



# The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 6.72

## The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

A System of Self-Mastery



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The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

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Fourth Edition, August 2006

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Published by

The Upper Triad Association

P.O. Box 807

Clayton, North Carolina 27528

The Upper Triad Association is a 501 ( c ) 3 non-profit educational organization established in 1974 and devoted to the study and practice of various principles leading to personal and spiritual growth.

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# Chapter 6.72

## The Yoga Sutras



## A System of Self-Mastery

- The *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali constitute one of the great formulations of the ancient wisdom. The Sutras form a synthesis of the science of raja yoga, as compiled in the form of sutras (threads) or aphorisms. These teachings cover the whole field of practical (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) yoga, from hatha yoga to (through) laya yoga to (through) bhakti yoga to (through) raja yoga (kriya yoga) proper, yet concisely and effectively.
- The *Yoga Sutras* form a basic system of yoga leading through various (preparatory) stages eventually to "the subjugation of the mental body and the control of the mind." Ultimately, the Sutras lead to the soul and its unfoldment (the evocation of the soul in the life and consciousness (of the personality) of the spiritual student).

## The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali constitute one of the great formulations of the ancient wisdom. The Sutras form a synthesis of the science of raja yoga, as compiled in the form of sutras (threads) or aphorisms. These teachings cover the whole field of practical (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) yoga, from hatha yoga to (through) laya yoga to (through) bhakti yoga to (through) raja yoga (kriya yoga) proper, yet concisely and effectively. The Yoga Sutras form a basic system of yoga leading through various (preparatory) stages eventually to “the subjugation of the mental body and the control of the mind.” Ultimately, the Sutras lead to the soul and its unfoldment (the evocation of the soul in the life and consciousness (of the personality) of the spiritual student).

Patanjali was an Indian sage and scholar who assembled (collected) (integrated) the Yoga Sutras in their (its) present formulation. Patanjali was obviously a student of the mysteries. His “system” has now been utilized quite effectively for centuries. The relative timelessness of this formulation indicates its relative freedom from religious practice (and its relative freedom from intellectualization), focusing instead upon spiritual practice as it leads to understanding and wisdom.

Patanjali’s system of aphorisms is a convenient means of registration and conveyance (concisely) of a great deal of useful information. Although subject to translation, interpretation, and exposition, the Sutras represent an important element of the ancient wisdom. Aphorisms are concise statements of principles or terse formulations of truth, defining the wisdom as it is understood. Sutras are strings of precepts or aphorisms which are interrelated and lead forward in consciousness. The Yoga Sutras (aphorisms) are designed to progressively evoke the higher consciousness. As the basic teaching is understood and practiced, the Sutras lead to the intermediate teaching (and likewise on to the advanced teaching). Like most proper scriptures, the Sutras can be embraced on various levels and applied in various ways.

The Yoga Sutras consist of some 195 or 196 sutras (depending on translation) organized into four books or sections. The first book or section consists of 51

sutras and is entitled variously and deals with yoga and its aims (the problem of union) (samadhi pada) (what is yoga) (the state of yoga). The second book consists of 55 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with yoga and its practices (the steps to union) (sadhana pada) (why one should practice yoga and how one should do so) (the instruments of yoga). The third book consists of 55 or 56 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with powers (union achieved and its results) (vibhuti pada) (internal practice) (the attainments of yoga). And the fourth book consists of 34 sutras and is entitled variously and deals with liberation (illumination) (kaivalya pada) (the fulfillment of yoga).

Numerous translations of the Yoga Sutras have been published, with associated commentary, including The Light of the Soul by Alice A. Bailey; The Science of Yoga by I.K. Taimni; Yoga, The Art of Integration by Rohit Mehta; and How to Know God by Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood. Although consideration of the Sutras in the context of the underlying Sanskrit language has some value, the student is urged to place greater emphasis upon subjective understanding and practical application. All paths lead eventually to the soul, some more or less gradually, some forthwith (relatively expediently). The Yoga Sutras, properly embraced (implemented), constitute an effective and expedient means (path).



## Section 6.721



### Samadhi Pada

- The first book of the *Yoga Sutras* is concerned with the objectives of raja yoga.



## Samadhi Pada 1

The first book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers raja yoga and its aims (the problem of union) (samadhi pada) (what is yoga) (the state of yoga). The problem of union is the difficulty encountered by the personality (the soul absorbed in incarnation) in recognizing its absorption (sleep), understanding its place, recognizing the soul (the way), becoming responsive to the soul, and achieving union with that soul.

Union is ultimately achieved through self-mastery, gaining control of the lower self and overcoming all of its nature (conditioning). Once some degree of (preliminary) discipline (refinement) of the physical and emotional nature has been achieved (i.e, that which is preliminary to raja yoga), then the mind must be restrained. In this context, restraining the mind properly means achieving the state in which the mind does not function independently. It is not a matter of passivity or blankness, nor of forcing the mind into new patterns, but rather a matter of un-doing the conditioning of the mind and evoking a new qualification of the mind (or temperance) such that it becomes responsive to the quality of the soul. Without restraint (higher qualification), the (untempered) mind assumes an endless succession of associated conscious and unconscious forms or "modifications of the thinking principle." Without restraint, the mind is not responsive to the light of the soul and the only light that emerges is the (relatively) dim light of the mind itself. But with restraint, the mind allows a shining forth of the light of the soul, without the impediment of thinking (thought-form-making).

The practical aim of raja yoga then is the knowing-of-reality (the self or soul as it is), through dis-identification with the lower self and its absorption in the senses and through identification with the higher self or soul (God-self or Christ within). This is the achievement of spiritual consciousness, a living in the reality (consciousness) of the higher self rather than in the superficial consciousness (delusion) of the lower self. Man naturally identifies with his lower nature and its sense impressions, without consciously realizing this identification. Thus one must become dis-associated from these lesser matters before one can turn toward the higher (light). For as long as the mind is passive,

one cannot even accomplish the preliminaries. Likewise, for as long as the mind is active (independent), one cannot go beyond the preliminaries. But once the mind is non-active (i.e., intelligently quiescent or reflective), then spiritual poise (union) is achieved.

“The (unrestrained) activities or modifications of the mind are correct knowledge (based upon correct perception, correct deduction, and correct (accurate) observation), incorrect knowledge (based upon perception of the form and not upon the state of being), fancy (resting upon images which have no real existence), passivity (blankness) (mechanicalness) (lack of awareness) (sleep), and memory (retention of thought-forms) (attachment to that which has been known or experienced).” All of these activities (kama-manas) must be brought under the control of the (waking) focus of consciousness or overcome as limitations (distractions) in consciousness, “through tireless endeavor and through non-attachment.”

The (proper) restraint of the mind (non-attachment) is a subtle matter, resulting in clarity, purity, and quietude (intelligent, non-thinking repose). Non-attachment evokes (affords) higher perception and understanding. But before this can occur, the mind must be fully and properly trained (qualified) (tempered) through right (proper) meditation. [Book I, Sutras 1-16]



Commentary No. 920

## Samadhi Pada 2

The principal tool of the aspirant is meditation. Meditation leads the student from aspiration through several stages (concentration, meditation proper, contemplation) to samadhi (the quiet mind) (illumination and inspiration). In this process, the mind is progressively applied or focused upon some object, first “with consideration for the form, through examination; then with consideration of its quality, through discriminative participation; then with consideration of its purpose, through inspiration; and finally through consideration of the soul, through identification.”

The brain is thereby brought directly into the field of influence of the mind and the mind is brought directly into the field of influence of the soul. But along the way one must become progressively less attached to the object(s) of consciousness. If one gets attached at some level, then one is absorbed (asleep) and will not progress on to the next level (until the gradual force of evolutionary pressure emerges into manifestation). Until the mind is properly tempered, it will naturally seek attachments and divert the consciousness through its (insidious) associative (dynamic yet mechanistic) stream. Thus keys to success in this endeavor are pre-determination, determination, patience, and persistence (will). The process eventually yields the intended stillness of mind. One must keep in mind, however, that the objective is not knowledge. The objective is not even understanding. The objective is wisdom (quality). Knowledge and understanding are merely stages in the process of fulfillment (wisdom). There are many paths toward the objective, but all have certain characteristics in common, which are the prerequisites in consciousness for fulfillment (completion), regardless of the particular methods and means employed. Depending on (prior) qualifications, the way is relatively difficult (easy) and the relative strength of character (quality) (will) determines the pace (while the relative temperament determines the particular path (methods)).

Essential to this process is discrimination between the self and the not-self, for otherwise the student is continually (even progressively) self-deceived in his or her associations, conclusions, identifications, etc. Once the self (soul) (Ishvara) is discerned intellectually (conceptually), one must pass on to actual realization of its existence. "By intense devotion to the soul (the heart or God-consciousness), realization is achieved." The head-centered student must develop the heart-centered nature (as the heart-centered student must develop the head-centered nature) until the needed balance (equilibrium) is achieved.

