

Study Guide 3

DVD series vol.3

Patañjali's Classical Yoga:
Blueprint for Transformation

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The Wisdom of Yoga

The Yoga Sūtras:

Blueprint for Transformation

1. Welcome to the Study of Yoga

Dear friend,

Welcome to volume 3 of The Wisdom of Yoga series.

It is our belief that yoga has a lot to offer to our lives and we are happy to present here the essence of the most important yoga traditions that India has produced throughout its rich history.

Enjoy!

Carlos Pomeda and the Yogakula team

2. How to use this study guide

The purpose of this study guide is to guide you through the study of yoga. Here you will find suggestions that may help you to draw the most out of your study. The DVDs are designed to break down each topic into smaller segments that can be more easily followed in one sitting, although their duration varies.

We advise that you read the study guide first and then apply the steps for each section in sequence. Or, if you want to zero in on only one or two topics, just go directly to those sections. Then watch the appropriate segments and complete any other assignments or recommended exercises.

3. About this DVD series

This series is designed to provide a complete course of study that covers the major systems of yoga in their chronological development.

The first volume includes an overview of the history of yoga, followed by an exploration of the upaniṣadic teachings and practices. The second volume delves into the Bhagavad Gītā and its innovations, followed by the tradition of Bhakti Yoga, the yoga of devotion. The third examines the yoga of Patañjali and his Yoga Sūtras, whereas number four looks at the system of Advaita Vedānta. Finally, volume five explores Tantra and the last one in the series, volume six, takes a look at Kuṇḍalinī Yoga and Haṭha Yoga, completing the historical perspective the series provides.

At the same time, each volume provides practices representative of the particular system of yoga examined in that volume. This design provides the opportunity of focusing on one specific school or exploring the entire spectrum. In either case, we recommend that

you take your time with each volume, considering not only the teachings of each, but particularly their application and practice over at least a period of a month for each system.

4. Invocation

Oṃ. Saha nāv avatu; saha nau bhunaktu; saha vīryaṃ karavāvahai.

Tejasvī nāv adhitam astu; mā vidviṣāvahai. Oṃ śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ, śāntiḥ

"Oṃ. May He protect us; may He help us; may we attain strength. May our study become luminous; let there be no enmity between us. Oṃ. Peace, peace, peace."

5. Introduction to the Yoga Sūtras

Your objectives for this segment are:

- Get an overview of the historical precedents that inform the Yoga Sūtras
- Understand the methodology deployed in the Yoga Sūtras and their main teaching
- Become familiar with the structure and organization of the Yoga Sūtras
- Learn the main teachings of the first section of the Yoga Sūtras

Ask yourself:

- What would be required to bring about stillness in the mind?
- How does life style influence the state of the mind?
- What is the most important practice of yoga?

You might want to take a look at the selections from the first chapter of the Yoga Sūtras before you watch this first segment, in order to acquaint yourself with some of the main teachings and to familiarize yourself with the aphorisms that are mentioned in the segment. When you are ready, please watch the segment titled, "Introduction to the Yoga Sūtras". Take your time to pause, write down thoughts, reflexions, questions and any items you may want to record. You may also want to write down the Sanskrit terms that appear on the screen, as well as their meaning.

6. Meditation sūtra I.36

Choose a quiet place where you can follow the meditation instructions from the DVD and also sit comfortably for meditation.

As you follow the instructions, be ready to either pause your DVD player or stop it at the end of those instructions. Otherwise, the DVD will return to the main menu and the background music may distract you.

Meditate as long as you wish (anywhere between 20 minutes and 1 hour is a good duration) and allow yourself plenty of time to come out of meditation gently.

Afterwards, take a few moments to reflect on your meditation process and experience, and take a few notes reflecting what worked, what was challenging, what you learned, what you experienced, what insights you had, etc.

7. Recap of Samādhi Pada

Watch the brief recap segment and contemplate the following:

- How would I summarize the teachings of this chapter?
- In what way does this chapter lay out and develop the main message of the author?

Once you are comfortable with your grasp of the first chapter, it is time to move on to the next topic.

