

HINDUISM

# The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

A foundational text of the Yoga school of Hindu philosophy, presented in four books: spiritual consciousness, the means of soul growth, spiritual powers, and liberation. Presents Charles Johnston's 1912 translation of all 194 sutras.

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## **Book I: Spiritual Consciousness**

- <sup>1</sup> OM: Here follows Instruction in Union.
- <sup>2</sup> Union, spiritual consciousness, is gained through control of the versatile psychic nature.
- <sup>3</sup> Then the Seer comes to consciousness in his proper nature.
- <sup>4</sup> Heretofore the Seer has been enmeshed in the activities of the psychic nature.
- <sup>5</sup> The psychic activities are five; they are attended by pleasure or pain.
- <sup>6</sup> These activities are: Sound intellection, unsound intellection, phantasy, dream, memory.
- <sup>7</sup> The elements of sound intellection are: direct observation, inductive reason, and trustworthy testimony.
- <sup>8</sup> Unsound intellection is false understanding, not resting on a perception of the true nature of things.
- <sup>9</sup> Phantasy is a fiction of mere words, with no underlying reality.
- <sup>10</sup> Dream is the psychic condition which rests on mind states, all material things being absent.
- <sup>11</sup> Memory is the holding fast to mind-images of things perceived.
- <sup>12</sup> The control of these psychic activities comes through the right use of the will, and through ceasing from self-indulgence.
- <sup>13</sup> The right use of the will is the steady effort to stand in spiritual being.
- <sup>14</sup> This becomes a firm resting-place, when followed long, persistently, with righteousness.
- <sup>15</sup> Ceasing from self-indulgence is conscious mastery over the thirst for sensuous pleasure here or hereafter.
- <sup>16</sup> The consummation of this is freedom from thirst for any mode of psychical activity, through the establishment of the spiritual man.
- <sup>17</sup> That spiritual vision which is conditioned and limited takes the form first of exterior reasoning, then of interior judgment, then of happiness, then of realisation of individual being.
- <sup>18</sup> Spiritual consciousness unlimited is the final state led up to by the right practice of spiritual Silence.
- <sup>19</sup> The external world still dominates those who have conquered bodily lusts, but are immersed in the sense of separateness.
- <sup>20</sup> For the others, there is spiritual consciousness, led up to by faith, valor, right mindfulness, one-pointedness, perception.
- <sup>21</sup> Spiritual consciousness is nearest to those of keen, intense will.
- <sup>22</sup> The will may be weak, or of middle strength, or intense.
- <sup>23</sup> The will may be gained by ardent service of the Master.
- <sup>24</sup> The Master is the spiritual man, who has conquered sorrow, bondage to works, and the accumulation of evils.
- <sup>25</sup> In the Master is the seed of perfect Omniscience.

- <sup>26</sup> He is the Teacher of all who have gone before, since he is not limited by Time.
- <sup>27</sup> His word is OM.
- <sup>28</sup> Let there be soundless repetition of OM and meditation thereon.
- <sup>29</sup> Thence come the awakening of interior consciousness, and the removal of barriers.
- <sup>30</sup> The barriers to interior consciousness, which drive the psychic nature this way and that, are these: sickness, inertia, doubt, light-mindedness, laziness, intemperance, false notions, inability to hold the ground gained, unsteadiness.
- <sup>31</sup> Grieving, despondency, bodily restlessness, the drawing in and sending forth of the life-breath, also contribute to drive the psychic nature to and fro.
- <sup>32</sup> Steady application to a principle is the way to put a stop to these.
- <sup>33</sup> By sympathy with the happy, compassion for the sorrowful, delight in the holy, disregard of the unholy, the psychic nature moves to gracious peace.
- <sup>34</sup> Or peace may be reached by the even sending forth and control of the life-breath.
- <sup>35</sup> Faithful, persistent application to any object, if completely attained, will bind the mind to steadiness.
- <sup>36</sup> As also will a joyful, radiant spirit.
- <sup>37</sup> Or the purging of self-indulgence from the psychic nature.
- <sup>38</sup> Or a pondering on the perceptions gained in dreams and dreamless sleep.
- <sup>39</sup> Or meditative brooding on what is dearest to the heart.
- <sup>40</sup> Thus he masters all, from the atom to the Infinite.
- <sup>41</sup> When the perturbations of the psychic nature have all been stilled, then the consciousness, like a pure crystal, takes the color of what it rests on, whether that be the perceiver, perceiving, or the thing perceived.
- <sup>42</sup> When the consciousness, in perceiving, is successively occupied by the name, the idea, and the understanding of what it is dwelling on, this is the distributive action of the mind.
- <sup>43</sup> When the object dwells in the mind, clear of memory-pictures, devoid of any form, as a pure luminous idea, this is non-distributive perception.
- <sup>44</sup> The same two steps, when referring to things of finer substance, are said to be with, or without, judicial action of the mind.
- <sup>45</sup> Subtle substance rises in ascending degrees, to that pure nature which has no distinguishing mark.
- <sup>46</sup> The above are the degrees of limited and conditioned spiritual consciousness, still containing the seed of separateness.
- <sup>47</sup> When pure perception without judicial action of the mind is reached, there follows the gracious peace of the inner self.
- <sup>48</sup> In that peace, perception is unfailingly true.
- <sup>49</sup> The object of this perception is other than what is learned from the sacred books, or by sound inference, since this perception is particular.