The nature of the soul is difficult to apprehend without direct experience. The soul is "untouched by limitation, free from karma and desire" and "being unlimited by time condition." Being one with God, the soul apprehends directly, without recourse to the senses. The student who can achieve samadhi can begin to evoke the realization of the soul, as the light of the soul begins to qualify the lower consciousness (mind and heart of the personality). The "Word of God (Ishvara) is AUM (OM)." This refers to the cosmic Christ (manifestation of consciousness) and every correlative (something that is

correlated) (e.g., the individual soul) and relationship. "Through the sounding of the Word and through reflection upon its meaning, the Way is found."

Once the Way is found, progress is assured. The Word evokes higher qualification of the lower vehicles (bringing weaknesses to the surface to be transformed into strengths) and leads the ardent student to the Voice of the Silence. [Book I, Sutras 17-28]



Commentary No. 929

### Samadhi Pada 3

There are a number of obstacles along the Way. These obstacles are all within the field of personality consciousness. At some point along the Way, the aspirant comes to realize his (her) true existence, begins to understand his (her) true nature, and eventually becomes determined to eliminate them. Once the aspirant has experienced the "touch" of the soul, then real progress begins.

According to Patanjali, "The obstacles to soul cognition are bodily disability, mental inertia, wrong questioning, carelessness, laziness, lack of dispassion, erroneous perception, inability to achieve concentration, failure to hold the meditative attitude when achieved." Bodily disability is resolved through "wholesome, sane living" leading to physical, etheric, and emotional health (vitality) (balance) (purification) (tempering of the animal nature). Mental inertia is resolved through "control of the life force" and the uplifting of the concrete mind and transcending attachment (beliefs) (habits) (opinions). Wrong questioning is resolved through "one-pointed thought" and overcoming doubt or the reliance on outer authority and the inertia of ego. Carelessness is resolved through "meditation" and overcoming the lack of proper focus, such that one is no longer "carelessly" making (needless) thought-forms.

Laziness refers to the inertia or "slothfulness of the entire lower nature" (inertia is a consequence of man's material nature (i.e., on physical, etheric, emotional, concrete mental levels) and is resolved through "self-discipline"). Lack of dispassion refers to kama-manas or the "desire for material and sensuous things" and is resolved through "correct analysis." Erroneous perception refers to man's identification with the lower self and all of its attachments and

entanglements (desires, beliefs, habits, opinions), i.e., man's delusion of (in) (by) the senses, and which is resolved through "illumination." Inability to achieve concentration and failure to hold the meditative attitude refer to the emergence of self-discipline and a focusing of man's resources (and will) upon the Way. Man suffers in accordance with his attachments (the extent to which he is entangled in these obstacles). The will must be invoked along with coordinated determination and adherence to the preliminaries.

The Way is a matter of balance, as the student must necessarily learn to live in the world without being of the world. The student must evoke the heart nature and relate properly to all other lives, yet without attachment or involvement or entanglement (and without imposition). Only thereby (with peace of mind (the quiet mind) and overall dynamic equilibrium) can one evoke and share the higher energy. This peace is also "brought about by the proper regulation of the prana or life breath" (more properly, several coordinated practices (one of which is proper breathing) that lead to the quiet mind). There is no one remedy that leads to awakening (realization) but all of the ways of the Path must be embraced in some measure.

Through proper meditation, the senses (and centers) (man's nature) are examined, and through effective (unbiased) observation and understanding, non-attachment is eventually achieved. The light is embraced and evoked throughout the lower self. The lower self is stabilized and purified, its indulgences (and reactivity) are overcome, and the student is thereby freed from maya (glamour) (illusion). The dream (waking sleep) brings experience (knowledge) which must be assimilated, contributing to peace (the quiet mind). But somewhere along the Way, the student must come to the realization that he or she is asleep, that the personality is deluded by the senses and its attachments thereto. [Book I, Sutras 29-38]

## Samadhi Pada 4

Through proper study (self-observation and meditation), the student should also consider that which the lesser self holds to be important, i.e., its values (desires, motives, habits), so that in understanding this conditioning the student can transform those values into the higher values of the Path (soul). It is not enough to merely affirm the higher values or agree with them, one must admit that the lower nature has its own values, identify those values, and overcome them. The higher values must be embraced and made manifest. Theory must result in application (adherence to the Way).

Through proper embrace of the depth and breadth of manifestation (from the lowest to the highest, from the smallest to the largest, from the most inner to the most outer) the mind and consciousness are expanded and deepened such that union is achieved between inner and outer reality. "The knower, knowledge, and the field of knowledge become one." Separateness (and separateness) is (are) wholly overcome as the ego is transcended and one then lives through all lives (and without being limited by particulars). In this sense, one passes from meditation with seed (which involves the lower self (concrete mind or intellect) and is therefore separative) to proper (seedless) meditation (which involves the higher self (abstract mind and intuition) and is therefore non-separative). Thus reasoning (rationalization) (thinking) (thought-form-making) (reliance upon memory) is transcended and union (truth) (reality) (the soul) achieved. When words and thoughts are transcended (in this higher sense), what remains is reality.

Meditation with seed (object) (focus) leads from the gross state (most entangled in form), through a succession of more refined (less entangled) (ever more subtle) states, to the formless state. In this process, there is both a passage through a progressive continuum of states within each level and progressive repolarization through the various levels. Coarseness implies separateness, while purity conveys the ability to blend and merge. To pass from one state to another requires refinement and upliftment. To pass from one level to another (e.g., from physical to emotional or from emotional to mental or from mental to intuitional) requires a different kind of focus in consciousness (altogether) and a



letting go of the habits of the lower level. To transcend the emotions one must learn to think. To transcend the mind, one must learn to not-think. In order to rise above and beyond the concrete mind, one has to let go of all the notions associated with experience in the lower worlds, so that the dimensionality and character of the higher world (level) can be embraced. "Clear perspicuity (pure spiritual realization) follows through the quiet mind."

"With clear perception, only the truth is revealed." This does not mean that one can "explain" the truth, but that one can fully realize the truth. Reality persists beyond limitation, beyond the formulatory existence. Human evolution is fulfilled as time and space (and all notions thereof) (more properly, all notions) are transcended. The rational mind is simply unable to embrace the (higher) reality, but the waking-consciousness can so embrace reality, and the energy or qualification of that embrace can be brought forth into the lower life (as qualification), but is necessarily constrained thereby (as its dimensionality is reduced).

Thus Patanjali describes the entire scope (and problem) of union (yoga). The many paths are resolved in the one Path. The challenge is made and the path (pattern) evoked. [Book I, Sutras 39-51]



## Section 6.722



### Sadhana Pada

- The second book of the *Yoga Sutras* is concerned with the practices of raja yoga.



## Sadhana Pada 1

While the first book deals with the objective of raja yoga, the second book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers raja yoga and its practices (the steps to union) (sadhana pada) (why one should practice yoga and how one should do so) (the instruments of yoga). The second book presents "the basic personality requirements, the hindrances which can then be noted by the earnest disciple, and the eight means of yoga or the eight kinds of activity which will bring about the needed results."

The three basic personality requirements are (1) fiery aspiration, spiritual reading, and (3) devotion to Ishvara. Fiery aspiration implies the overcoming and domination of the physical aspect of the personality, such that aspiration can proceed without (lower) impediment. It also implies overcoming one's basic karmic obligations, i.e, the overcoming of the circumstances of one's life and the reorientation of the personality toward the path. Spiritual reading and devotion to Ishvara imply the overcoming and domination of the emotional or astral aspect of the personality. Spiritual reading is the ability to see or perceive the reality of something, the subject rather than the object. Devotion to Ishvara is the reorientation of the personality from a self-centered perspective to a perspective in which the reality (and equivalence) of God, the soul, and the race as a whole is fully realized. This is achieved as the personality becomes responsive to the God within, lessening the sense (and practice) of separateness and separateness, seeing God within all lives and all forms.

The object of these three basic personality requirements is "to bring about soul vision and to eliminate obstructions" (hindrances) (distractions) that impede the student's progress along the Way. Soul vision refers to the "perception" of reality that transcends the senses (and distractions of the senses) of the personality. The impediments are all of one's own making, through karma, and must be dealt with and overcome (resolved). Collectively, the various impediments (self-inflicted conditioning (wrong ideas)) may be grouped as (1) avidya, (2) the sense of personality, (3) desire, (4) hate, and (5) the sense of attachment.

