

So far we have seen:

The Sutras are based upon Samkhyan Cosmology 'The Hierarchy of Existence: 25 Tattwas or Things' where we are told we can directly experience that we are in Truth Spirit/Pure Consciousness i.e. Purusha. Whereas normally we are identified with all that is manifested, believing that the mind, body and senses are who we are but they are part of Prakriti which is everchanging. Yoga is a quest for our true identity, Self-Realization.

Book One, verses 1 to 4, summarise what yoga is:

"Yoga is the stillness of our mental/emotional fluctuations"

There are four functions of the mind:

1. Ahamkara: I am-ness
2. Manas: Sensory mind
3. Buddhi: Intellect
4. Chitta: Memory, unconscious

All of these are necessary for us to live in this world

There are five ways of knowing [1.5 to 1.11]

1. Right knowledge (Pramana)
 - i. Direct Perception (Pratyaksha)
 - ii. Inference (Anumana)
 - iii. Scriptural Testimony (Agama)
2. Misconception (Viparyaya)
3. Verbal Delusion (Vikalpa)
4. Sleep (Nidra)
5. Memory (Smritayah)

These can be:

Klishta: Painful (selfish)

Aklishta: Painless (selfless)

In Book 2 v15 we saw how "To one of discrimination, everything is painful indeed, due to its consequences: the anxiety and fear over losing what is gained; the resulting impressions left in the mind to create renewed cravings; and the constant conflict among the three gunas, which control the mind." **Meaning when we perceive clearly we see that when we identify with the mind i.e. thought/emotion there will eventually be suffering; this is because perception is distorted as it is normally coloured by the the kleshas, the resulting samskaras and the gunas.**

Samskaras: Habitual thinking, feelings & emotions; mental/emotional impressions flowing as waves or vrttis; **Vasanas:** being groups of associated samskaras as traits.

**Five states of mind: Chitta Bhumis
Play of the Gunas within the mind**

1. Agitated mind; Very Rajasic
2. Dull Mind: Very Tamasic
3. Distracted Mind: Alternates R & S
4. Focused Mind: Sattvic
5. Absorbed Mind:

Kleshas: Afflictions [2.3 to 2.15]

The shared human attributes that fundamentally drive us all and create the chains of samskara and the chitta bhumis:

1. Avidya: Ignorance
2. Asmita: Ident. with body & mind
3. Raga: Attraction
4. Dvesha: Aversion
5. Abhinivesha: Fear of death

All kleshas are based on an ignorance of who/what we really are – Pure Consc.

If subtle these can be released back into the ego or if active can be destroyed by meditation. Both of these possibilities require the silence, stillness & stability of the

This means our perception is coloured by our conditioning and yet through the practices of yoga we can identify primarily with the witness (Purusha).

So now we can perceive any object, including the body/mind with clarity, without it being coloured by our projections i.e. our past memories, experiences, likes, dislikes, gunas etc. We can know Our Self. (Know Thyself).

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To continue:

Practice (Abhyasa) & Non-attachment (Vairagya)

Practice (Abhyasa)

Sutras 1.12 to 1.16 (Carrera translation)

- 12. These mental modifications are restrained by practice and non-attachment.*
- 13. Of these two, effort towards steadiness is practice.*
- 14. Practice becomes firmly grounded when well attended to for a long time, without break and with enthusiasm.*
- 15. Non attachment is the manifestation of self mastery in one who is free from craving for objects seen or heard about.*
- 16. When there is non-thirst for even the gunas (constituents of Nature) due to realization of the Purusha that is supreme non-attachment.*
- 21. To the keen and intent practitioner this samadhi comes quickly.*
- 22. The time necessary for success also depends on whether the practice is mild, moderate or intense.*

Practice (Abhyasa)

This is fairly self-explanatory as we told we must practice willingly and with faith i.e. with enthusiasm. We are not told which practice, only that we should practice earnestly and in the Sutras many possibilities for practice are given.

- *Have you noticed what happens when you only practice intermittently?*
- *Have you set intentions to motivate you to practice?*

[For more information on Practice see Carrera's translation pages 35 to 42]

It can be interesting to reflect on practice as part of 'doing'. Eckart Tolle's book 'The New Earth' he outlines three parts to awakened doing, in which he says in every situation we must adopt one of the three following options or desist from what we are doing:

Enjoyment

He says do not wait for something meaningful to enable you to enjoy what you are doing. Instead find enjoyment in what you are doing by **being fully present in your activity**. This introduces joy, the dynamic aspect of being, because when the creative power of the universe becomes conscious of itself this manifests as joy!

Enthusiasm

When there is a deep enjoyment **and a goal to be reached** then a structural tension is added to the enjoyment, although if you wish to **arrive at the goal more than doing** what you are doing then this causes stress! When true enthusiasm exists the ego cannot dominate, creating a high frequency of creativity.

