

## Yoga Sutras – Living the Science of Harmonious Union

The yogi makes every effort not to be a howler telling untruth or a simpleton believing in something because somebody said it or it is written somewhere. (243)

You might have noticed the highly aggressive and conceited nature of very intelligent people who are incorrigibly egoistic. This is the case of *sattva* losing its game when bracketed with *rajas*. The only way to keep the superiority of the leadership of *sattva* is by making it intimately loyal to the pure light of the Absolute. (YS 337-8)

According to Vyasa, Yoga is *samadhi*, “equipoise in consciousness.” It is not the steady state of inert matter in its stagnation of evolution, but the continuous rebalancing of a poise that is kept up in and through the flux of a cosmic order of continuous transformation and transvaluation. (3)

In the definition of Yoga given in this sutra [I:2] there is no mention of the total restraint of consciousness. From that we deduce that cognitive consciousness continues to operate even when restraint is exercised. (10)

We do not see sunlight except as it is reflected from an illuminated object. Similarly, *purusha* as such is not seen. When the pure light of *purusha* illuminates an object, that illumination is the person's cognizance. In that cognizance the person experiences not merely the self-effulgence of *purusha* but also the clear and pure mirroring quality of nature. That particular quality of nature is called *sattva* for the reason that it gives an identity of a cognition that is not falsified with any defect of the mirroring agent. (YS 10-11)

Events are not registered on a clean slate. Each time a centrifugal reverberation is created in the psychosomatic apparatus, all the

latent culturings of the past are stirred and the most relevant of the potencies that have been acquired surge into dynamic operation. This, in turn, creates new potencies to come to fruition in the future. If the painful tendencies are slowly weaned off, the neutral witnessing consciousness can shine forth in its full effulgence. Such is the view of Vyasa about *vritti*, modifications. (YS 29)

For your actualization, you require appropriate instruments, congenial environments, and the will to actualize. Thus it is up to you to live in an environment that is not conducive for drawing out the potentials of any evil disposition with which you are genetically endowed. Again, it is up to you not to will an action that can strengthen an evil *samskara*, a malignant disposition. It is again in your power to nullify the potentiality of a negative force by accentuating the positive thrust of a benevolent disposition. This freedom of the individual to change themselves, to reorganize the psyche, is given in the present sutra as the cultivation of detachment and repeated exercise in the building up of benevolent dispositions as well as the eradication of malevolent dispositions. The cultivation of non-attachment is here termed *vairagya* and the repetitive practice by which a desirable potency can be actualized is called *abhyasa*. (56)

An Indian god is never more serious than Shakespeare's Puck or Ariel. After all, Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and Devi are all only poetic fancies, metaphorically referring to deeper psychic realities. (58)

As an aspirant yogi you have to take initiative with unflagging interest, to have a critical examination of your preformed habits, and then scrape or modify the behavioral pattern in such a manner that it is cleansed of ignorant adherence to evil or superficial modes. Instead of a static view of an effect or a cause, you are expected to develop a transparency of vision by which you can clearly see the manifested effect and the entire process through

which, from the primeval cause to the present effect, the manifestation came. You should also have the sagacity to unhook all expectations of the future from the performances in which you are presently engaged. (YS 59)

Nature is said to have two inverse impacts on our minds. One is the concealing of truth and the other is the precipitating of imaginary pictures that are easily taken for true. The veiling principle is called *avarana* and the projecting principle is called *vikshepa*. Eliminating the *vikshepa* from our mind will automatically pull off the veil. Every moment is thus a moment of challenge to decipher the mystery of life presented in the form of enigmas, paradoxes, and conundrums. That is why it is said that there is no holiday in spirituality and no one can act as a proxy. (YS 59)

Scriptures of most religions treat their votaries as if they are immature people with animal instincts and a discrimination that is no better than that of children. Moral norms are taught with the help of anecdotes and parables, which forcefully describe how wickedness is drastically punished and good is always rewarded. Believers' minds are fed with the lures of an enchanting heaven, a place where the most exaggerated hedonistic pleasures are lavished on those who are selected to enter paradise. In the same manner, hell is described as a terrible place of torture. Both the preachers and their congregations forget that when they die their brains and sensory systems transform into dead matter and thereafter the dead have no bodies to experience pain or pleasure. When the faithful are told that they might go to hell and be cast in the burning flames of brimstone, the fear of being scorched comes to them. Such outright stupidity is enshrined in the most adorable scriptures of all religions. Most people remain ethical in their outward life, fearing such punishments, and do good to others, coveting an honored place in heaven. Henri Bergson, in his *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, exposed the dubiousness of static religion and closed

morality. The alternatives are dynamic religion and open morality.  
(73-4)

When your own nature is becoming more and more evident to yourself, the imperfections of your social personality will become more and more clear. In its place *īśvara*—the universal person not afflicted with the love/hate dualities of physico-social life—can be accepted as a better model for imitation or identification.

The word *īśvara* is derived from *īś*, which literally means “ruling from within.” The life of an individual is not an amorphous chaotic structure that comes from the randomness of the physical world. It has a goal to achieve and laws to abide by. The innate law of everything that governs, controls, and maneuvers it to function for the purposeful attainment of a given goal is *īśvara*. If you know there is such a guiding principle in your life, life becomes all the more dear and an incentive comes to live as correctly as possible. Thereafter, the lower aspect of the self will always be in resonance with *īśvara*, the higher Self. That *īśvara* is looked upon as your true teacher or preceptor. Relating always with that *īśvara* to develop insight into the meaning of your life combines both the purificatory and educative aspects. (149)

Yoga is not a passive way of closing one’s eyes to injustice. If the yogi has a moral conscience, he or she has to challenge all three kinds of involvement in violence (greed, anger and delusion).  
(267)

The element of happiness that permeates both a situation and its witness sometimes becomes manifested as a time-transcending presence that has the quality of a beatitude or non-eventuality. Take for example, the situation where you are surrounded by a beautiful panorama and your eyes are focused on the changing colors of the setting Sun. The pale blue sky, blushing clouds, gentle breeze, your rhythmic breath, and unidentified thoughts that gently pass in your head are all one with your inner state of peace.

Although technically there are modulations of consciousness, they are like the alpha waves of a relaxed brain. Hence, that can be qualified as a natural cessation of *citta vritti* (mental modulation). (YS, 367)

It is not difficult to cultivate an awareness that is both critical and sympathetic. (371)