Avidya is ignorance, “the cause of all the other obstructions, whether they be latent, in process of elimination, overcome, or in full operation.” That ignorance is man’s condition, absorbed as he is in manifested existence. All evil, illusion, selfishness, etc. results from ignorance. Yet that ignorance is consequential (self-imposed) by virtue of man’s foray or pilgrimage into matter. And that ignorance must be progressively overcome if “man” is to achieve liberation (union with the God-self (soul)). “Avidya is the condition of confusing” reality with the unreal, of deluding oneself, however naturally, into perceiving the world of matter (transience) (self-centered existence) as real, thereby “suffering” the illusion of separation (exclusive individuality).

The pilgrimage into matter begins and ends in blindness. In the beginning (of self-consciousness in the lower sense) the individuality is blinded by immersion in matter. Though blind and deluded, the student must experience and develop through sense perception and form-attachment, and gradually evolve discrimination and discernment, ultimately overcoming even the processes of perception and achieving freedom from all attachments in the lower worlds. In the end, one is blind in the higher sense of being blinded by the (inner) light. In the beginning one is not even aware of light; in the end there is naught but that light. [Book II, Sutras 1-5]



Commentary No. 940

## Sadhana Pada 2

“The sense of personality is due to the identification of the knower with the instruments of knowledge.” Having been wholly immersed in matter through the involutionary stage, the human being emerges into (superficial) self-consciousness at the point of individualization, and becomes more and more identified with sense perceptions and their means. The entire personality is consciously or unconsciously identified with as what one is, where in fact, the entire personality and all of its faculties are merely an instrument of the higher self. That that higher self does not (cannot) make its presence felt to the lower self (until substantially later in the evolutionary process) only strengthens the delusion of independence.

This delusion is further compounded by emotional and intellectual attachments and aversions (e.g., through desire, liking and disliking, agreement and disagreement, criticism, judging, materialism, egoism, etc., all of which involve entanglement in the senses and the false identification with personality (the form life)). With sufficient evolution in consciousness, the spiritual student gradually rises above the forces of attraction and aversion and with balance (freedom) embraces the underlying (overshadowing) reality. The personality and its natural activities (proclivities) are inherently separative (as is any sense of personality). The union implied in and conveyed through raja yoga is a higher union of self with God, yet not something to be achieved (which is separative) but something to be realized (which is non-separative).

“Intense desire for sentient existence is attachment. This is inherent in every form, is self-perpetuating, and known even to the very wise.” Manifestation and all of its associated problems (delusion, ignorance, evil, etc.) are part of the evolutionary design. It begins with the urge to manifest, which is inherent in the highest macrocosmic life. That results in endless and progressive manifestation, through cycles within cycles of involution and evolution, through days and nights of activity and pralaya. In manifestation there is a degree of absorption (immersion) (blindness) (preoccupation with apparent (superficial) reality). That absorption is an intended and necessary experience, leading eventually to re-emergence into higher, less constrained existence. Thus evolution is a process of experience (delusion) leading to realization (emergence). Yet even on the highest levels there is the inherent urge to manifest, however subtle it may be. But with (higher) consciousness in manifestation, the student is aware of this conditioning and effectively able to transcend the limitations of manifested existence (experience and expression).

As one realizes the existence and nature of the five hindrances, one can then begin to deal with them. The first step is cultivation of the mental attitude (determination) to overcome. One then must progressively free oneself from the lower distractions (impediments) by cultivating the mind and properly applying that cultivated mind. Ultimately one must transcend the mind by cultivating its responsiveness to that which is higher-than-mind, but in the meantime one must rely on the mind to some extent. The external and lower internal conditioning of the physical body, the emotions, and ultimately the mind, must

be progressively undone and replaced by progressively more subtle (internal) conditioning of self-realization and non-attachment.

Through the meditation process (and spiritual practice), ignorance must be replaced by knowledge. Knowledge must be replaced by understanding. Understanding must be replaced by wisdom. The sense of self which is the not-self must be replaced by the non-sense of the self. [Book II, Sutras 6-II]

† Commentary No. 949

### Sadhana Pada 3

“Karma itself has its root in these five hindrances and must come to fruition in this life or in some later life.” The five hindrances (avidya, the sense of personality, desire, hate, and the sense of attachment), the life and circumstances of the incarnated person, and karma are effectively inseparable. The five hindrances provide (karmic) opportunity through entanglement and overcoming. One who is entangled in any one, some, or all of the five impediments creates karma which in turn determines his or her circumstances. As the hindrances are progressively overcome, the karmic balance is progressively restored, and the student is progressively liberated into unhindered realms (or is able to function unimpeded in hindered realms (though still in accord with the laws of that hindered realm)). In the lower sense, karma is binding, in the higher sense karma is liberating. In either case, karma contributes to the evolution of consciousness.

There are three kinds of karma (latent, active, and new), each of which provides roots or seeds that must eventually be fulfilled or balanced. That activity which is counter-evolutionary evokes a karmic response (negative feedback leading to restoration of balance (flow)). That activity which is evolutionary also evokes a karmic response (positive feedback which increases or sustains the evolutionary momentum). The purpose of “liberation” or “self-realization” is not to be free from karma, but to minimize karmic limitations. The person (personality) that is entangled in the five hindrances is relatively asleep, lacks real awareness, and lacks any real ability for self-determination. The person (not personality) that has overcome the five impediments has awakened to the higher consciousness

(and is therefore functioning as more than merely a personality), has subordinated itself to that greater life, and therefore moves freely through the patterns of life and consciousness in the two worlds (lower and higher). Such a person is unimpeded by pleasure or pain and flows with the (broader) evolutionary force.

Yet for those who are entangled, the natural consequences of their contrary (counter-evolutionary) activities involve pain in its various forms. One who achieves balance, i.e., who is without desire or attachments, naturally rises above pleasure and pain, and the otherwise merited (apparently or potentially painful) karmic consequences are thereby (naturally) muted. Thus "attitude" can effectively compensate for (past) errors, but only in the sense that lessons are actually learned (and adjustments in consciousness are actually achieved). The enlightened simply produce no ill effects. The "actions" of the enlightened are in-the-flow of evolutionary momentum and therefore evoke no hindering consequences.

But evolution is progressive and the field of action and consequence becomes more and more subtle. Once freed from the five hindrances one must still deal with more subtle illusions. As the sense of personality is overcome it is then possible to overcome the illusion "that the perceiver and that which is perceived are one and the same" (which implies that one becomes aware of the process of perception and is no longer deceived through false identification). "That which is perceived has three qualities, sattva (rhythm), rajas (mobility), and tamas (inertia)."

The student must understand (1) the nature of these three gunas or qualities, (2) his or her own nature, and (3) how one's own nature is related to the three gunas. In this process of self-realization the student progressively awakens to the greater reality. [Book II, Sutras 12-18]

## Sadhana Pada 4

“The divisions of the gunas (or qualities of matter) are fourfold: the specific, the non-specific, the indicated, and the untouchable.” The specific refers to form and manifested elements (five elements, five sense organs, five organs of action, and the mind) (i.e, sixteen means of perception and activity in the phenomenal world); the non-specific refers to force and the senses (i.e., that which is subjective and intangible) (six tanmatras); the indicated refers to primary substance (the cause of the sixteen and the six); and the untouchable refers to the totality of manifested and unmanifested existence (i.e., the cause of the indicated (the cause of the cause of the sixteen and the six)).

“The seer is pure knowledge (gnosis). Though pure, he looks upon the presented idea through the medium of the mind.” The seer is one who stands above (beyond) the lower self and beholds the lower world of illusion. Presented ideas are forms on the various levels. The seer is not deceived by appearances in the lower world, but recognizes the underlying forces (and context). The mind is the instrument for perception in the lower world, yet for the seer, the mind is refined and tempered such that it serves as an unimpeding and non-distorting instrument.

“All that is exists for the sake of the soul.” The soul refers to that which is above and beyond the lower self (personality) (ego), i.e., the logos in the context of manifested purpose. That which exists is (predominantly) the objective universe (illusion), created by and for those who are entangled therein, yet it exists only for those who are so entangled; for those who are (relatively) free, there is no such objective (substantial) universe. For those who are free, who have overcome the modifications of the mind, there is only spirit (energy) (higher consciousness). Those who are not yet liberated live in and sustain their own delusion. Those who are liberated are not so easily self-deceived nor do they continue to create the lesser world (instead they live in a world of more subtle delusion).

One of the essential (requisite) keys to liberation is discrimination. One naturally (ignorantly) associates oneself with apparent existence (the



phenomenal world) (body, feelings, thoughts), and learns through that process of association and entanglement, yet this must ultimately be overcome. Without humility and honesty and harmlessness (composite egolessness) one cannot discriminate sufficiently to achieve liberation. Progressively, experience leads to knowledge which leads to understanding which leads to wisdom (realization). With increasing effective (proper) discrimination one gradually overcomes the identification of oneself with that which is ephemeral (merely perceived). This occurs as the soul is brought into manifestation through the refined mind, as intuition displaces intellect, as selflessness replaces ego, as realization overcomes perception.

