न तत्र चक्षुः गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति न उ मनः॥...यद् वाचा अन्-अभ्युदितं येन वाग् अभ्युद्यते॥...यन् मनसा न मनुते येन आहुः मनः मतम्। तद् एव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि न इदं यद् इदम् उपासते’ “The eye does not go there, nor speech, nor the mind. ...What does not appear by speech, [but] by which speech appears, that alone may you know is *brahman*, not a ‘this’ [known or unknown thing] which people meditate (*upāsate*).” (*Kena Up.* 1.3–5). ‘श्रवणाय अपि बहुभिः यः न लभ्यः शृण्वन्तः अपि बहवः यं न विद्युः’ “Who is not available to many even for hearing, and which many, even having heard, do not know.” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.7). ‘न एषा तर्केण मतिः आपनेया’ “This knowledge (*mati*) [gained with the help of a teacher who identifies with *brahman*] is not to be attained [*āpaneya* = *āpanīya*] [or, to be taught, i.e., *āpaneya* meaning *āpayitavya*] by reason (*tarka*) [alone].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.9). ‘श्रुत्वा अपि एनं (आत्मानं) वेद न च एव कश्चित्’ “Even after listening, another still does not know this [which is oneself].” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.29).

as the limitless self. If one is unclear on the nature of the self that one has been taught through words and with reasoning, then the clarity of mind that contemplation brings to these words and logic allows this teaching to be assimilated and brings the truth of this teaching into one's life, in the first-person, not as a third-person topic.

It is possibly this distinction that *Vyāsa* in his commentary was alluding to by saying that the scope (*viśaya*) of the words of the scripture and the supporting logic is general (*sāmānya*) (in my terms, is in the 3rd person), whereas, the scope of this assimilated knowledge (*prajñā*) is unique (*viśeṣa*) (in my terms, is in the 1st person).

This is the limitation of words, even the words of the scripture and logic. They both are in the realm of the 3rd person. They are about the topic. They, themselves, are not here the topic, the object talked about. Here that topic, that object, is I, oneself alone. This self is doubly *viśeṣa* (unique). First, the self is not the words or the logic, nor their object. Second, the self, the only thing that always remains the subject (I) and never an object (he, she, it, you), is unlike anything else in the universe. Everything else in the universe, including thoughts and even notions one has about oneself, are objects known. The *ātman* (self) alone is the only subject in the universe and can never be an object by its very nature.

This is why there is a need to assimilate this teaching and its supporting logic. The direct object of this teaching and supporting logic has the nature of being a 3rd person account about the self. What frees, though, is their 1st person assimilation that is the self free of the 3rd person erroneous notions imposed on the self, counteracted by an integrated understanding of the teaching and its supporting logic. It is a change from “The teaching says this or that about the limitless self,” to “I am the limitless self.”

This is, and has always been, the critical sticking point for every generation of all students. The student hears the teaching (called *śravaṇa*) and has been trying to understand the teaching (called *manana*), but seems to get stuck at not yet assimilating the teaching (called *nididhāsana*).¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ ‘आत्मा वै अरे द्रष्टव्यः – श्रोतव्यः मन्तव्यः निदिध्यासितव्यः, मैत्रेयि’ “My dear, this *ātman* (limitless self) is to be seen [i.e., known through *śruti pramāṇa* (scripture as a means of knowledge) from a competent teacher, as clear as one sees by *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* (sight as a means of knowledge)]. [How?] It [the teaching *pramāṇa* regarding *ātman*] is to be [repeatedly] listened to (*śrotavya*) and understood (*mantavya*) and is to be [repeatedly] contemplated (*nididhyāsita*), O *Maitreyī*

In *nididhāsana*, instead of being simply a repeated mental activity, it is a repeated operation of a means of knowledge. It is similar to opening the eyes to see a visual object. No effort is required other than to operate the means of knowledge, for example, by simply opening the eyes sight takes place. In *nididhāsana*, one is simply bringing to a contemplative mind the teaching and seeing its truth.¹⁴⁷

A term related to *nididhāsana* is *upāsana* (meditation). *Upāsana* is a practice prescribed in the ritual parts of the *Vedas* that is a mental ritual of visualizing in an object the Lord. It is a mental worship of the Lord. In the *Vedas*, it is primarily for gaining *punya* (*karma* merit) through this mental activity. The *upāsanas* in the *Upaniṣads*, the last part of the *Vedas*, on the other hand, pertain more to topics within the teaching methodology than to rituals, such as meditating on space as the source and resolution of the universe, as *sa-guṇa-brahman* (reality in reference to the attributes of nature).

These *upāsanas* develop a contemplative mind (*cittasya naiścalya*, steadiness of mind), and they have a special *karma* benefit (*punya a-drṣṭa phala*) later in life or in the after-life, such as getting to a better heaven. These *Veda upāsanas* have the same detailed prescriptions in their performances as *Veda* rituals. As such, by performing them wrongly, they can yield unwanted

[since, unlike seeing an apple and being told, ‘this is an apple,’ there can be obstacles to this knowledge about oneself that listening and understanding alone, simple exposure to the *pramāṇa*, cannot resolve].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.4.5, also 4.5.6).

¹⁴⁷ ‘बहु-जन्म-दृढ-अभ्यासात् देह-आदिषु आत्म-धीः क्षणात्। पुनः पुनः उदेति एवं जगत्-सत्यत्व-धीः अपि॥’ “By force of habit during many births, the notion that the self exists as these bodies [and minds] immediately arises again and again. In this way also [arises] the notion that the world is absolutely real (*satya*).” ‘विपरीता भावना इयं ऐक-अग्यात् सा निवर्तते। तत्त्व-उपदेशात् प्राक् एव भवति एतद् उपासनात्॥’ “By the contemplation (*aikāgrāya*) that this notion is opposed [to the scripture and its logic] that notion goes away. This [ability to contemplate] arises [in *yoga*] through *upāsana* (contemplative worship) [of the Lord], even before [one may finally come to] the teaching on reality.” ‘उपास्तयः अतः एव अत्र ब्रह्म-शास्त्रे अपि चिन्तिताः। प्राक् अन्-अभ्यासिनः पश्चात् ब्रह्म-अभ्यासेन तद् भवेत्’ “Indeed because of this, *upāsanas* (contemplations, *upāsti* = *upāsana*) are observed even here within the teaching on reality [within the *Upaniṣads*, such as in many of the chapters of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*]. For one who has not repeatedly performed [*upāsana*] before, may it be there [now] [regarding elements of the teaching methodology, as an *upāsana*] [and with this contemplative mind] [may contemplation be] in the form of repetition [of continual acknowledgment] regarding reality (*brahman*) [i.e., in the form of *nididhyāsana*].” (*Pañca-Doṣī* 7.103–105).

benefits (*pāpa a-dr̥ṣṭa phala*) also.

When these *upāsanas*, especially the ones from the *Upaniṣads* that relate to topics of the teaching methodology, are performed as a *karma-yoga*, as simply an offering to the Lord (*Īśvara-praṇidhāna*), they do not yield any special *karma* benefit (*punya a-dr̥ṣṭa phala*), nor unwanted benefit if performed wrongly. They instead always yield an immediate benefit of a more contemplative mind, in keeping with how well they are performed. If the *upāsanas* are a seeing of the truth of these teachings, these become contemplations.

A contemplative mind is integral to assimilating this teaching. There are students who, because of a mind sufficiently groomed over prior lives, quickly mature spiritually in this life and are able to assimilate the teaching upon first hearing it (*śravaṇa*). We see this in the *Upaniṣad* descriptions of certain students with their teacher. Others take longer to understand what they heard and longer to assimilate it – until they know with certitude, “I am what this teaching is about.”

Because of the universality of this vision, encompassing all of one’s understanding of the universe and oneself, the teaching cannot be fully assimilated until it is thoroughly understood. Not understanding the teaching correctly keeps the student from being able to assimilate it. When it is crystal clear, one can whole-heartedly jump into it, and just be it.

तज्-जः संस्कारोऽन्य-संस्कार-प्रतिबन्धी ॥ (1.50)

taj-jah saṃskāro'nya-saṃskāra-pratibandhī.

[*saṃskāra* – latent tendency; *tad-ja* – born of that; *pratibandhin* – counter-acts; *anya* – other; *saṃskāras* – latent tendencies.]

The new **latent tendency**, the subtle seed of thought **born of that** *prajñā* (clear knowledge), with the help of *sa-bīja samādhi* (contemplation that retains this new seed in the form of the teaching) which nourished and matured that new seed, **counter-acts the other latent tendencies** one has gained in this and in prior life-times, that have kept one as though a separate individuality to be reborn again and again.

Clarity of knowledge through the preceding *sa-bīja samādhi* brings to maturity the *saṃskāra*, (latent impression) of the teaching of the limitless self. The teaching *saṃskāra* nullifies the ingrained but erroneous orientation that we each have had from beginningless time. Of course,

this assumes that one is contemplating on the nature of the self and not on some object of desire or power. Contemplating worldly attachments, one remains in *samsāra* (rounds of unbecoming becoming and its attendant rebirths and deaths), chasing after phantoms with an enlarged ego. According to the *Bhagavad Gītā* chapter 16, such a lifestyle is trying to perfect the path of an *asura*, an unworthy person bent on consumption.

There are two sets of *saṃskāras*. One set is the inherent tendencies that manifest as the continuing ignorant notions and their effects in the mind and thus in one's actions. Those *saṃskāras* are formed over lifetimes of erroneous thinking. The other set is the inherent tendencies that manifest as the recall of the teaching and its supporting logic. The second set counteracts, blocks, the first set of *saṃskāras*. The second set of *saṃskāras* also were formed over lifetimes, and have now brought you to listen to the teaching right here and now. It is this latter set of *saṃskāras* that *pratibandhin* (counter-acts) the other.

Note here that we are talking about *saṃskāras*, not actual thoughts themselves (again, please see Appendix A for a description of the mind within this tradition). *Yoga* is about getting at the source of the problem. The problem may appear to be the negative thinking one has about oneself, but here the deeper problem is the root inherent tendency to manifest these erroneous notions. These tendencies are within the unconscious and may involve psychological issues, as well as the normal but blocking orientation of an individual against a world out there.

That is why thoughtless *samādhi* is useless in *yoga*. *Samādhi* is all about bringing in the teaching from previous lifetimes and the current one in the mind and assimilating it from 3rd person to 1st person in nature.

Properly, this *samādhi* occurs while one is walking around, as well as while sitting. It is the awareful, continuous attempt¹⁴⁸ to assimilate the teaching. This alone strengthens the beneficial *saṃskāras* that effectively counteract any limiting notions about oneself before, during, or after they arise – during the *samādhi* and for the rest of one's life.

¹⁴⁸ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.13 & 14.

Contemplation Free of Seed

तस्यापि निरोधे सर्व-निरोधान् निर्-बीजः समाधिः॥(1.51)
tasyāpi nirodhe sarva-nirodhān nir-bījaḥ samādhiḥ.

[*nirodha* – dropping; *tasya api* – of even that; *nirodha* – dropping; *sarva* – everything; *nir-bīja samādhi* – contemplation free of seed.]

When there is the dropping of even that latent tendency in the form of the teaching **due to the dropping of everything**¹⁴⁹ as not other than oneself,¹⁵⁰ through discernment of the limitless nature of the *puruṣa*, arrived at through continuous repetition of *sa-bīja samādhi* (contemplation that has the new seed which is the teaching of the self), **this** complete clarity in the knowledge that frees, that is not just another state of mind, **is called contemplation free of seed.**

This *nir-bīja samādhi* is the natural, inevitable result of *sa-bīja samādhi* when one sees past the name and form of the object of contemplation to its reality basis, past the words of the contemplation to their meaning. That meaning is the limitless reality that is oneself. It is the fulfillment of the change from *saṃprajñāta* to *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*, from 3rd person understanding to 1st person assimilated knowledge. After that, the teaching need not be repeatedly brought back to memory for the knowledge to remain clear and unshakable. There is no need for further activation of the teaching *saṃskāras*.

The latent tendencies needed to regenerate these memories of the teaching have done their job in *sa-bīja samādhi*. Now they are not needed to correct any erroneous thinking. They too are dropped; though they are not destroyed. Latent tendencies are not destroyed as several translators suppose. They are just not activated into memories of the teaching in the quiet stillness of *nir-bīja samādhi*. This is their *nirodha*, in much the same way as the erroneous

¹⁴⁹ 'यत्र (=यस्मिन् काले) उपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योग-सेवया। यत्र च एव आत्मना (=मनसा) आत्मानं पश्यन् आत्मनि (=स्वे) तुष्यति' "When the mind – mastered (*niruddha*) by following *yoga* [i.e., contemplation] – abides [in *ātman*], and when one sees the *ātman* by the *ātman* (mind), [then] one is satisfied in oneself alone." (**Bh. Gītā** 6.20).

¹⁵⁰ *Yoga Sūtras* 3.53 & 55.

saṃskāras were not destroyed in *sa-bīja samādhi*, only deactivated, rendered powerless for a period of time¹⁵¹ by the teaching's *saṃskāras*. This quietude in *nir-bīja samādhi*, as we will see in *sūtra* 3.9, is in fact silently maintained by the *saṃskāras* of the teaching. They just do not manifest a thought in the form of a memory of the teaching during this *nir-bīja samādhi*.

This is one way of understanding what goes on in *samādhi*. It is a very mechanical way of understanding *samādhi* and the purpose of *yoga*. However, there is a much deeper way of understanding *nir-bīja samādhi*.

Instead of looking at this mechanically, paying far too much attention to what happens to the mind, the more fruitful vision is to look at the knowledge of the realities of nature including the mind and of the *puruṣa*, which alone is the real concern of *Patañjali* in these *sūtras*.

Actually, *Vyāsa* had a much better grasp of this than most of the current translators. In his commentary he says that the *saṃskāras* born of the teaching did not destroy the other *saṃskāras*, they instead cause the stopping (*avasādayanti*) of the other *saṃskāras* from manifesting the afflictions (*kleśas*) in the mind. He goes on to say that in *nir-bīja samādhi* the mind along with both sets of its latent tendencies remains merged in its own nature (*saha saṃskārāiḥ cittam svasyām prakṛtau avasthitāyām pravilīyate*). For *Vyāsa* there is no destruction of *saṃskāras*, they only remain merged in their own nature, in the *guṇas*.

Even in a mechanical way, this is a much better expression of what is going on. It provides the basis for a discussion of what is meant by the resolution into its own nature. If the resolution of the mind is understood within a dualist philosophy, then the mind having been resolved in this way cannot reappear in any way, shape, or form. This mind, once capable of sublime thought on the nature of the universe and the *puruṣa*, is now disintegrated into its unthinking components, not to reform again. Is this outcome desirable by anyone?

If, however, the resolution of the mind is understood in the non-dual *āgama* tradition, then the mind – being clearly known as always being in its own insentient nature before, during, and after *nir-bīja samādhi* – cannot erroneously reappear confused as the sentient being that the *puruṣa* is, that I am. In that case, come what may in the mind, I remain in my own nature, free of identification with the thoughts in the mind.

This deeper understanding is recognition of the nature of the *prajñā* (knowledge) itself that

¹⁵¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

allows *nir-bīja samādhi*. The knowledge is that the only reality is the reality that is oneself, and that reality is limitless, without a second. This means that as long as this knowledge is deeply assimilated in the 1st person, then even outside the seat of meditation this knowledge will remain. That knowledge is oneself – how could it not remain? Even while thoughts and their objects, the entire universe, parade in the mind, they are definitely known as not oneself, not the permanent reality, and hence unreal, less than real, dependent.

Their unreality is not that they do not appear in the mind. Many unreal (imaginary) things appear in our minds and we are not confused into thinking them real. In this case, every thought (imaginary or relatively real) is now known as unreal, as not absolutely real, not as real as oneself. This means that, being unreal by their nature, one is in *nir-bīja samādhi* without thoughts as being real, in and out of the seat of meditation. That is why we can have teachers who know (*śrotriya*) and have assimilated (*brahma-niṣṭha*) this reality,¹⁵² who can pass on this teaching to the next generation. Without this deeper understanding, no such teachers could exist. If resolution of the mind into its own nature is taken to be destruction of mind, great teachers would have to remain in the seat of *nir-bīja samādhi*, thoughtless and silent. This is not a helpful appreciation of *kaivalya* (freedom).

Why bother studying *Patañjali*'s text if you think he either did not yet have the knowledge he talked about, or he did, became a zombie, and that zombie wrote this? Now, if the mechanical resolution of the mind is only during meditation, but not afterward (which was not what *Patañjali* said), and thus if this freedom from the mind is just temporary in *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi*, then do either the ignorant *saṃskāras* activate again later, or not? If the ignorant *saṃskāras* return to being active, then the knowledge that brought *a-saṃprajñāta samādhi* was clearly not complete and fully assimilated. If you know one plus one is two, but forget it later, then did you in fact know it, or did you just memorize the answer for a while? If it was just memorizing an answer, then there never was knowledge.¹⁵³

The freedom that is *kaivalya* is knowledge, and that *kaivalya*, that knowledge, is the very

¹⁵² See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 2.25.

¹⁵³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.54.

nature of the *puruṣa*.¹⁵⁴ It was from the knowledge itself that *nir-bīja samādhi* effortlessly resulted. *Nir-bīja samādhi*, understood mechanically as simply quietude of the mind, would be just a state of the mind. The mind is not the *puruṣa* – at least *Patañjali* was clear about that! Any state of the mind, quietude or not, therefore, cannot be the *kaivalya* here.

In real *kaivalya*, which is the very nature of the self without identifying with any state of the mind, there is only the subject, oneself, as the only reality. Even when thoughts and their objects come and go, they are nothing but oneself, like all the bodies and all the thoughts in a dream, including my own body and thoughts therein, are nothing but me the dreamer. This was why *Patañjali* suggested contemplation on *Om*, and on the dream and sleep state.

Otherwise, if *samādhi* is without this discernment, without the teaching, then it is only a temporary dropping of problems, to be picked up again when thinking and the old latent tendencies kick back in.¹⁵⁵ This is why thought-less *samādhi* without the teaching has no efficacy here. Only clear knowledge (*prajñā*) has efficacy, since the problem is only one of ignorance.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.48, 2.25, 4.26 & 34.

¹⁵⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

¹⁵⁶ 'वेद अहम् एतं पुरुषं महान्तम् आदित्य-वर्णं तमसः परस्तात्। तम् एव विदित्वा अति मृत्युम् एति न अन्यः पन्था विद्यते अयनाय'
 "I know this limitless *puruṣa*, whose brilliance is [like] the sun, beyond darkness. Having known that alone, one goes beyond death. There is no other means for reaching [beyond death] [than knowing this *puruṣa*]." (*Svetāśvatara Up.* 3.8).

Chapter 2

On Preparation

Yoga in Regard to Action

तपः-स्वाध्यायेश्वर-प्रणिधानानि क्रिया-योगः ॥ (2.1)
tapah-svādhyāyēśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ.

[*kriyā-yoga* – means in regard to activity; *tapas* – prayerful discipline; *svādhyāya* – one’s study of the family’s *Veda* scripture; *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* – surrendering to the Lord.]

The *kriyā-yoga* (means in regard to activity) is prayerful discipline,¹ one’s study² of

¹ ‘देव-द्विज-गुरु-प्राज्ञ-पूजनं शौचम् आर्जवम्। ब्रह्म-चर्यम् अहिंसा च शारीरं तपः उच्यते॥’ “*Tapas* pertaining to the body is said to be the honoring of deities, of those initiated into scriptural study, [and] of teachers and of scholars; cleanliness; straightforwardness [of thought, word, and deed]; a life of studentship in the *Vedas* [for the unwed, it also implies chastity]; and harmlessness. ‘अनुद्वेग-करं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रिय-हितं च यत्। स्व-अध्याय-अभ्यसनं च एव वाङ्मयं तपः उच्यते॥’ *Tapas* in the form of speech is said to be speech that is not agitating, is truthful, and both pleasant [now] and beneficial [later] [for the person spoken of or to], as well as reciting to oneself the *Veda* texts [daily, in the prescribed manner]. ‘मनः-प्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनम् आत्म-विनिग्रहः। भाव-संशुद्धिः इति एतत् तपः मानसम् उच्यते॥’ *Tapas* pertaining to the mind is said to be this: mental clarity, cheerfulness, discipline over [inner] speech [i.e., the non-arising of – or the restraint from expressing – unhelpful thoughts], mastery [in general] over the mind, and clean intentions. ‘श्रद्धया परया तप्तं तपः तत् त्रि-विधं नरेः। अ-फल-आकाङ्क्षिभिः युक्तेः सात्त्विकं परिचक्षते॥’ That threefold *tapas* – performed with complete *śraddhā* (trust in the teaching) by disciplined people who do not require/anticipate [limited] results [like wealth and *puṇya*, but instead only seek clarity of mind for knowledge] – they say is predominately *sattva*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 17.14–17).

² ‘आचार्य-कुलाद् वेदम् अधीत्य यथा-विधानं, गुरोः कर्म अतिशेषेण, अभिसमावृत्य कुटुम्बे (=गार्हस्थ्ये) शुचौ देशे स्वाध्यायम् अधीयानः...’ “Having studied the *Veda* according to the prescribed rule(s) along with spending the rest of one’s time serving the teacher, and, [when study is complete and duties therein discharged] returning to one’s household from the teacher’s family, in a clean [i.e., tidy and sanctified] place [sitting and] studying one’s scripture (*svādhyāya*) [as it was taught, so that it is retained, and as much more as one can study beyond what was taught by the teacher] ...”

the family's *Veda* scripture as it has been taught by one's teacher, **and** intelligently **surrendering to the Lord**,³ to the whole interconnected order of this universe.⁴

Prayerful discipline (*tapas*) is total commitment to one's goal. The following words in the *sūtra* give the context of this commitment. Here it is commitment towards the scripture as a means of knowledge in order to gain the ultimate freedom that is the Lord. This naturally entails the physical and mental disciplines of a dedicated student. Again *Patañjali* emphasizes study of the scripture. That is where the reality teaching is given. It is through the scripture that one understands what it to be contemplated.

Īśvara-pra-ṇi-dhāna culminates, as was pointed out in the first *pāda* (chapter), in contemplation of the Lord, but it also means aligning (*dhāna*) oneself completely (*pra-*, *prakarṣeṇa*) with understanding (*ni-*, *niścayena*) towards the Lord, who is the whole order that expresses as this universe, and as this body and mind. In this, how one lives one's life becomes an expression of a spontaneous sense of duty and care of all that is in-keeping with this order – respect for everyone and all of nature, with the proper values in support of this life style.

As part of *kriyā-yoga*, application of *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* in one's life is emphasized here. This *kriyā-yoga* is the equivalent of *karma-yoga* in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where this topic is more completely unfolded. Knowing that, *Patañjali* does not here develop this topic. Contemplation

(*Chāndogya Up.* 8.15.1).

³ 'स-ततं कीर्तयन्तः मां यतन्तः च दृढ-व्रताः। नमस्यन्तः च मां भक्त्या नित्य-युक्ताः उपासते' "Always acknowledging Me and making [proper] effort [to gain Me], [those] whose commitment is firm, surrendering to Me, always united [to Me] with devotion – they [the *karma-yogins*] seek [Me]." (*Bh. Gītā* 9.14).

⁴ 'त्रयः धर्म-स्कन्धाः' "Three are the paths of sacred duty (*dharma*)."
 'यज्ञः अध्ययनं दानम् इति प्रथमः,' "The first is ritual (*yajña*), [continued] study (*adhyayana*) [after learning from a teacher], and charity (*dāna*) [as a householder]."
 'तपः एव द्वितीयः,' "The second is prayerful discipline (*tapas*) [as a wandering mendicant]."
 'ब्रह्म-चार्यी आचार्य-कुल-वासी तृतीयः अत्यन्तम् आत्मानम् आचार्य-कुले अवसादयन्' "The third is pursuing the scripture (*brahma-cārin*) while living with the family of the teacher and then staying one's entire life in that teacher's family [i.e., in a *guru-kula*]."
 'सर्वे एते पुण्य-लोकाः भवन्ति,' "[As sacred lifestyles] they all gain a virtuous abode (*puṇya-loka*)."
 'ब्रह्म-संस्थः (=ब्रह्मणि सम्यक्-स्थितः तु) (आत्यन्तिकम्) अ-मृतत्वम्' "[But] the one who completely lives only in *brahman* (*brahma-saṁstha*) [in whatever lifestyle] gains immortality." (*Chāndogya Up.* 2.23.1).

within *yoga* is the special topic of these *sūtras*. Here, when *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is understood in its fullest extent, it includes all the limbs of *yoga* up to and including *samādhi*,⁵ the contemplation of the perfect person (*puruṣa*) in the form of the Lord as oneself.⁶

The traditional teaching's focus on the identity of self and the Lord helps develop one's understanding of everything as interconnected. Seeing deeply into any one thing reveals the truth of everything. We will develop this more fully in the commentary on the many contemplations given in chapter three, *sūtras* 3.16 to 3.53. Here it is seen that the three components of *kriyā-yoga* are included in the *niyamas*, the second of the eight limbs of *yoga*.⁷ In the *Yoga Sūtras*, the three components of *kriyā-yoga* in their full sense, and particularly *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* incorporate all eight limbs of *yoga*. Indeed, thinking through any universal value, or any of the limbs of *yoga*, or any object – in full measure – will reveal the uninterrupted correspondence of microcosm and macrocosm. This is seeing the macrocosm in the microcosm. This follows the principle that what is true here is true everywhere. Whether in *samādhi* or enjoying one's mind and life, truly knowing oneself is knowing everything.

समाधि-भावनार्थः क्लेश-तनू-करणार्थश् च॥ (2.2)
samādhi-bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa-tanū-karaṇārthaś ca.

[*artha* – for; *bhāvana* – bringing about; *samādhi* – contemplation of the proper means of knowledge resulting in assimilation; *ca* – and; *artha* – for; *tanū-karaṇa* – minimizing; *kleśas* – afflictions.]

Kriyā-yoga (activity when used as a means) is meant for bringing about contemplation of the proper means of knowledge resulting in assimilation of this reality that is the Lord and for minimizing the afflictions.⁸

⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.29.

⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.23–32.

⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.32.

⁸ 'सिद्धिं प्राप्तः यथा ब्रह्म तथा आप्नोति निबोध मे। समासेन एव कौन्तेय निष्ठा ज्ञानस्य या परा॥' "O *Arjuna*, in which way one who has attained the success [of *karma-yoga*] attains *brahman*, which is the final conclusion

Kriyā-yoga, which is the equivalent of *karma-yoga*, is a core aspect of the life of a *yogin*. The saints and sages of India underwent and were exposed to and influenced by this teaching discipline. If some saint appears to not have been formally initiated into this teaching tradition, then by his or her past *karma*, the person was naturally disciplined and had an appropriate attitude toward life and the universe. That person needed very little exposure to the teaching, which is inescapably heard in the cultural songs and literature of India, to be a saintly person. If you dream you are another exception, then a dream enlightenment may surely be yours. It would be better, though, to take advantage of this proven, detailed, and well maintained *yoga* tradition.

Karma-yoga is not, after all, an activity one does. It is instead an attitude based on understanding the reality of the world and of God. If one has this matured attitude, there is nothing more needed to be done to gain a mind that can assimilate this teaching. If one does not

of knowledge [i.e., unlike knowledge of everything else, which can have no final conclusion] – in that way, in brief, pay heed to Me.” ‘बुद्ध्या विशुद्धया युक्तः धृत्या आत्मानं नियम्य च। शब्द-आदीन् विषयान् त्यक्त्वा राग-द्वेषौ व्युदस्य च॥’ “[That one] endowed with a clear mind and, by resolve, gaining mastery over the body-mind complex [so it is not wasted chasing fancies]; giving up the [requiring of] sense objects beginning with sound, etc., and giving up [i.e., being free from the hold of] attraction and repulsion (*rāga-dveṣa*);” ‘विविक्त-सेवो लघु-आशी यत-वाक्-काय-मानसः। ध्यान-योग-परः नित्यं वैराग्यं समुपाश्रितः॥’ “having the disposition to repair to a quiet place; having the habit of eating lightly [to stay bright in this quiet lifestyle]; whose speech, body, and mind are mastered; [who is] always keeping contemplation and dedication [i.e., focuses only on oneself] as the ultimate; [who is] completely committed to objectivity;” ‘अहङ्कारं बलं दर्पं कामं क्रोधं परिग्रहम्। विमुच्य निर्-ममः शान्तः ब्रह्म-भूयाय कल्पते॥’ “[who is] free from a notional ‘I’ (*ahaṅkāra*), power, arrogance, desire, anger, and possession(s); [who is] free from the judgment “[this] is mine” and is clear – that one is fit for being *brahman* (reality) [i.e., for simply being oneself, without mistaken notions of reality].” ‘ब्रह्म-भूतः प्रसन्न-आत्मा (लब्ध-अध्यात्म-प्रसाद-स्व-भावः) न शोचति न काङ्क्षति। समः सर्वेषु भूतेषु मद-भक्तिं लभते पराम्॥’ “Attaining *brahman* [by the knowledge that the limitless *brahman* is – i.e., I am – all this, including oneself] [and thus] with a cheerful mind, one neither grieves nor requires [anything]. [Thus] being the same toward all beings, [one] attains the ultimate *bhakti* (devotion) to Me.” ‘भक्त्या माम् अभिजानाति यावान् यः च अस्मि तत्त्वतः। ततः मां तत्त्वतः ज्ञात्वा विशते तद्-अन्-अन्तरम्’ “By that *bhakti*, one knows Me – who I am in extent [as everything] and in reality [as the only thing, the only reality]. Therefore, knowing Me in reality, that one [as though] enters [Me] immediately after that [i.e., by knowledge alone one attains Me even while living].” (*Bh. Gītā* 18.50-55).

have this matured attitude, one may engage in activities that help bring about the necessary understanding to mature this attitude.

Karma-yoga brings about the two goals of *yoga*: *samādhi* culminating in an assimilated knowledge and freedom from the *kleśas*. These two goals are really just two ways of stating the same goal – being the perfect *puruṣa* (person, self).⁹ Put positively, this one goal is the *freedom* in the assimilation of self-knowledge with the help of *samādhi* (contemplation); put negatively it is the *freedom from* the *kleśas*.

The Five Afflictions

अ-विद्यास्मिता-राग-द्वेषाभिनिवेशाः पञ्च-क्लेशाः ॥ (2.3)
a-vidyāsmitā-rāga-dveṣābhiniveśāḥ pañca-kleśāḥ.

[*pañca*¹⁰-*kleśas* – five afflictions; *a-vidyā* – ignorance; *asmitā* – I-notion; *rāga* – attachment; *dveṣa* – aversion; *abhiniveśa* – fear of death.]

The five afflictions are ignorance and its crop or germinations, namely, the I-notion, attachment, aversion, and the fear of death.

These five afflictions and their interrelationships will be unfolded in the next eight *sūtras*.

The Affliction of Ignorance

अ-विद्या क्षेत्रम् उत्तरेषां प्रसुप्त-तनु-विच्छिन्नोदारणाम् ॥ (2.4)
a-vidyā kṣetram uttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanu-vicchinnodārāṇām.

⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.3, 24 & 25, 3.49 & 55, and 4.34.

¹⁰ The number (*pañca*=5) is missing in other manuscripts.

[*a-vidyā* – ignorance; *kṣetra* – soil; *uttaras* – others; *prasupta* – dormant; *tanu* – sprouting; *vicchinna* – variously breaking out; *udāra* – fully grown.]

Ignorance is the soil [field of activity, arena] **for the others**, the other afflictions – whether they are **dormant; sprouting**, literally, *gained a form*; **variously breaking out** at different times and situations; **or fully grown**.

For those who have lived a full life of *yoga*, the first two, the dormant and the sprouting (like seeds), are subtle and can be taken care of by contemplation and self-inquiry, respectively. In this way the *kleśas* (afflictions) in these two states remain or are reduced to being dormant (*prasupta*). The later two, the variously breaking out and the fully grown, are where the *kleśa* has broken out of its obstructions or is unobstructed, respectively. *Kriyā-yoga* addresses these *kleśas* by bringing not only the mind but one’s activities to bear at reducing or neutralizing these afflictions.

अ-नित्याशुचि-दुःखानात्मसु नित्य-शुचि-सुखात्म-ख्यातिर् अ-विद्या ॥ (2.5)
a-nityāśuci-duḥkhānātmasu nitya-śuci-sukhātma-khyātir a-vidyā.

[*a-vidyā* – ignorance; *khyāti* – determining; *nitya* – timeless; *śuci* – pure; *sukha* – satisfied; *ātman* – self; *an-ātman* – what is not the self; *a-nitya* – within time; *a-śuci* – impure; *duḥkha* – unsatisfied.]

Ignorance is determining the timeless, pure [attributeless], **satisfied** [full and complete] **self to be in what is not the self, within time, impure** [having attributes], **and unsatisfied** [empty and incomplete]. And visa-versa.

Ignorance is the erroneous transference of the natures of the mind, body, and their possessions and relationships upon the pure witness self; and the transference of the timeless reality nature of the witness self to the mind and body, and their possessions and relationships. The mutual transference is thinking, “I am time-bound, limited, and incomplete (like this body and mind)” and “the mind, body, possessions, and relationships should somehow last forever, be unlimited, and fully satisfying (like the pure witness self).” This is the fundamental mistake from which all other afflictions arise. It is not a simple cognitive mistake; it is a fundamental perspective with which all humans are born. This mistaken orientation requires an encompassing life of *yoga*

to re-orient oneself in keeping with objectivity and with ultimate reality. *Patañjali* tells us that *kriyā-yoga* and *vairāgya* (non-attachment) are proven disciplines for reorientation.

The Affliction of I-notion

दृग्-दर्शन-शक्त्योर् एकात्मतेवास्मिता ॥ (2.6)
dṛg-darśana-śaktyor ekātmatevāsmitā.

[*asmitā* – I-notion; *iva* – apparent; *eka-ātmatā* – identity; *śaktis* – natures; *dṛk* – seer; *darśana* – instrument for seeing.]

The I-notion – the problematic “possessive I,” not the unproblematic “is-ness I” of *Yoga Sūtra* 1.17 – **is the resulting apparent identity of the natures of the seer** – the witness self, **and the instrument for seeing** – the mind.

This mutual identity of oneself with the thoughts of the mind is called *vṛtti-sārūpya* (having the same form as the thoughts) in *Yoga Sūtra* 1.4. It includes the mind, in these cases manifesting as ego, thinking it is the witness self that should last forever, be unlimited, and fully satisfied. These are not possible for the mind, hence the resulting afflictions the ego, which is just one type of thought in this mind, suffers out of its own ignorance. The conflicts and defenses the ego suffers are rebuilt from childhood onwards – nurtured and possibly inflamed by parents who suffer their own problematic ego.

The mutual identification of the ego and the limitless I is the natural condition of every human being. We are not born with knowledge of the whole and of its identity with the self. Enlightened parents and qualified teachers can bring the light of knowledge to the darkness of self-ignorance. The specifics of the individual complexities of ego, of the *kleśas*, of anger and covetousness and self-criticism, are the field, the arena, for *Patañjali*'s *kriyā-yoga* and *vairāgya*. These are the ways to come to terms with the mind and its habitual misidentifications as the self. The unexamined and unresolved misidentification, the human mistake, perpetuates through the subtle processes identified in the traditional Indian understanding of the human condition.

This entity, the self identified with the mind, is the individual person called the *jīva*. The subtle mind, senses, and powers of the bodily functions, collectively called the subtle body, inhabit a physical body, and then move on when that physical body can no longer hold them.

This is recognition of the continuance of energy, which is what this subtle body is. The subtle body is not an effect of the physical body. Rather, in this tradition, it is just the opposite. The physical is always an effect or a phenomenal manifestation of the subtle. The subtle body is independent – existing before, during, and after the physical body. In its presence, this physical body is animated; in its absence this body lies motionless and decaying. Whatever it is that makes that difference between a live and a dead body is called the subtle body. The witness self that is attribute free and therefore timeless lends reality, lends consciousness, to this composite subtle body. Again, the identification of that which has no attributes is taken to be the self in an apparent individual relationship with this subtle body. That self-identified subtle body is the transmigrating *jīva*, the individual.

The *Sāṅkhya* philosophers call the *jīvas* separate *puruṣas*. They mistakenly say the *puruṣas* are equivalent to the *ātman* taught in the *Upaniṣads*. There is an abrupt and irreconcilable discord in the *Sāṅkhya* explanation.

Īśvara-kṛṣṇa was the author responsible for formalizing many of the *Sāṅkhya* inconsistencies. The term *sāṅkhya* was a Sanskrit word meaning a *well thought out reckoning*, and was so used in the early literature of the *Upaniṣads*, the *Purāṇas*, and the *Bhagavad-gītā* as a term indicating the scriptural teaching relating to the self, the world, and God. The teaching tradition that takes the time and care to go through all the statements of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā* holds that there is only one reality, variously referred to by the terms *brahman*, *ātman*, or *Īśvara*, depending on whether the term is in reference, respectively, to itself, to oneself, or to the universe. It is this truly complete teaching that we present here and that brings understanding and relevant skills to the student.

Little is gained by philosophies which seek to confirm our innate sense of ultimate separation between individuals. *Patañjali* does not suggest a multiplicity of *puruṣas*. It is the one reality (the *eka-tattva*), the identification of the self and the Lord through knowledge, that provides meaningful contemplation and a fully integrated emotional and physical life. This is the original *sāṅkhya* taught in the scriptures. It is the clear teaching in the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad-gītā*. *Patañjali* makes no claims that would force these *sūtras* outside of this tradition.

The Afflictions of Attachment and Aversion

सुखानुशयी रागः ॥ (2.7)
sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ.

[*rāga* – attachment; *anuśayin* – being in-keeping; *sukhas* – pleasurable objects.]

Attachment is being in-keeping, literally, to lie down, with pleasurable objects.

दुःखानुशयी द्वेषः ॥ (2.8)
duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ.

[*dveṣa* – aversion; *anuśayin* – being in-keeping; *duḥkhas* – painful objects.]

Aversion is being in-keeping with painful objects.

Both attachment (*rāga*, *bandana-kāma* binding desire) and aversion are impositions on objects of a capacity to be consistent sources of pleasure or pain. Seen as sources of pleasure and pain, we act upon those judgments, those beliefs, accordingly. Our judgments are based on subtle impressions (*saṃskāras*) formed during previous contact with similar objects and on our incessant desire to be fulfilled and satisfied.

However, when objectively seen, objects, animate or inanimate, do not intrinsically have that nature of being a source of pleasure or pain. Pleasure and pain are subjective judgments related to the mind and senses. The objects are what they are. The same object will stimulate pleasure or pain at one time and not at another; it will stimulate one person but not another, one creature but not another. Objects remain what they are irrespective of the imposition of emotional or sensed qualities upon them. Again, it is the individual's unexamined and persistent need to find a sense of wholeness and satisfaction that drives him or her to attribute the potential for fulfillment to objects. It is the unexamined and wanting notion one has of oneself that drives an individual to seek remedy, or control, or approval, or attention, or safety, from the people with whom he or she is emotionally involved.

What *Patañjali* and the *Yoga Sutras* teach is that the only source of happiness and fulfillment

is the fully realized self. When the student relieves objects, including other people, of the burden of providing satisfaction, when the value structure is appropriate, objects can serve their purpose and the student can enjoy or appreciate them and himself, or herself, without the confusion.

It is a human tendency to become emotionally attached to objects of desire and to distance from or reject what seems to bring pain. Contemplation is an effective tool for freeing oneself from emotional reactivity. *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* (acknowledgement of the Lord as the universal order) helps here, because the Lord manifests not only as the physical order, but also as the psychological order. This acknowledgement and appreciation is relating one's individual mind and body objectively within the total. This interconnected universe is a given, mostly outside one's own two hands. One learns to accept this order graciously.

Each person has a psychological background, and so too another person has his or her own background. If, in-keeping with the order, these two do not mesh together, then with this objective understanding one may stay away from another. One can draw a boundary – physically, emotionally, or intellectually (that is, make decisions that maintain a boundary). To hate another person is not objective, nor helpful, nor even natural, since one typically has to work oneself into that emotion. Hatred stems from an unwarranted imagination of this person as a source of pain (perhaps due to one's own inability to maintain adequate boundaries) and an unwarranted expectation of this person as being a source of pleasure, when all there is objectively is a potential clash of personalities or activities, which can be managed more wisely.

To have a desire for or against something or someone is not the problem. These are privileges and necessities in order to enjoy the variety in nature. Otherwise, one would be an insensitive automaton. The problem is when one identifies with and becomes that obsession or hatred. This is being in-keeping with objects mixed up with one's imagination upon them. One imposes the nature of being a source of pleasure or pain on the object, then oneself becomes different towards that object in keeping with one's imagination upon it. This is another form of mutual imposing of natures, another expression of the basic ignorance.

The Affliction of Fear of Death

स्व-रस-वाही विदुषोऽपि तथा रूढोऽभिनिवेशः ॥ (2.9)
sva-rasa-vāhī viduṣo'pi tathā rūḍho'bhiniveśaḥ.

[*abhiniveśa* – fear of death; *vāhin* – passed on; *sva-rasa* – one’s subtle essence; *tathā* – in that way; *rūḍha* – well rooted; *api* – even; *vidvat* – scholar.]

Fear of death is passed on in one’s subtle essence. In that way it is well rooted even for a scriptural scholar.

Ni-veśa, and thus *abhi-ni-veśa*, normally means *entering into* or *clinging to* in classical Sanskrit, where here it can mean *clinging to life* or *self-preservation*. However, *yoga* has a particular meaning for the word. The word can as well be taken from the old *R̥g-Veda* meaning for the Sanskrit prefix *ni* with the verbal root *viś*, from which come the words *ni-veśa* and *abhi-ni-veśa*.¹¹ That old meaning is *to sink down, to vanish, to cease*, hence the meaning *death*, and, as an affliction, *the fear of death* – the fear that one will not be there after the body dies. The misidentification of the time-free self with the body’s changes causes us to assume that the body should last forever and causes us to see our selves as mortal. We seem shocked and find it difficult to accept that this decay is happening to oneself.

Even scriptural scholars who believe in life after death of the body still show fear and non-acceptance of death. What the *āgamas* (scriptures) reveal is beyond scholarly information; it is knowledge that affords a reorientation in understanding of oneself and the world. *Yoga* is the means to assimilation of that knowledge.

The reality here is that it is the body that we see dying. The consciousness, the is-ness that is my self, which is manifest as my mind, is the witness of this change in the body. To assume that the one who is witnessing it is dying, is the same kind of misidentification we can experience watching a 3-D movie, ducking every now and then because of that misidentification. It is another expression of the fundamental ignorance. If that is resolved, then so are all these afflictions, because these afflictions are not based in objective reality. It is a clear case of

¹¹ A Sanskrit English Dictionary by Monier Williams.

knowledge alone being the solution. But it is a knowledge that requires thorough assimilation for its benefit to manifest in one's life. The *samskāras* (subtle impressions in the mind) and the scars of an unexamined emotional life do not yield readily. They have ways of coming back that require vigilance and patience until knowledge is free of doubt and spontaneous.

Fear of death is the mother of all fears, and that is why it is included here as one of the afflictions. It is also taken up in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, when fear of inflicting death on members of his own family and clan impels *Arjuna* to seek from *Kṛṣṇa* the teaching that frees one from unwanted fear of death. Every living being shares the survival instinct. Perhaps we retain some memory of prior deaths and loss that conditions the present life. Perhaps there was pain involved that informs us now. Otherwise, it is difficult to account for this natural fear and behavior towards something we had not experienced before.

It is not a fear of the unknown, though that also may be there. Can one really believe that a mosquito avoids its death because of fear of the unknown? This tradition's explanation is that the subtle body and mind carry forth from birth to birth the impressions (*samskāras*) related to fundamental self-ignorance which result in, among other things, a fear of death. In modern science, we may attribute it to instinctual mechanisms passed on through DNA. Either way, this fear results from subtle sources that come with birth. The various forms of the fear are lodged in the subtle recesses of the mind, and may be neutralized, according to this tradition, by better assimilation of this teaching. But fear itself is only eliminated by a fully ascertained knowledge that I am limitless in terms of time and the notion of duality is erroneous.

Fear is not because of a second thing. There is, in fact, no second thing in reality. Nevertheless, we seem to have fear. Fear is thinking something else limits me. A wise person has the whole world all around, but fears not. The world is a secondary reality that makes no difference in the wise person.

The subtle world is a part of the order in the universe we call the manifestation of the Lord. Science is also part of the manifestation of the order which is the Lord, and without that order there would be no mathematics or science.

Some may have issue with a Lord. The issue is really with their concept of a Lord. This teaching tries to invoke the most open and broad sense for the term Lord. Any concept that

cannot stand inquiry, including inappropriate or inadequate concepts of a Lord, need to drop in the light of a fuller understanding.

There is an intelligent order that pervades the entire universe, which enforces $e=mc^2$, as well as allows that formulation's understanding. So, one logically needs an all-pervasive term to capture that fact. This is what is attempted here with the term Lord. It is a term used in the context of a very important understanding of a universe that is both sentient and insentient, but in both cases is completely intelligent. This universe manifest to our senses and understanding has its complete being in this Lord alone. The proof of such a Lord is, then, everywhere around. Open your eyes and you are seeing the Lord. Close your eyes and there is the Lord. You yourself are this Lord, and the Lord is you. If your concept of the Lord is smaller than this, then this teaching is here to expand it.

These scriptures are there because of the human mind. These minds do not differ in their issues and problems. If generations after generations contribute their understanding of these issues, such as in a scripture that grew and was gathered over millenniums like the *Vedas*, and faithfully commented upon for millenniums afterwards, then, when you look into that, you will see the basic truths of your own mind. They all had to deal with death for millenniums. They have something to teach on this subject, and it could be more profound than one can imagine.

Giving Up Afflictions

ते प्रतिप्रसव-हेयाः सूक्ष्माः ॥ (2.10)
te pratiprasava-heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ.

[*te* – those; *sūkṣma* – subtle; *heya* – to be given up; *prati-prasava* – by resolving.]

Those *kleśas* (afflictions) which are already or made **subtle** – dormant or sprouting, **are to be given up by resolving them**, seeing that they are sourced in ignorance and thus unreal.

The *kleśas* (afflictions) arise from ignorance of reality, ignorance of the truth. Ignorance alone is their ground of being. When these afflictions are still just subtle thoughts, not broken out or in full bloom in one's behavior, one only needs to see them as their source, as ignorance alone.

By this, they easily resolve or dissolve themselves. No further counter action is required. This seeing their falsity can be employed anywhere and anytime, including in the seat of meditation. Basically, it is the application of objective, common sense to one's afflictions. If their source in ignorance, in untruth, is not clearly seen continue your studies of this teaching with a competent teacher.

ध्यान-हेयास् तद्-वृत्तयः ॥ (2.11)

dhyāna-heyās tad-vṛttayaḥ.

[*tad-vṛttis* – their expressions; *heya* – to be given up; *dhyāna* – retaining a single pointed inquiry in contemplation.]

Their, the already subtle or made subtle afflictions', **expressions are also to be given up by retaining** a single pointed inquiry in contemplation.

In contemplation, when these afflictions arise out of new and old *saṃskāras*, they are observed objectively, without identifying them as being associated with myself, and then let go without pursuing them, without being in-keeping with them, *anuśayin* (*Yoga Sūtras* 2.7 and 2.8). Contemplation is a quiet, mental pursuit that allows these sub-conscious afflictions to bubble up and be clearly seen. But in contemplation one exercises the capacity to choose to not react to them by not identifying with them. This deliberate, contemplative attitude of objectivity carries over into one's entire life, where it continues to counteract the afflictions. Contemplation requires prior inquiry (*vicāra*); this inquiry is brought into the contemplation in an abbreviated form. Inquiry into these afflictions exposes their erroneous nature. Seeing them as simply forms of ignorance, the afflictions are neutralized as being real impediments in life, so that one naturally can mature out of them.

Karma-Storage From the Afflictions

क्लेश-मूलः कर्माशयो दृष्टादृष्ट-जन्म-वेदनीयः ॥ (2.12)

kleśa-mūlaḥ karmāśayo dṛṣṭādṛṣṭa-janma-vedanīyaḥ.

[*kleśas* – afflictions; *mūla* – source; *karma-āśaya* – *karma*-storage; *vedanīya* – to be experienced; *janmas* – births; *dṛṣṭa* – seen; *a-dṛṣṭa* – unseen.]

Having the afflictions as its source, the *karma*-storage, accumulated in a beginningless succession of human births, yet to fructify, and belonging to one *jīva* (individual), is to be experienced as births seen – the current birth, and unseen – births past and future.

It is said that only humans (or the equivalents to humans on other planets) can give rise to *karma* since it requires a faculty of choice, an intellect (*buddhi*). If a creature has no faculty of choice to guide its actions, as is the case with plants, insects, and other animals, then that creature has no resulting responsibility for those actions performed in that embodiment. These creatures have a mind (*manas*) that is controlled by instincts, and its own likes and dislikes which come with or are acquired in that birth. It is also said that subtle beings born into pleasant or unpleasant, purely subtle realms, such as a heaven, cannot accumulate new *karma*, since those embodiments, like other non-human physical embodiments, are only meant to exhaust certain *karmas* from an already existing *karma-āśaya* (storehouse of *karmas*). The individual’s *karma-āśaya* is not somewhere in a heavenly vault; it is part of the individual’s subtle body (*kaṛaṇa-śarīra*) that is with you right now in an unmanifest, potential form.

Only humans, or beings that are the equivalent to human in terms of having an intellect capable of making choices based on free-will and on the certitude of the judgment, “I am the doer,” “I am the experiencer,” and “I will reap the expected results of my actions,” can cause further births. Moreover, they alone can end their string of births through gaining knowledge of reality. That is also why the universe-manifestation cycles are beginningless. There always has to be the equivalent, or better, of humans for there to be the *karmas* for rebirths now and in the past. These universes are manifested in order to provide the variety of beings and variety of situations for exhaustion of these innumerable *karmas*.

This whole scheme of how the universe and its cycles are put together is, of course, a reflection of, and a discourse directed at the human mind, and itself is thus a reflection of the fundamental ignorance by which the human is born. The description of *karma* and rebirth is not of absolute reality. Instead, it is a means to understand the nature of conditional, dependent reality and of one’s experiences so that one can more easily understand and appreciate the teaching of the limitless reality that brings a mature freedom in one’s life.

सति मूले तद्-विपाको जात्य्-आयुर्-भोगाः ॥ (2.13)
sati mūle tad-vipāko jāty-āyur-bhogāḥ.

[*mūla* – source; *sati* – is there; *tad-vipāka* – fruition of those; *jātis* – births; *āyuses* – life-spans; *bhogas* – life-experiences.]

As long as that source of the *karma*-storage is there – as long as there is the fundamental ignorance manifesting as the afflictions – the fruition of those *karmas* becomes the births, life-spans, and life-experiences.

ते ह्लाद-परिताप-फलाः पुण्यापुण्य-हेतुत्वात् ॥ (2.14)
te hlāda-paritāpa-phalāḥ puṇyāpuṇya-hetutvāt.

[*te* – these; *phalas* – results; *hlādas* – pleasures; *paritāpas* – pains; *hetutva* – they are caused; *puṇya* – merit; *a-puṇya* – demerit.]

These three – births, life-spans, and experiences – have results that are pleasures and pains, since they are caused by *karma* merit (*puṇya*) and demerit (*pāpa*).

Giving Up Sorrow

परिणाम-ताप-संस्कार-दुःखैर् गुण-वृत्ति-विरोधाच् च दुःखम् एव सर्वं विवेकिनः ॥ (2.15)
pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ.

[*vivekins* – discerning; *sarva* – all; *duḥkha* – painful; *eva* – alone; *duḥkhas* – pains; *pariṇāma* – change; *tāpa* – worry; *saṃskāras* – latent tendencies; *ca* – and; *virodha* – opposition; *vṛtti* – play; *guṇas* – components of nature.]

The discerning view all separate entities as painful¹² alone due to the pains of change,

¹² ‘इह एव सन्तः अथ विद्यः तद् (ब्रह्म) वयम्, न चेद् अ-वेदिः महती विनष्टिः। ये तद् विदुः अ-मृताः ते भवन्ति, अथ इतरे दुःखम् एव आपियन्ति’ “Being [born] in here itself [in this body], in this way we have come to know that *brahman*. If not, [then] not knowing [this] is a great loss. Those who know that [*brahman*] are

worry, and new latent tendencies, and because of the opposition of the play of the three *guṇas* (components of nature).

Why is keeping these births going unpleasant when pleasures are also mixed in? Change always involves loss. All pleasures, as experiences, come at a loss in the form of what it took to get each pleasure, what else one missed in getting that, and the wear and tear on the body and mind in entertaining and holding on to that pleasure.

The word *tāpa* means *heat* or *fever*. In the context of these *sūtras*, *tāpa* means *worry*, the overactive mind anticipating pleasure, its intensity and duration, concerned about securing the pleasurable object from competitors, and finally apprehensive over when that possessed object and oneself will decline and perish. Pleasures intensify the attachment to objects and strengthen tendencies (*saṃskāras*) to pursue more pleasures. These new and strengthened desires lead to actions whose future results necessitate more births, along with their additional mixtures of pains in the process.

Objects of pleasure and the instruments we use to enjoy pleasure – the body, senses, and mind – are composed of the three *guṇas*. All objects exhibit all three *guṇas*. These three *guṇas* continually over-power each other throughout the day and one's life.¹³ Candy creates cavities; ice-cream consumed too quickly creates headaches. Good food spoils. The *tamas* of old-age overpowers the agility (*rajas*) of youth. Pleasure (*sattva*) leads to exhaustion (*tamas*) which interferes with one's activities (*rajas*). The urge to get busy (*rajas*) overcomes the sleepiness (*tamas*), and causes one to be distracted from the experience of pleasure (*sattva*). The fluctuation is endless. No one expression of a *guṇa* can remain in isolation, holding off other expressions.

Moreover, every thing is painful alone, since the only source of pleasure is one's self. In fact, the self is not even the source; it *is* the pleasure. Everything else is a pale reflection of that pleasure, which, if we miss the satisfaction in one's self, entices us to chase after that shadow,

free from what is dead, whereas the others remain in sorrow (*duḥkha*) alone [being bound to what is dead or dying]." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.4.14).

¹³ 'रजः तमः च च अभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत। रजः सत्त्वं तमः च एव तमः सत्त्वं रजः तथा' "O *Arjuna*, *sattva* [throughout the day and one's life] arises [by] overwhelming *rajas* and *tamas*, *rajas* arises [by overwhelming] *sattva* and *tamas*. Similarly, *tamas* arises [by overwhelming] *sattva* and *rajas*." (*Bh. Gītā* 14.10).

always leading us away from the real satisfaction. Hence they always tend towards dissatisfaction. Therefore, the discerning have an objective view towards all things. They see that all limitations are inextricably bound with pain, whereas the limitless self is free of all pain, and thus there is no reason for sorrow. When one's self is not accepted as being in pain, then the pain belonging to the body can be endured without causing sorrow.¹⁴

Those who discern are not more unhappy than the non-discerning, although some commentaries explain this *sūtra* in that way. But ignorance is not bliss. If it was then would you rather relive your life knowing what you know now, or not?

It is not the case that this pursuit of freedom increases the experience of sorrow. Objectivity, matured by this teaching and its contemplation, is the avoidance of bondage towards irrational elation, and of bondage from irrational sorrow. Non-attachment (*vairāgya*) is not a pursuit to become passionless or to become more sad. In fact, there is a great passion for gaining the knowledge that frees. Non-attachment is to be more objective and factual towards the world, to see that the real passion and real pleasure in life has one's self as its basis, its reality. This pleasure, this reality, does not wax and wane, cannot have a more or a less. One discovers this limitless reality as oneself that no longer requires attachment to situations that fit the mind's subjective and flirtatious perspectives in order to become happy. This is what is being pointed out here.

We all live lives confused with regard to the ability of objects to give happiness until we are taught by those who actually discern the confusion and its cause. This discernment (*viveka*) is the essence of the *yoga of Patañjali* and of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā* where the discernment is explored and emphasized. It is taught that one's self alone is the source of happiness never to be missed, and anything else is a shadow of this happiness. In fact,

¹⁴ 'अ-शोच्यान् अन्वशोचः त्वं प्रज्ञा-वादान् च भाषसे। गत-असून् अ-गत-असून् च न अनुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः' "You have grieved for those not to be grieved, yet proclaim words of wisdom. The wise do not grieve for those whose life's breath is gone or not [yet] gone." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.11). 'मात्रा-स्पर्शाः तु कौन्तेय शीत-उष्ण-सुख-दुःख-दाः। आगम-अपायिनः अ-नित्याः तान् तितिक्षस्व भारत' "O *Arjuna*, the contacts of the senses, which give cold/hot and pleasure/pain [the natural pairs of opposites], have a beginning and an end and [therefore] are time bound. Endure them [i.e., accept them objectively as they are], O *Arjuna*." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.14).

unhappiness, grief, is said there to be illegitimate, simply by clear reasoning, even without knowing oneself as independent from the body or the soul.¹⁵

The *yogin* who is objectively rational and who knows himself or herself as completely independent from the objects of the world is the one with real *śānti*, real satisfaction and happiness in life, not otherwise. Turning away from once pleasurable things is indeed only possible, and real, to the extent that one has already discovered the pleasure that is one's self. The *Bhagavad Gītā* clearly explains this.¹⁶

Even the very next *sūtra* tells us that sorrow, unhappiness, is no longer to be entertained in the *yogin*'s life.

हेयं दुःखम् अन्-आगतम् ॥ (2.16)
heyaṃ duḥkham an-āgatam.

[*duḥkha* – sorrow; *an-āgata* – not yet come; *heya* – to be given up.]

Sorrow not yet come is to be objectively given up.

Future sorrow alone is what can be avoided. Obsession with past pain or sorrow, because it is

¹⁵ 'अथ च एनं नित्य-जातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम्। तथा अपि त्वं महा-बाहो न एवं शोचितुम् अर्हसि॥' "O *Arjuna*, now if you consider this [the self – as the body or as an individual soul] to continually be born and die – even in that way, you should not grieve." 'जातस्य हि ध्रुवः मृत्युः ध्रुवः जन्म मृतस्य च। तस्माद् अ-परिहार्ये अर्थे न त्वं शोचितुम् अर्हसि॥' "Because, for what is born, death is certain, and for what is dead, birth [in another form] is certain. Then you should not grieve over a situation that cannot be avoided." 'अ-व्यक्त-आदीनि भूतानि व्यक्त-मध्यानि भारत। अ-व्यक्त-निधनानि एव तत्र का परिदेवना' "O *Arjuna*, [all] beings are unseen [before] their beginning [i.e., unknown as to who or what they were before their birth], [are] seen in between, and [are] unseen [after] their end [i.e., unknown as to their lot after death]. Regarding that, [even relatively] why grieve?" (*Bh. Gītā* 2.26–28).

¹⁶ 'विषयाः विनिवर्तन्ते निर्-आहारस्य देहिनः। रस-वर्जं रसः अपि अस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते' "For the embodied one who does not feed [i.e., indulge the senses], the objects turn back [i.e., are not pursued], but the longing remains. Knowing the *para* [i.e., *brahman* (reality)], even one's longing ceases." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.59). 'कर्म-इन्द्रियाणि संयम्य यः आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्। इन्द्रिय-अर्थान् विमूढ-आत्मा मिथ्या-आचारः सः उच्यते' "The one who sits, restraining the organs of action, [yet] contemplating the sense objects with the mind – that one is called one whose mind is deluded and whose conduct is useless." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.6).

past, is to be objectively dropped, and current pain is to be objectively endured. Saying future sorrows are to be given up (*heya*) can mean either they do not arise or, if and when they arise out of inattention (*pramāda*),¹⁷ they can be dropped once the teaching is brought back in to bear on the painful situation.

Duḥkha can mean either *pain* or *sorrow*. Pain is different from sorrow. Physical pains are natural to the body. Mental preferences for avoidance of physical pains are likewise natural to the mind. What is unnatural, because it is due to ignorance that can be removed, is sorrow towards pains. To get to sorrow from pain requires a series of mistakes, a process of ignorance, which this teaching addresses. Pain and pleasure need not be removed; the mind's habit of coveting and blaming objects for its own condition is where objectively is advised.

Sorrow can be seen as understandable, but unnecessary, to an objective outsider. However, that objective outsider is anything but, when it comes to one's own experiences. Having a scholarly understanding is not enough. The knowledge here is the knowledge of one's very identity. This knowledge is thus completely transformative of one's vision of one's self and the world. By removing ignorance through this knowledge based on objectively and thoroughly understanding realities, one can avoid sorrow in the heart, but not pain. If the pain is acute, an environment that is more therapeutic may be needed to better address re-emerging pain, guilt, shame, and trauma.

Mutual Identification of Seer and Seen

द्रष्टृ-द्रश्ययोः संयोगो हेय-हेतुः ॥ (2.17)
draṣṭṛ-dṛśyayoḥ saṃyogo heya-hetuḥ.

[*saṃyoga* – mutual identification; *draṣṭṛ* – seer; *dṛśya* – seen; *hetu* – cause; *heya* – to be given up.]

Ignorance in the form of **the mutual identification**¹⁸ **of the seer and the seen**, literally,

¹⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.30.

¹⁸ 'यावत् सञ्जायते किञ्चित् सत्त्वं स्थावर-जङ्गमम्। क्षेत्र-क्षेत्रज्ञ-संयोगात् तद् विद्धि भरत-र्षभ' "As long as any being [i.e., a *jīva*] [continues to] be [re-]born as immobile or mobile – know that [continuance in *saṃsāra* (life

the seeable, is the cause of these afflictions to be given up.

The Nature of the Seen

प्रकाश-क्रिया-स्थिति-शीलं भूतेन्द्रियात्मकं भोगापवर्गार्थं दृश्यम्॥ (2.18)
prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti-śīlaṃ bhūteन्द्रiyātmakam bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam.

[*dṛśya* – seen; *sīla* – nature; *prakāśa-kriyā-sthiti* – light-action-inertia; *ātmaka* – nature; *bhūtas* – elements; *indriyas* – organs; *artha* – for; *bhoga* – enjoyment; *apavarga* – freedom.]

The seen has the nature of the three *guṇas*, light-action-inertia; has the nature of the five material and subtle elements including the subtle organs of sensing and acting; and is for enjoyment in the form of what can bind and freedom in the form of the teaching that frees one from bondage.¹⁹

of unbecoming becoming)] to be due to the *saṃyoga* (association) [due to a lack of *viveka* (knowing the difference)] between the *kṣetra* (the field of objects) and the *kṣetra-jñā* (the knower of that field), O *Arjuna*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.26).