Acceptance

In a situation where you cannot enjoy or be enthusiastic then inwardly be accepting saying for now I have to do this and I do it willingly. This activates a peacefulness of surrendered doing (remember this next time you have to change a car wheel in the rain!).

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In these sutras we are also introduced to the idea of vairagya or non-attachment

Non-attachment (Vairagya)

This is a very interesting concept to explore because it can easily mean different things to different people. Often people equate this to desire, stating that all desire must be quashed, although this is not true because initially there must be desire for growth, more wholeness or Freedom itself, to provide the aspiration and motivation for practice.

Rather, vairagya, which means 'without colour,' refers to a state of neutrality where we no longer look outwards for our fundamental fulfilment and satisfaction and as a result we are truly okay when what we hope for does or doesn't arise. (The story of the Farmer & Maybe) This quality of equanimity becomes increasingly accessible as the the mind quiets but meanwhile we can become more aware of our patterning or conditioning in the mind.

With practice, through the repeated immersion in deeper states of consciousness we will find that state will become much more prevalent within our daily life bringing a kind of freedom from the roller-coaster of life's ups and downs where we remain more and more centered within. It is like a cloth being repeatedly being dyed and dried in the sun so that gradually more and more of the dye becomes fast within the cloth.

Ultimately as it says in 1.16 there is no attachment to anything whether inside or outside of ourselves; where we can experience things moment to moment and allow the experience and our responses to easily move through us. You could say we know 'we are done' when there is nothing to be done, and this is not a negative circumstance but rather one where there is such as **sense of fullness inside nothing else is needed to make us whole.**

This relates to the kleshas where we now know what we are so Avidya is no longer present. Asmita or the need to refer to relate everything to 'I, me and mine' is no longer a central concern. The kleshas of Raga and Dvesha, of attraction and aversion respectively, do not create disturbance within, and anxiety or fear, Abhinivesha, can no longer disturb us.

Non-attachment can at first seem to mean cultivating a beige, passionless existence but this is not the case. Rather it means that when we meet all things equally, being fully present to what arises, not trying to change what has arisen or hold on to it, then paradoxically there is more peacefulness and enjoyment, there is a more integrated relationship with life, here wisdom and selfless service arise. When we experience ourselves as Purusha, and are increasingly established within that we are no longer affected by Prakriti or change, we are more identified with the changeless, infinite Pure Consciousness and can only see the Beauty in all of Nature.

In the meantime can we relate to our practice without expectation, and consciously allow all that happens to occur and move through?

Have you noticed a change in your ability to be detached as your practice has developed, i.e. is there more steadiness?

Can we raise awareness of when the kleshas arise for us in life, would this be useful?

[For more information on Non-attachment see Carrera's translation pages 42 to 52]

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Note: a useful point given by Carrera (PYS page 269) is when he says “Strictly speaking: the sutras list nonattachment as the compliment to practice. In our daily life, the roots of attachments are discovered through such practises as mindfulness, study, and self analysis. Seekers also seek strength and guidance for overcoming attachments through prayer and worship. In short non attachment is gained with the aid of a great deal of practice”

So we need to practice and also simultaneously cultivate non-attachment along the way.

Ishwara: The Question of ‘God’ within the Yoga Sutras.

In the Sutras 1.23 to 1. 29 we find the following: (Carrera’s translation):

23. *Or samadhi is attained by devotion, with total dedication to God (Ishwara).*
24. *Ishwara is the supreme purusha, unaffected by any afflictions, actions, fruits of actions, or any inner impressions of desires.*
25. *In Ishwara is the complete manifestation of the seed of omniscience.*
- 26.. *Unconditioned by time, Ishwara is the teacher of even the most ancient teachers.*
27. *The expression of Ishwara is the mystic sound OM.*
28. *To repeat it in a meditative way reveals its meaning.*
29. *From this practise, the awareness turns inward, and the distracting obstacles vanish.*

The good news is that Yoga only asks us to **believe in the reality of consciousness** not to believe in a particular concept of divinity. Ishwara is an additional tattva or principle added to the 24 tattvas of Samkhyan Cosmology. Sometimes it is added to Purusha and sometimes it is placed under the principle of Mahat or Cosmic Intelligence as the first tattva of Prakriti. It is a special form of Purusha or cosmic intelligence that has never experienced the Wheel of Samsara.

Whilst it is similar to the God of monotheistic religions and is a theistic concept it is far more fluid and mystical. This ‘Supreme Person’ can be male or female possessing the highest sattvic mind, being beyond samsara or karma, ignorance and sorrow. Ishwara is seen as the source of all knowledge within the Vedas and all higher knowledge. It is the Guru of all Gurus, sometimes described as the first teacher. It possesses complete intelligence and all healing energies.