“When ignorance is brought to an end through non-association with the things perceived, this is the great liberation.” Proper discrimination between the real and the unreal leads to liberation. Seven major modifications of the thinking principle must be progressively experienced and eventually overcome. These are (1) desire for knowledge, (2) desire for freedom, (3) desire for happiness, (4) desire to do one’s duty, (5) sorrow [loneliness], (6) fear [subtle attachments of the mind], and (7) doubt [even more subtle attachments of the mind]. From duality the path leads to unity. Through the various endeavors of the lower self and the realization of the higher self, freedom is achieved. [Book II, Sutras 19-27]



Commentary No. 959

## Sadhana Pada 5

“When the means to yoga have been steadily practiced and when impurity has been overcome, enlightenment takes place leading up to full illumination.” These (the eight means and self-discipline (self-purification)) (spiritual practice) constitute the dharma of the spiritual student and lead to proper discrimination and discernment and in turn to full self-realization. The eight means of yoga are (1) the commandments, (2) the rules, (3) posture, (4) right control of the life-force, (5) abstraction, (6) attention, (7) meditation, and (8) contemplation. While the five commandments refer primarily to the outer life and the five rules refer primarily to the inner life, each outer (inner) aspect has an inner (outer) correspondence.

(1) The commandments (yama) (right conduct) include the practice of (a) harmlessness, (b) truth, (c) abstention from theft, (d) abstention from incontinence, and (e) abstention from avarice. These are a matter of “self-control or forbearance” and the role and place of the spiritual student in relation to “others and the outside world.” Harmlessness includes physical, emotional, and mental practice. The practice of truth (honesty to (with) all beings and to (with) oneself) is never preempted by harmlessness (nor should it ever be inconsistent with harmlessness). Abstention from theft refers to any wrong appropriation (physical or otherwise). Abstention from incontinence is desirelessness. Abstention from avarice is a higher (astral and concrete mental (covetousness)) counterpart to abstention from theft in the physical sense.

(2) The rules (niyama) (right observance) relate to self-governance and “form the basis of character” and include (a) internal and external purification, (b) contentment, (c) fiery aspiration, (d) spiritual reading, and (e) devotion. Purification includes refinement of the physical, etheric, astral (emotional), and concrete mental bodies (nature). Contentment refers to the poised (non-intrusive) mind, the equilibrated (tempered) (yet non-inertial, non-passive) mind that affords the student the opportunity to participate intelligently in the evolution of consciousness (without impediment of (the separative, independent, self-centered) mind (ego) (personality)).

Fiery aspiration does not refer to a particularly emotional state, but rather to the state of “higher enthusiasm” for the spiritual path, the practices of the path, etc. In other words, the path is embraced seriously and the rest of life in the lower worlds is placed in the context of the path. It implies confidence and commitment and determination to fulfill one’s dharma. Spiritual reading refers to the development and practice of spiritual sensitivity, of awareness of reality, of cause and effect relationships, becoming and remaining awake (free from mundane and/or personal absorption). Devotion refers to the relationship of the waking-consciousness to God, the soul (realization of the divinity within).

“When thoughts which are contrary to yoga are present there should be the cultivation of their opposite.” Thoughts are quite potent, for good or ill. Spiritual advancement requires a progressive qualification and transformation of the thinking process. The first step is positive (honest and constructive) thinking to help build the student’s momentum upon the path (and conversely,



the elimination of negative (less than honest and/or destructive) thinking). What a person thinks (and feels) is a reflection of that person's character. The spiritual student needs to become disentangled from thoughts leading to form-entanglement (which (disentanglement) does not preclude intelligent form-building). [Book II, Sutras 28-33]



Commentary No. 960

## Sadhana Pada 6

The first step (in cultivating the higher mind) involves active thinking and includes utilization of the constructive imagination. Many (ordinary, habitual) thoughts are contrary to yoga and should be overcome by cultivation of their opposites. Eventually, one rises above the whole arena of pairs-of-opposites (to non-thinking) but until then the student should proceed with positive thinking (rather than suppression of negative thinking). All of the commandments and rules contribute to the value system of the student. The student's thoughts should reflect and focus upon and express those values. Improper (spiritually impertinent) thoughts are counter-evolutionary. Proper thoughts are evolutionary. Thinking produces effects appropriate to the character, quality, and intention of the thinker (i.e., his or her thoughts).

Along with proper thinking (and feeling), harmlessness and truthfulness constitute a crucial three-dimensional approach to the (practices of the) path. Each (harmless and truthfulness) (and their effect on thinking and feeling and behavior) contributes to improvement of the immediate synergistic atmosphere and affects anyone who enters into or passes through that atmosphere. Only when one is living in harmony and balance (truth) with all of life can the student truly begin to appreciate reality. Until that time, all of the actions (feelings) (thoughts) that are other-than-harmless or other-than-truthful (or contrary to yoga) tend to cloud the student's perception and inhibit realization.

When the student has achieved purity, desirelessness (abstention from theft) (desires and takes nothing for himself (herself)), and continence, the student then participates in the flow of energy such that whatever is needed for the work (dharma) (the path) (service) is readily available (limited only by the karmic bounds of circumstances) [the enlightened student is always in the right place at

the right time with the right demeanor (wisdom) and available energies]. The enlightened (non-egoistic) student is thereby not distracted by attachment to form (his or her own or others), emotional (personal) entanglements, or opinions (concrete mental attachments). The student is then free to work through form (physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels) in contributing to (participating in) the work of the path (evolution in (non-individual) consciousness).

Through purification (and adherence to truth) comes clear perception (knowledge, understanding, and wisdom). "Spiritual reading results in contact with the soul (divinity within)." Spiritual reading (progressively proper sensitivity) is consequential, and follows from the other commandments and rules (spiritual practice) [in fact, while some are prerequisites for others, most contribute synergistically and simultaneously to the whole such that self-realization is achieved only when sufficient "quality" is achieved in all areas].

(3) Posture (asana) (right poise) refers to the physical, emotional, and mental demeanor of the student. This practice does not require specific (literal) physical postures, but requires a certain quality (poise) and attitude on all levels of one's personality expression. "The posture assumed must be steady and easy." "Steadiness and ease of posture is to be achieved through persistent slight effort and through the concentration of the mind upon the infinite (reality)." The student should achieve and maintain spiritual poise (qualified balance of physical, emotional, and mental natures) (balance of one's lower (personality) nature with the higher self, external world, etc.), easily and naturally (almost effortlessly). [Book II, Sutras 34-48]

## Sadhana Pada 7

(4) Right-control of the life-force (pranayama) implies proper qualification of the breathing process (physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels). It implies equilibrium in the context of the karmic flow, i.e., in responding intelligently (non-actively and non-passively) to karmic consequences (circumstances, external and internal forces). It implies conservation of forces and their proper utilization and application (internally and externally) (and taking responsibility for same (effects)). Breathing is as much or more an etheric process than a dense physical process. Even on astral levels, that-which-corresponds-to-prana is inspired and expired through the astral (emotional) body as the student relates to conditions in the astral environment (however consciously or otherwise).

One's astral state can affect others (thus one should be properly cultivated emotionally) and others' emotional activities can affect oneself if the astral body is allowed to function more or less passively (or if the astral body is sufficiently coarse) (thus one should keep the entire astral nature in balance (cultivated, purified, non-passive)). And to some extent there is a concrete mental analog to prana and that-which-corresponds-to-prana on the astral plane. The energy relationship(s) of the student is, after all, what the student really is.

"Quiescence, or the attitude of positive receptivity to the higher inspiration and downflow" of the life and energy of the higher self is a necessary prerequisite for self-realization (which is, in some sense, merely the removal of that which obscures). Absorption in the emotional (mundane) (personal) life (of sense impressions) simply obscures the mind and inhibits or prevents it from perceiving that-which-is-real.

(5) Abstraction (pratyahara) (right withdrawal) implies withdrawal from the state of entanglement in sense perception (personality-centeredness), particularly in the etheric and astral (emotional) sense. This is dealt with throughout the Sutras and in a number of different ways (perspectives), all of which contribute to liberation (service). One must understand that one is entangled; one must then understand the phenomenon of entanglement; only then can one proceed to become disentangled. The process of disentanglement

is facilitated as a result of progress in all other areas (harmlessness, truthfulness, etc.).