¹⁹ ‘(तत् ज्ञेयं ब्रह्म) सर्व-इन्द्रिय-गुण-आभासं सर्व-इन्द्रिय-विवर्जितम्। असक्तं सर्व-भृत् च एव निर्-गुणं गुण-भोक्तृ च’ “[Since that *brahman* to be known] [merely] appears as the attributes [i.e., the functioning – seeing, etc.] of all the organs [in these bodies], [yet] is free from all the organs; is unattached [yet] sustains all; and is free from the *guṇas* [yet] is the experiencer of the *guṇas*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.14). ‘प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहम् एव च पाण्डव। न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति॥’ “O *Arjuna*, brightness, [attachment-based] activity [i.e., *rajas*], and, indeed, delusion (*tamas*) – the one who is not displeased [when they] wax, nor longs for [them when they] wane [throughout the day and one’s life];” ‘उदासीनवद् आसीनः गुणैः यः न विचाल्यते। गुणाः वर्तन्ते इति एव यः अवतिष्ठति न इङ्गते॥’ “who, remaining seemingly indifferent, is not disturbed by the *guṇas*; who abides – [knowing] indeed that the *guṇas* act – and does not waiver [from this knowledge];” ‘सम-दुःख-सुखः स्व-स्थः सम-लोष्ट-अश्म-काञ्चनः। तुल्य-प्रिय-अ-प्रियः धीरः तुल्य-निन्दा-आत्म-संस्तुतिः॥’ “who is the same in pleasure and pain [and] abides in the self; for whom a lump of clay, a stone, and gold are [transcended as] the same; for whom the pleasant and the unpleasant are [objectively viewed] the same [way]; who is wise; for whom censure and praise of the self are alike [addressing only the mind or body – as the *ātman* cannot be flattered nor damaged by any misconception of it];” ‘मान-अपमानयोः तुल्यः तुल्यः मित्र-अरि-पक्षयोः। सर्व-आरम्भ-परित्यागी गुण-अतीतः सः उच्यते’ “who is the same in respect and disrespect [which express only the others’ understanding and

The objects of the world are both hindering and helpful. They can keep you in bondage or help you out of bondage.²⁰ The attachment to the presence or absence of sense objects is what makes you feel as though you are bound. Believing that one is less or more whole as a result of the absence or presence of objects, associations, position, or influence is bondage and is ignorance. This teaching is also an object in the world, but it shows you how to convert what could bind, into what will liberate.

विशेषाविशेष-लिङ्ग-मात्रालिङ्गानि गुण-पर्वानि ॥ (2.19)
viśeṣāviśeṣa-liṅga-mātrāliṅgāni guṇa-parvāṇi.

[*parvans* – levels; *guṇas* – components of nature; *viśeṣa* – particularized; *a-viśeṣa* – non-particularized; *liṅga-mātra* – merely indicated; *a-liṅga* – non-indicated.]

The levels in reverse order of the manifestation of the *guṇas* (components of nature) are **particularized** – the five mixed material and subtle elements; **non-particularized** – the five unmixed subtle elements;²¹ **the merely indicated** – the universal order or intellect assumed to exist because of its effects, otherwise called *mahat* (the great), and elsewhere called *Hiraṇya-garbha* (the Golden Womb); **and the non-indicated** – the unmanifest *prakṛti* (nature).²²

value structure, unrelated to the self], the same regarding the side of a friend or an enemy [seeing neither as friend nor enemy]; and who has completely renounced [doership in] all activities – that one is called *guṇātīta* (beyond the *guṇas*).” (*Bh. Gītā* 14.22–25).

²⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.5.

²¹ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.41.

²² ‘(स्थूल-)इन्द्रियेभ्यः पराः हि (सूक्ष्म-स्थूल-)अर्थाः अर्थेभ्यः च परं (अर्थ-ग्रहक-)मनः। मनसः तु परा (निश्चय-आत्मिक-)बुद्धिः बुद्धेः आत्मा महान् (=हेरण्य-गर्भं तत्त्वं) परः॥’ “Than the sense organs, the objects [of the mind] are more subtle (*para*). Than the objects [of the mind], the mind is more subtle. Than the mind, the intellect is more subtle. Than the intellect, the *mahān ātmā* [i.e., the universal intelligence, *mahat* – the entire subtle body of the universe] is more subtle.” ‘महत्तः परम् अव्यक्तम् (=त्रि-गुण-आत्मिक-प्रकृतिः) अव्यक्तात् (निर-गुण-)पुरुषः परः। पुरुषात् न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परा गतिः॥’ “Than *mahat*, the unmanifest is more subtle. Than the unmanifest, the *puruṣa* [i.e., the limitless self] is more subtle. Than the *puruṣa*, there is nothing more subtle. That maximum limit (*kāṣṭhā*), that goal (*gati*), is the ultimate.”

In each cycle of manifestation of the universe, the unmanifest *prakṛti* (nature), consisting of the undifferentiated *guṇas*, first manifests as intellect, the mind of God, so to speak, which is then said to contain the divisions cognized as the subtle and gross elements, each being five-fold in this human-authored description that is based on our five senses.

The universe is said to be entirely formed according to the evolution of *prakṛti* through the subtle and gross elements in keeping with the universal order (*buddhi*). The evolution is not one level of nature changing into another; it is the later levels manifesting due to the continuing presence of the earlier more basic levels of reality. The manifest does not replace the unmanifest; it manifests because of the presence of the unmanifest, because of the order in the universe, because of the Lord.

The elements have no independent reality. They and their manifestations are all *nāma-rūpa* (names and forms alone). They are all of the nature of names flowing from intellect. At the end of each cycle of manifestation they flow back into their unmanifest nature (*prakṛti*). All this happens in the unlimited being-awareness (*sat-cit*) that is the Lord and that is oneself.

The analogy at the individual level is that of one's universe springing out from and returning back into the ignorance of deep sleep. It is the intellect that awakens. As the intellect thinks so one's universe seems and so one's conditional sense of reality is. And then the intellect resolves into unmanifest in sleep. Even at the universal level, this teaching's presentation of the cycles of manifestation of the universe is itself only more names employed in the teaching to help reveal that, just as in waking and sleep, this cycle of manifestation and dissolution of the universe is still no more than the cyclic flow of names and forms.

When the intellect has the abiding knowledge that there is only one reality, and from this one reality, which is oneself, nothing else separate from reality can possibly come into or go out of being, then there is no cycle. The cycle of creation simply falls, as a name (*nāmadheya*), from the tip of the tongue. The universe is spun from the mind in the form of words, lit up by the witness-being which alone is their reality.

This is the only *sūtra* dealing with the evolution of the universe. The *sūtra* is in keeping with the scripture and thus with *Vedānta* and its analysis of the *Upaniṣads*.

(*Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.10–11).

The Nature of the Seer

द्रष्टा दृशि-मात्रः शुद्धोऽपि प्रत्ययानुपश्यः ॥ (2.20)
draṣṭā dṛṣi-mātraḥ śuddho'pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ.

[*draṣṭr* – seer; *dṛṣi-mātra* – pure perception; *api* – though; *śuddha* – pure; *anupaśya* – sees; *pratyayas* – thoughts.]

The seer is pure perception – the *jñapti-svarūpa* (nature of the source of knowing) free of the three-fold knower-knowing-known aspects of the act of knowing, **and though pure**, indivisible and without a second thing, **it sees**, as it were, **the thoughts**.

The nature of the seer has been presented and discussed in the context of earlier *sūtras*, where it had to be introduced to fully comprehend the *sūtras* up to this point. This *sūtra* clearly states *Patañjali*'s adherence to the scriptures as we have been unfolding them in the context of these *sūtras*. This *sūtra* emphasizes the undifferentiated nature of the seer. The seer, unlike the universe and all the entities within it, is partless. In fact, the seer is the very partless reality of the universe and all within it, including the individual, yourself.

Later, *Patañjali* and this commentary will discuss in detail the nature of thought, the seer, and knowledge in *sūtras* 4.18 through 4.24.

The Seen's Relation to the Seer

तद्-अर्थ एव दृश्यस्यात्मा ॥ (2.21)
tad-artha eva dṛśyasyātmā.

[*ātman* – nature; *dṛśya* – seen; *eva* – simply; *tad-artha* – its object.]

The nature of the seen is simply as its, *draṣṭr*'s (the pure-witnesses') **object**.

The seen has no more reality than its phenomenological experience, which is why it is always temporary. The example of dream and deep sleep comprehensively illustrates this point. Just because we see something does not determine the seen's independent existence. We see in dream, yet the dream objects have no independent existence. When we move from dream back

into deep sleep those supposedly independent dream objects lose all their independent reality. They disappear. The same can be said for the waking world objects. They too are temporary within the time they appear. The only existence any seen object has is just its nature of being seen. That nature of being seen is no more than being within awareness, the nature of the seer.

A seen object is then nothing more than its nature of being a seen object. It does not in fact exist as an equal reality independent of the seer (*draṣṭṛ*). It is nothing more than a form (*rūpa*) perceived and a corresponding name (*nāma*) ascribed. Objects, including thoughts, have this transient, relative (*vyāvahārika*) existence. Their reality is attributed to them only in as much as they become, or can become, known. These objects do not exist in and of themselves. This understanding is consistent with the principles of quantum physics which say that the scientific manner in which you examine and measure an object determines what you will find to be that object.

An example of an object seen is a table. Now, there is no such absolute thing as a table that the eyes see. The eyes see something, but only the human mind has the form and gives the name ‘table’ or the various equivalents in other languages. A bug’s eyes certainly do not see a table; they may see something to fly around or something to climb upon to find food. At the atomic-scale, in what way would an electron experience, so to speak, this so-called table? Would not what it encounters be really an atomic field, not at all resembling a table?

If one inquires into the table, then its absoluteness disappears. The absoluteness as a table object disappears when it is known that it is but wood. The absoluteness as a wood object disappears when resolved into cellulose fibers. Cellulose fibers resolve into molecules. Molecules resolve, when they are better known, into atoms, then into particles, and those into packets of variously vibrating energy in dimensions of space. These appreciations of various energies within dimensions of space are all notions within the awareness of the scientist. Where did the table go? It is still there as a name ascribed to a phenomenological experience.

This more complete understanding of objects seen is incorporated in the process of sub-²³ of very temporal and contingent realities to their more permanent and universal reality.

²³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.44.

In fact, none of these so-called objects need disappear to appreciate the partless, universal reality. At the same time I am seeing table, I also see wood, know fibers, molecules, atoms, etcetera. While seeing table, I can transcend table and see wood. While seeing wood, I can transcend wood and see fibers, and so on. What one sees is not really an independently existing object, but rather one sees (with the mind) only the name which we have attributed to the experience. What disappears is my assumption that any of the object/name is absolutely real. What is absolute is reality itself. The names and forms – as the objects, the senses, and the mind – are relative perspectives of reality itself. These names and forms exist only as appearances within the awareness of the witness, in oneself alone.

Prakṛti, unmanifest nature, which is the source of the perceived objects, can enjoy no greater degree of reality than the observed objects. *Sāṅkhya* claims *prakṛti* to be as equally real as *puruṣa*, the reality that is oneself. But *Patañjali* has not given equal status to *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* is a concept and a reality only so far as one ascribes to the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. Whereas, *puruṣa* (oneself) is universally never unknown or unknowable, and is independent of any seen object or collection of objects or their unmanifest aspect.

Again the clear illustration is deep sleep, where all objects along with their supposed absoluteness disappear, yet I must be there in order for me to later recall the absence of any separate experience during that time. The *puruṣa* alone is the timeless reality to be discovered, and it alone is the goal of *Patañjali*'s *yoga*. It is reached, so to speak, by a knowledge (the knowledge alone is the reaching) that is free of erroneous thinking and incomplete philosophies. There is no new, special thing to know; there is only acknowledgement that the seen has not, nor ever had, the reality one had believed.

कृतार्थं प्रति नष्टम् अप्य् अ-नष्टं तद् अन्य-साधारणत्वात्॥ (2.22)
kṛtārthaṃ prati naṣṭam apy a-naṣṭam tad anya-sādhāraṇatvāt.

[*api* – though; *naṣṭa* – lost; *prati* – in regard to; *kṛta-ārtha* – one who has achieved the goal; *tad* – it; *a-naṣṭa* – not lost; *sa-ādhāraṇatva* – it has commonality; *anyas* – others.]

Though lost, as being absolutely real, **in regard to one who has achieved the goal**²⁴ –

²⁴ 'यथा एव बिम्बं मृदया उपलिसं तेजोमयं भ्राजते तत् सुधान्तम् (=सुधौतम्)। तद् वै आत्म-तत्त्वं प्रसमीक्ष्य देही एकः कृत-अर्थः'

kaivalya (freedom) – **it**, the *dr̥śya* (seen), **is not lost, since it has commonality with others** who remain in ignorance of the seen’s (un)reality.

The seen’s status as an objective (*vyāvahārika*) reality is based on its commonality to multiple seers (*grahītr̥s*). When it does not have that commonality and there is only one person seeing it, then it could be an imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) reality.

Though objects are known to exist when they are seen by a person and not known to exist when they are not seen by a person, this status of objects does not lead to pure subjectivism – that objects are only their independent perceptions. Since a commonality of an object is also something that can be known.²⁵

This teaching accepts that a name and form can have commonality for multiple seers. Now, one seer’s version of the form of an object is not exactly the same as another seer’s, and no form is the same the next time you see it. But the fact that there are certain commonalities of these names and forms determines their objective (*vyāvahārika*) reality, as opposed to an imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) reality. That commonality itself is a name and form having an objective reality. Commonality is, like any other object, not absolutely real. Only existence-consciousness, the truth of the universe and you, is absolutely real.

The word ‘others’ (*anyas*) here does not mean that there absolutely are multiple *puruṣas*. An individual seer (*grahītr̥*), which itself is a product of ignorance in the form of a mutual identification of the subject and an object (the act of seeing), enjoys the same non-absolute reality as the seen (*grāhya*). An individual seer is just another concept in the mind. This concept comes and goes; it is relative and impermanent, not absolute.

भवते वीत-शोकः’ “Just as a reflecting surface covered by dirt, [when] it is clean, shines brilliantly, similarly the embodied one, clearly seeing the reality that is *ātman* (oneself) [with a transparently clear mind], is [thus] one (*eka*) [with that shining reality], has achieved the goal (*kr̥ta-artha*), and is free from sorrow.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 2.14). ‘इति गुह्यतमं शास्त्रम् इदम् उक्तं मया अन्-अघा एतद् बुद्ध्वा बुद्धिमान् स्यात् कृत-कृत्यः च भारत’ “Thus, I have told this most secret [i.e., in terms of sanctity, value, and by appearing to be difficult to understand] teaching, O Sinless One. Knowing this, one becomes one who has [made best use of one’s] intellect and who has done what is to be done (*kr̥ta-kr̥tya*), O *Arjuna*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 15.20).

²⁵ *Yoga Sūtras* 4.14–15.

Nor can the reality of a quality of many-ness for the *puruṣa*, as the pure witness, be established (*siddha*) by a conjunction of seer-seen which is a product of ignorance, as will be told in the next two *sūtras*. In other words, one cannot establish a truth by reason of a fabrication. When witnessing, as an attribute of the attribute-less *puruṣa*, is only as if, then any opinion based on this as if assumption, namely, since there are many witnessings then there must be many *puruṣas* – is also as if.

Moreover, this *sūtra* points out an even more profound fact. Namely, the same object can exist for certain people and not exist for others. And this *not existing for others* is not due to them not looking, but rather to them knowing a fact about the object that makes that object lose its supposed reality. To the others, to the unwise, the object is taken as absolutely (*pāramārthika*) real. Whereas, for one who has achieved the knowledge (*prajñā*) that is *kaivalya* (complete freedom), the same object is taken as only objectively (*vyāvahārika*) real – as transient and relative. Once one distinguishes *pāramārthika* (absolute) reality from *vyāvahārika* (transactional) reality, then this less-real world of phenomenon becomes what is meant by *vyāvahārika*, the transactional reality that is now understood as being only apparently-real (*mithyā*), not as real as oneself who is *pāramārthika*.

Before knowledge, we confuse the relatively real (the ego, mind, body, and objects) with the absolute (the being-consciousness that is oneself and all of reality). We falsely believe that all that we desire should last forever and what we do not want should never be. We falsely believe we are born and die, when it is but the objects including this body that come and go within the unchanging awareness that is oneself, that is reality. Only the wise see in general the relative reality as it really is. The otherwise see a confusing reality that they think is absolute – which goes against reason and ultimate knowledge.

In the snake-rope example, two people are looking at the same object. The one with knowledge sees a rope and has no fear; the other without knowledge sees a snake and has fear. This means that in error does not see what is there and can project out of the fears in one's mind what one believes is there. The one who has knowledge, upon first glance at the rope, originally also thought it was a snake, but after careful analysis with the light of a proper means of knowledge discovered it was really a rope. For that person, the snake is lost (*naṣṭa*), but, more importantly to that person, the basis for the fear vanishes. One can still see how the mistaken

rope could appear as a snake, but that correction nevertheless frees one from the fear of a snake there. This is freedom (*kaivalya*) from one's baseless fears. The snake is apparently-real (*mithyā*), and so now the basis for the fear is *mithyā*.

The same relationship that exists between imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) reality and objective (*vyāvahārika*) reality, for example, the snake and the rope, also exists between objective (*vyāvahārika*) reality and absolute (*pāramārthika*) reality – the world and I (*ātman*), respectively. Both the imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) world and the phenomenal (*vyāvahārika*) world seem absolutely real only when they are believed to be so. In the wake of more complete knowledge, both are only *mithyā* (apparently-real). The unwise and the wise see the same object, but their understanding of realities is vastly different. The unwise is limited and thus bound by the seen; the other is not. As a result, for the unwise, the objects as possessions become necessities they are bound to; for the wise, they are simply luxuries – life is seen as a luxury.

The term *mithyā* when translated as *false* or *imaginary* or *illusion* has confused many. The word *mithyā* is a later form of the *Veda* word *mithunā*, meaning *conflictively, wrongly, falsely*. Properly used, *mithyā* is an adverb describing *how* we take an object, *how* we know it. When we take an object *falsely*, that is *mithyā*.

The statement, “The world is *mithyā* (*jagan mithyā*),” does not mean the world is false, imaginary, or useless. It means the world is taken, is understood, falsely. In this tradition, the world – or anything in the world – cannot be an object distinct from the absolute reality that is oneself, distinct from *ātman*, from *sat* (reality). There is already fundamental ignorance that keeps one from the factual, absolute reality nature of objects, in which case there would be *mithyā*, the taking of it as otherwise than what it is, along with that confusion reoccurring and cascading variously about everything throughout one's life.

Even what we call knowledge about the world, such as, “Today is hot,” is only relatively true from a limited perspective – hot for a human compared to that same person's memories of the past or expectations of the future temperatures at this location. That kind of knowledge has a practicality and usefulness; it is not absolutely and universally true. From the essential truth of everything and of oneself, even that knowledge is *mithyā*. *Mithyā* is an inevitable expression of one's fundamental ignorance.

The verbal root of the words *mithyā* and *mithunā* is *mith*, meaning *to associate, to mix*. *Mithyā* is mixing up one thing for another, which is what *Patañjali* has described as ignorance.²⁶

The wise who say “the world is *mithyā*” do not mean they are mixed up about the world. For them the world is none other than themselves – the one, indivisible, and sacred reality. The wise mean the world once was *mithyā* for them and is *mithyā* for the majority who take objects as other and as absolutely real, and who take themselves to thus be limited or bound by those objects.

Patañjali points out that all objects (*dṛśyas*) are to be seen in terms of *mithyā* (falsely taken as being absolutely real). Every thing that has conditional, dependent reality is not of the same order of reality as absolute reality, as oneself. The status of absolute (*pāramārthika*) reality that an individual ascribes to objects out of ignorance is now lost. Objects enjoy conditional existence as name and form and are available for transaction (*vyāvahāra*), but they are entirely dependent upon the reality that is the self. The objects are *dṛśyam eva* (simply the seen), not reality as real as oneself.²⁷

The seen (*dṛśya*) is capable of being dismissed in thought, dismissed in *samādhi*, and permanently dismissed as absolute reality in knowledge, dismissed as *mithyā*. What is capable of being dismissed defines the dismissed as less real than what dismisses it (*see* the commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 1.3). What is not dismissed in thought, contemplation, or knowledge is oneself (*puruṣa*), the being that alone remains real.

The pursuits and skills of *yoga* are themselves part of the *vyāvahārika* world. *Yoga* starts with inculcating an understanding of the absolute reality (initially as the reality of the limitless Lord) behind all this transactional life we lead. From there, we can loosen the grip of our mistaken identities with our limited and limiting thoughts in the mind. They are all a part of the universal order called the Lord, and are not my personal possessions or identity. Then one can begin to appreciate that I am this reality that is the Lord, in which all thoughts and objects come and go.

²⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.5 & 1.8.

²⁷ ‘नष्टः मोहः स्मृतिः लब्धा त्वद्-प्रसादात् मया अ-च्युत’ “Gone (*naṣṭa*) is the delusion. I have gained recognition [without error] [of myself] by Your grace [i.e., by Your teaching], O *Kṛṣṇa*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 18.73).

This is not wishful thinking, or a simple positive attitude. It is a disciplined analysis and immersion in the realities of how I see myself and how I deal with an overwhelming large and complex world. The techniques have worked to free those who have gone before. As a student of this *yoga*, one starts with the following understanding.

This universe is what I view from the limited perspective of my experiences I have in this mind during this life, so it is not absolutely, categorically real – not as real as me, its witness. And the various facets of this limited perspective may be wrong – “My perspective may be wrong.” This not only includes my perspective of the world and others, but of what I think myself to be, or to have been or will be.

This allows one’s objectivity to be complete. This truly objective perspective helps heal the sorrows retained from the past that are based on absolutely identifying with the painful projections of my perspective of events and people. It provides a buffer from present pains to help keep them from becoming sorrows. This objectivity culminates in a clear absolute knowledge of life, where even this transactional universe has no more power to limit me than a dream can affect the one who awakens from dream. Life, like the dream upon waking, can surprise and pain me. But it has not the power it had, once I know it for what it is. This universe is not absolutely real as I had once thought. It has lost (*naṣṭa*) its power, its reality, to define me. I am the reality, who alone validates the reality this transactional reality can enjoy. The world is no different than before, but *how* I more wisely take the world has changed. This is true wisdom that frees.

This is the full vision, and for *Patañjali* to point this out here among *sūtras* meant for explaining the nature of the self and of objects clearly places him outside of the later *Sāṅkhya* philosophy of *Īśvara-kṛṣṇa*, where duality is taken as real. These *sūtras* naturally fall within the teaching of the sacred scriptures of India, within the field of the *Upaniṣads* and the *Bhagavad Gītā*, where *Patañjali* clearly placed them. The *sūtras* understood in that field, in the field of knowledge, not of a sectarian philosophy, are where these words are pregnant with a depth of meaning and clarity, with tradition and certainty.

स्व-स्वामि-शक्त्योः स्व-रूपोपलब्धि-हेतुः संयोगः ॥ (2.23)
sva-svāmi-śaktyoḥ sva-rūpopalabdhi-hetuḥ saṃyogaḥ.

[*saṃyoga* – conjunction; *śaktis* – natures; *sva* – itself; *svāmin* – master; *hetu* – cause; *upalabdhi* – ascertainment; *sva-rūpas* – their natures.]

The seeming conjunction of the natures of itself – the *dṛśya* (object) – and its master – the *draṣṭṛ* (witness) – is the cause of the ascertainment of each of their separate natures, namely, that one is the seer and the other is the seen, that this duality is somehow real.

Without the knowledge of reality, I have a notion of a separate, real object or thought only when I perceive or think of it; and I entertain a notion, a wrong notion, of myself as a separate, individual witnesser only when I see or think of an object or thought. Like pot-space, as though separate from limitless space, appears to come into existence when a pot is formed, so an individual, limited seer appears to come into existence when a thought is formed.

But an independently existing, absolutely real pot-space is not really created when a pot is formed. It is in fact only as if, but becomes a definite mistake if taken as absolutely real. So too, I (*ātman*), the witness-being, am not really created when a thought is formed. A pot comes and goes within limitless space without affecting space in the least; a thought comes and goes within the witness-being without affecting or limiting the witness-being in the least. This is the truth. If thought does seem to affect you, then that notion, an ego notion, of oneself being affected is itself just another thought, the same as any other thought. These notions that thoughts actually affect the witness of the thoughts are themselves thoughts, ignorant of their mixing up of realities.

Because one thinks the self is like this or that thought, does not make it so. We need a *pramāṇa* (a valid means of knowledge) to help us see that the self and the thoughts are not in interrelationship, not in conjunction (*saṃyoga*). The self is the unchanging witness and reality of the thoughts. If one imagines the self is changing while seeing the thought, that imagined self is only a notion, a thought, about the self. The self witnesses that notion also, but does not

change.²⁸ Even in confusion one remains the changeless, limitless witness-being (*sat-cit*). This is what the scripture and this teaching says. Continue listening (*śravaṇa*) to this teaching *pramāṇa* while living a life of *yoga* and contemplation; the truth of this teaching will be one's own truth.

Cause and Removal of Mutual Identification

तस्य हेतुर् अ-विद्या ॥ (2.24)
tasya hetur a-vidyā.

[*hetu* – cause; *tasya* – of that; *a-vidyā* – ignorance.]

The cause of that conjunction is **ignorance** – the mutual misidentification of the seer and the seen as being separate and limiting.

We see now why one has to include the phrase “as if” or “as though” in *Yoga Sūtra* 2.20. By doing so, the connection between seer (*draṣṭṛ*) and thought/object is clarified. The limitless self, which has no attributes, cannot be an object, nor even a thought, which is within the realm of words. Every statement about it is an as if. The best one can think about the self is what it is not – *neti-neti* (*not this – not that*), since we have so many wrong conclusions about ourselves. Because the one who negates is oneself, then this negation ends in reality, your reality free of its seeming limitations, where you have always been.

Negation is one technique within the teaching methodology. Another technique involves using words with a positive sense, such as *satya* (reality) and *jñāna* (knowledge). The understood meanings of these words are used as the basis to expand their sense and indicate the affirmative, inexplicable whole. Some negation is used to free these positive words of the limitations they connote within space, time, and the dualist separation of knower and known. Both negation and expansion of meaning are used to point out the nature of oneself as limitless reality (*an-antam brahman*), pure perception (*jñapti-svarūpa*), the witness-being.²⁹ This reality

²⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.22.

²⁹ ‘सत्यं ज्ञानम् अन्-अन्तं ब्रह्म’ “*Brahman* is limitless (*an-anta*) reality (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*).”

is the changeless reality of all notions and objects, the inherent reality of the universe in and between every cycle of its manifestation.

तद्-अ-भावात् संयोगाभावो हानं तद् दृशेः कैवल्यम्॥ (2.25)
tad-a-bhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ tad dṛśeḥ kaivalyam.

[*hāna* – giving up; *a-bhāva* – disappearance; *saṃyoga* – conjunction; *tad-a-bhāva* – disappearance of that; *tad* – that; *kaivalya* – freedom; *dṛk* – seer.]

The giving up of *heya* (what is to be given up) **is the disappearance of this conjunction by the disappearance of that** *a-vidyā* (ignorance), its cause, in the wake of *puruṣa-khyāti* (self knowledge), **and that is the freedom**³⁰ **of the seer.**

Patañjali makes very clear here what is meant by freedom (*kaivalya*). It is not the disappearance of the objects, the disappearance of the world. Freedom is the appreciation of the absence of any conjunction (*saṃyoga*) of the self with objects, the confusion of mixing the nature of the object with the nature of oneself, which confusion is a form of ignorance (*a-vidyā*). Once ignorance disappears, is removed, then confusions of ignorance also disappear. There is no reasonable way to interpret the words of this *sūtra* as a statement that *Patañjali* advises making the worldly objects disappear.

Kaivalya means *being one, non-dual (kevalaḥ ekaḥ bhāvaḥ)*, which also means *the nature of being pure, without non-intrinsic attributes (kevalasya śuddhasya upādhi-rahitasya bhāvaḥ)*.³¹ One is no longer seen as limited by some one thing or notion. This entire universe is but oneself, one non-dual, indivisible whole. This alone is known as complete freedom – not to be mistaken for isolation from the world.

(*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1).

³⁰ ‘अनेन (कैवल्य-उपनिषद्-अध्यायेन) ज्ञानम् आप्नोति संसार-अर्णव-नाशम्। तस्मात् एव विदित्वा एनं कैवल्यं पदम् अश्नुते’ “By this [teaching regarding *brahman*] is attained a knowledge that dispels the ocean of *saṃsāra* (the life of continual unbecoming becoming), Therefore, knowing in this way, one attains the goal (*pada*) [called] completeness (*kaivalya*) [i.e., *mokṣa* (freedom)].” (*Kaivalya Up.* 2.2).

³¹ *Sabda-Stoma-Mahānidhi: A Sanskrit Dictionary by Tārānātha Bhaṭṭāchārya.*

The disappearance is of the ignorance, not of the objects of the world, because what distinguishes the wise from the unwise is simply their knowledge. It is like a child looking at a rock, and a physicist looking at the same rock. The child simply sees what is before its eyes, the physicist sees the rock and knows it is not completely solid, but consists of mass-less packets of energy in mostly empty space, more information than matter. The physicist knows the rock is simply a temporary, massive phenomenal presentation to the human's senses, but its basic component reality is altogether something else. The phenomenal reality is less real, and less amazing, than its underlying component reality. But if the rock comes flying his or her way, like the child, the physicist ducks. That much practical reality it has. The physicist does not stop seeing the rock simply as a rock, nor does he or she have to stop perceiving the rock to clearly know its underlying component reality. Similarly here, the *yogins* know the practical reality of the rock and the absolute reality as themselves in which this rock phenomenally appears, and that it is time to duck.

Sāṅkhya-Yogins, on the other hand, seek to dismiss the objects of the world in *kaivalya*, even though believing the objects, as *prakṛti* (nature), are as equally real as themselves. It is as if they are simply closing their eyes in the face of the approaching rock. Their contradiction looms large. This is because of a mechanical interpretation of *kaivalya*, instead of the knowledge-based *kaivalya* which *Patañjali* clearly indicates.³² Knowledge cannot dismiss what is practically real; it can only dismiss ignorance. Along with that ignorance goes the confusions based on that ignorance, including the belief in the absolute nature of what is only practically real. In fact, knowledge is what discerns the practicality of objects as well.

The freedom of the self is not some new condition of the self gained or accomplished by meditation or any other activity, nor is it the loss of the ability of the senses and the mind to behold their objects. It is merely the loss (*a-bhāva*) of what cannot withstand inquiry. Freedom is already the nature of the seer. Living one's life practically in this world with this assimilated knowledge is living in freedom. Then only can we have wise people who may be teachers for

³² *Yoga Sūtras* 4.25–34.

the otherwise. The necessity of having a teacher, and hence the necessity of that teacher being liberated even while living, is pointed out often in the scriptures.³³

विवेक-ख्यातिर् अ-विप्लवा हानोपायः॥ (2.26)
viveka-khyātī a-viplavā hānopāyaḥ.

[*upāya* – means; *hāna* – giving up; *viveka-khyāti* – discerning knowledge; *a-viplava* – which does not go astray.]

The means for the giving up of this *saṃyoga* (conjunction) is a discerning knowledge

³³ ‘यथा सोम्य पुरुषं गन्धारेभ्यः अभिनद्ध-अक्षम् आनीय तं ततः अति-जने विसृजेत्, सः यथा तत्र प्राङ् वा उदङ् वा अधराङ् वा प्रत्यङ् वा प्रध्मायीत “अभिनद्ध-अक्षः आनीतः अभिनद्ध-अक्षः विसृष्टः”॥’ “Just as, my dear, having been blind-folded [and bound], and taken from the *Gandhāra* [region], and thereupon left in a desolate place, one would shout ahead, up, down, and behind, ‘[I have been] brought blind-folded and left blind-folded!’” ‘तस्य यथा अभिनहनं प्रमुच्य प्रब्रूयात् “एतां दिशं गन्धाराः एतां दिशं ब्रज” इति, सः ग्रामाद् ग्रामं पृच्छन् पण्डितः मेधावी गन्धारान् एव उपसंपद्येत,’ “And as one [a compassionate passerby] would remove his blind-fold and teach him, ‘*Gandhāra* is in this direction, go in this direction,’ then inquiring from village to village this [thusly] educated (*paṇḍita*) and smart [i.e., retentive and logical] (*medhāvin*) person alone would reach *Gandhāra*.” ‘एवम् एव इह आचार्यवान् पुरुषः वेद, तस्य तावद् एव चिरं यावत् “न विमोक्ष्ये अथ सम्पत्स्ये” इति (मन्यते)॥’ “In this way, a person [left] here [by his/her desires and blinded to his/her own nature] who [somehow] has a teacher would know [the *ātman* (self)], and for him [or her] the delay would only be as long as one [thinks] ‘I am not freed nor yet reached’ [or to match the example another way... though he or she is no longer blind to *ātman* and already abides in this freedom, still that body and mind is not released from this life’s *karma* nor yet reached its final mergence back to nature – otherwise called ‘*videha-mukti*’ so it still has to walk those last years until then].” ‘- सः यः एषः अणिमा, एतद् आत्म्यम्, इदं सर्वं, तत् सत्यं, सः आत्मा, तत् त्वम् असि श्वेतकेतो” “This very [*sat* (being)] is the subtlest. All this [universe] has this [subtlest] as its nature. That is reality (*satya*). That is the self. That you are (*tat tvam asi*), O *Śvetaketu*.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.14.1–3). ‘परीक्ष्य लोकान् कर्म-चितान् ब्राह्मणः निर्वेदम् आयात् न अस्ति अकृतः कृतेन। तद्-विज्ञानार्थं सः गुरुम् एव अभिगच्छेत् समित्-पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्म-निष्ठम्’ “Examining the worlds gained by action, the one who has been initiated in the scripture (*brāhmaṇa*), and being dispassionate (*nirvedam āyān*) [by thinking] the uncreated [i.e., reality] is not by action, should, for clearly knowing that [*brahman* (reality)], approach with sacrificial sticks in hand a teacher who indeed is [both] steeped in the scriptures (*śrotriya*) and established in *brahman* (*brahma-niṣṭha*) [i.e., who both knows how to teach and knows what to teach].” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.2.12).

which does not go astray.

Again, *Patañjali* points out that the ignorance in the form of mutual identification (*saṃyoga*)³⁴ goes away only by knowledge, not by some mechanical, *karma* stopping of the mind in *samādhi*. This knowledge has to be *a-viplava*, *one that does not go astray* – not float away or get inundated by life’s situations. This is what we have been stating to be a fully assimilated knowledge, not some new information or philosophy about the self and the world that one remembers, can forget, or be distracted from.

तस्य सप्तधा प्रान्त-भूमिः प्रज्ञा ॥ (2.27)
tasya saptadhā prānta-bhūmiḥ prajñā.

[*tasya* – its; *prānta-bhūmi* – final stage; *saptadhā* – seven-fold; *prajñā* – assimilated knowledge.]

Its final stage is a seven-fold assimilated knowledge.

The seven-fold nature of the final, assimilated knowledge is not explained in this or the following *sūtras*. We could assume that there are some missing *sūtras*, since *Patañjali* has certainly given a consistent and thorough presentation. The commentators have assumed the task of delineating the seven aspects of this knowledge, and not with convincing success. *Vyāsa*’s attempt,³⁵ which everyone seems to follow, looks more related to the various steps one

³⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.17.

³⁵ ‘तद् यथा –’ “This is as follows –” (1) ‘परिज्ञातं हेयं न अस्य पुनः परिज्ञेयम् अस्ति।’ “What is to be given up (*heya*) [i.e., all the *kleśas* (afflictions), see *Yoga Sūtra* 2.10] is fully known, [so] nothing more is to be known about this.” (2) ‘क्षीणाः हेय-हेयवः न पुनः एतेषां क्षेतव्यम् अस्ति।’ “The [continuing] reasons [i.e., the *kliṣṭa* (hindering) thoughts, see *Yoga Sūtra* 1.5] for what is to be given up [the *kleśas*] have diminished and nothing more of them is to be diminished.” (3) ‘साक्षात्-कृतं निरोध-समाधिना हानम्।’ “Their [the *kleśas*] giving up is clearly seen through disciplined contemplation (*nirodha-samādhi*).” (4) ‘भावितः विवेक-ख्याति-रूपः हान-उपायः।’ “The means for their giving up in the form of a discriminative knowledge has matured.” (5) ‘...चरित-अधिकारा बुद्धिः।’ “The intellect has fulfilled its function.” (6) ‘गुणाः गिरि-शिखर-कूट-च्युताः इव ग्रावाणः निरवस्थानाः स्व-कारणे प्रलय-अभिमुखाः सह तेन अस्तं गच्छन्ति, न च एषां विप्रलीनानां पुनः अस्ति उत्पादः प्रयोजन-अभावात् इति।’ “Like rocks [naturally] find their level having been dislodged from the peak of a mountain, the *guṇas* [naturally] settle down [i.e., their potential for affliction

takes to get to this knowledge, than the nature of the final stage itself.

Many of the ancient texts were fixed and essentially frozen by their commentaries. These commentaries established a final form that was thereafter maintained. In the case of the *Yoga Sūtras*, the commentaries, which became popular by quirk of history (perhaps simply due to the famous names [or titles] of two of those authors – *Vyāsa* and *Śaṅkara* – not likely the same as the famous *Veda-Vyāsa* and *Ādi-Śaṅkara*) and thus passed down to us, were the *Sāṅkhya* influenced commentaries. If they skipped over or dropped *sūtras* that were missing in their original or which contradicted their own views and might have been themselves thought to have been corruptions or incorrect additions, those *sūtras* would be lost. Certainly the content of the missing *sūtra* or *sūtras* that would have detailed this seven-fold nature of knowledge is a significant elision.

A better and benign way of looking at this *sūtra*, though, is to see this as part of *Vyāsa*'s commentary being later confused as a *sūtra* in *Patañjali*'s work. These texts and commentaries were maintained as recopied, edge-to-edge lines of Sanskrit on stacks of palm leaves, not the highly formatted, multi-font texts we have nowadays. There are other possible examples of this mixing up of original with commentary in *Patañjali*'s *Yoga-Sūtra* text. This *sūtra* and *Vyāsa*'s filling in the answer are all just part of *Vyāsa*'s commentary, and is not a *sūtra* in *Patañjali*'s work. So nothing of *Patañjali* is lost at all, and that is why there is no follow up *sūtra* needed to explain the seven-fold nature of this knowledge.

I've not seen anyone else suggest this, but it seems a possibility. Other translators in different places suggest that one or more *sūtras* have crept in from the surrounding commentary, though

is gone and, upon death of this embodiment, the *guṇas* of this body return to the elements] and are on the verge of [eventual] universal dissolution (*pralaya*) [i.e., become unmixed together] into their cause [i.e., into the *a-vyakta* (the unmanifest) *prakṛti* according to *Vyāsa*, or rather into the Lord as the unmanifest] along with that [intellect/mind (*citta*) of the *yogin*]. Having been dissolved, there is no rebirth [for the *yogin*] since there is no more [*karma*] purpose [for another embodiment]." (7) 'एतस्यां अवस्थायां गुण-सम्बन्ध-अतीतः स्वरूपमात्र-ज्योतिः अ-मलः केवली पुरुषः इति' "When they have settled down, the *puruṣa*, who transcends any relationship with the *guṇas*, shines in its own nature, free of impurity [any second thing], and complete (*kevalī*) [i.e., free]." (*Vyāsa's Pātañjali Yoga Sūtrāṇi Bhāṣya* 2.27).

usually on the clue that those *sūtras* are missing in some of the existent manuscripts. Not attempting a textual exegesis, that manuscript claim is not being made here.

The Eight Limbs of *Yoga*

योगाङ्गानुष्ठानाद् अ-शुद्धि-क्षये ज्ञान-दीप्तिर् आ विवेक-ख्यातेः ॥ (2.28)
yogāṅgānuṣṭhānād a-śuddhi-kṣaye jñāna-dīptir ā viveka-khyāteḥ.

[*anuṣṭhāna* – following; *aṅgas* – limbs; *yoga* – the means; *a-śuddhis* – impurities; *kṣaya* – diminish; *dīpti* – light; *jñāna* – knowledge; *ā* – reaches to; *viveka-khyāti* – discerning knowledge.]

By following the eight limbs of *yoga*, as the impurities diminish, the light of knowledge reaches to the discerning knowledge that frees.

Patañjali does not say that these eight limbs, which include *samādhi*, create new knowledge. They only remove the impurities that inhibit knowledge. We will discover more about the nature of knowledge in the last (the fourth) *pāda* (chapter) of these *sūtras*. Now *Patañjali* explains the eight limbs of *yoga*.

यम-नियमासन-प्राणायाम-प्रत्याहार-धारणा-ध्यान-समाधयोऽष्टाव् अङ्गानि ॥ (2.29)
yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo'ṣṭāv aṅgāni.

[*aṣṭa* – eight; *aṅgas* – limbs; *yama* – avoidance; *niyama* – observance; *āsana* – sitting posture; *prāṇa-āyāma* – controlling the breath; *pratyāhāra* – withdrawing; *dhāraṇā* – restraining the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts in contemplation; *dhyāna* – retaining the flow of wanted or helpful thoughts in contemplation; *samādhi* – contemplation resulting in assimilation.]

The eight limbs of *yoga* are *yama* (avoidance) of the *kliṣṭa* (what hinders), *niyama* (observance) of the *a-kliṣṭa* (what helps), *āsana* (sitting posture) – controlling the body for meditation, *prāṇa-āyāma* (controlling the breath), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawing) the senses, *dhāraṇā* (restraining the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts in contemplation), *dhyāna* (retaining the flow of wanted or helpful thoughts in

contemplation), and *samādhi* (contemplation resulting in assimilation).

The limbs of *yoga* are effective as a full lifestyle. They are much less effective as part-time.³⁶ They are explained in order in the following thirty four *sūtras*, stretching into what the commentaries divide as the third chapter to *sūtra* 3.8. The pairs, *yama-niyama* and *dhāraṇā-dhyāna*, are of special note. *Yama-niyama* is the basic life of the *karma-yogin*. *Dhāraṇā-dhyāna* is the basic life of the *jñāna-yogin*. These are the two lifestyles discussed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. They are essentially the same. That is, both avoid what hinders and observe what helps. The *yama-niyama* pair is more in regard to one's activities and attitudes in life, the *dhāraṇā-dhyāna* pair is more in regard to the quiet life of contemplation. This is why both lifestyles are said in the *Bhagavad Gītā* to be conducive to freedom.³⁷

The 1st Limb: Avoidances

अ-हिंसा-सत्यास्तेय-ब्रह्म-चर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥ (2.30)
a-hiṃsā-satyāsteya-brahma-caryāparigrahā yamāḥ.

[*yamas* – avoidances; *a-hiṃsā* – non-violence; *satya* – truthfulness; *a-steya* – non-usurping; *brahma-carya* – pursuing the scripture; *a-parigraha* – renunciation.]

The first limb of *yoga*: **the avoidances** of the *kliṣṭa* (what hinders) **are non-violence** to one's own body and mind, to other people and creatures, to cultures, and to the environment; **truthfulness**, actually, as a *yama* (avoidance), it is not harboring and speaking untruth; **non-usurping** what is not given; **pursuing the scripture**,³⁸ as a *yama*

³⁶ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.13–14.

³⁷ 'लोके अस्मिन् द्वि-विधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मया अन्-अघ। ज्ञान-योगेन साङ्ख्यानं कर्म-योगेन योगिनाम्' "O *Arjuna*, long ago in this world I taught [in the *Upaniṣads*] two different lifestyles – [one] through *jñāna-yoga* (*yoga* while simply pursuing knowledge, i.e., renunciation) for those dedicated to knowledge (*sāṅkhya*), [and the other] through *karma-yoga* (*yoga* while performing one's duties) for *yogins* [i.e., those dedicated to duty as a means]." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.3). 'सन्न्यासः कर्म-योगः च निःश्रेयस-करौ उभौ' "Both [lifestyles of] *sannyāsa* (renunciation) and *karma-yoga* (*yoga* while performing one's duties) lead to complete freedom." (*Bh. Gītā* 5.2).

³⁸ 'श्वेत-केतुः ह आरुणेयः आस तं ह पिता उवाच श्वेत-केतो वस ब्रह्म-चर्यम्, न वै सोम्य अस्मत् कुलीनः अन्-अनूच्य ब्रह्म-बन्धुः इव

(avoidance) it is not chasing after pursuits other than the *āgama* (scripture), which is the knowledge of truths that are outside one's own two means of knowledge;³⁹ **and renunciation** of what is given – renunciation of the notion of ownership.⁴⁰

Each of these *yamas* will be discussed in later *sūtras*. First, though, is an explanation of the translation of certain of these *yamas*. *A-steya* is rendered as *non-surping*. This is a rather old terminology, but so is this text. Though the popular meaning is not stealing (*steya*), as a part of *karma-yoga* that popular meaning stands out in this list as not needing to be said. Of course one should not behave like a criminal! The deeper meaning is through pairing it with *a-parigraha* (renunciation of what is given). *A-steya*, then, is not confiscating what is not given. This is an avoidance of both the act and the attitude of usurping. *A-steya* is then a satisfaction that what little I have is enough. This is maturity, not just an avoidance of criminal behavior.

In a Victorian way, *brahma-carya* is often equated with chastity, sexual abstinence. This can and should be a component in a full-time student's life (particularly as a student from the age of twelve to twenty-four, while living in the teacher's house), but the total dedication to this study is so much more than avoidance of unnecessary or inappropriate sex. Traditionally, the term *brahma* in *brahma-carya* means the *Veda* (*brahman*, scripture). So it meant *Veda* studies, the life of a scriptural student. Over time and with secular intensions, the expression took on the

भवति इति॥' "There once lived one *Śveta-ketu*, grandson of *Āruṇi*. His father said to him, 'O *Śveta-ketu*, you please live as a *brahma-carya* [a student in a teacher's house, since I am not now able to teach you myself]. Indeed, my dear, no one in our family is a *brāhmaṇa* in relation only, having not studied.'" 'सः ह द्वा-दश-वर्षः उपेत्य चतुर-विंशति-वर्षः सर्वान् वेदान् अधीत्य...एषाय' "He left at twelve years old and returned at twenty-four years old having studied all the *Vedas*." (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.1.1-2).

³⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.7.

⁴⁰ 'अ-सक्तिः अन्-अभिष्वङ्गः पुत्र-दार-गृहादिषु। नित्यं च सम-चित्तत्वंइष्ट-अन्-इष्ट-उपपत्तिषु॥...एतद् ज्ञानम् इति प्रोक्तम् अ-ज्ञानं यद् अतः अन्यथा' "[Also] absence of ownership; lack of identification towards son [i.e., offspring], wife [i.e., spouse], house, etc.; continual equanimity of mind (*sama-cittatva*) towards occurrences of the desirable and the undesirable; [etc.] ... [all] this is called knowledge (*jñāna*) [an expression of knowledge and, thus, a means of gaining knowledge]. What is other than this is an obstacle to knowledge (*a-jñāna*)." (*Bh. Gītā* 13.9 & 11).

pre-marital status that a young student was to have. It was only after finishing studies that one was qualified to get married. Until then, one was to remain chaste. The interpretation of *brahma-carya* as simply *chastity* is a result of a more and more secular society giving greater weight to the status of marriage than the status of scriptural studies. Moreover, the secular side of modern *yoga* does not want to promote scriptural studies as part of *kriyā-yoga*, or as one of the *yamas*.

जाति-देश-काल-समयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्व-भौमा महा-व्रतम्॥ (2.31)
jāti-deśa-kāla-samayānavacchinnāḥ sārva-bhaumā mahā-vratam.

[*sārva-bhauma* – applied to the entire universe; *an-avacchinna* – not limited; *jāti* – origination; *deśa* – place; *kāla* – time; *samaya* – circumstance; *mahā-vrata* – great vow.]

These *yamas* (avoidances), **applied to the entire universe and not limited toward origination** [species, class, and so on], **place, time, or circumstance is the great vow**, namely, *sannyāsa* (renunciation) in terms of knowledge within the lifestyle of the *jñāna-yogin*, or within the lifestyle of a mature *karma-yogin*.

A-parigraha (renunciation) of the entire universe is *sannyāsa*.⁴¹ This renunciation is cognitive,

⁴¹ ‘केन भगवन् (प्रजा-पते) कर्माणि अ-शेषतः विसृजानि इति।’ “‘O Lord [*Prajā-pati*], how should I renounce *karmas* (actions and their results) completely?’” ‘तं (आरुणिं) ह उवाच प्रजा-पतिः तव पुत्रान् भ्रातृन् बन्धु-आदीन् शिखं यज्ञ-उपवीतं यागं सूत्रं स्व-अध्यायं च भूलोक-भवलोक-स्वर्लोक-महर्लोक-जनोलोक-तपोलोक-सत्यलोकं च अतल-तलातल-वितल-सुतल-रसातल-महातल-पातालं ब्रह्म-अण्डं च विसृजेत्।’ “*Prajā-pati* said to him [*Āruṇī*], ‘Your children, siblings, relations, etc. [i.e., every one and thing related to you], the [sacred] tuft of hair, [performing the] investiture of the sacred thread, oblation rituals, the sacred thread [itself], [the initial, bulky heaven-going portion of the] *Veda* study, and the *brahma-aṇḍa* (i.e., the universe, see *Chāndogya Up.* 3.19) [all the worlds (*lokas*), from] *Bhū-loka* [i.e., Earth], [and up to] *Bhuva-loka*, *Svar-loka*, *Mahar-loka*, *Jalas-loka*, *Tapas-loka*, *Satya-loka*, and [down to] *Atala*, *Talātala* [though usually placed just below *Rasātala*], *Vitala*, *Sutala*, *Rasātala*, *Mahātala*, and *Pātāla* – one should renounce...” ‘... (इदं सर्वं) सन्धिं समाधौ आत्मनि आचरेत्। सवेषु वेदेषु आरण्यकम् आवर्तयेत्, उपनिषदम् आवर्तयेत् उपनिषदम् आवर्तयेत् इति।...ब्रह्म-चर्यम् अ-हिंसां च अ-परिग्रहं च सत्यं च, यत्नेन हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः हे रक्षतः’ “One should merge (*sandhim ācaret*) [the entire universe] in *samādhi* which is *ātman*. One should recite the forest section (*āraṇyaka*) in each of the *Vedas* [in which *upāsanas* (meditations) and the teaching of

born out of an understanding of reality. A life of *sannyāsa* encompasses a life of *yamas* and *niyamas*. See the *Bhagavad Gītā* for a complete unfoldment of what constitutes *sannyāsa*. Only indirectly is *sannyāsa* defined in terms of a stage in one's life, like a retirement from competitive society for study and contemplation. *Sannyāsa* and its less formal equivalent *vāna-prasthya* (retirement in the forest) lifestyles are well known and accepted stages in the lives of people within the Indian culture.

A more general interpretation of this *sūtra*, but one that is less likely to be what *Patañjali* intended, is – [The *yamas* as virtues] are applicable universally, not limited by [one's own] social status, location, time, or circumstance, and (would be) a great vow [for anyone who could more fully live in accordance with these virtues].

The 2nd Limb: Observances

शौच-सन्तोष-तपः-स्वाध्यायेश्वर-प्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥ (2.32)
śauca-santoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāyēśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ.

[*niyamas* – observances; *śauca* – cleanliness; *santoṣa* – contentment; *tapas* – prayerful discipline; *svādhyāya* – one's study of the family's *Veda* scripture; *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* – intelligently surrendering to the Lord.]

The second limb of *yoga*: **the observances** of the *a-kliṣṭa* (what helps) **are cleanliness** mental and physical; **contentment**, where satisfaction is found in one's self instead of in circumstances; **and** *kriyā-yoga*,⁴² namely, **prayerful discipline**, **one's study** of the family's *Veda* scripture as it has been taught by one's teacher, **and intelligently surrendering** what is the Lord's – this body-mind and its actions – **to the Lord** as the whole.

Together, the *yamas* and *niyamas* cover what is expressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* as living in

brahman are given]. One should [especially] recite over and over the *Upaniṣads* [within them]. ...Commitment to study (*brahma-cārya*), non-violence, renunciation, and truthfulness – O may you always observe (*rakṣataḥ*) [these] with effort.'" (*Āruṇeya Up.* 1–3).

⁴² *Yoga Sūtras* 2.1–2.

keeping with *dharma* (the universal physical and psychological order in nature). Acting against the universal order – against the natural forces in nature, objective justice, and universal values – is acting against *dharma*. The *yamas* and *niyamas* essentially help connect the individual to the whole, helping the individual to be a better participant in the natural cosmic order.

Patañjali does not take advantage of this understanding. He describes instead how they personally advantage the individual. The same also happens in the third chapter, where *Patañjali* offers many contemplations ostensibly for gaining superpowers. The values incorporated in these *yamas* and *niyamas* may be better understood by referring to their explanation in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and Śaṅkara's commentary thereon. Within the limits of these *sūtras*, this commentary will attempt to bring in a sense of the cosmic order perspective in regard to these values, and to the contemplations in the third chapter.

Nurturing the Avoidances and Observances

वितर्क-बाधने प्रति-पक्ष-भावनम् ॥ (2.33)
vitarka-bādhane prati-pakṣa-bhāvanam.

[*bādhana* – hindered; *vitarka* – wrong thinking; *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana* – contemplate the contradiction.]

When these *yamas* (avoidances) and *niyamas* (observances) are **hindered by wrong thinking**, one should **contemplate the contradiction** – apply correct reasoning, as a result of correct *vicāra* (inquiry).

As in *Yoga Sūtra* 2.10, this practice here is to see the illogical and false nature of any hindrance as being in fact a hindrance to the truth. Until I am convinced that what I am doing results in the opposite of what I need and want, that ill behavior will remain uninhibited. I may stop doing it for a while. But, having not thought out the nature of that activity and its results, it can unconsciously return back in my life.

Here, the word *vitarka* is not used in its general sense of *reasoning* as in *sūtra* 1.17. Instead, the prefix *vi* in *vi-tarka* has more the sense of *vaiparītya* (the reverse of) *tarka* (logic). This

means *vi-tarka* has the sense of *illogic*, for which *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana* (contemplating the contradiction) is required to counteract that illogic, that wrong thinking.

Wrong thinking, even a moral mistake, as is noted in the next *sūtra*, is seen to be illogical. Within this tradition *dharma*, the just and right thing to do, will always be the logical thing to do. The most logical will be what takes into account not only what seems best for me, but also best for others, best for the community, best for everyone’s spiritual well being, and best for our shared environment. If all this is considered in one’s deliberation, then such logic will be in keeping with *dharma*, the most supportive for everyone.

The West tends to view logic as cold and misleading when it comes to doing what’s right. That is often true only because of an out of balance importance to what is me-and-mine. Fixing the me-and-mine balance, reducing the over importance of the individual and of what’s in it for me in relationship to everything else in life, will fix both logic and our emotional heart. Within this balance, treating others as you would want others to treat you is logical, not just a commandment.

If I am just commanded not to do something, I can easily disobey out of a sense of me-and-mine. If I understand it is wrong because it is illogical and not in my interest, then I will be disobeying myself by doing it. That is a more intelligent and powerful argument.

वितर्का हिंसादयः कृत-कारितानुमोदिता लोभ-क्रोध-मोह-पूर्वका मृदु-मध्याधि-मात्रा दुःखाज्ञानानन्त-फला
इति प्रति-पक्ष-भावनम् ॥ (2.34)

*vitarkā hiṃsādayaḥ kṛta-kāritānumoditā lobha-krodha-moha-pūrvakā mṛdu-madhyādhi-
mātrā duḥkhājñānānta-phalā iti prati-pakṣa-bhāvanam.*

[*prati-pakṣa-bhāvana* – contemplating the contradiction; *hiṃsā-ādi* – violence, etcetera; *kṛta* – done; *kārita* – ordered; *anumodita* – permitted; *pūrvaka* – out of; *lobha* – greed; *krodha* – anger; *moha* – delusion; *mṛdu* – small; *madhya* – middling; *adhi-mātra* – great measure; *an-anta* – continuous, unending; *phalas* – results; *duḥkha* – pain; *a-jñāna* – ignorance; *vi-tarka* – illogical; *iti* – “...”.]

Contemplating the contradiction would be, for example, “**violence and the other avoidances in the *yamas* done, ordered, or permitted, out of greed, anger, or delusion, whether in small, middling, or great measure, have unending results of pain and**

remaining in **ignorance**, which turns the pain into sorrow, so they **are illogical.**”

The Components of the Avoidances

अ-हिंसा-प्रतिष्ठायां तत्-सन्निधौ वैर-त्यागः ॥ (2.35)
a-hiṃsā-pratiṣṭhāyām tat-sannidhau vaira-tyāgaḥ.

[*pratiṣṭhā* – establishment; *a-hiṃsā* – non-violence; *tyāga* – dropping; *vaira* – hostility; *tad-sannidhi* – those around that.]

When there is establishment in non-violence as a *yama* (avoidance), there is a dropping of hostility in and towards those around that person.

Violence toward another is often an attempt to control. The best approach towards this felt need to control another is to address that felt need within oneself, where a degree of control is more likely to succeed now and be yours later to have in relating to others. A matured non-violent understanding, attitude, and behavior toward others help evoke the same from others towards oneself. It does not always thwart hostility from some, but from some people there may be nothing more effective in the long run.

Along with this non-violent understanding, attitude, and behavior towards others is an equal directing of these towards oneself. Attending to non-violence towards one’s own body and mind, such as clearly knowing their capabilities and not chasing after what they do not really need, will help protect them and keep them from having to need so much protection. Additionally, attending to non-violence towards one’s own body and mind encompasses defending and protecting one’s own body and mind from others, when required. *A-hiṃsā* as a paramount value and a comprehensive skill is both logical and in keeping with *dharma*.

An even deeper meaning for *a-hiṃsā* is the understanding that the one behind these eyes of mine is the very one behind all other eyes. *Ātman* (the self) is one and the same in all embodiments, in all life-forms. To hurt another is genuinely to hurt oneself.

This understanding and behavior is saintly. There is no more miraculous change than to change one’s own attitudes for the better.

सत्य-प्रतिष्ठायां क्रिया-फलाश्रयत्वम् ॥ (2.36)
satya-pratiṣṭhāyām kriyā-phalāśrayatvam.

[*pratiṣṭhā* – establishment; *satya* – truthfulness; *āśrayatva* – has the power of sustaining; *phalas* – results; *kriyā* – action.]

When there is establishment in truthfulness⁴³ as a *yama* (avoidance), that truthfulness has the power of sustaining – lends the pure, uninhibited power of its conviction in fructifying **the results of one’s action.**

A *karma-phala* (result of action) requires the willful, conscious power of a doer performing the action and desiring to gain its hoped for reward in order for the eventual result (*karma-phala*) to be stored in the individual doer’s *karma* account, and to be enjoyed or bemoaned later, even in succeeding births. An action without this will power, for example, purely accidental, yet not out of carelessness, will not create a lasting *karma-phala* accrued in one’s *karma* account for later fruition, though there will be an immediate result of action out of simple cause and effect. One’s head will hurt if it is accidentally bumped, but a residual karma to rebound later is not generated.

We have a will, but its power is variable depending upon how informed and clear each choice is. The less informed and clear our choice, the weaker the will power in that choice, as well the power of the *karma* result to accrue in keeping with our intention.

An informed, conscious, willful choice is not there (or is not fully developed) for very young children and other creatures lacking a fully functioning facility of choice, a *buddhi* (intellect). They act and react mostly instinctually from their *manas* (faculty of notion and doubt, *saṅkalpa-vikalpa*). We mistakenly think children are willful when they are being adamant in their cravings of the moment. A craving is not a willful choice; it is itself a result, not a chosen action.

In the *karma* model, innocent children and animals cannot create new *karma-phalas*. A lioness will not have to reap the *karma* result of killing, no matter how horrific it may seem to us. The activity itself, of course, has a result. For every action there will be a reaction. The action

⁴³ ‘अन-उद्वेग-करं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रिय-हितं च यत्’ “Speech that is not agitating, is truthful, and both pleasant [now] and beneficial [later] [for the other person].” (*Bh. Gītā* 17.15).

of the lioness will result in the death of the prey, but there is no willful mental action beyond just the intelligence to acquire food for survival, right now.

Action is either physical (bodily or vocally) or mental. In willful actions, we are talking of a subtle *karma* result of the action of the mind – not of a physical action itself and its result. This action of the mind is an action of the willful choice by a mature human.

Satya (truthfulness to ourselves and others) will better inform our not-so-blind actions. Truthfulness will guide our actions to do the most benefit for ourselves in the short and long term, and least harm to others. The more clarity in the intelligence behind our choices and the more pure our will power, uncompromised by our self-serving desires or fears, then the more power behind the fruition of a truly beneficial result.

This willful power of a human is strengthened when the doer aligns thought, word, and deed in a truthful straight line, in other words, when there is integrity. This power, generated through all three actions of thought, word, and deed will sustain the *karma-phala* and presumably keep that result more on the top, so that it is retrieved more quickly. Any dilution or pollution of this power through these three sources of action will weaken and delay the fruition of the result, which may as well be harmful or less helpful when inadequate or inappropriate thinking is involved.

अ-स्तेय-प्रतिष्ठायां सर्व-रत्नोपस्थानम् ॥ (2.37)

a-steya-pratiṣṭhāyāṃ sarva-ratnopasthānam.

[*pratiṣṭhā* – establishment; *a-steya* – non-usurping; *sarva* – everything; *upasthāna* – around; *ratnas* – jewels.]

When there is establishment in non-usurping as a *yama* (avoidance), **everything around becomes** one's **jewels**, glories of the limitless reality, the Lord, not needing to be individually possessed.

When one appreciates everything as the precious glories (*vibhūtis*) of the Lord, of the total, to be enjoyed freely wherever they are and in whosever temporary possession they are in, then the need to personally possess a few simply drops away. This helps the mind settle and be available for what is really essential in life, including and especially for this teaching.

ब्रह्म-चर्य-प्रतिष्ठायां वीर्य-लाभः ॥ (2.38)
brahma-carya-pratiṣṭhāyām vīrya-lābhaḥ.

[*pratiṣṭhā* – establishment; *brahma-carya* – pursuing the scripture; *lābha* – gain; *vīrya* – strength.]

When there is establishment in pursuing the scripture, without distracting pursuits, as a *yama* (avoidance), then, like with *satya* (truth)⁴⁴ in strengthening the results of action, **there is the gain of strength**, or rather *tīvra-samvega* (tenacity) in this pursuit.

When this pursuit becomes the only pursuit, the power and tenacity in that inquiry will overcome all obstacles to understanding the scripture.

अ-परिग्रह-स्थैर्ये जन्म-कथंता-सम्बोधः ॥ (2.39)
a-parigraha-sthairye janma-kathamtā-sambodhaḥ.

[*sthairya* – establishment; *a-parigraha* – renunciation; *sambodha* – understanding; *kathamtā* – reason; *janma* – birth.]

When there is establishment in renunciation as a *yama* (avoidance), **there is an understanding of** beginningless, unwarranted desires⁴⁵ as being **the reason**, literally, *the how-ness, for birth*.

In cognitive-based renunciation, one comes to clearly understand that unwarranted desire, a sense of lack and inadequacy in oneself, leads to further re-birth, and that knowledge of the self, which possesses nothing yet is everything, removes the ignorance which is the source of desire and re-birth.

There is no basis found in this *sūtra* to say that the tradition holds a value for discovering or exploring past life experiences, as some claim. If renunciation is the value here, then it would naturally include the renunciation of a me and mine notion in those past life experiences too.

⁴⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.36.

⁴⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.10.

There is no purpose in renunciation to go there. Nevertheless, there are many commentators and authors who would like to take the student in that direction. The current life holds more than enough to come to the freedom that these *sūtras* unfold. The *karma* setup here is that the individual's mind is wiped of the details of the previous life's memories, allowing a fresh, clean start to get it right this time. This mind, after many years, has brought you to this teaching, so why regress back into what happened in your past? It may distract you, and this opportunity for the teaching may be missed.

The Components of the Observances

शौचात् स्वाङ्ग-जुगुप्सा परैर् अ-संसर्गः॥ (2.40)
śaucāt svāṅga-jugupsā parair a-samsargaḥ.

[*śauca* – cleanliness; *jugupsā* – repulse; *sva-aṅga* – one's own body; *a-samsarga* – non-attachment; *paras* – others.]

From the *niyama* (observance) of physical **cleanliness**, where the naturally accumulating bodily filth is recognized for what it is and then expunged, **there is *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana*** (contemplating the contradiction) of **repulse from** aspects of **one's own body**, which counter-acts excessive admiration of one's body, **and there is non-attachment with others** – the alluring beauty in others is objectively balanced with the non-alluring that will also be present.

