

Insight is Everything, Volume 2 of 2

is a translation and commentary
on the Yoga Sutra of Maharishi Patanjali
who is the worldwide accepted ultimate authority on Yoga.

This book deals with the last two chapters

of the four chapters of the ancient text of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra.

The first two chapters of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra are translated
and commented upon in **Insight is Everything, Volume 1 of 2.**

It can be ordered through my website: www.selfrealisation.net,
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Insight
is
Everything

*Ancient Wisdom
for Modern People*

*An new translation with
a liberating commentary
on the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali*

*Volume 2 of 2
The Ultimate Insight*





*Satyaat
naasti
pari
dharmaha*

*There is no
higher religion
than the Truth*



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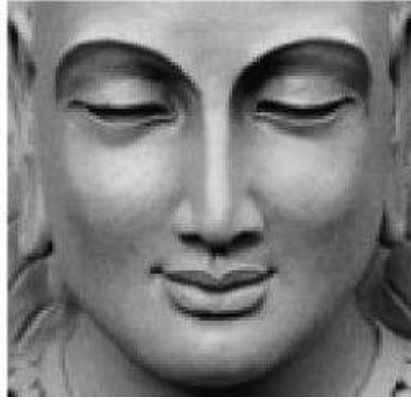
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Maharishi Patanjali

Foreword and Introduction

Everything a person says and does is based on the knowledge he or she has. What happens when the knowledge we have is defective or even incorrect? Then our thoughts, words and actions will also be flawed or incorrect! What happens when seven billion people have defective or flawed knowledge? Then they will think, speak and act poorly or incorrectly! Then we as humanity are in trouble!

I believe it is not necessary to elaborate on this. However, it is good to keep this final diagnosis of human suffering clearly in mind. Why? Because without this adequate and deep diagnosis, a real therapy and cure are not possible!

Many people are doing their best and are committed to improving the destiny of humanity. This usually involves combating symptoms. They try to fight terror, they try to fight diseases, they try to fight crime, poverty, hunger, etc.

Yet all these well-intentioned endeavors are very similar to the well-intentioned acts of a group of inexperienced gardeners, who are taking care of dried-out trees in an orchard. They work hard, often in shifts, to treat the withered leaves of the trees with water. They notice that certain branches are actually about to break off, so they prop them up

with all kinds of means. Others who have experimented with chemicals are going to treat the fruits with chemicals in the hope that they will become bigger and juicier. The chemical experts notice that many trees have a certain kind of disease and they try to treat them by injecting chemicals into their bark. Young trees, which are still healthy and strong, are vaccinated with chemicals, in the hope that this will prevent them from drying out later. Others start cutting and sawing dried parts from the trunk and branches. When the trees catch fire because of the drought that prevails inside them, the fire brigade quickly sets out to put out the fire. That's how the people lived with the sick and dried up trees, and everybody thought that was the most normal thing in the world.

One day, a wise gardener comes by and sees at a glance that the trees are in a condition that is far from ideal! Because he understands the inner mechanism that applies to all trees, he immediately knows what to do to improve the overall situation. He is doing something that most people don't understand. He starts to water the invisible roots of the trees.

Nobody had ever thought of that, because for these people it meant: "out of sight, out of mind." The actions of the wise gardener met with a lot of resistance! Those who supplied the chemicals saw their business in jeopardy and resisted tooth and nail. The fire brigade was also outraged, as the trees were now beginning to absorb moisture from the inside, and therefore there were far fewer fires. The tree cutters protested strongly, as the trees became much healthier inside and therefore no longer needed any surgery.

But after some time and after a lot of bickering, it became clear that the approach of the gardener was effective. As if by magic, the whole orchard blossomed and the fruits became very juicy and colorful! All the people who depended on the orchard for their nourishment grew stronger and happier, as the fruits had now become much healthier!

Thus, the "root philosophy" of the wise gardener was gradually accepted. He had explained to them that every visible tree is based on invisible roots. And by taking care of the invisible roots, and giving

them daily attention and water, all trees could blossom to their full potential effortlessly from within!

The gardener had thus introduced a new point of view, and when the people adjusted their thinking, speaking and acting to this insight, things turned out to be better. Hence, his philosophy of the roots and sap of the trees gradually became widely accepted, and this ushered in a new era of health, contentment and happiness.

Yes, dear reader, good old Patanjali is like the wise gardener, and it is about time for mankind to take a closer look at his simple and universal philosophy of life. His short but powerful Sutras (statements) shed light on our inner nature and essence. They also tell us how we can experience, enliven and strengthen our innermost nature. After reading this book, we will have a deep understanding of everything it takes to live a happy, healthy, successful, and therefore fulfilling life!

