

Universal Ideas from Patanjali's Yoga Sūtra on Mind & Mental Health: Philosophy and Practice

as part of the Workshop on
Mental Wellness & Stress Management
Curricular Reforms and Implementation – Yoga in Stress Management

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ātmaavidyā

no hard separations:
'curricular', 'extracurricular',
'vocational', Or 'arts',
'humanities', and 'sciences',
Or 'vocational' and 'academic'
streams.



knowledge for the
'complete realization and
liberation of the Self'

Richa Chopra, PhD
Core Faculty, Centre of Excellence
for Indian Knowledge Systems,
IIT Kharagpur

Rich heritage of the eternal
Indian Knowledge Systems.

knowledge (jñāna),
wisdom (Prajña),
and truth (Satya)
as the highest
human goal

Full human potential encompassing

satyābuddhi

ahimsā

niškāma śeva tyāga

dhṛti sānti

“A disease-free body, quiver-free breath, stress-free mind, inhibition-free intellect, obsession free memory, ego that includes all, and a soul which is free from sorrow is the birth right of every human being”

Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Founder, The Art of Living

Sandarbh

Study of mind and behaviour has evolved under the rubric of 'Psychology' - increasingly attended more and more nuances of behaviour with a predominantly **physical scientific lens**...

...Positivist and anthropocentric view leading to **utter neglect of the inner world, self-awareness, experiential realities** and insights from Eastern perspectives including the Indian Knowledge Systems (such as Vedānta, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Āyurveda etc.).

...leading to the acceptance of a lopsided view of reality causing an impoverished perspective on **human potential**.

sā vidyā yā vimuktaye [1.19.41; Viṣṇu Purāṇa]

‘Knowledge is that which liberates’

- Progressive expansion of the ‘Self’ is the central construct of ‘Indian Psychology’ – an approach based on ideas and practices embedded in ancient texts such as the **Vedas**, **Upaniṣads**, **Bhagavadgītā**, **Yogasūtras**.
- One of its significant tenets direct us to the **pañcakośa** – the five sheaths covering the gross, subtle and astral bodies of the individual ‘Self’ – *annamayakośa* (body cell), *prāṇamayakośa* (life cell), *manomayakośa* (mind cell), *vijñānamayakośa* (knowledge cell) and *ānandamayakośa* (bliss cell).
- And that *pañcakośa* embodies treasures of the human ‘Self’, attainment of which can remove deficiencies, complexities, stresses, worries, sufferings and agonies.
- The **Yogasūtras** of Patañjali delineate the five modulations of the human mind – Yoga, being the act of **freeing the mind from its clutches** – a remarkable and unparalleled contribution to the science of behaviour.



Taittirīyopaniṣad | Varuṇi Vidyā

bhrgurvai varunih | varuna-mpitaramupasasara | adhihi bhagavo brahmeti |... |
sa tapo - tapyata | sa tapastapta || iti prathamo-nuvakah

- bhṛgu, the well known son of varuṇa approached his father with the request 'O revered sir teach me 'Brahman'. To him Varuna said 'this food, vital force, eye, ear mind, speech – these are the aids to the knowledge of Brahman. 'crave to know well that from which all these beings take birth, that by which they live after being born, that which towards they move and into which they merge. That is Brahman...

annam-brahmeti vyajanat | ... iti dvityo-nuvakah ||
He realized food as Brahman

prano brahmeti vyajanat |... iti trityo nuvakah ||
He realized the vital force as Brahman

mano brahmeti vyajanat |...' iti chatutho-nuvakah ||
He realized the mind as Brahman

vijnam-brahmeti vyajanat/..
iti panchamo-nuvakah ||
He realized the mind as Brahman

anando brahmeti vyajanat/... iti sastho nuvakah ||
He realized Bliss as Brahman



Patanjali's Yoga Sūtra: Philosophical Ideas

*ḥogena cittasya padena vacam / malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena //
yo pakarottam pravaram muninam / patanjalin pranjaliranato smi //*