The objective attributes of the body are, of course, what they are. But when the mind also labels these as alluring or repulsive due to the ignorance of mutual identification, namely, “This improves or ruins me,” then this subjectivity needs to be balanced. If one extreme is seen then the other extreme cannot be far away, since an opposite does not exist without its contrary. Moreover, once the subjective nature of the labeling is better appreciated, then the allurements and repulsion is properly placed in one's mind instead of in the object. This balance and understanding towards one's own body is easily applicable to the bodies of others too.

This technique of *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana* (contemplating the contradiction) is useful here. We are not trying to develop a repulsion or disgust with the body or with other bodies. This and all other bodies are glories of the Lord. But, if one is nagged by emotions towards others, they can

effectively be jolted back into balance by a one-time realignment, as and when necessary. This is the repulse (an instance of being driven away) regarding the least agreeable aspects of this body being surely present in that other, otherwise alluring, body also.

This is a preliminary discipline to counter-balance the extremes of attachment, so that one can get to a more objective center, from which to progress altogether out of attachment in all its forms, positive and negative, to arrive at an acceptance of all that one sees. But this is an objective acceptance, not a blind acceptance. If something needs fixing, and it is within my means to fix, then cleanliness (*śauca*) does not stop. It proceeds without attachment.

सत्त्व-शुद्धि-सौ-मनस्यैकाग्रचेन्द्रिय-जयात्म-दर्शन-योग्यत्वानि च॥ (2.41)

sattva-śuddhi-sau-manasyaikāgryendriya-jayātma-darśana-yogyatvāni ca.

[*sattva-śuddhi* – mental cleanliness; *sau-manasya* – contentment; *aika-agrya* – ability to stay on one; *indriya-jaya* – mastery over the senses; *yogyatva* – capacity; *ātma-darśana* – knowing the self.]

From the *niyama* (observance) of **mental cleanliness** – the second aspect of *śauca* (cleanliness), where the mental waste and excesses, including excessive *rajas* (agitation) and *tamas* (dullness), and the errors in thinking that increase these two, is recognized for what it is and then reduced or neutralized – **there arises contentment** – the alert, clear, and bright mind attains an abiding peace; from that arises **the ability to stay on one** topic of contemplation; from that arises **the mastery over the senses** – mastering the mind first, which should be and now is the master of the senses; **and** from that arises **the capacity of knowing the self** – the clarity of mind to stay in contemplation leading to assimilated knowledge of the self.

सन्तोषाद् अन्-उत्तमः सुख-लाभः॥ (2.42)

santoṣād an-uttamaḥ sukha-lābhaḥ.

[*santoṣa* – contentment; *lābha* – attains; *an-uttama* – unsurpassed; *sukha* – fullness.]

From the *niyama* (observance) of **contentment**,⁴⁶ where satisfaction is found in one’s self instead of in circumstances, **one attains the unsurpassed fullness**, which is the nature of the self.

When the mind attains clarity, the nature of the limitless fullness of oneself, which is the teaching of this tradition, is unimpeded. This is through a discerning knowledge that I am full and complete, untainted by the limitations of the mind and body since, as their witness, I cannot be them, yet they cannot be without me since I am the existence they enjoy.

कायेन्द्रिय-सिद्धिर् अ-शुद्धि-क्षयात् तपसः ॥ (2.43)
kāyendriya-siddhir a-śuddhi-kṣayāt tapasah.

[*tapas* – prayerful discipline; *kṣaya* – wane; *a-śuddhis* – impurities; *kāya* – body; *indriyas* – senses; *siddhi* – success.]

From the *niyama* (observance) of **prayerful discipline**,⁴⁷ **due to the wane of impurities**, then **the body and senses attain their success**.

The body and senses also are allowed to be all they can be, not hindered by an undisciplined and doubting mind and by a weakness of will-power, which erect barriers that are not there. The *tapas* listed in the *Bhagavad Gītā* verses (17.14 through 17) quoted under *sutra* 2.1 clearly are reasonable and effective disciplines that directly address the weaknesses the mind may have in assimilating this teaching.

Tapas is sometimes confused with torturing the body or mind. Stories of exaggerated self-torture in local tales get passed down and spread by otherwise well-meaning people – thinking they may be inspiring others, but are more likely discouraging. Self-torture is not what

⁴⁶ ‘यः तु आत्म-रतिः एव स्याद् आत्म-तृप्तः च मानवः। आत्मनि एव च सन्तुष्टः तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते’ “Whereas, the person who would [find] pleasure within the self alone, be satisfied (*tṛpta*) with the self, and be contented (*santuṣṭa*) in the self alone – that one has nothing [yet] to be done.” (*Bh. Gītā* 3.17).

⁴⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

reasonable people would want to do unto themselves, or want others to do unto themselves. Self-violence cannot be the intention or the practice of *tapas*, since this runs exactly counter to *a-himsā* (non-violence). One cannot observe both at the same time. *Patañjali* neither introduces nor suggests any torturous practices in his *sūtras*.

Self-violence is disrespect for the Lord's creation, for the temple of the *ātman*. All these disciplines are to be imbued with *satya* (truthfulness) and *a-himsā* (non-violence), the two pillars of all values. A *yogin* undertakes certain practices because they are the more intelligent to perform. It may be like a medicine that could be unpleasant, though it is corrective. But if the corrective is more destructive than the problem, then such cures should be avoided or dropped. The body and senses cannot attain their success if they are distorted or destroyed in the practice of *tapas*.

स्वाध्यायाद् इष्ट-देवता-संप्रयोगः ॥ (2.44)
svādhyāyād iṣṭa-devatā-saṁprayogaḥ.

[*svādhyāya* – **one's study** of the family *Veda* scripture; *saṁprayoga* – **identity**; *devatā* – **Lord**; *iṣṭa* – **one's family or personal worship.**]

From the *niyama* (observance) of **one's study** of the family's *Veda* scripture as it has been taught by one's teacher, **there is identity with** the nature of **the Lord of one's family or personal worship.**

One can gain enough of an understanding of limitless reality, of the Lord, so one can proceed to contemplate upon that Lord. One's worshipped Lord (*iṣṭa-devatā*) may be just an aspect of the Lord. Any and all of the forces in nature can be looked upon as *devatās* (deities). A *devatā* is a manifestation of the Lord, so the Lord can be invoked in that particular form. Recognition of the Lord's awareful presence in the sacred waters of *Gaṅgā*, in a temple stone carving, or in the embodiment of Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, is similar to gaining another's attention by just touching their hand, instead of having to touch their entire body. This is why the term *devatā* (deity) was used here. It can have this limited sense, unlike the term *Īśvara* (Lord) used in *sūtra* 1.24, that rarely has a limited sense.

The term *devatā* (deity) here can be extended to nearly all the various descriptions of the gods and goddesses of any and all cultures.

A limited form of the Lord does not limit the Lord itself. Even the worshipers of the gods and goddesses of any and all cultures really worship in their heart, knowingly or unknowingly, the limitless Lord. Though they may be temporarily confused into believing their own version of the Lord is the limitless, since a distinct version or perspective of anything, even of the Lord, can only be something that is limited.

In fact, no one really worships a form, such as an element of nature, the sun, a stone-carving, or a historical person, but only what that form stands for, what it means, what it is a manifestation of. No one keeps staring at their glasses on their nose, but uses them to clearly focus beyond them. The *iṣṭa-devatā* is the lens adopted to appreciate the formless, limitless reality, called the Lord.⁴⁸

To grow up with such spiritual study and enjoying the presence and support of a personal and family deity is the norm in *Veda* inspired India. Few Westerners have experienced this quality of interaction with an ever-present and loving deity. The devotee grows up knowing that his *iṣṭa-devatā* hears and sees all words and gestures and understands their fullest meaning. That Lord is non-judgmental and points always to the way to grow from life's experiences and challenges – the extra parent, so to speak, that one may need in life. This is an appreciation that fully lends itself to success in the contemplations in these *Yoga Sūtras*. Anyone can choose an aspect of creation to use as an altar for devotion and meditation. The Lord's presence is in and available in all things. The student who does not already do so begins a relationship with the Lord as an aspect of nature and as a symbol of what she sees as her most complete and most mature self.

It should again be noticed with due importance that *Patañjali* has not mentioned any other source or teaching upon which to contemplate than the *Veda*, as a means of knowledge.

⁴⁸ 'सः एव काले भुवनस्य गोप्ता विश्व-अधिपः सर्व-भूतेषु गूढः। यस्मिन् युक्ताः ब्रह्म-ऋषयः देवताः च तम् एवं ज्ञात्वा मृत्यु-पाशान् छिनत्ति' "He alone is the preserver of the universe in time, the Lord (*adhīpa*) of the universe, [as though] hidden in all beings. Knowing in this way the one [Lord] in whom all the sages of the *Vedas* and the deities (*devatās*) are united, one cuts the noose of death." (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 4.15).

Completeness and clarity require a broad and certain basis – physically, emotionally, and logically. The various philosophies throughout history are based on various sets of assumptions that may or may not be true or pertinent. These philosophies may not have such a grand vision of oneself that encompasses all the universe and accepts all forms of worship. They may not have a vast array of practical, mythical, psychological, and logical teachings that have been lived fully for thousands of years. Those other philosophies may not provide the student such a certain and firm basis that this teaching tradition does provide.

समाधि-सिद्धिर् ईश्वर-प्रणिधानात् ॥ (2.45)
samādhi-siddhir īśvara-praṇidhānāt.

[*Īśvara-praṇidhāna* – intelligently surrendering to the Lord; *siddhi* – attainment; *samādhi* – contemplation resulting in assimilation.]

From the *niyama* (observance) of contemplation on and intelligently surrendering what is the Lord’s – this body-mind and its actions – to the Lord as the whole,⁴⁹ there is attainment of contemplation resulting in assimilation.

Gradually one comes to the surrender of his belief that one controls the results of one’s actions. When this surrender is fully assimilated, and all of one’s body and mind, and all of one’s actions and their results are no longer mine, but are known as belonging to nature as a manifestation of the Lord, of reality, and further, when one knows that this reality, the Lord, cannot be separate from, and in fact is, oneself, then that is *samādhi*. There is no second limiting, real thing – no thoughts, no body, no actions, no results which can be misidentified as one’s limited self. Then you understand that which is and always was yourself as complete and free of any sense of limitation.

⁴⁹ ‘तम् (ईश्वरम्) एव शरणं गच्छ सर्व-भावेन भारत। तत्-प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्’ “With all [your] being, surrender to that [Lord] alone [who is the center of your being and is in the form of your natural disposition moving you through life], O *Arjuna*. By that [Lord’s] grace you will attain the ultimate peace, the timeless abode.” (*Bh. Gītā* 18.62).

The 3rd Limb: Sitting Posture

स्थिर-सुखम् आसनम् ॥ (2.46)

sthira-sukham āsanam.

[*āsana* – sitting practice; *sthira* – stable; *sukha* – comfortable.]

The third limb of *yoga*: **the sitting practice** – controlling the body for meditation – is **stable and comfortable**.⁵⁰

If one cannot sit erect with head-neck-back in balanced alignment, remaining still and comfortable for a span of 48 minutes, one *muhurta*, then prior to meditation one can practice various *yoga-āsanas* (healing postures) to gain the required flexibility and strength to maintain

⁵⁰ ‘स्पर्शान् कृत्वा बहिः बाह्यान् चक्षुः च एव अन्तरे भ्रुवोः। प्राण-अपानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तर-चारिणौ॥’ “Keeping external the external sense objects and the vision within the eyebrows [i.e., the eyes shut], keeping [naturally] equal the exhalation and inhalation moving within the nostrils,” ‘यत-इन्द्रिय-मनो-बुद्धिः मुनिः मोक्ष-परायणः। विगत-इच्छा-भय-क्रोधः यः सदा मुक्तः एव सः॥’ “...the one who is contemplative – whose senses, mind, and intellect are mastered [enough to sit in meditation], having *mokṣa* (complete freedom) as the ultimate end, from whom are [mostly or completely] gone requiring/anticipating, fear and anger – that one [who sits in meditation, contemplating this teaching] is always liberated indeed.” (*Bh. Gītā* 5.27–28). ‘शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरम् आसनम् आत्मनः। न अति-उच्छ्रितं न अति-नीचं चैल-अजिन-कुश-उत्तरम्॥’ “Arranging one’s seat in a clean place, firm, not too high nor too low, on which the cover is [from top to bottom:] a [soft] cloth, a hide [for padding], and *kuśa* grass [for insulation from cold and dampness] [or whatever else provides the same].” ‘तत्र एक-अग्रं मनः कृत्वा यत-चित्त-इन्द्रिय-क्रियः। उपविश्य आसने युञ्ज्याद् योगम् आत्म-विशुद्धये॥’ “[Then] sitting upon that seat [or its equivalent] – making the mind single-pointed [i.e., having just one object] – may the one whose activities of the mind and senses are mastered contemplate [the teaching] for clarity of mind [i.e., for removing obstacles to abiding in this knowledge].” ‘समं काय-शिरो-श्रीवं धारयन् अ-चलं स्थिरः। सम्प्रेक्ष्य नासिका-अग्रं स्वं दिशः च अन्-अवलोकयन्॥’ “Holding the body, head, and neck in line and still, being steady [i.e., having a wide base], [as though] looking at the tip of one’s nose [i.e., relaxing the shut eyes, whose open gaze otherwise would be along the tip of the nose], not looking [listening, etc.] in all directions,” ‘प्रशान्त-आत्मा विगत-भीः ब्रह्म-चारि-व्रते स्थितः। मनः संयम्य मद्-चित्तः युक्तः आसीत् मद्-परः॥’ “...being of clear mind, without fear, and firm in [one’s] vow of seeking *brahman* (*brahma-carya*; i.e., listening to the teacher, then continually contemplating and teaching others), mastering the mind – may the *yogin* sit, thinking of Me [through My teaching], having Me as the ultimate.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.11–14).

this alert sitting posture. Whatever sitting, after practice, allows one to remain alert and comfortable for a sufficient length of time is called *āsana*. For more, one can see Śaṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 4.1.7 through 11.

प्रयत्न-शैथिल्यानन्त-समापत्तिभ्याम् ॥ (2.47)
prayatna-śaithilyānanta-samāpattibhyām.

[*śaithilya* – relaxation; *prayatna* – straining; *samāpatti* – contemplating; *an-anta* – limitless.]

Sthairya (stability) is gained **by relaxation of straining, and *sukha* (comfort) is gained by contemplating on the limitless**, for example, on limitless space, or on the limitless Lord, reality, or consciousness, which are all three the same.

Until there is relaxation in the posture, then that stress will keep it from being still and stable. Comfort, on the other hand, is gained not only physically (by repeated practice in flexibility), but also mentally by removing the mind's focus from the confines of any small bodily pain, and focusing instead on what lacks limitation. The body and its small pains are then, in time, dismissed and dropped in the seat of contemplation on the limitless. If the pains persist, though, better corrective measures should be applied to gain a more painless, still and stable posture.

Samādhi is for gaining complete freedom in all of one's life. Even to attain comfort in sitting for meditation *Patañjali* recommends contemplation on the limitless. Even the smallest thing, like breath, can be connected in the seat of contemplation to its cosmic manifestation, intelligently appreciating breath as the life force that pervades this entire universe. Similarly, the space of the body, or the space in the heart, is not different, not separated in anyway, from the entire expanse of the space in this universe, just as a pot does not divide or limit the space of the universe.

Āsana for meditation may involve the visualization of the body, mentally observing the physical body as an object. Start from the top of the head slowly down to the toes, or from bottom up. Bathe in your attention and breath (as life's energy) each part of the body – the top of the head, forehead, eyes, mouth, jaw, ears, neck, shoulders left and right, chest, and the rest of the lower body, relaxing each of them in turn. Then visualize the entire body, like it was a

statue – a living, breathing statue – in limitless space, in the limitless space of awareness in the heart.

Appendix C presents effective steps in contemplation.

ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः ॥ (2.48)
tato dvandvānabhighātaḥ.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *an-abhighāta* – not assailed; *dvan-dvas* – pairs of opposites.]

From that stable and comfortable sitting posture **one is not assailed by the pairs of opposites**, for example, environmental hot-cold, bodily pain-pleasure, and other pairs of sensations.

If the body has an itch, mentally scratch it with attention and let it go. You have an appointment later – note it and let it drop for now. A memory of what someone said to you arises – acknowledge its current significance, then drop it for the time being.

With repeated practice one can sit and quickly shut out awareness of the physical environment, including one’s body. The attention then can shift to the more subtle – the breath, the mind, the teaching, and oneself. This alone is *Patañjali*’s advice concerning *āsana*. One needs to be able to sit still and comfortable, without bodily affliction, in order to contemplate subtle reality. Other *yoga āsanās* and practices are for addressing health and related concerns that might be a distraction for the mind.⁵¹

The 4th Limb: Controlling of Breath

तस्मिन् सति श्वास-प्रश्वासयोर् गति-विच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥ (2.49)
tasmin sati śvāsa-praśvāsayor gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ.

⁵¹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.30.

[*tasmin sati* – established in this; *prāṇa-āyāma* – controlling the breath; *viccheda* – separating; *gati* – flow; *śvāsa* – inhalation; *pra-śvāsa* – exhalation.]

Established in this *āsana*, the fourth limb of *yoga*: controlling the breath is separating with a pause the flow of inhalation and exhalation.

Established in this (*tasmin sati*) does not mean when this (*āsana*) is perfected (*siddha*). That could take a lifetime and beyond. The breath control practices here only require one to be able to have a stable, comfortable sit, which naturally blocks out the environment, including the pains and itches of the body. The mind can then start to fully contemplate upon the infinite, the cosmic aspect of a topic of contemplation.

Between inhalation and exhalation, introduce a pause. This pause is the first step in *prāṇāyāma* (controlling the breath). Because of the continual necessity for this major source of life-energy, this pause naturally draws one’s attention to the quiet subtleness of the life-breath. If the mind wanders away from this attention on the breath, recognize the distraction, acknowledge that the distraction too is present in this same life-force that pervades the universe, and gently bring it back. Do not scold the mind for wandering. The art of continually bringing the mind back to its topic is what meditation is. This *prāṇāyāma* (breath control) naturally calms the mind into its own quiet, subtleness, and thus fulfills its expressed purpose as the fourth limb of *yoga*.

बाह्याभ्यन्तर-स्तम्भ-वृत्तिर् देश-काल-संख्याभिः परिदृष्टो दीर्घ-सूक्ष्मः ॥ (2.50)

bāhyābhyantara-stambha-vṛttir deśa-kāla-saṁkhyābhiḥ paridṛṣṭo dīrgha-sūkṣmah.

[*vṛtti* – operation; *bāhya* – outward; *abhyantara* – inward; *stambha* – stoppage; *paridṛṣṭa* – is observed; *deśa* – location; *kāla* – length; *saṁkhyā* – count; *dīrgha* – long; *sūkṣma* – subtle.]

In *prāṇāyāma* (controlling the breath), **the operation** of pausing the breath first **happens outward** – after the out-breath when the lungs are empty. Next, the pausing is **inward** – after the in-breath when the lungs are full. **And also there is stoppage** – during out-breathing or in-breathing there is stoppage, where at least some air is retained in the lungs and held there. **These three *prāṇāyāmas* are observed according to location,**

length, and count of the breaths, and their pausing and stoppage. With practice, **they become long** – the lengths of the out-breath and the pausing and stoppage become long, **and subtle** – the observance moves from the gross movement of the breath to the subtle presence of this life-force called *prāṇa*.

Prāṇāyāma can be a simple practice learned in a few sessions, which is good enough for settling into contemplation. Its more elaborate practices need careful instruction and direction from a skilled and experienced teacher, but are not necessary for the following next step in *prāṇāyāma*.

बाह्याभ्यन्तर-विषयाक्षेपी चतुर्थः ॥ (2.51)
bāhyābhyantara-viṣayākṣepī caturthaḥ.

[*caturtha* – fourth; *ākṣepin* – diminishing; *viṣaya* – attention; *bāhya* – outward; *abhyantara* – inward.]

The fourth *prāṇāyāma* is **diminishing attention**, literally, *objectification*, **towards the outward and the inward** movements and holding of the breath, so that they become imperceptibly lost in the attention upon the quiet stillness of the presence of the life breath itself.

The other three *prāṇāyāmas* are the *bāhya* (outward), *abhyantara* (inward), and *stambha* (stoppage). In the fourth, breathing continues, but no attention is placed on controlling the out-going or in-coming movements, or holding of the breath. Rather attention is placed only upon the presence of the breath. One's breathing then becomes effortless and imperceptible. During this time the conscious controlling of the breath stops and the inward and outward breaths would become naturally equal (*sama*). This then becomes the more subtle, simple witnessing of the presence of the breath without attention to controlling the breaths, also called *prāṇa-vīkṣaṇa*. One moves from there to the next more subtle step of withdrawing the senses.

The practices of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* will bless any practitioner. They are skills what can be gained and enjoyed for themselves. Indeed, for adept *yogis* they are simple, reasonable ways to promote a healthy life that supports the commitment to knowledge. Nevertheless, breathing

techniques have an observable effect on the thought processes and the ability to contemplate on and with them.⁵²

ततः क्षीयते प्रकाशावरणम् ॥ (2.52)
tataḥ kṣīyate prakāśāvaraṇam.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *āvaraṇa* – blocking; *prakāśa* – clarity; *kṣīyate* – lessened.]

From that *prāṇāyāma*, the blocking of clarity of mind is lessened.

The dullness (*tamas*) of the mind is lessened by oxygenating the body and brain through *prāṇāyāma*. Restlessness (*rajas*) is lessened by attention put on the quiet, still subtleness of the breath. Then, the natural clarity (*sattva*) of the mind will become more predominant. But a clear mind needs correct thinking to be brought in. We are not looking for an empty-headed *samādhi*.

Like *samādhi*, *prāṇāyāma* cannot give knowledge. *Prāṇāyāma* quietly awakens the mind for entering into contemplation, and contemplation (*samādhi*) is for sitting undistracted in appreciation of what one already understands, but has not yet assimilated as firm knowledge in one's heart.

धारणासु च योग्यता मनसः ॥ (2.53)
dhāraṇāsu ca योग्यता मनसः ॥ (2.53)

[*ca* – and; *manas* – mind; *yogyatā* – fitness; *dhāraṇā* – restraining the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts **in contemplation.**]

And the mind gains fitness – discipline – for restraining the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts in contemplation.

⁵² *Yoga Sūtra* 1.31.

The 5th Limb: Withdrawal of the Senses

स्व-विषयासंप्रयोगे चित्तस्य स्व-रूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः ॥ (2.54)

sva-viṣayāsaṃprayoge cittasya sva-rūpānukāra ivendriyāṅām pratyāhārah.

[*pratyāhāra* – withdrawing; *indriyas* – senses; *iva* – seeming; *anukāra* – take on; *sva-rūpa* – very nature; *citta* – mind; *a-saṃprayoga* – withdraw; *sva-viṣayas* – their own objects.]

The fifth limb of *yoga*: **withdrawing of the senses is their seeming to take on the very nature of the mind, when**, because the mind’s attention has been withdrawn by *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, **they also withdraw from their own objects.**

The senses are by their nature led by the mind. If the mind lacks discipline and gives up the lead, then the senses, like wild horses yoked to a chariot with an unskilled driver, will drag the mind through the fields of their objects. When the mind gains the discipline and skill of the *yamas* and *niyamas*, the *rāga-dveṣas* (attraction and aversion toward objects) diminish. With the help of *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, the mind experiences a composure that is naturally available. When that informed and composed mind takes lead of the senses, then the senses will naturally follow suit, like well trained horses anticipating the subtle orders of their master.⁵³

The senses seeming to take on the nature of the mind is the key to gaining control of the senses. One has to command the mind by an informed intellect to not allow the mind’s attention to be stolen away against one’s will. The informed intellect is one that is clear about what is

⁵³ ‘यः तु अ-विज्ञानवान् भवति अ-युक्तेन मनसा सदा। तस्य इन्द्रियाणि अ-वश्यानि दुष्ट-अश्वाः इव सा-रथेः॥’ “But the undisciplined senses, of that [intellect] which lacks discernment and [thus is] ever with a mind (*manas*) not in control, are like the unruly horses of the charioteer [i.e., of the intellect without control of the reins, of the mind].” ‘यः तु विज्ञानवान् भवति युक्तेन मनसा सदा। तस्य इन्द्रियाणि वश्यानि सद्-अश्वाः इव सा-रथेः’ “Whereas, the disciplined senses, of that [intellect] which has discernment and [thus is] ever with a mind in control, are like the trained horses of the charioteer.” (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.3.5–6). ‘राग-द्वेष-वियुक्तैः तु विषयान् इन्द्रियैः चरन्। आत्म-वश्यैः (बुद्धि-वश्यैः) विधेय-आत्मा (विधेय-अन्तःकरणः) प्रसादम् अधिगच्छति’ “Whereas, moving among the objects with the senses under authority of the intellect and freed from [being overpowered by] *rāga-dveṣa* (attraction and repulsion), the one whose mind is disciplined attains clarity (*prasāda*).” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.64).

hindering (*kliṣṭa*) and what is helpful (*a-kliṣṭa*) in this discipline. Such an intellect will guide the other functions of the mind to remain in this discipline.

It is not by blocking sensory experiences that we command the senses. You can close your eyes in the seat of meditation, but the other senses remain wide open. They will do their job regardless. You cannot live your life in a sensory deprivation chamber. In meditation, as well as in your life, you simply have to choose not to let your mind be distracted by following after a sound, smell, or any other sensation that is not your current concern. That choice can only have effect when it is backed by a clearly ascertained understanding of what is one's goal, what is the appropriate discipline for that goal, and how to undertake that discipline.

If the intellect is not maintaining this control, then the preceding *yamas* and *niyamas* should be revisited. They concern the values, and the meaning of the values, that the intellect needs to invoke in the mind to control the senses and the body.

With *ahimsa* (non-violence) in your life, when the world has no need of fear from you, then you can relax your ninja stance against the world and allow the Lord as the natural order to provide your sustenance. With *satya* (truthfulness) in your life, will power is strengthened by your mind, words, and deeds being in natural alignment. With *asteya* (non-usurping) in your life, the cravings of the senses are filtered through your assimilated values. With *brahma-carya* (pursuing the scripture) in your life, those values you have can be better assimilated through the more universal perspective the scripture invokes. With *aparigraha* (renunciation) in your life, a cleaner and simpler lifestyle will bring balance back from living your life for the sake of your senses to living your life for the sake of the highest goals your intellect can envision. Similarly, the *niyamas* (physical and mental cleanliness, contentment, prayerful discipline, studying one's *Veda*, and intelligently surrendering to the Lord) will move one's center of attention from sensory phenomena to contentment and contemplation of the reality stage upon which all these phenomena dance.

Pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses) is at its core *vairāgya* – non-attachment to and non-identification with sense objects, as well as with thoughts that are equally objects within awareness.

ततः परमा वश्यतेन्द्रियाणाम् ॥ (2.55)
tataḥ paramā vaśyatendriyāṅām.

[*parama* – best; *vaśyatā* – mastery; *indriyas* – senses; *tataḥ* – by that.]

The best mastery of the senses is by that taking the lead by a mind, which is first itself quiet.⁵⁴

Compare this with *Yoga Sūtra* 2.41. This *sūtra* emphasizes the importance of an informed understanding of the erroneous ways of thinking that increase the distraction and agitation of the senses. An informed intellect bests the various forms of mechanical sense denial, because the point of this mastery is to command calmness in and out of the seat of meditation, not just when the senses can be temporarily denied.

One of the Sanskrit words for the mind is *hṛd* or *hṛdaya* (heart or center). When the scripture talks of the heart, it means the *buddhi* (intellect). The *hṛd* of anything is its *center*. The individual’s subtle body, which includes the mind and intellect, pervades the entire physical body, and at its center is the intellect. This tradition does not accept that the heart and mind should be separated in any way. The intellect is where one’s deepest convictions are. Where the intellect is, where this heart is, that is where the senses will naturally be directed. If the intellect, the heart, is weak and unstable, then the senses will be in charge.

⁵⁴ ‘इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यद् मनः अनुविधीयते। तद् अस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुः नावम् इव अम्भसि’ “Because, that very mind (*manas*), which follows after the roaming senses, takes away one’s wisdom (*prajñā*), like a small boat on the water, which follows after the wind.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.67).

Chapter 3

On Accomplishments

The preceding five limbs of *yoga* deal with being in keeping with *dharma* – being an objectively virtuous and just citizen in the world, relatively free from conflicts and actions that result in conflicts. Additionally, one gains the ability to sit quietly in meditation, dropping attention towards sense stimuli. This creates the meditative environment for the mind to turn its attention to a selected contemplation. This chapter on *siddhis* (accomplishments) begins with the first *siddhi* – the skill of contemplation. That skill is developed in the next three limbs of *yoga*, namely, *dhāraṇā* (restraining the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts in contemplation), *dhyāna* (retaining the flow of wanted or helpful thoughts in contemplation), and *samādhi* (contemplation resulting in assimilation). The chapter (*pāda*) ends with the teaching on the ultimate fulfillment – contemplation on the reality of the world and the *puruṣa*.¹ This contemplation leads directly to *Patañjali*'s goal of *yoga, kaivalya* (complete freedom), the ultimate *siddhi*.

Sūtras 3.16 through 3.42 point out an additional accomplishment. This is the acquisition of a cosmic perspective towards objects in the universe in contemplation. This helps one gain and abide in limitless freedom. This accomplishment is connected to specific side-effects (*gauṇa-phalas*, by-products, secondary to the main goal) in the contemplations of this section. These side-effects are the superpowers mentioned, but deemphasized by us. They too are called *siddhis* in Sanskrit.

The student should avoid confusing these superpower *siddhis* with the main accomplishments in *yoga*. These superpowers play a part in the popular spiritual literature within this tradition, namely the *Purāṇas* (legends dealing with creation stories and the deities), such as the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*, and the *Iti-hāsas* (epic histories), such as the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahā-bhārata*. These superpowers are typically attributed to heroes or demons, and are key to advancing a story within a particular legend or epic. The quests for superpowers were and are a part of the practices of some *yogis*, as well as of shaman practitioners from around the world in cultures old and new.

¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 3.43–53.

Patañjali gives mention of them in this chapter, though he too deemphasizes their import.²

The mention of these superpowers is more to connect these helpful cosmic contemplations to what the Indian practitioner has read in these very popular legends and epics that tell how these powers can be helpful and can be detrimental. In the West, where there may not be exposure to this literature, there could be an over-tendency to take these superpowers out of context, and as being the most interesting and so necessary pursuits in *yoga*.

There is no separate, special, or unique experience or capacity that one needs to fulfill the knowledge *yogins* seek. Every experience, every object, every thought, when viewed in keeping with the cosmic whole, reveals that whole. The task of this commentary, in keeping with the scripture of this tradition and with *Patañjali*, is to clearly indicate the real purport of these *sūtras* as the development of the three principle *siddhis*: skill in contemplation, the gaining of a cosmic perspective in the mind that certain contemplations can give if understood in the light of this tradition's physics and metaphysics of life, and then the final goal of *kaivalya*. In the contemplations we will elaborately explore how the contemplations are employed in gaining a cosmic perspective, and then briefly note the purported side-effect superpowers and their connection with the topic of the contemplations.

The 6th Limb: Restraining Thoughts

देश-बन्धश् चित्तस्य धारणा ॥ (3.1)
deśa-bandhaś cittasya dhāraṇā.

[*dhāraṇā* – **restraining** the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts **in contemplation**;
bandha – **keeping**; *citta* – **mind**; *deśa* – **place**.]

The sixth limb of *yoga*: **restraining** the pursuit of unwanted or hindering thoughts **in contemplation is keeping the mind in one place**.

This is keeping the mind from straying to other places, other areas of thought, that hinder or are not the topic of the contemplation. *Dhāraṇā* naturally culminates in the following *dhyāna*. When the mind is not where it should not be, then it is where it should be. All the preceding disciplines

² *Yoga Sūtra* 3.37.

have given the mind this strength to settle down and the wisdom to know what to settle into. Like for *pratyāhāra*, it succeeds from an informed intellect that can stay alert to when the attention strays from the contemplation topic. Remember, we are talking about the mind here. Restraint in thinking does not mean suppression. It is not like the physical restraint of a pet. It is a cognitive alertness allowing the most appropriate and helpful thinking to arise and remain, in and out of the seat of meditation.³

The Contemplation Process

There is a progression from *pratyāhāra* through *dhāraṇā* to *dhyāna* – from redirecting the mind’s attention away from the external to being only upon the chosen topic of contemplation. But this *directing inward* is directing the mind toward the more inward truth of everything, not seeking isolation from the external world.

The student generates a systematic practice that establishes a firm seat of meditation. There may be a confirmation of one’s intention to address the mind and to nurture a friendly and supportive relationship with one’s emotions. The student attends to *āsana* (including visualizing the parts of the body to relax them), *prāṇayāma*, and *pratyāhāra*. The student acknowledges the physical environment around, and mentally affirms that this particular time is for oneself not for everything else – including your body, health, finances, family, neighbors, co-workers, friends, foes, politics, and the world. They will all be there afterwards. Now is the time for this mind to attend to its own purpose in freeing itself, no matter what the environment.

Then, beginning *japa* (quiet or silent chant), the student repeats a sacred *mantra* whose meaning he or she knows, for example, *Om īśāya namaḥ*, meaning, “*Om* (see *sūtra* 1.27) I surrender all ownership and identification with this body, mind, and senses unto the natural cosmic order that is the embodiment of the Lord.” I am one with the Lord that manifests and enlivens this entire universe, which is the reality into which all universes resolve in sleep as well as at the ends of time.

If one finds that the mind tends to drift during the mental repetition of the *mantra*, use the voice to softly chant the *mantra* for a time. We can often control our body – here, the voice – better than our mind, so vocalization may be introduced to bring the mind back. Returning to

³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 1.2.

mental repetition, make the chant non-physical. Keep the mouth, tongue, and vocal chords still during the chant. This keeps the chant in the more absorbing depth of the intellect. The mental chant can be disassociated from the rhythms of the breath. Let the chant sometimes occur during in-breaths as well as during the change over from the in and out breaths. An additional technique is keeping the tongue still in the middle of the mouth without touching any part inside the mouth.

Appreciate in the heart, in the center of one's certitude and conviction, the truth of the *mantra*. Do not think *about* the *mantra* or its meaning; simply *behold* its truth, as to how it encompasses you and your universe.

Let the silent pause between chants and between words of the chant lengthen, and sometime stop, while beholding their meaning. The chant and silence are oneself, pure awareness. They resolve in the reality of oneself as the meaning of the *mantra*. They come out of the reality of oneself, they appear, and they resolve back into oneself. The truth of the *mantra* is the truth of oneself.

Once the silence of oneself is foremost, let the chant drop. There is only oneself as the self-evident reality and truth of the *mantra*.

One may recognize other thoughts or perceptions arising. If these thoughts or perceptions are felt to be distractions, recognize that they are all within your awareness, the truth of oneself. If it is a sense perception, that could only be from a contact of one of the senses with its object. Being a contact, there can be no distance between your sense organ and the object, whether it is the sense reaching out to the object or the medium of the object reaching to the sense organ. Even the notional distance or the calculated estimation of the distance between the seat of the sense and the seat of the object are a notion or estimation within the mind right now. There is no distance or separation of that notion or estimation in the mind from awareness. The sense or notion of the time elapsed also only occurs right now in the mind within awareness. Simply appreciate that these thoughts are well within the order and convention of the mind. The entire mind is within the Lord's order. This thought and its object are both a manifestation of the Lord, the reality that is the Lord.⁴ Bring back the *mantra* which holds this fact and carries the sense

⁴ 'यतः यतः निश्चरति मनः चञ्चलम् अ-स्थिरम्। ततः ततः नियम्य एतद् आत्मनि एव वशं नयेत्' "Bringing it [i.e., the mind] back from whichever [distracting object] the [naturally] mobile, unsteady mind goes to – [by understanding that object also as] within limitless *ātman* alone – may one bring [the mind] under

and wisdom of surrender and freedom from identification with the mind and its separate thoughts.

This understanding of the nature of thought, sense perceptions, objects, distance, and time will be unfolded in this text in keeping with the teaching tradition here and in the scriptures.

The absorption discovered in contemplation is natural, unforced, and all-encompassing. Give depth to that absorption by introducing thoughts that express the truth of the identity of the Lord and oneself. These are the contemplation of one's choosing. They may only be the *mantra* one has used for *japa*. They may be words of the teacher or from scripture that the student finds particularly meaningful and helpful. They may be *prati-pakṣa-bhāvanas*⁵ that counteract an affliction that is hindering your progress in *yoga*. Do not be content with aimless pondering, wandering through a disconnected enjoyment of some part of the whole truth. Keep in the mind well thought out expressions that encompass a truth you wish to always remain in your heart. This truth should be clearly seen as the truth of oneself in and out of contemplation.

Again, when the mind strays during contemplation, see that thought and its object as not outside of the truth one is contemplating, then, having been brought back to the truth, remain in its contemplation – with or without words.

For the steps involved in contemplation see Appendix C.

The 7th Limb: Retaining Thoughts

तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ॥ (3.2)
tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam.

[*tatra* – when that is; *dhyāna* – retaining the flow of wanted or helpful thoughts in contemplation; *ekatānatā* – nature of having a oneness; *pratyayas* – thoughts.]

When that is complete, the seventh limb of *yoga*: **retaining** the flow of wanted or helpful thoughts **in contemplation** is this mind's **nature of having a oneness of thoughts**.

Consciousness is the one, timeless witness of all thoughts. The conscious mind is characterized

control." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.26).

⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.33–34.

by a flow of thoughts and images (of *pratyayas*). That flow tends to jump from one associated or distracting thought to another. This is the common mind with which we are all very familiar. *Dhāraṇā* is the practice we saw of limiting unwanted thoughts. This practice merges into *dhyāna* where only the wanted thoughts occurs. Mind being a flow of thoughts, then this oneness of thought is a flow of the same (*sajātīya*) thought. It can be likened a flow of pure, clear oil.⁶

Oneness of thoughts (*pratyaya-ekatānatā*) is not to be seen as only keeping one single thought in the mind for some time. The oneness of thoughts, the flow of thoughts, here implies an ongoing, relevant topic of contemplation. A topic started in *dhāraṇā* can be any prayer, such as *japa*,⁷ which sets up or is the topic of contemplation, or any reasoning (*tarka*) or inquiry (*vicāra*) belonging to the contemplation. *Dhyāna* naturally culminates in the following *samādhi*.

The 8th Limb: Contemplation

तद् एवार्थ-मात्र-निर्भासं स्व-रूप-शून्यम् इव समाधिः ॥ (3.3)
tad evārtha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ sva-rūpa-śūnyam iva samādhiḥ.

[*samādhi* – contemplation that culminates in assimilation; *tad eva* – the same; *nirbhāsa* – appearance; *artha-mātra* – only the object; *iva* – as if; *śūnya* – lacks; *sva-rūpa* – its own form.]

The eighth and final limb of *yoga*: **contemplation that culminates in assimilation is the same *dhyāna*** (retaining in contemplation), where **there is the appearance of only the object** of the contemplation **as if** the mind **lacks its own separate form**.

As noted in *Yoga Sūtra* 1.43, because this is as if (*iva*), the mind is still subtly present. This indicates the *samādhi* is with-seed (*sa-bīja*), that is, with-idea, the seed/idea being the teaching. The attention is completely on the object/topic of the contemplation, and there is no attention on the fact one is thinking of or contemplating on this object/topic. There is no conscious thinker-thinking-thought distinction.

⁶ 'तैल-धाराम् इव' "Like the flow of oil." (*Dhyāna-bindū Up.* 18).

⁷ 'यज्ञानां जप-यज्ञः अस्मि' "I [*Īśvara*] am, among *yajñas* (rituals), the *yajña* that is the mental repetition [of the Lord's name] (*japa*)." (*Bh. Gītā* 10.25).

This is not the final goal of *samādhi*, though. The goal is without-seed (*nir-bīja*) *samādhi* (*Yoga Sūtras* 1.51 and 3.8), where the teaching has done its job and one abides in this knowledge in and out of the seat of meditation.

In *sa-bīja samādhi* the quality of the absorption is not too unlike that experienced by an artist or scientist when they create or invent, or by someone engrossed in a visual or mental activity such as reading. The difference is only in the nature of the topic under consideration. Here, for the *yogin*, the topic is oneself and, at the time of contemplation, not one's psychological processes. The *yogins* mature their intellect so it abides in the teaching and in the truth that is oneself. *Samādhi* is not a degree of mental awareness and not a special awareness. It is the teaching, the *bīja*, one brings to the absorbing contemplation that makes this abidance a *samādhi*.

Uniting (*Samyama*) of the Last Three Limbs

त्रयम् एकत्र संयमः॥ (3.4)
trayam ekatra samyamah.

[*traya* – three; *ekatra* – together; *samyama* – uniting.]

The three – *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* – together is called *samyama* (uniting).

Samyama (uniting) is not a new contemplation. It is simply a convenient term that *Patañjali* uses to group the last three limbs of *yoga*. Again, in the seat of meditation, one directs one's attention from thoughts that you do not want to the teaching that you want to be there. This is *dhāraṇā* leading to *dhyāna*. The teaching is seen in its fullest meaning, to the purpose these words point, at which the words drop, having done their job. You sit with that assimilated knowledge, that revelation, of their meaning, their goal. With the background of the scripture, this revelation, this goal, will be acknowledged to its very reality, the reality that is oneself. This is *prajñā* (wisdom). That wisdom, once all doubts and vagueness are finally cleared, will not stray⁸ no matter where life takes you. This is timeless freedom, even while one still lives in time.

⁸ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.24–27.

तज्-जयात् प्रज्ञालोकः ॥ (3.5)
taj-jayāt prajñālokaḥ.

[*tad-jaya* – mastering that; *āloka* – there manifests; *prajñā* – knowledge that is assimilated.]

By mastering that *saṁyama* (three-fold uniting) there manifests a knowledge that is assimilated – the *jñāna* (scriptural knowledge) brought into the contemplation becomes *pra-jñā* (assimilated knowledge).

तस्य भूमिषु विनियोगः ॥ (3.6)
tasya bhūmiṣu viniyogaḥ.

[*viniyoga* – application; *tasya* – of that; *bhūmis* – stages.]

The application of that *saṁyama* (three-fold uniting) should occur in the various stages in one’s progress in *yoga*.

Do not leave contemplation of reality to the end, exhausting life’s energy trying only to perfect the imperfectible body and mind. This is *Patañjali*’s injunction to include contemplation with your *āsana* practice. What can be done to heal, strengthen, or relax the body is to be done. Then employ the mind, where the knowledge takes place and where *Patañjali*’s techniques have proven their worth. Find out what is to be contemplated and contemplate.

Which are the Internal Limbs of *Yoga*?

त्रयम् अन्तर्-अङ्गं पूर्वैर्भ्यः ॥ (3.7)
trayam antar-aṅgaṁ pūrvebhyaḥ.

[*traya* – these three; *antar-aṅgas* – internal limbs; *pūrvas* – preceding.]

These three, namely, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *sa-bīja samādhi*, **are more internal limbs than the preceding** five limbs of *yoga*, namely, *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra*.

They are more internal since they deal only with the mind, which is more internal than one's activities, posture, breath, and senses. The other limbs of *yoga* address those. These three internal limbs are more direct when it comes to assimilation of the knowledge. Nevertheless, without the external practices the internal cannot be mastered. Certainly without the external pursuit of the scriptures there would be nothing to contemplate, and so nothing to master.

तद् अपि बहिर्-अङ्गं निर्-बीजस्य ॥ (3.8)
tad api bahir-aṅgaṃ nir-bījasya.

[*tad api* – even they; *bahir-aṅgas* – external limbs; *nir-bīja* – free of seed.]

But even they are external limbs to the *nir-bīja* (free of seed) *samādhi*.

In the quiet appreciation of the self, there is no duality of seer-seen. The self is not the object of any word or thought. There are no thoughts as second things, as other than oneself. There is only oneself, the only reality without a second, equal, and limiting reality. It becomes clear that this is in fact the nature of the self, the nature of reality. Even before this *samādhi* this was my nature. The thoughts, even mistaken thoughts of myself being the thoughts, never affected or restricted the pure, limitless reality of oneself.

The afflictions are known to have been due to the mutual identification that is ignorance. The well-assimilated knowledge (*prajñā*) removes for good the prior ignorance. Its crops, the afflictions (*kleśas*), are seen for what they are and cannot return in force. This is not a knowledge subject to forgetting; it is oneself. Once known it is always known. The reappearance of thoughts and their objects, even ones tied to emotional well-being, are within this *prajñā* that releases them of identification with oneself and eliminates any possibility of their having an independent reality. The thoughts remain as mere appearances, and the afflictions lose their potency to touch oneself.⁹

⁹ '(सनत्-कुमारः उवाच) तस्य ह वै एतस्य एवं पश्यतः एवं मन्वानस्य एवं विजानतः' "For the one who sees (*paśyan*) thus [i.e., knows as clearly as seeing], [because of being one] who contemplates (*manvāna*) thus [i.e., thinks over with reason], and who ascertains (*vi jānan*) thus [i.e., correctly determines]" – आत्मतः प्राणः, आत्मतः आशा, आत्मतः स्मरः, आत्मतः आकाशः, आत्मतः तेजः, आत्मतः आपः, आत्मतः आविर्-भाव-तिरो-भावौ, आत्मतः अन्नम्, आत्मतः बलम्, आत्मतः विज्ञानम्, आत्मतः ध्यानम्, आत्मतः चित्तम्, आत्मतः सङ्कल्पः, आत्मतः मनः, आत्मतः वाक्, आत्मतः नाम, आत्मतः मन्त्राः, आत्मतः कर्माणि, आत्मतः एव इदं सर्वम् इति॥' " – from *ātman* is life (*prāṇa*), hope

The final stage of *Patañjali*'s teachings on *samādhi* is the culmination in complete freedom (*kaivalya*). Here, there is no longer an as if. This is different than the prior stage (*see Yoga Sūtra* 1.18) where the student suspended the presence of limiting thoughts which were otherwise taken as real. In *nir-bīja samādhi* there is no thought taken to have absolute reality and no affliction taken to limit the free self. Even latent tendencies of doubt and confusion are left impotent to reappear as they were. If any personal criticisms arise from me or from others, they are objectively seen to apply only to the limited mind, not to oneself. They will lack any force or reason to afflict the self. No longer is there confusion with regard to the real and the unreal.

This is what *nir-bīja* (free of seed) means. The many old seeds of doubt and confusion in the field of ignorance in the form of afflictions neither sprout, or grow, or flower. *Nir-bījā* (the state of being free of seed) is where the potency of the seeds of doubt and confusion has been burnt by the fire of knowledge (*jñāna-agni-bharjita-bīja-śakti*).¹⁰

This *samādhi*, as assimilated knowledge of reality, remains in and outside the seat of meditation. The meditation has swallowed all time and all situations within this knowledge. All of one's life resolves into this *samādhi* that is the very nature of I. This is no passing experience and no super-experience. The earlier states of *samādhi* pass. The beatific or prophetic or psychedelic experience, though memorable and inspiring, passes without yielding abiding knowledge. This knowledge abides as the reality that is self.

Change Within Contemplation

व्युत्थान-निरोध-संस्कारयोर् अभिभव-प्रादुर-भावौ निरोध-क्षण-चित्तान्वयो निरोध-परिणामः ॥ (3.9)
vyutthāna-nirodha-saṁskārayor abhibhava-prādur-bhāvau nirodha-kṣaṇa-cittānvayo
nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ.

and love, space, fire and water, appearance and disappearance, food and strength, cognition, meditation, memory, intension and mind, speech and name, *Veda* verses and rituals – all this is from *ātman* alone.” ‘तद् एषः श्लोकः। न पश्यः मृत्युं पश्यति, न रोगं, न उत दुःखतां, सर्वं ह पश्यः पश्यति सर्वम् आप्नोति सर्वशः इति’ “There is this verse – Seeing [thus] one does not see death, nor disease, nor affliction. Seeing [thus], one sees all and attains all, in all ways.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.26.1-2).

¹⁰ *Sarva-Tantra-Siddhanta-Pada-Artha-Lakṣaṇa-Saṅgraha.*

[*pariṇāma* – change; *nirodha* – assimilation; *anvaya* – regarding; *citta* – mind; *kṣaṇa* – moment; *nirodha* – assimilation; *prādur-bhāva* – arising; *saṃskāras* – latent tendencies; *nirodha* – assimilation; *abhibhava* – quelling; *vyutthāna* – active mind.]

There is a change by way of *dharmas* (distinguishing characteristics) **during assimilation** of the teaching in *samādhi* **regarding the mind at the first moment of assimilation**. The change is the **arising of the latent tendencies** introduced by the teaching that negate the *kleśas* (afflictions) **in assimilation and the quelling** of the other *saṃskāras* **from the active mind** that nourished the *kleśas*.

The quelling or deactivation of the latent tendencies (*saṃskāras*), the seeds, of ignorance and associated tendencies (the crop of *kleśas*) by the activation of the *saṃskāras*, the seeds, of the teaching is the essential characteristic (*dharma*) of assimilation (*nirodha*) in *samādhi*. If it were just the quelling of the ignorance without the teaching, then such a *nirodha* (dropping) would either be deep sleep or a mechanical stunning of the mind, which is not the distinguishing characteristic, the *dharma*, of *nirodha* in *samādhi*. The *saṃskāras* of the teaching are active in *samādhi*.

With continued progress, the adept *yogi* quells even the *saṃskāras* of the teaching, the cause of the first *nirodha*. With assimilation of the reality that is the focus of the contemplation, the second and comprehensive *nirodha* is the accomplishment of *nir-bīja-samādhi* in the clear knowledge of reality.

The current *sūtra* (3.9) addresses only the first *nirodha*, the change from no *nirodha* to *nirodha*. The beginner's mind had active *saṃskāras* of ignorance. Then, at the first stage of *nirodha*, those *saṃskāras* are deactivated by the teaching *saṃskāras*.

This is the start of a discussion on the three factors involved in change, initially as it relates to the changes that take place in *saṃyama*, and then extended to all objects – physical and mental. The three factors are the *dharma* (characteristic) that distinguishes one thing from others, the *lakṣaṇa* (external symptom) that surround a thing and in that way help point out a thing based on its surroundings, and the *avasthā* (period) that is the time a thing exists.

तस्य प्रशान्त-वाहिता संस्कारात् ॥ (3.10)
tasya praśānta-vāhitā saṃskārāt.

[*tasya* – its; *vāhitā* – flow; *praśānta* – clarity; *saṃskāra* – latent tendency.]

Its, the mind's, **flow of clarity is due to the final latent tendency**, which is knowledge of reality in the form of the teaching becoming fully assimilated.

The final latent tendency (*saṃskāra*), knowledge in the form of the teaching being fully assimilated, maintains the characteristic (*dharma*) of the quelling of latent tendencies (*saṃskāras*) of ignorance during *samādhi*. The maintenance of the same characteristic of a thing that is continually being regenerated, such as the flow of thoughts during *nirodha*, requires a cause. In this case it is the *saṃskāra* of the teaching.

Saṃskāras are not manifest thoughts. They are tendencies assumed to be present in the unconscious part of the *citta* (the storehouse of the mind). Again, see Appendix A for a description of the mind within this tradition. The existence of *saṃskāras* is proposed to explain how certain manifest thoughts or images arise in the mind and not others. The *saṃskāras* are seed potentials that when triggered may manifest a certain memory or image, or effect the flow and content of manifest thoughts, even during *nirodha*.

The quelling here is not destruction of *saṃskāras* that can manifest unhelpful thoughts; it is the blocking of unhelpful *saṃskāras* by other, helpful *saṃskāras*. If the quelling of unhelpful thoughts is temporary, because the teaching is not clearly and fully assimilated, then the unhelpful thoughts return. If permanent, this is because of the assimilation of the teaching so that one no longer has to remember it or keep it in the forefront of the mind to fight off notions of limitation, of bondage. One simply lives the teaching in the first person (as *I am free*), not as a student trying to *get it*.

In *nir-bīja samādhi* and in the freedom that is *kaivalya*, there is even the *nirodha* of all *saṃskāras*, including the teaching, because one need no longer have to remind oneself of the teaching to negate the limiting *saṃskāras* of ignorance. The teaching is no longer a memory to be recalled, but is firm, assimilated knowledge, like we do not remember one plus one is two, we just know it.

This *nirodha* is of all *saṃskāras* because it affects how I understand everything. The relativity and dependence of everything one knows is now perfectly clear. Everything one knows is now known as only *as if*. They are recognized as only *mithyā*, as always only from a relative perspective. They are not and never will be absolutely true, as I had previously believed. They

are imaginary or transactional, not *pāramārthika* (absolute). Only I, only awareness-being, am *pāramārthika*. The *nirodha* of these *saṃskāras* and their manifest affect as thoughts in the mind is not their disappearance; it is recognizing their nature of being *mithyā* (relative). This teaching is now ingrained in my thinking. This new perspective of thinking is now natural, not requiring an effort to remember it.

We may think we know a person’s name, until we forget it. Perhaps the only name we know is our own, because we just don’t seem to forget it. We may forget facts regarding some area of knowledge, such as in calculus. But the simple fact of one plus one is two, does not appear to be forgettable. Its unforgettable nature may be said to be due to the unfading and unblockable power of the *saṃskāra* that maintains this particular knowledge. The simple knowledge of this teaching is “I am absolutely free.” With continued listening to the scripture from a qualified teacher, understanding what is being said, and contemplation, this simple teaching becomes ingrained as an unfading and unblockable *saṃskāra*. If contrary notions lack any power to contradict or block this simple knowledge, then this is one’s assimilated knowledge (*prajñā*).

Controlling the appearances of contrary notions does not control the cause for them being taken as real, being taken as myself (*see Yoga Sūtra* 1.4). In the assimilation of knowledge as the culmination of contemplation, the latent tendencies that manifest as contrary notions lose their power when the fundamental ignorance about oneself goes, and they can no longer manifest a notion of a real duality of seer-seen, limiting oneself. When there is no manifestation of a believed notion of a real duality of seer-seen, limiting oneself, that is *nir-bīja samādhi*. One is now free of the *bījas* (seeds) of ignorance and living a life of assimilated knowledge, of *kaivalya*.

This liberating teaching brings with it an appreciation of its own fiction. The liberating teaching is relative to, is dependent upon, the belief in being bound. Even the teaching is *mithyā* – this is its *nirodha* too.¹¹ The teaching says the self is never bound, therefore any liberating teaching is no less a fiction than the sense of bondage itself. Nevertheless, until the liberating teaching is heard, considered, and assimilated, the delusion of bondage will not go away except

¹¹ ‘न निरोधः न च उत्पत्तिः न बद्धः न च साधकः। न मुमुक्षुः न वै मुक्तः इति एषा परम-अर्थता’ “There is no destruction, nor origination, nor one in bondage, nor one trying [to get out of bondage], no desire for freedom, nor freedom – this is the nature of ultimate reality.” (*Brahma-bindu Up.* 10, *Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.32).

in sleep or coma. The liberated person would have a natural modesty in regard to this discovery of the already liberated self.

सर्वार्थतैकाग्रतयोः क्षयोदयौ चित्तस्य समाधि-परिणामः ॥ (3.11)

sarvārthataikāgratayoḥ kṣayodayau cittasya samādhi-pariṇāmaḥ.

[*pariṇāma* – change; *samādhi* – contemplation; *citta*'s – mind's; *kṣaya* – losing; *sarva-arthatā* – all directedness; *udaya* – gaining; *eka-agratā* – one directedness.]

The change by way of *lakṣaṇas* (extrinsic symptoms) prior but **leading to *samādhi* (contemplation)** is the mind's losing its all directedness and gaining its one directedness starting in *dhyāna*.

Objects that cause, foster, or are a result of another object may be used to indicate that object. They become that object's *lakṣaṇas* (external symptoms). The *lakṣaṇas* may even be causally unrelated, like a crow sitting on a house may help indicate the second house down the street, so long as they help point out the indicated object.

The all-directedness, or rather the mis-directedness, is the mind's normal condition, or symptom, prior to *dhyāna*. That symptom goes away, becomes external, in *dhyāna*. One directedness of the mind happens in *dhyāna*, and continues in *samādhi*. *Dhyāna*, in which the change to this one directedness first occurs, is thus indicated (*lakṣita*) by its contrast from the extrinsic condition of our normal all-directedness. Inside *dhyāna* and *samādhi* one characteristic of the mind occurs, outside another as an external symptom of the mind occurs. After *samādhi*, activities of life start again, and the all-directedness returns, except in the case of *nir-bīja samādhi*. *Nir-bīja samādhi* is the appreciation of even all-directedness as within the limitless reality that is oneself and is the Lord. That assimilation would be, then, defined by *Patañjali* as an ongoing *samādhi*.

ततः पुनः शान्तोदितौ तुल्य-प्रत्ययौ चित्तस्यैकाग्रता-परिणामः ॥ (3.12)

tataḥ punaḥ śāntoditau tulya-pratyayau cittasyaikāgratā-pariṇāmaḥ.

[*punaḥ* – and; *tataḥ* – apart from those; *pariṇāma* – change; *eka-agratā* – one directedness; *citta* – mind; *tulya* – same; *pratyaya* – thought; *sānta* – past; *udita* – present.]

And apart from those two changes, the change by way of *avasthās* (periods) during one directedness starting in *dhyāna* is the mind’s same thought in the past, literally, *the ended*, and the present, literally, *the arisen*.

The change occurring during one directedness (*eka-agratā*) of the mind is one thought ending and the same thought arising again. In one directedness the successive thoughts have a consistent theme and content. Because this succession involves past and present thoughts, it is better to connect *avasthā* (period) with time, than *lakṣaṇa* (extrinsic symptom). Other commentators, following the lead of *Vyāsa*, reverse these, connecting *lakṣaṇa* with time (a stretch grammatically), and *avasthā* with place (which can grammatically be either time or place). Whichever is the intended significance of these two terms individually, together they certainly indicate the two factors involved in change, namely, time and place. The three factors in change (*Yoga Sūtras* 3.9 through 3.12) during various meditative steps were singled out to set up the next *sūtra*.

Change Regarding All Objects

एतेन भूतेन्द्रियेषु धर्म-लक्षणावस्था-परिणामा व्याख्याताः ॥ (3.13)
etena bhūteन्द्रियेषु dharma-lakṣaṇāvasthā-pariṇāmā vyākhyātāḥ.

[*etena* – by this; *vyākhyāta* – are explained; *pariṇāmas* – changes; *dharmas* – distinguishing characteristics; *lakṣaṇas* – extrinsic symptoms; *avasthās* – periods; *bhūtas* – objects; *indriyas* – senses.]

By this three-fold change of the mind within *saṃyama* are explained the changes in distinguishing characteristics, extrinsic symptoms as to place, and periods in time, respectively, namely, the three factors of everything – in terms of content, place, and time – in regard to all objects – the elements and everything made from them, both subtle and material, including the subtle senses for experiencing the material objects.

The change of the mind during *nirodha* is an example of a change of characteristic (*dharma*), as

the appearance and subsequent quelling of the latent tendencies, of their self-limiting notions, is a distinguishing characteristic of *nirodha* (assimilation).

The change of the mind leading to *samādhi* is an example of a change of an extrinsic symptom (*lakṣaṇa*), as the all-directedness to one directedness is prior but leading to (indicating where is) *samādhi* proper, not distinguishing it.

The change of mind during *eka-agratā* is an example of a change of period (*avasthā*) where the same one directedness continues over time. Each thought is essentially the same within a flow of thoughts.

These three types of changes happen to all other phenomena also. By these changes then, every change in phenomena can be defined (the what), located (the where), and their track through time (the when) be pointed out. Using the terminology of *Vedānta*, a change taking place is to be understood *vastutaḥ* (in terms of content), *deśataḥ* (in terms of place), and *kālataḥ* (in terms of time).¹²

In this text, the objects that undergo change are the three *guṇas* (*Yoga Sūtras* 2.18 and 2.19) that form the five subtle elements (*Yoga Sūtra* 3.41), which combine to form the five gross elements and everything made from them.

शान्तोदिताव्यपदेश्य-धर्मानुपाती धर्मो ॥ (3.14)
śāntoditāvyapadeśya-dharmānupātī dharmī.

[*dharmīn* – domain of the characteristics; *anupātīn* – consequence; *dharmas* – distinguishing characteristics; *śānta* – past; *udīta* – present; *a-vyapadeśya* – future.]

With regard to objects and their characteristics, **the domain of the characteristics**, literally, *that which has dharmas* (distinguishing characteristics), is the object. It is the conditioned reality basis within which the characteristics appear as recognizable phenomena. This domain of the characteristics **is an indirect consequence of its distinguishing characteristics in the past, the present, and the future**, literally, *the not yet manifest*.

¹² Using similar terms, these three factors are also employed, in different contexts, in *Yoga Sūtras* 2.31 & 3.53.

The *sūtra* now switches from the change that objects undergo, to the very object itself, while using the same terminology of *characteristic*, *place*, and *time*. With regard to an object itself, we are concerned only with the location (*deśa*) of the characteristics, not with the surroundings (*lakṣaṇas*), as we were when we looked at the change that objects undergo. Here, the characteristics are the *lakṣaṇas*, the indicators, of the location, of the object (*dharmin*). An object is seen in terms of its place. Indeed, that place (*deśa*) itself is the object (*dharmin*, what has a *dharma*), and it is where the characteristics (*dharmas*) are within time (*avasthā* or *kāla*).

An object, a *dharmin* (domain of characteristics), is separately distinguished from other objects (domains) by virtue of a set of qualities (*dharmas*) being held together over a span of time (*kāla*). The separation of objects is from the standpoint of a set of qualities in time, not from the nature of the domain itself in which the qualities appear for a time. Qualities do not attach to a permanently separable domain. Rather, our senses perceive certain qualities persisting in time and, we posit that there is a separate, individual object or domain, somehow distinguished from other objects.

The example of pot-space is employed to point out how the mind assumes the objects it perceives are separately real, in the way we assume a separately real pot-space is created by a pot being formed.

A visible clay pot (a set of perceived characteristics), when formed, seems to create a pot-space (the domain) within. In truth, before the pot there is no pot-space, after the pot is destroyed there is no pot-space, and even during the life of the pot there is no independently existing pot-space. Pot-space is a creation of the human imagination.¹³ It exists only because we give a name to it.

There is, objectively speaking, space and there is a pot, but there is no pot-space. The pot exists within space. Space exists outside the pot walls, within the clay of the pot walls, and between the pot walls. Space did not get cut up into separate entities or objects, any more than space can be sliced up into separable chunks by swinging a sword in space. The human mind through language gives a name to an area between the walls of the pot and calls it a pot-space. That name, that pot-space, is not separately there for the countless other creatures in this world who have not this language, this imagination.

¹³ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.9.

In the example, limitless space is the more objectively real *dharmin* (domain, or reality basis), the particular pot walls are the *dharma* (characteristic), such as round or rectangular shape, and the pot-space is the imagined *dharmin*, the imagined object, existing as it is only because of the characteristics of the pot walls. If it had been a rectangular pot that was formed instead of a round pot, would that same space have been really a rectangular space all along? Is that same space instead or also a room-space, a city-space, a state-space, a country-space, a continent-space, an Earth-space, a solar system space? Are these equally knowable to whom – a human, an ant, an atom? Or is that space really, categorically, none of these?

Patañjali is telling us that an object (*dharmin*) is not its distinguishing characteristics; rather, it is wherever the particular conjunction of these distinguishing characteristics happens to occur within time. It is its intersecting, distinguishing characteristics' domain. These distinguishing characteristics are then the limiting adjuncts (*upādhi*) for what we perceive the object, the domain of the characteristics, to be. The form of these intersecting characteristics within time, as they appear to this mind, is the peculiar form to which we can give a name. That name and form defines by circumscribing a domain.