(6) Attention (dharana) (concentration) relates to the training and proper focusing of the mind. This concerns the phenomenon of entanglement on the more subtle (than sense perception per se), concrete mental levels. It is related to abstraction in the sense that it involves the entanglement of the mind with the senses, but as some progress is achieved in abstraction (emotional disentanglement) one must also deal with the mind's entanglement. Of course the mind is utilized in emotional abstraction, but the mind cannot abstract itself. Mental abstraction requires the (spiritual) intuition (buddhi). Attention is the beginning (and prelude to) meditation, but neither dharana nor dhyana can be achieved effectively without considerable preliminary progress (personality refinement, right conduct, proper attitude, etc.).

(7) Meditation (dhyana) relates to the linking of the higher and lower minds, the evocation of higher energies (qualification) onto lower levels (and is dealt with more properly in Book III). (8) Contemplation (samadhi) relates to the linking of the refined mind with the soul resulting in self-realization (full illumination) (and is likewise dealt with more properly in Book III). [Book II, Sutras 49-55]



## Section 6.723



### Vibhuti Pada

- The third book of the *Yoga Sutras* is concerned with the powers and attainments of raja yoga.

## Vibhuti Pada 1

The third book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers raja yoga and its powers (union achieved and its results) (vibhuti pada) (internal practice) (the attainments of yoga). This concerns the self-control of one's mind, by un-doing the mind's conditioning, by intelligently inhibiting (not suppressing) the mind's independent nature, and by unfolding and qualifying the mind through higher perspective.

Concentration (dharana) is (the cultivation of) the ability to hold the mind steadily upon some object (subject). This is the first step in the training of the mind and bringing the mind into the disciplined (poised) (non-reactive), externally and internally unconditioned state. None of the steps are easy, but the first step is relatively more difficult due to the entanglement of the mind in the sense-perception process. The mind tends to be absorbed in the senses and the mind tends to be attached to various objects of the senses. Through concentration one becomes less attached (more detached) and less reactive (and ultimately more responsive to higher qualification). "Objects upon which to concentrate are of four kinds, progressively --external objects, internal objects, qualities, and underlying mental concepts." Through progressive stages of concentration one gradually turns the attention from the external world (where the mind is entangled in sense-perception) to the internal world, without being self-absorbed in the lower sense. The mind that is poised, undistracted by the senses and the desire nature, is a mind that is responsive to higher direction.

Meditation (dhyana) is not merely the extension in time of concentration but the evocation of some higher quality that gradually transforms the concentrated state into a state of spiritual poise or repose. This begins with "seed" meditation (which is really just a higher form of concentration) and leads to "seedless" meditation or meditation proper. In meditation proper there is an almost complete transformation of the sense-perception process in which one is not at all distracted by the senses yet one remains able to sense what needs to be sensed. But that "sense" is secondary and peripheral (where in the normal waking-conscious that sense is primary, central to the waking-consciousness, and almost overwhelming).

Contemplation (in the sense of concentration-meditation-contemplation) (samadhi) is a state in which one “is unaware of separateness or of the personal self.” This is not an intellectual appreciation or understanding of the reality of non-separateness but a true realization in which one is no longer aware of separation. When one returns to a lower state (waking-consciousness, concentration, or meditation) one carries the sense of that higher reality (until one becomes re-absorbed in the senses (personality consciousness)). But in true contemplation there is no sense of separate individuality (there is yet a sense of non-separate individuality, but it is secondary and peripheral). In contemplation there is “no awareness of brain consciousness (physical plane apprehensions as to time and space), no awareness of emotional experience or expression, and no awareness of mental activities or modifications of the mind.” In effect, in true contemplation the physical, emotional, and mental nature is wholly qualified or conditioned (in repose) by the contemplative self (soul).

In higher meditation (contemplation) the lower self (false independence) is wholly subdued and responsive to the higher or real self, and the awareness is focused on that higher (non-physical, non-emotional, non-mental) reality (oneness). [Book III, Sutras 1-3]

† Commentary No. 980

## Vibhuti Pada 2

“When concentration, meditation, and contemplation form one sequential act, then is sanyama achieved.” This implies “that one is absorbed in the higher (soul) consciousness, that one is liberated from the three worlds of sense perception [physical, emotional, and mental], that one has realized oneness, and that one is illumined by that higher rapport.” Sanyama implies a mental self-control that transcends the ego or lower self and (in a sense) everything associated with personality-centeredness.

One may think of it as the result of development or evolution in consciousness brought about through progressive concentration-meditation-contemplation, but it also implies and requires a complete transformation of the personality self (physical, emotional, and mental nature) such that one is viewed as being



“reborn” or “born-again” (in the higher sense of actually achieving spiritual consciousness) (and not (merely) the common superficial and emotional (religious) experience).

“As a result of sanyama comes the shining forth of the light.” Sanyama evokes realization (or vice versa). Sanyama evokes the spiritual intuition or higher senses. Sanyama evokes or conveys the ability to discern (discriminate) between the unreal and the real (between superficial and real values). The nature of the higher self is light-love-power. All three dimensions are conveyed through sanyama, but the more obvious of the three is light (enlightenment) [love is more of an overall qualification and power in this sense is rather subtle]. The power of light leads to “illumination of perception, lucidity of consciousness, the shining forth of insight, and the illumining of the intellect.” Here the intellect refers to that intellect so qualified by higher energy that it does not function independently but functions wholly responsively to the higher self (the normal intellect (of even the mentally-polarized) tends to be separative and independent (egoistic and self-defensive)).

“This illumination is gradual; it is developed stage by stage.” This is the evolution of consciousness. There are no short cuts or easy paths to self-mastery or self-realization. Many lifetimes may be required. The whole of yoga (properly) leads the aspirant through various preparatory stages to various intermediate stages. The “advanced” stage cannot be achieved; it can only be realized in the activity of non-activity (the feeling of non-feeling) (and the thinking of non-thinking). In the early stages one must realize the differences between things and be able to discriminate between higher and lower aspects of things. Eventually “unity is known and even duality is seen to be limitation.”

“The sequence of mental states is as follows: the mind reacts to that which is seen; then follows the moment of mind control. Then ensues a moment wherein the chitta (mind stuff) responds to both these factors. Finally these pass away, and the perceiving consciousness has full sway.” Or ... “Out of the ascending degrees is the development of control. First there is the overcoming of the mind-impress of excitation. Then comes the manifestation of the mind-impress of control. Then the perceiving consciousness follows after the moment of control. This is the development of control.” Initially one naturally struggles with the inherent (conditioned) tendencies of the mind. Gradually one exercises more



and more control (one becomes less and less reactive), without suppressing the mind but by undoing its lower conditioning and “training” the mind to be naturally poised (and thereby to be responsive to higher impression). [Book III, Sutras 4-9]

† Commentary No. 989

### Vibhuti Pada 3

“Through the cultivation of this habit of mind there will eventuate a steadiness of spiritual perception.” The stabilization of the mind is crucial to effective spiritual perception. Unless the mind is quiet (non-passively quiescent (clear and responsive)), any (spiritual) perception will be distorted or impeded. Through spiritual discipline, the state of the quiet mind is achieved and one has therefore achieved “mind control” or self-control of the mind. This quiet mind is a necessary (but not sufficient) precursor to soul infusion, or the down-flow of the consciousness (qualification) of the soul or higher self.

“The establishing of this habit, and the restraining of the mind from its thought-form-making tendency, results eventually in the constant power to contemplate.” Restraint cannot effectively be imposed. It must be achieved through qualification such that the independent tendencies of the mind (e.g., thought-form-making) are naturally inhibited. Since this generally occurs coincidentally with the evocation of spiritual quality in consciousness, the resulting consciousness facilitates contemplation. The properly realized spiritual student is in a more-or-less-constant state of meditation (non-thinking contemplation), even though he or she is also able to interact consciously and intelligently with internal and external opportunities (experience). In other words, while participating (incidentally) in worldly activities, the student remains contemplative and therefore does not become absorbed in mundane, personal, or worldly matters, and in principle does not lose the higher continuity and quality of consciousness.

Thus there are (at least) two levels or activities implied by the quiet mind: the one-pointedness of spiritual focus in inner activity ((proper) meditation) and the one-pointedness of spiritual focus in outer activity (i.e., living the spiritual life). In neither case is this the one-pointedness of absorption in concentrated

(exclusive) consciousness (which is a much more preliminary stage). In both levels, spiritual perception is clear and revealing, although the spiritual focus in outer activity is naturally more difficult to achieve and sustain.

But what is meant by spiritual perception? It is seeing “things” as they are, not as the mind or personality supposes they are. It is a conscious (intuitive, non-thinking) realization of the character and (acquired, manifesting, and/or latent) characteristics of any spiritually perceived object or subject. It is a realization of the substance and significance of what is perceived. It is a realization of the symbolic nature of which the outer form or notion is merely representative. In the delusion of the senses, one perceives external objects as reality. With higher consciousness, one perceives the higher, symbolic reality of external objects. With yet higher consciousness, one perceives beyond the symbolic nature to the actuality. “A symbol is an embodied idea, the working out in objective existence of some life.” The reality is that life, not the symbol itself, and not the external appearance of the symbol.