<sup>50</sup> The impress on the consciousness springing from this perception supersedes all previous impressions.

<sup>51</sup> When this impression ceases, then, since all impressions have ceased, there arises pure spiritual consciousness, with no seed of separateness left.

## **Book II: The Means of Soul Growth**

<sup>1</sup> The practices which make for union with the Soul are: fervent aspiration, spiritual reading, and complete obedience to the Master.

<sup>2</sup> Their aim is, to bring soul-vision, and to wear away barriers.

<sup>3</sup> These are the barriers: the darkness of unwisdom, self-assertion, lust, hate, attachment.

<sup>4</sup> The darkness of unwisdom is the field of the others. These barriers may be dormant, or worn thin, or suspended, or expanded.

<sup>5</sup> The darkness of ignorance is: holding that which is unenduring, impure, full of pain, not the soul, to be eternal, pure, full of joy, the soul.

<sup>6</sup> Self-assertion comes from thinking of the Seer and the instrument of vision as forming one self.

<sup>7</sup> Lust is the resting in the sense of enjoyment.

<sup>8</sup> Hate is the resting in the sense of pain.

<sup>9</sup> Attachment is the desire toward life, even in the wise, carried forward by its own energy.

<sup>10</sup> These subtle barriers are to be removed by a countercurrent.

<sup>11</sup> Their active turnings are to be removed by meditation.

<sup>12</sup> The burden of bondage to sorrow has its root in these barriers. It will be felt in this life, or in a life not yet manifested.

<sup>13</sup> From this root there grow and ripen the fruits of birth, of the life-span, of all that is tasted in life.

<sup>14</sup> These bear fruits of rejoicing or of affliction, as they are sprung from holy or unholy works.

<sup>15</sup> To him who possesses discernment, all personal life is misery, because it ever waxes and wanes, is ever afflicted with restlessness, makes ever new dynamic impresses in the mind; and because all its activities war with each other.

<sup>16</sup> This pain is to be warded off, before it has come.

<sup>17</sup> The cause of what is to be warded off, is the absorption of the Seer in things seen.

<sup>18</sup> Things seen have as their property manifestation, action, inertia. They form the basis of the elements and the sense-powers. They make for experience and for liberation.

<sup>19</sup> The grades or layers of the Three Potencies are the defined, the undefined, that with distinctive mark, that without distinctive mark.

<sup>20</sup> The Seer is pure vision. Though pure, he looks out through the vesture of the mind.

<sup>21</sup> The very essence of things seen is, that they exist for the Seer.

<sup>22</sup> Though fallen away from him who has reached the goal, things seen have not altogether fallen away, since they still exist for others.

