

MARSHALL GOVINDAN

# Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

## and the Siddhas

Translation, Commentary and Practice



KYP

# Chapter 1: SAMĀDHI-PĀDA

This first chapter (*pāda*), provides some of the most important concepts about the process of *Yoga* and its results. Cognitive absorption (*samādhi*) is such a result, and Patañjali brings us to a clear understanding of just what it is towards the end of this first chapter. As *Yoga* is a scientific art, a progressive system, Patañjali leads us through it much the same way an engineer might point out the features of a blue print. While he does not teach us how to perform specific practices, his blueprint will indicate in fair detail how they all fit together and what the results will resemble. The succinct form of the *sūtras*, like the engineers blueprints, are not to be confused with the reality, which they symbolize. Indian writers in general, and fully accomplished *yogins* (*siddhas*) like Patañjali and Tirumūlar specifically, realized the limitations of language, and used words in a suggestive manner. They wished to point to a deeper reality, which could not be grasped with mere words. Their works were often written in such a way so as to deliberately obscure the meaning from the non-initiate. A good grasp of the concepts revealed in this introductory chapter will enable the reader to understand what follows in the subsequent chapters, in which the processes and results of *Yoga* are described in much greater detail.

## 1. *atha-yoga-anuśāsanam*

*atha* = now

*yoga* = union

*anuśāsanam* = exposition

**Now [begins] the exposition on *yoga*.**

The term *atha* or now is a word used to call the readers attention to the beginning of an important treatise.

## 2. *yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*

*yoga* = Yoga

*citta-vṛttiḥ* = fluctuations of consciousness

*nirodhaḥ* = cessation

**Yoga is the cessation [of identifying with] the fluctuations [arising within] consciousness.**

Here it is appropriate to first explain some of the oldest concepts in Indian metaphysical thought: the term nature (*prakṛti*) and Self (*puruṣa*) in verses I.16, 24. *Prakṛti* is everything besides the Self and includes the entire cosmos from the material to the psychic levels. Unlike the Self (I am....), which is purely subjective, *prakṛti* is objective reality, that which is observed by the Self. It is real, however transitory it may be. *Puruṣa*, the Self, is pure subject, at the core of consciousness. It illuminates the consciousness. Without it, the mind and psyche would have no conscious activity, just as a light bulb without invisible electricity would radiate no light. *Prakṛti* exists as nature in its transcendental, undefined state as well as its multi-form, differentiated manifestations. This Self is to be distinguished from the self of the limited personality and body. Sometimes, one refers to the true Self, as that eternal being at the core of everyone, the *atman*, or *jīva*, as opposed to the little, self, the person or personality, the sum of our memories and limited identifications held together by egoism.

The word *citta* consciousness and the term *cittar* (pronounced *siddhar*) is the Tamil word for one who is a master of consciousness. It is the localized manifestation of Absolute Consciousness (*cit*). While Patañjali does not define the term consciousness (*citta*) its meaning can be determined from the contexts in which it appears in the Sūtras. According to verse IV.23, consciousness is colored by the Self and the manifestations of nature, the Seer and the Seen. This apparent and mistaken identification of the Self, or Seer, with the manifestations of Nature (the Seen) is the cause of human suffering and the fundamental problem of human consciousness. As the *cittars* (*tam.*) have stated: “We are dreaming with our eyes open because we identify not with who we are, but with what we are not, our dreams”. It is a complete reversal of the true relationship between the Self and



objects of consciousness. The Self has become an object and myself, the personality, an ego-ridden collection of thoughts, feelings and sensations taken on the role of the subject. The habit of identifying with our thoughts, emotions, sensations, that is, egoism, is the disease of human consciousness. The fluctuations (*vr̥ttiḥ*) arising within consciousness, enumerated and explained in verse I.5 to I.11, such as the means of acquiring true knowledge, misconceptions, conceptualization, sleep and memory must be cleansed of egoism, the strong habit of feeling, “I am this emotion,” “I am this memory,” “I am this sensation,” by the systematic cultivation of detachment, wherein one realizes “I am conscious of this emotion, memory, sensation and I am not this emotion, memory, sensation.”

In *Babaji’s Kriya Yoga*, the first meditation technique, *śuddhi dhyanā kriyā*, has this change in perspective (or - change in consciousness) as its purpose. Like all habits, egoism lives in the subconscious level of the mind, that is, the part that is below our normal everyday realm of awareness. This level is, however, accessible through the various methods of *Yoga*.

It is not the elimination of the modifications of consciousness that will restore one’s realization of the Self as one’s identity. As long as the world exists, there will always be modifications. What is problematic here is the habitual confusion of “I am” (the Self) with “I am” (the object of consciousness, emotion, memory, sensation).