8. Sādhana Pada: Chapter on Practice

Your objectives for this segment are:

- Understand the connection between the practices laid out at the beginning of this chapter and the teachings of the previous one
- Find out the dynamics of those practices and how they serve the purpose of samādhi

Ask yourself:

- If meditation is not enough to achieve samādhi, what else would be needed?
- How would those additional elements work?

At this point, you might want to take a look at the selections from the second cycle of the Yoga Sūtras below, before you watch this second segment. This will acquaint you with some of its main teachings and familiarize you with the aphorisms that are mentioned in the segment. When you are ready, please watch the segment titled, "samādhi Pada: Chapter on Practice". As you watch, take your time to pause, write down thoughts, reflexions, questions and any items you may want to record. You may also want to write down the Sanskrit terms that appear on the screen, as well as their meaning.

9. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga: Eight Limbs of Yoga

As in the previous chapter, your objectives for this segment are:

- Understand the connection between the practices laid out at the beginning of this chapter and the teachings of the previous one
- Find out the dynamics of those practices and how they serve the purpose of samādhi

Ask yourself:

- What is the role of ethical behaviour in the pursuit of samādhi?

- What is the connection between posture and samādhi ? Breath and samadhi? The senses and samādhi?

At this point, you might want to take a look at the selections from the third cycle of the Yoga Sūtras below, before you watch this third segment. This will acquaint you with the eight limbs of yoga. When you are ready, please watch the segment titled, "Aṣṭāṅga Yoga: Eight Limbs of Yoga". As you watch, take your time to pause, write down thoughts, reflexions, questions and any items you may want to record. You may also want to write down the Sanskrit terms that appear on the screen, as well as their meaning.

10. Meditation sutra 1.17

Choose a quiet place where you can follow the meditation instructions from the DVD and also sit comfortably for meditation.

As you follow the instructions, be ready to either pause your DVD player or stop it at the end of those instructions. Otherwise, the DVD will return to the main menu and the background music may distract you.

Meditate as long as you wish (anywhere between 20 minutes and 1 hour is a good duration) and allow yourself plenty of time to come out of meditation gently.

Then, take a few moments to reflect on your meditation process and experience, and take a few notes reflecting what worked, what was challenging, what you learned, what you experienced, what insights you had, etc.

11. Session Recap

Watch the final recap segment and contemplate the following:

- What do I take from this session?
- What is the main teaching of the Yoga Sūtras?
- What is the relationship between the first chapter and the second?
- What is the goal of the Yoga Sūtras?

For further study and practice, you may want to continue with the study suggestions given below.

12. Q&A

Take look at the Q&A submenu and explore any or all themes you may be interested in, for additional information.

a) Selections from the Yoga Sutras - First Cycle: Samādhi Pada

yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ (1.2)

Yoga is restraining the activities of the mind

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe'vasthānam (1.3)

Then the witness rests in his own nature

vṛtti-sārūpyam-itaratra (1.4)

At other times, there is identification with the activities (of the mind)

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyāṃ tan-nirodhaḥ (1.12)

Restraining (the activities of the mind is accomplished) through practice and detachment

śraddhā-vīrya-smṛti-samādhi-prajñā-pūrvaka itareṣām (1.20)

For others, it is preceded by faith, vigor, memory, samādhi and true wisdom

īśvara-praṇidhānād-vā (1.23)

Or by dedication to the Lord

tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ (1.27)

Its indicator is the syllable Om

tat-pratiśedha-artham-eka-tattva-abhyāsaḥ (1.32)

Practice on one principle (should be performed) in order to stop them (the distractions)

maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣāṇāṃ sukha-duḥkha-puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaś-citta-prasādanam (1.33)

The contentment of the mind (comes) from the cultivation of friendliness, compassion, gladness and indifference towards happiness, suffering, virtue and non-virtue

pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyāṃ vā prāṇasya (1.34)

Or by expulsion and retention of the breath

viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī (1.36)

Or that which is luminous and free from sorrow

vīta-rāga-viṣayaṃ vā cittam (1.37)

Or a mind that is free from the experience of passion

svapna-nidrā-jñāna-ālambanaṃ vā (1.38)