Later (in discussing *sūtras* 4.12 through 4.14) we will see that the ultimate domain (*dharmin*)¹⁴ is not many, individual things or beings, but is nothing other than the one, indivisible existence itself that lights up everything within. The limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*) are

¹⁴ 'मनस्-आदिः च प्राण-आदिः च इच्छा-आदिः च सत्त्व-आदिः च पुण्य-आदिः च एते पञ्च-वर्गाणां' "The mind, [memory, intellect, and I-notion], the outward breath, [downward breath, dispersing circulation, upward energy, and uniting digestion], desire, [and aversion], *sattva*, [*rajas*, and *tamas guṇas*], and *karma* merit, [and demerit] – these are the five groups [of characteristics of the individual person who travels from birth to birth, the *jīva*]." 'धर्मो भूत-आत्म-ज्ञानात् ऋते न विनश्यति, आत्म-सन्निधौ नित्यत्वेन प्रतीयमानः आत्म-उपाधिः यः तद् लिङ्ग-शरीरं हृद्-ग्रन्थिः इति उच्यते।' "The domain (*dharmin*) [i.e., the individual *jīva*] of these five groups, lacking knowledge of the self of these elements [the *bhūta-ātman*], does not die [i.e., keeps wandering in *samsāra*]. It appears as being timeless [only] within [i.e., because of] the presence of [the timeless] *ātman*. What is an [apparently limiting] adjunct (*upādhi*) of *ātman* is that subtle body (*liṅga-śarīra*) called the knot of [i.e., around] the heart (*hṛd-granthi*) [– the shackle of ignorance within the mind that needs to be dissolved for freedom]." 'तत्र यद् प्रकाशते चैतन्यं सः क्षेत्र-ज्ञः इति उच्यते' "In that [subtle body], the consciousness which lights it up is called the knower of the field [of this body and of the body of the universe] (*kṣetra-jñā*)." (*Sarva-Sāra Up.* 16, or 7–8 by a different numbering).

the words connected to perceptions of qualities that our mind uses to impose a temporary division in reality, without making any real change to the reality at all.

Patañjali's presentation of the nature of our perceptions and our unexamined take on reality is based on the *Upaniṣads*, this culture's science of the nature of the person and the nature of the universe. Together they deconstruct the attribution of reality to objects and take us back from sense-perceptions to ourselves, to the underlying reality. As we have said, doing this does not discount or seek to dismiss the experience and usefulness of objects and the empirical universe. We seek knowledge at a fundamental level of truth about the human condition. A mind firmly established in the appreciation of the limitations of perception will not inappropriately ascribe those limitations to oneself.

Back to the topic of change regarding an object, as it is for change, to know or imagine any object all three factors are needed. This is knowing an object in terms of content, place, and time.

क्रमान्यत्वं परिणामान्यत्वे हेतुः ॥ (3.15)
kramānyatvaṃ pariṇāmānyatve hetuḥ.

[*anyatva* – difference; *krama* – sequence; *hetu* – cause; *anyatva* – difference; *pariṇāma* – change.]

Difference during sequence of past, present, and future is a cause for difference in change.

Change in an object is a function of differences in its characteristics that apply to the sequence of past, present, and future. Again, the object is the domain for these characteristics. With regard to the mind as an object, in the movement from being all directed to one directed the characteristic of the quality of attentiveness changes and is noticeable. You do not see the mind, the domain of thoughts, as such; you see the attendant *dharmas* (characteristics), the thought characteristics, changing over time.

Accomplishments and Superpowers – *Siddhis*

Sūtras 3.16 through 3.53 list a variety of contemplations and their results. These results can be taken as what are called superpowers. But that is far from their most useful and meaningful

interpretation. As superpowers, these results fall far short of the limitlessness that is the object of *samādhi*. *Patañjali*, himself, notes their limited nature and their potential as obstacles to an enlightened appreciation of the self in *Yoga Sūtra* 3.37.

Initially the listed results of these contemplations are forms of praise (*stuti*). Praise points out some glory in something or someone, but it may also involve exaggeration. One may draw a parallel with today's commercials – Buy and use this toothpaste and that special person of your dreams will be irresistibly attracted to you. Not that one follows from the other, but they are not totally unconnected.

These *sūtras* say that if you do *saṃyama* (that is, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*) on some particular object for a certain number of years, or decades, or who knows how long, and if you are the best at it in the past year, decade, century, or millennium or so, then maybe this superpower will be yours. *Patañjali* may be putting value on strict discipline as a part of a healthy life. He may be emphasizing the value of these disciplines as they affect the chance for a better next life, including a heaven. Overall though, the student who pursues these disciplines and powers may be disappointed with the results of his or her attempts. The toothpaste does not often fulfill one's dreams – but your teeth may be healthier. Mere praise of the disciplines leading toward enjoyable results, though, does not justify the space allowed here in the terse *sūtra* form.¹⁵

Sūtra literature does not introduce a new subject matter; it consolidates and filters the verbal and written material already extant. Much of the *yoga* tradition and history is covered in the vast body of the *Purāṇas*. The *yogīs* and their accomplishments live on in the *Purāṇas*. The *Purāṇas* hold the history and tradition of the culture. They are a mixture of the histories of events and people and other beings in a way that reflects their current cultural mores and teachings while also being flexible and able to accept and carry new interpretations and meaning. The *Purāṇas* are the mind and heart of India in the form of fable and parable.

¹⁵ 'सु-अल्प-अक्षरम् अ-सन्दिग्धं सारवत् विश्वतो-मुखम्। अ-स्तोभम् अन्-अ-वद्यं च सूत्रं सूत्र-विदः विदुः' "Those who know *sūtra* literature know a *sūtra* as having minimal syllables (*su-alpa-akṣara*), lacking ambiguity (*a-sandigdha*), being meaningful (*sāravat*), being able to have more than one valid meaning as well as being non-contradicting (*viśvato-mukha*) [with what is said before and after], lacking elaboration in praise (*a-stobha*), and having no fault (*an-a-vadya*) [in grammar or logic]." (*Śabda-Stoma-Mahānidhi: A Sanskrit Dictionary by Tārānātha Bhaṭṭāchārya*).

The *Purāṇas* are the playing field for superpowers and super-beings. There are stories of powerful *yogīs*, and even of *asuras* (bad guys and gals),¹⁶ whose special powers are important features to dramatize the story. These highlight and amplify the struggle between the forces of *dharma* and *a-dharma* (justice and injustice). It is the grey area between the two that life is lived. The superpowers are not the exclusive property of either side of this struggle. *Patañjali* may give them space in the *sūtras* because, in light of the tradition, the superpowers are of interest and may encourage study and contemplation which do yield benefit for anyone.

A more ancient literature that this section harkens to is the *Veda Āraṇyakas*, including the *Upaniṣad* literature, when they present various *upāsanas* (meditations), sometimes with their side-effects (*gauṇa-phalas*) being superpowers used as a praise to encourage their worthy practice. These various meditations involve contemplating the nature of the world with the specific intent to create a cosmic perspective in the meditating mind. They often connect a feature in the meditator to a feature in the cosmos, such as the being behind one's right eye and the being behind the face of the sun, indicating their identity of some sort. This helps expand one's thinking and helps one to more easily accept the ultimate truth that the *Upaniṣads* are interested in, namely that oneself is limitless reality, and the whole cosmos is oneself alone.

As we go through this section we will pay attention to the objects of contemplation, see their inter-connections and their connections to their superpower side-effects (*gauṇa-phalas*). This analysis of the *Upaniṣad upāsanas* introduces the cosmic perspectives valuable to the meditator.

We can also consider the strength of these powers as being of value to the student in a relative way. We do not consider the superpowers to be impossible, since that is generally impossible to prove. Rather, there is a maxim in the *Mīmāṃsā* discipline that analyzes the statements in the *Veda* as to their context. The maxim is that if a statement in the *Veda* says that fire is cold, then the *Veda* would be wrong, and since the *Veda* should not be wrong, then there must be some other meaning indicated by such a statement. In this example, a particular ritual fire should not cool down too much.

¹⁶ Remember that *saṃyama* itself need not include the first two *aṅgas* (limbs) of *yoga*, which bring in values. If one is meditating on unbecoming things, then one also will gain strength in those unbecoming things. See the 16th chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* titled *Distinction Between Worthy and Unworthy Dispositions*.

A scriptural statement, as a means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*), cannot contradict any other means of knowledge (in our example, the sense of touch in contact with fire); therefore we need to revise our understanding of the scriptural statement so the two do not conflict. We will generally apply this *Mīmāṃsā* maxim in the following *sūtras*, if necessary, to see if there is something else being indicated here, than its literal or an exaggerated meaning.

***Samyama* on Change**

परिणाम-त्रय-संयमाद् अतीतानागत-ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.16)
pariṇāma-traya-samyamād atītānāgata-jñānam.

[*traya* – three-fold; *samyama* – contemplation; *pariṇāma* – change; *jñāna* – knowledge; *atīta* – past; *an-āgata* – future.]

From the three-fold *samyama* (contemplation) on change there is knowledge of past and future, as being essentially a mental construct in the mind.¹⁷

Patañjali has thrown light on the dependent reality of objects.¹⁸ By reflecting on what the nature of change is in distinguishing characteristics (*dharmas*), extrinsic symptoms (*lakṣaṇas*), and periods of objects, one gains a better understanding of time itself. We can draw from his instruction and see that time itself, in spite of our perception of past and future, is itself an object that exists only to our senses and in our mind in the present.

The characteristic of a present experience of an object right now is different from the characteristic of a present notion of the object in the past or in the future. Nevertheless, the present experience of an object right now is often influenced by, and even mixed up with, how that object was in the past (through memories) or will be in the future (through fears and expectations).¹⁹ Even the present experience of an external object right now is an experience of its past, since it takes time for the light reflected from the object to get to us and for our mind to

¹⁷ *Yoga Sūtras* 4.12–13, & 33.

¹⁸ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtras* 2.21–22.

¹⁹ See commentaries on *Yoga Sūtras* 1.43 & 3.17.

reach out to form a conscious idea of the object as being out there. Time often seems to drag or speed up. During dream, time is even more flexible, sometime stopping or repeating. While in deep sleep, time itself disappears.

Time is a mental construct for thinking about and talking about that which is not now before one's senses. We have cultural conventions that set time to certain units, for example, moments, minutes, and months. Even these will vary according to one's individual experience, mood, age, and situation. Neither time nor its partner space is a fixed reality. Space too expands, contracts, and disappears in our daily experiences – between and within waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

Einstein and Heisenberg taught us about the relative nature of time and the importance of the observer's intent when he looks at things in nature. However, this teaching goes straight to the point of the reality basis of time by focusing on the individual mind's experience of time, where alone time, as we know it, exists and matters.

Patañjali clarifies the processes and meanings of our day-to-day experiences. He asks us to question and investigate how we give value and reality to things in the world and in our minds. He incorporates this into a practical approach to maximizing one's life. This is neither theoretical or an exercise of a superpower. Clarity in this pursuit makes the difference between the wise and the otherwise.

Concerning the nature of change in terms of distinguishing characteristics (*dharmas*), extrinsic symptoms (*lakṣaṇas*), and periods (*avasthā*) of things, the *dharma* of the past is as a memory, of the future is as an expectation. The *lakṣaṇa* of the past and the future is the connection of both in the present. The *avasthā* of both is but the present alone.

Without reflecting on all its aspects, there is so much we take for granted about our understanding of time, indeed any object, thinking it to be transparently real. The fact is there is much confusion about time. It appears to be both real and unreal. This status is what the teaching calls its being indefinable (*a-nirvacanīya*), unavailable for categorical definition as to whether it exists or does not exist. *Sūtras* to come will explain this further.²⁰ This indefinable nature extends to all objects within time and space also. All objects are useful and available for transaction, and they would not even be said to exist but for the one indivisible reality. None of them enjoy independent reality.

²⁰ *Yoga Sūtras* 3.52, 4.12-13, & 33.

Nevertheless, one can certainly gain some transactional knowledge of an object's past, which has its effect in the present object, and its future, which is its present potentiality, by a reflection – not necessarily on time itself, but, granting time and the object their transactional reality – on a particular object in its past, present, and future. As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, everything of an entity's past and future is knowable.

***Samyam*as on the Seen and on the Seer**

शब्दार्थ-प्रत्ययानाम् इतरेतराध्यासात् सङ्करस् तत्-प्रविभाग-संयमात् सर्व-भूत-रुत-ज्ञानम्॥ (3.17)
*śabdhārtha-pratyayānām itaretarādhyāsāt saṅkaras tat-pravibhāga-saṃyamāt sarva-
bhūta-ruta-jñānam.*

[*saṅkara* – confusion; *śabda-ārtha-pratyaya* – word-object-idea; *adhyāsa* – being imposed; *itara-itara* – each other. *saṃyama* – contemplation; *tad-pravibhāgas* – its separate parts; *jñāna* – knowledge; *rutas* – sounds; *sarva-bhūtas* – all beings.]

The confusion of word-object-idea²¹ is due to their being imposed on each other. From *saṃyama* (contemplation) on its, the confusion's, separate parts there is knowledge about sounds – communication – of all beings.

The student's contemplation and understanding gain by an appreciation of *Patañjali*'s teaching on perception and time. They also gain by a similar examination of what occurs in the process of naming, in the process of word recognition and ascription of a meaningful word to a recognized object. We do not as a rule separate the steps involved, and one may live an entire life without doing so. But by taking them apart we can see that mixing them up can lead to basic, but correctable errors.

Without examination, we may tend to see what we are habituated to see, or expect to see, without seeing what is actually there. We may think that what we believe we saw was what was really there. The automatic and habitual practice that happens in our mind when we see and identify by name an object tends to cement our acceptance of that object as real and true. This in turn informs and conditions subsequent perceptions as to their valuation and reality. We tend

²¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.42–43.

to develop a mental narrative in our life that continually conditions our world of experiences. Unless we take the time to examine this narrative objectively, it may not serve us well.

There is a reality in naming that attracts us; we like to know the names of the objects around us. Knowledge of our environment helps gives us a sense of security. This may be a false comfort that hides the fact of not knowing oneself. The name, the object, and the thought-form can be separately objectified, but they all exist within and because of the one consciousness that is the only reality.

Contemplation is, in part, a quiet examination of how I interact with myself and with the world. I now also have an appreciation of myself as the whole in which this world shines. The clarity of understanding of myself is the basis with which to appreciate the world.

Sounds of living beings, unlike sounds of inanimate objects, are often a form of communication. There is an intelligence in living beings that allows a rudimentary language for communication. We see this from insects to mammals. At the apex of this capacity for communication is the human. Since this human body and brain seems to be a product of the evolution of life on Earth, this same rudimentary capacity lays at the core of the human also. As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, all sounds of all creatures are understandable and thus knowable.

संस्कार-साक्षात्-करणात् पूर्व-जाति-ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.18)
saṃskāra-sākṣāt-karaṇāt pūrva-jāti-jñānam.

[*saṃskāras* – latent tendencies; *sākṣāt* – immediate; *karaṇa* – instrumental cause; *jñāna* – knowledge; *pūrva* – prior; *jātis* – births.]

From *saṃyama* on latent tendencies one is born with, as being the immediate instrumental cause of one's birth, there is knowledge of prior births – their role in effecting and affecting one's own tendencies and the tendencies in others.

Contemplation on one's unique tendencies leads to an assumption of prior causes for these tendencies. Prodigies and those with inborn talent are examples of the breadth of human uniqueness. *Patañjali* gives us the traditional explanation for the individual conditions and capacities with which each being comes. The Indian perspective gives meaning and promise to the whole of human experience. We are as actors who come to the stage of life with a script to

play, a script with many roles. We are actors who do not realize that we are more than our roles. The promise is that, when one recognizes the truth of the actor who takes on all the roles, the fullness of life is appreciated. Only as a self-conscious actor can you come to this realization – knowing that as the actor one is not diminished or exalted while playing the role of a beggar or a king with equal ease and satisfaction. Deities, animals, and other sentient beings must go around again until they earn birth as an actor capable of recognizing that the role does not define the actor.

Since this script is for just one part in the great drama of creation, it can be taken as having been crafted for this individual to fit in with the whole. The scripture teaches that this script was self authored through various prior lifetimes, and it is this particular embodiment at this time in this place that was designed to play out this part in the drama. This script, in the form of these latent tendencies, thus becomes the immediate instrumental cause for ordering up this particular embodiment to appropriately play out the role.

Of course, the ultimate cause of these tendencies, and thus this embodiment, is the basic ignorance of which these tendencies are its manifestation. By contemplating this script in the form of one's natural latent tendencies, one can gain an appreciation for the existence of, and to a certain extent the nature of, the variety of causes for these effects in the form of these tendencies. For example, if I am having a protracted problem with some other person, it can indicate something in the relationship that occurred in the past, or it may be symbolic of how I act within all similar relationships. This can indicate an aspect of me where I can learn and grow and thereby contribute to my chances for a better current life and a better coming life.

This is a recognition that everyone, including oneself, comes with a background that cannot be fully known. Misunderstandings and confusions in relating to others can be the result of not appreciating these backgrounds. One's known and unknown latent tendencies work in concert with new experiences and conditions to shape the current and future lives. There are recognizable patterns of behavior and feeling that can help one to learn and grow. Or this may be a lifetime where you enjoy so many assets and opportunities that you have little need to question life. The teaching tradition says that we all come to earth with some work to do toward mental and emotional maturity, and to the discovery of and owning up to the truth of the self. And we all, no matter our situation or our capacities, have an opportunity to seek the fullest expression of our intellects and to realize our sense of fullness.

Clarity with respect to latent tendencies has positive benefits in this life. As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, all of one's prior lives can not only be understood but also known.

प्रत्ययस्य पर-चित्त-ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.19)
pratyayasya para-citta-jñānam.

[*pratyaya* – thought; *jñāna* – knowledge; *para* – other; *cittas* – minds.]

From *saṁyama* about one's own thought there is knowledge of the thoughts in other minds.

Human minds overall have more in common than they do differences. Though there is a broad range of human expression, the feelings, motivations, and capacities are similar. One may contemplate on the distinguishing characteristics, defining stimuli, and patterns of thought and behavior within oneself, within one's mind. By doing so, one may get in touch with empathy and patience and an understanding toward other human minds.

Beyond maturing an empathy and an accommodative attitude towards others whose minds are not unlike our own, we may also consider the very nature of the mind and how it makes contact with others.

In the West we tend to identify the mind with the brain. But mind can be seen as much more, as a subtle capacity for knowledge that reaches out beyond the skull. One feels pain or movement in the toe as being down there in the toe, not in the spinal cord leading to the brain. One sees a tree across the valley and sees it as being over there, not in the brain or back of the eye. The mind encompasses the distance, as well as the object of the sense perception.²² The form of the

²² 'मातृ मानाभिनिष्पत्तिः निष्पन्नं मेयम् एति तत्। मेयाभिसङ्गतं तच्च च मेयाभत्वं प्रपद्यते' "From the cognizer the cognition is produced. Having been produced, it reaches out to its object. Having come together with its object, it assumes the form of the object." (*Pañca-Daśī* 4.30). 'यत्र यथा तटाक-उदकं छिद्रात् निर्गत्य कुल्या-आत्मना केदारान् प्रविश्य तद्वत् एव चतुर्-कोण-आदि-आकारं भवति, तथा तैजसम् अन्तःकरणम् अपि चक्षुर्-आदि-द्वारा निर्गत्य घट-आदि-विषय-देशं गत्वा घट-आदि-विषय-आकारेण परिणमते।' "Here [regarding an external object cognition], just like water from a pond goes out through an opening, enters the fields in the form of canals, and becomes a four cornered form, etc., similarly the luminous mind (*antaḥ-karaṇa*) also goes out through the gate of sight, etc. [any of the five senses], reaches the locale of an object (*viśaya*), such as pot, etc., and changes into the form of the object, the pot, etc.

thought of a distance is the distance we experience.

Is it not so that the mind has gone to the toe and to the tree, by means of touch and sight, and filled the objects, taken their form and used those to identify and name the objects? Does not the mind envelop the expansive world of your experience? Does this not bring the whole of the universe into the realm, the scope, of your mind in a very intimate yet objective sense? Can you envision how a simple change in your mind changes how you see the world; how you can best see the world?

The Western science model begins with the assumption that there are totally independent sense objects outside our minds, yet the current perceptual model in science is that all perceptions happen only inside this mind, this brain. Since this assumed model has to also apply to the scientists themselves doing their experiments and analyses, there is no way for them to objectively be sure any object can be a totally independent entity outside their own, much less their test subject's, mind. Since the determination that any object can be a totally independent entity is itself dependent on the world-view assumptions of those who setup and measure the experiment, then the experiment would be prejudiced by these unavoidable assumptions.

That there are objects external to, distanced from, our *brain* is a common sense assumption not in dispute. However, science has no tools to independently verify the assumption that objects are also external to the *mind*, much less that these objects are not only external but also totally independent of our thought of them. The teaching here does accept as a given that objects exist externally to the brain, but the teaching does not accept that these objects can be independent of our mind.

That modification (*pariṇāma*) is called a *vṛtti* (thought or thought-form).” (*Vedānta-paribhāṣā* 1.18). These are from latter day *Vedānta* writers (14th and 17th century). This literal contact of the mind via the senses with the external objects is a natural extrapolation of scriptural statements, such as the ‘पराञ्चनि खानि’ “outgoing senses” (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.1.1), ‘पञ्च-श्रोतस्-अम्बुं पञ्च-योनि-उग्र-वक्राम्’ “the five streams of water [the five senses] violently meandering among their five sources [the five great elements]” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.5), ‘अन्यत्र-मना अभूवमं न अदर्शम्, अन्यत्र-मना अभूवं न अश्रोषम्’ “with the mind elsewhere I did not see, with the mind elsewhere I did not hear” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.5.3), and others. Earlier *Vedānta* texts were less concerned with explaining the mundane world than the sacred, so their treatment of perception of everyday objects was more cursory, speaking only of a “contact of the senses with their objects,” without finding a need to speculate what is the nature of that contact.

It takes the mind to know any object, and this mind will unavoidably have its own perspective and limitations that will color the perception or knowledge of any object it can think of. Even our current science is starting to recognize that the very act of perceiving an object or event, such as measuring whether light behaves like waves or particles, in some way affects the nature, or understanding of the nature, of the object or event. How could that be if the observer is simply a passive entity only encountering the object or event once it arrives to the brain? Can we take this scientific observation and its logical consequences as perhaps a confirmation that no object can factually be external to the mind?

Moreover, since the current perceptual model is that object stimulus indirectly reaches the brain and a resulting thought of that stimulus occurs, then doesn't this implicitly impose a separation of external objects from our internal thoughts? The world of stimuli outside our brain is of one nature, totally independent of thought, and the world of thought inside our brain is another. Whether that model matches our common sense assumptions, or even our most current science, is debatable.

The scientific perceptual model seems to propose some unknowable universe of stimuli outside our brain that, once it enters into the brain, forms a known universe of thoughts within. This model tends to invoke a sense of isolation of myself from the universe, an isolation of my world of thoughts from the supposedly real world of stimuli out there. Nevertheless, we can muddle along in our life with this perspective. Thankfully, we don't spend too much time pondering this perceptual model and its implications. While growing up, we have all managed to survive well enough before our teachers taught this perceptual model. Life has and can be lived with or without acknowledgement of this model.

Let's assume another model can apply. Suppose thought is not a passive, reactive entity in this universe. Imagine thoughts are active entities participating in every aspect of our universe. Imagine that there cannot be any object outside of or away from thought. If one assumes there is any object that is outside or away, that object at that time is not a totally, independently existing object, but is only an assumption of such an object. That assumption is itself a thought, a type of thought we call an assumption. How could we possibly think of any object, perceptual or logical, that is totally unconnected to thought?

Let us imagine a model that, whereas the brain is a physical base or coordinating center for subtle thoughts and their sense organ apertures, these thoughts extend or expand out from that

base (this teaching, however, prefers this base to be the heart as the center of the person, the center of the person's subtle body) into the perceptual, known, and imagined universe in keeping with the nature of the thought. If the thought has the nature of a distance between my body and a tree, for example, this thought is in the form of this distance. The nature of the thought is all we could ever know about the distance itself. The sense of any distance we have is simply our thinking of it. This is maybe why it varies from time to time in our perspective. The mountain at the other end of the valley we live in doesn't look too far way, until we have to start walking towards it. We do not so much objectively see distance, as we sense distance. Our perceptual sense of distance is more wrapped up in our sense of current comparisons of near and far, than actual measurements. Near and far are valuation thoughts.

This teaching here does not prescribe any specific model of perception. It is concerned with the essential nature of oneself and world, not with different models of the universe wherein we can happily choose one or the other. But we can gain by a reexamination of any model of the universe that concretizes a sense of isolation and otherness within this world of experience.

At least we may be able to learn to not be so inclined to think this experienced world perspective, this one life, is in fact categorically real and the permanent truth. Just recognize that every individual in the past, present or future has its own experienced world perspective. Our own perspective alone cannot categorically be the truth. This seems obvious, yet we continue to believe that the world is exactly how we currently think it to be. This certainty in our current beliefs would seem to be rationally impossible, yet we do it all the time.

The traditional teaching here uses the word *mithyā* to describe the dependent nature of all that is objectified by our minds. The world is not independent of our thinking of it. Our thinking of it varies in time, so naturally the specific nature of the world appears variable and is not categorically true. *Mithyā* is not unreality or simply imagination; it is just incomplete knowledge which an individual is satisfied or stuck with for the time being. Objects are taken as absolutely real only until we more clearly understand them. We talked about *mithyā* when discussing *Yoga Sūtra* 2.22.

The contemplative model of perception suggested here is that sight and the other senses, followed by the mind, directly expand or extend out into the universe. Where the senses cannot extend, the intellect reaches out beyond. Whereas sight can see that the stars are far away, only to the extent that the intellect knows *how* far away those stars are can one think them to be *that*

far away. The distance is only what each person thinks it to be. This alone can be the expanse of one's universe.

This contemplative model provides a perspective in which the individual is integrally connected to and is co-extensive with the entire phenomenal and known universe, in keeping with how we each know our universe of experience. This universe, because it is pervaded by the mind, is directly lit-up *in situ*, in place, by the awareness-being we are. As far as and to where the senses and mind are directed, that mind-pervaded universe of experience is lit by you, the awareness-being. One's self, as this awareness-being, is at least as vast as one's universe.

You are the witness-being lighting this mind that pervades this entire universe of your experience, from your perspective. As the only witness-being, you are the witness-being (*cit-sat*) lighting up all minds that pervade all their perspectives of this entire manifestation, the manifestation of the Lord as this universe. There is a continuing thought and belief in this particular mind, in my mind, that its experience is all there is, that this particular universe of experience is absolutely real. This misconception can be removed by the teaching, by *Vedānta* as *yoga*.

We will apply this understanding of the mind and of reality to gain a depth of understanding in those *sūtras* that deal with the individual and with the cosmos.

Here, if the mind is not limited to the confines of the brain, then the ability of a mind to come in contact with another's thoughts is not necessarily a stretch of imagination. It can be viewed as objectively possible within the contemplative model of perception. Just as external phenomenal objects can be contacted by our mind, so too can other minds. Your mind moves about within a shared field of minds – of your family members, neighbors, community, group, and so on. The more intimate and interconnected the shared field of minds, such as between loved ones, twins, etcetera, the more the possibilities of these mental contacts. In an objective sense your mind moves about in others' universes of experience, in their mind spaces too.

But an ability to intentionally contact another's mind seems thankfully limited in people. We generally seem to not have any more contact with the minds of others beyond mentally sensing another's emotion or someone's presence nearby. We would hardly recognize we have this subtle natural ability, unless it proves itself unusual in comparison with others. Different people naturally have, or perhaps can develop, a more extensive contact with others' minds. There are also some people we may diagnose as unstable who may attest to having an extensive form of

this ability.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one can perceive thoughts in another's mind, can read another's mind.

न च तत्-सालम्बनं तस्याविषयी-भूतत्वात् ॥ (3.20)
na ca tat-sālambanaṃ tasyāviṣayī-bhūtatvāt.

[*ca* – but; *na* – not; *tat-sa-ālambana* – accompanied with its basis; *a-viṣayī-bhūtatva* – is not within the scope; *tasya* – of that.]

But the other mind's thought **is not accompanied with its basis** – its object – **since** that latter **is not within the scope of that** *yogin's* mind. Hence, the particular reasons others think the way they do cannot be fully known.

One's mind can come into contact with another's current thought, but not with the object of that other's thought. A *yogin* may cognize another's feeling of desire, but the *yogin's* mind does not also contact, at the same time, the actual object of that desire. We say this because we look upon a thought as different from the object perceived. A latent tendency of the mind can also generate a desire, but, just as with the object of desire, that latent tendency will not be contacted by the *yogin's* mind. Latent tendencies involved in memory, in general, are not available to even the thinker's mind. A latent tendency, the originating thought, or the object of that thought cannot be read by another. Only the current manifest thought is available.

It might be possible that a manifest, though subliminal, thought may be noticeable to a *yogin*. Perhaps, whatever blocks the thinker from distinctly noticing his own subliminal thought would not be a block to the *yogin*. A subliminal thought, or aspect of a thought, is like an unnoticed object, such as a neighbor in a crowd, in one's field of perception (*see Yoga Sūtra* 4.17).

Why another person has a specific thought cannot be fully known even when this is interpreted as a superpower, since *fully* includes the original object and the latent tendency sources of the thought.

काय-रूप-संयमात् तद्-ग्राह्य-शक्ति-स्तम्भे चक्षुः-प्रकाशासंप्रयोगेऽन्तर- धानम् ॥ (3.21)
kāya-rūpa-saṃyamāt tad-grāhya-śakti-stambhe cakṣuḥ-prakāśāsaṃprayoge'ntar-dhānam.

[*saṁyama* – contemplation; *rūpa* – form; *kāya* – body; *tad-grāhya-śakti* – its capability of being grasped; *stambha* – stopped; *a-saṁprayoga* – non-contact; *prakāśa* – light; *cakṣus* – sight; *antar-dhāna* – concealment.]

From *saṁyama* on the form of a body when its capability of being grasped is stopped and there is non-contact of the light of sight, then there is concealment of the body, when need of avoiding others is helpful.

If this is taken as a *saṁyama* dealing with the form of other bodies, other objects, then this is a method for making those bodies unnoticed, invisible. These bodies may also become unavailable to the other senses, inaudible, etcetera, by taking one's attention from them. This may be seen as a development of the ability to intentionally not pay attention to what one knows is not helpful in life. Instead of being distracted by so many things, we do need to discipline our time and be selective in our attention.

Or perhaps, by reflection on the form of one's own body, understanding its nature of reflecting light and creating sounds, one can gain a certain stealth. This is a practicality when living in a forest with predators, a skill in the martial arts, and a science actively pursued today for military advantage.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one can gain a laser-like, undistracted focus of attention and one's body can become invisible to others.

सोपक्रमं निर्-उपक्रमं च कर्म तत्-संयमाद् अपरान्त-ज्ञानम् अरिष्टेभ्यो वा ॥ (3.22)

sopakramam nir-upakramam ca karma tat-samyamād aparānta-jñānam ariṣṭebhyo vā.

[*karma* – subtle result of willful action; *sa-upakrama* – has a sequence that is quick; *ca* – and; *nir-upakrama* – has a sequence that is slow; *saṁyama* – contemplation; *tat* – that; *vā* – or; *a-riṣṭas* – ill-omens; *jñāna* – knowledge; *apara-anta* – death.]

The *karma* (subtle result of willful action) has a sequence that is quick and has a sequence that is slow. From *saṁyama* on that, or from noticing ill-omens, there is knowledge of certain death and perhaps when it will come.

To have a body is to have the means to exhaust past *karma*. These *karmas* get exhausted early or later in life, but they eventually get exhausted, at which end the embodiment will end. Knowing this makes clear that the end is certain and relatively near. There are also said to be

omens that indicate that death is near. Some are very clear, such as closing one's ears and not hearing any sound, that is, there is little or no pulsing of blood heard. There are also said to be omens from the environment around or from the beyond. These are anecdotal beliefs that one may choose to take seriously or not.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one knows exactly when one will die.

मैत्र्य-आदिषु बलानि ॥ (3.23)
maitry-ādiṣu balāni.

[*maitrī-ādi* – goodwill, etcetera; *balas* – strengths.]

From *saṃyama on goodwill*,²³ [...*karuṇā* (compassion), *mudita* (approval), and *upekṣa* (allowance)], **there are strengths** of being in accord with all, in these ways.

Contemplating on these four makes a significant contribution to one's clarity. Despite what some commentators claim here, allowance (*upekṣa*) towards those who have committed offence and towards the offence itself is a virtue of great value. It is, once again, seeing everything as within the order, within the Lord's order. It is also a practical attitude because the *yogin* consciously limits the areas for which he or she needs to take responsibility. Seeing beyond good and bad is part of this. Often the tendency to criticize, condemn, and control others is a compensation for one's doubt that a person can control himself. The student will use this *sūtra* as a guide toward emotional strength and good judgment. *Samyama* is to be done at all stages in one's progress in *yoga*.²⁴

All the pairs of opposites we deal with in life are seen within this teaching tradition as the natural flow of the three *guṇas*. Stepping back from reactivity by means of contemplation gives the student freedom from unnecessary involvement with anything other than his or her proper concern. Apart from self or others' immediate defense, in the view of the *yogin*, only a parent and perhaps someone in law enforcement needs to restrain another. Watching the *guṇas* at work,

²³ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.33.

²⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.6.

one knows he cannot influence them except as they affect his own intentions and manifest in his own behavior. Watching the *guṇas* at work, in a sense, is this contemplation.

Clarity is not a mechanical clearing or cleaning of the mind. Clarity is being clear in the nature and quality of one's thoughts so that they are in keeping with a proper means of knowledge, are without error, and are free of unnecessary imagination. This results in knowing what one wants and needs, and knowing the means to that.

बलेषु हस्ति-बलादीनि ॥ (3.24)
baleṣu hasti-balādīni.

[*balas* – strengths; *bala-ādi* – strength, etcetera; *hastin* – elephant.]

From *saṁyama* **on strengths there is the strength**, [...grace, balance, and so on] **of an elephant**, and of other creatures. How the creatures exhibit their powers can be helpful in your own life.

Beyond their names, many of the *yogāsanas* draw from animals as examples of how to stretch, relax, and tone one's body and to fill it with maximal energy. The elephant is certainly an Indian icon of strength, steadfastness, dexterity, grace, and even wisdom. Other animals and forces in nature also have strengths and abilities that are worth contemplating. Many of the martial arts have adopted this study. Our sciences study nature for these same reasons.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one can gain super strength.

प्रवृत्त्य्-आलोक-न्यासात् सूक्ष्म-व्यवहित-विप्रकृष्ट-ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.25)
pravṛtṭy-āloka-nyāsāt sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam.

[*nyāsa* – directing; *āloka* – light; *pravṛtti* – outward; *jñāna* – knowledge; *sūkṣma* – subtle; *vyavahita* – concealed; *viprakṛṣṭa* – remote.]

By directing the light of the intellect **outward**, **there is the knowledge of the subtle, the concealed, and the remote** in this universe before us.

Where the senses cannot penetrate, the intellect uncovers the rest of the universe. Our sciences have already demonstrated that this extends from the tiny loops of energy at the heart of matter

to the farthest limits of space, and back in time from the first moments of this universe to the farthest reaches of possible futures. This teaching tradition goes further in that it opens this mind to the mind of the Lord, and in that way it resolves with objectivity this intellect, along with the entire universe, all the way to its singular reality. The light of awareness lights the way for this intellect.

भुवन-ज्ञानं सूर्ये संयमात् ॥ (3.26)
bhuvana-jñānaṃ sūrye saṃyamāt.

[*saṃyama* – contemplation; *sūrya* – sun; *jñāna* – knowledge; *bhuvanas* – worlds.]

From *saṃyama* on the sun there is knowledge of the worlds – the other solar systems and the realms beyond the physical.

The energy of the big bang is the source of the hydrogen and helium that eventually formed the stars by way of the gravitational attraction of these two elements. These stars are the source of all the other elements in the universe needed to form all the earths there may be. The gravity of the suns and their elements are the cause for the formations of planets. And the suns heat those planets to allow life to exist. This is what our sciences tell us.

This was recognized, in very general, less exacting technical terms, by the tradition we are studying. In their terminology, the earth (*bhū*) is predominantly mass (*tamas*), while the sun (*sva*, the heavens including the sun) is predominantly energy (*sattva*), the obvious source of all energy on earth. The atmosphere (*bhuvā*) between the earth and the heavens is predominantly motion or turbulence (*rajas*). Between mass and energy, between *tamas* and *sattva*, is the entire makeup of the universe (*bhū-bhuvā-sva*, *tamas-rajas-sattva*).

Further, the light (the truth) of the sun removes the darkness here, so the sun also stands for the light of intelligence, the awareness itself that is the light of the mind.²⁵ Intelligence (*sattva*, also called *satya*), is the basic, subtle nature or reality of the universe. It manifests in the mind

²⁵ 'तत् सवितुर् वरेण्यं भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि। धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात्' "We meditate upon that to be worshipped of the sun as this effulgence of the Lord which impels our intellects." (*Gāyatrī Mantra, Ṛg Veda* 3.62.10). 'केन इषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः' "Impelled by what (agent, by its mere presence) does the mind go directed (to its object)?" (*Kena Up.* 1.1).

and to the senses as motion (*rajas*) and mass (*tamas*), by way of name (the motion of forming a thought) and form (the seeming fixed structure of the motion of thought), like the appearance of distinct patterns when the glowing end of a firebrand or incense stick is waved in darkness. In this firebrand example, the glow is the awareness-intelligence that alone is both the movement and the patterns, and their absence.

The sun is also considered the door to the subtle heavenly worlds, and beyond to the truth of everything.²⁶ This is recognition that heavens and hells are subtle forms of energy within the universe. They are not specific locations in space. Neither the physical body nor even a subtle body goes to heaven or a hell in a particular location in physical space. The subtle body – the mind and the subtle powers of sensing and action – has gone to various subtle realms before and after the death of this physical body. These are regions of thought-like reality, like in a realm of dream. Their order up and down is in terms of their pleasant or unpleasant valuation, not in terms of physical space. These subtle realms are the topic of the scriptures and the literature based on these scriptures.

The sun is especially seen as a doorway to the highest heaven, *Brahma-loka*.²⁷ There one

²⁶ 'आदित्यं गच्छति एतद् वै खलु लोक-द्वारम्' "He goes to the sun, this indeed is the doorway to the [highest] realms [of heaven]." (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.6.5 and 6). 'हिरण्मयेन पात्रेण सत्यस्य अपिहितं मुखम्। तद् त्वं पूषन् अपावृणु सत्य-धर्माय दृष्टये' "The face [i.e., the true nature] of *satya* (i.e., *brahman*) is [as though] hidden by the golden vessel (*pātra*) [i.e., the blinding sun]. O Sun, please remove that [*pātra*, the blinding manifest form of yourself] for showing [the *satya*] to [me] the one whose nature is that *satya*." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 5.15.1).

²⁷ 'ते ये एवम् एतद् विदुः, ये च अमी अरण्ये श्रद्धां सत्यम् उपासते,' "Those who meditate upon this [five-fire ritual] in this way, and those in the forest who meditate with faith upon *satya* [i.e., *Hiraṇya-garbha*, the limit of subtlety but as 'other' than oneself, falling short of limitless *brahman*], they enter into the [funeral] fire[-deity], from the fire[-deity]" 'ते अर्चिः अभिसम्भवन्ति, अर्चिषः अहः, अहः आपूर्यमाण-पक्षम् आपूर्यमाण-पक्षात् यान् षण्मासान् उदन् आदित्यः एति, मासेभ्यः देव-लोकं, देव-लोकात् आदित्यम्, आदित्याद् वैद्युत्,' "they go to the day[-deity], from the day[-deity] to the waxing fortnight[-deity], from the waxing fortnight[-deity] to those six-months[-deities] where the sun travels north, by those six-months[-deities] to the heaven of the deities, from the heaven of the deities to the sun[-deity], from the sun[-deity] to the lightning-deity." 'तान् वैद्युतान् पुरुषः मानसः एत्य ब्रह्म-लोकान् गमयति,' "From the lightning-deity a person born of the mind [of *Hiraṇya-garbha*] comes and takes them to the realms called *brahma-loka* [the highest heaven, wherein one can be taught *brahma-vidyā*, presumably, in the highest of these realms and get out of this rebirth cycle completely]." 'ते तेषु ब्रह्म-लोकेषु पराः परावतः वसन्ति, तेषां न पुनर्-आवृत्तिः' "In those realms of *brahma-loka* they live a long time.

enjoys an extended opportunity to gain knowledge that frees one from moving through all realms of heavens and hells. Let your contemplation tie what you know from science together with what *Patañjali* and the *Upaniṣads* say. They are not at odds; they are helpful perspectives from those who have gone before.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one gains detailed knowledge of the universe as this tradition understands it – with seven heavens (including the earthly realm in the lowest of these heavens) and seven hells, and the various regions within each one of these. These details are already given in various accounts throughout the classic literature of this culture.

चन्द्रे तारा-व्यूह-ज्ञानम्॥ (3.27)
candre tārā-vyūha-jñānam.

[*candra* – moon; *jñāna* – knowledge; *vyūha* – arrangement; *tārās* – stars.]

From *saṃyama* on the moon there is knowledge of the relative arrangement of the stars – the zodiac, and the path for rebirth.

The moon traverses the visible sky in its nightly journey. The constellations and their positions were important to the herding and agrarian segments of this society in need of knowledge of the seasons, and for maintaining their ritual calendar. The lunar calendar is based on the movement, and the waxing and waning, of the moon against the backdrop of the constellations.

In this tradition, the moon is seen as the doorway to all the lower heavenly realms,²⁸ from

For them there is no return again [during the life of this *Hiraṇya-garbhā*, if at all, they will return upon the dissolution of that current *brahma-loka* during *pralaya*, the dissolution of all worlds].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 6.2.15).

²⁸ ‘अथ ये यज्ञेन दानेन तपसा लोकान् जयन्ति ते धूमम् अभिसम्भवन्ति, धूमाद् रात्रिं रात्रेः पक्षीयमाण-पक्षम् अपक्षीयमाण-पक्षाद् यान् षण्मासान् दक्षिण-आदित्यः एति, मासेभ्यः पितृ-लोकं, पितृ-लोकात् चन्द्रं,’ “Whereas, those who win [heavenly] worlds through ritual, charity, and prayerful discipline enter into the [funeral] smoke[-deity], from the smoke[-deity] they go to the night[-deity], from the night[-deity] to the waning fortnight[-deity], from the waning fortnight[-deity] to the six-months[-deities] where the sun travels south, from those six-months[-deities] to the heaven of the ancestors, from the heaven of the ancestors to the moon[-deity].” ‘ते चन्द्रं प्राप्य अन्नं भवन्ति, तान् तत्र देवाः यथा सोमं राजानम् आप्यायस्व अपक्षीयस्व इति, एवम् एनान् तत्र भक्षयन्ति, तेषां यदा तत् पर्यवैति अथ इमम् एव आकाशम् अभिनिष्पद्यन्ते, आकाशाद् वायुं, वायोः वृष्टिं, वृष्टेः पृथिवीं,’

which there will be a return to this world of opportunity to create new, beneficial *karma* or get out of the transmigration cycle altogether.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, by contemplation on this nightly wanderer there is detailed knowledge of all the constellations.

ध्रुवे तद्-गति-ज्ञानम्॥ (3.28)
dhruve tad-gati-jñānam.

[*dhruva* – pole star; *jñāna* – knowledge; *tad-gati* – their movement.]

From *saṁyama* on the pole star there is knowledge of their movement – the movement of the constellations and the annual and epochal rhythms of the universe from the human perspective.

Around the Northern pole star, the constellations of stars slowly revolve as the earth daily spins around its axis. The stars visually arise from the horizon four minutes earlier every day throughout the year because of the combination of the earth's spin on its axis and its rotation around the sun.²⁹ Together, by these one can tell the time in the night. As the tipped earth rotates around the sun, the constellations revolve at a slightly different angle throughout the year, so one can also tell the date. Even the pole star revolves in a circle around the earth's axis once

“Reaching the moon[-deity] they [i.e., their *karmas* that brought them here] become food. There the deities enjoy them [like one enjoys] King *Soma* [saying] thus, ‘May you increase and [then] diminish [like the moon].’ When that [*karma*] of theirs elapses, then they fall out [of the lunar heaven] to this space [i.e., they, being emptied of their load of *karma* that was consumed by and thus swelled the waxing of the moon, become like empty space], from space to air, from air to rain, from rain to the earth.” ‘ते पृथिवीं प्राप्य अन्नं भवन्ति, ते पुनः पुरुष-अग्नौ हूयन्ते, ततः योषा-अग्नौ जायन्ते, लोकान् प्रति उत्थायिनः ते एवम् एव अनुपरिवर्तन्ते,’ “Reaching the earth they [i.e., their watery bodies] become food again, and they are offered into the [digestive] fire of a male, from him they [as seed] are born in the [reproductive] fire of a female, in this way alone rising [again] to [other] worlds they revolve [in *saṁsāra*].” ‘अथ ये एतौ पन्थानौ न विदुः ते कीटाः पतङ्गाः यद् इदं दन्दशूकम्’ “But, those who do not know [and follow] either of these two paths [of rites to the lunar heavens and of meditations to the solar heavens] [directly] become [i.e., may be born as] worms, flies, and this [bug, etc.] that keeps biting [us].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 6.2.16).

²⁹ *Skywatching (A Nature Company Guide)*, David H. Levy, Time-Life Books, 1998, p. 86.

every 26,000 years as the earth wobbles on its axis like a spinning top that is off center.³⁰

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, there is detailed knowledge of the movement of the constellations around the pole star.

नाभि-चक्रे काय-व्यूह-ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.29)
nābhi-cakre kāya-vyūha-jñānam.

[*nābhi-cakra* – navel plexus; *jñāna* – knowledge; *vyūha* – arrangement; *kāya* – body.]

From *saṃyama* on the navel plexus, as a point of reference physically and energetically, **there is knowledge of the arrangement of the body.**

Like the fixed pole star, so the central navel plexus may be used as a fixed point of reference to contemplate the arrangement of the various systems in the body.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, there is detailed knowledge of the various systems of the body.

कण्ठ-कूपे क्षुत्-पिपासा-निवृत्तिः ॥ (3.30)
kaṇṭha-kūpe kṣut-pipāsā-nivṛtīḥ.

[*kaṇṭha-kūpa* – cavity of the throat; *nivṛtī* – suppression; *kṣudh* – hunger; *pipāsā* – thirst.]

From *saṃyama* on the cavity of the throat there is suppression of hunger and thirst – when needed.

Hunger and thirst may be suppressed by this contemplation. The mind plays, or can play, a large role in what we otherwise consider to be bodily processes outside of our control.

कूर्म-नाड्यां स्थैर्यम् ॥ (3.31)
kūrma-nādyāṃ sthairyam.

³⁰ *ibid.*, p. 87.

[*kūrma-nāḍī* – bronchial passage[s]; *sthairya* – calmness.]

From *saṁyama* on the bronchial passage[s], literally, *the turtle tube*, there is calmness.

This is related to control of the breath in that, just as slowing the breath calms the mind, watching the breath in the upper chest also calms the mind. This can be taken as the focus on the presence of the breath in *prāṇa-vīkṣaṇa* (*Yoga Sūtra* 2.51), the focal point for life's energy, since this is where the essential life force of air is centered in the body. We may gain more energy from food than from air, but we can survive weeks without food, while only minutes without air.

मूर्ध-ज्योतिषि सिद्ध-दर्शनम् ॥ (3.32)
mūrdha-jyotiṣi siddha-darśanam.

[*mūrdhan-jyotis* – light in the head; *darśana* – vision; *siddhas* – accomplished beings.]

From *saṁyama* on the light in the head there is the vision of ethereal accomplished beings that may help guide one's way in the afterlife, or inspire one in this.

There are references to *siddhas* (accomplished beings) in the *Purāṇa* literature, and *saṁyama* on them is said to be a way of contacting them. If there is a description of any thing or any place, the human mind will find a way to reach it, and there will be those who claim to have the only or best way. The available teaching sources, present in these appropriately analyzed scriptures and texts, are enough to point the way to *yoga*'s freedom. If these teaching sources were not available at certain times or places, perhaps the mind would still be able to connect to a source wiser than itself.

These *siddhas* are subtle beings that only the mind reaches, similar to someone you encounter in dream, who have a certain knowledge of these teachings. Being still within *samsāra* after their previous life, they themselves are not liberated. They may know about this knowledge, but would not as yet have fully assimilated it.³¹ A teacher can be one who is fluent in the teaching methodology of the scriptures, but has not yet assimilated the knowledge being taught. He or she may be a *śrotriya* (scriptural master), but not yet a *brahma-niṣṭha* (reality master). Or, if they have assimilated the knowledge, then their *karma*, yet to be exhausted, is still somehow

³¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 4.32 & 34.

maintaining their subtle body after the death of the physical body. In either case, the best of knowledge they can impart to those who contact them would be this same teaching – that perfect reality always exists everywhere, is right here now, and you are that.

You would know if there was another teaching that is more valid and reliable than this teaching. If you do know, you should take advantage of it.

A more traditional way of understanding what the *sūtras* mean by the *siddhas* and the afterlife is found in the *Upaniṣads* that talk about the path the subtle body takes when it leaves the physical body behind. *Siddhas* can be subtle beings who guide us along the path to higher or lower heavens. Or, one's actions and meditations on the shining conscious being behind the right eye (*see* footnote for *jyotiṣmatin* in *Yoga Sūtra* 1.36) gain for you the highest heaven within the universe, *Brahma-loka*, in that world there will be other likewise accomplished (*siddha*) beings in residence.³² Or, as an *upāsana* (meditation), in this life itself, one can gain the

³² 'अथ यत्र एतद् अस्मात् शरीराद् उत्क्रामति अथ एतैः एव रश्मिभिः ऊर्ध्वम् आक्रमते सः ओम् इति वा ह उद् वा मीयते सः यावत् क्षिप्येन् मनः तावद् आदित्यं गच्छति एतद् वै खलु लोक-द्वारं विदुषां प्रपदनं, निरोधः अ-विदुषाम्॥' "Thus when this one [the common person] departs from this body, as well as the one who dies [uttering, i.e., meditating upon] 'Om,' then one goes upward through these rays alone [that come from the sun into the subtle pathways in the body called the *nāḍīs* reaching to the heart, and from them back to the sun, *see Chāndogya Up.* 8.6.2, i.e., there is no disconnect of energy between the center of oneself and the representative center of the universe]. After the mind fails [to remain tied to this body], then one goes to the sun, this indeed is the doorway to the [highest] realms [of heaven]. There is passage [through the sun] for the [sufficiently] wise, but there is obstruction [there] for the unwise." 'तद् एषः श्लोकः। शतं च एका च हृदयस्य नाड्यः तासां मूर्धानम् अभिनिःसृता एका। तथा ऊर्ध्वम् आयन् अ-मृतत्वम् एव विष्वन् अन्याः उत्क्रमणे भवन्ति उत्क्रमणे भवन्ति' "There is this verse – 'One hundred and one *nāḍīs* of the heart. One of them goes out to the head. Going upward through that, one attains deathlessness. The other [*nāḍīs*] [going] in different directions are when going out [in those other directions, upon death].'" (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.6.5 and 6, and *Kaṭha Up.* 2.3.16). 'सर्व-द्वाराणि संयम्य मनः हृदि निरुध्य च। मूर्ध्नि आधाय आत्मनः प्राणम् आस्थितः योग-धारणाम्॥' "Closing all the gates [i.e., the sense organs] and [as a visualization] withdrawing the mind into the heart; placing one's breath at [the top of] the head, and remaining [there] holding [the last breath] by [the strength of] *yoga*; 'ओम् इति एक-अक्षरं ब्रह्म व्याहरन् माम् अनुस्मरन्। यः प्रयाति त्यजन् देहं सः याति परमां गतिम्' "chanting the single syllable 'Om,' which is *brahman*; remembering Me accordingly [through My teaching], [while] giving up the body – the one [*yogin* who is not yet fully wise] who departs [by movement as it were] – that one reaches the most exalted end [within *samsāra*, i.e., *brahma-loka*, the seventh heaven, where one may be taught *brahma-vidyā* and thus freed]." (*Bh. Gītā* 8.12-13).

greatness (the *siddhi*) and brilliance of whatever, or whomever, *siddha* is meditated upon.³³

प्रातिभाद् वा सर्वम्॥ (3.33)
prātibhād vā sarvam.

[*vā* – and; *prātibha* – light; *sarva* – everything.]

And from *saṁyama* on the light of intelligence³⁴ there is knowledge of everything that needs to be known.

By intelligence, which is the mind lit in awareness, alone we come to know everything of our world. This fact can be lost in our interactions with the world. The mind often appears transparent and not a factor when we perceive the world, but it is only by the form our mind takes in perceiving and understanding the world that we can ever know anything. Whatever limitations or colorings the mind has, these limitations and colorings inform our knowledge of everything in our world. Contemplating this gives rise to renewed commitment to gaining more clarity of mind so that it does not unnecessarily limit and afflict one’s world of experience.

Alternatively, the *sūtra* can be taken as: Or from the light (*prāti-bha*) [of intelligence just before total absorption in *samādhi*] there is [knowledge of] everything.

The prefix, *prāti-* (= *prati-*), can mean *pre-* or *before*. As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, just before total absorption of understanding in *samādhi* that is enlightenment, there is a power of knowing everything – according to some in the *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* tradition.

However, this knowing everything is an expression in the *Upaniṣad* tradition for knowing everything to be known. One knows that everything is the reality that is oneself, so, in knowing oneself as such, one knows everything in essence. For example, when one knows the nature of

³³ ‘यः एव असौ आदित्ये पुरुषः...अतिष्ठाः सर्वेषां भूतानां मूर्धा राजा इति वा अहम् एतम् उपास इति, सः यः एतम् एवम् उपास्ते अति-ष्ठाः सर्वेषां भूतानां मूर्धा राजा भवति’ “That person [*brahman*] which is in the sun...I contemplate this one as existing across all beings, as [their] head and resplendent. The one who contemplates this one in this way [also] exists across all beings, as their head and resplendent.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 2.1.2).

³⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.25.

clay, one knows the essential nature of all things made of clay. In the *Upaniṣads* the knowing everything by knowing reality itself is the enlightenment. Nothing more needs to be known for one to be totally free. There is even an entire *Upaniṣad* called *Muṇḍaka* that is devoted to answering this specific question, “Upon having known what is all this known?”³⁵ With this knowledge the knower comes to terms with all fear that is the result of giving absolute reality to what is other than oneself, to what appears to limit and afflict oneself.

The student can see here the major distinction between the freedom the *Veda* tradition teaches, the tradition *Patanjali* comes from, and the misinterpretation by those who see *yoga* contemplation as bringing about a fundamental change to oneself to become free and with superpowers.

Sāṅkhya-Yoga writers misinterpret what *yoga* freedom is. They think that the mind has to disappear for freedom to arise in *samādhi*. The knowing of everything, if it happens, can only be possible just prior to the mind disappearing in *samādhi* absorption in which there is no other thing known. It is then designated as a superpower that comes to the meditator just prior to this absorption. Total absorption is their goal; it is a lonely goal (*kaivalya*, freedom in isolation). But this is a misinterpretation of freedom. It is not even consistent with the second *sūtra* of *Patañjali*'s text – “(From *yoga*'s success) then the witness remains in its own nature.” If freedom was not already one's nature, then remaining in one's nature could not be freedom.

Freedom cannot be a state or stage arrived at in contemplation, preceded or not by a superpower of all-knowledge. If freedom were a result of contemplation, and not the very nature of the self, then, like every other result gained in the world, it would be limited in time and equal to its cost, and could just as well slip away in time and value. As with every experience, we soon enough get used to it and start demanding more and better and new. When has experience ever been anything else than that?

हृदये चित्त-संवित् ॥ (3.34)
hrdaye citta-samvit.

³⁵ ‘शौनकः ह वै महा-शालः अङ्गिरसं विधिवत् उपसन्नः पप्रच्छ। कस्मिन् नु भगवः विज्ञाते सर्वम् इदं विज्ञातं भवति इति’ “*Saunaka*, a great householder, appropriately approached *Aṅgiras* and asked, ‘O Lord, upon having known what is all this known?’” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.1.3).

[*hṛdaya* – center; *saṃvid* – knowledge; *citta* – mind.]

From *samyama* on the center, literally, *the heart*, and in particular the limitless expanse within the heart, **there is knowledge of the mind** – and the limitless expanse within, lit by the light of awareness, like the sun and stars light the universe outside.

When this tradition talks about the heart, it is talking about the mind, in particular the intellect (*buddhi*). There is no knowing that goes on in the physical heart, but it is in the heart that one can be said to feel the truth of wisdom.

Placing the mind or intellect in the heart is an imagery that has been used in the West too. The heart is the center of our body that remains active day and night. The heart is said to be the seat or wellspring of the mind. The heart stands for the center of one’s being, and that is realistically the mind, since one is essentially a cognitive being. Even now we still point to our heart when we talk about our deeply held convictions, and deeply held convictions are what constitute the intellect. Our language, even today, allows the use of the word ‘heart’ when we are indicating where we know or believe something. As was pointed out before, the mind is subtle and thus is not really something that can be categorized as having, or being limited to, a physical location. But as the center of one’s own mind, in any culture, the heart is as good as any place to point.

The heart is as vast as the mind. Within it can be seen the entire cosmos.³⁶

सत्त्व-पुरुषयोर् अत्यन्तासङ्कीर्णयोः प्रत्ययाविशेषो भोगः परार्थत्वात् स्वार्थ-संयमात् पुरुष-ज्ञानम्॥ (3.35)
sattva-puruṣayor atyantāsaṅkīrṇayoḥ pratyayāviśeṣo bhogaḥ parārthatvāt svārtha-
samyamāt puruṣa-jñānam.

³⁶ ‘यावान् वै अयम् आकाशः तावान् एषः अन्तर-हृदये आकाशः। उभे अस्मिन् द्यावा-पृथिवी अन्तः एव समाहिते॥’ “Indeed as vast as this space [in the cosmos] is this space inside the heart (*antar-hṛdayaḥ ākāśaḥ*) [i.e., the mind]. In this [mind, the space in the heart] are contained [are contemplated] (*samāhite*) within both sky and earth,” ‘उभौ अग्निः च वायुः च सूर्या-चन्द्रमसौ उभौ विद्युत्-नक्षत्राणि। यद् च अस्य इह अस्ति यद् च न अस्ति सर्वं तद् अस्मिन् समाहितम्’ “...both fire and wind, both sun and moon, and lightening and stars. Whatever here one has and does not have [in this world], all that is contained [is contemplated] in this [mind, the space in the heart].” (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.1.3).

[*bhoga* – experience; *arthatva* – sake; *para* – other; *a-viśeṣa* – non-distinguishing; *pratyaya* – notion; *sattva* – mind; *puruṣa* – self; *atyanta* – completely; *a-saṅkīrṇa* – separate. *saṁyama* – contemplation; *artha* – sake; *sva* – the self; *jñāna* – knowledge; *puruṣa* – self.]

Seeking **experience for the sake of the other** – all other objects – **is a non-distinguishing** – a mixed up – **notion between the mind**, literally, *pure-energy*, **and the *puruṣa* (self)**, **which are completely separate. From *saṁyama* for the sake of the self there is knowledge of the *puruṣa* (self).**

Objects by their nature are limited, and the self by its nature is unlimited. We seek experience because of our binding desire for objects as unending sources of satisfaction. Unending satisfaction is the nature of only the self. Mutual imposing their natures is thinking the objects are limitless and the source of satisfaction, whereas oneself is limited and not satisfied. When this mutual imposing of natures of oneself and the objects is there in the confused mind, and oneself is thus thought to be unacceptable, then there is a drive for the sake of these objects of experience. This *yoga* is for turning away from this delusion and seeking the real, lasting satisfaction in the self.

Sattva (pure-energy) is the *guṇa* that constitutes the essential nature of the mind. The other two *guṇas*, *rajas* (agitation) and *tamas* (darkness), are considered impurities of the mind. These two *guṇas* allow the mind to experience all objects, since every object is a composite of the three *guṇas*. If these two *guṇas* are predominant in the mind, they are said to inhibit the ability of the mind to contemplate their reality as dependent on the self that is free of the *guṇas*.³⁷ When

³⁷ ‘तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकम् अन्-आमयम्। सुख-सङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञान-सङ्गेन च अन्-अघम्॥’ “Among these [three *guṇas*], *sattva* – since it is free from impurity – is illuminating and free from affliction – [yet] binds by [one’s] attachment to pleasure and by [one’s] attachment to knowing [i.e., attachment/identity is the problem, not the pleasure or knowledge], O *Arjuna*.” ‘रजः राग-आत्मकं विद्धि तृष्ण-आसङ्ग-समुद्भवम्। तद् निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्म-सङ्गेन देहिनम्॥’ “Know *rajas*, which is of the nature of attraction [i.e., it is an impurity to the natural clarity of the *sattva* mind – projecting virtues on things they don’t have], as born of [i.e., increased by] longing and attachment. O *Arjuna*, it binds the embodied one by attachment to activity.” ‘तमः तु अ-ज्ञान-जं विद्धि मोहनं सर्व-देहिनाम्। प्रमाद-आलस्य-निद्राभिः तद् निबध्नाति भारत’ “Whereas, know *tamas* – for all those identified with their body – as delusion [i.e., as the lack of discerning the difference between oneself and objects of desire] born of [i.e., perpetuated by] ignorance. It binds by carelessness, laziness, and sleepiness, O *Arjuna*.” (*Bh.*

rajas and *tamas* are in abeyance, when they have only their appropriate proportion, the *sattva* predominant mind – in contemplation of the self, in removing its wrong notions of the self – becomes like a clear crystal unclouded by ignorance and doubt.

The *sattva* mind in assimilated knowledge is said to have the form, so to speak, of the self, of *brahman* (nondual reality), called *a-khaṇḍa-ākāra-vṛtti* – the knowledge that limitations have no separate reality from the self, that there is only one undivided reality.³⁸ In terms of contemplation, this is said to be the dawn of self-knowledge, of knowledge that is true to the nature of the self. The tradition clearly says, though, that it is the words of the teaching from a capable teacher to the adept student that afford the possibility of realizing that knowledge.³⁹ The practice of contemplation supports and helps the assimilation of that knowledge; it does not produce it.⁴⁰

Ignorance with regard to the nature of the self, once burned away in the light of truth, cannot stage a comeback. Just as one clearly and doubtlessly knows one exists, and this is not forgotten, similarly when one clearly and doubtlessly knows one exists free of limitations, this cannot be

Gītā 14.6–8).” ‘न अन्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टा अनुपश्यति। गुणेभ्यः च परं वेत्ति मद-भावं सः अधिगच्छति’ “When the seer sees [according to the teaching] that there is not a doer other than the *guṇas* and knows [the self] as beyond the *guṇas*, [then] that one attains My nature [called *mokṣa* (freedom).” (**Bh. Gītā** 14.19).

³⁸ ‘मनसः वृत्ति-शून्यस्य (भेद-वृत्ति-रहितस्य अ-खण्ड-आकारतया) ब्रह्म-आकारतया स्थितिः’ “The status of the mind whose thoughts are unreal (*sūnya*) by having the form of *brahman*” (**Pātañjala-Yoga-Sūtrāṇi-Bhoja-Sadāśiva-Vṛtti** 3.3).