Unlike other traditions in which God is seen as a ‘judge’ determining our fate here our fate is attributed to karma, that is our own thoughts and actions. It is this which dictates our future rebirth. Ishwara can be seen as more of an internal or external guide than an internal or external judge. It cannot grant us liberation but can facilitate it.

In the sutras it says Ishwara’s voice is the primordial sound of OM, vibrating within the universe which can be heard in deep meditation. AUM being the ‘Pranava’ or pranic vibration of the whole universe. Using the mantra calms the mind, Ishwara can be reached through the repetition of OM whilst meditating upon its meaning, and ultimately it can lead to the realisation of the Self as Purusha.

We can consider that perhaps Isvara is included to salve the theistic need of man. Where an externalised God is a way to go beyond the ego, humility being a requirement of devotion and learning where we recognise we do not know everything. Whilst theism is not an integral part of the Sutras it is offered as an object of devotion and meditation, helping us to overcome the

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obstacles to Liberation. Indeed for some individuals devotion can be of great assistance on their journey and in their practice. It can provide great enthusiasm for practice; be an accessible way to calm the mind; and a way to fully surrender; letting go of all fear. It can be seen as a personified God or perhaps as the Great Spirit or Universal Mind and the choice of how we perceive it is our own.

Also perhaps Ishwara is included because 'spiritual beings' can be experienced in deep meditation as a higher more inclusive state of consciousness and we may personify this as a 'God' depending upon our background and needs. Initially this appears to be force outside ourselves but through enlightenment we ultimately realize that it is part of our own transcendental Self, Purusha.

[For more information on Ishwara see Carrera's translation pages 62 to 72]

The Antarayah (Obstacles) & Vikshepa (Distractions) of the mind

We are told there are Nine Antarayah & Vikshepa [1.30 to 1.31] Obstacles or Distractions of the Mind Stuff:

The obstacles: the distractions of the mind-stuff

Sutras 1.30 to 1.31 (Carrera's translation)

30. Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, sensuality, false perception, failure to reach firm ground and slipping from the ground gained – these distractions of the mind-stuff are the obstacles.

31. Accompaniments to the mental distractions include distress, despair, trembling of the body and disturbed breathing.

Do any of these seem familiar?

Regarding sutra 1.30 we are told the obstacles to progression and most commentaries tell us that they are like a waterfall, with one obstacle potentially leading to another, so for instance disease leads to dullness and so on. Generally in Indian yoga texts the first factor listed will be the most important factor and indeed with disease it may become challenging and we may feel it is even impossible to practice. All factors may of course also be experienced singly. They are all generally tamasic & rajasic physical and mental states.

Take the time to reflect upon these obstacles, for instance:

When ill can we or should we continue to practice, perhaps altering our practice to suit our situation?

Do we ever feel that when we leave a gap between practices we have to start again in some way?

The 'obstacles' can follow a causal flow, which is especially clear when some translations exchange the word *duhkha* which is given as 'distress' above, for the word 'suffering'. So a feeling of suffering (*duhkha*) leads to a feeling of despair or depression, adversely affecting the nervous system leading to trembling and unsteady breathing.

You might like to research the concept of 'duhkha' in more depth. Interestingly it can mean 'Lack of space in the heart' from impure (*dus*), cavity (*kha*) and heart (*hrdayam*) and can originate in oneself, on account of another, or due to natural disasters (Bouanchaud PYS

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translation page 46). Indeed we could say that Yoga is aimed at releasing us from dukkha or suffering.

Why are these vikshepa helpful to know?

- *Is it that we can become more aware of our own situation and better recognise signs that something needs to be done to redress balance, such as changing our diet or getting more sleep?*
- *Or perhaps that it helps to know these are commonly experienced as set backs so we do not need to lose heart?*
- *That inevitably life will include ups and downs and we should accept this is the nature of life, and see these obstacles in a more objective light?*
- *What do you think?*

The following sutras 1.32 to 1.39 (Carrera's translation) tell us ways to prevent these obstacles, keeping the mind calm or sattvic.

32. *The concentration on a single subject (or the use of one technique) is the best way to prevent the obstacles and their accompaniments.*
33. *By cultivating attitudes of friendliness towards the happy, compassion for the unhappy, delight in the virtuous, and equanimity toward the non-virtuous, the mind-stuff retains its undisturbed calmness.*
34. *Or that calm is retained by the controlled exhalation or retention of the breath.*
35. *Or that (undisturbed calmness) is attained when the perception of a subtle sense object arises and holds the mind steady..*
36. *Or by concentrating on the supreme, ever blissful Light within.*
37. *Or by concentrating on a great soul's mind which is totally freed from attachment to sense objects.*
38. *Or by concentrating on an insight had during dream or deep sleep.*
39. *Or by meditating on anything one chooses that is elevating.*

And then in sutras 1.40 & 1.41 we are told that gradually as the mind stills and concentration become possible we can move into meditation (dhyana) and then samadhi, the state of absorption where there no difference between the seer, the process of seeing and the seen. As Carrera states (page 86) "The mind, steady and clear as a crystal, temporarily gives up its self identity and seems to vanish as it allows the object of meditation alone to shine forth."

