

From the *Yogasūtra* (Translation by Stephen H. Phillips)

Yoga is an ambiguous term, used as the name of a classical school (*Yoga*) as well as the general word for a wide range of meditational, devotional, and ascetic practices of self-discipline (breath-control, fasting, etc.). The *Yoga-sūtra* (*YS*), which defines the *Yoga* school, is an ancient manual of yogic practices (i.e. of *yoga* with a small ‘y’) framed within a metaphysics. The *Yoga* philosophy of the *YS* is distinct from the theism of the *Gītā*, though both texts advocate yogic practices. Also, similar mystic themes are elaborated. But the goal of *yoga*, self-discipline, is differently conceived: the supreme good according to the *YS* is an absolute rupture separating the soul or conscious being, *puruṣa*, from nature, *prakṛti*. The *YS* presents a metaphysical dualism of an infinite plurality of souls, on the one hand, and a single nature, on the other. God, according to this text, is an archetypal liberated yogin, never sullied by contact with the world. This is a notion distinct from that of the *Gītā*, where the Supreme Being is conceived along lines not so different from the theology of Western religions.

Thus in addition to its delineation of yogic practices in the style of a how-to book or meditation manual, the *YS* attends to questions about reality, especially about the relation of souls to nature. Its theory may be interpreted as a view of the ontological underpinnings of the

enlightenment or liberational experience, i.e. an explanation how such an experience is possible.

Though portions of the *YS* probably date to very early, the final version of the text belongs to the period after the Buddhist Nāgārjuna (see below, the next section) provoked a professional turn in Indian philosophies, with more attention to overall coherence as well as supportive argument.

1.1. Now instruction in yoga.

1.2. Yoga is cessation of the fluctuations of mind and awareness (*citta*, henceforth rendered as “mind”).

1.3. Then the seer (the conscious being) rests in his true self.

1.4. At other times, he identifies with the fluctuations.

1.5. The fluctuations are of five types, and are either detrimental or non-detrimental.

1.6. (The five are:) (a) veridical awareness, (b) its opposite, (c) thought and imagination, (d) sleep, and (e) memory.

...

1.12. The cessation of the fluctuations is accomplished through practice and disinterestedness.

1.13. Practice is effort to hold fast the cessation.

1.14. Practice is firmly grounded only through proper effort uninterrupted and stretching over a long time.

1.15. Disinterestedness is the intention to control on the part of someone who has no desire either for worldly or revealed objects.

...

1.33. Calming illumination of the mind is furthered through friendship, compassion, happiness, and indifference to objects whether pleasant or painful, virtuous or full of vice.

1.34. Or, this can be brought about by controlled exhalation and retention of the breath.

1.35. Or, this (calming illumination) is brought about by particular activity centered on an object arresting mentality.

1.36. Or, it is brought about by activity that is free from sorrow and luminous.

1.37. Or, it is achieved when the mind contemplates an object devoid of allure.

1.38. Another means involves the mind brought to a knowledge of sleep and dreams.

1.39. Or, from meditation as is appropriate.

...

2.2. Yoga is practiced to achieve mystic trance as well as to attenuate the detrimental fluctuations or afflictions (*kleśa*).

2.3. The afflictions are spiritual ignorance, egoism, passion, hatred, and attachment to life.

...

2.11. These (detrimental) fluctuations are banished through meditation.

2.12. (Action-inducing) karmic latencies, to be experienced in the current or in future births, are rooted in the afflictions.

2.13. So long as this root endures its fruit will endure, the (triple) fruit, namely, of birth, life, and apparent enjoyment.

2.14. These three bring joy or suffering according to the merit or lack thereof (in accumulated karmic latencies).

2.15. A person of discriminating judgment sees all as suffering because of the pain in continual change, in tortured states of mind, and in subliminal latencies. Suffering is caused by conflicting fluctuations.

2.16. Future suffering is to be banished.

2.17. That which is to be banished stands caused by a conjunction of the seer (the conscious being) and that to be seen (nature).

2.18. What is to be seen (i.e. nature) is characterized by the (three qualities or strands) of intelligence, activity, and inertia; it includes the gross elements and the sense organs, and has as its *raison d'être* enjoyments for or liberation of the conscious being.