³⁹ ‘तद्-विज्ञान-अर्थं सः गुरुम् एव अभिगच्छेत् समित्-पाणिः श्रोत्रियं ब्रह्म-निष्ठम्’ “For assimilated knowledge of that [reality] one must with ritual fuel in hand [as a sign of dutifulness] approach only a teacher (*guru*) who is learned in the scripture (*śrotriya*) and established in that reality (*brahma-niṣṭha*).” (**Muṇḍaka Up.** 1.2.12). ‘अन-अन्य-प्रोक्ते गतिः अत्र न अस्ति अणीयान् हि अ-तर्क्यम् अणु-प्रमाणात्’ “When taught by one who is [established] in no other (*an-anya*) [reality], there is no going (*gati*) [astray] in regard to it. Because, it is subtler (*aṇīyas*) than the subtle (*aṇu*) and unapproachable by mere logic (*atarkya*).” (**Kaṭha Up.** 1.2.8).

⁴⁰ ‘वेद अहम् एतं पुरुषं महान्तम् आदित्य-वर्णं तमसः परस्तात्। तम् एव विदित्वा अति-मृत्युम् एति न अन्यः पन्थाः विद्यते अयनाय’ “I know this fullness (*puruṣa*) that is limitless (*mahat*), clear and bright as the sun (*āditya-varṇa*), and beyond the darkness [of ignorance]. By knowledge of that alone (*tam eva viditvā*) one goes beyond death. There is no other way of getting [there].” (**Svetāśvatara Up.** 3.8).

forgotten. One is no longer deluded by the appearance of limitations, thinking them to be real, to be as real as me. This contemplation is an appreciation of myself as unlimited reality, free of any mixing up with that which is not self. Compare this *sūtra* with *Yoga Sūtras* 2.17, 2.18, 2.20, and 2.21.

The only way one can know objects as other is through the duality of taking them as other. When contemplating simply oneself, there can only be non-duality, since one's self is but the reality of everything.

ततः प्रातिभ-श्रावण-वेदनादर्शास्वाद-वार्त्ता जायन्ते ॥ (3.36)
tataḥ prātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanādarśāsvāda-vārttā jāyante.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *jāyante* – arise; *prātibha* – light; *vārttās* – activities; *śrāvaṇa* – hearing; *vedanā* – sensation; *ādarśa* – sight; *āsvāda* – taste.]

From that *saṃyama* for the sake of the self may **arise** various degrees of powers of **the light** of intelligence,⁴¹ **and the activities of hearing, sensation – touch, sight, and taste.**

The word *vārttā* (*vārtā* in some texts) is from the Sanskrit verbal root *vṛt* (*to happen* or *take place*) and generally means an *occupation*. It is rendered here as the *activities* of the four senses. Some take the word to mean *smell*, because of the word being limited sometimes to *agricultural occupation*. We can imagine the smell of the rich earth, the element connected with smell, in that occupation. Then the *sūtra* would read, “...the light [of intelligence], hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell.”

This *sūtra* indicates that meditation, or certain forms of meditations, can enhance the senses. For whatever entertainment or occupational value that would be, it can be considered a superpower.

ते समाधाव् उपसर्गा व्युत्थाने सिद्धयः ॥ (3.37)
te samādhāv upasargā vyutthāne siddhayaḥ.

⁴¹ See the alternative meaning of *Yoga Sūtra* 3.33.

[*siddhis* – superpowers; *vyutthāna* – active mind; *te* – these; *upasarogas* – impediments [or secondary]; *samādhi* – contemplation.]

Though being *siddhis* (superpowers) in the active mind outside of contemplation, these are, or may be, impediments [or secondary] in final progress in *samādhi*.

Superpowers or imagined superpowers are not the nature of limitless reality that is the goal of *samādhi*. They are possible side-effects along the way. If they are mistaken as the main goal, they become *upasarogas* (impediments) waiting along the way, from which one may not get back on the path. Final wisdom is relatively uncommon (see *Bhagavad Gītā* 7.3); seeking can be a drawn out process. There are those who settle for the limited attainments of powers and perhaps the charisma to attract followers. There is no shortage of followers. This *sūtra* encourages the student to maintain focus on the goal and the worthy guides to that goal.

These superpowers in and of themselves are not impediments. However, they can become impediments when they invoke in the seeker attitudes not helpful to success in *yoga*. Any attention the student gives to the superpowers should not be counter to *vairāgya* (non-attachment).⁴² The superpowers can only become impediments when the side-effects become ends in themselves.

The pronoun *te* (these) in this *sūtra* refers specifically to the *siddhis* in *sūtra* 3.36. These are not intrinsically different, though, from all the other *siddhis* in the preceding and following *sūtras*, in regards to being possible impediments. All of them are attractive side-effects (*gauṇa-phalas*). They are neither the accomplishments of skill in contemplation (*saṃyama*), the gaining of a cosmic perspective in the mind, nor the attainment of greater clarity of mind that was pointed out in the first chapter as the immediate goal of contemplation. Nor are they the final attainment of *samādhi* culminating in assimilated knowledge (*prajñā*). So they are not part of the direct path to assimilated knowledge. They are like the other *gauṇa-phalas* mentioned here and there in the scriptures, such as gaining abundance or fame.⁴³ By the very same reasoning

⁴² *Yoga Sūtras* 1.12 & 15.

⁴³ ‘सः यः एवं वेद प्रतिष्ठति। अन्नवान् अन्न-अदः भवति। महान् भवति। प्रजया पशुभिः ब्रह्म-वर्चसेन। महान् कीर्त्या’ “One who knows [through contemplation] thusly becomes established [in the ultimate being within (*parame vyoman*)]. That one possesses food and is the eater of food, and is bountiful in progeny, wealth,

that the *siddhis* in *sūtra* 3.36 can be impediments, all the superpower *siddhis* mentioned in this chapter are indicated by *sūtra* 3.37 as capable of being impediments.

However, the *siddhis* in *sūtra* 3.36 were possible from the contemplation in *sūtra* 3.35. That contemplation has a quite distinct topic. The contemplation in *sūtra* 3.35 was on the ultimate topic, the *puruṣa* free of misidentification with the mind or other objects. This contemplation would be the contemplation detailed in the first chapter of these *sūtras*. Any side-effect there would be considered by *yogins* possessing sufficient *vairāgya* (non-attachment) far short of his or her goal.

Moreover, the other contemplations in this section are on various objects within the universe. Those contemplations may even be suggested for persons interested in other disciplines besides *yoga*. Students of astronomy, astrology, healing, martial arts, and other disciplines may find them useful. These superpowers, even in limited measure, may be their ultimate goal. They would not be impediments for such seekers. Since *sūtras* can have more than one meaning or application, this can be an additional and acceptable interpretation of this *sūtra*, and thus of this section of *sūtras*.

Perhaps another way to understand the superpowers, while avoiding here the consideration of them being impediments, is by taking the word *upasarga* as meaning *additional* or *secondary*, opposed to *pradhāna* (primary). The simple, alternative meaning of the *sūtra* would be, “Though being superpowers, upon arising out of contemplation these are secondary to final progress in *samādhi*.”

बन्ध-कारण-शैथिल्यात् प्रचार-संवेदनाच् च चित्तस्य पर-शरीरावेशः ॥ (3.38)
bandha-kāraṇa-śaithilyāt pracāra-saṃvedanāc ca cittasya para-śārīrāveśaḥ.

[*śaithilya* – loosening; *kāraṇa* – cause; *bandha* – bondage; *ca* – and; *saṃvedana* – fully understanding; *pracāra* – travel; *citta* – mind; *āveśa* – entering; *para-śārīra* – another body.]

From the loosening of the cause of bondage to this body and from fully understanding the travel of the mind to new embodiments, there may be the entering of the mind into

spiritual radiance, and fame.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 3.6.1).

another body of the next life, perhaps even in this life, if one goes by the stories.

Here, nature of the subtle mind as not being an effect of the gross brain must be assumed. Nor does the mind die when the body dies. This allows the mind to not only go out during perception through senses, but also leave the body upon the body's death.

This *sūtra* also brings up questions about the propriety of a *yogin* ending this life to continue the pursuit in a young, healthy body.

Belief in reincarnation can be just as sure in the believer's mind as a belief in going to a heaven. Belief in *karma* that continues past this life can be just as sure as the belief that one's life résumé and personality tendencies continue up to and into a heaven, or doesn't. Everyone, no matter what their beliefs, eventually arrive at the threshold of death. The wise in this tradition chose to contemplate this topic to their most honest satisfaction. Their decision should be understood within the context of their beliefs.

At the advent of death, though the mind might not let go easily, the body may naturally lose appetite for life sustaining food and drink. The mind may also wish to let go as death nears. These are common experiences. Though we understand and accept that the body naturally can and eventually must shut down, we often do not understand or accept another person choosing death. We have recently gained a greater ability to extend the death process through medical discoveries. This has benefits in certain circumstances, but also prolongs an often agonizing event process for the individual and for others in relationship with the person.

This *sūtra* provides some relief, acknowledging that in the *karma* model everyone's spiritual progress continues to the next life.⁴⁴ Though the *karma* model promotes *a-himsā* (non-injury or

⁴⁴ 'पार्थ न एव इह न अमुत्र विनाशः तस्य विद्यते। न हि कल्याण-कृत् कश्चिद् दुर्-गतिं तात गच्छति॥' "O *Arjuna*, neither here itself [due to the positive attitude of *śraddhā* (trust in the teaching)] nor hereafter [according to *karma*] is there loss for that one. Because, O Dear One, [to the extent] anyone performs adaptive action [in keeping with *dharma*], [to that extent] that one does not get a bad lot." 'प्राप्य पुण्य-कृतां लोकान् उषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः। शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योग-भ्रष्टः अभिजायते॥' "The one who has 'fallen' from this *yoga* gains the [same] worlds [i.e., heavens] of those who do adaptive actions, lives there for countless years, [then] is [re-]born in the home of a virtuous [i.e., following *dharma*] and fortunate [family]." 'अथवा योगिनाम् एव कुले भवति धीमताम्। एतद् हि दुर्-लभतरं लोके जन्म यद् ईदृशम्॥' "Or [even better] that one is born in the family of wise *yogins*. Such a birth as this is indeed more difficult to attain in this world." 'तत्र तं बुद्धि-संयोगं लभते पौर्व-देहिकम्। यतते च ततः भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरु-नन्दन॥' "There, one gains connection with [i.e., quickly matures to] an intellect [like the one] that existed while in

offence) towards any body as a preeminent value, it allows the knowledge and decision of the individual as a positive or negative factor within this value.

If one could separate from the physical body without injuring it (see the next *sūtra*) simply by the power of will to choose to separate from the physical body, then no *himsā* would incur. It is the nature of the body to disintegrate and that will naturally continue and accelerate when the mind and the rest of the subtle body are not there to provide and direct the body's life extending functions.

In the legends and epics of India there are stories of characters leaving their own body to inhabit another body. This *sūtra* could be indicating how this may be accomplished. As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one may gain, for whatever benefit it may be, the ability to leave this body, and even, according to the *Purāṇa* stories, enter into another person's body.

उदान-जयाज् जल-पङ्क-कण्टकादिष्व् अ-सङ्ग उत्क्रान्तिश् च॥ (3.39)
udāna-jayāj jala-paṅka-kaṅṭakādiṣv a-saṅga utkrāntiṣ ca.

[*jaya* – mastering; *udāna* – upward energy; *a-saṅga* – not getting stuck; *jala* – water; *paṅka* – mud; *kaṅṭakas* – thorns; *ādi* – etcetera; *ca* – and; *utkrānti* – ascending.]

From mastering the upward energy in the body there is the power of not getting stuck in water or mud, or by thorns and so on, and the power of ascending out of the body at will.

Udāna is one of the five subtle life-force energies (*prāṇas*). It accounts for any rising up power within the body. Certainly it takes power to stay afloat in water and to pull oneself out of mud. It takes dexterous power to tiptoe over thorny ground. Upon death's door, it also takes strength to hang on longer or let go of the body, at one's choosing.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one may become light

the previous body and [then] strives further than that, towards success [i.e., complete freedom], O *Arjuna*." 'पूर्व-अभ्यासेन तेन एव हियते हि अ-वशः अपि सः। जिज्ञासुः अपि योगस्य शब्द-ब्रह्म अतिवर्तते' "By that previous [life's] practice [i.e., its *karma-phala* (the results of its *karma*)] alone, even without will, one is indeed swept along. Just desiring to know about [this] [*jñāna*]-*yoga* [one quickly] goes beyond the *Veda* text [i.e., its bulky heaven-going section]." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.40–44).

and can walk on water and over mud, and lightly walk over thorns without getting stuck. Exit from the body, death, is a power one can wield at any time. The latter is connected with the preceding *sūtra*, since *udāna* is the force that also ejects the subtle body, including the mind, out of the then lifeless physical body.

समान-जयाज् ज्वलनम् ॥ (3.40)
samāna-jayāj jvalanam.

[*jaya* – from mastering; *samāna* – uniting energy; *jvalana* – glowing.]

From mastering the uniting energy – center directed energy, including digestion in the body – **there is glowing** of good health in body, senses, and mind.

Digestion, another of the five *prāṇas*, is the body’s subtle assimilation of the energy from food, water, and air. It provides strength to the body. So this glow is the glow of good health and strength, including the ability to survive cold temperatures when needed. This glow is also the brilliance of the senses and mind because of the assimilation of the energy from food.⁴⁵ This brilliance may increase through a broad based knowledge and self-confidence, called *brahmavarcasa* (brilliance in scriptural knowledge).

Through a broader knowledge of the various topics in the scriptures one can unfold these *sūtras* without having to leap to mystical or nearly impossible superpowers. This scriptural background should be there through *svādhyāya* (study).⁴⁶

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one’s aura brightens, illuminates a room, or dries the clothes on one’s back in winter.

श्रोत्राकाशयोः संबन्ध-संयमाद् दिव्यं श्रोत्रम् ॥ (3.41)
śrotrākāśayoḥ sambandha-samyamād divyaṃ śrotram.

⁴⁵ ‘एषः हि एतद् हुतम् अन्नं समं नयति तस्माद् एताः सप्त-अर्चिषः भवन्ति’ “Since this [*samāna*] distributes equally the food offered [into the fire of *prāṇa*], from that these seven flames [of *prāṇa*] [issue out] [through the mouth and the two eyes, ears, and nostrils].” (*Prāsna Up.* 3.5).

⁴⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

[*saṁyama* – contemplation; *saṁbandha* – connection; *śrotra* – sense of hearing; *ākāśa* – element space; *divya* – divine; *śrotra* – hearing.]

From *saṁyama* on the connection between the sense of hearing and the element space there is divine hearing – the listening to and the understanding of the cosmic worldview from the scripture, and the pervasive connection between the individual and the universe, including the divine realms therein.

Vedānta accepts one of the traditional *Upaniṣad* and *Sāṅkhya* explanations of the process of creation via the elements that make up the dependent universe. We use that explanation to unfold the *Yoga Sūtras*. Within that explanation, space is the first of the five elements: space (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*āpaḥ*), and earth (*pṛthivī*). From the subtle element space come the other four subtle elements, each successively less subtle than the other. Subtle, here, means incapable of being an object of the five sense organs, as well as being more innermost and/or more pervasive. From space comes air, from air comes fire, from fire comes water, and from water comes earth.⁴⁷ Out of these subtle elements is the entire universe.⁴⁸ Each succeeding subtle

⁴⁷ ‘तस्माद् वै एतस्माद् आत्मनः आकाशः संभूतः। आकाशाद् वायुः। वायोः अग्निः। अग्नेः आपः। अद्भ्यः पृथिवी’ “From that [*brahman*] indeed, which is this self (*ātman*), exists space. From space [exists] air, from air fire, from fire water, from water earth.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1).

⁴⁸ ‘सद् एव सोम्य इदम् अग्ने आसीद् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयम्’ “In the beginning [of this manifestation cycle], my dear, [all] this was existence (*sat*) alone, one indeed without a second.” ‘...तद् ऐक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेय इति तत् तेजः असृजत, तत् तेजः ऐक्षत बहु स्यां प्रजायेय इति तद् अपः असृजत। तस्माद् यत्र क्वच शोचति स्वेदते वा पुरुषः तेजसः एव तद् अधि आपः जायन्ते॥’ “...That [existence as the Lord] envisioned [as it was before and in keeping with that], ‘May I be many, may I be born [as though many].’ That [existence] gave rise to Fire. That Fire envisioned, ‘May I be many, may I be born [as though many].’ That [Fire] gave rise to Water. Therefore, whenever a person is hot he perspires. So water is produced indeed from heat.” ‘ताः आपः ऐक्षन्त बह्व्यः स्याम प्रजायेमहि इति ताः अन्नम् असृजन्त, तस्माद् यत्र क्व च वर्षति तद् एव भूयिष्ठम् अन्नं भवति अद्भ्यः एव तद् अधि अन्न-अद्यं जायते’ “That Water envisioned, ‘May I be many, may I be born [as though many].’ That [Water] gave rise to Food, i.e., Earth. Therefore, whenever it rains, then abundant food arises. So eatable food is produced from water.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1 & 3-4). ‘पृथिव्याः ओषधयः। ओषधीभ्यः अन्नम्। अन्नात् पुरुषः। सः वै एषः पुरुषः अन्न-रसमयः’ “From the earth are plants. From plants is food. From food is the person. This very person is made from the essence of food.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1). ‘एतावद् वै इदं सर्वम् अन्नं च एव अन्नादः च’ “All this [universe] is indeed this much – food and the eater of food.” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.6).

element includes the natures of the previous.

These elements seem to be just a selection of five common features we see in the world, but there is a significant sophistication behind these terms, when the tradition expounds on them as subtle elements. They are not actually the five features we experience in the world. Here, they are the subtle, hidden basics behind all features we experience in the world.

Subtle space is defined as what gives accommodation (*avakāśayati iti ākāśa*). Subtle space thus means dimension. Subtle air means movement (*vāti gacchati iti vāyuḥ*). Subtle fire means heat and light (*dahati iti dahanam agniḥ*). Subtle water means liquidity (*āvṛnoti iti vāriḥ*). Subtle earth means solidity and mass (*sambhavati iti bhūḥ*).

Each subtle element allows the following element to arise. Dimension allows the possibility of movement and form (*rūpa*), including thought forms. Dimension and movement via vibration allow heat/light, the start of visible form. Dimension, movement, and heat/light allow liquidity, for example, the possibility of magma. Dimension, movement, heat/light, liquidity via cooling allows solidity/mass, for example, the possibility of land formation.

These subtle elements, also called the *tan-mātras* (literally, *merely that*) the basic elements, not mixed together with any of the other elements, are not the gross elements we interact with. The mixing of these subtle elements are their grossification – each one a combination of the other four with itself being the predominant element. This five-folding of the five elements is an extrapolation from the three-folding of the last three (visible) elements mentioned in scripture as just a naming convention employed by living beings to distinguish things.⁴⁹ For example, the

⁴⁹ ‘सा इयं देवता ऐक्षत हन्त अहम् इमाः तिस्रः देवताः अनेन जीवेन आत्मना अनुप्रविश्य नाम-रूपे व्याकरवाणि इति॥’ “This very Lord thought, ‘Well, may I enter into these three deities [i.e., Fire, Water, and Food/Earth] through this [individual] living *ātman* [as in the previous cycle] and [through the enlivened mind therein] differentiate [all things] into name and form.’” ‘तासां त्रि-वृत्तं त्रि-वृत्तम् एक-एकां करवाणि इति सा इयं देवता इमाः तिस्रः देवताः अनेन एव जीवेन आत्मना अनुप्रविश्य नाम-रूपे व्याकरोत्॥’ “This very Lord (thought), ‘Of these [three deities], may I make each one threefold. May I enter into these three deities through this [individual] living *ātman* and [through the enlivened mind therein] differentiate [all things] into name and form.’” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.3.2-3). ‘...यद् अग्ने रोहितं रूपं तेजसः तद् रूपं यद् शुक्लं तद् अपां, यत् कृष्णं तद् अन्नस्य – अपागाद् अग्नेः अग्नित्वं’ “In [triplicated, i.e., material/visible] fire, what is the red color/form is the color/form of [undifferentiated] Fire, what is the white color/form [in the fire] is that of Water, and what is the black color/form [in the fire] is that of Food/Earth – [thus] [a single] form/nature of [visible] fire has gone away from [what we call] fire [that is really tri-formed] [i.e., all that we give a name to is in fact a semblance consisting of something more

gross space we interact with is a combination of the subtle elements space, air, fire, water, and earth, with space being the predominant. That is, gross space we move through is a combination of mostly dimension, with movement, heat/light, fluidity, and solidity/mass. Because of its movement aspect, the expanding and bending of space can be demonstrated by experiments. In this way, we may say a particular space is breezy, hot, humid, or polluted. It is from the distinguishing names of these gross elements that their more sophisticated subtle elements get their names: space, wind, and so on.

This is our model. The model could be the string theory (multiple dimensions of space and spins of energy making up the characteristics of everything) or the periodic table of the elements from the airy light to the most massive. But those mappings have no benefit in understanding the self-based freedom that this teaching is alone concerned with. Our model's purpose is simply to comprehend in five components the entirety of the universe, so everything within the universe can be later summarily dismissed as not fully satisfying our basic quest for ultimate freedom.

This is an ancient, sophisticated presentation of the entire universe into five components because we happen to have five sense organs. The subtle elements of the macrocosm are matched to the five subtle sense organs with which the human body is equipped. So, wherever you go, whatever you perceive will be in keeping with this model. The addition of better means of gathering data, such as the telescope, microscope or electrocardiograph, is simply useful extension of the five senses. Eventually, they and their data also have to be perceived through the five senses. This five-fold elemental model, and its purpose within this teaching, will thus never become outdated.

Space/dimension is connected to the sense of hearing, air/movement to the sense of touch, fire/heat/light to the sense of sight, water/liquidity to the sense of taste, and earth to the sense of smell. If we had six sense organs, then the tradition would have come up with six subtle and gross elements. If someone is born with less than the five senses, their entire universe would

subtle, and that more subtle is more real as it is more permanent].” ‘वाचा-आरम्भणं विकारः नामधेयं त्रीणि रूपाणि इति एव सत्यम्’ “[All] modification [i.e., form (*rūpa*)] is originating from speech (*vācā-ārambhāṇa*), mere name alone (*nāmadheya*). The three forms [of undifferentiated Fire, Water, and Food/Earth, not available to the senses] alone are [relatively] real (*satya*) [as even their reality is but existence (*sat*) itself, which has no beginning, no modification, and no end].” (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.4.1).

only consist of a mix of those elements sensed.

An alternative presentation, which we have already seen, is the later, three-*guṇa* model, perhaps derived from the three-elemental presentation in the scripture of fire-water-earth. These are models⁵⁰ for comprehending everything in the universe without the sophisticated scientific tools and data we have now. Sitting in a cave in the Himalayas or in an apartment in New York City the entire universe through these elements can be contemplated.

Our model sees the universe as proceeding from three or five and then assuming or condensing into the forms that are available to the five senses. Again, the three or five are themselves said to manifest within the one reality that alone exists. The universe is but the names applied to the forms appearing along the continuum of the evolution of the universe.

No future science could ever improve or dismiss this world view. This knowledge of the one reality that is everything and is oneself is more complete than any possible Theory of Everything from science. The sciences can, without certitude, speculate what is the building block of everything perceived, but lack a method to resolve with certitude both the perceived and the perceiver into one absolute reality – beyond time and space, beyond mind. One cannot objectively stand outside this singular reality-consciousness to describe it or experiment with it.

The subtle sense of hearing in the body is directly connected to the subtle element space, dimension. In the dark of night or closed eye meditation, hearing connects us to the dimensions of the universe. By reflecting on the connection of subtle, limitless space and the subtle sense of hearing, one can start to appreciate the participation of one's body-sense-mind complex in the limitless. Space is not altogether limitless, since it is bound up with time. And space itself is said to be re-created along with each manifestation cycle of the universe from the one, limitless reality called *brahman*, the Lord. But within this embodiment, hearing directly connects us to the relative limitless within this transactional world we live in.

Indeed, hearing also connects us to this oral teaching of the limitless reality of oneself, and this universe of space and time. Nothing is apart from this space, including the subtle realms of

⁵⁰ Both of these models originate from the *Upaniṣad* literature. The *Sāṅkhya* and *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* philosophies would like to say they first thought of these explanations. They try to garner the perennial scriptural authority of the sage *Kapila*, who is connected with the *guṇa* model and who preceded the dates of the existent writings of these two philosophies.

heaven. So one is directly connected, even here and now, to the entire universe including the divine heavens – everything one has heard of.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one's hearing gains access to the whole, to all that is divine.

कायाकाशयोः संबन्ध-संयमाल् लघु-तूल-समापत्तेश् चाकाश-गमनम्॥ (3.42)
kāyākāśayoḥ saṁbandha-saṁyamāl laghu-tūla-samāpatteś cākāśa-gamanam.

[*saṁyama* – contemplation; *saṁbandha* – connection; *kāya* – body; *ākāśa* – space; *ca* – and; *samāpatti* – contemplation; *laghu-tūla* – light cotton; *gamana* – movement; *ākāśa* – space.]

From *saṁyama* on the connection between the body and space, and from contemplation on light cotton, there is movement through space – the free movement, as it were, of the body-space within space, and the free movement of the mind within the space of the heart.

Remember from the preceding *sūtra*'s commentary that the element air, meaning movement, exists from space, from dimension.

The body, which we take as solid, is, in fact, mostly space. The subatomic particles of matter are many, but far between. Even these particles of matter are, at their basis, mass-less packets of vibrating energy in multiple dimensions of space. Even these mass-less packets of energy are more intelligence, more conception in our mind and in our mathematics more abstractions, than something actually there.

This body is standing on earth, but the earth is spinning around on its axis. The earth is also flying around the sun. The sun is flying around in its star cluster. This star cluster is flying around in its galaxy. This galaxy is flying around in its galaxy cluster. This galaxy cluster is flying outward along with the expanding space of the universe. There is no standing still in space; it is *mithyā* – only apparently-real, valid only from a limited perspective and falsifiable when viewed in a broader and more factual context.

Our experiences in life are appearances gained through our senses and mind. This is the nature of life. It is not that someone can peek behind the curtain, behind the appearances, to see absolute facts free from the limited perspective of the senses and mind. Since appearances are the nature

of all things, then it is not really an illusion. An ordinary illusion, such as pulling a rabbit out of an empty hat, can be corrected by figuring the trick. Here in our experiences, even figuring the trick, the appearances constantly continue to be believed. Seeing is believing, but if believed absolutely then the belief – not the appearance – is dismissible and can be characterized as a grand, though natural, illusion. The entirety of our experiences is not an illusion, but our believing in their absolute validity does qualify. Appreciating this helps free oneself from being caught up and identified with our natural belief system as a categorical, static reality in and of itself.

What alone is not an illusion is the limitless reality that is oneself. What can be an illusion in regard to the self is only our wrong notions of our self. Once those notions get exposed to knowledge, they dismiss themselves and there is only you, the undeniable reality. This reality was before, during, and will be after every big bang of the universe that was, is, or ever will be. It is unmoving and unchanging, since it is outside of time and space. Time and space are totally within it, without modifying or affecting it. Though unmoving, this reality is still called *sarva-ga*, literally, *the all-moving*, as it includes all that moves within it.⁵¹

Short of the freedom called *kaivalya*, even objectively resolving in understanding this gross body down to its subtlest elemental source, to *ākāśa* (space), according to the preceding *sūtra*'s understanding of subtle space, and via our scientific understanding to be 99.999...% multi-dimensional space, one is, in a relatively real sense, the all-pervasive space within this universe.

This whole universe of names and forms before you is within your mind, within the space in the heart, that wields these names and forms. Within that space of your personal universe of experience you freely move, in the day and night.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, one can fly, can move, unaided through space.

बहिर् अ-कल्पिता वृत्तिर् महा-वि-देहा ततः प्रकाशावरण-क्षयः ॥ (3.43)

bahir a-kalpitā vṛttir mahā-vi-dehā tataḥ prakāśāvaraṇa-kṣayaḥ.

⁵¹ 'ते सर्व-गं सर्वतः प्राप्य धीराः युक्त-आत्मानः (=युक्त-चेतसः) सर्वम् एव आविशन्ति' "Those wise [sages], whose minds are merged [in that reality] [and thus] having attained the all-pervading (*sarva-ga*) in every way, they enter [i.e., become] everything indeed [as the self of all]." (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.2.5).

[*vyṛtti* – thought; *bahir* – externally; *a-kalpita* – without error; *mahā-vi-deha* – great disembodiment. *tataḥ* – from that; *āvaraṇa* – covering; *prakāśa* – light; *kṣaya* – removed.]

Thought directed **externally** to the nature of the universe **that is without error**, correctly seeing the limitations as only belonging to the phenomenon, not to oneself, **is called the great disembodiment** – oneself disembodied of all limitations. **From that, the covering of the light** of knowledge **is removed**.

Externally, here, means pertaining to beyond just this limited individual, to the entire phenomenal universe including this mind and body – in other words, with eyes wide open, not just in closed-eye meditation. *A-kalpita* means *a-vikalpita*, having a nature that is without *vikalpa*, without error. Knowledge of the external that is *a-kalpita* is then knowledge that is without one’s own erroneous imaginations (*kalpas*). It is seeing the universe objectively as it is, as has been unfolded in the scripture and indicated in these pages through these helpful five-element, three-*guṇa*, and waking-dream-sleep state categorizations, and other teachings that properly connect and resolve the individual into the total, into the Lord, in keeping with this teaching tradition.

Ultimately, all that is external is seen as but names and forms, as constructs. When thought, knowledge, of all that is external, of the entire universe within space, is free of error, that knowledge is great – as vast and true as the universe is, and is not limited to the body (*deha*). It is not bound up by the limitations of one’s body and mind.

Knowledge totally free of error, of course, cannot mean knowledge about all the details one could possibly and impossibly know regarding the universe. It only means the knowledge of the one essential truth of everything that makes the difference between oneself as totally free in this life, or not.

One’s body and mind do not determine the nature of the universe; rather the universe ought to be recognized as it is, not as my senses present it. Any knowledge of the universe that is based on the senses, and on inferences from that sense-generated knowledge, cannot but be constricted by the perspective and other limitations of those senses.

Knowledge of the universe is clearly recognizing the limited and the not so real nature of the entire phenomenal universe. Knowledge is recognizing that the actual nature of the universe is not exactly what is presented to the limited senses, but it is the reality that one’s self is. This

knowledge is what is gained from the teaching of the *Upaniṣads*, the *āgama*. This is the removing of the covering, of the ignorance, that has kept one from seeing the nature of the external world as it is, and appreciating oneself as completely free of its phenomenal limitations. Again, the conclusion that there are phenomenal limitations of the self is known to be a mistake. The limitations are *nāmadheya* (in name only).⁵² This is the great dis-embodiment. This is oneself disembodied of all limitations.

The manifestation of the phenomenal universe is by *māyā*, the power (*śakti*) of the Lord. This *māyā* has two components: *āvaraṇa* (covering) that hides the real, non-dual reality that is the Lord as being oneself and *vikṣepa* (projection) of an unreal duality – in the form of the notion that these projections are distinct from each other and from oneself. This universal *āvaraṇa* that affects all creatures can be seen through, can be penetrated, by an individual who sees that the truth of this phenomenal universe is but the non-dual reality that is one's nature, which is the non-dual nature of the Lord. Then, the phenomenal objects are seen as being the reality, as being oneself, but I am not any of them.

No super power accomplishment, whether visualized or actualized, is greater than that. The dis-embodiment, the freedom from limitation, always has been your nature. Through the teaching and your contemplations, as you inquire into the nature of yourself, see if you do not come to

⁵² 'विकरोति अपरान् भावान् अन्तर्-चित्ते व्यवस्थितान्। नियतान् च बहिर्-चित्तः एवं कल्पयते प्रभुः॥' "The Lord (*prabhu*) [i.e., the limitless self] diversely manifests (*vikaroti*) the limited (*a-para*) objects existing [dis-orderly, as in dream] inside the mind as well as the orderly [objects] outside the mind – in this way [the self] imagines (*kalpayate*)." 'चित्त-कालाः हि ये अन्तः तु द्वय-कालाः च ये बहिः। कल्पिताः एव ते सर्वे विशेषः न अन्य-हेतुकः॥' "Those [objects] are inside because their time [of manifestation] is only that of their thought, whereas those others are outside [because] their time [of manifestation] is twice [i.e., as the time one is thinking of them and as the time of their being seen, or, in other words, their time from the perspective of the seer and from the perspective of the seen], so, the distinction having no other reason [than their time of manifestation, and not for reason of any separate intrinsic nature on their part], they all [both internal and external objects] are but imaginations (*kalpitas*) [i.e., temporally 'fixed up' by the mind]." 'अ-व्यक्ताः एव ये अन्तः तु स्फुटाः एव च ये बहिः। कल्पिताः एव ते सर्वे विशेषः तु इन्द्रिय-अन्तरे' "Those [objects] which are inside are indistinct (*a-vyakta*), whereas the others which are outside are distinct (*sphuṭa*). [Since] their distinction is but the difference in the organ [that perceives it, whether the mind or the mind via the senses], then [external objects being not intrinsically different from dream or mental-only objects] are [as well] all imaginations [i.e., not absolutely real]." (*Māṇḍūkya Up. Kārikā* 2.13-15).

this appreciation and all it encompasses. Be wise!

स्थूल-स्व-रूप-सूक्ष्मान्वयार्थवत्त्व-संयमाद् भूत-जयः ॥ (3.44)
sthūla-sva-rūpa-sūkṣmānvayārthavattva-saṁyamād bhūta-jayah.

[*saṁyama* – contemplation; *arthavattva* – significance; *anvaya* – connection; *sthūla* – gross; *sūkṣma* – subtle; *sva-rūpa* – its own nature; *jaya* – mastery; *bhūta* – created.]

From *saṁyama* on the significance of the connection between the gross, the subtle, and its own real nature – the latter sub-rating the prior, **there is mastery over the created universe**, through this mature, objective understanding of realities, wherein one appreciates one’s reality as the reality that swallows, subsumes, all.

The connection between the gross, the subtle, and the essence of a thing is one of a sub-rating the one by the other. ‘Sub-rating’ or ‘sub-ration’ is a useful term this author is borrowing from Eliot Deutsch in his book *Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction*. Sub-ration is his rendering of the Sanskrit technical term *bādha*, which is often translated by the English term *sublation*. Sub-rating is more transparent in its meaning. It says that one thing is *sub*, meaning subsumed under or within, and is sub-rated (*bādhita*), meaning it is less valued in terms of its reality, when compared to another thing. That is, one thing sub-rates another when the latter is subsumed and devalued by that first thing. The term *bādha* is also usefully rendered as *negation*, where, in comparison to another, one thing is more negative, that is, lessened in value or truth.

The term sub-rating is employed in the context of levels or orders of reality. For example, the dream world is sub-rated by the waking world. Both worlds are known to the waker, but the dream world is a less inclusive level of reality than is waking. The dream world is based totally upon the waking world.

We compose the world of our nighttime dreams from what we have gathered as memories while awake. These may be colored by *saṁskāras* (subtle impressions) gained in our prior births’ waking experiences, however mixed up or distorted those impressions may appear in the dream. A portion of those *saṁskāras* may be otherwise described as the collective unconscious, common to the human mind. In turn, the dream world has only a limited effect on the waking world. In this tradition, the waking is taken as more basic, more real than the dream. We tend to place more value on our waking experiences than our dream experiences. After a nightmare dream, we are relieved upon waking to

discover it was *just* a dream and not real. The nightmare of physical or emotional pain and suffering experienced in waking may not be as easily dismissed. The waking world in this way sub-rates the dream world.

In the traditional teaching, there are three levels of reality – imaginary (*prātibhāsika*), objective (*vyāvahārika*), and absolute (*pāramārthika*). This teaching literature, which talks about these three levels of reality, also makes further distinctions within the objective (*vyāvahārika*) reality that amount to similar sub-rating connections between distinct sub-levels of that reality. For instance, we sub-rate falsified or subordinate notions with more correct or inclusive notions. My being human sub-rates my being an author, or any other role I play in this life.

In the context of this *sūtra*, generally, the subtle sub-rates the gross, and the essence sub-rates the subtle. The gross is what our subtle senses perceive. This gross universe is the material world. In the language of this tradition’s physics (*see* commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.41), the elements that make up the gross are actually composed of a mixture of the subtle elements. The gross is then nothing but a manifestation of the subtle. Moreover, the gross universe appears as it does only because of one’s peculiar senses, and is there only in our waking experience. It is not there in either the dream or deep sleep experience, which are both subtle. Two thirds of our experience, then, is purely subtle.

While dream and sleep are limited to the subtle, the waking world also has a significant subtle component. In the waking experience, we likely spend more time manipulating our subtle thoughts, our ideas, than we spend manipulating the gross objects of the world. Moreover, the names and forms that constitute the distinctions of this multitudinous universe are all within the subtle mind that wields these names and forms. And, as was pointed out before, we determine the reality of objective things by our mental estimation of their reality. In other words, our subtle mind weighs the reality or unreality of phenomenal, gross things. Put together, we can easily see how our subtle world sub-rates the gross world.

Sub-ration is even part of maturing as an adult. We get over dolls, marbles, excesses in unhealthy activities, and so on by sub-rating them for more fulfilling activities and interests. We usually get over pains and fears in life through being more concerned and occupied with and by the present moment. As we have seen, the present is the truth of both the past and future. Sub-ration, then, should not surprisingly be a natural process in spiritual maturation too.

If one exposes oneself to this teaching and stays committed until it is assimilated, he or she will

understand the absolute reality that is the basis and reality of the gross and subtle worlds. The expression, “its own (real) nature (*sva-rūpa*),” in the *sūtra* here is the same as the absolute (*pāramārthika*). It is reality in and of itself. As such, it cannot be other than the basic nature of me. And the basic nature of me is a conscious being. I am, and I light up everything else within my experience. This is *sat-cit*, reality-consciousness – not a mixture of these two, rather these two are equivalent words indicating the single nature of myself. That single nature is what we say is beyond words and mind. These two words, *sat* and *cit*, point out that one reality which is all existence, which shines in the gross and the subtle, which is all words and mind, and which is more than words and mind.

This reality-consciousness is the nature of oneself, the *puruṣa*. It is also, without being a second thing, the nature of reality, *brahman*. And it is also, without being a second thing, the real, essential nature of the universe, which is but a manifestation of the Lord, of *brahman*, the only reality. Thus this reality, the *sva-rūpa* of everything, sub-rates the entire universe. It is the absolute reality that allows the dependent reality of the gross and subtle universe. The entire gross and subtle universe is swallowed into this limitless reality.⁵³

This reality also sub-rates, in terms of devaluing, the entire universe, since within this reality alone is one’s limitless and total satisfaction, *ānanda*. Every experience we go after in life is for our own experience. It is for our self alone.⁵⁴ Even altruistic activity is finally for the well-being of our own conscience, so we can be at peace with ourselves. This reality is indicated by the expression

⁵³ ‘सः यः च अयं पुरुषे। यः च असौ आदित्ये। सः एकः॥’ “The one who is in this person [the individual] and the one who is in the sun [the Lord] – that is one (*eka*).” ‘सः यः एव-वित्। अस्मात् लोकात् प्रेत्य। एतम् अन्नमयम् आत्मानम् उपसंक्रम्य। एतं प्राणमयम् आत्मानम् उपसंक्रम्य। एतं मनोमयम् आत्मानम् उपसंक्रम्य। एतं विज्ञानमयम् आत्मानम् उपसंक्रम्य। एतम् आनन्दमयम् आत्मानम् उपसंक्रम्य।’ “That one who knows thus – leaving this world [of ignorance], transcending [by swallowing in terms of knowledge] this body (*ātman*) made of food, transcending this body made of energy (*prāṇa*), transcending this body made of mind, transcending this body made of intellect (*vijñāna*), transcending this body made of joy (*ānanda*)” ‘इमान् लोकान् काम-अन्नी काम-रूपी अनुसंचरन्। एतत् साम गायन् आस्ते। हा वु हा वु हा वु॥’ “ – moving about [all] these worlds consuming at will any food, assuming at will any form – he [or she] sits singing this song, ‘Oho [repeated 3 times].’” ‘अहम् अन्नम् अहम् अन्नम् अहम् अन्नम्। अहम् अन्न-अदः अहम् अन्न-अदः अहम् अन्न-अदः’ “[As every thing] I am [all] food [repeated 3 times]. [As every being] I am the eater of [all] food [repeated 3 times].” (*Taittirīya Up.* 3.10.4-6).

⁵⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.18.

sat-cit-ānanda (existence-awareness-fullness). Gaining the knowledge of this self is the only real mastery of the universe; it alone completely and finally fulfils one's life.

As a superpower, when extrapolated to its extreme, fictional or not, this *sūtra*, according to the *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* commentaries, shows how one can manipulate all the elements (*bhūtas*) of the universe. This could have been a valuable accomplishment in their system. This advantage over nature and over others was as well the pursuit of the demons in the epics and myths of India. We are just not sure how a superpower like this, or all the previous superpowers, fit with *vairāgya* (non-attachment), and all the values like *a-steḥya* (non-usurping) and *a-parigraha* (renunciation) that really lay at the core of this teaching.

If secondary (*gauṇa-phala*) superpowers are *kliṣṭas* (hindrances) to the goal of *yoga*, then what is the point of presenting the *sūtras* (3.16 to 3.48) about *siddhis* (accomplishments) as only meant for superpowers, instead of for accomplishing *kaivalya* in keeping with the means given in the other three chapters, as well as the starting and ending *sutras* (3.1 to 3.15, and 3.49 to 3.55) of this chapter? Yet, commentary after commentary gets sidetracked into exaggerating these *sutras* as primarily or only about superpowers. Has anyone else questioned this?

We continue to show how these *siddhis* (accomplishments) pertain to inculcating a more cosmic perspective towards this body, mind, and the things of this universe. In this way, all these *sūtras* resolve into the singular goal of oneself completely free from limitations without having to change this body, or this universe.

ततोऽणिमादि-प्रादुर्-भावः काय-संपत् तद्-धर्मानभिघातश् च॥ (3.45)
tato'ṇimādi-prādur-bhāvaḥ kāya-sampat tad-dharmānabhighātaś ca.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *prādur-bhāva* – evident; *aṇiman-ādi* – the most small, etcetera; *kāya-sampat* – attainment of the body; *ca* – and; *tad-dharma* – that nature; *an-abhighāta* – cannot be assailed.]

From that mastery, in terms of knowledge, becomes evident what is both the smallest and the largest – namely, the self – as well as the attainment of the body of the universe itself, and that body's nature cannot be assailed by anything.

Once one acknowledges that one's self is the limitless reality, then all forms are one's form,

from the smallest to the largest.⁵⁵ This self is smaller than the smallest, and at the same time larger than the largest.⁵⁶ Such a one whose form is all forms and is one without a second – who or what could assail? There is no second thing.

Even on a relative level, at the level of the subtle (*aṇiman*), the contemplation of the *yogin* is to bring to mind the identity of the subtle *prāṇa* in one's body with the cosmic subtle *prāṇa* – reaching whatever limit in the universe one is contemplating. For example, in a typical meditation one is to contemplate the subtle being behind the right eye as being the same as the subtle being behind the solar orb. This is a will-based expansion and appreciation of the mind from the individual to its cosmic source, to the total subtle body of the universe.

The *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* writers, drawing from the storied *yogins* of the epics and myths, instead of from the scriptures, imagine the *yogins*' gross body can become as small (*aṇimā*) as an atom and big enough to touch the moon (as if that is really big in comparison to the entire universe). But this is not what *Patañjali* would advise all his flesh and blood students. These myths live large in the imaginations and psyche of those who know India's heritage, but the *Sāṅkhya* viewpoint fades in the truth of the *Yoga Sūtras*.

There is something profound to be understood here, yet some people can miss it out of desire for the prosaic.

रूप-लावण्य-बल-वज्र-संहननत्वानि काय-संपत् ॥ (3.46)

rūpa-lāvaṇya-bala-vajra-saṃhananatvāni kāya-saṃpat.

[*kāya-saṃpat* – attainment of bodies; *rūpa* – shapely; *lāvaṇya* – beautiful; *bala* – strong; *saṃhananatva* – hard; *vajra* – diamond.]

And **there is the attainment** in terms of knowledge **of all bodies that are shapely,**

⁵⁵ 'यद् अर्चिमद् यद् अणुभ्यः अणु च यस्मिन् लोकाः निहिताः लोकिनः च। तद् एतद् अ-क्षरं ब्रह्म' "What is shining and is subtle (*aṇu*) among the subtle [i.e., the tiniest] objects (*aṇus*), and in which are placed all the worlds and dwellers in these worlds, that is this immutable *brahman* (reality)." (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 2.2.2).

⁵⁶ 'अणोः अणीयान् महतः महीयान् आत्मा अस्य जन्तोः निहितः गुहायाम्' "The self (*ātman*) is smaller than the small (*aṇu*), bigger than the big (*mahat*); present in the heart of [every] creature." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.20).

beautiful, strong, and hard as diamond [cf. *Yoga Sūtra* 2.37].

All glories (*vibhūti*)⁵⁷ of the universe are one's own glories. They cannot all be physically possessed; they need not be. Than chasing bodily perfection, this body and mind have enough to do just taking care of themselves. Whereas, simple maintenance of the body and maturation of the mind through this teaching is all the effort required for allowing complete fulfillment.

All glories are perfectly fine just where they are. All forms are mine, wherever they are.⁵⁸ Like the Lord, we too can say that all glories in the world are mine – if one knows oneself as not other than the Lord. The real nature of my self and the Lord is one, and my body and mind is none other than the body and mind of the Lord.

This is a mature non-usurping (*a-steya*), mature renunciation. As an individual, I did not create the elements of which this body and mind is composed. I do not create the food on which they live. I do not create the upbringing and environment that nurtures them. I am not the author of any of this around me. All this cannot be “mine”; it is not mine. It is factually a portion of the interconnected whole of nature that forms the body of the Lord. As the Lord, though, all this, all glories, are mine, are *ātman*, wherever they appear.

The special glories of the world are not what they seem; all things, all aspects of the Lord, are glories. Even the glamour and glitter publications show that the supposedly beautiful and the rich suffer the same human failings as the rest. The body and its possessions can gain culturally valued glories, but the mind alone controls one's appreciation of those glories. The

⁵⁷ 'मत्तः परतरं न अन्यत् किञ्चिद् अस्ति धनञ्-जय। मयि सर्वम् इदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणि-गणाः इव' "Like collections of gems [i.e., so many glories] on a thread, all this is strung in Me." (*Bh. Gītā* 7.7). 'श्री-भगवान् उवाच। हन्त ते कथयिष्यामि दिव्याः हि आत्म-विभूतयः। प्राधान्यतः कुरु-श्रेष्ठ न अस्ति अन्तः विस्तरस्य मे॥' "The Lord said: Well now, O *Arjuna*, I will tell to you the extraordinary glories of Myself [the self of all] wherever there is importance, since there is no end to My detailed description." '...यद् यद् विभूतिमत् सत्त्वं श्रीमद् ऊर्जितम् एव वा। तद् तद् एव अवगच्छ त्वं मम तेजः-अंश-सम्भवम्' "...Whatever entity has glory (*vibhūti*), has wealth, or is indeed powerful – that itself, may you know, is born of a fraction of My power." (*Bh. Gītā* 10.19 & 41).

⁵⁸ 'यः तु सर्वाणि भूतानि आत्मनि एव अनुपश्यति। सर्व-भूतेषु च आत्मानं ततः न विजुगुप्सते' "The one who according [to the teaching] sees all beings in one's self (*ātman*) alone, and one's self in all beings." (*Īśā Up.* 6). 'येन भूतानि अ-शेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्य् आत्मनि अथ-उ मयि' "By this [knowledge] you will see all beings in Me and even in yourself." (*Bh. Gītā* 4.35).

mind is not made any more adequate by a beautiful body or fabulous possessions. These material things of the world have no edifying affect on the subtle world of the mind. Nor can educated minds, skilled in the valued professions of a society, by profession escape the same human failings as the rest. It is not learning how to manipulate things and people that is going to educate you in how to be a fully satisfied person in your own glory, without need of comparison with others.

A teaching the equal of this ancient tradition alone can bring out this full satisfaction in oneself as perfectly acceptable in every way. In this vision all glories are one's own. I am the self of all – this is the vision born of sure knowledge, not imagination. I need not suffer the trials and tribulations in physically gaining and retaining those glories in order to appreciate that they are all the glories of my own reality. They are perfectly and naturally acceptable wherever they are in my reality. This physical body need not have to suffer their gain and their expense for this mind to appreciate their beauty. They are there free to have and hold in the glory of my reality – effortless, painless, limitless, and ever-lasting. This comes from understanding this teaching and remaining in contemplation therein.

Fixation on one's own or others' objects, or body, or mind, is a hindrance. All things can be enjoyed fully as they are, without comparison or possession. All things pass away, even diamonds. Only the reality that is self will not decay, will not ever be away from you.

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Kṛṣṇa* taught that the embodied one is untouched by any physical element, that the embodied one is none other than the Lord, and the Lord is that embodied one. And *Kṛṣṇa* taught that all glories are the Lord's glories. All actions and their results, including a nice body, belong to the Lord, not to the individual.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ 'न एनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि न एनं दहति पावकः। न च एनं क्लेदयन्ति आपः न शोषयति मारुतः' "Weapons [made from the element earth] do not cut it [the embodied one], nor [does the element] fire burn it, nor [does the element] water soak it, nor [does the element] wind wither it." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.23). 'अहम् आत्मा गुडाका-ईश सर्व-भूत-आशय-स्थितः। अहम् आदिः च मध्यं च भूतानाम् अन्तः एव च' "O *Arjuna*, the self (*ātman*) [yourself, the I] residing in the mind [i.e., in the seat of thoughts wherein reality is to be acknowledged] of all beings is Me. The source, the center, and the resolution of [all] beings is Me." (*Bh. Gītā* 10.20). 'न अन्तः अस्ति मम दिव्यानाम्' "There is no end to My divine glories." (*Bh. Gītā* 10.40). 'कार्यम् इति एव यद् कर्म नियतं क्रियते अर्जुन। सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा फलं च एव सः त्यागः सात्त्विकः मतः' "O *Arjuna*, if – renouncing both attachment [to action] and [its] result [i.e., as *karma-yoga*] – enjoined *karma* is performed as simply what is to be done, [then] that renunciation is considered predominately *sattva*." (*Bh.*

Kṛṣṇa was not interested in catering to the desires of the masses in his teaching to *Arjuna*. He was interested in teaching reality, and living in keeping with this reality. We do not think *Patañjali* was interested in trying to entice the largest following by promoting their desires either. You'll have to decide for yourself how much the superpower advocates bend and break the teaching of *Kṛṣṇa* and *Patañjali*. As we have shown, one does not have to interpret *Patañjali's* *Yoga Sūtras* as they do, and remain more true to the *sūtras'* words than they, but, more importantly, remain true to the sacred literature of India that is the entire background of this work.

Without overemphasizing them, there is nothing wrong with going after limited goals, such as a healthy body and a pleasant environment, if that is what one dearly needs and wants. And the means should be taught! Especially, a means that is as benign and beneficial as meditating. This is the spirit of the bulk of the *Vedas* when they give countless prayers, rituals, and meditations for these human goals of security (*artha*) and pleasure (*kāma*), which includes having a beautiful, impervious, heavenly body in the heavens.

But these limited goals need not, and should not, be overly promoted in a text that is clearly meant for *kaivalya*, liberation from these ill-informed notions of lacking and insecurity. Incremental moving from the limited to the limitless, through goal seeking, is not only mathematically and logically impossible, it is also psychologically impossible. It requires a total cognitive re-orientation in keeping with a clear knowledge of reality that is already limitless by nature. The teaching has to be based on reality, not on fiction or vague promises in the future.

ग्रहण-स्व-रूपास्मितान्वयार्थवत्त्व-संयमाद् इन्द्रिय-जयः ॥ (3.47)

grahaṇa-sva-rūpāsmitānvayārthavattva-saṃyamād indriya-jayaḥ.

[*saṃyama* – contemplation; *arthavattva* – significance; *anvaya* – connection; *asmitā* – I-notion; *sva-rūpa* – its own nature; *grahaṇa* – perceiving; *jaya* – mastery; *indriyas* – sense organs.]

From *saṃyama* on the significance of the connection between the I-notion – the is-ness presence notionally appearing in the landscape of the mind – and its own real nature

– the limitless is-ness that is the presence everywhere – **in regard to perceiving, there is mastery over the sense organs.**

As the mind’s I-notion loses its possessiveness which is caused by a sense of limitation and neediness, the mind gains the fullness that is knowledge of its limitless reality basis. This allows the mind and the senses to relax and do their natural jobs, free of ultimately baseless desires and of ignorant fears. This *sūtra* takes us back to the first chapter and contemplation on the *asmitā* (I-notion).⁶⁰

The difference between the real I and the notional I may be likened to the difference between the sun and its reflection in a mirror or in a bucket of water.⁶¹ The one is the source, the ever-shining light of knowledge, while the latter is a pale reflection, disturbed by the slightest ripple in the waters of the mind. When I identify with the mind, due to misidentification, I as though become the rippling reflection. From the perspective of the reflection, I am in the bucket, in the body, peering out, like reflected rays of the sun, at my surroundings, their overwhelming size and danger. Moreover, my life seems to be leaking out from this holey bucket. Like the sun to the rippling water, the reflection, the bucket, and their surroundings, I can enjoy the mind’s rippling, the body, and their surroundings. I can know that I am that which is unconnected to and unaffected by the mind, the I-notion, the senses, the body, and its surroundings.

When the reflection gets enlightened, so to speak, and sees its reality as pure-light itself, pure awareness, that lights up every experience, and that light survives every bucket of water this reflection manifests in, what fear can affect this enlightened one who takes itself as purely its limitless real nature, not as this surface patch of water? In this full appreciation of reality, what does it matter if there are re-births in more buckets or not? In either case, I remain the pure light of awareness, without limit in time or space.

⁶⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.18.

⁶¹ ‘यथा आदर्शो तथा आत्मनि (=बुद्धौ), यथा स्वप्ने तथा पितृ-लोके। यथा अप्सु परि इव ददृशे तथा गन्धर्व-लोके (एवं च लोक-अन्तरेषु अपि-*Śāṅkara Bhāṣyam*)’ “As [clearly] in a [spotless] mirror, so in the mind [i.e., here in this world with the valid teaching]; [but] as [indistinct] in dream, so in the world of the ancestors, and as was seen [more distinct but still not steady] in water so in the world of the celestial musicians [and so also in any other world where the teaching is not available, therefore make effort to prepare your mind here itself to get this clear teaching].” (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.3.5).

Any sense experience is another glory of my shining nature. Pleasure and pain are alike powerful expressions of my brilliance; I bask in their show of life. The senses can no longer confuse me, no matter what they see or do not see. I am the master, and these are just tools with which to play the game of life. I do not identify with them, like the pale reflection did, disturbed by every ripple fracturing and helplessly tossing around its sense rays pointing wildly around their surroundings. I do not follow, like a captive, these wild swings of the mind, as before. Because this reflection, which still remains after enlightenment and is nothing but an aspect of the mind, a notion in the mind about myself that no longer takes itself as only this limited reflection, is no longer upset at the ripples of the mind.

That reflection of myself, the notion of myself, no longer disturbs the rest of the mind. The mind itself calms down naturally as a result. When the mind calms, the senses naturally follow suit.

ततो मनो-जवित्वां वि-करण-भावः प्रधान-जयश् च ॥ (3.48)
tato mano-javitvaṃ vi-karaṇa-bhāvaḥ pradhāna-jayaś ca.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *javitva* – swiftness; *manas* – mind; *bhāva* – one exists; *vi-karaṇa* – free from the senses; *ca* – and; *jaya* – mastery; *pradhāna* – mother nature.]

From that mastery over the sense organs, **there is the swiftness of the mind. One exists completely free from the senses, and there is mastery of mother nature**, instead of mother nature mastering the senses and mind.

When the senses are under control through an informed and calm mind, then the mind is free to wield its power of swiftness in what does not hinder this vision of reality. The senses no longer control the mind. The mind is not pulled down wasting by-lanes. The mind is now freely in control of the senses (the horses in the chariot illustration, *see sūtra* 2.54). They quickly get the mind to wherever it directs them. In this way, one not only becomes free from the control by the senses, one now is allowed the natural control of them. And from this, one has mastery over nature itself.

By mastering the subtler, one masters the less subtle. By self knowledge, which is the subtlest of knowledge, since it informs one of the nature of oneself and of all of nature, then there is control of the subtle mind. When the subtle mind is in control, the grosser, more external, senses

come under its control. When they are in control, then the outside, gross world is now under one's control, in that it no longer limits you – there is nothing to fear from it.⁶² When the chariot, the mind-sense-body complex, is under your control, the avoidable (*kliṣṭa*) ditches on either side of the road are no longer sources of danger; they clearly mark the highway of life that can now be smoothly traveled with ease and certainty.

The Final Accomplishment is Freedom

सत्त्व-पुरुषान्यता-ख्याति-मात्रस्य सर्व-भावाधिष्ठातृत्वं सर्व-ज्ञातृत्वं च ॥ (3.49)
sattva-puruṣānyatā-khyāti-mātrasya sarva-bhāvādhiṣṭhātṛtvaṃ sarva-jñāṭṛtvaṃ ca.

[*khyāti-mātra* – one who has reached discernment; *anyatā* – distinction; *sattva* – mind; *puruṣa* – self; *adhiṣṭhātṛtva* – one presides; *sarva-bhāvas* – all beings; *ca* – and; *sarva-jñāṭṛtva* – very nature of the knower of all.]

For one who has reached discernment of the distinction between the mind – any object including the mind – **and the *puruṣa* (self)**, then like/as the Lord, **one presides** as the reality in all beings, and is the very nature of the knower of all.⁶³

⁶² 'कर्म-इन्द्रियाणि संयम्य यः आस्ते मनसा स्मरन्। इन्द्रिय-अर्थान् विमूढ-आत्मा मिथ्या-आचारः सः उच्यते॥' "The one who sits restraining the organs of action, [yet] contemplating the sense objects with the mind – that one is called one whose mind is deluded and whose conduct is useless. [Such is the predicament of a renunciate not prepared for a contemplative lifestyle]." 'यः तु इन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्य आरभते अर्जुन। कर्म-इन्द्रियैः कर्म-योगम् अ-सक्तः सः विशिष्यते' "However, O *Arjuna*, the one who rules the senses with the mind, is unattached [i.e., not anticipating results], who through the organs of action undertakes action as a *yoga* (a means for preparing for knowledge) – that one is better [than the deluded of useless conduct]." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.6–7). 'इन्द्रियाणि पराणि आहुः इन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः। मनसः तु परा बुद्धिः यः बुद्धेः परतः तु सः॥' "They say that the senses are superior [to the body and all other objects], the mind is superior to the senses, the intellect is superior to the mind; whereas the one who is superior to the intellect is that [limitless self]." 'एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्य-आत्मानम् आत्मना (संस्कृतेन मनसा)। जहि शत्रुं महा-बाहो काम-रूपं दुर्-आसदम्' "O *Arjuna*, in this way [of] knowing [oneself] as superior to the intellect, steadying the one by the other one [steadying the senses by the mind, the mind by the intellect, and the intellect by self-knowledge], destroy the enemy in the form of *kāma* (overpowering desire), [otherwise so] difficult to get a fix on." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.42–43).

⁶³ 'ते ध्यान-योग-अनुगताः अपश्यन् देव-आत्म-शक्तिं स्व-गुणैः निगूढाम्। यः कारणानि निखिलानि तानि काल-आत्म-युक्तानि अधितिष्ठति एकः' "Committed to contemplation as a means (*dhyāna-yoga*), they have seen [i.e., come to know]

Sattva means *the mind*, since the *sattva guṇa* is the predominant nature of the mind in its non-confused, non-agitated state. A *sattva* predominant mind is the immediate goal of *yoga*.

Sattva (literally *exist-ness*, *sat-tva*) can also mean any object, since an object is that which enjoys *sat* (existence). Knowing that one is the self alone, and not the limitations presented in the mind or the limitations apparent in objects, one knows the nature of oneself as *sat-cit*, unlimited reality-consciousness. This reality-consciousness is the reality in all things. It is the *adhīṣṭhātr*, the one who provides the *adhīṣṭhāna* (reality basis, *asmitā*, of all things), like the power of employees within a business is only an expression of the power given by the owner and president of that business.

In common parlance, the word *adhīṣṭhātr* would mean a ruler or an administrator. But this teaching is hardly common parlance. An individual *yogin* cannot be the administrator of all, since *all* in this teaching has come to mean just that, the entire universe including all of time and space, in fact every cycle of the manifestation and dissolution of the universe. Only the Lord

the power (*śakti*) behind the individual (*ātman* [i.e., the *jīva*]) as the shining being (*deva*) [or, the power (*śakti*) behind (*ātman*) the shining mind (*deva*)] [as though] hidden by the *guṇas*, who alone (*eka*) presides in (*adhīṣṭhātī*) all causes related to time [i.e., nature] and the individual.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 1.3). ‘यः योनिं योनिम् अधितिष्ठति एकः यस्मिन् इदं सं च वि च एति सर्वम्। तम् ईशानं वर-दं देवम् ईड्यं निचाय्य इमां शान्तिम् अत्यनम् एति’ “One completely attains this peace [i.e., freedom from grief], seeing that shining (*deva*), worshipful, blessing-bestowing Lord (*īśāna*), who is the one alone (*eka*) who presides in (*adhīṣṭhātī*) each and every [other] source (*yonī*), within which all this resolves and manifests.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 4.11). ‘सर्वाः दिशः ऊर्ध्वम् अधः च तिर्यक् प्रकाशयन् भ्राजते यद् उ अनङ्गान्। एवं सः देवः भगवान् वरेण्यः योनि-स्वभावान् अधितिष्ठति एकः॥’ “Lighting up all directions – up, down, and across – the one who shines [powerfully] like a bull [in a field of cows], that Lord shining (*deva*) in this way, the one to be chosen, is the one alone (*eka*) who presides in (*adhīṣṭhātī*) [all] that have the nature of being sources (*yonis*).” ‘यद् च स्वभावं पचति विश्व-योनिः पाच्यान् च सर्वान् परिणामयेत् यः। सर्वम् एतद् विश्वम् अधितिष्ठति एकः गुणान् च सर्वान् विनियोजयेत् यः’ “The [single] source (*yonī*) of everything [including *prakṛti*], who ripens [everything’s] nature, who would [appropriately] mature all those that are to be matured [i.e., deserving maturity, one way or another, according to their *karma*], who would [appropriately] present (*vinijojayet*) all attributes (*guṇas*), is the one alone (*eka*) who presides in (*adhīṣṭhātī*) this entire universe.” (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 5.4–5). ‘ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं ज्ञान-गम्यं हृदि सर्वस्य विष्ठितम्’ “It is *jñāna* (knowledge) [i.e., universal order and what lights everything in that order], *jñeya* [to be known], and the result to be attained by/as *jñāna*. It abides (*viṣṭhita*) in the center (*hr̥d*) of everything [and is to be known in this intellect at the center of the human being].” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.17).

has this title of the administrator of all, since the Lord manifests as the order within this and all other manifestations of the universe. Nor is the Lord just the administrator and not also the body of this entirety (*see Śaṅkara's Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya 2.2.37 through 41*).

When I say, “I am the Lord,” I do not mean this *yogin* as the body-mind complex right here and now is the equivalent of that universal Lord. I mean *this sat-cit* (unlimited reality-consciousness) is not other than *that sat-cit* (unlimited reality-consciousness). In self-knowledge, as an individual, I do not become the administrator of all. There is no reason or reality for the individual to claim of being the ruler of all.

When one approaches a text like this, one does *mīmāṃsā* (analysis of the words). This analysis assumes the text is internally consistent with itself and, if part of a tradition, consistent with that tradition also. Therefore, we understand each word in its present, whole context. If a word or statement cannot be taken in its common usage, for example, “fire is cold,” then we resort to its possible grammatical meanings that fit the context. In this *sūtra*, we derive the root meaning of the word *adhiṣṭhātr* differently than is done in day-to-day speech.