The process of realization in consciousness, subsequent to the quiet mind and properly qualified consciousness, is a matter of soul-assisted unveiling (of itself and of all that falls within the realm of manifestation on whatever level of consciousness is embraced). “In time and space all characteristics have relative values.” Reality is embraced as the whole is realized and the delusion of time and space is overcome. [Book III, Sutras 10-14]



## Vibhuti Pada 4

True meditation is only possible when the various factors which inhibit meditation have been overcome. As one achieves sufficient refinement of the physical, emotional, and mental nature, as one embraces more spiritual quality, and as one tempers the ego (mind) (personality), then true meditation becomes possible. Once true meditation has been achieved, then “results” (knowledge, understanding, wisdom (realization)) are evoked through meditation.

Through true meditation, the intuition reveals the character, sound (tone), characteristics, and underlying nature of the object and its context (relationships). The key to realization is recognition of the underlying sound (soul aspect), for it is this sound (soul) that is the common or unifying aspect of all of manifested life. “Normal” psychic faculties rely on the third aspect (matter), while true meditation (spiritual intuition) evokes the second aspect (consciousness).

“Knowledge of previous incarnations becomes available when the power to see thought-images is acquired.” True meditation conveys insight regarding thought-forms and various causal chains, including the nature and quality of previous lives. Details are generally not significant, although they can be evoked as needed. For the most part, it is the consciousness (quality) (causal (karmic) factors) of previous experience (and its significance to the current life (work)) that is (are) relevant and therefore of interest. At this level of consciousness (true meditation) (intuitive realization) there is no curiosity and no personal (intrusive) energy. There is simply insight. And that insight comes unbidden by deliberation (desire) [in fact, deliberation (desire) inhibits true realization]. With other-than-true-meditative realization, images and impressions from previous lives are generally distorted and of little value as one cannot (at that level) properly discern truth from imagination.

The properly trained and qualified seer can accurately and effectively read and interpret the akashic (historical) records (memory of nature) of all that has (ever) transpired, but the less-than-properly trained (and unqualified) seer can only glimpse (partially) the akashic records and has no substantive basis for

interpretation or understanding. The properly trained and qualified spiritual (esoteric) student will intuitively recognize anyone with whom he or she is historically or karmically linked (the untrained and unqualified may also experience some similar “impressions” but without understanding the context). In other words, the properly trained and qualified student sees clearly, while the untrained and unqualified become englamoured and tend to distort whatever impressions are realized.

“Through concentrated meditation, the thought images in the minds of other people become apparent.” This does not mean that the trained and qualified seer invades the mental and emotional privacy of others. It is (properly) a matter of intuitive (and telepathic) realization, and not a matter of intrusion or imposition. It may occur through an act of will (attention) in the context of understanding causal factors (quality of consciousness) and the dharma of the observer. It may (more generally) occur unbidden through an act of sympathetic telepathy. It does not (generally) involve specific (verbalized) thoughts or feelings, but it does (generally) involve the character, quality, and intention of the respective thoughts and feelings. In the basic sense, the thoughts and feelings are realized. In the advanced sense, the object(s) of thoughts and feelings is (are) also realized, as that is more relevant. It is the context (character and intention) that truly matters. [Book III, Sutras 15-20]

† Commentary No. 999

## Vibhuti Pada 5

“By concentrated meditation upon the distinction between form and body, those properties of the body which make it visible to the human eye are negated (or withdrawn) and the yogi can render himself invisible.” The significance of this notion is essentially that visibility is conveyed by the delusion of the senses [thus invisibility can be evoked by overcoming the delusory properties of matter as they affect perception]. It does not imply that one should seek the ability to render oneself invisible (nor does it imply any great significance to the state of invisibility). The “talent” comes naturally from spiritual development (higher realization) and is not sought by the enlightened or self-realized student. Those who seek such powers are operating at a much lower level, and even if one is

successful in achieving some imitation of these powers (through occult techniques), there is no implied spirituality.

A much more practical result of true meditation is the conscious realization of karmic factors. Every act on physical, emotional, and mental levels evokes karmic consequences, either immediately or subsequently (previously). The enlightened yogi (spiritual student who has achieved self-realization) is able to "read" much of his or her own karmic factors and is thereby better able to work effectively in the lower worlds (fulfilling karma, fulfilling dharma). Thus the yogi perceives experience and expression in terms of actions and consequences, causes and effects, and is able to place much if not all of experience and expression in the proper evolutionary (and broad, impersonal) context. The yogi is thus balanced (in equilibrium with karma and the evolutionary force).

"Union with others is to be gained through one-pointed meditation upon the three states of feeling --compassion, tenderness, and dispassion." The self-realized person is en rapport with the soul of all. The self-realized person has passed beyond selfishness, self-centeredness, self-indulgence, self-absorption, etc., and lives for the sake of others. Thus the self-realized person enjoys a sympathetic relationship with all lives. Having achieved union with the overshadowing and underlying soul or higher self, the self-realized person has also (necessarily) achieved such union with the soul of all. The truly self-realized person lives, simultaneously, through all lives.

The self-realized person has whatever power is needed in the lower worlds and is tempered only by the (necessary) sense of propriety (law) (dharma). The self-realized person is not limited by physical, emotional, or concrete mental factors. "Perfectly concentrated meditation upon the awakened light will produce the consciousness of that which is subtle, hidden, or remote." The yogi works from the central point of light (which is produced "through the subjugation of the lower nature, through the practice of love (service to humanity), through an understanding of meditation, and through perfectly concentrated meditation in the head." The development and unfoldment of the "head" nature builds upon the essential (necessary) (pre-requisitional) heart development. One may develop the head-centered nature to some extent without the heart, and vice versa, but the higher stages of the path are only available to those who have

achieved substantial balance between the head-centered and heart-centered natures. Then, and only then, can the “higher” head-centered nature unfold.

Through concentrated meditation on the sun and moon, will come a conscious realization of the world of manifestation of the soul (consciousness) and the world of matter (form), respectively. [Book III, Sutras 21-27]

† Commentary No. 1000

## Vibhuti Pada 6

Through concentrated meditation on the heavens will come a conscious realization of astrological factors in manifestation. With intuitive realization comes understanding of the various qualifying forces and the opportunities that they represent. While the self-realized person has transcended mundane astrological factors, humanity as a whole has not, and therefore consideration is given to the factors which condition and qualify humanity as a whole, through the various cycles of manifestation.

Through concentrated meditation on the various centers within the human form will come a conscious understanding of the physical, emotional, and mental (personality) (form) nature, particularly with regard to intermediate causal forces. Through that understanding comes (earned) freedom from the limitations of the personality. The lower nature is overcome, the ego is tempered, and equilibrium is achieved.

“Those who have attained self-mastery can be seen and contacted through focusing the light in the head. This power is developed in one-pointed meditation.” The light can be focused externally or internally, at will. As it is turned within, one is placed in contact, qualitatively, with all who have achieved self-mastery. Since one must have achieved a high degree of qualification oneself, there is no intrusion or distraction involved in such contact. Only one who is approaching their level can even perceive the masters as they are. There is simply a sharing of “energy” involved when one is working at those (soul) levels. The significance in this process is not that the masters



can be contacted, but that the light (love-wisdom) of the soul can be evoked and then shared through the life of the esoteric student.

“All things can be known in the vivid light of the intuition.” The enlightened are not curious. They are simply self-realized. Whatever is needed (knowledge, understanding, wisdom) is simply evoked. The light of the (spiritual) intuition conveys discrimination and discernment. The dispassion of illumination allows knowledge, understanding, and wisdom to be evoked and applied non-willfully (non-actively) and non-passively. The enlightened do not “do” anything, nor are they encumbered by the belief that they are “doing” anything. The enlightened simply fulfill their dharma. They have passed beyond the having and doing stages to the being stage. And yet they continue to serve, even more effectively, through being. But the keys are always quality of consciousness and the stability (equilibrium) (quiescence) of the mind.

“Understanding of the mind-consciousness comes from one-pointed meditation upon the heart center.” The love-wisdom aspect arises from the heart, not from the head. The great potency of the heart can (must) be evoked in the process of tempering the ego and stabilizing the mind. As one understands the mind, one neutralizes its power of independence. Then one can begin to overcome the various illusions, glammers, and maya associated with manifestation and life in the lower worlds (realm of pairs of opposites). As one transcends the various pairs of opposites, one realizes one’s spiritual nature (where previously it is a belief, subsequently it is a realization). In realization of one’s spiritual nature are evoked the various higher senses and powers of the soul or higher self (natural, uncontrived, intuitive knowledge, understanding, and wisdom).