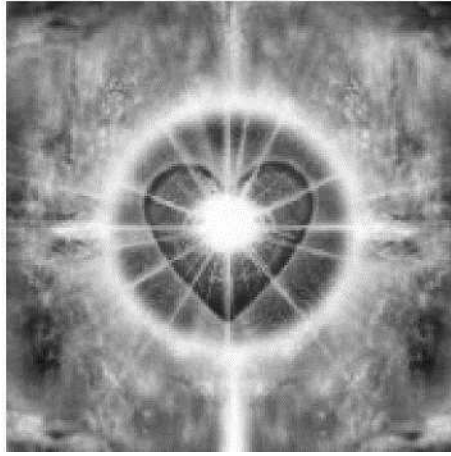
This book describes a new paradigm of reality – a new frame of reference, a new world view – that also includes a new self-image and a new form of spirituality. This new paradigm of reality makes it possible for us to learn to see reality as it is! This new paradigm offers us a map of life that fits exactly to reality. By learning to think, speak and act in the light of this eternal and universal paradigm, our individual life, as well as that of society and of humanity as a whole, becomes manageable in an easy and effortless manner. This makes it possible to experience true freedom, happiness, peace, justice, health, wisdom and love in daily life.

Dear reader, I will no longer hold you back, and I will open the door to a clear translation of the ancient text, accompanied by a commentary, that clearly reveals the simplicity and perfection of Patanjali's insights. I wish you good luck and recognition, reading this eternal and universal wisdom!



Chapter Three

Supernormal Abilities



Chapter Three

Supernormal Abilities

Sutra 1. Dharana is the holding of attention in one area.

Dharana is usually translated as concentration or focus. If one wants to achieve anything in life, be it something internal (e.g. mental maturity), or something external (e.g. a successful career), we must be able to keep our attention on something for a long time. Also, having a certain ideal in your life is a good example of what dharana can mean in practical life. Dharana – holding the attention fixed on something – works in all of us, as life naturally sticks to itself! What does it mean that life sticks to itself? That is to say, it holds on to happiness, it holds on to bliss! Completely automatically (= *atma*-matically!) the Self holds on to its intention and its birthright, which is the manifestation of its inherent (transcendental) happiness on the third dimensional

plane. After all, manifestation and expansion of happiness is the inherent goal of life.

Ultimately, it is this deepest and inherent tendency of our consciousness that enables tenacity, focus or concentration on a desired life experience from within! I wish to emphasize the fact that dharana, or focus, must come *from within*, from the center of the soul, otherwise it will not achieve its purpose. **Life is designed to be a blissful experience, not a laborious toil or the like.** Any pursuit of anything should be supported and nourished from within. Then one feels inspired, carried and propelled by life itself. This is the most pure and ideal experience of dharana.

Therefore, the ultimate and universal dharana to be practiced, is to focus on the acquisition and stabilization of an inner state of happiness. The desire to be happy is the basis of all our actions. Whether we are young or old, holy or criminal, educated or underdeveloped, everything we do, we do with a view to perpetuating or deepening our happiness. Happiness is really a sustainable and natural focus, as it is the inherent nature of our own subjectivity. The Self must and will manifest itself and experience and express its true nature.

Dharana usually refers to directing the attention to something or someone – to some *object of knowledge*. The next two limbs of yoga (Dhyana and Samadhi) concern themselves respectively with *the process of knowing* and the *knower himself*. The last three of the eight limbs of yoga therefore form a special group. They form three aspects of one and the same process of one-pointed orientation. The following three Sutras explain this process.

Sutra 2. Dhyana is the constant refinement of attention while focusing on a particular area.

As in the previous Sutra, I choose to use the Sanskrit term, instead of translating it. Usually *dhyana* is translated as *meditation* and that is correct. Nevertheless, in this translation, the essential meaning of the word *dhyana* does not come to light. Dhyana literally means “refine-

ment”. When we move towards success on the inner plane (gaining psychological maturity) or towards success on the outer plane (living in abundance based on activities that we want to do with heart and soul), an increasing refinement of our whole personality is implied. Our inner perception becomes more and more subtle, until we transcend even the most subtle level of mental activity – the feeling of “I as doer” – and we become aware of our true identity.

In that very process of *inner* cultivation, there is increasing efficiency on the *outer* plane. The ideas we cherish about life, the world, society, and about the role that we as a person want to play in this whole, become more and more accurate and also more sophisticated. We get closer and closer to “the truth”, both on the inner plane and on the outer plane. After all, these two always go hand in hand; they are always an expression of each other. They are the two sides of the same coin that shapes our lives – the subjective and the objective side. Because of the inseparable link between these two, the popular but oh-so-profound saying arose: **As the inside, so the outside; As above, so below.** Paracelsus, from whom this statement comes, was aware of the fact that the outer conditions of each individual soul are a reflection of its inner condition. **The outer is always an analogy of the inner.** All forms of astrology are based on this universal truth. The arrangement of the Sun, Moon and Planets against the background of the fixed stars turns out to be a reflection of what is happening here on Earth. Does this make us a slave to the movements of the celestial bodies? Absolutely not! Or maybe I should say, not absolutely. It all comes down to what we identify with. If we identify completely and exclusively with our body-mind-soul system and its activities, we unconsciously become slaves to the heavenly mechanisms.