- <sup>23</sup> The association of the Seer with things seen is the cause of the realizing of the nature of things seen, and also of the realizing of the nature of the Seer.
- <sup>24</sup> The cause of this association is the darkness of unwisdom.
- <sup>25</sup> The bringing of this association to an end, by bringing the darkness of unwisdom to an end, is the great liberation; this is the Seer's attainment of his own pure being.
- <sup>26</sup> A discerning which is carried on perpetually is the means of liberation.
- <sup>27</sup> The soul vision which is the final goal of liberation is sevenfold.
- <sup>28</sup> From steadfastly following after the means of Yoga, until impurity is worn away, there comes the light of wisdom in full discernment.
- <sup>29</sup> The eight means of Yoga are: the Commandments, the Rules, right Poise, right Control of the life-force. Withdrawal, Concentration, Meditation, Illumination.
- <sup>30</sup> The Commandments are these: non-injury, truthfulness, abstaining from stealing, from impurity, from covetousness.
- <sup>31</sup> The Commandments are not limited to any race, place, time or age. They are universal; they are the great obligation.
- <sup>32</sup> The Rules are these: purity, serenity, fervent aspiration, spiritual reading, and perfect obedience to the Master.
- <sup>33</sup> To conquer transgressions, the weight of the imagination should be thrown on the opposite side.
- <sup>34</sup> Transgressions are injury, falsehood, theft, incontinence, envy, whether committed, or caused, or assented to, through greed, wrath, or infatuation; whether faint, or middling, or excessive; bearing endless fruit of ignorance and pain. Therefore must the weight be cast on the other side.
- <sup>35</sup> Where non-injury is perfected, all enmity ceases in the presence of him who possesses it.
- <sup>36</sup> Where truth is perfected, it brings the reward of all rites.
- <sup>37</sup> Where cessation from theft is perfected, all treasures present themselves to him who possesses it.
- <sup>38</sup> For him who is perfect in continence, the reward is valor and virility.
- <sup>39</sup> Where there is firm conquest of covetousness, he who has conquered it awakes to the how and why of life.
- <sup>40</sup> Through purity comes a withdrawal from one's own bodily life, a ceasing from infatuation with the bodily life of others.
- <sup>41</sup> To the pure of heart come also a quiet spirit, one-pointed thought, the victory over sensuality, and fitness to behold the Soul.
- <sup>42</sup> From acceptance, the disciple gains happiness supreme.
- <sup>43</sup> The perfection of the powers of the bodily vesture comes through the wearing away of impurities, and through fervent aspiration.
- <sup>44</sup> Through spiritual reading, the disciple gains communion with the divine Power on which his heart is set.
- <sup>45</sup> Soul-vision is perfected through perfect obedience to the Master.
- <sup>46</sup> Right poise must be firm and without strain.

- <sup>47</sup> Right poise is to be gained by steady and temperate effort, and by setting the heart upon the everlasting.
- <sup>48</sup> The fruit of right poise is the strength to resist the shocks of infatuation or sorrow.
- <sup>49</sup> When this is gained, there follows the right guidance of the life-currents, the control of the incoming and outgoing breath.
- <sup>50</sup> The life-current is either outward, or inward, or balanced; it is regulated according to place, time, number; it is either long or short.
- <sup>51</sup> The fourth degree is concerned with external and internal objects.
- <sup>52</sup> Thereby is worn away the veil which covers up the light.
- <sup>53</sup> Thence comes the mind's power to hold itself in the light.
- <sup>54</sup> The right Withdrawal is the disengaging of the powers from entanglement in outer things, and their return to the quality of consciousness.
- <sup>55</sup> Thereupon follows perfect mastery over the powers.

### **Book III: Spiritual Powers**

- <sup>1</sup> The binding of the perceiving consciousness to a certain region is Attention (dharana).
- <sup>2</sup> A prolonged holding of the perceiving consciousness in that region is Contemplation (dhyana).
- <sup>3</sup> When the perceiving consciousness, in this contemplation, is wholly given to illuminating the essential meaning of the object contemplated, and is freed from the sense of separateness and personality, this is Meditation (samadhi).
- <sup>4</sup> When these three, Attention, Contemplation, Meditation, are exercised at once, this is perfectly concentrated Meditation (sanyama).
- <sup>5</sup> By mastering this perfectly concentrated Meditation, there comes the illumination of the perceiving consciousness.
- <sup>6</sup> This power is distributed in ascending degrees.
- <sup>7</sup> This threefold power, of Attention, Contemplation, Meditation, is more interior than the means of growth previously described.
- <sup>8</sup> But this triad is still exterior to the soul vision which is unconditioned, free from the seed of mental analysis.
- <sup>9</sup> One 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.
- <sup>10</sup> Through frequent repetition of this process, the mind becomes habituated to it, and there arises an equable flow of perceiving consciousness.
- <sup>11</sup> The gradual conquest of the mind's tendency to flit from one object to another, and the power of one-pointedness, make the development of Meditation.

