



The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

Patanjali

Sage, yogi, grammarian, Ayurvedist.
One man or many. Compiled the Yoga Sutras.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali is divided into four *padas* (chapters)

Pada: foot, step, part, journey, chapter

1. **Samadhi Pada:** Awareness - This pada explains the meaning of yoga. Samadhi is found in the full experience of the now and that what prevents us from being in the now is *vrtti*.
2. **Sadhana Pada:** Practice - This pada explains how to get to Samadhi. It defines the methods for stilling the *vrtti*, which will enable the individual to attain Samadhi.
3. **Vibhuti Pada:** Accomplishments - This pada explains what happens when you can bring Samadhi into your life.
4. **Kaivalya Pada:** Liberation - This pada is about living in harmony with your karma; being in a continuous state of Samadhi.



Excerpts from translations of Book I: Samadhi Pada (Portion on Awareness)

Chapter 1, Sutra 1: *atha yogānuśāsanam*:

Now the exposition of Yoga is being made. ~ Sri Swami Satchidananda, The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

- 1.1 With prayers for divine blessings, now begins an exposition of the sacred art of yoga.
~ BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali
- 1.1 Here begins the authoritative instruction on Yoga. ~ TKV Desikachar, The Heart of Yoga
- 1.1 Now, the teachings of Yoga. ~ Chip Hartranft, The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali
- 1.1 Now, the teachings of yoga [are presented]. ~ Edwin F. Bryant, the YOGA SUTRAS of Patanjali



Ashtanga Yoga

Eight Limbed Yoga

ashta: eight
anga: limb

On the path of yoga all eight aspects
develop concurrently and in an interrelated way.

~ T.K.V. Desikachar, *Heart of Yoga*



LIMB 1

YAMA: restraints; social ethics; outward practices

This limb is our attitude towards our environment, people and things around us. These commandments are the rules of morality for society. {Sutras: 2.30, 2.31, 2.35 –2.39}

- **Ahimsa:** non-violence
- **Satya:** truthfulness
- **Asteya:** non-stealing
- **Brahmacharya:** continence; self restraint
- **Aparigraha:** non-greed; non-attachment

LIMB 2

NIYAMA: internal restraints; personal ethics; inward practices

This limb is our attitude toward ourselves. They are the rules of conduct that apply to individual discipline, while yamas are universal in application. {Sutras 2.32, 2.40 – 2.45}

- **Saucha:** purity; cleanliness
- **Santosh:** contentment
- **Tapas:** heat; to burn impurities; self-discipline
- **Svadhya:** self-study; study of spiritual books
- **Isvarapranidhana:** surrender to a higher power

LIMB 3

ASANA: posture; seat {Sutras 2.46, 2.47, 2.48}

The Vedas (India's oldest scriptures) do not contain the word asana, but they make use of the verbal root "as," which means to sit. Asana fully developed in 1000 CE with Hatha Yoga.

LIMB 4

PRANAYAMA: breath control {Sutras 2.49 – 2.51}

Pranayama is the conscious, deliberate regulation of the breath, replacing unconscious patterns of breathing.

THE EIGHT LIMBS CONTINUED

- LIMB 5** **PRATYAHARA: sense withdrawal** {Sutras 2.54 – 2.55}
Pratyahara is to withdraw oneself from that which nourishes the senses. It occurs automatically in pranayama and meditation if we are deeply absorbed in what we are doing. Also creating a situation in which the mind is so absorbed in something that the senses no longer respond to other objects.
- LIMB 6** **DHARANA: concentration** {Sutra 3.1}
Dharana is the beginning of meditation. It is training the mind to meditate by focusing on a single object.
- LIMB 7** **DHYANA: meditation** {Sutra 3.2}
The Yoga Sutras, Sutra 3.2: “Dhyana is the continuous flow of cognition toward that object.” Normally, what we are doing when we say we are meditating is dharana. After long practice of dharana, gradually the “flow of cognition” gets a little longer and it becomes dhyana.
- LIMB 8** **SAMADHI: union; yoga; oneness; contemplation; bliss** {Sutra 3.3}
“Samadhi is the end of the sadhaka’s quest. At the peak of his meditation he passes into the state of Samadhi, where his body and senses are at rest as if he is asleep, his faculties of mind and reason are alert as if he is awake, yet he has gone beyond consciousness. The person in a state of Samadhi is fully conscious and alert.” ~ B.K.S, Iyengar

Some teachers describe the first four limbs as external and the last four limbs as internal. Others say that you practice the first four limbs with sheer will and then the last four limbs occur spontaneously....A balanced practice is the simultaneous investigation of all eight limbs as each limb compliments every other limb. ~ Michael Stone, *The Inner Tradition of Yoga*



**[Learn more about The Yoga Sanctuary's 2024
Yoga Teacher Training Program HERE!](#)**