As *sat-cit*, unlimited reality-consciousness, I cannot do any activity, whether administering or knowing. Only the body and mind can do such activities, and they, being limited, cannot administer everything, the all. However, as *sat-cit*, unlimited reality-consciousness, I am the reality that, relatively speaking, supports these activities, and that support does extend to all, every cycle of the universe. On a grammatical basis we understand this word in keeping with the rest of the teaching as *the one who provides the basis (adhiṣṭhānaṃ adhikaraṇaṃ kartā iti adhiṣṭhātr)*, the reality basis of all, of everything in the *yogin's* universe.

Of course, everyone unknowingly does this providing reality to everything all the time (*see commentary on Yoga Sūtra 1.3*) by being the source of the attribution of reality. One cannot but be the reality of everything, yet one may not fully know this fact or its implications. This teaching is reality based knowledge, not a time-bound activity of becoming something one is not already. This knowledge is timeless and alone is complete, because it is ever and always an accomplished fact. What is different here is that this *yogin* now knows this reality completely, and has completely assimilated this knowledge in his or her understanding of himself or herself and the universe.

Additionally, even as an administrator, as the sole owner and president of a company, I alone hand out, provide, the titles to the others in the organization which become their only basis, their

authority roles, within the organization. Even assuming any one of the roles within an organization, each one allows the other employees their authority roles, their bases, only to the extent that they recognize and understand those titled roles.

An administrator does not create the people. He or she only assigns and allows their title/basis. That is basically what this creation is also. The separate individuals in this creation, this universal organization, are only distinguished by their names (*nāmadheya*) – their being, their reality, is not created. Only their title or name is assigned or allowed that distinguishes them and relates them within the universal organization, for example, “my co-worker,” “my spouse,” “my neighbor,” “that person,” “this bird,” “those stars,” and so on. In this way too, even as an individual, I assign or allow the titles/names of all entities within my universe. These titles alone are the basis of their so-called separate existence, as *nāmadheya*. The *yogin*, as one who truly knows reality, alone can properly assign these titles/names without creating real divisions beyond the separate names and thus lessening his or her own reality, without creating afflictions by these names.

The *yogin* no longer hands out titles/names to things as sources of happiness, as separate, real entities. This is the true, unlimiting power of the *yogin*. In this way, the *yogin* alone remains as the administrator of all, whereas others immediately lose that status as administrator of all by reducing their own status through naming things as sources of happiness, as separate, real entities. Accepting a limited, dependent role for themselves, the others become overwhelmed and even dependent upon all other things.⁶⁴ The *yogin* is in control of his or her thoughts and

⁶⁴ ‘अथ अतः आत्म-आदेशः एव – “Now the teaching in regard to oneself (*ātman*) apart from this [body-mind complex] – ” ‘आत्मा एव अधस्तात् आत्मा उपरिष्ठात् आत्मा पश्चाद् आत्मा पुरस्ताद् आत्मा दक्षिणतः आत्मा उत्तरतः आत्मा एव इदं सर्वम् इति,’ “Oneself alone is alone below, oneself is above, oneself is west, oneself is east, oneself is south, oneself is north, and oneself is indeed all this.” ‘सः वै एषः एवं पश्यन् एवं मन्वानः एवं विजानन् आत्म-रतिः आत्म-क्रीडः आत्म-मिथुनः (यस्मात्) आत्म-आनन्दः,’ “The very one who sees in this way, who contemplates in this way and who has assimilated knowledge in this way [as well] revels [inside] (*ratī*) in the self, plays [outside] (*krīḍā*) in the self, and copulates [with a partner] (*mithuna*) in the self, [because] oneself is fullness (*ātma-ānanda*).” ‘सः स्वराट् भवति, तस्य सर्वेषु लोकेषु काम-चारः भवति,’ “That one alone rules (*sva-rāṭ*). That one has free rein (*kāma-cāra*) in all worlds.” ‘अथ ये अन्यथा अतः विदुः अन्य-राजानः ते क्षय्य-लोकाः भवन्ति तेषां सर्वेषु लोकेषु अ-काम-चारः भवति’ “Whereas, those who know otherwise than this are ruled by another. Their worlds decay. They have no free rein in any of those worlds.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.25.2).

the naming of everything; the others are controlled by their thoughts and naming.

From the point of view of the total, this can be expressed as the assimilation of one's identity as the Lord, the only ruler and presiding presence.⁶⁵ The Lord is the perfect person (*puruṣa*) that is one's reality in truth. As one gains clarity in knowledge of being this perfect person, one loses subservience towards what was other,⁶⁶ even towards some notion of a Lord as other. When there is no subservience to anything, since there is no other thing or power, then that is ultimate sovereignty (*adhiṣṭhāna*). One's role is subservient in this interrelated universe, but the role's natural subservience does not adhere to the reality and understanding of oneself. One may be a janitor as a participating role, but this person is foremost the Lord with perfect dignity and sovereignty.

As one gains knowledge of being a perfectly acceptable person, one loses the sense of being less than or unworthy of full integration with oneself and the Lord's world. The difference between oneself and the Lord is incidental in terms of creation and naming. There is no Lord who is in reality other than oneself. That knowledge is ultimate sovereignty (*adhiṣṭhāna*).

The only reality that all objects, starting with the mind, really enjoy is this reality which is none other than oneself. And one is the awareness in which all things can become known. These are not two qualities of oneself; they are the single nature of oneself manifesting in our understanding in these two ways: I exist, and I am the witness. This is the essential person. As this essential person, there is no limitation. As reality, there cannot be anything outside of me. There can be no division in reality. If one were to imagine a division, the only thing that could exist outside of reality is non-reality, and that is just the point. Nothing exists outside of reality, so nothing exists outside of me. This being a fact, then any such division in reality itself amounts to no more than an imagination, a mere name as 'other' – nothing more.

⁶⁵ 'श्रोत्रं चक्षुः स्पर्शनं च रसनं घ्राणम् एव च। अधिष्ठाय मनः च अयं (ईश्वरः जीव-भूतः) विषयान् उपसेवते' "Presiding over (*adhiṣṭhāya*) [by giving conscious-being to] [the subtle functions of] hearing, vision, touching, taste, and smelling – and the mind – this [Lord, in the form of the individual] experiences the sense objects." (*Bh. Gītā* 15.9).

⁶⁶ 'यः तु आत्म-रतिः एव स्याद् आत्म-तृप्तः च मानवः। आत्मनि एव च सन्तुष्टः ... न च अस्य सर्व-भूतेषु कश्चिद् अर्थ-व्यपाश्रयः' "Whereas, the person who would [find] pleasure within the self alone, be satisfied with the self, and be contented in the self alone, ...for that one there is no dependence for [any] thing toward any being." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.17-18).

All that enjoy the claim of reality are only what I am aware of in order to lend that claim. I am aware of everything – I clearly am aware of what my mind knows and does not know. I am as much aware of the Mandarin language which my mind does not know – this is why I am absolutely sure I do not know it – as I am aware of the English language that I do know, at least sufficiently enough.

Since this is the subtlest of knowledge, it bears repeating (*abhyāsa*). All exist in the shining reality that I am. This mind through its sense organs can only point in one direction or another, therefore its field is certainly limited, but that does not create a limit in me who is illumining this mind and its senses. This shining reality is not inside the mind or body. This shining reality is free of spatial division – being the witness of these phenomenal divisions.

There cannot be an inside or outside for reality, so there cannot be an inside or outside for me, the real me. When one says that all things exist within me, the meaning is that as reality itself, there can be no second thing. If something appears in my awareness, it cannot be a separate thing. There can only be reality; there cannot be reality plus the divisions. If the divisions are real, then they are not apart from reality, and so not a second thing that can really divide me. If they are not absolutely real, then they do not exist to be a second thing or create a real division. This is having one's identity in reality, in awareness, itself, and not in the phenomenal divisions. This is being all-knowing, being the very nature of the knower of all (*sarva-jñātriva*).

By ascertaining the meanings of these words according to their grammatical roots and context, the student can appreciate the fullest meaning of these *sūtras*. Their meaning presents a total re-orientation of one's understanding that is a freedom which is more real than the bondage, the limitations, I previously thought I was under. That bondage ends. This freedom always was and will be the reality.

This is a reality-based knowledge which brings a complete and lasting satisfaction in oneself. This is a knowledge and teaching tradition, couched in the Sanskrit language, that we know has been available in India for thousands of years and has proved true for countless adepts. It is a knowledge that is said to be true, real, in every cycle of manifest universe, so it can be reasonable to think it is present throughout the extent of each universe. The teaching is so fulfilling and reality-based it is hard to imagine it would not be universally present. This teaching is getting

clearly expressed here and now in the English language also.⁶⁷

तद्-वैराग्याद् अपि दोष-बीज-क्षये कैवल्यम् ॥ (3.50)
tad-vairāgyād api doṣa-bīja-kṣaye kaivalyam.

[*api* – and; *tad-vairāgya* – non-attachment to that; *doṣa-bījas* – defect-seeds; *kṣaya* – withered; *kaivalya* – freedom.]

And from non-attachment to that – from no longer identifying with that mind and all other objects, including superpowers and even the teaching as a last crutch, in other words, from ultimate non-attachment⁶⁸ – **when the defect-seeds** – the afflictions in their seed form onwards⁶⁹ – **are finally withered** by this complete knowledge that destroys the ignorance that is the fertile field for these seeds, **there is *kaivalya* (freedom)**.

This knowledge is meant to be completed. If one stops before clarity is attained, one may be left with just a self-righteous or scholarly view of the texts. The real I is not a topic – it is oneself. One cannot know the real self, know *about* the real self. One can only *be* the self, without limitations. Any knowledge about the self, such as, “I am limitless,” can amount to only a notion about oneself. This can only be another thought, another notion, not the being-witness of thoughts.

This teaching is about knocking off the notions that limit the self. It is not for gaining more notions of grandeur of a holy or perfect self. When the seeds of affliction can no longer stage a

⁶⁷ Swami Chinmayananda initiated in 1952 public talks on these scriptures in English for the first time to anyone who came to listen throughout India and abroad. This now continues with Swamiji’s disciple, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, in public talks, and in short and long term courses in English around the world. Swami Dayananda’s precise presentation of the original Sanskrit teachings into English is unique in its ability to keep these scriptures current and pertinent and applicable in terms of the student’s own experience. This precision in teaching will continue through enough of the hundreds of students Swami Dayananda has taught and who have matured into teachers themselves. We hope the English presentation of this text is a clear example of the clarity that can be brought to a traditional text, long thought to be outside of the *Advaita Vedānta* tradition.

⁶⁸ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.15–16, & 1.49–51.

⁶⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.3–4.

comeback, one enjoys the fruit of this knowledge called complete freedom.

Like light to darkness, knowledge is opposed to ignorance – the dark field in which these seeds of afflictions sprout and flower. Knowledge and ignorance cannot co-exist. In the wake of knowledge, ignorance must go. Once gone, it cannot come back. Even if one were to lose the powers of the mind through accident, disease, or senility, there is no reason for wrong notions to be re-entertained. This knowledge is not extraneous knowledge that can be forgotten. It is a loss of wrong notions, without reason for them to return. It takes practically no mental power to know that one exists; even a bug knows it exists. It takes very little more to know that one exists without limitations. And this is all one needs for knowing oneself as free of limitations. No religious, prophetic, or mystic promise can surpass this.

At that point, one no longer has attachment to or identification with this mind, the objects of the mind, or any grandeur gained in the process. Even the words and practices of the teaching are themselves but means to the end, which is here now. I always exist without limitations. More teaching than this clear knowledge is just words (*nāmadheya*).

स्थान्य्-उपनिमन्त्रणे सङ्ग-स्मयाकरणं पुनर्-अन्-इष्ट-प्रसङ्गात्॥ (3.51)

sthāny-upanimantraṇe saṅga-smayākaraṇaṃ punar-an-iṣṭa-prasaṅgāt.

[*upanimantraṇa* – invitation; *sthānins* – those in high position; *a-karaṇa* – no reason; *saṅga* – attachment; *smaya* – conceit; *prasaṅga* – necessitate; *punar* – return; *an-iṣṭa* – what would not be chosen.]

When there is invitation to join from those in high position, no matter what one’s *karma* brings, there is no reason for attachment or conceit, because attachment and conceit necessitate a return of what would not be chosen.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ ‘श्वः-भावाः मर्त्यस्य यद् (हे) अन्तक एतत् सर्व-इन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः। अपि सर्वं जीवितम् अल्पम् एव तव एव वाहाः तव नृत्य-गीते॥’ “O Lord Death, ephemeral things waste away the vigor of all of a mortal’s senses. All of life is short. [As for Your counter-offer, let] the cars, dances, and songs be Yours alone.” ‘न वित्तेन तर्पणीयः मनुष्यः लप्स्यामहे वित्तम् अ-द्राक्ष्म चेत् त्वा। जीविष्यामः यावद् ईशिष्यसि त्वं वरः तु मे वरणीयः सः एव’ “A mortal cannot be [fully] satisfied by wealth. If I have beheld You [Lord Death] [and survived], I will receive wealth [anyway, when I get back to Earth]. [Having already been freed from You] as long as You rule, I will live. But, my best choice (*vara*) [to be taught the knowledge of existence

Once knowledge dawns, whatever happens in life, whether life gets simpler or more complicated, whether one enjoys position or power or influence, these situations make no change to me. These situations happen to the mind and body, not to me. The self does not become simpler or more complicated, or more or less powerful. It remains as it is, as limitless reality. When promotion or demotion happens in life's situations, these have no connection with oneself. They only relate to the body and mind, and the unfoldment of the *karma* that brought them into being. These are results that, in this life, are mostly out of one's hands, much less are they reasons for worry, disdain, fear or hatred at their approach.⁷¹

The scripture is replete with stories of great sages, such as *Yājñna-vaḥkya* in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, whose counsel and instruction were sought by the great kings of the time. The sages were well rewarded for contributing their knowledge to those who were wise enough to approach and request the greatest of teachings. Some of those kings in turn became wise teachers of this sacred knowledge. In the Indian tradition, the best of politics, economics, and even war were in the light of spiritual wisdom.

There are translators who interpret this *sūtra* to mean one should avoid those in high position or in power out of fear of contamination. But the student need not necessarily limit his contact with anyone of power. Those powers can be confronted and dealt with as well as temptations from other sources. Those with authority and influence can and do benefit from association with adepts who understand the scriptures. It was indeed part of the culture that scriptural students pay no tuition while living with the teacher, but afterward were expected to go to the king or ruler in the area to demonstrate their learning and, if impressive, receive rewards for the student's teacher. Surprisingly, the commentators and translators here either ignore or are

(*asti*) by You] [instead] remains the same." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.1.26-27).

⁷¹ 'समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मान-अपमानयोः। शीत-उष्ण-सुख-दुःखेषु समः सङ्ग-विवर्जितः॥' "The same (*sama*) toward [another who takes himself or herself as] an enemy or a friend and toward respect or disrespect; the same toward [the opposites] cold and hot, pleasure and pain; free from attachment," 'तुल्य-निन्दा-स्तुतिः मौनी सन्तुष्टः येन केनचित्। अ-निकेतः स्थिर-मतिः भक्तिमान् मे प्रियः नरः' "...for whom censure and praise are alike [addressing only this body or mind, but not one's self]; disciplined in speech; satisfied with whatever [happens]; homeless [i.e., a renunciate or who has no ownership toward a house he or she may own]; whose knowledge is firm – who [in this way] has devotion, [that] person is dear to Me." (*Bh. Gītā* 12.18-19).

unaware of this traditional role of the rulers in supporting the educational systems of India.

This *sūtra* emphasizes the student's focus on her own growth and learning, and her strength of character that keeps her from binding attachment and distractions from her purpose. This is the attitude one has as a *karma-yogin* of accepting life's twists and turns as part of the natural order of nature. There is no reason now for a sudden fear or hatred toward those who happen to be rich and powerful. If that were so, then this wisdom would be a sudden stupidity.

No new situation is unacceptable, though there may be situations not of one's choosing. Only the inappropriate attitudes towards these situations, such as attachment or conceit, that are completely under one's control, are not allowed back in, not chosen, since they were based on an ignorance that is gone. Or at least, these inappropriate attitudes would not be chosen by the seeker pending the gain of the real wealth of this knowledge.⁷²

क्षण-तत्-क्रमयोः संयमाद् विवेक-जं ज्ञानम् ॥ (3.52)

kṣaṇa-tat-kramayoḥ saṁyamād viveka-jaṁ jñānam.

[*saṁyama* – contemplation; *kṣaṇas* – moments of time; *tad-krama* – their sequence; *jñāna* – knowledge; *viveka-ja* – born of discernment.]

From *saṁyama* on the notional reality basis of the moments of time and their sequence, there is knowledge born of discernment between the timeless self and the transactional universe.

⁷² 'अ-भयं सत्त्व-संशुद्धिः ज्ञान-योग-व्यवस्थितिः। दानं दमः च यज्ञः च स्व-अध्यायः तपः आर्जवम्॥' "Freedom from fear, purity of mind, steadiness in [i.e., commitment to] knowledge and its contemplation, charity, mastery over the [ways of] behavior, performing [daily] *yajña* [prayers, etc.], reciting to oneself the *Veda* texts, prayerful discipline, straightforwardness," 'अ-हिंसा सत्यम् अ-क्रोधः त्यागः शान्तिः अ-पैशुनम्। दया भूतेषु अ-लोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीः अ-चापलम्॥' "...harmlessness, truthfulness, resolution of anger, renunciation, clarity, *apaśuna* (not exposing defects of one person to another), compassion toward living beings, *aloluptva* (absence of agitation of the senses in the presence of objects), gentleness, modesty, absence of [meaningless] physical agitation," 'तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचम् अ-द्रोहः न-अतिमानिता भवन्ति सम्पदं देवीम् अभिजातस्य भारत' "...brilliance [expressed as self-confidence], accommodation [i.e., patience and understanding], resolve, cleanliness, absence of malice, absence of demanding respect from others – [these] are there for one born to the wealth of a *deva* (i.e., a worthy person), O *Arjuna*." (*Bh. Gītā* 16.1–3).

This *sūtra* returns us to the types of change that objects may undergo. Here, by contemplating on one of the factors, time itself, one attains a knowledge that discerns the difference between the self and this transactional universe.

There is no single entity that is exactly a moment of time. Any length of time is further divisible into shorter and shorter lengths. If we say that a moment is just the shortest length of time that a human can notice, then what of other creatures? For creatures whose life-span is only in terms of a few human days or hours, then couldn't their moment be much shorter? Moreover, our sciences cannot advance without an even shorter understanding of moments of time, so they measure down to fractions of vibrations of an atom or frequency of light. In fact, there cannot be a single shortest moment of time. If there is any length to a moment, then the beginning of the length is really part of the past, and the ending a part of the future. Yet we imagine time as a series of moments. If we cannot really know what a moment is, how can we know what is a series (*krama*) of such moments?

Let us assume there is a series of moments that characterize time. How do we experience this flow of time?

A past moment is something that does not exist anything like a present moment. A future moment also is something that does not exist anything like a present moment. Nor is a past moment anything like a future moment. A past moment is more like a memory of an experience that does not (now) exist. A future moment is more like an expectation of an experience that does not (yet) exist. The present is the experience of what exists. The flow of time would then be an expectation of an experience that does not exist, becoming an experience of existence, which then becomes a memory of that which does not exist. These three are much more unlike than alike. Yet we think of them as a series of the same thing, a series of moments.

Which is the real moment? Is it the expectation, the experience, or the memory? Of the three, the only one that deals with reality is the present moment. But that present moment can have no length lest it again be reduced into expectation and memory, future and past. Any measure that aggregates future, present, and past, such as a minute, and which we call time, cannot exist apart from our conception of that aggregate existing.

In fact, the past is nothing more than a present moment of an existing memory of an experience that does not (now) exist, and the future is no more than the present moment of an existing expectation of an experience that does not (yet) exist. What alone is real of time is the

experience of existence, of the present. That present has nothing to do with any length of time. The present is wholly a length-less, a time-less, experience of existence. Existence is all there is in life. And it is present only in the present. Never is there non-existence. The present is not even an experience of existing in time. This length-less experience of existence, having nothing to do with time, is but my self, existence itself. My self is timeless.⁷³

This timeless existence that is myself is that by which my mind has what it calls experiences, and then attributes reality to these experiences and to this seeming fiction we call time. It is the mind that creates the concept of time, of past-present-future moments and their passage (*krama*). But the conscious mind itself is a flow of thoughts in time. The mind, it seems, then has no more reality than time itself. The mind and time appear to be mutually dependent fictions. Yet they make up our experience of reality.

This is what is meant by transactional reality (*vyāvahārika-sat*). Transactional reality is what appears to be real, but becomes less and less real the more one questions it. Yet it cannot be dismissed as not real. It is good enough for life to carry on; it need not be anything more than that.

What alone is unquestionably real and cannot be dismissed is oneself. It is the same throughout the moments of time and the flow of the thoughts of the mind that allows these to be aggregated. It remains the unblinking witness that never changes, and remains the unchanging background by which all this ever changing transactional reality we call life flows. Without this unchanging background, there would be no experience of change.⁷⁴

If the self changed along with the flow of life, then there could be no experience of the flow of life. Just as, when our senses move along at the same speed, they never sense the fantastic speeds in various directions that we move through the universe on this spinning planet flying through the ever revolving and expanding systems that make up this universe. If our senses

⁷³ 'न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिद् न अयं कुतश्चिद् न भूव कश्चित्। अ-जः नित्यः शाश्वतः अयं पुराणः न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे'
 "This intelligence (*vipaścit*) [i.e., consciousness] is not born nor does it die. Nor did this come from anything, nor did it become anything else. This, which is unborn, timeless, ever the same, and is always there, is not destroyed [i.e., changed] when the body is destroyed [i.e., changed]." (*Kaṭha Up.* 1.2.18). 'नित्यः अ-नित्यानां चेतनः चेतनानाम्' "The timeless of the time-bound (*a-nityas*), the consciousness of the conscious." (*Kaṭha Up.* 2.2.13).

⁷⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.18.

could somehow stand outside of this movement, then only would this movement be fully sensed. Only because there is a reality outside of time and space do we have our limited experience of time and space gained through our senses and mind.

The existence of reality that includes time and space but is more than time and space is what we come to appreciate through the teaching and contemplation. This reality is yourself, and this is why you have these experiences throughout your life that make up this transactional reality. The same ever-fresh witness of your childhood, is the ever-fresh witness of your adulthood, and is the ever-fresh witness of your old age. That witness does not age.⁷⁵ That is why all your experiences remain ever vivid. The timeless reality of your awareness, of your sense of your self, is why a child cannot wait until his body grows up, the teen thinks he will live forever, and an older person cannot accept his mortality. Only the body and mind undergo transformations in time, not the self.

We do not even experience a real flow of life or of thoughts. There is no real flow of life plus myself as its witness. Life itself is less permanent and real than the reality of me, and the flow of life is an abstraction in the mind's eye. This mind also is a part of impermanent life and is itself a flow. The mind has notions about life but the mind is not the witness of life, is not the I who witnesses life. The mind is lit up, so to speak, by the light of the self. This lighting of the non-luminous mind is no more than the presence of the luminous self wherever the mind goes. These ideas will be elaborated and explained in the next chapter of *sūtras*.

The self is called the witness relative only to the act of witnessing which happens in the subtle mind that alone is the action of witnessing and the act of labeling. As explained under *Yoga Sūtra* 1.3, I am the reality that allows me to ever be the witnesser. I am the existence that witnesses all that can be witnessed. I am essentially existence itself that expresses as the witness of all by way of the mind. This witness is the witness of the conscious mind that is a flow of thoughts. The self is the unchanging reality, the unchanging background, by which the mind can experience this flow. That mind is not essentially other than this reality. It participates in this unchanging reality, thus the mind can make sense of a flow, an aggregation, of time, and can

⁷⁵ 'गुणान् एतान् अतीत्य त्रीन् देही देह-समुद्भवान्। जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-दुःखैः विमुक्तः अ-मृतम् अश्नुते' "Transcending these three *gunas* that give rise to the body – and freed from birth, death, ageing, and sorrow [i.e., guilt and hurt] – the embodied one attains immortality." (*Bh. Gītā* 14.20).

become enlightened as to its basis in unchanging reality.

Through this inquiry into the nature of time, one comes face-to-face with the unchanging reality behind time, and that reality cannot be other than oneself. The mind may at first be challenged by the realization, but it will learn to rest in the truth of its unchanging basis. The mind will learn to enjoy freedom from having to try so hard to make sense of life and from trying to make oneself and one's world acceptable. Once this unchanging reality is discerned, time itself is objectively understood. Time and all within time enjoy an objective, phenomenal reality. Whereas, the self is reality itself, being without limitation. The self is known as reality unfiltered through the senses and mind, whereas everything else within reality is phenomenally filtered and limited.

Time and all within time have a dependent, conditional reality. The self is the unconditional, independent reality. The conditional is within the unconditional, and they are not two separate entities. Time and all within time, the transactional world, is reality, but reality is not the transactional world. As Swami Dayananda puts it, "B is A, but A is not B." The broad universe is *ātman* (oneself), but *ātman* is not the broad universe. The broad universe is not the equal of reality, *ātman*; the transactional world is not the total reality. As we have seen, that does not mean the transactional world is not real. The universe is the reality that is oneself; it cannot and does not exist apart from this reality. Yet we are not born knowing this fact, and we come to take the universe and its apparent limitation as its reality and as our reality.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ 'आत्मा एव इदम् अग्रे आसीत्।...तद् ह इदं तर्हि अ-व्याकृतम् आसीत्,' "*Ātman* [here, the shining intelligence manifest as the subtle universe] alone was there in the beginning. ...That [which is] this very universe was at that time undifferentiated." 'तद् नाम-रूपाभ्याम् एव व्याक्रियत, असौ-नाम अयम् इदं-रूपः इति, तद् इदम् अपि एतर्हि नाम-रूपाभ्याम् एव व्याक्रियते, असौ-नाम अयम् इदं-रूपः इति' "It became [itself] differentiated only into name and form (*nāma-rūpa*), 'this [existence] is this [particular] name, this [existence] is this [particular] form.' Even now this [universe] is differentiated only into name and form, 'this [existence] is this [particular] name, this [existence] is this [particular] form' [i.e., not into separate real entities, not away or different from *ātman*]." 'सः एषः (आत्मा) इह प्रविष्टः आ नख-अंग्रेभ्यः यथा क्षुरः क्षुर-धाने अवहितः स्याद्, विश्व-भरः वा विश्व-भर-कुलाये,' "This very [*ātman*] had [already] entered into these [bodies] all the way to the tips of the [finger and toe] nails, like a razor would be placed in its case [i.e., as manifest within like the obvious shining awareness in the mind (*hrd*), the is-is-is in every cognition, yet not fully known, as if encased] or like fire/energy (*viśvaṃ-bhara*) [i.e., the support of the body] within the nest/body (*kulāya*) of fire/energy (*viśvaṃ-bhara*) [i.e., as latent within like fire yet to be converted from unmanifest into manifest energy within the wood, here,

The universe is real, is nothing but the reality, and its limitations are only apparent. Its limitations are apparent in the same way a shirt is apparent, is only name and form, with respect to the fabric, its material. Its material is (relatively speaking) its reality. If you remove the fabric from the shirt, there is no more shirt. If you remove shirt (shirt-ness) from fabric, there is still fabric. The shirt is not the equal of the fabric; the shirt is a name we give to fabric in a certain form. The shirt is fabric, but fabric is not shirt. Similarly, a dream is me the dreamer, but I am not the dream.

This so-called relationship between the real and the unreal (what is other than the unconditional, total reality, yet is not totally nonexistent) is what *Kṛṣṇa* is indicating in the ninth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.⁷⁷ With this understanding, the transactional universe, though unreal, is reality, but reality is not the transactional universe, the unreal. The unreal cannot be totally nonexistent (*śūnya, tuccha*), like a square circle or a rabbit's horn. The totally nonexistent does not exist in any way, not even as an unreal entity. The unreal, any object both factual and

as existence present in the body throughout and not fully known, yet fully, blazingly, knowable].” ‘तं न पश्यन्ति। अ-कृत्स्नः हि सः प्राणन् एव प्राणः नाम भवति। वदन् वाक्, पश्यन् चक्षुः, शृण्वन् श्रोत्रं, मन्वानः मनः, तानि अस्य एतानि कर्म-नामानि एव। सः यः अतः एक-एकम् उपास्ते न सः वेद, अ-कृत्स्नः हि एषः अतः एक-एकेन भवति’ “They [the people] do not [in fact] see it [*ātman*]. Because [viewed from a limited perspective] it is not [seen] complete/whole (*a-kṛtsna*). Only while [manifesting the function of] living [does it go by] the name ‘life (*prāṇa*)’; while [manifesting the function of] speaking...‘speech’; while seeing...‘sight’; while hearing...‘the sense of hearing’; while thinking...‘the mind.’ Each of these are merely the names for it through these functions. The one who meditates upon it as individual and separate from it does not [in fact] know, because this is incomplete as separate from it.” ‘आत्मा इति एव उपासीत, अत्र हि एते सर्वे एकं भवन्ति। तद् एतत् पदनीयम् अस्य सर्वस्य यद् अयम् आत्मा, अनेन हि एतत् सर्वं वेद’ “Only as *ātman* [i.e., as oneself, complete, without separations or divisions] can one contemplate it, because in this [*ātman*] all these are one whole (*eka*). Among all these [names], this *ātman* is what is to be attained [by knowledge], because all this [i.e., everything, every name] is known [only] by this [by *ātman*, by this consciousness].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.1 & 7).

⁷⁷ ‘मद्-स्थानि सर्व-भूतानि न च अहं तेषु अवस्थितः॥ न च मद्-स्थानि भूतानि पश्य मे योगम् ऐश्वरम्। भूत-भृत् न च भूत-स्थः मम आत्मा भूत-भावनः’ “All beings exist in [i.e., are because of] Me, but I am not in [i.e., because of] them. [Yet] [as separate] beings [they] do not exist in Me. Look at My, the Lord’s, *yoga* (connection to/attaining in) [the world]! My *ātman* (self, the self of all) produces [all] things [all names and forms], sustains [all] things, but does not exist in [i.e., is not dependent upon] these things.” (*Bh. Gītā* 9.4-5).

imaginary, is what exists, but does not exist as absolutely real in every way.

The limitations, which make up the diversity of the universe, are only experiences from the perspective of our senses. It is we who then mistakenly take these limitations as being as real as ourselves, and then further impose those limitations (of the body and mind) on ourselves. Once all limitations, being impermanent, are known to be unreal, not absolutely real, not as real as oneself, then there can be no real difference between the universe and oneself. And that is why, once the universe is seen objectively and given proper consideration, the methodology of sub-rating, of negating, the unreal phenomenal limitation, reveals the reality of oneself and identity with the whole.

The tradition *Patañjali* follows does not attempt to explain reality in terms of common knowledge because what is commonly known is exactly where the mistake lies. Insecurities and misplaced values are embedded in our language and our mindset. Nevertheless, we must use common words. We use them and expand their connotation, their meaning. And we ask the student to put that expanded meaning up against his or her own experience.

This tradition unfolds an uncommon knowledge of realities that permanently frees one from all sense of shortcoming. The foundation of the meaning of words is re-oriented to the knowledge that you are whole and you are the whole. This is the revelation shared from the teacher and confirmed in contemplation. The words of the teaching bring out a more clear understanding of how reality ought to be understood, which subsume, sub-rate, our previous understandings of realities as less real, or as a lower level of reality. We already have in our common understanding two levels of reality: imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) and objective (*vyāvahārika*).⁷⁸ To this is to be understood an absolute (*pāramārthika*) reality, that is not a third

⁷⁸ Actually, from the perspective of the common person, the two levels of reality are imaginary (*prātibhāsika*) and absolute (*pāramārthika*), because what is actually the objective, transactional world, once all three levels are understood, is taken, before that understanding, as an absolute reality. That is why this transactional world is misunderstood as something that absolutely limits and binds oneself, because we take it as absolutely real. This is exactly what is meant by the error of identifying oneself, the absolute, with what is seen, with the thoughts in the mind (*compare Yoga Sūtras* 1.4 & 2.17). Again, why isn't this two level imaginary-absolute perspective absolutely true? Because the freedom from bondage sub-rates that perspective, making it incapable of being absolutely real. If freedom were not possible, then the common perspective would be absolutely true.

reality, but the only reality, under which the other two are objectively subsumed, sub-rated.

जाति-लक्षण-देशैर् अन्यतानवच्छेदात् तुल्ययोस् ततः प्रतिपत्तिः ॥ (3.53)
jāti-lakṣaṇa-deśair anyatānavacchedāt tulyayos tataḥ pratipattiḥ.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *an-avaccheda* – no separation; *anyatā* – distinction; *jāti* – character; *lakṣaṇa* – symptom; *deśa* – place; *pratipatti* – ascertainment; *tulya* – both being the same.]

From that knowledge born of discernment of the self in this transactional universe, **since there is no real separation of distinction in terms of character, symptom, and place** in time – the very ways we carve out dualities are themselves exposed as fleeting notions and their separations and limitations are known to be only apparent – then **there is ascertainment of both** the mind or universe within time and the self as **being the same** – the one reality within which the apparent are active.

When the separations, the limitations, in terms of character, symptom, and period between the mind (or any object) and oneself (*sattva* and *puruṣa*, see *Yoga Sūtra* 3.55) are recognized as apparent and not absolute, then the identity of everything as oneself, as reality, is ascertained. This is seeing the sameness everywhere, called *sarva-ātma-bhāva* (being the self of all). This sameness (*tulya*) is the *sama* (the same) that *Kṛṣṇa* explained in chapter five and six of the *Bhagavad Gītā* as the reality that is otherwise called *brahman*.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ 'इह एव तैः जितः सर्गः येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः। निर-दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः' "Those whose mind is rooted in what is by nature the same (*sama*) win over birth here itself. Because the defect-less *brahman* is the same (*sama*) [i.e., everywhere it is one only], therefore they abide in *brahman*." (*Bh. Gītā* 5.19). 'सुहृद्-मित्र-अरि-उदासीन-मध्यस्थ-द्वेष्य-बन्धुषु। साधुषु अपि च पापेषु सम-बुद्धिः विशिष्यते' "That one is exalted whose vision is the same (*sama*) toward the kind-hearted, friends, enemies, acquaintances, mediators, the hateful, kin, the virtuous, and even sinners." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.9). 'सर्व-भूत-स्थम् आत्मानं सर्व-भूतानि च आत्मनि। ईक्षते योग-युक्त-आत्मा सर्वत्र सम-दर्शनः॥' "Whose mind is absorbed in [this] contemplation, who sees the same (*sama*) [i.e., *brahman*] everywhere – sees [one's] self abiding in all beings and all beings in [one's] self." 'यः मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति। तस्य अहं न प्रणश्यामि सः च मे न प्रणश्याति॥' "The one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me – I am not lost [i.e., remote] to that one, nor is that one lost [i.e., remote] to Me." 'सर्व-भूत-स्थितं यः मां भजति एकत्वम् आस्थितः। सर्वथा वर्तमानः अपि सः योगी मयि वर्तते' "Having attained [this vision/knowledge of] oneness, the one who [thus] gains Me as abiding in all beings, that *yogin*, though engaging in all types [of

Though it is obvious that these last few *sūtras* from 3.49 to the end of this chapter are summing up what is the goal of *yoga* and the eight limbs of *yoga*, namely, the knowledge and what is freedom, the *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* commentaries and translators strive to interpret this *sūtra* as one more superpower.

They take the term *deśa* to mean only physical location, and not time. An accomplished *yogin* can glean knowledge of the temporal distinction of two entities that are similar (*tulya*) in character, symptom, and location. Then the *yogin* could distinguish two similar newly minted coins from each other, or one fruit from another, by being able to perceive atomic differences because of the difference in time they were formed and presented in front of the *yogin*. One commentator goes on to say the *yogin* would be able to tell if someone switched the coins or fruits when the *yogin* was not looking. I suppose they would be terrific at winning shell games on the streets of Delhi. But I have no idea how important this superpower is towards *kaivalya* (liberation).

Promoting superpowers and ignoring the scripture's physics and metaphysics when explaining these meditations not only misses the point, it misleads the student. These meditations should be seen for their help in preparing the mind for liberation through inculcating a cosmic perspective that connects the microcosm to the macrocosm and transcends the mundane all the way to the limitless. This is recognizing and staying on the purport (*tāt-parya*) of all these *sūtras* from the beginning to end of this text.

Liberating Knowledge – *Kaivalya*

तारकं सर्व-विषयं सर्वथा-विषयम् अ-क्रमं चेति विवेक-जं ज्ञानम्॥ (3.54)

tāraḥ sarva-viṣayaṃ sarvathā-viṣayam a-kramaṃ ceti viveka-jaṃ jñānam.

[*jñāna* – knowledge; *viveka-ja* – born of discernment; *iti* – is said to; *tāra* – liberate; *sarva-viṣaya* – includes everything; *sarvathā-viṣaya* – in everyway; *ca* – and; *a-krama* – lacks a progression.]

This knowledge, born of discernment of the self from this transactional universe, is said

action], abides in Me [i.e., abides not just when in the seat of meditation – because knowledge is continuous, in and out of meditation].” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.29–31).

to liberate⁸⁰ one from *samsāra*, which is mistaken identification of oneself with the limitations of this transactional universe, **includes everything** in the universe **in every way**,⁸¹ **and lacks a progression** – since liberation is not a simple gradual feeling of freedom on a relative, sliding scale of reaching in condition, place, and time, but is an absolute and timeless knowledge of what already is, as complete freedom.

There is no slowing getting liberated. Liberation is not an incremental knowledge that one gathers in terms of information, as is the case with subjects such as philosophy and psychology. The teacher’s words reveal the nature of one’s reality by removing all wrong notions regarding this reality. Until all wrong notions go, one remains limited by each one of them.

The last wrong notion is in the form, “I am limited.” Freedom is knowing oneself as limitless – nothing more and nothing less. This alone is to be thoroughly known and assimilated. It takes time to untangle and remove the layers of confusions and wrong convictions that have been taken for granted all one’s life. Then, it also takes time to assimilate this understanding during this process. But the knowledge itself is so simple; it can take no time at all. We already know we exist; we just have to know that we exist without limitations.

The knowledge itself, since it removes all notions of limitations, also removes the limitation of time. In this sense, the knowledge is timeless, and therefore does not actually take place in time. Between the limited and the limitless, from a logical or a practical standpoint, there cannot be any incremental path. The leap, so to speak, from limited to limitless can only happen because

⁸⁰ ‘सः अहं भगवः मन्त्र-विद् एव अस्मि, न आत्म-विद्, श्रुतं हि एव मे भगवद्-दृशेभ्यः “तरति शोकम् आत्म-विद्” इति, सः अहं भगवः शोचामि तं मा भगवान् शोकस्य पारं तारयतु इति तं ह उवाच – यद् वै किञ्चित् अध्यगोष्ठा नाम एव एतत्’ “‘Revered Sir [i.e., O *Sanat-kumāra*], as I am, I am but a knower of *mantras* (sacred verbal texts), not a knower of *ātman*. Because I have indeed heard from those like yourself that the knower of *ātman* crosses over (*tarati*) sorrow (*śoka*) and, Revered Sir, as I am, I suffer, [then] may your reverence [as a teacher] help me cross over (*tārayatu*) beyond sorrow.’ [*Sanat-kumāra*] replied to him [*Nārada*], ‘Whatever you had studied is but name (*nāman*) alone.’” (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.1.3). ‘रुद्रः तारकं ब्रह्म व्याचष्टे येन असौ अ-मृती-भूत्वा मोक्षो-भवति’ “*Rudra* distinctly imparts the saving (*tāraka*) scripture (*brahman*), by which one who [already] is free (*a-mṛta*) [by nature], is [now] free [by knowledge].” (*Jābāla Up.* 1.1).

⁸¹ ‘तद् एषः श्लोकः – न पश्यः मृत्युं पश्यति न रोगं न उत दुःखताम्। सर्वं ह पश्यः पश्यति, सर्वम् आप्नोति सर्वशः’ “There is this verse – Seeing [thus] one does not see death, nor disease, nor affliction. Seeing [thus], one sees all and attains all, in all ways.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 7.26.2).

one is already and always unlimited. There can be no distance or time span in that leap, without limiting the endpoint as within space or time. Only ignorance that blocks this appreciation stands in the way of the limitless.

This teaching is about including the universe in one's understanding in everyway. It is not about blocking out the universe in deep *samādhi*, hoping the self will *pop up* later in a blank trance of meditation. If the self has to pop up in a trance, then who has been living your life? The self is always there as the being-witness of this life. The mind has just been busy changing and justifying its wrong notions about the self. *Patañjali* offers us *yoga*, a life of assimilating the teaching regarding the world, God, and oneself, aided by values, attitudes, and contemplation.

Some *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* commentaries and translators here create a brand new meaning for the term *tāraka*, saying that it means *intuition*. This is their attempt to claim that *Patañjali* would accept their thesis that *samādhi* creates new knowledge. For them, that new knowledge would be an intuition and would not come from the *guru* (teacher). There would be no background of study or teaching (*brahma-carya* and *svādhyāya*) involved in this intuition. Every New Age author can make any claim he or she wants under the guise of intuition. Anything goes.

But no single experience one has in meditation, no superpower or mystical epiphany, will deliver the goods. Freedom, abiding freedom, does not come and go with specific experiences, even specific intuitions. It cannot because anything that comes in time cannot but be susceptible to, and will, leave in time. The student must read all translations and commentaries, new or old, with an eye to the tendency to overstate the nature of the experiences one may have while living a life of *yoga*.

Samādhi along with its prior practices brings about a clarity and steadiness of mind to apply to what one has studied by way of *svādhyāya* (see *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1), so that this mind may assimilate the knowledge of the teaching. The clarity in knowledge is brought about by the words of the teaching removing ignorance. From the nothingness of a *samādhi* without a teacher and a teaching, one will get nothing more than a quiet sit. What is the point of contemplation, if there is nothing to contemplate? One has to bring into the contemplation the teaching, and then the culmination of *samādhi* will be oneself free of the notions the teaching knocks off. Why would *Patañjali* have wasted so many other *sūtras* about values and attitudes, wrong *saṃskāras* and correcting *saṃskāras*, living a life of study, learning from the scripture, and assimilating

this knowledge, if all there was to *yoga* was a trance *samādhi* that created its own new intuitional knowledge?

सत्त्व-पुरुषयोः शुद्धि-साम्ये कैवल्यम् इति ॥ (3.55)
sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam iti.

[*śuddhi-sāmya* – pure equality; *sattva* – mind; *puruṣa* – self; *iti* – is called; *kaivalya* – freedom.]

When there is understanding and assimilation of the pure equality⁸² of the mind, including any and all objects, and the *puruṣa* (self), this is called *kaivalya* (freedom).

Discernment (*viveka*) of the self as different from the apparent world, and the apparent world as different from the self – this is an initial step in gaining the knowledge that liberates. It gets you onto the raft of self-knowledge as one’s sole pursuit. But, by itself, it may only result in an isolated self, afraid of seeing the world again. The real liberation is the next step born of this discerning knowledge. That step is called *sarva-ātma-bhāva* (*being the self of all*) – limitlessness even while seeing the apparent limitations of the universe.

Sarva-ātma-bhāva is the figurative crossing over (*tāraka*) the ocean of limitations to the limitless *brahman* as oneself. This is the active life that *Kṛṣṇa* lived for all to see and learn from. This is the pure equality, the equality that is obvious once there is purity from the limitations of the universe and the imagined self. That purity is not a physical destruction of limitations. The limitations of the world obviously are not destroyed. The universe, or even one’s personal universe, is not destroyed when someone, somewhere gets liberated. Rather the wise person

⁸² ‘यदा पश्यः पश्यते रुक्म-वर्णं कर्तारम् ईशं पुरुषं ब्रह्म-योनिम्। तदा विद्वान् पुण्य-पापे विधूय निर्-अञ्जनः परमं साम्यम् उपैति’ “When the experiencer (the individual) knows as clear as seeing the shining person (*puruṣa*) [him or herself as the] Lord who is the only doer and as the source of even Lord *Brahmā*, then this wise one, shaking off [as ‘mine’] all *karma* merit and demerit, is freed of impurities, and attains ultimate sameness (*paramaṃ sām्यam*).” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 3.1.3). ‘बुद्धिः बुद्धिमताम् अस्मि’ “I [the Lord, the ultimate *puruṣa*] am the intellect (*buddhi*) of all you have an intellect.” (*Bh. Gītā* 7.10). ‘इन्द्रियाणां मनः च अस्मि’ “I am the mind (*manas*) among the powers [of perception and action].” (*Bh. Gītā* 10.22). ‘सत्त्वं सत्त्ववताम् अहम्’ “I am the contemplative disposition (*sattva*) among the contemplative.” (*Bh. Gītā* 10.36). ‘अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयः तथा’ “I am the source of the entire universe, as well at [its] resolution.” (*Bh. Gītā* 7.6).

subsumes and sub-rates these limitations by his or her all-encompassing knowledge of limitless reality.

The limitless is first recognized through the discernment that oneself is not the unreal limitations – the A is not B from the second half of Swami Dayananda’s formula.⁸³ But is finally recognized according to the first half of that formula, B is A – all this broad universe is nothing but myself (*ātman*).

This formula, B is A but A is not B – the broad universe is *ātman* (oneself), but *ātman* is not the broad universe – applies to relating to (applies to including) the world in oneself through the liberating knowledge of this teaching. The essential knowledge that brings this understanding about is that B is A, expressed in the Great Saying (*mahāvākya*): That (*brahman*) is you, you are that (*tat tvam eva tvam eva tat*).⁸⁴ That limitless reality (*brahman*) is you (*ātman*) and you are that. This doubtlessly reveals the exact identity, oneness, of oneself and the limitless. Being the limitless, everything must be within oneself.

Whereas, the dualist *Sāṅkhya-Yoga* philosophy holds that liberation is a mechanical process like breaking a car engine. One stops the mind, stops the engine. Once the mind stops then (with a little tinkering under the hood – this is the mystical part) the *karma* seed linkage gets unlinked, and the mind, the engine, can never get started again. Presto, the problem is solved.

Sāṅkhya-Yogins see the mind as a problem, and they say eliminating the mind solves the problem. Liberation for them is whatever remains after this thought-stoppage. It literally amounts to the *yogin* stranded in his or her isolation philosophy without an intellect to get out. There are even stories of *yogins* walled off in a cave or an ashram room, feed by their students and devotees through a small opening. This is somehow a sign of the *yogin*’s liberation.

All *dharma* efforts toward growth, though, will bring rewards and *punya* (*karma* merit). A *yoga-bhraṣṭa* (fallen from *yoga*) is the one who gets as far as he or she does, but does not finish. The lot of a *yoga-bhraṣṭa* is questioned and answered in the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* dealing with *samādhi* contemplation.⁸⁵

⁸³ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.52.

⁸⁴ ‘तद् (परं ब्रह्म) त्वम् एव त्वम् एव तद्’ “That [limitless reality] is you, you are that.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 1.16).

⁸⁵ ‘अ-यतिः श्रद्धया उपेतः योगात् चलित-मानसः। अ-प्राप्य योग-संसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति॥’ “O *Kṛṣṇa*, [the renunciate talked about in this sixth chapter] endowed with trust [in this Your teaching], [but] who does

not make [adequate] effort, whose mind wanders away from *yoga*, not gaining success in *yoga* – what is [that one’s] lot?” ‘कश्चित् न उभय-विभ्रष्टः छिन्न-अभ्रम् इव नश्यति। अ-प्रतिष्ठः महा-बाहो विमूढः ब्रह्मणः पथि॥’ “O *Kṛṣṇa*, deluded in the path [i.e., the means for the knowledge] of *brahman*, fallen from both [*karma-yoga* and *jñāna-yoga*] [and thus] without a basis, I hope that this one does not fizzle out, like a cloudlet [split off from a cloudbank]?” ‘...पार्थ, न एव इह न अमुत्र विनाशः तस्य विद्यते। न हि कल्याण-कृत् कश्चित् दुर्-गतिं तात गच्छति’ “...O Arjuna, neither here itself [due to the positive attitude of *śraddhā*] nor hereafter [according to *karma*] is there loss for that one. O Dear One, [to the extent] anyone performs adaptive action [in keeping with *dharma*], [to that extent] that one does not get a bad lot.” (*Bh. Gītā* 6.37–38, & 40).

Chapter 4

On Freedom

Causes of the Accomplishments

जन्मौषधि-मन्त्र-तपः-समाधि-जाः सिद्धयः ॥ (4.1)
janmauṣadhi-mantra-tapaḥ-samādhi-jāḥ siddhayāḥ.

[*siddhis* – superpowers or accomplishments; *ja* – effected; *janma* – birth; *oṣadhis* – herbs; *mantras* – repetition of sacred declarations; *tapas* – austerities; *samādhi* – contemplation.]

The *siddhis* (superpowers or accomplishments) mentioned in the preceding section can be effected by one's birth with a fast-track to maturity due to one's prior efforts, or in this life by healthy herbs, repetition of *mantras*, austerities, and/or *samādhi*.

One may achieve these superpowers to varying degrees naturally from one's birth, or from drugs, incantations, austerities, or *samādhi* (the various *saṃyamas* talked about in the preceding section). We accept these accomplishments in their relative sense as conceivably possible but unnecessary and indistinct. They hold their place in the Indian tradition as more of a cultural or cult phenomenon and, as superpowers, do not give us sensible goals.

A better understanding of *siddhis* (accomplishments) here is the gain of the qualifications sufficient to assimilate this teaching. That alone is the most worthwhile accomplishment within *yoga*, and is in keeping with everything that *Patañjali* has presented and intended in this text.

A conducive birth and upbringing supports and nourishes the student's spiritual growth, his or her sense of integrity and understanding of one's identity with the Lord. The *mantras* of the scriptures express the essential understanding of this liberating teaching. *Patañjali* refers to herbs, which may be combined with specific *mantras*, employed in *Ayurveda* to heal the mind and body of distracting conditions (see *Yoga Sūtras* 1.30 and 31). In a broad sense, a vegetarian

diet contributes to a steady mind and a healthy attitude.¹

A vegetarian (*oṣadhi*) diet complements the prime virtue of non-injury (*a-himsā*) in one's life. We've become efficient farmers in the past several thousand years. We do not have to kill to survive, unless we choose to. A vegetarian diet may be seen as an accomplishment of a more intelligent consumption from the healthier base of the food chain, instead of from its accumulated poisonous top. But, in making this personal decision does the intellect or desire win out? Which is in charge of the diet? How could the same not be in charge of the rest of one's actions and thoughts? If intelligent sincerity and tenacity are perhaps lacking even at the sacred dining table, when and where will they show?

We simply want to present here an understanding about non-violence in one's life. Our own choice in this matter is our choice – understandable and acceptable no matter what it is. *Vedānta* and *yoga* do not demand or command anything. We each have to demand and command our own action – that's all. This here is simply to inform.

¹ 'यज्ञ-शिष्ट-अशिनः सन्तः मुच्यन्ते सर्व-किल्बिषैः' "Those who eat the food left after first offering to the Lord are freed from all transgressions." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.13). 'अपरे नियत-आहारः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति' "Others, whose food [consumption] is regulated, offer [their] *prāṇas* (energies) into the *prāṇas* (digestive fires)." (*Bh. Gītā* 4.30). 'युक्त-आहार-विहारस्य युक्त-चेष्टस्य कर्मसु। युक्त-स्वप्न-अवबोधस्य योगः भवति दुःख-हा' "For one whose food and activity are moderated – whose bodily movement is regulated during activities, whose sleeping and waking [hours] are moderated – *yoga* is a destroyer of [all] sorrows." (*Bh. Gītā* 6.17). 'स्वधा अहम् अहम् औषधम्' "The food [offered to the ancestors] is Me, the food (*auśadha*, made from plants [*oṣadhīs*]) [offered to the Lord] is Me." (*Bh. Gītā* 9.16). 'गाम् आविश्य च भूतानि धारयामि अहम् ओजसा। पुष्णामि च ओषधीः सर्वाः सोमः भूत्वा रस-आत्मकः॥' "Having entered the earth [as the brilliance from the sun], I sustain with My strength all beings. And being the extracted juice in the form of sap [from the earth], I nourish all plants (*oṣadhīs*) [hence, I am the food]." 'अहं वैश्वानरः भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहम् आश्रितः। प्राण-अपान-समायुक्तः पचामि अन्नं चतुर्-विधम्॥' "Being the digestive fire, obtaining in the body of living beings, and united with [i.e., stoked by] exhalation and inhalation, I cook [inside the body] the four kinds of food [drunk, chewed, licked, and sucked]." 'सर्वस्य च अहं हृदि सन्निविष्टः' "And I am present [as the conscious being] in everyone's intellect [energized by Me as the digested food]." (*Bh. Gītā* 15.13–15). 'आयुः-सत्त्व-बल-आरोग्य-सुख-प्रीति-विवर्धनाः। रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिराः हृद्याः आहाराः सात्त्विक-प्रियाः' "Foods that increase longevity, mental clarity, strength, health, pleasure [in taste], and satisfaction [visually or physically], [that are] tasty, oily, long lasting [in the body], and pleasing to the mind – [they] are [said to be] a favorite of one predominately *sattva*. (*Bh. Gītā* 17.8).

Action and the Mind

जात्य्-अन्तर-परिणामः प्रकृत्य्-आपूरात् ॥ (4.2)
jāty-antara-pariṇāmaḥ prakṛty-āpūrāt.

[*pariṇāma* – change; *jāti-antara* – another birth; *āpūra* – filling in; *prakṛti* – pre-existing nature.]

The change into and within another birth, which may bring these powers, as well as any and all abilities one is capable of in keeping with that embodiment, **is due to the filling in of one's pre-existing nature**. In the context of change into a new birth, this filling in is the possibility within one's entire storehouse of *karma*; in the context within this birth, this is the subset of latent tendencies one is born with.

The abilities of any embodiment, whether divine, human, animal, or other, are not solely due to any current activity one undertakes in that embodiment. These current activities are themselves more an effect of the current embodiment and situations with which one has been provided, than any change within this embodiment. They are more due to one's past store of *karma* that creates one's physical body and shapes the subtle body (the mind) appropriately for the various experiences this embodiment can provide. The past *karmas* play out as one's abilities and the situations around, with which to experience and grow.

There is free-will to be exercised in one's choices throughout life. These chosen activities create new *karmas*. Free-will activities make growth possible, but even these are within the possibilities allowed to one's mind with its background that has been mostly provided and not caused by you. This shaping background is provided by the total environment – one's genetic material, one's mother and father, one's siblings and extended family, neighbors, friends, teachers, co-workers, *guru*, literature, language, art, society, technology, cuisine, locale, geography, climate, weather, and on and on. You did not cause any of these, but they shaped you according to what your *karma* required and allowed.

This total environment is what is appreciated as the manifestation of the Lord in one's life. This appreciation is the predominant attitude within *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* (intelligent surrender to

the Lord as the whole order of the universe) as part of *kriyā-yoga*.² In appreciation of this provided background and order, one has natural duties to give back as an offering to the whole, even if that offering is but this prayerful appreciation.

If part or much of this background is seen as a problem by you, still that background has also allowed you to see the problem and thus to start to address the problem. This problem was likely there because of one's *karma* to be worked out in this life. That storehouse of *karma* was your own doing in countless lives past. Do not blame the messengers for this *karma* which is yours to work out. This acceptance of one's own storehouse of *karma* is also part of the appreciation of this provided background, of the Lord in one's life.

In the course of resolving the shame and blame that conflict one's life, the student recognizes that much of what occurs in life is outside of his or her control. It can be accommodated as the given environment. Then, one can turn to adjusting one's emotional attitude to accept this objective fact. This allows a more unclouded intellect to freely choose the best course of action in this given reality. This is a life of *karma-yoga*.

The concept of a storehouse or account holding one's *karma* is a belief. It is a belief that is not essential to gaining liberation, but it is a healthy and supportive belief system.

Some may believe that what happens is due to good or bad luck, uncaused chance occurrences, at which to rejoice or curse. But science does not accept non-causation or uncaused magic. Or, some may think that everything in their life is caused by their will, their choices. This more easily leads to more shame, guilt, and a sense of failure, than to self-empowerment and satisfaction.

The *karma* model allows a balanced, healthy measure of importance to present choices within the given interlinked causal mesh of life, within the Lord. It respectfully acknowledges the intricate web of life in which one participated in forming around oneself, and pinpoints where informed choice can be effectively directed right here now. In respectful and informed choice alone is growth in life which can shape one's current attitudes and future experiences. It is a greater mastery of one's attitudes in life that brings real and lasting maturity – not control of

² *Yoga Sūtra* 2.1.

situations which are, in truth, not controllable.³

There are translators of this *sūtra* and the next one who find in the meaning of the word *jāti* a connection to the evolution of species. *Jāti* can mean *group* or *species*. This is again an attempt to fit *Patañjali* into a *Sāṅkhya* mold, with its elaborate analysis of evolution. *Patañjali*'s reference here is to freedom from the confusion of seeing the world as equally real as the self. He explains how the individual makes progress in this birth within the scheme of *karma* towards an appreciation of that freedom. Understanding *jāti* as *birth* is the appropriate translation and is consistent with the context.

Moreover, those translators have little to offer for their efforts in trying to throw light on species or world evolution through these few *sūtras* here that are ill-equipped for such a topic. One is left as a result in the next *sūtra* wondering just who would be the farmer in its irrigation metaphor? If these two *sūtras* are about species, then is God their farmer? But God or the *ātman*, the *parama-ātman*, is actionless.⁴ How can an actionless farmer plant and pull weeds to cultivate crops, or anything like that?

निमित्तम् अ-प्रयोजकं प्रकृतीनां वरण-भेदस् तु ततः क्षेत्रिकवत्॥ (4.3)
nimittam a-prayojakaṃ prakṛtīnāṃ varaṇa-bhedas tu tataḥ kṣetrikavat.

³ 'कर्मणि एव अधिकारः ते मा फलेषु कदाचन। मा कर्म-फल-हेतुः भूः मा ते सङ्गः अस्तु अ-कर्मणि॥' "You have control only in doing action, never in its results. Do not [think yourself to] be the cause of the results of action [that cause being but the Lord as embodied in the universal laws of *karma*]. Nor should you have attachment to inaction. O *Arjuna*, being free from attachment [toward anticipated results], [i.e.] being the same (*sama*) towards success or failure, established in *yoga* [this attitude], [then] perform action. Sameness (*samatva*) [of attitude (*buddhi*) towards results – whatever they are] is called *yoga*." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.47–48).

⁴ 'अन्-आदित्वात् निर्-गुणत्वात् परम-आत्मा अयम् अ-व्ययः। शरीर-स्थः अपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते' "O *Arjuna*, since it is beginningless [i.e., uncaused/un-effected] and since it is without attributes, this changeless *parama-ātman* (limitless I) does not do action – even though obtaining in the body – nor is it affected [by the results of action]." (*Bh. Gītā* 13.31).

[*nimitta* – efficient cause; *a-prayojaka* – not the instigator; *prakṛtis* – pre-existing causes; *tu* – rather; *kṣetrika-vat* – like a farmer; *bheda* – removal; *varaṇas* – obstacles; *tataḥ* – to them.]

An efficient cause – one’s current action – **is not the instigator of the pre-existing causes** – the already existing store of *karma* – **rather, like a farmer** opening a gate in an irrigation system and removing weeds, **there is only the removal of obstacles to them**, to the preferred *karma* pathways possible in this life.

The part of the storehouse of *karma* that materially effects and affects this current life, namely *prārabdha karma*, is not fate set in stone. It is a wealth of possibilities, within the mind as its latent tendencies, that is the promise this life can entail. Current choices and actions remove obstacles (*varaṇa* = *āvaraṇa*) to different *karma*-currents within these possibilities in this life to flow into manifestation. To use the given metaphor, the opening of certain irrigation gates is equivalent to the informed free-will choices one makes, and the removing of weeds in the chosen channels is the equivalent here of clearing away the *kleśas*, the blocking obstructions, within the *karma* matrix of fixed possibilities that hold one back from fulfillment in life. This is the importance of choice in action and then following through in thought, words, and deeds that are in keeping with *dharma* (what is appropriate in every situation).⁵ This topic, which is only hinted at here, is covered very well in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. This freedom to exercise choice is also the basis of what prayer is.

Prayer’s purpose is to exercise a choice and mentally act upon it, where physical action is not possible or not enough of an effective option, such as in helping another in one’s life to mature in their own life. Prayer is for removing any obstacles to a preferred outcome that is possible. Much of that removal of obstacles is of one’s own false sense of helplessness that keeps one unhappy in the current situation. By gaining a healthier attitude towards what is being prayed for, by doing all that one can do in the situation, this at least helps prepare oneself for any outcome and accept it.

Prayer should not be seen as requesting some deity to interfere in the nature of things and

⁵ ‘योगः (स्व-)कर्मसु कौशलम् (=यथा-अर्थता)’ “Propriety in actions [i.e., acting within *dharma*, where, like for the Lord, the means are as important as the end] is [called] *yoga*.” (*Bh. Gītā* 2.50).

people to create some positive outcome for you or for certain of your friends. Deities are, in this tradition, viewed as the very forces that make up the nature of things, such as Lord *Agni* (Fire), Goddess *Sarasvatī* (Perennial Knowledge), or Lord *Dharma-rāja* (Death), not as spoilers in nature with preferences towards whomever most appeases them. Whenever the scripture talks about appeasing the gods and goddesses, it means appreciating and acknowledging, in words and deeds, their effectiveness in this world. This is why these types of prayers, such as the *Veda* ritual prayers, simply praise the glories of these forces in nature. It is an expression of a fact, and an acceptance of this fact in one's attitudes and actions in the world.

With one's limited mind and its personal background, one cannot know exactly what is best in the long run for anything or anybody; much less know what is best for everything and everyone in this interconnected universe. Let nature by way of *karma* take its course. It is not enough to choose or wish an outcome; one has to act on the choice. One does what one can and one prays for what one believes is the better outcome. Then, with this maturity of a sense of duty fulfilled, and understanding of the power and interconnectedness of all *karmas*, one accepts whatever is the outcome with this maturity, and carries on happily with the next choices in life with wisdom.

In regard to the teaching that frees, note that the methodology of the teaching is through *neti-neti* (*not this – not that*), removing wrong notions, quite like the farmer removing weeds – as opposed to adding new information about categories of the evolution of the world through an unnecessary dualist philosophy. In seeking limitless liberation, why nurture a philosophy about divisive dualist notions? Everyone already has these divisive beliefs anyway without any study or philosophy. Those alone are the weeds that need to be cleared, not cultivated.

निर्माण-चित्तान्य् अस्मिता-मात्रात् ॥ (4.4)
nirmāṇa-cittāny asmitā-mātrāt.

[*cittas* – minds; *nirmāṇa* – fashioned; *asmitā-mātra* – purely by a notional-I.]

Minds are fashioned purely by a notional-I, identified with actions as the doer and enjoyer, creating new and different *karma* – adding to and reinforcing the latent tendencies in these minds.

Births of new bodies and the shaping of the subtle body and mind to fit those embodiments are due directly to the storehouse of *karma* in one's own series of births. In regard to all births of all individuals, these births are due to the various, personal storehouses of *karma*, in everyone's series of births. My own storehouse of *karma* itself is due to the ignorance that I am this body and mind, and thus the body's and mind's actions and their outcomes are mine also. This continuing false identity, which results in further births to allow those outcomes to be expressed, is the notional-I.