40. *Gradually one's mastery in concentration extends from the smallest particle to the greatest magnitude.*
41. *Just as the naturally pure crystal assumes shapes and colours of objects placed near it, so the yogi's mind, with its totally weakened modifications, becomes clear and balanced attains the state devoid of differentiation between knower, knowable, and knowledge. This culmination of meditation is Samadhi.*

[For more information on the Obstacles and Distractions see Carrera's translation pages 72 to 78]

Discrimination (Viveka)

As we practice the different techniques of yoga we can balance our body/mind, especially the nervous system; our mind can quieten, becoming more sattvic, and as a consequence

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the faculty of the Buddhi can grow until ultimately at a deeper level the power of discrimination enables us to dispel the ignorance of what we truly are.

"Ignorance is regarding the impermanent as permanent, The impure as pure, the painful as pleasant, and then non- self as the Self." 2.5 (Carrera's translation)

The sword of discrimination between the truth and non-truth becomes sharper as our conditioning recedes so we are less reactive and perception is clearer, and in a real way this as part of the path of Raja Yoga is the aspect which is most allied to the path of Jnana Yoga we shall explore as one of the paths of Yoga in the Bhagavad Gita.

Sutras 2.15 to 2.28 (Carrera's translation)

15. *To one of discrimination, everything is painful indeed, due to its consequences: the anxiety and fear over losing what is gained; the resulting impressions left in the mind to create renewed cravings; and the conflict among the activities of the Gunas, which control the mind.*
16. *Pain that has not yet come is avoidable.*
17. *The cause of that avoidable pain is the union of the Seer (Purusha) and the seen (Prakriti).*
18. *The seen is the nature of the gunas: illumination, activity, and inertia. It consists of the elements and sense organs, whose purpose is to provide both experiences and liberation to the purusha.*
19. *The stages of the gunas are specific, non specific, defined, and undifferentiated.*
20. *The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing which, although pure, appears to see through the mind.*
21. *The seen exists only for the sake of the Seer.*
22. *Although destroyed for him who has attained liberation, the seen exists for others, being common to them.*
23. *The union of owner (Purusha) and owned (Prakriti) causes the recognition of the nature and powers of them both.*
24. *The cause of this union is ignorance*
25. *Without this ignorance, no such union occurs. This is the independence of the Seer.*
26. *Uninterrupted discriminative discernment is the method for its removal.*
27. *One's wisdom in the final stages is sevenfold*
28. *By the practises of the limbs of yoga, the impurities dwindle away and there dawns the light of wisdom leading to discriminative discernment.*

With regards to an explanation of the seven stages of growth of viveka you will find different answers to this in the different commentaries.

In Iyengar's translation of the Sutras he sums up the seven stages of growth of this wisdom of discrimination as the integration of physical body, senses, prana, mind, intellect, rasa (or tastes of life) and of the Self, i.e. he sees this pathway of growth through the lens of the koshas. So, as Alistair Shearer says it becomes possible to realize the Self.

"Yoga is a way to restore our wholeness, our integrity as complete human beings, by unifying the personality around a centre that is silent and unbounded." PYS page 24

Gradually there is a deeper awareness of the nature of reality so that our identification changes, and ultimately we are no longer subject to Avidya and the transitory movement of Prakriti. This of course is not a mental development, where our intellectual knowledge grows rather a surrendering of these aspects of ourselves into the inner silence within.

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The Chinese Farmer Story

Once upon a time there was a Chinese farmer whose horse ran away. That evening, all of his neighbors came around to commiserate. They said, “We are so sorry to hear your horse has run away. This is most unfortunate.” The farmer said, “**Maybe.**”

The next day the horse came back bringing seven wild horses with it, and in the evening everybody came back and said, “Oh, isn’t that lucky. What a great turn of events. You now have eight horses!” The farmer again said, “**Maybe.**”

The following day his son tried to break one of the horses, and while riding it, he was thrown and broke his leg. The neighbors then said, “Oh dear, that’s too bad,” and the farmer responded, “**Maybe.**”

The next day the conscription officers came around to conscript people into the army, and they rejected his son because he had a broken leg. Again all the neighbors came around and said, “Isn’t that great!” Again, he said, “**Maybe.**”

The whole process of nature is an integrated process of immense complexity, and it’s really impossible to tell whether anything that happens in it is good or bad — because you never know what will be the consequence of the misfortune; or, you never know what will be the consequences of good fortune.” Alan Watts

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