Or the support of the experience of dreams and deep sleep

yathā-abhimata-dhyānād-vā (1.39)

Or by meditation as desired

b) Second Cycle: Kriyā Yoga

tapāḥ svādhyāya-īśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyā-yogaḥ (2.1)

Kriyā yoga (yoga of actions) (consists of) austerities, self-study and dedication to the Lord

samādhi-bhāvana-arthāḥ kleśa-tanū-karaṇa-arthāś-ca (2.2)

For the purpose of cultivating samādhi and for the purpose of weakening the afflictions

avidyā-asmitā-rāga-dveṣa-abhiniveśaḥ pañca-kleśāḥ (2.3)

The five afflictions are: ignorance, ego, passion, aversion and clinging (to the body)

avidyā-kṣetram-uttareṣāṃ prasupta-tanu-vicchinna-udārāṇām (2.4)

Ignorance is the ground for the others, whether they are dormant, attenuated, interrupted or active

anitya-aśuci-duḥkha-anātmasu nitya-śuci-sukha-ātma-khyātir-avidyā (2.5)

Ignorance is perceiving the non-eternal, impure, suffering and non-self as eternal, pure, pleasure and self

ḍṛg-darśana-śaktyor-eka-ātmatā-iva-asmitā (2.6)

Ego is perceiving the powers of the seer and the seen as if they were one

sukha-anuśayī rāgaḥ (2.7)

Passion depends on pleasure

duḥkha-anuśayī dveṣaḥ (2.8)

Aversion depends on suffering

svarasa-vāhī viduṣo'pi tathā-ruḍho'bhiniveśaḥ (2.9)

Clinging to the body, which is sustained by one's inherent inclination, is well established even in the case of the wise

c) Third Cycle: Aṣṭāṅga Yoga**yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇa-dhyāna-samādhayo'sṭāv-aṅgāni (2.29)**

The eight elements (of yoga) are: yama (restraints), niyama (observances), āsana (posture), prāṇāyāma (breath-control), pratyāhāra (withdrawal of the senses), dhāraṇa (concentration), dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi

ahiṃsā-satya-asteya-brahmacarya-aparigrahā yamāḥ (2.30)

The yamas or restraints are: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and absence of greed

śauca-saṃtoṣa-tapaḥ-svādhyāya-iśvara-praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ (2.32)

The niyamas or observances are: purity, contentment, austerities, self-study and dedication to the Lord

sthira-sukhaṃ āsanam (2.46)

The posture (āsana) is firm and comfortable

tasmin satī śvāsa-praśvāsayor gati-vicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ (2.49)

When this (āsana) happens, prāṇāyāma or breath-control is interrupting the flow of inhalation and exhalation

svaviśaya-asamprayoge cittasya svarūpa-anukāra iva indriyāṇaṃ pratyāhāraḥ (2.54)

Pratyāhāra is the withdrawal of the senses from their objects, as if following the nature of the mind (that is also withdrawn from external objects)

deśa-bandhaś-cittasya dhāraṇā (3.1)

Dhāraṇa (concentration) is confining the mind to one place

tatra pratyaya-ekatānatā dhyānam (3.2)

Dhyāna (meditation) is prolonging (the contemplation of) that mental object

tad-eva-artha-mātra-nirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śūnya-iva samādhiḥ (3.3)

Samādhi is the shining of the object alone, as if one's nature were emptiness

13. Study Suggestions

Reading Assignment: Read Feuerstein, Georg. *The Yoga-Sūtra of Patañjali*. Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1989. (Entire book)

Items for reflection:

- Engage in a slow, deliberate and contemplative reading of the sūtras, keeping in mind the three-fold division outlined in this workshop. In your notebook, write down the passages that inspire you the most. Memorize at least one from each section.

Practices:

- Make it a point to remember during the day one of the sūtras you have selected and memorized. Integrate that sūtra into your āsana practice. Keep a journal.
- Continue with a daily practice of meditation, based on your chosen method. Pay attention to how the teachings you have selected inform and inspire your practice. Keep a journal with the results, challenges, questions, insights, etc. that arise from your practice.