Over the course of birth and rebirth, the migrating notional-I persists in a continuum of appropriate subtle body adaptations – appropriate for the next round of growth and the exhaustion and accumulation of *karma*. This notional-I for each individual has been there from the beginning-less beginning, and its current storehouse of *karma* has accumulated countless *karmas* for countless more and varied embodiments yet to fructify. But this notional-I, as absolutely real, does have an end in knowledge of the self as limitless reality and the notional-I is but a notion. Once this limited identity is falsified, there is no more an owner of this individual's storehouse. The storehouse, no matter how full, wastes away on its own, like unclaimed baggage, for lack of ownership.

Patañjali in this *sūtra* is moving from the single seeker's mind to the plurality of all minds (*cittas*), because the next *sūtras* are about the Lord and all individuals in respect to the *karma* model that has been presented.

प्रवृत्ति-भेदे प्रयोजकं चित्तम् एकम् अन्-एकेषाम्॥ (4.5)
pravṛtti-bhede prayojakaṃ cittam ekam an-ekēṣām.

[*bheda* – distinction; *pravṛtti* – activity; *eka* – one; *citta* – mind or self; *prayojaka* – instigates; *an-ekas* – all other ones.]

When there is distinction of one's self from activity,⁶ hence no doership and no limited

⁶ 'प्रकृति एव च कर्माणि क्रियमाणानि सर्वशः। यः पश्यति तथा आत्मानम् अ-कर्तारं सः पश्यति' "And the one who sees actions being done in every way by *prakṛti* (nature) alone and, in that way, [sees] that the self is not a doer – that one [alone] [correctly] sees." (*Bh. Gītā* 13.29). 'क्षेत्र-क्षेत्र-ज्ञयोः एवम् अन्तरं ज्ञान-चक्षुषा। भूत-प्रकृति-मोक्षं च ये विदुः यान्ति ते परम्' "Those who thus know, through the eye of wisdom, the distinction

I-notion, **there is only the one Mind [or self]** – the Lord or the limitless consciousness – **that instigates all other ones**, all other individuals.

That one *citta* can be viewed in two ways here. *Citta* can be the *cit* (the conscious reality that is oneself alone) free of ignorant limitations. The mind (*citta*) after all is nothing but *cit* (consciousness-being) in reality; and one who is liberated knows this to be the fact of the mind. That *cit* (consciousness-being), of course, does not instigate any second thing, but it does allow all imagined second things to come into phenomenal being, to enjoy a degree of existence, remain for a time, and then resolve without ever leaving the one and only limitless reality.

Without conflict, this one *citta* can also be the Mind of the Lord, the total or cosmic mind, also called the *mahat*.⁷ This is the intelligent order of the universe that shapes the universe and all embodiments within this universe. It materially is not other than the Lord, being like the Lord's dream that phenomenally occurs but does not make any real change in, does not have any real effect on, the Lord.

When one person, one individual mind, is liberated by knowledge, apparent *samsāra* (the life of perpetual unbecoming becoming) carries on for all other individuals until they also gain this knowledge. This universe naturally continues to be perceived by the liberated person, and this universe is maintained by the total manifestation we call the Lord, all within the reality that is oneself. The liberated one does not see duality, no longer accepts duality as absolutely real. He or she only sees the one reality that is this Lord as oneself, within which this beautiful and enjoyable dream-like manifestation is incapable of any longer afflicting the wise person. There is only the one Mind of God as everything, with everything and everyone else revolving within that Lord.⁸

between the *kṣetra* and the *kṣetra-jñā* [i.e., the object and the subject – the subject being the substance of all objects, of all names and forms] and [their inherent] freedom from *prakṛti* (the cause) of [all] beings – they attain the ultimate.” (*Bh. Gītā* 13.34).

⁷ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.19.

⁸ ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्-देशे अर्जुन तिष्ठति। भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यत्र-आरूढानि मायया। “O *Arjuna*, the Lord – causing all beings to spin around, [as if] mounted on a machine [as on a wheel revolving in *samsāra* – now up, now down] by *māyā* (the Lord's power of projecting) – remains [unmoved as the self of

तत्र ध्यान-जम् अन्-आशयम् ॥ (4.6)
tatra dhyāna-jam an-āśayam.

[*tatra* – in that; *dhyāna-ja* – born of contemplation; *an-āśaya* – no storehouse.]

In that clear vision of oneness, **born of contemplation** that brings the clarity and allows assimilation of this teaching, **there is no storehouse** of *karma*.

The contemplation is of the one being – none other than the limitless Lord free of everything, including being free of all *karma*. Initially, this may be something on which one is trying to gain clarity. Eventually, it is known as a fact of one’s nature, because it is one’s nature and always has been one’s nature. This knowledge is made firm by all the contradicting notions being laid thread-bare in contemplation. In oneself as the Lord, as the perfect person (*puruṣa*), there is no binding storehouse of *karma* for new births.⁹

कर्माशुक्लाकृष्णं योगिनस् त्रि-विधम् इतरेषाम् ॥ (4.7)
karmāśuklākṛṣṇaṃ yoginas tri-vidham itareṣām.

[*yogin* – the one who has attained success in *yoga*; *a-śukla* – neither pure; *a-kṛṣṇa* – nor impure; *karmas* – results of action; *itaras* – everyone else; *tri-vidha* – three-fold.]

For that *yogin* (the one who has attained success in *yoga*) there is neither pure nor impure *karmas*; for everyone else there is the three-fold – *sattva-rajas-tamas karmas* – with their full range from pure to impure.

In the knowledge of the identity of the self and the Lord, a separate individual *jīva* who accumulates a storehouse of *karmas* is known to be a false conclusion. For the one who knows, without a real *jīva* there can be no owned storehouse of *karmas*. There cannot then be its pure or impure *karmas*. As expressed in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, the wise person is naturally beyond all

all] in the seat of the intellect (*hrd*) of all beings.” (*Bh. Gītā* 18.61).

⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24.

dharma, all right and wrong,¹⁰ which are relative notions within duality. However, the wise person, having lived a life of values in order to arrive at this understanding, will have no pressure to act otherwise, nor require incentive to act in keeping with *dharma*. As was mentioned, when one person is liberated, life carries on for the others. For them, *karma*, in all its variety, is taken as real.

ततस् तद्-विपाकानुगुणानाम् एवाभिव्यक्तिर् वासनानाम्॥ (4.8)
tatas tad-vipākānugūṇānām evābhivyaktir vāsanānām.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *abhivyakti* – manifestation; *vāsanās* – latent tendencies; *anugūṇa* – in keeping; *tad-vipāka* – fruition of those; *eva* – alone.]

For everyone else, **from that** store of *karmas*, **there is the manifestation of latent tendencies that are in keeping with the fruition of those *karmas* alone** which are not obstructed.

Until that understanding, for everyone else, the *karma* model is still a healthy perspective with which to view one’s life in this interconnected universe. The *karmas* of the storehouse are themselves the results of previous lives’ will-based activities which in this life become subtle causes of the physical body and situations, and of the subtle nature of one’s mind. *Vāsanās* (latent tendencies) are aspects of the nature of the mind that themselves are the results of these *karmas*, as well as newly acquired *karmas* in this life. The *vāsanās* lie within as the unmanifest mind, later becoming the immediate causes of feelings, attitudes, habits, and aptitudes – all in the form of various memories whose source lies outside one’s conscious mind. *Vāsanās* (latent tendencies) are this tradition’s expression of the human unconscious. Another word for *vāsanās* is *saṃskāras*. Again, for a fuller discussion of the nature of the mind see Appendix A.

¹⁰ ‘सर्व-धर्मान् (=धर्म-अ-धर्मान्) परित्यज्य माम् एकं शरणं ब्रज’ “Giving up all *dharma* [and *a-dharma*] (adaptive and maladaptive action) [by giving up doership], surrender to Me alone [as there is nothing other than Me].” (*Bh. Gītā* 18.66).

जाति-देश-काल-व्यवहितानाम् अप्य् आनन्तर्यं स्मृति-संस्कारयोर् एक-रूपत्वात् ॥ (4.9)
jāti-deśa-kāla-vyavahitānām apy ānantaryaṃ smṛti-saṃskārayor eka-rūpatvāt.

[*eka-rūpatva* – having the same form; *ānantarya* – linkage; *smṛtis* – memories; *saṃskāras* – latent impressions; *api* – though; *vyavahita* – separated; *jātis* – births; *deśas* – locations; *kālas* – times.]

Due to having the same form, there is linkage between memories and their latent impressions that cause them, **though** the formation of those latent impressions by past *karmas* are **separated** from their manifest memories **by** many, different intervening **births, locations, and times.**¹¹

A memory and its source *saṃskāra* (latent tendency) created previously have the same form. The *saṃskāra* is that memory, but in just its potential state. The *saṃskāra* remains in that potential state until there occurs the appropriate embodiment, time, and place for it to express as a manifest memory – as a feeling, attitude, habit, or aptitude. The varieties of latent tendencies that match what one needs for this particular life were sown in a variety of one’s previous human-like lives as creatures with a faculty of relatively free choice, though many non-human births may have intervened. The appropriate tendencies for the non-human births were expressed in those intervening births, while the ones appropriate for a human birth remained dormant.

A particular *saṃskāra* appropriate to only a certain human being would itself be sown by a deliberate action in a past human-like birth, even though there may have been intervening births as other creatures or as humans in which this tendency was not appropriate to manifest. For example, a tendency sown thousands of years ago to consume beyond all rationality, would be inappropriate for a person born a hundred years ago in the jungles of New Guinea, but not unusual for one born now in the consumer driven United States.

The universe itself is cyclic in its manifestations, so the separation of an original cause and

¹¹ ‘सर्व-भूतानि कौन्तेय प्रकृतिं यान्ति मामिकाम्। कल्प-क्षये पुनः तानि कल्प-आदौ विसृजामि अहम्’ “O *Arjuna*, at the end of the *kalpa* (manifestation cycle, the start of night for Lord *Brahmā*), all things go [i.e., become unmanifest] into My *prakṛti* (*māyā*). Again, at the beginning of the manifestation cycle, I project [i.e., manifest] them [from My *māyā*].” (*Bh. Gītā* 9.7).

its final result can span generations, centuries, millenniums, eons, or manifestation cycles – maintained in that span in seed form as a *karma* within one’s *karma* storehouse.

तासाम् अन्-आदित्वं चाशिषो नित्यत्वात्॥ (4.10)
tāsām an-āditvaṃ cāśiṣo nityatvāt.

[*ca* – and; *an-āditva* – no beginning; *tāsām* – for these; *āśiṣ* – desire; *nityatva* – eternal.]

And there is no beginning for these *saṃskāras* (latent tendencies) because desire that induces will-based action which in turn creates *karma*¹² is eternal – beginningless.

The flow of *saṃskāras* from desires is beginningless. Like the chicken and egg, there cannot logically be a first *saṃskāra*. This is because their wellspring, desire, is beginningless. And desire is beginningless because its cause, ignorance of the real nature of oneself, is beginningless. The reason that every link in this seeming causal chain is beginningless is because all effects are a manifestation of their material cause; in this case it is beginningless ignorance. The inherent, underlying reality of each effect is its material cause. Moreover, these effects are but the seemingly different names (*nāma-rūpas*) we imagine, and even time and its sequence will be shown to be more apparent than real.

In this seeming time-bound life, though, when the nature of oneself as full and complete, lacking any limitation, is not known, where one identifies with the limited objects of perception, and where those objects are taken to be sources of fullness and completeness that one naturally misses in oneself, one will have a very strong desire for those objects. This desire generates the will-based decisions for actions to acquire those objects. These will-based actions create subtle *karma* that can take any length of time to eventually fructify. Being subtle like a photon let loose at the beginning of the universe, there is nothing to wear out the *karma*, other than their eventual fruition. These separate *karmas* can survive over a cycle of universe-manifestation.¹³ A subset

¹² ‘त्रि-विधं नरकस्य इदं द्वारं नाशनम् आत्मनः। कामः क्रोधः तथा लोभः तस्माद् एतत् त्रयं त्यजेत्’ “Desire [i.e., requiring], anger, and greed: This is the threefold gate of hell [i.e., painful experience], which is the loss of oneself [i.e., it is the destruction of a mind able to pursue a worthy existence]. Therefore, one should give up this triad [by this teaching].” (*Bh. Gītā* 16.21).

¹³ ‘यथा सोम्य मधु मधु-कृतः निस्तिष्ठन्ति (=निष्पादयन्ति) नाना-अत्ययानां (=नाना-गतीनां) वृक्षाणां रसान् समवहारम् एकतां रसं

of these *karmas*, to be exhausted in each embodiment, forms the *saṃskāras* at the start of each birth.

हेतु-फलाश्रयालम्बनैः संगृहीतत्वाद् एषाम् अ-भावे तद्-अ-भावः ॥ (4.11)
hetu-phalāśrayālanbanaiḥ saṃgr̥hītātvaḍ eṣām a-bhāve tad-a-bhāvaḥ.

[*saṃgr̥hītātva* – held together; *hetus* – causes; *phalas* – results; *āśraya* – abode; *ālambanas* – bases; *eṣām* – these have; *a-bhāva* – no existence; *tad-a-bhāva* – those have no existence.]

Since those *saṃskāras* (the latent impressions) are held together by their causes starting from ignorance of oneself, initiating a chain of causes, their results which instigate a new round of *saṃskāras*, their abode – the uninformed mind, and their bases – the physical or subtle objects that form the basis or motive for the *saṃskāras*, when these four factors have no overvalued existence, then those *saṃskāras* have no overvalued existence.

It is not possible to directly address the *saṃskāras*, the content of the unmanifest, unconscious mind. However, these unmanifest subtle potentials have linked manifest factors: the causes, results, locations, and motivations connected to them. To gain relative freedom from the *saṃskāras*' painful or destructive effects, one needs to address these manifest factors. Even if these subtle potentials, the unwanted *saṃskāras* or *vāsanās*, are there but are deactivated,

गमयन्ति॥' "Just as, my dear [*Śveta-ketu*], bees prepare honey [by] collecting the essences of many distant trees and making them one essence," 'ते यथा तत्र न विवेकं लभन्ते अमुष्य अहं वृक्षस्य रसः अस्मि अमुष्य अहं वृक्षस्य रसः अस्मि इति एवम् एव खलु सोम्य इमाः सर्वाः प्रजाः सति (सुषुप्ति-काले मरण-प्रलययोः च) संपद्य न विदुः सति संपद्यामहे इति॥' "...and just as in that [honey] those [essences, though bringing with them their different flavors] have no discernment, 'I am the essence of this tree, I am the essence of that tree [etc.],' in this way alone, my dear, all these creatures [as subtle bodies] having merged into existence (*sat*) [during deep sleep, after death of the body, and after the dissolution of the universe], do not know, 'We [separately] have merged into existence (*sat*).'" 'ते इह (पूर्व) व्याघ्रः वा सिंहः वा वृकः वा वराहः वा कीटः वा पतङ्गः वा दंशः वा मशकः वा (एवं-संस्कारवान्) यद् यद् भवन्ति तद् (एवं-संस्कारवान्) आभवन्ति (पश्चात्)' "[Nevertheless, their individual tendencies remain as their own *karma*-storehouse, therefore] whatever they are here [before] – tiger, lion, wolf, boar, worm, fly or biting thing [tendencies] – that they return to [upon waking and re-birth]." (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.9.1-3).

blocked, or neutralized to some extent, this mastering helps manage the seeming unmanageable unconscious mind.

The *saṃskāras* do not have to be destroyed to be free from them. Absolutely not owning, not identifying, with them or their effects, frees me from them. Not giving them a permanent existence, which is myself alone, is not valuing them with my identity, not including them in my reality. This is recognizing oneself as indeed free from everything, including the unconscious mind.

In the same way that the immutable *puruṣa* is, in fact, free even before the liberation called *kaivalya*,¹⁴ so too self ignorance and its effects called the *saṃskāras*, as well as their abode called the mind, and the *saṃskāras*' bases called the objects of this universe, in fact, always are and have been *a-bhāva* (unreal).

The process of contemplation that Patañjali gives us addresses the causal chain involving these *saṃskāras*. This causal chain starts with, and never leaves, ignorance of the self, manifesting as dissatisfaction in oneself and an imagined satisfaction in the gain of objects. This forms the inner core of, the material basis of, this causal chain. This causes, or at least allows the arising of, a strong desire for the objects. These desires induce will-based actions to satisfy these desires. This will-based action creates new *karmas* that need to fructify. These *karmas* will create an embodiment with appropriate *saṃskāras* in the mind. These *saṃskāras* will shape one's desires for their objects. Those desires induce will-based actions to satisfy these desires – and on and on. The chain itself is ignorance of reality, of the limitless consciousness-being. Whether your life is easy (golden) or hard (iron), the chain of ignorance binds to one's sense of smallness and impotence.

Absolute or at least relative freedom can be gained by addressing this causal chain. Once ignorance of reality is removed, one is absolutely free from *saṃskāras*. Short of that, relative freedom can be gained by not expecting the results to be as one demands (*Bh. Gītā* 2.47), not assuming ownership of the results (*Bh. Gītā* 2.51), and not allowing the emotional or immature mind to control one's choices in action (*Bh. Gītā* 2.52 and 53). Put positively, relative freedom can be gained by informing the intellect so one can appreciate the natural order of the universe

¹⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.24, 2.24–25, 3.49 & 55, 4.18 & 34.

and then live in conformity to that order (*Bh. Gītā* 3.30), and by understanding the nature of objects as not the source of one's happiness (*Bh. Gītā* 5.21).¹⁵ In the light of the student's understanding and resolve, the unwanted *saṃskāras* are buffered and weakened. The natural, unavoidable pains of living can be kept from becoming sorrows.

Being less driven by undesirable *saṃskāra*-based desires, one's actions will be more mature. The results of more mature decisions and actions will tend towards human re-births more receptive to and conducive for gaining this knowledge that frees one from the fundamental ignorance that had kept one in this beginningless cycle. See the *Bhagavad Gītā* for a complete unfoldment of these simple, objective steps one can take to gain freedom from sorrow.

The Past and Future and the Present

अतीतानागतं स्वरूपतोऽस्त्य् अध्व-भेदाद् धर्माणाम् ॥ (4.12)
atītānāgataṃ sva-rūpato'sty adhva-bhedād dharmāṇām.

¹⁵ 'कर्मणि एव अधिकारः ते मा फलेषु कदाचन। मा कर्म-फल-हेतुः भूः' "You have control only in doing action, never in its results. Do not [think yourself to] be the cause of the results of action." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.47). 'कर्म-जं बुद्धि-युक्ताः हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः' "Because, the wise, endowed with this attitude – after discarding [the pressure for] result born of action..." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.51). 'यदा ते मोह-कलिलं बुद्धिः व्यतिरिष्यति। तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च॥' "When your intellect crosses over the confusion that is delusion, then you will gain a dispassion for what has been heard and is yet to be heard [from the secular and the spiritual marketers]." 'श्रुति-विप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला। समाधो (=आत्मनि) अचला बुद्धिः' "When your intellect – [previously] distracted by the *śruti* [i.e., the bulk of the *Vedas* (scriptures) concerned with providing means for gaining heaven, power, wealth, and progeny] – becomes steady and centered on *samādhi* (oneself)..." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.52–53). 'मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्य अध्यात्म-चेतसा। निर-आशीः निर-ममः भूत्वा' "With a mind centered on oneself [as the Lord, as the reality], renouncing all action in Me [the Lord – as *prakṛti* (nature), the cosmic order], being free from anticipations, and free from [the judgment] 'this is mine.'..." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.30). 'बाह्य-स्पर्शेषु अ-सक्त-आत्मा विन्दति आत्मनि यत् सुखम्। सः ब्रह्म-योग-युक्त-आत्मा सुखम् अ-क्षयम् अश्रुते' "The one whose mind is [relatively or absolutely] not attached towards external sense objects finds [relative or absolute] happiness in the self. That one whose mind is endowed with clear knowledge of *brahman* attains the *sukha* (fulfillment) that does not wane [i.e., *mokṣa* (freedom)]." (*Bh. Gītā* 5.21).

[*atīta* – past; *an-āgata* – future; *asti* – exist; *sva-rūpa* – their own form; *bheda* – difference; *adhvan* – path; *dharmas* – characteristics.]

The past and the future exist in their own form as different notions in the mind, because of the difference in the path of their characteristics.

Among the strongest of the *saṃskāras* are those that nurture the notions of a past and a future time.

The past and the future are not non-existent entities. They exist according to the nature of their characteristics. The past exists as a present memory of the previously present. The object of this memory is what is presently called the past. The future exists as a present expectation. The object of this expectation is what is presently called the future. The present is what is real. The present is the reality of all three times. The past never exists except as the present, either as its thought or as its object, and the future never exists except as the present, either as its thought or as its object. When *Patañjali* woke up it was always the present. He himself never woke up in the past. As a child I never woke up in the morning in the past, it was always the present. If I wake up again, it will be the present, not the future.

Yet our existence within time informs us to give the past and the future an absolute reality. This is because, even though they are but the present in their essential reality, in their characteristics, in how we agree to talk about them, they are distinguished as present memories, present expectations, or as present inferences about what we agree to call the past or future. These are their characteristics, distinct from each other, by which we talk of a past or future as different from the present, and from each other. It should be understood, though, that these characteristics are not intrinsic to the present in which alone the past and future exist.

Nor does the intrinsic nature (*sva-rūpa*) of the past or future modify from past to present or from present to future – does not modify from was-existent into existence, or from existence into not-yet-existent. If an entity’s intrinsic nature (*sva-rūpa*) modifies into something else, then that was not the real *sva-rūpa* of that entity in the first place. In all three periods of time existence itself is the real *sva-rūpa*; *past* and *future* are adjectives that make no essential difference in this *sva-rūpa*.

The past is not something that existed and then became non-existent, and the future is not something non-existent that will become existent. Non-existence can never become existent,

and existence can never become non-existent.¹⁶ All there can ever essentially be is existence.¹⁷ For this tradition's succinct analysis on this you can read Śaṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 2.2.26 and 27. The logic of the law of conservation of matter/energy is applicable here; it is in fact why the law exists. Existence always was, is, and will be. Only phenomenal characteristics keep changing, keep being replaced, into other forms with different names. These characteristics are but the forms our human senses or mind pick up, and the names we give to them. To a rock or to another creature these characteristics (as memories or expectations) either do not appear or exist, or they appear quite differently. Therefore they do not categorically, do not universally, exist in and of themselves. That is, phenomenal characteristics are categorically (universally) indefinable (*a-nirvacanīya*).

These characteristics cannot but be of the very existence that is their domain, that is existence itself, the existence that is oneself as an awareful being. A non-existent characteristic is just that – non-existent. Existence alone can be the categorical truth of these characteristics. That existence is the real *dharmin* (domain),¹⁸ the real and only presiding presence of everything (*adhiṣṭhārtva*).¹⁹ All the characteristics are only the limiting adjuncts (*upādhis*) which do not exist except in the present, in reality. Being within existence, being dependent on the existence that is the self, the characteristics do not in any way limit that overarching reality. They come and go as various names we give in the present moment. Only the present always is as it is.

¹⁶ 'न अ-सतः विद्यते भावः, न अ-भावः विद्यते सतः' "A-sat (the unreal, the time-bound) has no being [of its own], and sat (the real) has no nonbeing." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.16).

¹⁷ 'सद् एव सोम्य इदम् अग्रे आसीद् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयम्।' "Existence (*sat*) alone, my dear [*Śvetaketu*], was this in the beginning – one alone without a second." 'तद् (=तत्र) ह एके आहुः अ-सद् एव इदम् अग्रे आसीद् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयं तस्माद् अ-सतः सद् जायत (=अजायत)॥' "Now, some say that non-existence (*a-sat*) alone was this in the beginning – one alone without a second, and from that non-existence came existence." 'कुतः तु खलु सोम्य एवं स्याद् इति ह उवाच कथम् अ-सतः सद् जायेत इति।' "But how, my dear, indeed could it be said that such a thing is possible? How could existence come from non-existence?" 'सत् तु एव सोम्य इदम् अग्रे आसीद् एकम् एव अ-द्वितीयम्' "Rather, existence alone, my dear, was this in the beginning – one alone without a second." (*Chāndogya Up.* 6.2.1-2).

¹⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.14.

¹⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.49.

These characteristics cannot be outside of existence to limit existence.

In regard to time, the present that is the reality of all three times is, in fact, the presence that is oneself free of time. This presence, this reality, is the domain (*dharmin*), the ultimate nature (*sva-rūpa*), of the different characteristics, the different forms and names, by which we phenomenally distinguish past, present, and future.

The reason *Patañjali* keeps coming back to the topic of time is that in the seat of meditation, with eyes closed and no attention directed to the environment, there is only oneself and time. If time itself can be seen for what it is, as nothing but a name that makes no change to the presence that is the timeless self,²⁰ then that resolution is *samādhi* – is pure presence whether thoughts come or thoughts go.

ते व्यक्त-सूक्ष्मा गुणात्मानः ॥ (4.13)
te vyakta-sūkṣmā guṇātmanah.

[*te* – these; *vyakta* – manifest; *sūkṣma* – subtle; *ātmanas* – natures; *guṇas* – characteristics.]

These times exist as the manifest – as the manifest present – **and subtle** – as the subtle thought of a past and future – **natures of their characteristics.**

The past and future are subtle, since they exist only as subtle thoughts, as memory and expectation in the mind. The objects of these thoughts are also subtle, in that they are either subtly present as their effects in the present because of which one has the memory of a present moment in the past, or subtly present as their potential in the present because of which one has an expectation of a present moment in the future.

The past and future only subtly exist, only manifest, right now. The advantage of this factual based worldview is that all one’s baggage of regrets and resentments of the past and one’s fears of the future only exist right now, whenever they are brought up as memories or expectations, respectively. All these, which we thought we could do nothing or very little about, are right now available. They can be addressed in a mind that now has more mature attitudes and

²⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.5.

understandings that can help nullify the afflictions these would otherwise evoke. The past and future need not bookend you into a tiny gap of the present. You, in fact, are the presence, the existence, of the present moment in which alone the past and future occur. You are the master of them, not the other way around. Only ignorance of realities, yours and theirs, keeps you from being the master you naturally are.

This is not theoretical. *Yoga* is about knowing the body, its environment, and the mind, with oneself as their sole reality. The goal of *yoga* is to completely assimilate these truths about realities. Try it and see the natural benefit. Because it is reality based, there can be no downside or loss of effort in the pursuit of this *yoga*.

Oneness Determines Entities

परिणामैकत्वाद् वस्तु-तत्त्वम् ॥ (4.14)
pariṇāmaikatvād vastu-tattvam.

[*tattva* – reality; *vastu* – entity; *ekatva* – oneness; *pariṇāmas* – modifications.]

The reality of an entity is due to the oneness of its various modifications.

The word *tattva* literally means *that-ness*. All the various modifications of an entity are the various *that-s* which can be connected by the oneness, the *-ness* of the entity, to keep it the same entity. Despite the differences in characteristics and times of an entity, their oneness allows them to be included into the *that-ness* of the entity. For example, a tree modifies over time – as that seedling, that small tree, that large tree, that fallen tree – but its treeness remains. Despite the differences in characteristics, places, and times of multiple entities, their oneness allows them to be included into the *that-ness* of the entity, for example, trees range in characteristics, places, and times – as that spruce tree, this pine tree here, that pine tree over there, or that tree back then – but their treeness remains.

Now let us connect the simple analysis of this *sūtra* to the topics that have come before, such as in *sūtra* 3.35 where we saw that the *śuddhi-sāmya* (pure oneness) of everything and oneself (*puruṣa*) constitutes freedom (*kaivalya*).

An entity's modification (*pariṇāma*) is nothing more than its form coming together in time

and place. Entities are either thought-forms or their object-forms. The object-forms are themselves either entirely subtle or a combination of subtle and physical. Each is just a form, a modification, to which we give a particular name, as well as call each in general an *entity*. The reality or nature (*tattva*) of an entity is what makes the entity what it is. An entity can be said to be either indirectly (*anupātin*) its distinguishing form or characteristics, or directly (*sva-rūpin*) the more subtle, more pervasive domain (*dharmin*, see *sūtra* 3.14) in which the form *comes together*.

For example, the reality or nature of a shirt can be said to be either the form or shape that qualifies as a shirt, or it could, more fundamentally, be the material basis of the form – here it would be the fabric. In the first case, the form of the entity and the shirt are one and the same thing. One particular form may be slightly or quite different from another particular form, but we may still call both forms a shirt. In this case, their oneness is what allows them both to be called a shirt. It is the broad oneness of the form that does not differ in the least in all the variations of the form to which we give the same name. But a shirt can be varied until it is not a shirt, such as being cut down to a handkerchief.

Even more fundamental in the oneness is its material basis, in this case the fabric. With its material basis present, a particular form can be called a shirt, but, without this basis present, the form or shape cannot exist at all. How can one have a shirt without its fabric? Can you think of a shirt without it being made of some kind of fabric or material? Without its material there can be no particular form for any entity. So whether as a particular form, for example, a shirt or skirt or handkerchief, or as a material basis of these various forms, for example, a fabric, the sense of oneness plays an essential role in defining an entity and its reality.

We give reality to whatever we perceive and conceive, and thus give a name to. Whatever the mind has not yet or cannot perceive, nor conceive, and we have not, to our knowledge, any name for it, is as well non-existent, not distinguishable as a separate entity. If such a perception or conception later comes to us, or we gain a name for it, we will at that time attribute reality to it. It was not non-existent before and now becomes existent as an entity we recognize and know. In our understanding of our attribution of reality, we understand that it existed before our perception or conception and our naming of it. The round earth was there even before we knew the earth to be round.

The entire world has a certain composite form and a given name, because of which it exists as an entity to us, as something having a separate reality. Many possible composites are not known as distinct entities. Perhaps we know what a table is and what chairs are, but we do not know they were made and intended to be taken as a particular dining room set. Once we understand the concept we can name it as a single entity. That composite form, forming a composite unit in our understanding, is the oneness of its modifications. The table and chairs themselves did not have to change to produce the new entity. Neither did their material wood or cellulose fibers or molecules have to change. Only our understanding had to change. This applies equally to scientific discoveries. Previously we knew it took varying amounts of effort to move an object. Now we recognize different aspects of that effort through the quantifiable scientific terms: inertia, acceleration, and momentum.

A composite may also change over time and still be considered a single composite entity. It is the oneness of our understanding of that continually modifying composite that alone allows it to remain as one entity to us, such as our body. Because of the different names we have for entities, though, we may call an entity that changes over time by an entirely different word. For example, a burning log becomes ash. We set a boundary to the oneness of that composite, that form, outside of which we call it a separate entity. For example, carbon in a certain form gains the name “8-caret 58-facet round-cut diamond.”

The important idea to note in all of this is that from oneness alone comes the attribution of reality. But the more fundamental, the more subtle and objective one’s appreciation of this oneness, then the more inclusive and closer to reality, to non-sub-ratable permanence, one gets.

The ultimate reality, which provides freedom from all sense of limitation, is the oneness of existence itself that unites all including time. This ultimate reality is the *dharmin* (domain) of all phenomena. Nothing can gain or lose that reality. Unlike the countless, mutable composites of this universe, this ultimate reality cannot change. There cannot exist anything else to cause it to change, nor can it change into anything else, since that anything else to affect it or to change into it could only be non-existence, and non-existence is just that – non-existent. This ultimate reality alone is the non-sub-ratable truth of myself, the universe, and God. Its importance is that in thoroughly understanding it to be, in fact, my reality, I am totally free.

This freedom is as non-sub-ratable as the reality itself, because that freedom is based solely

on this certain, ultimate reality, not my or anyone else’s changeable opinions or theories. No New (or Old) Age theory can shake this certain clarity of ultimate understanding. Nor will there ever be a more valuable reality of myself or the universe, since this reality is, always was, and will be limitless and perfect.

Since all that can come by my perception, all entities of perception, are modifying composites, then the easiest and clearest understanding of the one ultimate, non-modifying oneness is not the objects, but myself alone. In my universe of common understanding, the only non-modifying oneness of my experience is the single witnessing conscious being, myself. Gaining clarity of oneself as the ultimate reality allows me, with the teaching, to include the entire universe of my experience within this reality. This is why the scripture, as a teaching methodology, says that one should seek this limitless reality in one’s heart, in the center as the reality of one’s body-mind complex.²¹

Many philosophies get stuck on statements such as this that talk of seeking the limitless reality in one’s heart. They come to the conflicted, and hence unsatisfactory, conclusion that there are a multitude of separate ultimate realities – one in each heart. The tradition that tells us

²¹ ‘अथ यद् इदम् अस्मिन् ब्रह्म-पुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म दहरः अस्मिन् अन्तर्-आकाशः तस्मिन्’ “[The teacher should say] ‘Now, in this city of *brahman* [i.e., the body with its nine gates, which are the seven sense openings in the head and the two lower openings in the bottom of the trunk, into which *brahman* has ‘entered’ as the self], there is this small lotus[-like] abode [i.e., the closed, downward pointing lotus-like heart/intellect, that needs opening, expansion], and in this is [as though] a small enclosed space.” ‘यद् अन्तः तद् अन्वेष्टव्यं तद् वाव विजिज्ञासितव्यम् इति॥’ “What is interior within that [heart/intellect] is that which is to be sought and indeed to be known.” ‘तं चेद् ब्रूयुः यद् इदम् अस्मिन् ब्रह्म-पुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म दहरः अस्मिन् अन्तर्-आकाशः किं तद् अत्र विद्यते यद् अन्वेष्टव्यं यद् वाव विजिज्ञासितव्यम् इति सः ब्रूयात्॥’ “If [the students] were to reply to him, ‘In this city of *brahman*, there is this small lotus[-like] abode, and in this is a small enclosed space, [then] what is that in this which is to be sought, and indeed to be known?’” ‘यवान् वै अयम् आकाशः तावान् एषः अन्तर्-हृदये आकाशः। उभे अस्मिन् द्यावा-पृथिवी अन्तः एव समाहिते॥’ “He should reply, ‘As much indeed as this space [outside], that much [and more, as it is totally limitless] is this space [i.e., in this imagery – is this *brahman*] in the inner heart [i.e., the inner core of the person, the heart and intellect of the person].” ‘उभौ अग्निः च वायुः च सूर्या-चन्द्रमसौ उभौ विद्युत् नक्षत्राणि। यद् च अस्य इह अस्ति यद् च न अस्ति सर्वं तद् अस्मिन् समाहितम्’ “In it are resolved (*samāhita*) within indeed both heaven and earth. Both fire and air, both the sun and the moon, the lightning, the stars, and all of this that is here and is not – is resolved in this.” (*Chāndogya Up.* 8.1.1-3).

to look inside is clear that the seeking, the looking, into the heart is to appreciate the one real thing that all are, whether that single reality be called the Lord or the ultimate self. When I look within there is only myself and no second thing with independent reality.

Moreover, that reality in the heart is said in the scriptures to be as vast as this entire universe. The many and separate can only come from preconceived notions, or, later, from philosophizing. The many and separate are just preconceived I-notions (*asmitā*) or otherness-notions (*anyatā*) to be given up (*heya*). With this mistake, no true freedom is possible, since the scripture warns that as long as one gives reality to duality there will be fear²² – fear of being overpowered or shown up by the other, fear of being forced by another to change into something else, fear of losing one’s sense of self-identity, fear of death. In oneness alone there is truth, there is reality.

²² ‘द्वितीयाद् (वस्तु-अन्तरात्) वै भयं भवति’ “Fear [including insecurity] arises [only] from a second thing [i.e., a thought or an object of thought].” (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 1.4.2). ‘अ-सद् (=अ-विकृतं ब्रह्म) वै इदम् अग्रे आसीत्। ततः वै सद् (=विकृतं ब्रह्म) अजायत। तद् आत्मानं स्वयम् अकुरुत्।’ “Existence unmanifest (*a-sat*) [i.e., *brahman* unmanifested] indeed was this [universe] in the beginning. From that arose existence manifested (*sat*) [i.e., *brahman* manifested as names and forms]. That [existence (*brahman*)] [as though] created itself.” ‘तस्मात् तत् सु-कृतम् उच्यते इति – यद् वै तत् सु-कृतम्। रसः वै सः। रसं हि एव अयं लब्ध्वा आनन्दी भवति।’ “Therefore, it is said to be perfectly created (*su-kṛta*) [i.e., without a second thing required as an external factor or condition, in other words it is self-manifesting]. That which is self-manifesting (*su-kṛta*) is indeed that essence (*rasa*) [of everything, of names and forms], because having attained this essence (*rasa*) one is full (*ānandin*) [i.e., this essence, being without a second, is an absence of fear and insecurity, and manifests as fullness and security alone – *ānanda* and *sat*].” ‘कः हि एव अन्यात् कः प्राणयात्। यद् एषः आकाशः आनन्दः न स्यात्।’ “Since who [else than *brahman*] would breath in and who [else] would breath out, if this space [within oneself as one’s essence] be not fullness (*ānanda*) [that is this *brahman* – *satyam jñānam anantam brahma*]?” ‘एषः हि एव आनन्दयाति। यदा हि एव एषः एतस्मिन् अ-दृश्ये अन्-आत्म्ये अ-निरुक्ते अ-निलयने अ-भयं प्रतिष्ठां विन्दते।’ “Since this alone gives rise to fullness. Since, when this one discovers [one’s] being and absence of fear in this [*brahman*] which is not [a second object] seen, as bodiless, as not named [i.e., not a form having a name], and not having [any other] abode [than itself], then that one has attained [as not being separate from] fearlessness.” ‘अथ सः अ-भयं गतः भवति। यदा हि एव एषः एतस्मिन् उद् (=अपि) अरम् (=अल्पम्) अन्तरं कुरुते। अथ तस्य भयं भवति। तत् तु एव भयं (ईश्वरः अन्यः मत्तः अहम् अन्यः संसारी इयेवं-)विदुषः अ-मन्वानस्य’ “[But, not finding this due to ignorance] when this one makes (*kurute*) [i.e., imagines] even the least difference (*antara*) in this [*brahman* (reality)], then there is fear of that [other thing, e.g., as God, as others, etc.]. But that [separate other, though being but *brahman*] indeed becomes a terror (*bhaya*) for one who [thus] knows without [properly] thinking.” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.7.1).

Contemplations from Science

Recent science can be taken as another source of cosmic meditations (*upāsanas*) for this teaching regarding the mind and oneness of reality. For example, in Brian Greene’s book, *The Elegant Universe* (pg. 46-51), he explains Hermann Minkowski’s and Einstein’s conception of space-time.

There are our common three dimensions of forward-sideward-vertical in space. In addition, there is a fourth dimension that is time, which we also move through; hence these four are together called space-time. This space-time is as ordinary as knowing that not only do we need to know where in space to meet a friend, but also where, that is, when, in time, to meet. The concept of space-time and its mathematical consequences became extremely useful, though, in physics and in understanding relativity.

In this space-time there is an interesting fact according to Einstein – we are always moving in this space-time at the *same* speed, the speed of light. If we stand perfectly still (which by the way we cannot since we are standing on this spinning, careening globe), we actually move in space-time at exactly the speed of light through the time dimension alone of space-time. If we additionally move through one or more of the other dimensions in space, the combination of the speed through all four dimensions will still only equal the speed of light.

This is why the faster or slower we travel through dimensions of space the slower or faster, respectively, we move through time. And that is why a photon of light speeding through space at the speed of light actually stands still in time – it never ages. That is why we can today perceive the photons created just after the big bang, billions of years ago. The photon, from its perspective, has not gotten a second older.

Moreover, as a whole within this space-time, since it includes at once every moment of time (like three dimensional space includes within it every location at once), there absolutely (totally, cosmically) cannot absolutely be any change or movement within the space-time continuum. Everything that ever was or will be is right here now in space-time. It is only when our mind takes a relative perspective to distinguish time from space that we can conceive of change, of movement, between moments of time. That is a step down from the more absolute, and more accurate, knowledge of space-time that Einstein points to. The relative perspectives are brought

about by the natural makeup of the human mind that deals with information from the senses and is conditioned by one's identification with itself and its states.

With this understanding of space-time, we can now do a thought-experiment. To our mind, the three dimensions of space exist in their entirety as the currently unfolded universe while the fourth dimension of time only makes its appearance to our mind as an infinitely short slice in the present moment – perhaps because the mind is really just one thought after another thought, each one directly perceiving only the moment, or the only moment. Now, see if you can conceive, perceive, that fourth dimension as having the same quality of being simultaneously present, as the other three dimensions. That makes all of space-time one fully present occurrence. This would be the *mind*, if it had one, of the first (age-less) photon.

Now imagine a mind that exists before, during, and after every cycle of creation. For that one mind, the current universe and its entire occurrence is but one moment, one ageless thought. Normally, we have a sense of time that is limited and that sees a beginning for creation. Stretch that sense from where there is not one creation to where there is only the uncreated, timeless reality. With that sense of time, see the one cosmic mind as holding simultaneously all the thoughts of past, present, and future universes as but one present occurrence, one ageless thought in this multiverse, space-time continuum.

Only the uncreated, limitless mind of the Lord could be this pervasive. This is why this teaching tradition says the Lord is *sarva-jñā* (all-knowledge) and *sarva-śaktimat* (all-power), in full recognition of the beginningless cycles of the universe. That is also why the entire universe's complicated *karma* sequence could be so effortlessly accomplished by the Lord – said to be as easy as a breath.²³ To the Lord it is no more than a thought. Not a thought starting everything

²³ 'अस्य महतः भूतस्य निश्चसितम् एतद् यद् ऋग्-वेदः यजुर्-वेदः साम-वेदः अथर्व-अङ्गिरसः इति-हासः पुराणं विद्याः (=देव-जन-विद्याः) उपनिषदः श्लोकाः सूत्राणि अनुव्याख्यानानि व्याख्यानानि इष्टं हृतम् आशितं पायितम् अयं च लोकः परः च लोकः सर्वाणि च भूतानि' "As the breath of this limitless [*brahman* (reality)] are the *Rg-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sāma-Veda*, *Atharva-Veda*, *Iti-hāsa* (epics), *Purāṇa* (legends), *vidyā* (arts), *Upaniṣads*, *ślokas* (verses), *sūtras* (aphorisms), *vyākhyānas* (commentaries) and their *anuvyākhyānas* (explanations), *iṣṭa* (rituals), *huta-āsita* (ritual food offerings), *pāyita* (ritual drink offerings), this *loka* (world) and the other, and all beings." 'अस्य एव एतानि सर्वाणि निश्चसितानि' "From it have breathed forth all these." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Up.* 4.5.11).

off. That one thought is but this entire beginningless, cyclic universe, from beginningless beginning to endless end in total. Consider how easily you do something as complicated as driving a car, particularly a stick shift in traffic. The Lord has the capacities to accomplish the entire order of karma and nature effortlessly. We do the same, even though not so well, in our own dream worlds.

This space-time thought-experiment amounts to the same understanding of the present moment as the timeless reality contemplations this ancient tradition teaches.

Now, as this teaching unfolds, you are this Lord. This has already been indicated in the fact that all of the past and future exists only in the presence one is. The present of this presence is the same as the timeless present of that age-less photon. Within that present, the entire age and breadth of the universe is traversed. Do you still think you are limited?

This thought-experiment, this contemplation, expands the individual's mind, expands thought, to the degree that the teaching suggests, to reality-awareness itself. At this comprehension, the mind, thought itself, does not limit and is true to its very reality, to limitless existence-knowledge called *brahman (satyam jñānam an-antam brahman)*.

The expanded thought itself, the experience of the thought-experiment, is not limitless reality. Rather, the expanded thought does not obstruct the limitless reality of oneself that clearly reveals itself as one's very nature. This expanded space-time presence, in which the flow of time disappears and the remoteness of space vanishes, is but the presence, the reality-awareness, of the reader of this book right now. This is the oneness of everything that includes oneself. This is the vision of this teaching.

Since this vision is an acknowledgement of reality itself, it is neither simply the thought about it nor the thought-experiment itself. The vision is an acknowledgement of reality no matter what thoughts occupy the mind. This cosmic vision remains while washing the dishes or laying down for a nap. In assimilated knowledge, all experiences are assimilated from this understanding so that any passing notion of smallness or otherness fails to obscure one's fullness, one's *ānanda*. One does not have to continually do this thought-experiment, or any of the contemplations in this text, to remain in fullness. It is rather that any stray or unresolved limiting ego thought is unable to effect a real sense of limitation, a loss of freedom. Those stray ego thoughts are like toasted seeds unable to take root in a soil of ignorance that is now gone. This is the factual

oneness of everything including oneself.

The objects of the universe, including the thoughts that make up the mind, are the modifications (*pariṇāmas*) in the universe. Their oneness (*ekatva*) is the limitless, immutable consciousness-being.

Distinction of Objects and Thoughts

वस्तु-साम्ये चित्त-भेदात् तयोर् विभक्तः पन्थाः ॥ (4.15)
vastu-sāmye citta-bhedāt tayor vibhaktāḥ panthāḥ.

[*sāmya* – oneness; *vastu* – entity; *bheda* – different; *cittas* – thoughts; *vibhakta* – separate; *panthan* – path; *tayoḥ* – for the two.]

Though there is a oneness of an entity, because of different thoughts about that one entity, **there is a separate *karma* path for the two** – the object and the thought of the object.

From this *sūtra* onwards, the reality of entities is analyzed to their fundamental basis, and certain philosophies about the reality of entities are dismissed in the process.

Path here simply means its own unique *karma* track, its modification path, that brought the object or the thought into manifestation as a single, separate entity. This *sūtra* denies that, even though the reality of an object is known from our thought of it, the entity is the same (*sāmya*) as the thought itself. That would amount to solipsism, thinking the world is only thoughts without there being any objects external to these thoughts. We continue to distinguish between the thoughts and the objects external to these thoughts. This distinction allows the student a universe that is not the private domain of his or her thoughts.

The teaching tradition here moves the student from subjectivity, from the sense of me and mine, to objectivity. It emphasizes acknowledgment of the Lord as presented in the preceding *sūtras*. That Lord is more than any one mind, and every mind is the Lord. The Lord stands as the objective universe which includes this body, the mind, and all that is external to the body. Within the common, external reality of this universe are all the common values. This can provide a helpful sense of *dharma*, of duty to this interconnected order within this objective reality. With

this understanding the student can discover the truth of the ordered universe and the ultimate reality that is freedom.

Despite an entity being considered only one entity existing in time, we clearly can have many thoughts of it, and there may be many different minds having thoughts of it.²⁴ Since the entity exists separately from any one of these thoughts or minds, as can be seen from their *karma* tracks that bring them into manifestations at different times, for different lengths of time, and in different locations, then the entity and the many thoughts of it are not one and the same thing.

Objective experience has two components: the thought as my thought, and the thought's object as an object of the world. To the extent that my mind has a limited perspective, the thought has its peculiar, limited *karma* track. To the extent that the object contacted has its own separate *karma* track, then my thought does not determine that object, though it determines how I experience the object.

My thought's *karma* track is included in what I call *my karma*. However, the object's *karma* track is separable from *my karma*. I know what's mine, and I know what is other. This framing of the distinction of my thought from its object is a common sense understanding, quite unlike solipsism which can brook no distinction between the two.

External objects exist for the very reason that we all perceive them as external and we always have – not because some philosophy has convinced us, or convinced us otherwise. Moreover, we clearly recognize the different characteristic of perceptions of external objects from the characteristic of perceptions of dream objects or imaginations. For these refutations of solipsism see Śāṅkara's *Brahma-Sūtra-Bhāṣya* 2.2.28 through 32.

This tradition accepts the common sense understanding of the nature of things in the world. But it also says that a fuller understanding is beneficial. No object or entity can categorically be defined as only one thing. We have seen how there are a variety of perspectives from which to view and redefine anything. The distinction between thought and the object of thought is an acceptable and common perspective. However, we must also understand that this distinction is not categorical; it is just a perspective – an idea expressed in so many words. A more universal perspective still remains that both a thought and its object are but a mere name (*nāmadheya*).

²⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.22.

The understanding of *vyāvahārika* (transactional) reality, where an object is not equal to a thought, needs to include the appreciation that all of both *prātibhāsika* (imaginary or projected) and *vyāvahārika* (transactional) realities are but names and forms (*nāma-rūpas*).

न चैक-चित्त-तन्त्रं वस्तु तद् अ-प्रमाणकं तदा किं स्यात् ॥ (4.16)
na caika-citta-tantram vastu tad a-pramāṇakam tadā kiṃ syāt.

[*na ca* – nor; *vastu* – object; *tantra* – dependent; *eka-citta* – single thought; *tadā kiṃ syāt* – were that ever to be the case; *tad* – that; *a-pramāṇaka* – never have a means of knowing.]

Nor is an object totally dependent on – only equal to – **a single thought** of it. **Were that ever to be the case, that** object, being unique and momentary, **would never have a means of knowing** it as true or false – as being verifiable.

Some say let the sameness of an entity be only its sameness to the one thought of it. If there are multiple thoughts of it, then they would each be separate entities. They say we just imagine that these separate object-thoughts are the same entity, that they have any commonality. Those imaginations themselves are each separate thoughts that exist only when they occur also. This is the philosophy of universal momentariness or impermanence – that there are only discrete momentary object thoughts that we erroneously connect. They say this makes any connection between them erroneous as well. There is then no domain, no basis, no reality in which or by which these discrete moments exist in commonality.

Such a philosophy, though, lacks any means of knowing anything. If realities are momentary and their connection is illusory, then one could have no thought of a preceding thought by which to prove the first thought true or not. If one believed there could be a thought that proved or verified a preceding thought, then such a belief in a proof or verification as really connected in any way to the preceding would itself be, by their definition, an imagination. The only proof of the truth of a thought would be the single, isolated thought in itself.

Were that the case, every single thought would necessarily be true. There could be no such thing as an untrue thought. This is not only unacceptable in common sense, it renders the term ‘true’ to be meaningless, without its opposite being possible. The philosopher of universal

momentariness has condemned his or her own philosophy to not being meaningfully true. Moreover, every philosophy, every possible statement, that can ever be made would necessarily be meaninglessly true. In point of fact, according to their thinking there could be no valid statement of any thing, since any statement made of separate syllables and words would then itself be an erroneous connection of moments involved in making the statement. Meaningful statements themselves would be impossible, if not just imaginations.

Most commentaries or translations of this *sūtra* take the word *citta* to here mean a *mind*, rather than a single *thought*. Reading *citta* as *mind* makes the *sūtra* say that if an object were totally dependent upon only one mind then there would be no means of (provably) knowing that object. This is also untenable, since these same commentators and translators would then be stuck by their own logic into acknowledging that only what more than one mind perceives is objectively real and knowable (or at least provable). Every thought and feeling in my mind is in fact known to my mind; many objects and events in my life are seen only by me. These would then become unknown and unreal, or at least improbably true, by their logic here.

Universally experienced timeless awareness is in fact the basis of knowing what is in my own mind. No other mind is required for me to know what is in my mind. Even the thoughts that are imagination exist and are known by me. Whether they are an imagination or not depends on the nature of their content, not the thoughts' reality or unreality or whether only I see it or others do too.

Some translators try to fix up their interpretation by giving a weaker meaning to *pramāṇaka*, calling it a *perception* instead of its clear meaning as a *means of knowing*. They take this *sūtra* as saying that an object cannot depend on one mind (*citta*) because that object would be non-existent when not perceived (*pramāṇaka*). But the momentarians would gladly accept this outcome. This interpretation does nothing to encourage the momentarians to drop their claim. While the previous *sūtra* answered the solipsists who say that entities are but the individual minds or individual thoughts, this *sūtra* answers the momentarians in a way the previous *sūtra* did not.

There are Buddhist interpretations of these *Yoga Sūtras* that ignore the subtle yet crucial differences between Buddhism and the *Veda* tradition. There are differences in terms of world views, the nature of the mind, and of the self. *Patañjali's* tradition is that of the *Veda*. The *Veda*

view is of verifiable commonsense objectivity and positive unconditional wholeness. The current Buddhist trends are to a Zen nothingness, an emptiness that is meaningless in light of consciousness as presented here.

Though *Patañjali* expresses a particular point of view about the efficacy of contemplation, the *Veda* tradition rests on and recognizes what is true in every way of thinking. Vaguely it may be said that all religions say the same thing, but how they each help the individual is quite different. This *Vedānta* and *yoga* tradition is neither a religion nor a philosophy. It is an inquiry into the reality of the world and of the self that reshapes one's entire perspective of the world and oneself. It is not just a part-time respite from daily life. It is employed as a means of knowledge regarding all aspects of life – not a pure belief system. Commonsense and logic are not thrown out in assisting this inquiry.

True allowance for all beliefs²⁵ is an acknowledgement that everyone is variously mistaken about reality, until reality is clearly known by individuals. Mistaken, limited views and conclusions keep the student from emotional growth and clear knowledge of limitless reality. Beliefs do not need to cause one to judge others, to practice intolerance, or to try to convert others. In the course of time, perhaps over a number of births, any person can come to the vision of the oneness of reality that accommodates peacefully all differences. This is true, universal allowance (*upekṣa*).

The oneness of reality is not the destruction of differences. It is seeing the subtle oneness that brings everyone and everything together, even while appreciating and enjoying the varieties, including the different perceptions of those varieties.

²⁵ 'कामैः तैः तैः हृत-ज्ञानाः प्रपद्यन्ते अन्य-देवताः। तं तं नियमम् आस्थाय प्रकृत्या नियताः स्वया॥' "Those whose discrimination has been robbed away by various [heavenly or worldly] requirements and are ruled by their own disposition worship various deities, following various stipulations [per the appropriate deity to fulfill each particular requirement]." 'यः यः यां यां तनुं भक्तः श्रद्धयार्चितुम् इच्छति। तस्य तस्य अ-चलां श्रद्धां ताम् एव विदधामि अहम्॥' "Whoever be the devotee and to whichever [limited] form [of Mine] one wishes to worship with faith – for that one, the very same faith I make firm [by giving the result of the devotee's action]." 'सः तया श्रद्धया युक्तः तस्याः (देवतायाः) राधनम् ईहते। लभते च ततः कामान् मया एव विहितान् हि तान्' "That one, endowed with that faith, engages in the worship of that [deity, that limited form of Me] and obtains from that [deity] those desired objects – because those are ordained by Me alone [in the form of the laws of *karma*]." (*Bh. Gītā* 7.20–22).

तद्-उपरागापेक्षित्वाच् चित्तस्य वस्तु ज्ञाताज्ञातम् ॥ (4.17)
tad-uparāgāpekṣitvāc cittasya vastu jñātājñātam.

[*apekṣitva* – requirement; *tad-uparāga* – its influence; *citta* – mind [or thought]; *vastu* – object; *jñāta* – known; *a-jñāta* – unknown.]

From the requirement of its influence on the mind [or thought] – its mutation of the mind – an object becomes known or remains unknown. Therefore, the mind has to distinctly mutate over time for its object to be known.

A single object in the wide field of one’s perception-thought, like a single face in the crowd, may be immediately known or remain unknown depending on whether or not that single object in the entire vision had yet distinctly drawn the attention and thus distinctly affected the mind. Only when an object within the perception-thought makes its own distinct change to the mind does the existence of the object become known.

This becomes another problem for the universal momentarians to explain, because the object not only has to be within the thought, it also has to distinctly influence or affect the mind or the thought in order for that particular object knowledge to be included in the entire perceptual knowledge. Universal momentarians do not permit such a two-step or heterogeneous process.

This relative argument by *Patañjali* is no more than a light jab at the even more relative solipsist or momentarian opponents to set up the absolute knockout punch in the next *sūtra*. Knowledge, it will be said, is neither the mind nor the modified mind. The mind, the thought, itself can only be known by the self, the witness. And the self alone is ultimately what knowledge is. The mind, the thought, is only a particular form of that knowledge, though it does not change the self, the very nature of the knower (*jñātṛtva*). The mind is a known object; it is neither the knower nor knowledge itself.

Distinction of Thoughts and Self

सदा ज्ञाताश् चित्त-वृत्तयस् तत्-प्रभोः पुरुषस्यापरिणामित्वात् ॥ (4.18)
sadā jñātāś citta-vṛttayas tat-prabhoḥ puruṣasyāpariṇāmivāt.

[*a-pariṇāmitva* – immutability; *puruṣa* – self; *tad-prabhu* – its master; *vṛttis* – thoughts; *citta* – mind; *sadā* – always; *jñāta* – known.]

Though the mutation of the mind is the form of the knowledge, it is not the knowledge itself, since the thoughts themselves need to be known. **Due to the immutability²⁶ of the *puruṣa* (self) who is its, the mind's, master,²⁷ the thoughts in the mind are always known.**

Unlike the mind sometimes not distinctly reflecting an individual item in a perceptual field of many items, the *puruṣa*, who is pure awareness, is always aware of every thought in its entirety. The self is the unblinking witness (*a-lupta-dṛk*) of the mind. Awareness does not have to be affected by something for that thing to be witnessed. Awareness does not change. This is why it can recognize every moment, every change, of thought. A thought has a form and has to distinctly change in order to reflect its object. That is why we sometimes miss the recognition of an object within a thought.

We are fuzzy in certain thoughts or parts of a thought, because the content of those thoughts are indistinct in their form, whether visual or in their language. For example, a friend's face in the periphery of a crowd may not catch the notice of my mind until the mind focuses towards that face; or, for example, the language of a particular thought may be vague or in doubt when answering a pop quiz.

²⁶ 'एकः देवः सर्व-भूतेषु गूढः सर्व-व्यापी सर्व-भूत-अन्तर-आत्मा। कर्म-अध्यक्षः सर्व-भूत-अधिवासः साक्षी चेता केवलः निर्-गुणः च' "The one (*eka*) shining being (*deva*) is the one who is [as though] hidden in all beings, pervading all as the self (*ātman*) within all beings, the seer (*adhyakṣa*) of [all] activities, the inhabitant (*adhivāsa*) of all beings, the witness (*sākṣin*), the knower (*cetṛ*), complete (*kevala*), and without attributes (*nir-guṇa*)." (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 6.11). 'अन-आदित्वान् निर्-गुणत्वात् परम-आत्मा अयम् अ-व्ययः। शरीर-स्थः अपि कौन्तेय न करोति न लिप्यते' "O *Arjuna*, since it is beginningless and since it is without attributes (*nir-guṇa*), this changeless (*a-vyaya*), limitless I (*parama-ātman*) does not do action – even though obtaining in the body, nor is it affected [by the results of action]." (*Bh. Gītā* 13.31).

²⁷ 'महान् प्रभुः वै पुरुषः सत्त्वस्य एषः प्रवर्तकः' "The *puruṣa* is indeed the limitless Master (*prabhu*, the Lord); it is the prime mover (*pravartaka*) of the real (*sattva*, all entities including the mind)." (*Śvetāśvatara Up.* 3.12). 'गतिः भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी' "The goal, the nourisher, the Lord (*prabhu*), and the witness (*sākṣin*) [are Me (the Lord)]." (*Bh. Gītā* 9.18).

Awareness is the reality within which comes and goes every thought, whose content is manifest (the conscious mind) or unmanifest (the unconscious mind, the *saṃskāras*), is completely or partially fuzzy, or is mostly or fully clear. The unconscious mind is *known* only as an assumption from the manifest effects in the mind.

Awareness is also timeless and thus unaffected by time, because time itself is just one type of notion that itself comes and goes. Time is there for you only when you think about it. It is because awareness provides this timeless, unaffected background that the changing mind can reflect on its memories of the past and consider the future. The background also allows us to recollect dreamless sleep, where the conscious mind itself was asleep.

Awareness is ever fresh and shining. It is only the mind and body that can become dull and sleepy, or does not focus on every detail in its perceptions. Awareness is ever aware of the states (dull, sleepy, and etcetera) and the thoughts of the mind. Not having to change in order to be ever awareful makes its witnessing effortless. It does not therefore perform an act of witnessing the mind; rather, the self is itself the effortless witnessing.

The *puruṣa* is also called the master (*prabhu*), since it is not because of the mind. The mind is because of the *puruṣa*. In other words, the self is independent; the mind is dependent. The self, reality, exists whether there is a mind or not. The mind neither exists nor is known without reality, without the self.

This runs counter to the common Western notion that consciousness is a product, an effect of the brain. These Western notions of consciousness are not the consciousness being talked about here. In fact, their notions of what thought is and what consciousness is also fall to the same logical fallacies as the other philosophical notions of thought and mind discussed in the *sūtras* that follow.

This *sūtra* is for presenting the self, the witness, as the only self-revealing reality, though we may erroneously believe the mind, the thoughts, to be self-revealing. This error is simply misidentifying thoughts with oneself.

Being ever self-revealing, the self cannot submerge or surface, like a submarine, from the mind or the brain. The confusion of a self, the seer, surfacing to comprehend itself when the thoughts in the mind die away in *samādhi* is completely ungrounded in this teaching, in the teaching of the scripture behind this text.

न तत् स्वाभासं दृश्यत्वात् ॥ (4.19)
na tat svābhāsaṃ dṛśyatvāt.

[*na* – nor; *tad* – it; *sva-ābhāsa* – self-revealing; *dṛśyatva* – it has the nature of being seen.]

Nor is it, the mind – each thought in the flow called the mind – self-revealing, because it has the nature of being seen.

This argument may not be very convincing on the face of it. In some explanations it amounts to a circular argument, because the reason given for something not being self-revealing is that it is because it is seen, and the reason that this is so is because the seen needs to be seen because it is not self-revealing – not very edifying.

The better argument is that because the mind, including the Westerners’ concept of mind, is an ever-changing composite, then it cannot be the one consistent knower of itself and everything around, which we obviously take ourselves to be. But we can gain some clarity here in the argument as it is given, by clarifying the terminology and the intent of the argument.

Self-revealing is not the equivalent of self-luminous. Any source of light is self-luminous. But here we are not talking of a source of light waves whose waves of light are illumining other parts of that same light generator, like a light bulb. We are instead talking of knowing, and this knowing has to amount to the completeness of knowledge in our universe of understanding. Since we are saying that there is only one self-revealing entity, and since everything else including the mind is an insentient object, then that one entity that reveals everything else including itself has to explain every bit of what knowledge is, not just part of it.

Now, if the mind is the one self-revealing entity by which all is known, then it has to stand up to a test it cannot pass. The mind is not self-revealing as it does not completely know itself, much less everything else. This is why it has an unconscious aspect that is not known to it, and why some of its memories are not available when you want them, but reappear when you do not. The mind is, in fact, not other than just another object in the world that is as well not completely known. Our vaunted sciences have to admit that there is no object in the universe that is completely known, since there will always be something more, and better to know, about any

object.

Moreover, objectifying an object by the mind is really no more than reflecting the object of the thought – no more than the mind being modified, being affected, by an object. The mind appears to be a peculiar entity that has the ability to change in the presence of another object and even in the simple presence of itself. Knowledge itself is something that escapes our understanding, just like many deep secrets of nature escape the understanding of our sciences. Knowledge just happens; there is no satisfying explanation for what creates it.

However, this teaching takes a different approach to understanding knowledge. It says that knowledge is not created, and that is why its *creation* cannot be adequately explained. All that is really happening is that ignorance is removed. The mind is viewed as a special subtle, non-luminous matter that has this capacity to take the form of what is in the purview of the senses, including the ability to bring up memory forms from within itself. The consciousness in which these thoughts occur is the knowledge having that particular form the thought has.²⁸ Our notions, our thoughts, in the mind that we have about something may be dropped, replaced, or modified in this process of more clearly reflecting on some object or topic. That is, certain thoughts are sub-rated or dis-valued in this process.

It is also not that a new and better thought or notion is then the knowledge, since we know that this new notion may itself be improved when later the mind has gained a more exact form of its object. There are always new and better notions that express the exact form of the object, the real content of the knowledge that a notion is about. And that new and better notion is itself subject to correction in the near or distant future.