What is consciousness? The meaning of consciousness (*citta*) can be determined from the context in which it appears in Siddha literature. According to Tirumūlar:

Our intelligence entangled in the senses,  
Finds itself in very deep waters,  
But inside our consciousness is a deeper  
Consciousness.  
Which the Supreme Grace stimulates. (TM 119)

and Verse 122:

Śivayoga is to know the *cit-acit*  
And for the *yoga*-penance qualify;  
Self-light becoming Self,  
To enter undeviating, His lordly domain;  
He granted me this - *Nandi* of the Nine *Yogas*.



*cit* = The Self-knowledge of *Śiva*-consciousness.

*acit* = The ignorance of the, the soul or individualized spirit which upholds the living being.

Practice: As various disturbing thoughts, emotions, or sensations arise, ask the question: “Could I let it go?” Cultivate detachment towards them.

3. *tadā draṣṭuḥ sva-rūpe’vasthānam*

*tadā* = then

*draṣṭuḥ* = the Seer

*svarūpe* = in one’s own form

*avasthānam* = abides

**Then the Seer abides in his own true form.**

“Then” implies that what follows is a consequence of the process of purifying the habit of identifying with the fluctuations arising within consciousness, described in the preceding verse. What follows is a permanent state of Self-realization, not a temporary experience, which can be dispersed by the waves of mental distractions. In ordinary physical consciousness, one habitually identifies with mental forms and emotions. By the practice of such meditation techniques as *śuddhi dhyāna kriyā* or *mantras*, one may develop a profound sense of detachment. The “Seer” is the Self. At the end of the process of *Yoga*, the individual soul (*jīva*), realizes that it is “*Śiva*”, the Supreme Lord. The individual soul (*jīva*) assumes, by expansion, its true nature or form (*Śiva*) and no longer identifies with the lower physical or mental vehicles.

According to Tirumūlar:

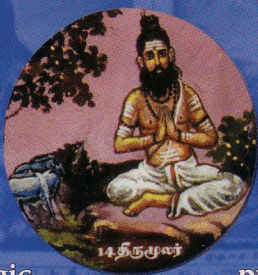
In this *turiyatita jagrat* state,  
The Lord Of Dance with *jīva* in union stands  
When that union takes place *māyā* vanishes away  
That very day *jīva* attains *Śiva* form. (TM 2277)

“*Jagrat*” refers to the waking state; “*turiya*” is the fourth state of consciousness, beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep; super consciousness (*turiyatita*) means beyond *turiya*.

Practice: Repeat: “Now nothing can disturb me anymore” often, as an autosuggestion, particularly before going to sleep or when coming out of meditation:



**Patanjali** refers to his “yoga of action with Sutras are universally the two or three most of yoga. Until now, com- as a philosophical refe- red its implications for yogic red the fact that it is also an esoteric work, and that only initiates, with sufficient prior experience, can grasp its deeper meaning.



yoga as “Kriya Yoga”: the awareness.” His Yoga- considered to be among important texts in the field mentators have treated it rence, and have largely igno- practice. They have also igno-

**This new translation and commentary** provides a practical guide to Self-realization or enlightenment. It clearly explains how to apply Patanjali’s profound philosophical teachings in everyday life, in any situation. When one practices the techniques of Kriya Yoga, it is like driving a powerful automobile. But without a roadmap, most students are “stuck in traffic” or at “dead ends.” Now for the first time, there is a clear roadmap to guide the student to remarkable destinations.

**In Tamil Nadu and other southern states of India,** there is a tradition of yogic adepts known as Siddhas, who are renowned for their longevity, miraculous powers, and remarkable contributions to an enduring culture. They have left a large body of literature, including Tirumandiram by the Siddha Thirumoolar, who was, by many indications, a brother disciple of Patanjali.

**“Study (svadhyaya) has always been an integral aspect of Yoga. Western students, in my opinion, need to take this yogic practice more seriously. Because of its succinctness and focus on essentials, the Yoga-Sutra is ideally suited for in-depth study. Its approach is rational, systematic, and philosophical. By contrast, the Thirumandiram is ecstatic and poetic and filled with precious nuggets of yogic experience and wisdom. Both texts complement each other beautifully, and their combined study will be found illuminating and elevating. Govindan’s book provides an excellent platform for such a study. He writes from his own long experience of Kriya Yoga and a deep love and respect for the heritage of Yoga...Marshall Govindan’s Kriya Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and the Siddhars is a valuable addition to the study of Yoga in general and the Yoga-Sutra in particular. I can wholeheartedly recommend it... In particular, the growing number of students of Kriya Yoga throughout the world will find his treatment indis- pensable, but others will benefit from it.”**

*From the Foreword by Dr. Georg Feuerstein, Ph D., author of “The Sutras of Patanjali” and the “Encyclopedia of Yoga.”*

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