

**Yoga Dharshan
of
Maharishi Pathanjali**
(A critical commentary)

By Ramachandra Raju Kalidindi



What is Yoga

Yoga is a Sanskrit word that generally translates to union in English. Union in this sense refers to one of many ideas, the most common definitions are:

the union of male and female polarities in the body, the union of consciousness and energy, the union of yin and yang, the merging of individual ego with Universal Ego, or merging of Individual self with Universal Self. It is perhaps best explained as an applied science aimed at achieving equilibrium between thought and action, body and mind, and between potential and kinetic energies within the human body. It is also described as union with God, although no belief in a supreme being is required, and one need not be religious. Yoga is a science that works for all -

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the religious, the spiritual, the wanderer, the agnostic and the atheist.

Though the Science of Yoga has been there from the time of Rig Veda, It is Maharishi Pathanjali has made it a separate branch of study and formulated the Sutras based on the knowledge available in his time and his practical experience in practicing the methods that were in vogue at that time.

Lets us discuss in depth the methods that are used to achieve the state of Yoga, with reference to Maharishi Pathanjali.

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Samadhi Pada:

Adha yoganushasanam || 1 ||

'Adha' At this very moment, 'yoganushasanam' follow the path of Yoga. What does this mean? It says that one has to live in the present, just as an integral part of the Universe. It emphasizes the truth that one has to live in the present, which is only true. The past is a memory and the future is an expectation, how can one live there? To live in the present is Yoga in essence.

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Yoga chittha vrutti nirodhaha || 2 ||

Chitta, the mind stuff, wavers and won't stay in one place or one act. Stays not in present, roams all round, purposeless. All the four of Manas (mind), buddhi (Intellect), chitta (will), Ahankara (ego) of Sankhya darshan is collectively called by Pathanjali as Chitta. Keeping Chitta in right perspective is Yoga, by thus living in present. The Vrittis misguide Chitta, thus man is unable to know the knowledge of true self. By controlling (rather ignoring) these vrittis, he can realize his true state. That true state is the state of Yoga.

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Thadha drastuh swaroopevasthaanam

|| 3 ||

Thus, controlling vrittis, our true existence become stable and shines forth with true effulgence. That is the state of Yoga.

Vritti saaropya mitharatra || 4 ||

Otherwise (if we don't control the vrittis), the vrittis influence our true nature and colors it. These (vrittis) will change the appearance of the self and modifies it with the dualities and hides it' true nature.

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**Vrutthaya panchathah klistaaklista
|| 5 ||**

These vrittis are of five types, some are painful and some others are not painful.

**Pramana viparyaya, vikalpa, nidra
smruthayah || 6 ||**

They are Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smruthi. When we study them in detail, we can realize how to stop them.

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**Prathyaksha anumana agamaah
pramaanaani || 7 ||**

(Pramana may be translated to English as 'valid cognition', which is a false and filtered perception of the reality as per Maharishi Pathanjali).

Pramana's are of three types: Direct, Indirect, Scriptural Authority.

Direct perception: This is perceived through our senses, filtered by our belief systems and through the template of dualistic nature.

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Indirect perception: This is arrived at by our deductive reasoning and intellect.

Agama Pramana: This is the belief that one get from accepting the authority of Vedas and other Scriptures.

All these three are modifications (Vrittis), which stand in the path of getting/ attaining Yoga (Union).

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Viparyayo mithya-jnanam a-tad-rupa- pratishtam || 8 ||

Viparyaya is false knowledge and this false knowledge is imprinted in our mind. That may be due to false perception of the senses or wrong interpretation by our mind or both.

We may see a pair of shining eyes at a distance in dark from a distance. We try to assess that unclear shape with our previous knowledge mixing our fears and assumptions. We may declare it as tiger; it may be even a cat or some other animal.

This is a Vritti (modification of mind), if we control it, Yoga is possible.

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**Shabda-jnanaupati vastu-shunyo
vikalpah || 9 ||**

Vikalpa is false reality which is born out of our fanciful daydreaming, a mere word play. No such thing exists, except in our fig of imagination which distances us from the truth. Unless we crossover this Vritthi, we cannot achieve Yoga.

**Abhava-pratyaya-alambana vrttir
nidra || 10 ||**

In deep dreamless sleep there are no distractions of the mind, but it is also devoid of Consciousness, hence it is also called Vrttir. One has to awake from the sleep of ignorance to the

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realization of the self, and then only the Union with the Supreme Self is possible.

When the memories of past experiences influence us, we cannot live in the present. Seeing through the colored glasses of past experiences we also carry the traumas, mistakes, and wastes that are to be discarded. It's an obstacle in getting the direct knowledge and practice of Yoga, hence, should not carry along.

Anubhuta-vishayasampramoshah smrti

|| 11 ||

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Abhyasa-vairagyabhyam tan-nirodhah

|| 12 ||

Abhyasa means sustained and consistent practice. Vairagya means, living without attachments (without falling prey to worldly likes and dislikes). These are not two separate activities; it is only one synchronized effort. It is practicing Vairagya consistently with regularity. May be it sounds easy to say, but to practice is not that easy. But, if one climbs step by step with persistence, it is not impossible to reach the pinnacle.

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The same thing has been told by Lord Krishna to Arjuna in Bhagavad Gita.

“Abhyasenathu kountheya vairagyenacha grahyathe”

O Son of Kunthi, it's true that the mind wavers, but with consistent practice of vairagya it can be controlled.

Tatra sthitau yatno'bhyasah || 13 ||

By willfully doing Abhyasa (sustained and consistent practice), one can establish oneself in the passive, serene stillness. This stillness leads

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to attaining the state of Yoga, by becoming a firm ground, devoid of Vrittis.

**Sa tu dirgha-kala-nairantarya-
satkarasevito drdha-bhumih ||14||**

When the Abhyasa with consistent dedication is done for a sustained period of time, it will become self perpetuating and inwardly directed. When the Sadhana become inward, no external supports are required for it.

“The Sun and the Moon, The equinoxes, all the holy places (Thirdhas) could be seen inside the self. The mount Meru in head, Kedhar in the

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brow and Kasi at heart could be perceived. (Yoga Dharshan Upanishad)

Transforming the Sadhana into our natural attribute and directing it inward, is the important thing to be noted.

**Drasta anusravika visaya vitrsnasya
vasikara samjna vairagyam - || 15 ||**

By keeping the focus away from external objects, teachings of traditions; mastery and freedom from desires of sense objects can be gained and results in gaining intimate knowledge.

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That means, giving no importance to the Chitta Vrittis by having non-attachment (Vairagya) towards external objects. The Focus to be shifted inward, like a tortoise withdraws its limbs inward. We think that is it possible, it is possible if we do regular practice (Sadhana). It should not be limited to the period we sit in meditation seat; it should be continuous all the time. It doesn't mean we should stop doing any work, but do them without attachment to the fruits of the work (as told in Bhagavadh Gita).

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**Tat param purusha-khyater
guna-vaitrasnyam - || 16 ||**

By doing (As mentioned in the above) Practice (Sadhana) one can overcome the obstacles and get Independence from the illusion of differentiated Physical Objects, then realization of Parama Purusha (The absolute and infinite Self).

When the practice increases the chitta vrittis gets thinned and disappear. Attains stability and realizes non-dual Supreme Self. Then we understand that 'Supreme Self' is not something that witnesses from a remote corner, but it is non-dual Self inside us.