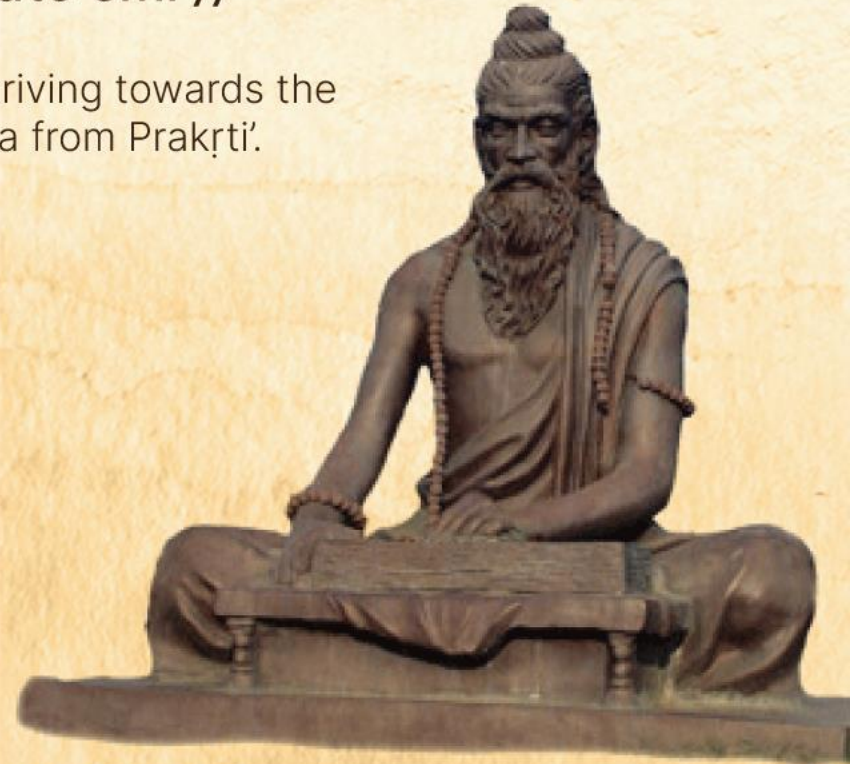
Patanjali, the author of Yoga system of philosophy employs Yoga to signify a striving towards the realization of Puruṣa or the Divine Self (Real Self) - 'an effort to separate Puruṣa from Prakṛti'.

IDEA 1

Stilling the Mind through Yoga

yogaḥ citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ ||1.2||

The education of yogic realization is achieved when the vacillations of the collective mind cease.



IDEA 2

Separating the Seer from the seen – Viyoga

tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe avasthānam ||1.3||

When this Realization happens then you, the Ātmic Seer, are rested in your true Self.

IDEA 3

Nature of the Mind

vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra ||1.4||

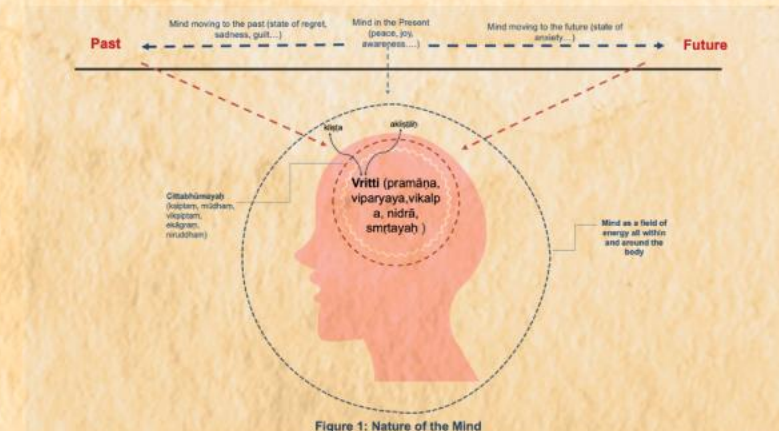
But at other times when you are enmeshed in thought waves and mental images, then your true identity as the 'Self' is lost. There is identification with the modifications of citta.

vṛttayaḥ pancatayyaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ ||1.5||

There are five kinds of thought waves – some painful, others not painful.

pramāṇa-viparyaya-vikalpa-nidrā-smṛtayaḥ ||1.6||

These five kinds of thought waves are right knowledge, wrong knowledge, delusion, sleep and memory



IDEA 4

What makes the Mind?

tat asaṅkhyeya vāsanābhiḥ citram api parārtham saṁhatyakāritvāt ||4.24||

The citta or collective mind accumulates countless desires and fears although it exists solely for the sake of being close to the Seer because without its light, the mind cannot function.

kleśamūlaḥ karmāśayaḥ dṛṣṭādrṣṭa-janma-vedanīyaḥ ||2.12||

A man's latent tendencies have been created by his past thoughts and actions. These tendencies will bear fruits, both in this life and in lives to come.

ekasamaye cobhayānavadhāraṇam ||4.20||

The mind itself is an object and an instrument of knowledge; and therefore, cannot comprehend both subject and object simultaneously.

atītānāgatam svarūpataḥ asti adhvabhedāt dharmāṇām || 4.12||

Mind contains within it in potential form all mental characteristics manifest in the past and those which can manifest in the future. Because of the law of cause and effect, karma, the characteristics that will arise to become visible in the future will depend upon the path you travel in the present.