- <sup>12</sup> When, following this, the controlled manifold tendency and the aroused one-pointedness are equally balanced parts of the perceiving consciousness, this is the development of one-pointedness.
- <sup>13</sup> Through this, the inherent character, distinctive marks and conditions of being and powers, according to their development, are made clear.
- <sup>14</sup> Every object has its characteristics which are already quiescent, those which are active, and those which are not yet definable.
- <sup>15</sup> Difference in stage is the cause of difference in development.
- <sup>16</sup> Through perfectly concentrated Meditation on the three stages of development comes a knowledge of past and future.
- <sup>17</sup> Sound and meaning and the thought called up by a word are confounded because they are all blurred together in the mind. By perfectly concentrated Meditation on each separately, there comes an understanding of the sounds uttered by all beings.
- <sup>18</sup> When the mind-impressions become visible, there comes an understanding of previous births.
- <sup>19</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on mind-images is gained the understanding of the thoughts of others.
- <sup>20</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the form of the body, by arresting the body's perceptibility, and by inhibiting the eye's power of sight, there comes the power to make the body invisible.
- <sup>21</sup> The works which fill out the life-span may be either immediately or gradually operative. By perfectly concentrated Meditation on these comes a knowledge of the time of the end, as also through signs.
- <sup>22</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on sympathy, compassion and kindness, is gained the power of interior union with others.
- <sup>23</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on power, even such power as that of the elephant may be gained.
- <sup>24</sup> By bending upon them the awakened inner light, there comes a knowledge of things subtle, or obscure, or remote.
- <sup>25</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the sun comes a knowledge of the worlds.
- <sup>26</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the moon comes a knowledge of the lunar mansions.
- <sup>27</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the fixed pole-star comes a knowledge of the motions of the stars.
- <sup>28</sup> Perfectly concentrated Meditation on the center of force in the lower trunk brings an understanding of the order of the bodily powers.
- <sup>29</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the center of force in the well of the throat, there comes the cessation of hunger and thirst.
- <sup>30</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the center of force in the channel called the "tortoise-formed," comes steadfastness.
- <sup>31</sup> Through perfectly concentrated Meditation on the light in the head comes the vision of the Masters who have attained.

- <sup>32</sup> Or through the divining power of intuition he knows all things.
- <sup>33</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the heart, the interior being, comes the knowledge of consciousness.
- <sup>34</sup> The personal self seeks to feast on life, through a failure to perceive the distinction between the personal self and the spiritual man. All personal experience really exists for the sake of another: namely, the spiritual man.
- <sup>35</sup> Thereupon are born the divine power of intuition, and the hearing, the touch, the vision, the taste and the power of smell of the spiritual man.
- <sup>36</sup> These powers stand in contradistinction to the highest spiritual vision. In manifestation they are called magical powers.
- <sup>37</sup> Through the weakening of the causes of bondage, and by learning the method of passing, the consciousness is transferred to the other body.
- <sup>38</sup> Through mastery of the upward-life comes freedom from the dangers of water, morass, and thorny places, and the power of ascension is gained.
- <sup>39</sup> By mastery of the binding-life comes radiance.
- <sup>40</sup> From perfectly concentrated Meditation on the correlation of hearing and the ether, comes the power of spiritual hearing.
- <sup>41</sup> By perfectly concentrated Meditation on the correlation of the body with the ether, and by thinking of it as light as thistle-down, will come the power to traverse the ether.
- <sup>42</sup> When that condition of consciousness is reached, which is far-reaching and not confined to the body, which is outside the body and not conditioned by it, then the veil which conceals the light is worn away.
- <sup>43</sup> Mastery of the elements comes from perfectly concentrated Meditation on their five forms: the gross, the elemental, the subtle, the pervading, the essential or objective.
- <sup>44</sup> Thereupon will come the manifestation of the atomic and other powers, which are the endowment of the body, together with its unassailable force.
- <sup>45</sup> Shapeliness, beauty, force, the temper of the diamond: these are the endowments of that body.
- <sup>46</sup> Mastery over the powers of perception and action comes through perfectly concentrated Meditation on their fivefold forms; namely, their power to grasp, their distinctive nature, the element of self-consciousness in them, their pervasiveness, and their objectivity.
- <sup>47</sup> Thence come the power swift as thought, independence of instruments, and mastery over matter.
- <sup>48</sup> When the spiritual man is perfectly disentangled from the psychic body, he attains to mastery over all things and to a knowledge of all.
- <sup>49</sup> By absence of all self-indulgence at this point, also, the seeds of bondage to sorrow are destroyed, and pure spiritual being is attained.
- <sup>50</sup> There should be complete overcoming of allurements or pride in the invitations of the different regions of life, lest attachment to things evil arise once more.
- <sup>51</sup> From perfectly concentrated Meditation on the divisions of time and their succession comes that wisdom which is born of discernment.

<sup>52</sup> Hence comes discernment between things which are of like nature, not distinguished by difference of kind, character or position.