“These powers are obstacles to the highest spiritual realization, but serve as magical powers in the objective worlds.” One must not only transcend the delusion of the lower senses but also, eventually, even the higher senses. [Book III, Sutras 28-37]

## Vibhuti Pada 7

Liberation is achieved as the student fully realizes that energy follows thought. By qualifying and focusing the mind, consciously and deliberately, as needed, the student achieves freedom from the various emotional attachments and entanglements. And by tempering the mind's tendency to focus itself (i.e., to pursue its own interests), the student achieves freedom from the various attachments and entanglements (and separateness) of the mind. The key to achieving the quiet mind is always holding the mind at a point of (occult) tension.

As prana (upana) is properly controlled, one's entire nature can be tempered. Liberation includes freedom from absorption in physical life (maya), freedom from the astral or emotional life (desires, distractions, entanglements, glimmers), and freedom from kama-manas (the desire mind) (combination and interaction of the desire nature and the concrete mental nature). As these freedoms are gained, the power of ascension is realized. As prana (samana) is subjugated, the radiant life emerges. The irradiation of the lower self (personality) (mind) (heart) by the higher self comes as the head-centered nature and the heart-centered nature are refined and balanced through effective use of upana and samana, respectively. "By the means of one-pointed meditation upon the relationship between the akasha and sound, spiritual hearing unfolds." Sound manifests on all levels of consciousness but in different forms and in different ways. The voice (sound) of the silence is the "still small voice of the Christ (God-self) within."

"By the means on one-pointed meditation upon the relationship existing between the body and akasha, ascension out of matter is achieved." The state of illumination follows the overcoming of "that which veils the light." Although the various bodies (physical, emotional, and concrete mental) facilitate experience and expression, they inhibit realization. As the inhibiting tendencies of matter (form) (the body) are transcended, the light of the soul or higher self irradiates the personality or lower self. The personality (mind) (ego) is destroyed as an independent and inhibiting entity, yet continues to facilitate the



higher expression (more correctly, the ego is destroyed while the mind and personality are tempered).

“One-pointed meditation upon the five forms which every element takes, produces mastery over every element. These five forms are the gross nature, the elemental form (character), the quality (subtlety), the pervasiveness (inherence) (concomitance) (the three gunas (tamas, rajas, sattva) (inertia, activity, rhythm)) and the basic purpose (usefulness).” Magical work is facilitated as the occult student understands the nature of matter and consciousness and the various relationships (forces) (powers). Knowledge leads to some power over matter. Understanding leads to greater power over matter and some discretion in working with matter. Wisdom leads to real power and complete discretion. The black (lower-self-centered) magician draws (appropriates) power from the lower nature (matter). The white (non-lower-self-centered) magician draws (evokes) power from the higher nature (soul consciousness) and works with the power of the lower nature.

“Through this mastery, various powers are attained.” Through refinement and spiritual discipline comes some realization. Through that realization comes “complete subjugation of the lower nature and control of the senses.” Through that subjugation comes greater realization and the (subtle) manifestation of the higher powers (wisdom). [Book III, Sutras 38-45]

† Commentary No. 1010

## Vibhuti Pada 8

Bodily perfection is (properly) the perfection of the etheric body of which the dense physical body is merely an outer covering. The etheric body must be balanced in a number of ways in order to facilitate higher consciousness. As the etheric body is qualified and balanced, as the astral or emotional nature is refined and balanced, and as the concrete mind is refined and balanced, the whole personality or lower self can be integrated. Then and only then can that lower self be aligned properly with the higher self.

“Mastery over the senses is brought about through concentrated meditation upon their nature, peculiar attributes, egoism, pervasiveness, and useful purpose.” Once one has dealt effectively with the illusions of the objective nature, one must then deal effectively with the illusions and glammers of the subjective nature, which are more subtle. The whole of the sutras deal with this notion, building upon one realization after another through understanding and tempering the senses and the mind until one transcends them altogether. Then one achieves direct (spiritual) perception (intuition), that is, perception independent of the sense organs and independent of the emotional and concrete mental interpretation of sense impressions.

“The man who can discriminate between the lower self and the higher self achieves supremacy over all conditions and becomes omniscient.” This discrimination between the personality (lower self of physical, emotional, and concrete mental nature) and the soul (higher self or upper triad of atma-buddhi-manas) is a necessary and major step in disentanglement and subsequent realization (ascension). The process of unfolding discernment is long and difficult, filled with self-deceptions as the mind masquerades as the higher self, but eventually, with sufficient refinement (impersonality) one learns to discriminate and the hold (impediment) of the lower self is loosened and overcome. Ultimately one becomes omnipresent as the unity of all life is realized, omniscient as a rapport with all life and consciousness is achieved, and omnipotent as alignment with the God-head is evoked. Those who wish to become omnipresent, omniscient, and/or omnipotent are prevented by that wish. Success comes not through seeking, but through non-seeking. Success comes not through “doing” but through being (passion-less-ness).

Proper spiritual realization includes unresponsiveness to allurements. Only through desirelessness can one ascend beyond the world of desire. For as long as one has desires or goals or expectations one will remain at that (relatively low) level. Intuitive knowledge (understanding) (wisdom) and associated discrimination follows from desirelessness. But spiritual desirelessness is not a passive state by any means. It is an active (yet non-having and non-doing) state of spiritual concentration (focus), spiritual meditation (contemplation), and spiritual service. The spiritual intuition unfolds as the whole is embraced, and is inhibited or limited by any separative perspective. One learns to distinguish without separateness, to recognize distinctions (within the real

and within the unreal (and between the real and the unreal)) without embracing duality. Past, present, and future are one.

“When the objective forms and the soul have reached a condition of equal purity, then is at-one-ment achieved and liberation results.” To some, liberation implies an end to the cycle of rebirths. More properly liberation conveys a fulfillment of karma such that rebirth is not obligatory. The very act of seeking to avoid rebirth is preventative of liberation. In liberation one proceeds entirely according to dharma. [Book III, Sutras 47-55]



## Section 6.724



### Kaivalya Pada

- The fourth book of the *Yoga Sutras* is concerned with liberation, the fulfillment of yoga.

## Kaivalya Pada 1

The fourth and concluding book or section of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras considers liberation (illumination) (kaivalya pada) (the fulfillment of yoga). This is the culmination of raja yoga, the evocation of the "presence" of the soul or higher self in the consciousness of the lower self or personality and conscious union with the God within.

The powers and results of raja yoga include the lower (fallible) psychic powers (siddhis) as needed and, more properly, the higher spiritual powers (siddhis) (which are relatively infallible (tempered by wisdom)). The lower powers can be evoked artificially (e.g., through drugs and various (lower) occult practices) but have little value without proper training and quality of consciousness. The higher powers cannot be evoked artificially, but can be evoked only as a consequence of spiritual practice (higher occult practices), spiritual unfoldment, and spiritual realization. The use of artificial means simply precludes any higher development and realization. For example, drugs merely remove certain protective barriers on astral and concrete mental levels such that the "user" suffers lack of control, inability to discern the real from the unreal, etc. The proper use of mantras and other techniques are more effective (less artificial), particularly when accompanied by genuine spiritual practice (refinement of the lower nature). But only selfless aspiration and proper meditation evoke the higher powers. Lower powers and anything obtained artificially come from the form aspect (matter), while the higher powers come from the aspect of (spiritual group) consciousness. While the unqualified seeker looks for power and is self-centered in perspective, the true aspirant seeks understanding and wisdom and is non-self-centered in perspective.

"The transfer of the consciousness from a lower vehicle into a higher is part of the great creative and evolutionary process." Involution proceeds as the primitive consciousness descends into matter (the lower planes). Evolution proceeds as that consciousness ascends, sub-plane by sub-plane and plane by plane. The human being evolves as the consciousness is transferred (over many lives) from the physical plane (physical polarization of consciousness) to the astral or emotional plane (emotional polarization of consciousness) to the

concrete mental plane (mental polarization of consciousness) and beyond to the intuitive (and higher) levels of the soul.

Thus evolution involves experience, the assimilation of experience, and the transformation (consequential elevation) of one's consciousness. This can occur gradually (over many, many lives), through ordinary experience and the overall momentum of the evolutionary impulse. Or it can occur more rapidly (over relatively few lives) as the student consciously and deliberately cooperates with the evolutionary force, i.e., in accordance with Patanjali's methods of raja yoga or some comparable system (ultimately the practices and rules are the same for all (proper) paths).