IDEA 5

The Sufferance of the Mind

*vyādhi-styāna-saṁśaya-pramādālasyāvīratibhrāntidarśanālabdhabhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni
cittavikṣepāḥ te antarāyāḥ ||1.30 ||*

The nine obstacles to Self-knowledge distracting the body and mind are disease, dullness, doubt, negligence, laziness, dissipation, delusion, lack of concentration to achieve higher consciousness and instability

duḥkha-daurmanasyāṅgamejayatva-śvāsapraśvāsāḥ vikṣepa-sahabhavaḥ ||1.31||

These distractions are accompanied by grief, despondency, trembling of the body and irregular breathing

avidyāsmitā-rāga-dveṣābhīniveśaḥ pañca kleśāḥ ||2.3||

There are five primal causes of suffering: Avidya – ignorance of your true Self; Asmita – egoism and its self-centredness; Rāga – attachment to pleasure; Dvesha – aversion to pain and Abhinivesha – clinging to life from fear from death.

IDEA 6

Transcending the Mind Through Practice

*vyutthāna-nirodha-saṁskārayoḥ abhibhava-prādurbhāvau nirodhakṣaṇa-cittānvayaḥ
nirodha-pariṇāmaḥ ||3.9||*

This transformation of mind occurs when your thoughts are restrained and cease to react to the appearance and disappearance of latent memories or samskaras.

*yama-niyamāsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-
samādhayaḥ aṣṭau aṅgāni ||2.29||*

Yama – self restraint, niyama – self discipline, asana - postures, pranayama – regulation of prana, pratyahara – withdrawal of senses, dharana - concentration, dhyana-meditation, samadhi – absorption in oneness, ecstasy. This is Aṣṭāṅgayoga.

vitarka-bādhane pratipakṣa-bhāvanam ||2.33 ||

When you are disturbed by unwholesome and negative thoughts and emotions try to meditate on their opposite qualities. These are called Pratipaksha Bhavana.



IDEA 6

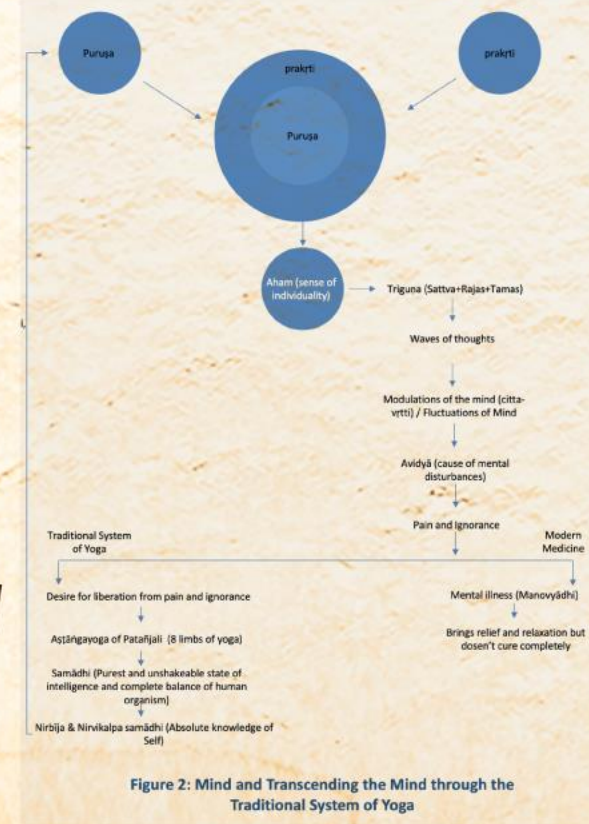
Transcending the Mind Through Practice

abhyāsa-vairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ || 1.12||

The cessation of the five transformations of the mind may be achieved by Abhyasa – sustained practice of withdrawal of the senses from their objects and Vairagya – dispassion to the ways of the world and its temptations. Refuse to be swayed by the emotional pendulum of attraction and repulsion.

sa tu dīrghakāla-nairantarya-satkārāsevitaḥ dṛḍha-bhūmiḥ ||1.14||

This practice when persevered in for a long time without a break, makes you firmly grounded and established in yoga.



ekam sat viprā bahudhā vadanti

There is one reality; the wise speak of it in different ways - Ṛgveda 1.164.46

Svāsthya, the Sanskrit term for health, is made up of sva (self) and āstha (abiding). Thus, etymologically svāsthya means "Self-Abiding." When the noise of the body and mind is quieted, one abides in the Self and remains in a state of good health.

Glimpse of Interventions

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