...

2.22. Although destroyed (for the liberated) yogin whose purpose is accomplished, nature is not destroyed for others (who are not liberated), because she is common among them.

2.23. The conjunction between the power of phenomena and the power of

their lord (the conscious being) is caused by a perception of the two's identity.

2.24. Spiritual ignorance is its reason (i.e. the reason the conjunction endures).

2.25. When spiritual ignorance is no longer, the conjunction is no longer. This is the relinquishment, the "aloneness" (*kaivalya*, i.e. salvation) of the seer (the conscious being).

2.26. Unbroken practice of discriminative discernment is the way to that relinquishment.

2.27. For such a yogin, sevenfold wisdom and insight (*prajñā*) arise as the highest foundation.

2.28. By practice of the "limbs of yoga," impurity is attenuated. Awareness is illuminated up to discriminative discernment.

2.29. (Ethical) restraints, constraints, āsanās, breath-control, withdrawal of the senses, (and three stages of meditation, viz.) concentration, "meditation," and mystic trance are the eight "limbs of yoga."

2.30. Of these, the restraints are non-injury (*ahiṃsā*), truthfulness,

refraining from stealing, celibacy, and lack of avarice.

2.31. These practiced universally irrespective of station and circumstance of time and place constitute the “great vow.”

2.32. The constraints are purity, contentment, asceticism, self-study, and focusing on God (as the archetypal liberated yogin).

...

3.1. Concentration is binding the mind down to a single spot.

3.2. Of the three (stages of meditation), “meditation” (*dhyāna*) is a single ideational focus.

3.3. Mystic trance is this carried to the point where there is illumination only of the object as object, empty, as it were, of what it essentially is.

3.4. The three together are called “conscious power” (*saṃyama*).

3.5. Through its mastery comes the light of wisdom and insight (*prajñā*).

...

3.49. The yogin whose awareness is restricted to the perception of the difference between (the strand of nature called) intelligence (*sattva*) and

the conscious being achieves lordship over all states of being and omniscience as well.

3.50. Through disinterest in that achievement arises “aloneness” (*kaivalya*) in the attenuation of the seeds of defects.

...

3.55. When the intelligence (strand, i.e. *sattva*) and the conscious being are equal in purity, “aloneness” ensues. ...

4.15. Since with regard to one and the same object, mind (*citta*) differs (on different occasions of perception), the two (*citta* and objects) have a distinct mode of being.

4.16. And to exist a thing does not depend on a single mind or awareness (*citta*). When it is not cognized by that mind, what then would it be?

4.17. Something is known or unknown to a particular mind, depending on the coloring conferred.

4.18. The fluctuations of mind are always known to their lord (the conscious being), since the conscious being (*puruṣa*) is unchanging.

4.19. That (the *citta*) is not self-luminous, because it is something to be

perceived.

4.20. And there is no possibility of cognizing both (objects and subject) at the same time.

4.21. It would be to assume too much to require one intelligence after another in order that a single mind or awareness be perceived. This would also mean memory's (impossibility because of) confusion.

4.22. Self-awareness occurs when the mind assumes the form of consciousness which (as the nature of the conscious being) is transcendently unchanging.

4.23. A mind (*citta*) that is colored by both the seer and that to be seen is capable of cognizing anything.

4.24. Although the mind is moved by countless subliminal valences, it works by unifying (diversities) for the sake of the other (the conscious being).

4.25. For one who sees the distinction (between nature and the conscious being), the projection of sense of self in nature ceases.

4.26. Then the mind settling into deep discrimination is carried on toward

(reflecting) the aloneness (of the conscious being).

4.27. In the gaps (or weaknesses) of discrimination, other ideational presentations (i.e. distractions) may arise by force of (unexhausted) subliminal valences.

4.28. These are banished like the afflictions, in the ways explained.

...

4.34. Aloneness (*kaivalya*, the *summum bonum*) entails the reversal of the course of the strands or qualities of nature, now empty of meaning and value for the conscious being. Or, it may be understood as the power of consciousness returned and established in its own true self.