<sup>53</sup> The wisdom which is born of discernment is starlike; it discerns all things, and all conditions of things, it discerns without succession: simultaneously.

<sup>54</sup> When the vesture and the spiritual man are alike pure, then perfect spiritual life is attained.

## **Book IV: Significant Illumination**

<sup>1</sup> Psychic and spiritual powers may be inborn, or they may be gained by the use of drugs, or by incantations, or by Meditation.

<sup>2</sup> The transfer of powers from one plane to another comes through the flow of the natural creative forces.

<sup>3</sup> The apparent, immediate cause is not the true cause of the creative nature-powers; but, like the husbandman in his field, it takes obstacles away.

<sup>4</sup> Vestures of consciousness are built up in conformity with the position of the feeling of selfhood.

<sup>5</sup> In the different fields of manifestation, the Consciousness, though one, is the effective cause of many states of consciousness.

<sup>6</sup> Among states of consciousness, that which is born of Meditation is free from the seed of future sorrow.

<sup>7</sup> The works of followers after Union make neither for bright pleasure nor for dark pain. The works of others make for pleasure or pain, or a mingling of these.

<sup>8</sup> From the force inherent in works comes the manifestation of those dynamic mind-images which are conformable to the ripening out of each of these works.

<sup>9</sup> Works separated by different births, or place, or time, may be brought together by uniformity of memory or dynamic impression.

<sup>10</sup> The series of dynamic mind-images is beginningless, because Desire is everlasting.

<sup>11</sup> Since the dynamic mind-images are held together by impulses of desire, by the wish for personal reward, by the substratum of mental habit, by the support of outer things desired; therefore, when these cease, the self-reproduction of dynamic mind-images ceases.

<sup>12</sup> The difference between that which is past and that which is not yet come, according to their natures, depends on the difference of phase of their properties.

<sup>13</sup> These properties, whether manifest or latent, are of the nature of the Three Potencies.

<sup>14</sup> The external manifestation of an object takes place when the transformations are in the same phase.

<sup>15</sup> The paths of material things and of states of consciousness are distinct, as is manifest from the fact that the same object may produce different impressions in different minds.

<sup>16</sup> Nor do material objects depend upon a single mind, for how could they remain objective to others, if that mind ceased to think of them?

- <sup>17</sup> An object is perceived, or not perceived, according as the mind is, or is not, tinged with the color of the object.
- <sup>18</sup> The movements of the psychic nature are perpetually objects of perception, since the Spiritual Man, who is the lord of them, remains unchanging.
- <sup>19</sup> The Mind is not self-luminous, since it can be seen as an object.
- <sup>20</sup> Nor could the Mind at the same time know itself and things external to it.
- <sup>21</sup> If the Mind be thought of as seen by another more inward Mind, then there would be an endless series of perceiving Minds, and a confusion of memories.
- <sup>22</sup> When the pure Spiritual Consciousness, which is free from all succession or change, takes form in the Spiritual Man, then does Consciousness realize its own luminous being.
- <sup>23</sup> The psychic nature, universally adaptive, takes on the color either of things seen, or of the Seer.
- <sup>24</sup> The psychic nature, which has been printed with mind-images of innumerable material things, exists now for the Spiritual Man, subordinate to him.
- <sup>25</sup> For him who discerns between the Mind and the Spiritual Man, there comes perfect fruition of the longing after the real being of the Self.
- <sup>26</sup> Thereafter, the whole personal being bends toward illumination, full of the spirit of Eternal Life.
- <sup>27</sup> In the intervals of the battle, other thoughts will arise, through the impressions of the dynamic mind-images.
- <sup>28</sup> These are to be overcome as it was taught that sorrows should be overcome.
- <sup>29</sup> He who, after he has attained, is wholly free from self, is set in a cloud of holiness which is called illumination. This is the true spiritual consciousness.
- <sup>30</sup> Thereon comes surcease from sorrow and the burden of toil.
- <sup>31</sup> When all veils are rent, all stains washed away, his knowledge becomes infinite; little remains for him to know.
- <sup>32</sup> Thereafter comes the completion of the series of transformations of the three nature-potencies, since their purpose is attained.
- <sup>33</sup> The series of transformations is divided into moments, and is to be regarded as the culmination of nature.
- <sup>34</sup> Pure spiritual life is, therefore, the inverse resolution of the potencies of Nature, which have emptied themselves of their value for the Spiritual man; or it is the return of the power of pure Consciousness to its essential form.