"The practices and methods are not the true cause of the transfer of consciousness, but they serve to remove obstacles." All of spiritual practice (yoga) is preparatory and preliminary. The real work is simply afforded and facilitated by these (necessary) practices. Without a foundation upon which to build, there is no spiritual progress. There are no short cuts or easy paths (except to delusion). The soul or higher self creates the personality (matrix) for experience and expression, then assimilates that experience. As long as the perspective of the waking consciousness is externally oriented, the "student" will be entangled in the senses. [Book IV, Sutras 1-4]

† Commentary No. 1020

## Kaivalya Pada 2

As the perspective or focus of the waking consciousness is properly and internally oriented (without losing awareness of external factors), then the unity of consciousness can be realized. That unity produces the many and various forms, for experience and expression, but the student must ultimately overcome the delusion of independent (egoistic) existence and consciously collaborate with the higher self (losing one's lower (separative) perspective as it is assimilated into the higher).

"Among the forms which consciousness assumes, only that which is the result of meditation is free from latent karma." As Bailey suggests ... "Forms are the

result of desire and the result of an outward-going urge or tendency.

Meditation is the result of an inward-turning tendency, of the capacity to abstract the consciousness from form substance and to center it within itself." Thus, in pure meditation (meditative life), the serious student fulfills dharma and is not entangled in the senses, or in karma. The student is still subject to karmic law, but living a meditative life (in desirelessness), serving according to dharma, one simply does not get entangled in the lower world.

"The activities of the liberated soul are free from the pairs of opposites." The enlightened personality, aligned with the soul or higher self, is not encumbered by duality, for the focus of consciousness is broader and deeper such that underlying reality (unity) is embraced. There are three (four) kinds of karma. (1) There is black karma, associated with gross materialism (egoism), great ignorance, and the physical plane. (2) There is black-white (grey) karma, subject to the various pairs of opposites, associated with the ordinary life of action (desire) and consequence, and the emotional plane. (3) There is white karma, associated with the spiritual path of the aspirant and disciple, and the mental plane. (4) And there is a (very subtle) karma that is neither black nor white, in which there is no bondage "to the form side of manifestation" (which is only applicable to those who have fulfilled the goals of human evolution).

Each of the first three kinds of karma produces forms (consequences) appropriate to the fulfillment of (that) karma. The purpose of karma is equilibrium in the context of the evolutionary force. As actions are undertaken, karma is produced in order to guide the student in the direction of the evolutionary flow. For every action on physical, emotional, and concrete mental levels, there are consequences. The collective consequences constitute the circumstances of life in the lower worlds. The memory of nature is such that all is eventually balanced, "even when separated by species, time, and space." The causal chain is essentially endless. "Desire to live being eternal, these mind-created forms are without known beginning." One cannot escape the past or the present (or the future), but one can transcend the domain of karma through ascension (transcending the mind which produces forms).

"These forms, being created and held together through desire, the basic cause, personality, the effective result, mental vitality, or the will to live, and the support of the outward-going life or object, when these cease to attract, then the



forms cease likewise to be." All of our circumstances in the lower worlds (and our very existence or manifestation) are consequences. The ultimate consequence is that of transmutation of activity onto levels beyond the lower world. Wherever there is (the delusion of) independent activity, there is a causal chain and bondage. When one transcends and transforms the lower self (ego) (mind) (personality), then all subsequent "action" is a matter of dharma and not karma. [Book IV, Sutras 5-II]

† Commentary No. 1023

### Kaivalya Pada 3

"The past and the present exist in reality. The form assumed in the time concept of the present is the result of developed characteristics, and holds latent seeds of future quality." This is true, from the pragmatic perspective of the student in time and space, and from the perspective of the apparent processes and relationships of causes and effects. From a higher perspective, the continuity of past, present, and future is fully integrated. "The characteristics, whether latent or potent, partake of the nature of the three gunas (the three qualities of matter)." All characteristics of forms are merely qualities. The human being is embedded in form and lives in the world of forms and is subject to the tendencies of form. Understanding this is essential to transcending the (physical and psychological) tendencies of form.

"The manifestation of the objective form is due to the one-pointedness of the effect-producing cause (the unification of the modification of the mind stuff)." While the soul or higher self remains above and beyond the levels of personality, the focus of the (group) soul is such that manifestation is evoked. The group soul identifies (in the abstract mental sense) initially with the force of involution and subsequently (gradually yet increasingly) with the force of evolution. At the personality level, there is entanglement in experience and expression (the karmic field). At the soul level there is identification with the force of evolution.

Matter, form, and consciousness, while distinct, are all closely related. Matter is evolving on its level. Forms are artificial. Consciousness is evolving on its level, through the appropriation and utilization of forms. Yet, matter is a form



of consciousness. It is a matter of perspective. What really matters is for the student to not identify with matter or with the form, but with consciousness. As the student progresses, that identification is raised to the higher consciousness and the ego (which is the inertial or "form" component of (lower) consciousness) is transcended.

"The many modifications of the one mind produce the diverse forms, which depend for existence upon those many mind impulses." A distinction must be drawn between the universal context and the particular, and between the particular in the sense of experience and expression and in the sense of entanglement and transcendence. It is natural and necessary that people are "involved" in the creative aspects of kama-manas, at least during the "having" and "doing" phases of human evolution. But when the soul begins to withdraw from the lower worlds, as evolution proceeds beyond experience and expression in the lower worlds, one must transcend identification with matter, one must transcend entanglement in the senses, one must transcend the desire nature, and one must transcend the will of the lower self (personality) (ego) (mind). One must transcend the modifications of the mind, such that all of the focus becomes qualified by the higher nature, so that "action" is egoless and therefore pure and perfectly aligned with evolutionary force.

"These forms are cognized or not, according to the qualities latent in the perceiving consciousness." Reality can be perceived only to the extent that one embraces reality. The distinction between external and internal eventually dissolves in liberation. The true perceiver has awareness without entanglement. The true actor is as incapable of willful "action" or activeness as it is incapable of passiveness. The key to this aspect of liberation is awareness and realization. In subtle ways, the very "act" of being aware and self-realized is a cause. [Book IV, Sutras 12-18]

## Kaivalya Pada 4

The mind is an instrument and “is not the source of illumination.” Yet the student finds great difficulty in discriminating between some object of the mind and the conditioning characteristics of the mind. The “life” of the mind as a mind is artificial, induced by and through the form aspect. Thus the mind is capable of activity “independent” of the true self. The mind is not self-conscious, yet it “behaves” and appears as if it were the self-conscious human being. The real “thinker” merely utilizes the mind. But the waking-consciousness is not the real thinker. The waking-consciousness is (for virtually everyone) falsely identified with and entangled in some or another aspect of the lower self. In liberation, the waking-consciousness is freed from these lower associations and attachments. “When the spiritual intelligence, which stands alone and freed from objects, reflects itself in the mind stuff, then comes awareness of the self.”

Through quiescence comes omniscience. When the mind functions clearly and completely in response to the higher self, without any hint of separative or independent activity (noise), then it serves as the most effective instrument of the higher self in relation to the lower worlds. Such a mind functions as a unifying bridge between the soul or higher self and the lower (integrated and aligned) instrument (personality or lower self). That bridge is greatly inhibited by the nature of the personality and the (wrong and misleading) assumptions of that personality with regard to the higher self. But as those assumptions are discarded and as the personality nature is understood and tempered, then the bridge (antahkarana) is built and the lower self is effectively irradiated by the higher self.

“The state of isolated unity (withdrawn into the true nature of the Self) is the reward of the man who can discriminate between the mind stuff and the Self.” The detachment of the mind from its “lower reactions and tendencies” and the tempering of the mind from its self-interested activities leads to isolated unity (freedom) (rapport with all of life). Then a fuller realization of the nature of the Self is achieved. Illumination is evoked. Yet the one who knows is inhibited by that knowledge. And the one who understands can proceed. But the one who

has (is) wisdom, transcends all of this. True progress comes in the realization of relativity, in the freedom of non-attachment (to anything, even to the notion of freedom of non-attachment).

“The man who develops non-attachment even in his aspiration after illumination and isolated unity becomes aware, eventually, of the overshadowing cloud of spiritual knowledge.” All that appears noble and is indeed necessary to spiritual advancement (and service) must eventually be transcended. As all hindrances are overcome and as all karma is fulfilled, there is simply the one and the way. Perfection is achieved. The goal of human evolution is realized. “The modifications of the mind, through the inherent nature of the three gunas come to an end.” “Time, which is the sequence of the modifications of the mind, likewise terminates, giving place to eternity.” This eternity is not an extension of time or endless time. It is beyond time. It is the integral of time and space (and everything else). “The pure spiritual consciousness withdraws into the One.”

Time and time again the student is reminded of the methods and requirements for liberation. The keys to the path stand revealed. The student need only sincerely make the commitment and determination to proceed. Thus end the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. [Book IV, Sutras 19-34]