Knowledge is then really not something created anew here; rather, we only discover or uncover what is closer to reality. The closer to reality we get, the more we feel that we are getting closer to the truth, that we are gaining knowledge. The process of gaining knowledge is thus the mind losing its prior form, its prior modification, that was not or did not match the form of its object, which was the definition of error (*viparyaya*) given in the first chapter of these *sūtras*.²⁹

²⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.22.

²⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.8.

What this reveals is that it is actually reality itself that is the knowledge we are discovering. A word given in the *Upaniṣads* (scriptures) for the one reality that always exists is ‘*jñāna*’ – the one, unambiguous word for *knowledge*.³⁰ In other words, reality and knowledge are not in fact two separate things. What is actually being said when this teaching is talking about the self-revealing *puruṣa* is that the *puruṣa* alone is the reality. And if this is not obvious to you, then it is to be dis-covered.

All objects including the mind are essentially only this one self-revealing reality viewed from the limited perspective of their form and the name we give to them. These individual names and forms, being impermanent, cannot be the single witness of all their mutations. This is why this teaching says that this reality is the sole source of knowledge, because it is knowledge itself. It is what reveals itself to us in our mind, and reveals all names and forms by way of the thought forms that make up the mind. Once the mind drops its ignorance, its erroneous notions, about this singular, limitless reality, then that is complete knowledge, that is oneself, that is reality.

Knowledge, oneself, and reality are one and the same. This alone is the self-revealing. Every object including the mind is revealed by this existence-knowledge, *sat-cit*, and is finally revealed as nothing but this limitless existence-knowledge. Knowledge *of* the self simply means the knowledge that *is* the self. This is the reason this knowledge alone is said to be ultimate, while every other knowledge, falling infinitely short of the limitless, is nothing more than a notion subject to correction, to sub-ration.³¹

This self-revealing being-consciousness is otherwise called the Lord, the total.³² This reality, this Lord, is not a thing to be believed or dis-believed, like a God sitting in heaven to be believed or not. It is what is to be known directly as the reality of oneself. As you cannot believe or dis-

³⁰ ‘सत्यं ज्ञानम् अनन्तं ब्रह्म’ “*Brahman* is limitless reality (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*).” (*Taittirīya Up.* 2.1.1).

³¹ ‘द्वे विद्ये वेदितव्ये इति ह स्म यद् ब्रह्म-विदः वदन्ति परा च एव अ-परा च’ “There are two types of knowledge to be known, say those who know scripture – unlimited (*para*) and limited (*a-para*).” (*Muṇḍaka Up.* 1.1.4).

³² ‘ज्ञानं ज्ञानवताम् अहम्’ “I [the Lord] am the knowledge (*jñāna*) among those who have knowledge.” (*Bh. Gītā* 10.38).

believe the reality of your own self, so you cannot believe or dis-believe the Lord, this reality of everything. Knowing the Lord completely is not knowing completely about the Lord – only the mind of the Lord contains all details of all times. It is instead knowing the Lord freely, free of any limitation. Indeed, knowing oneself freely, free of any limitation, is knowing reality freely, and is the same as knowing the Lord freely.

If you ask why the self needs to be uncovered if it is self-revealing, we agree! Why don't you know yourself as limitless? If you do not fully know yourself, then it must be because of ignorance.

Because of ignorance, everyone projects one mistake after another upon the self – “I am mortal,” “I am unhappy,” and so on. These projections of ignorance are a covering (*kośa*) that only *covers* because it is believed to be real. Once revealed as untrue, that cover is no longer there. This means there really never was a cover, just like there never was a snake in our snake-rope error example that covered the rope. Or, like a cloud does not actually cover the sun. In fact, it is the sun that reveals, that lights up, the cloud also. Like the cloud, ignorance can only block the full appreciation of knowledge, of reality, from the mind's perspective. And the ignorance itself is lit by that knowledge, the awareness that you are.

Like that, the self reveals even our ignorant notions of our self. Every ignorant notion shines in our knowledge of them. This allows the problem, as well as the solution. The self, being self-revealing, is already completely known as reality-awareness – “I am, and I am aware I can think and not think.” But in addition we also impose our ignorant notions which then limit reality, limit oneself, limit knowledge – “I am limited.” The solution, the process of gaining self-knowledge, is to recognize and dismiss the notions as being myself. The notions, like the clouds, do not have to disappear; they only have to be acknowledged as notions, as not the truth, like knowing clouds as clouds, not as the sun. This alone is freedom from their limitations.

एक-समये चोभयानवधारणम्॥ (4.20)
eka-samaye cobhayānavadhāraṇam.

[*ca* – and; *eka-samaya* – same moment; *an-avadhāraṇa* – no ascertainment; *ubhaya* – both.]

And at the same moment, there is no ascertainment of both the object and the thought, for example, “this is a pot” and “this is a thought about a pot” – one or the other disappears in attention. Therefore, thought cannot always be self-revealing itself.

Another reason the mind is not self-revealing is because a thought is always of whatever the content of that thought is. At the same time, a single thought has either the content, the form, of an object external to the thought form, for example, “this is a big dog,” or it has the content, the form, of the thought itself, for example, “this thought is of a big dog.” But they do not coexist at the same time.

If thought was self-revealing, it would never lose this nature of revealing itself in every thought. But this is not our experience. Only sometimes are we aware of, is our attention on, the thoughts themselves, our thinking of an object. Therefore the mind itself cannot be inherently self-revealing, though it occasionally is self reflecting. That self reflecting of the mind is only taking a form or shape of itself or of a recollection of itself in memory, for example, “that was a big dog yesterday that I saw.” In either case, thought is not itself, even then, the awareness, the knowledge, of itself, nor is it objectifying the awareness.

The self illumines only by being the reality of the form of the subtle entity called the mind, which in turn simply reflects, simply encompasses, the form of the object that is its content.

Some translators take the term ‘both’ here to refer to both the object and the self, instead of the object and the thought/mind. They believe the *sūtra* says that at the same moment there is no ascertainment of both the object and the self. But the ascertainment of the object and the self, in fact, is what actually does happen. In every perception there is both the form (the object) seen and the knowledge that is the existence, that is oneself. It is just that this knowledge, that is oneself, is mixed up with, and thus appears limited by, the form seen.

An example of the form of a perception is – “This is a pot.” The name and form of the object is expressed here as “this pot,” a specific form (the ‘this’) of clay to which we give the name ‘pot,’ whereas the existence is expressed here as ‘is.’ Reality, expressed as ‘is,’ is there in every perception. Pot is. Shirt is. Table is. Absence of a table is. Thought is. Lack of thought is. I am. Every thing and its absence is-is-is.

This recognition of ‘is’ in every cognition is what the self-revealing of is-ness means. It is why reality is self-revealing, all the time, in every cognition.³³ For more on this, one can see Śaṅkara’s *Bhagavad-Gītā-Bhāṣya* 2.16.

The translation of the term ‘both’ as the object and the self is the *siddhānta* (what is to be established), not what is to be denied by the *sūtra*. Several of the commentators and translators seem confused here. Their confusion may be more a matter of not knowing the scriptures, or not taking the scriptures as the inherent background of these *sūtras*.

चित्तान्तर-दृश्ये बुद्धि-बुद्धेर् अति-प्रसङ्गः स्मृति-सङ्करश् च ॥ (4.21)
cittāntara-dṛśye buddhi-buddher ati-prasaṅgaḥ smṛti-saṅkaraś ca.

[*dṛśya* – object; *citta-antara* – another thought; *ati-prasaṅga* – over necessity; *buddhis* – cognitions; *buddhis* – cognitions; *ca* – and; *saṅkara* – confusion; *smṛtis* – memories.]

In the case of a thought becoming **an object of another** following **thought** in order to be known, **there is an over necessity** – a logically vicious infinite series, infinite progression – **of cognitions of cognitions, and there would be confusion with memories**, which would be required, but could not even exist, for this endless series to continue.

Assuming that a thought is not self-revealing, if one argues that a thought must then require a following thought to reveal it, to see it, then there would be an over necessity of requiring a further thought to know the current one, since the current thought’s following thought would have not yet occurred. Therefore, this is a vicious logical error. The term ‘vicious’ in logic means the progression is such that none of the thoughts in the progression, each being dependent upon a latter being known, could ever be known. Namely, in the series of thoughts A-B-C-D..., A requires B to be known in order to know A, but B cannot be known until C is known, which cannot be known until D is known, ad infinitum. The whole series becomes impossible.

Since the current thought cannot be known until the next, the current thought’s knowledge of

³³ ‘(ब्रह्म सत्यं) प्रति-बोध-विदितं मतम्, अ-मृतत्वं हि विन्दते’ “It [*brahman* (reality)] is [rightly] known [when] it is known in every cognition [as ‘is-is-is,’ as ‘existence-existence-existence’], because [by that knowledge] one attains the nature of being free from death.” (*Kena Up.* 2.4).

its preceding thought is not available. This is a progression to infinity. In other words, no knowledge would ever be available.

Any thought about a prior thought is, in fact, only a memory – not to be confused with a *pramāṇa*, a knowledge-thought such as a perception or an inference.³⁴

Using the problematic logic that a thought can only be seen by another thought, a manifest memory, being just another thought, suffers the same vicious infinite progression. So there would be no memory that can be known.

Moreover, a current thought of a prior thought, could only be in the form of a memory of that prior thought, but that prior thought, not yet known, could not have generated a *saṃskāra* for the current mind to have a memory about it. So it is a confusion to think that there could even be memories for this endless series to continue.

Why all these nit-picking arguments? Since these questions and doubts are known to come to students and to those who hold to philosophies. The teaching is altogether willing to address any and all doubts because freedom is clarity in self-knowledge, and that clarity of knowledge has to be unshakable.

The scriptures were challenged by the Buddhist logicians prior to *Patañjali*, and these challenges had to be addressed. The reason they had to be addressed is because the challenges sought to erode the logic that supported the teaching's removal of ignorance. A logic that supports, that props up, duality, even one that calls this duality emptiness, needs to be brought down in the light of knowledge that is freedom. That which is the underlying, permanent, self-revealing reality does not need support.

Any logic or philosophy that also holds that clarity in self-knowledge is only possible and available in a singular moment's experience during *samādhi*, or otherwise, demands to be challenged. New experiences or epiphanies cannot be required if the self is always self-revealing, self-existing. We do not need to seek a new experience of the self; rather, we need the removal or dismissal of limiting notions. And that cannot be for just a moment, an epiphany, but needs to be permanent, needs to be sure knowledge.

It is easy to see that the popular world religions, even the popular forms within Hinduism,

³⁴ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.7 & 11.

are grounded in emotions, thou-shalt rules, and beliefs. None talk about a physics of realities that points to a self-evident truth that can be known without confusion. Their popularity, perhaps driven historically by their conversion practices and their economic and military force, is enhanced by their emphasis on emotions or beatific experiences, than on logic. Where do most people spend their spare change? They spend on emotional entertainment, even if it is spiritual entertainment and inspiration, not on physics lectures. Thankfully, Indian thought, through their scriptures, was already well grounded in physics, which allowed its following entertainment arts (epics, legends, song, and dance) to play upon that reality-based stage.

This tradition recognizes the importance of a logical physics of reality to underpin their clarity in knowledge. It allows an unshakable freedom that does not have to hide from spiritual specialists, peddling their wares. This is the same reason, now that burning at the stake or stoning is more or less unpopular, why science today does not feel threatened by popular religious assaults to the claims of science – unless those claims overstep the bounds of their scientific experiments and logic.

The freedom sought here is an unshakable cognitive freedom, not an emotional freedom. An unshakable cognitive freedom will naturally be an emotional freedom too. The heart will be where one's deepest convictions are. Convictions can only reside in clear, firm thought – this is *buddhi* (intellect). If the heart is not where the head is, or the head is not where the heart is, then this may be because one's emotions are on bodily (chemically) driven autopilot, and/or one's intellections are erroneous or are in conflict with each other.

Those spiritual *gurus* who propound that one should follow one's heart instead of the head, or one's head instead of the heart, are clearly misleading. One's heart and head should be inline with each other, since that is where their natural, healthy balance resides. The heart cannot be directly controlled, but the intellect can be corrected from error to knowledge. When that knowledge is true to the objective world, the emotional world, and to reality, then the heart will easily and fully follow. If you can imagine a teaching that has this as its goal and has been successful enough for a variety of generations to survive in retelling and in reprint for many thousands of years, then you are in fact looking at that teaching in these pages.

But that teaching is not easily and faithfully translated outside of its Sanskrit source. This makes its availability rare, but, then, so too is the student who can fathom its depth. Freedom

filled knowledge within an unshakable cognitive freedom, and its logic, should become common sense to the student, though it may be an uncommon knowledge to others.

चित्तेर् अ-प्रतिसंक्रमायास् तद्-आकारापत्तौ स्व-बुद्धि-संवेदनम्॥ (4.22)

citer a-pratisaṁkramāyās tad-ākārāpattau sva-buddhi-saṁvedanam.

[*a-pratisaṁkrama* – unchanging; *citi* – consciousness; *saṁvedana* – knowledge; *sva-buddhi* – its cognition; *āpatti* – take; *tad-ākāra* – the form of that.]

The unchanging consciousness has the knowledge of its cognition when it seems to take the form of that cognition.

If it is neither the same cognition nor a following cognition that has the knowledge of the cognition because of the preceding reasons, then what has the knowledge?

It is consciousness (*citi*) that has knowledge. Here, ‘*citi*’ is the same as the previously used term, ‘*cit*’ (limitless consciousness). It is oneself that has knowledge. After all, I have the knowledge of what is in my mind – this is our common understanding of knowledge. We may say that knowledge takes place in the mind, but what actually happens is that knowledge is there wherever the mind is. This is because I myself am the knowledge, which gets expressed wherever there is a cognition form – for example, “table is,” “shirt is.”

Yet it is not the consciousness-I that is actively taking the form of the cognition,³⁵ since existence itself can neither move or change. Where could it move to? What could it change into, and from what? Apart from existence itself, there is no second thing. Only phenomenal forms can move, change into and from each other – all within existence. When these phenomenal forms are of the special nature of the subtle forms of thought, there itself is knowledge of these thoughts and their content. The presence of awareness throughout the thought form is the knowledge of the thought form.

As mentioned before, this does not need to happen inside the brain; it can happen wherever the cognition is while it takes its various forms – *going out* by way of the subtle outgoing senses, or not, if the senses are not in play for the thought form. In perceptual cognition, the thought

³⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.18.

takes the form of the *external* object as well as the *distance* to the object, and the awareness lights up that entire out-going thought form. However, this teaching is not dependent on this particular model of cognition. It is just that this model of cognition so well matches the analysis that shows us that everything is *nāmadheya* (name only). The language of thought itself is the form of the thought and the form of the experienced object, so the meanings of the names ‘external’ and ‘distance’ are the external distance we experience. The world is essentially all nothing more than this language of thought, the form or structure of thought.

These models of explanation are themselves, like everything within the universe, not categorically (*a-nirvacanīya*) right or wrong. The common sense model that better explains the entirety of the experience being explained is preferred. Common sense will side with the felt sense that our thoughts wander out amongst their objects, not inside the invisible wiring of our brains.

If one wants, one can limit the mind to within the body or the brain without here being in contradiction to this essential teaching. The model one chooses to analyze the world and its experience is just another form within existence-consciousness. The essence of this teaching is that I am limitless existence-consciousness and that every form of and in the universe does not divide this existence, hence makes no limitation in me. Whatever it takes to get to that understanding is acceptable. But it helps if it is a reasonable, common sense process, otherwise it might not complete. The more one’s common sense is fooled, the less one’s certainty can reign.

द्रष्टृ-द्रश्योपरक्तं चित्तं सर्वार्थम्॥ (4.23)
draṣṭṛ-dṛśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham.

[*citta* – mind; *uparakta* – affected; *dṛśya* – seen; *draṣṭṛ* – witness; *sarva* – everything; *artha* – object.]

The mind, affected by the limited seen and the presence of the limitless witness – limitless existence-consciousness – has everything, the entire known and unknown universe, as its object.

The mind can take the form of any limited object within existence, and thus can gain knowledge

therein of any form in existence. Your entire universe, up till now, is all the forms your mind has assumed in your life – through perception by way of the senses and the mind, through logic or scripture, and even through knowing what all you know you do not know. Even what you do not know is known well enough to confidently say that you do not know it. Through this teaching, even the self is there for your mind to comprehend, not as a limited object of the mind but as the very existence of the mind, as knowledge itself, and as the reality of this entire universe.³⁶

तद् अ-संख्येय-वासनाभिश् चित्रम् अपि परार्थं संहत्य-कारित्वात्॥ (4.24)
tad a-samkhyeya-vāsanābhiḥ citram api parārthaṁ saṁhatya-kāritvāt.

[*tad* – that; *api* – though; *citra* – diverse; *a-samkhyeya* – countless; *vāsanās* – latent tendencies; *para-artha* – for another; *saṁhatya-kāritva* – it acts like it is being put together.]

That mind, though diverse – consisting of parts, **through the countless** old and new **latent tendencies**, seemingly adjusting itself – **is for another**, not for itself, **since it acts like it is being put together** – is a construction with a foundation and new additions, like a house made for its occupant.

These latent tendencies, here given the equivalent name *vāsanās* instead of *saṁskāras*, are part

³⁶ ‘जाग्रत्-स्वप्न-सुषुप्ति-आदि-प्रपञ्चं यद् प्रकासते। तद् ब्रह्म अहम् इति ज्ञात्वा सर्व-बन्धैः प्रमुच्यते॥’ “The one who lights up this expanse consisting of the waking, dream, and deep sleep, etc. [the heavens, etc.], that reality (*brahman*) am I [the *parama-ātman*, previously deluded by *māyā* into thinking itself limited]. Knowing this, one is free from all binds.” ‘त्रिषु धामसु यद् भोग्यं भोक्ता भोगः च यद् भवेत्। तेभ्यः विलक्षणः साक्षी चिन्मात्रः अहं सदा शिवः॥’ “Different from whatever is the experienced, the experiencer, and the experience, is the witness (*sākṣin*). It is pure awareness. It is I, ever calm.” ‘मयि एव स-कलं जातं मयि सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितम्। मयि सर्वं लयं याति तद् ब्रह्म अ-द्वयम् अस्ति अहम्॥’ “In me alone everything is born, in me everything is sustained, and in me everything is resolved. I am that *brahman*, without a second.” ‘अणोः अणीयान् अहम् एव तद्वत् महान् अहं विश्वम् अहं विचित्रम्। पुरातनः अहं पुरुषः अहम् ईशः हिरण्यमयः अहं शिव-रूपम् अस्मि’ “[Since I am unlimited in every way] I am indeed subtler than the subtle, and in that same way I am the vast, diverse universe. I am the *puruṣa* that is always there. I am the Lord who shines [as everything]. I am ever calm.” (*Kaivalya Up.* 17–20).

of the many and countless different components that constitute the complex called the mind. Its latent tendencies drive the mind in countless directions, though it is not being driven for its own sake. Each individual has its own storehouse of *karma*. All objects, including this mind, are for the individual to experience these *karma* results of the individual's prior actions, and are for maturation of the individual through this teaching to be free of all limitations.³⁷

When an object is an elegant interconnected complex, there is little doubt that it is a construction having a purpose. Everything's purpose lies outside of itself as well as within, since everything is, in fact, an interconnected whole. A house not only stands by its own design, but also serves the purpose of the people who built it, the person who sold it, who lives in it, and who visits it, and for the bird who perches on it, and for the spider who puts its web in one of its corners, and is for insulating the ground below and, if a wooden house, for binding its carbon molecules for a time being. Whether anticipated or not, all of these purposes are there.

Of course, from our anthropocentric perspective we think the house is only for ourselves, the home owner. This is the usual take on this logic and is the direction of the logic here, namely that the mind, like a house, seems to be a complex for the person's enjoyment. Being inert by its own nature, a mind cannot be for its own enjoyment or purpose. This logic is to help point out that there is something other than the mind that is the master of the mind. That master is oneself, the witness. That master, the witness, is one and partless, while the objects of the universe including the mind are all composed of parts, elements, and *gunas*.

The purpose of an entity can extend its benefit beyond the individual to all individuals too. For another example of a complex entity in this universe, DNA is an elaborate construction for the purpose of passing on genetic traits to the offspring, allowing enough variety to guarantee a viable genetic pool, and providing the variety of embodiments required for individuals to be born as any of the countless varieties of creatures. It fulfills this purpose, and many others, very well. This DNA itself is a result of conforming to, participating in, and thus surviving within the intelligent order of the universe.

There is an intelligent order to the design of all these systems – from the subatomic mathematically describable particles to the inter-connected formation forces of the entire

³⁷ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.18.

universe, and everything in between. The mind is indeed, for all we know, at the pinnacle of this evolutionary chain, with its unique ability to reflect upon the entire order of the universe from its very beginning, though centered in a tiny body for a tiny span of time in one tiny corner of this vast cosmos. By the intelligence of its construction, we can appreciate that it indeed has a grand purpose within the intelligent order of the universe.

Its ultimate purpose, for the individual, is to come to know the intelligence itself in its reality, to know the reality of the Lord manifesting as this intelligent order. That reality is yourself, waiting patiently, so to speak, for you to figure it out. Knowing this, you own up to your timeless reality.

Knowledge as Freedom

विशेष-दर्शिन आत्म-भाव-भावना-विनिवृत्तिः॥ (4.25)
viśeṣa-darśina ātma-bhāva-bhāvanā-vinivṛtīḥ.

[*darśin* – one who knows; *viśeṣa* – distinction; *vinivṛtī* – cessation; *bhāvanā* – imagining; *bhāva* – being; *ātman* – oneself.]

For the one who knows as clear as seeing **the distinction** of the witness self from the mind **there is cessation of imagining** the mind **being *ātman* (oneself)**.

Once one knows that one is the seer, the immutable (*a-pariṇāmin*) witness, of the changing mind, then one no longer identifies oneself with the changing thoughts in the mind. According to *sūtra* 1.3, then the witness remains only in its own nature without the mind's confused identifications.

तदा विवेक-निम्नं कैवल्य-प्राग्-भारं चित्तम्॥ (4.26)
tadā viveka-nimnam kaivalya-prāg-bhāraṃ cittam.

[*tadā* – then; *citta* – mind; *nimna* – surrenders; *viveka* – discernment; *kaivalya-prāṅk-bhāra* – has freedom before it.]

Then the mind surrenders³⁸ to this discernment and has freedom before it.

The mind is meant to surrender the limited notions it has about the nature of itself and of oneself unto this all-encompassing knowledge that is the reality of oneself. Then freedom itself looms on its horizon all around as its very nature. Freedom from limitation happens for the mind, but it always was the nature of oneself.

One cannot completely surrender what one is convinced is one's own. Only when one is convinced that something is not one's own is complete surrender possible. If one goes to the temple every day and one's prayer is, "O Lord, I surrender to You," then what is the nature of this surrender? If one had really surrendered yesterday, then what is the meaning of surrendering again today? This is an indication that the real surrender is yet to come. As my teacher expresses it – it is an act-it-out, an act upon what I believe until I fully understand. What I want to be is what I say I am, until I gain clarity in understanding that I am, in fact, what I say I am. Once that clarity is there, whether I keep saying it or not, it is an accomplished fact that I am what I had always wanted to be – a free being.

But if limitation is my nature, and if limitation is also the truth of the mind, then surrender of limitation is ignorance. It is an unrealizable goal. It would only be a leap of faith or a mystic goal that is unattainable in this life, and will remain an unattainable goal because it is unrealizable by its nature.

Surrender is, finally, not a belief or an emotion, though it may start as an act-it-out until I make it. If it is real, then it can only be based in reality. This is why this teaching is always

³⁸ 'सर्व-कर्माणि अपि सदा कुर्वाणः मद्-व्यपाश्रयः। मद्-प्रसादात् अवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदम् अ-व्ययम्॥' "The one who – though always performing all *karma* – has Me as the basis [of all actions and results] attains by [this] My grace [i.e., by the result (clarity of mind), which is given by the Lord as the teacher and as what is taught] the end, which is ever the same and imperishable." '...तम् एव शरणं गच्छ सर्व-भावेन भारत। तत्-प्रसादात् परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्' "...With all [your] being, surrender to that [Lord] alone [who is the center of your being and is in the form of your natural disposition moving you through life], O *Arjuna*. By that [Lord's] grace you will attain the ultimate peace, the timeless abode." (*Bh. Gītā* 18.56 & 62).

centered on gaining clarity of what is reality, and this is the reason for the importance that *Patañjali* gives to correctly employing the proper means of knowledge in this pursuit. That is why he placed the explanation of the means of knowledge at the beginning of these *sūtras*, before the meditations and the other auxiliaries to gaining self-knowledge. *Patañjali*'s teaching should not be understood as claiming that these limitations – as their unmanifest potential, as *prakṛti* – are as real as the self, like *Sāṅkhya* philosophy claims. This goes against the *āgama* (scripture) that is the proper means of knowledge in this pursuit. If nature is equally real and is limited, then it cannot surrender what is its very nature. But if, in fact, limitation is unreal, and its supposed separate reality from the limitless *puruṣa* is equally unreal, then limitation is not its real nature. Its real nature is limitless reality.

This is why *kaivalya* (freedom) is when there is pure equality in reality between the mind and the self, according to *sūtra* 3.55. Otherwise, it could only be mystical imagination, or so much poetry that can only fail in the long run to allay life's suffering.

The *puruṣa* is already free, and always has been free. This teaching is for the mind to lose its notions of limitation that are in fact not the nature of its reality. That is why it can surrender these notions since they are imaginary (*prātibhāsika*), and why that surrendering itself is real, transactionally (*vyāvahārika*) real, and logical.

तच्-छिद्रेषु प्रत्ययान्तराणि संस्कारेभ्यः ॥ (4.27)
tac-chidreṣu pratyayāntarāṇi saṁskārebhyaḥ.

[*chidras* – cracks; *tad* – that; *antara* – those different; *pratyayas* – thoughts; *saṁskāras* – latent tendencies.]

When there are cracks in that discerning knowledge, **those different thoughts are** to be known as born **of the latent tendencies** in the mind, laid down by prior ignorance.

हानम् एषां क्लेशवद् उक्तम् ॥ (4.28)
hānam eṣāṁ kleśavad uktam.

[*eṣām* – their; *hāna* – giving up; -*vat* – like that; *ukta* – said; *kleśas* – afflictions.]

Their, the ignorant *saṃskāras*’, **giving up is like that said**³⁹ **for the afflictions.**

This gets us back to one of the express purposes of contemplation (*samādhi*). Full clarity is when one no longer seriously entertains thoughts of being limited by phenomenal forms. These thoughts can bubble up from the unconscious in quiet meditation. In that quiet meditation these thoughts may be clearly seen and contemplated for what they are. The practice is to objectively witness them and let them drop without reacting to and identifying with them, and also to proactively contemplate their contradiction, *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana*.⁴⁰ This contemplation develops a mind that no longer reacts to notions from old *saṃskāras* (latent tendencies) that the now informed mind knows were the products of ignorance. This mind will then carry on outside of the seat of meditation, bearing the fruit of this new, beneficial *saṃskāra* consisting of this teaching.

There is no such thing as exhausting all these latent tendencies. That is like trying to empty the ocean with a teaspoon. In trying to exhaust the old *vāsanās* (latent tendencies), only you will become exhausted. What bubbles up, in fact, are only manifestations of these tendencies, not the actual tendencies themselves. The fertile field of these latent tendencies has to be upended. The basic ignorance of the nature of myself and the world has to go. Then, even if these now baseless thoughts bubble up, they are never again taken as real. This is why the term ‘*hāna*’ is used in regard to these tendencies. *Hāna* primarily means *giving up*, not *destruction*. It is a giving up of the notion of these limited forms being real, as being as real as myself, so they are unable to delimit the real me.

प्रसंख्यानेऽप्य् अ-कुसीदस्य सर्वथा विवेक-ख्यातेर् धर्म-मेघः समाधिः ॥ (4.29)
prasamkhyāne'py a-kusīdasya sarvathā viveka-khyāter dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ.

³⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.10–11.

⁴⁰ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.33–34.

[*api* – even; *a-kusīda* – no interest; *sarvathā* – in any way; *prasaṃkhyāna* – meditation process; *viveka-khyāti* – discerning knowledge; *samādhi* – contemplation; *megha* – mass; *dharma* – support.]

For one who even has no interest in any way in the pleasurable meditation process, including secondary benefits, and who has discerning knowledge, *samādhi* (contemplation) is a mass of support.

The steadiness of the body, senses, and mind, and the pleasure therein, can become addictive. It is easy to be waylaid by the bodily and mental pleasures that *āsana* (quiet sitting, as well as the variety of other *āsanas* for strengthening the bodily functions) and meditation can bring. But that pleasure is not here the purpose of meditation, according to *Patañjali*. Here, *yoga* is not taken as another way to get an intoxicating high. It is much more than that. *Yoga* matures the person so the addiction to needing to be high is nullified. This is also why the goal of *yoga* is easily attainable by one who has a tenacious degree of nonattachment (*vairāgya*)⁴¹ to and independence from all one has desired before, all *rāgas* (attractions).⁴²

Apart from the effects on the body and mind that accrue from the meditation process (*prasaṃkhyāna*), however, the contemplation itself, the clarity in understanding that takes place there, can never be a problem. One should always be contemplative – as long as one is contemplating on knowledge based in a valid *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), and not in some imagination or a going after some superpower *siddhi*. Both clarity of the mind⁴³ and contemplation ought to be pursued until the knowledge, the teaching, being contemplated gains complete clarity. This is called discerning knowledge. All doubts and the nature of everything in the universe and the nature of oneself – all are covered and resolved by this teaching of their one reality.⁴⁴

The culmination of the teaching is this vision of oneness, the knowledge that frees oneself.

⁴¹ *Yoga Sūtras* 1-12, 15 & 20–21.

⁴² *Yoga Sūtras* 1.37 and 2.7.

⁴³ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.30–41.

⁴⁴ *Yoga Sūtra* 3.54.

This knowledge is thus called *samādhi* (that in which everything is resolved).⁴⁵ The reality, oneself, is also called *samādhi*, since it is that into which everything is resolved.⁴⁶ That is why the knowledge and the self are one and the same. Additionally, where this resolution happens – the mind – is in certain contexts indirectly called *samādhi* (that in which everything resolves).⁴⁷ The everyday mind may also, in general, be called *samādhi* in the context of all the various experiences of my universe, which happen in only one place – in the mind.

The more currently popular meaning of the word *samādhi* is, unfortunately, the mental process of having a mystical experience of oneness. Few are aware that it is, instead, an abiding knowledge that is the basis of all experiences, including that occasional mystical experience of oneness.

Samādhi, when it amounts to discerning knowledge (*prajñā*),⁴⁸ by which the clarity of the truth of oneness lasts outside the seat of meditation, is here called a mass of *dharma*.

Dharma means *that which supports (dhārayati iti dharmah)*. It can also be expressed as *that by which the universe, the society, and the person are supported (dhriyate lokah anena iti dharmah)*. Thus *dharma* becomes a term variously indicating *karma* (what makes the world, or the individual, the way it is), tradition (what sustains the culture of society), teaching tradition (what sustains the nourishing knowledge from one generation to the next), virtue (what straightens the mind in thought-speech-action), and values (what bring maturity in a person's life). In all of these, as their basis, *dharma* clearly also means the reality that supports, that is the basis of, everything and oneself, and is that by which every name and form that constitutes

⁴⁵ 'ब्रह्म एव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्म-कर्म-समाधिना (=सर्व-कर्म ब्रह्म एव सम्यक्-दर्शनेन)' "*Brahman* (reality) indeed is to be attained by the one whose vision of identity (*samādhi*) is that [every aspect of] action is *brahman*." (*Bh. Gītā* 4.24).

⁴⁶ 'यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला। समाधौ (=आत्मनि) अ-चला बुद्धिः तदा योगम् अवाप्स्यसि' "When the intellect becomes steady and becomes centered (*a-cala*) on your self (*samādhi*), then you will attain *yoga*." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.53).

⁴⁷ 'भोगै-र्देवर्य-प्रसक्तानां तथा (पुष्पितया वाचा) अपहृत-चेतसाम्। व्यवसाय-आत्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ (=अन्तः-करणे) न विधीयते' "For those whose minds are carried away by that [flowery talk] and who are attached to consumption and power, a well-discerned knowledge is not formed in their mind (*samādhi*)." (*Bh. Gītā* 2.44).

⁴⁸ *Yoga Sūtras* 1.48, 2.26–27, & 3.5.

the variety of the universe is sustained. In this sense, *samādhi* is a mass of *dharma*, where *samādhi* is the culmination of the process of *samādhi*. It is clear knowledge itself, which is oneself alone, which is this limitless reality that supports all.

ततः क्लेश-कर्म-निवृत्तिः ॥ (4.30)
tataḥ kleśa-karma-nivṛtīḥ.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *nivṛtī* – cessation; *kleśas* – afflictions; *karmas* – results of action.]

From that discerning knowledge **there is cessation of afflictions and results of action** that seem to bind the individual.

Having discerning knowledge means that the root ignorance – by which the mind identifies oneself with the limitations seen and by which the limited objects seen are taken to be as real and permanent as oneself – is removed from the mind. The products of that ignorance – the afflictions and *karma* – no longer separately exist as being absolutely real for this person. This is the cessation (*nivṛtī*) of afflictions as being able to afflict, and of *karmas* as being able to bind.

Those products of that ignorance which have an objective reality, such as the practical I-notion and certainly the *karmas*, continue, but without afflicting the individual. The practical sense of I is still there to carry on the bodily needs. One knows that if hunger is there, one needs to put food into this mouth, not any other mouth or onto the floor. One does not become unreasonable or foolish once discerning knowledge takes place. Moreover, the karma that brought this body continues until its exhaustion in this life.

This I-notion and these *karmas* are incapable of afflicting the person, since this person does not take them as real as the self. It is similar to enjoying a movie without having any of the afflictions of the main character in the movie. This body and mind have their peculiar, limited natures. They are there to be enjoyed as an adventure, comedy, mystery, and tragedy. Like the movie, they end, but I do not end.

तदा सर्वावरण-मलापेतस्य ज्ञानस्यानन्त्याज् ज्ञेयम् अल्पम् ॥ (4.31)
tadā sarvāvaraṇa-malāpetasya jñānasyānantyāj jñeyam alpam.

[*tadā* – then; *malas* – impurities; *āvaraṇa* – cover; *sarva* – all; *apeta* – gone away; *jñeya* – to be known; *alpa* – insignificant; *jñāna* – knowledge; *ān-antya* – limitless.]

Then, for the one whose impurities that cover everything have all gone away – have become transparently unreal – what is to be known is insignificant because one’s knowledge is limitless.

The impurities are the various forms of ignorance and its crop, the *kleśas*.⁴⁹ Since, for this person, the knowledge is as true as the limitless reality, then the knowledge itself is limitless.

This was explained before – the knowledge is reality, and reality is the knowledge, and this is now known as oneself. Then the details of the universe, the limitations of the universe, are as many as before, but now pale in significance to the limitless reality that is their real nature. When there is an abiding and complete satisfaction in oneself, then there is no binding desire for any small, limited gain. Once the limitless, that includes the truth of everything, is yours, what else could be considered a gain? Once the life-fulfilling thirst for knowledge has been quenched by the water of the truth of life itself, by the knowledge of the self as limitless, then the various sips of detailed information of the universe are like the relaxing sips of flavored teas – to be enjoyed but not necessary. They are entertaining, but triflings.

ततः कृतार्थानां परिणाम-क्रम-समाप्तिर् गुणानाम् ॥ (4.32)
tataḥ kṛtārthānāṃ pariṇāma-krama-samāptir guṇānām.

[*tataḥ* – from that; *guṇas* – constituents of nature; *kṛta* – have completed; *artha* – purpose; *krama* – sequence; *pariṇāmas* – changes; *samāpti* – end.]

From that, when the *guṇas* (constituents of nature) in the form of this embodiment and its *karma*, have completed their purpose – the wisdom is gained, nothing more needs to be known, and the *karma* that brought the physical embodiment has played out – then the sequence of their changes comes to an end.

The coming to an end of the sequence (*krama*) of their changes is, in this context, the playing

⁴⁹ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.3.

out of the *guṇas* that seem to have bound you. The sequence has completed its purpose by serving to free you.⁵⁰ This is the fulfillment of one’s *karma* and the end of *saṃsāra*, the continual unbecoming becoming and its attendant rebirths and deaths.

There are three types of *karma* – the new *karma* created or yet to be created in this life (the *āgāmin karma*), the past *karma* fructifying as this life (the *prārabdha karma*), and the balance of *karma* yet to fructify sitting in the individual *jīva*’s account (the *sañcita karma*).

When one knows oneself as limitless reality, that reality does not produce new *karma* (*āgāmin*). One has to have a deliberative sense of “I am an individual doer who owns the results of this action” to create new will-based *karma*. This is required to create the *karma*, attach it to one’s storehouse of *karma*, and then later reap its result. This limited notion of oneself as an individual doer who requires the results of the action for one’s fulfillment is no longer there for this person.⁵¹ In effect, this body and mind complex is then, like any other innocent creature, living out its embodiment, not adding any new *karma* to an individual *jīva*’s account.

The body and mind are still acting, though, and the immediate effects of their actions (*karmas*) will be there and will exhaust themselves in this life-span. The past *karmas* (*prārabdha*) which brought about this embodiment play themselves out, affecting only the body and mind, not the reality, the knowledge, of the person.

The balance of the *karmas* (*sañcita*) waiting to fructify in future embodiments, belonging to the individual *jīva* who created and owned it, is now without an individual *jīva* with a sense of ownership. Those *karmas* become unable to sprout and thus waste away unclaimed, like unclaimed airport baggage.

Whether there is *karma* that survives this embodiment or not, or, if there is, whether there is an exit out of *karma* or not, both are beliefs. Even if such *karma* is not there, this freedom that *Patañjali* leads us to realize in this life is a satisfaction one had sought all one’s life. This

⁵⁰ *Yoga Sūtra* 2.18.

⁵¹ ‘न एव किञ्चित् करोमि इति युक्तः मन्येत तत्त्व-वित्। पश्यन् शृण्वन् स्पृशन् जिघ्रन् अश्रन् गच्छन् स्वपन् श्वसन्॥ ...प्रलपन् विसृजन् गुह्यन् उन्मिषन् निमिषन् अपि। इन्द्रियाणि इन्द्रिय-अर्थेषु वर्तन्ते इति धारयन्’ “The contemplative knower of the truth, maintaining that the organs [of sense and action] engage in their objects, would think ‘I do not do anything,’ even though seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, talking, releasing, grasping, [or] opening and closing [the eyes].” (*Bh. Gītā* 5.8–9).

satisfaction is here and now permanently and fully. One could want nothing more in life. If there is rebirth later do to *karma*, it is still within the Lord's order and still is exactly what the Lord provides us to continue our growth.

It is said that God can incarnate on Earth according to this tradition (for example, *Kṛṣṇa* is portrayed as the incarnation of Lord *Viṣṇu*) or an individual's body and mind can be viewed as the incarnation of a facet of the Lord (for example, *Arjuna* is portrayed as the son of the powerful warrior Lord *Indra*). When later schools of thought and the arts wax eulogistic about their founders and leaders, for obvious reasons, as incarnations of various gods, these are better to be understood as being like *Arjuna*'s (a partial incarnation), than like *Kṛṣṇa*'s.

क्षण-प्रतियोगी परिणामापरान्त-निर्ग्राह्यः क्रमः ॥ (4.33)

kṣāna-pratīyogī pariṇāmāparānta-nirgrāhyaḥ kramaḥ.

[*krama* – sequence; *pratīyogin* – associated; *kṣānas* – moments; *nirgrāhya* – can be assumed; *apara-anta* – other end; *pariṇāma* – change.]

Sequence is associated with moments of time, which only exist for the *guṇas* not the *puruṣa*, and can only be assumed to exist at the other end of a change, of which the *puruṣa* has none.⁵²

Only by the change of objects do we, whether *yogins* or not, understand there is sequence and moments of time. Within deep sleep where there are no objects, there is no sense of time. When change itself is no longer taken as real, as real as oneself, and thus not something that can affect oneself, affect reality, then sequence and time itself can no longer be taken as real and as affecting oneself. One knows oneself as timeless and free of any sequence of births. The objects composed of the *guṇas* alone are within time, and have a sequence of being constructed and de-constructed. The timeless, partless reality of oneself can have no sequence. If the body continues, or if rebirths continue, this continuance has no affect on oneself or the knowledge that is oneself, free of all limitations.

⁵² *Yoga Sūtra* 4.18.

पुरुषार्थ-शून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यं स्व-रूप-प्रतिष्ठा वा चिति-शक्तिर् इति ॥ (4.34)
puruṣārtha-śūnyānāṃ guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti.

[*artha-śūnya* – no more purpose; *puruṣa* – person; *guṇas* – constituents of nature; *pratiprasava* – return to their origin. *kaivalya* – freedom. *vā* – otherwise; *iti* – known as; *śakti* – pure power; *citi* – consciousness; *pratiṣṭha* – remaining; *sva-rūpa* – its own nature.]

When they serve no more purpose for the *puruṣa* (person), the *guṇas* (constituents of nature) – the elements that make up this embodiment and this universe – return to their origin without identifying with and thus limiting the person.⁵³ This is *kaivalya* (freedom).⁵⁴ Otherwise, positively it is known as the pure power of consciousness

⁵³ 'तत्त्व-वित् तु महा-बाहो गुण-कर्म-विभागयोः। गुणाः गुणेषु वर्तन्ते इति मत्वा न सञ्जते' "Whereas, O *Arjuna*, the one who knows the truth of the distinction of the *guṇas* [from 'I'], and of [their] actions [from 'I'], thinking 'the *guṇas* [i.e., the body and mind] engage among the *guṇas* [i.e., among the objects – physical and mental]' – that one is not bound." (*Bh. Gītā* 3.28). 'ब्रह्मणि आधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः। लिप्यते न सः पापेन पद्म-पत्रम् इव अम्भसा' "Giving up attachment [i.e., not anticipating results], the one who performs actions, offering [them] unto *brahman* (the Lord – as *prakṛti* (nature), the cosmic order) – that one is not affected by *pāpa* (*karma* demerit), like a lotus leaf [is not soaked] by water." (*Bh. Gītā* 5.10). 'न च मां तानि कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय। उदासीनवद् आसीनम् अ-सक्तं तेषु कर्मसु' "O *Arjuna*, these *karmas* (actions and their results) do not bind Me, who is seated [here as the basis of *prakṛti* (nature)], seemingly indifferent [being its mere conscious witness] and unattached towards these *karmas*." (*Bh. Gītā* 9.9). 'यः एवं वेत्ति पुरुषं प्रकृतिं च गुणैः सह। सर्वथा वर्तमानः अपि न सः भूयः अभिजायते' "The one who in this way knows *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* with its *guṇas* – that one, even though performing action in all ways [whether as a student, householder, retiree, or renunciate] is not born again." (*Bh. Gītā* 13.23). 'न अन्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टा अनुपश्यति। गुणेभ्यः च परं वेत्ति मद-भावं सः अधिगच्छति' "When the seer sees [according to the teaching] that there is not a doer other than the *guṇas*, and knows [the self] as beyond the *guṇas*, [then] that one attains My nature [called *mokṣa*]." (*Bh. Gītā* 14.19).

⁵⁴ 'अनेन ज्ञानम् आप्नोति संसार-अर्णव-नाशनम्। तस्मात् एवं विदित्वा एनं कैवल्यं पदम् अश्नुते, कैवल्यं पदम् अश्नुते' "By this [teaching regarding *brahman*] is attained a knowledge that dispels the ocean of *saṃsāra* (the life of continual unbecoming becoming). Therefore, knowing in this way, one attains the goal (*pada*) [called] completeness (*kaivalya*) [i.e., *mokṣa* (freedom)]." (*Kaivalya Up.* 2.2).

remaining in its own nature, always beyond time, beyond change.⁵⁵

Some take the expression, “the *guṇas* return to their origin,” to mean the *guṇas* return to *prakṛti*. This is impossible. *Prakṛti* is nothing but the three *guṇas*, whether in unmixed equilibrium called the unmanifest or in combination called the manifest universe. *Prakṛti* cannot be without the *guṇas* for them to return. The return here means they no longer, through the ignorant thoughts of this individual, throw their limited, separate identity upon the limitless real self, nor do they imagine the limitless real self to be this limited mind. Mutual misidentification goes way. *Kaivalya*, being free of the *guṇas*, is not some new condition, but is simply an assimilated understanding of the nature of the problem (ignorance, *see Yoga Sūtra* 1.4 and 2.5) and the solution (*see Yoga Sūtra* 1.2 and 1.3).

For the person who no longer identifies with the modifications of the *guṇas*, the *guṇas* return to where they operate – as the phenomenal universe, not as oneself. That is, they factually remain where they are, instead of being erroneously imposed upon the nature of oneself. This is what is meant by the mind surrendering to this discriminating knowledge.⁵⁶ It is surrendering what is only transactionally real to the body of the Lord, to the phenomenal universe, by acknowledging the absolute reality as the one reality of oneself and the Lord. It is essentially the recognition of realities.

The *guṇas* operate as the relative reality of the universe, not as the timeless, space-less reality that is the domain of, is the basis in and through of, this universe, and that is the truth of oneself. Any *puruṣārthas* (purposeful goals) sought in pursuing limited objects of the universe before the dawn of this knowledge now become trifles. This is a negative view of what freedom is.

The positive view of freedom is that one remains as one’s very nature – as the pure power of consciousness, not in need of possessing any limited object to fulfill oneself, yet not afraid of any gain or loss, or of any situation.⁵⁷ Nothing is actually gained. The *puruṣa* is no longer identified with the *guṇas*, the thoughts in the mind, and the *puruṣa* remains in its own limitless,

⁵⁵ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.3.

⁵⁶ *Yoga Sūtra* 4.26.

⁵⁷ See commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.51.

perfect nature, which brings us back to the start of these *sūtras*.

Freedom is a loss of ignorance, and the loss of the countless problems that are associated with ignorance. Freedom is a loss of that which cannot stand up to inquiry (*vicāra*)⁵⁸ into reality and its resulting *viveka-khyāti* (discerning knowledge).⁵⁹ Ignorance and its products are not real, not as real as oneself. Therefore, their loss is only an understanding of their actual lack of reality. This is knowledge, and this knowledge is oneself. This is *kaivalya*. *Kaivalya* is the nature of oneself.

Thus (*iti*), you now know what this teaching can be. May you find a teacher who can guide you to this, your limitless birthright.

⁵⁸ *Yoga Sūtra* 1.17.

⁵⁹ *Yoga Sūtras* 2.25–26.

The Nature of the Mind

The term *citta* (mind) is generally used in this text as we would use the word *mind* in English. But there are various aspects of the mind in this teaching tradition. To elaborate, the mind is better indicated by the term *antaḥ-karaṇa* (the internal subtle organ). It is a flow of thoughts, one after another, with inbuilt tendencies for certain types of thoughts that can be modified and channeled by life's experiences and by how one reacts to them.

The inbuilt tendencies are the latent tendencies, called either *saṃskāras* or *vāsanās*. Although these two terms can generally be used as synonyms, they can also be distinguished in certain contexts. *Saṃskāra* is the more general term that covers all latent tendencies created in this life or even in prior lives, and retained between lives through a storehouse of *karma* (called the *karmāśaya*). They can influence any type of thought that occurs in the mind. *Saṃskāra* can also have a narrower meaning, limited to just tendencies that one wants—any positive tendency. *Vāsanā* likewise can have a narrower meaning, either limited to any *saṃskāra* that one does not want—any negative tendency, and/or limited to just those latent tendencies that pertain to liking or disliking something, and/or limited to those tendencies that recreate memories. In these senses, the *vāsanās* are just *saṃskāras* that have these limited functions during this current life. These distinctions are the result of terminologies employed over thousands of years by innumerable writers, with the added flexibility of the Sanskrit language that can have conventional usages and well as etymological usages, for example, *saṃskāra* etymologically means *what is well formed*, and *vāsanā* means *what resides*.

Neither of these two, *saṃskāras* or *vāsanās*, appear as thoughts in the mind (the flow of thoughts—both conscious and subliminal), they only effect or affect the thoughts that occur in this flow. They are assumed to exist only by their effects on thoughts to explain why an individual tends to think and behave in a certain way. They are the unconscious mind. The other aspect of this unconscious mind is the storehouse (the *citta*, literally, *what is collected together*) from which memories arise. In fact, the *citta* is

technically the entire unconscious mind, and it is out of this that memories are recovered, not stored, some more easily than others.

A thought that occurred earlier in this life is said to be stored in the *citta* as a certain latent tendency (*saṃskāra*). When it is brought back out of that *citta*, it is then called a memory (*smṛti*). A *smṛti* is one of four types of thoughts that consciously appear in the mind (*antaḥ-karaṇa*).

The second of the four types of thought is *ahaṅkāra*. It is any thought that defines who the individual thinks he or she is. It is often translated as an I-notion or as ego.

The third type of thought is *buddhi*. It is any thought whose nature is one of firm conviction, usually translated as an intellection or knowledge.

The fourth type of thought is *manas*. It is the catch-all of every other kind of thought—from sensations and imaginations to emotions. Where an expressed emotion converges into a conviction, if it has a known logic, then it is a *buddhi*, otherwise it remains a *manas*.

The terms *manas*, *citta*, and, sometimes, *buddhi* are common terms also used for the entire *antaḥ-karaṇa*. And the term *smṛti* can be synonymous with *citta*—as simply the storehouse that includes the latent tendencies (*saṃskāras*) that arise as manifest memories.

Certain of these names are used for the collection of those four kinds of thoughts. For example, the memory is where memories reside, ego where ego thoughts reside, and intellect where intellections reside. Though convenient to use the collection terminology, to be exact these thoughts do not exist until they occur one after another. There is not a pile of them in the intellect, for example, to pick and choose. And the storehouse for memory is really the unconscious *vāsanās* that recreate the memory thought only when it is being recalled. Again there is not even a collection of these *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās*—they are just unmanifest potentialities. They are individually assumed to be there only when they effect or affect a manifest thought. It is hard for our manifest thoughts to conceptualize what a collection of unmanifest items could be. Still, it is easy to conceptualize why they might be assumed to be there, and few seem

to doubt the existence of an unconscious, once it is suggested by a writer or a scientist.

The mind, being subtle, is different from the physical brain. A particular intellection is not a particular neuron in the brain. The brain exists because of the subtle nature of the mind. The mind does not exist because of the physical brain. That is why the mind, as a facet of the subtle body—consisting of the mind plus the functionality of the sensing and movement—can survive the death of the body and the brain, travel to heavens and hells, and take new births. When it does, an appropriate brain, nervous system, or similar apparatus is formed to assist the mind in actualizing thoughts into actions. A thought is not the equivalent of one or more neurons firing. In this life a thought may not occur without these neurons firing. But our experience of thought is not of an electrical firing happening; it appears to have a nature totally different. In another life, for example in heaven where there can only be a subtle body, like a dream body, there is no physical brain required; some other subtle apparatus may be required.

Also different from Western thinking is that the mind is not conscious (if by *conscious* one means self-conscious) in this tradition's model. It is an unconscious object. Hence it can be misleading to call a thought 'consciousness,' like some Western translators do—trying to mimic Western psychology terminologies. This only confuses Western psychology with this very different model. Rather, thoughts are inert subtle material that appears to reflect the consciousness that is the *ātman* (self) simply by their subtle nature, like a light bulb manifests light illumining other objects when there is the presence of electricity in the bulb, whereas the wires and switches do not, though the same electricity is present in them as well.

In sense perceptions the mind is said to go out through the senses to their respective objects. In vision, the mind goes out through the sense of sight to a distant tree, for example. This accounts for the total sense cognition of not only the color and shape of the tree, but its distance too. This form of the thought that includes the distance to its visual object is called a *vṛtti* (thought form) and is lit up as knowledge by the ubiquitous presence of consciousness (*see* commentary on *Yoga Sūtra* 3.19). One of the other thoughts, an ego thought (*ahankāra*), then thinks this is my perception in my mind—

my experience different from other's experiences.

Consciousness, or awareness, called *cit*, *ātman*, or *puruṣa* among other appellations, is the same as reality (*sat*), the is-ness that is everywhere present. Wherever the mind travels in the universe and between embodiments, it is within ubiquitous consciousness, and so the mind, the thought, appears to be conscious.

Patanjali's Five Stages of Contemplation

<p>Deliberative Contemplation <i>(Saṃprajñāta Samāpatti)</i> (1.17) included within</p> <p>With-Seed Contemplation <i>(Sa-Bīja Samādhi)</i> (1.46)</p> <p>Having four forms</p> <p>Depending on the type of Object (i.e., Seed), namely, Logical or Scriptural <i>(Vītarka or Vicāra)</i> contemplation of the Seer-Seeing-Seen (<i>Grahīṭṛ, Grahaṇa or Grāhya</i>) (1.41) and whether or not it is mixed-up with Imagination, Word & Knowledge (about it) <i>(Vikalpa, Śabda & Jñāna)</i></p>		<p>Non-Deliberative Contemplation <i>(A-Saṃprajñāta Samāpatti)</i> (1.18)</p> <p>a culmination of <i>Nir-Vicāra Samāpatti</i> (1.47)</p> <p>starting as</p> <p>With-Seed Contemplation <i>(Sa-Bīja Samādhi)</i> then culminating through <i>Nirodha</i> (assimilation of teaching, where it no longer needs to be remembered) in</p> <p>Without-Seed Contemplation <i>(Nir-Bīja Samādhi)</i> (1.51)</p> <p>Once Self-knowledge (<i>Prajñā</i>) is completely clear, then this is permanent Freedom (<i>Kaivalya</i>)</p>
<p>Having Logical Object (in keeping with the teaching) <i>(Vītarka Artha)</i> Initially mixed-up with Word & Idea <i>(Sa-Vītarka Samāpatti)</i> (1.42)</p>	<p>Having Inquiry Object (i.e., scriptural teaching) <i>(Vicāra Sūkṣma-Viśaya)</i> Initially mixed-up with Word & Idea <i>(Sa-Vicāra Samāpatti)</i> (1.44)</p>	
<p>Being simply the Logical Object (<i>Artha</i>) <i>(Nir-Vītarka Samāpatti)</i> (1.43)</p>	<p>Being simply the Inquiry Object (<i>Sūkṣma-Viśaya</i>) <i>(Nir-Vicāra Samāpatti)</i> (1.44)</p>	

Suggested Steps in Contemplation

- **Living a life of *dharma*, of *yamas* and *niyamas***
 - A life of the *yamas* and *niyamas*, a life of *dharma*, will bring an abiding peace and freedom of mind that can sit without conflict and without fears.
- **Sitting (*āsana*)**
 - Structural alignment
 - Hold the body, head, and neck in-line and steady with a wide base.
 - The sitting is stable and comfortable (*sthira-sukham*), gained by relaxation (*śaithilya*) and contemplating beyond the confines of the body to the limitless (*ananta-samāpatti*), respectively.
 - See in the mind's eye that the space this body occupies is not limited to here. It reaches to the bounds of the cosmos. This entire space of the cosmos is now within the space of my awareness, accommodating everyone and everything.
 - Take three deep breaths (filling the lungs to their very top, releasing each breath twice as slow as the inhalation), like I am filling the entire space of my universe.
 - To awaken the body and mind, and to mark the start of invoking a meditative mind.
 - Recollection of my intension (*pratijñā*) to sit in meditation.
 - See and appreciate the purpose and benefit of gaining a contemplative mind. This is my appointment with myself.
 - Witness the body
 - Visualize the parts of the body from the top of the head down to the toes, relaxing each part. As their observer, I am not identified with them. They are just objects, like anyone else's body. Finish by observing this body sitting like a living, breathing statue in the limitless space of my awareness.
- **Witness the breath as a culmination of breath control (*prāṇayāma*)**

- Move attention from the gross body to the more subtle energy body in the form of the breath. This may begin with *prāṇayāma*, only as instructed by a proper teacher. Then I can move on to simply, objectively watching the breath. This later helps loosen my identification with the energy within the body, as its observer. This same energy fills this entire limitless space of my awareness. It is not my energy; it is the energy of the cosmos within and without this body.
- **Withdrawal (*pratyāhāra*)**
 - By non-identification (*vairāgya*) with all objects including the fleeting mind, not identifying with and thus being sucked into its desire-driven currents. Witness the thoughts, like I witness the body and the breath, as its observer. I neither seek out any object or thought, nor ponder them when they occur. I let them pass by me as their mere witness.
- **Restraining (*dhāraṇā*) the pursuit of unwanted/hindering thoughts and retaining (*dhyāna*) the flow of wanted/helpful contemplative thoughts**
 - Now bring in a helpful, contemplative thought through *japa*. It is a repetition (*abhyāsa*) by way of chanting (*japa*), quietly with the voice then mentally, a *mantra* that invokes the limitless Lord, the perfect *puruṣa*, for example, *Om Īśāya namaḥ* (*Om*, I surrender what is the Lord's to the Lord).
 - First the attention is predominantly on the *mantra* itself, later the attention is directed predominantly to the silence in-between, as my awareful being that precedes and follows the mantra and is the silent witness of the *mantra*.
 - Bring in a contemplation. A contemplation should always be in the form of a statement of a known fact with a clear logic (expressed or not)—not of an action that needs to be done later. For example, *prati-pakṣa-bhāvana* (contemplating the contradiction), “I cannot be this body, because I am the witness of this body, like of any other body.”
- **Being myself (*samādhi*)**

- A profound, doubtless knowledge that I am this limitless freedom (*ānanda*), this limitless reality am I (*asmitā*).

Suggested Sutra Selections for Courses

General Yoga Sutras Long Course—36 Sutras

1st Pada: Sutras 1–5, 12, 17–18, 23–24, 27–34, 41, 48–51.

2nd Pada: Sutras 1–5, 17, 20–21.

3rd Pada: Sutras 53–55.

4th Pada: Sutra 25–26.

General Yoga Sutras Short Course—9 Sutras

1st Pada: Sutras 1–4, 24.

2nd Pada: Sutras 1–2, 28–29.

Omkara Yoga Course—13 Sutras

1st Pada: Sutras 1–5, 12, 23–29.

Disciplines of Yoga Course—47 Sutras

1st Pada: Sutras 1–5, 12, 23–29.

2nd Pada: Sutras 1, 28–55.

3rd Pada: Sutras 1–3, 7, 8.

Pronunciation Key for Sanskrit Transliteration Characters

Char	Sounds-like	Location	Char	Sounds-like	Location
a	o in son	guttural	ṭ	t in but	cerebral
ā	o in bottle		ṭh	th in but how	
i	e in be	palatal	ḍ	d in god	
ī	ee in bee		ḍh	dh in godhead	
u	o in move	labial	ṇ	n in run	dental
ū	oo in moon		t	t in cat	
ṛ	rh in rhythm	cerebral	th	th in cat hair	
ṝ	rh - elongated		d	d in mad	
ḷ	le in table	dental	dh	dh in madhouse	labial
e	a in tape	guttural - palatal	n	n in numb	
ai	y in my		p	p in loop	
o	oe in toe	guttural - labial	ph	ph in loop-hole	
au	ow in now		b	b in rob	
ḥ	half of a hard h	conforms to following guttural or labial	bh	bh in rob him	labial
ṁ	n in French bon	conforms to preceding vowel	m	m in much	
k	ck in block	guttural	y	y in young	palatal
kh	ckh in blockhead		r	r in drama	cerebral
g	g in log		l	l in luck	dental
gh	gh in log-hut		v	v in avert or w in Swami	labial-dental or bi-labial
ṅ	ng in song	palatal	ś	sh in ship	palatal
c	ch in catch		ṣ	sh in bushel	cerebral
ch	chh in catch him		s	s in sit	dental
j	ge in hedge		h	soft h in hum	guttural
jh	geh in hedgehog	The first 13 characters (<i>a-au</i>) are vowels, the rest (<i>ḥ-h</i>) are consonants.			
ñ	n in cringe				

Notes on Pronunciation of Transliterated Sanskrit Words

The keys to pronouncing transliterated Sanskrit words are to watch out for misleading vowel pronunciations and to identify individual pronunciation syllables. The following will help eliminate the most egregious pronunciation errors.

1) The international standard for Sanskrit transliteration slips into the bizarre when it comes to the vowels. The four most common vowels (*a*, *i*, *u*, and *e*) are not, in fact, pronounced in Sanskrit like we pronounce these vowels in English, either in isolation or within English words. See the Sounds-like column in the preceding chart for the correct pronunciation examples. There are two vowel sounds (*r* and *l*) that are transliterated as consonants with a dot under them. There are no good equivalents for these vowels in English. The key to remember here is to treat them exactly as vowels and not as consonants when determining what constitutes a pronunciation syllable in Sanskrit words.

Of note is the pronunciation of the vowel *i*. It has often been described as sounding like *i* in *sit*. But *sit* can be pronounced in different ways. The vowel should be pronounced as *e* in *be*, since *i* is only the short version of the long vowel *ī*. The pronunciation of the long *ī* is often and correctly shown as sounding like *ee* in *bee*.

Some vowels and consonants have two letters assigned to them. They are the vowels *ai* and *au*, and the aspirated consonants *kh*, *gh*, *ch*, etc. These are considered single vowels and single consonants with different beginning and ending sounds within them. Do not treat these aspirated consonants as conjunct consonants when determining the pronunciation syllables of Sanskrit words.

Additionally, there are three forms of the sibilant consonant “s.” Each is a distinct letter, and this distinction makes a difference in the meaning of the word.

All Sanskrit words, unlike English words, are pronounced as they are written. The one main exception is the common consonant conjunct *jñ*, which to me sounds best as “*ññ*.”

2) A Sanskrit word is more clearly pronounced when there is a very slight pronunciation break between pronunciation syllables, just as we do when we speak

English. In English, a medial conjunct consonant is often split up so that the initial consonant in the conjunct is joined with the preceding vowel and its syllable, for example, “Web-ster.” Notice how wrong it sounds to pronounce the word as “We-bster.” When you do not break a Sanskrit word into its proper pronunciation syllables, then its pronunciation sounds just as wrong. The following are the main guidelines to identify pronunciation syllables.

- The basic pronunciation syllable is either:
 - A consonant+vowel combination, even if the vowel is part of the next word (unless one is slowing pronunciation for clarity); or
 - An initial vowel preceded by a pronunciation break.
- These two basic pronunciation syllables may also be joined into a single syllable with either:
 - A following final consonant, or conjunct consonant, itself followed by a pronunciation break; or
 - An initial consonant in a following conjunct consonant, even if that following conjunct is part of the next word (unless one is slowing pronunciation for clarity).

The blended results of these two guidelines will give us the following Sanskrit words with their pronunciation syllables separated with a hyphen:

Ma-hā-bhā-ra-ta

U-pa-ni-ṣad

Prāp-sya-sis-var-gam or *Prāp-sya-si svar-gam* (for the two words *Prāpsyasi svargam*)

Again, for clarity there may be a slight pronunciation break between compounded words, for example, *de-hān-ta-ra-prāp-tiḥ* for the compound word *dehāntara-prāptiḥ*.

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About the Author

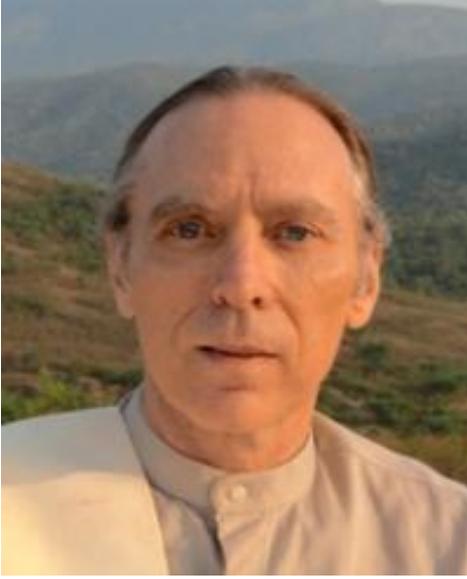


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