However, when we identify with our true Self – the field of all possibilities – we then identify with the true “I”, which stands for *inner* value of consciousness. The word “I” can stand for *inner* bliss as well as for *inner* sorrow. When we have become aware of our true essence, we experience our *integral individual* nature. In short, when we identify with our true selves, we become kings or queens of our own lives, the smiths of our own happiness, and the outer conditions reflect our internal peace.

This “reflection mechanism” is a universal law. It can be called the law of “cosmic correspondence”. It functions on all levels of creation, and is as effective on the earthly plane as it is on the heavenly plane. In other words, it works when we are in a gross body, and also when we have left the gross body: **our outer circumstances are always and eternally the expression or manifestation of our inner condition!** It should be noted here that the quality of inner awareness cannot always easily be read from the *objective* nature of the circumstances, but from the way in which we *perceive* and *appreciate* the outer circumstances.

Gaining insight into this cosmic correspondence also falls under the concept of *dhyana*. In Sanskrit, the syllable *dhi* refers to the light of consciousness, and *ya* refers to the intellect. *Dhyana refers to the refinement of our intellect, until our consciousness is able to distinguish between the relative and the absolute.* In other words, until we are able to perceive the absolute as the origin of the relative. In an even further stage of refinement, the intellect will be able to recognize the dynamics that are inherent in the absolute. We become able to perceive dynamism in silence, and silence in dynamism. This brings us to the next Sutra.

Sutra 3. Samadhi means that our awareness becomes one, as it were, with the object of perception, and the essence of the object becomes clearly visible.

Here Patanjali defines samadhi as a state of consciousness that is still related to a particular object of knowledge, perceived as something outside of oneself. Nevertheless, it is a state in which mental scattering has completely ceased to exist. The knower, the process of knowing and the known become united in the awareness of the subject; the knower. Everything that is known at that level is fully understood. One sees the reality as it is. The object of knowledge is understood at the level of *ritam bhara pragya*. The *vikshepas* – causes of confusion mentioned in Sutra 30 of the 1st chapter – have been overcome and are no longer a factor that can distort, scatter, stagger, overshadow or dull the internal coherence of consciousness. The brain now works as a cohe-

rent unit, forming a clean, stable mirror for the stable and clear experience of the Self. Whatever the Self then focuses its attention on becomes part of its limitless nature.

This level of samadhi is not as rare as most commentators on the Yoga Sutra have thought. Most commentators describe all the eight limbs of yoga as quite difficult, but especially the last three. Samadhi is said to be something that can only be achieved by a formidable persistence after one has mastered the previous seven stages one by one. Samadhi would only be attainable through a great effort of will, through an almost inhuman discipline, and above all, through the isolation from having a social life.

However, this is a distorted view ... one that is very misleading to the many sincere seekers of truth. **Nowhere in the entire Yoga Sutra does Patanjali suggest that the growth towards unity consciousness would be difficult or troublesome**, or that it would require great discipline, or that it would require withdrawal from the social system. In the complementary book on the philosophy of yoga, the Bhagavad Gita, yoga is defined as “skill in action” (*yoga karma su kaushalam*). The knowledge and practice of yoga is traditionally taught, says Krishna, to people who carry great social responsibility, such as kings and other leading figures. It is precisely these leaders of society, who are thus in full life, who desperately needed (and need) these holistic insights and calming exercises, otherwise they would be “eaten up” by the myriad obligations that constantly call on them.

The growth of yoga, by definition, is the growth of joy, naturalness and effortlessness in our lives. Conscious-ness as such is pure happiness (*Ananda*), so a practice that can effectively bring us to our essence is by definition a joyful one. It can be concluded from this irrefutable and universal axiom, that if the exercise of the limbs of yoga is not experienced as joyful, then one is not doing it correctly. Reports from real life also show that the practice of yoga, including the experience of samadhi, is very natural and fulfilling for successful people. It is precisely the active, dynamic and successful people who will immediately recognize this supreme knowledge of Patanjali, when presented in a correct way.

Samadhi, as defined in this Sutra, is exactly what successful athletes, artists, scientists, inspired leaders of society and people in general who are creative in life experience off and on. They don't even have to sit with their eyes closed or do breathing exercises for this level of samadhi to occur. **Samadhi is a natural experience for all those who are on the path of self-actualization.** Abraham Maslow has "re-searched" many successful people, and they all report experiences of this kind, which provide a fulfilling and motivating factor in their lives. In fact, samadhi, as defined here by Patanjali, is the hallmark of successful, self-realizing people.

More recently, the term *flow* came into use. The American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentimihalyi (of Hungarian origin) described the experience of being *in flow* as an *autotelic experience*, an experience that is intrinsically rewarding, and thus activities are carried out for the joy and fulfillment that is experienced in the activities itself. This is in contrast to *exotelic activities*, which we perform in order to achieve something other than the activity itself (see his book *Flow – the psychology of optimal experience*).

The concept *autotelic* is based on two Greek words: *auto*, which we all know means *self*, and *telos*, which means *goal*. Thus, it refers to a subjective state in which the acting person experiences so much joy and fulfillment in performing the action, that he performs it without seeking any additional benefit or reward. **The act itself is experienced as rewarding!** An example would be a happy truck driver who not only does his job to earn money, but pays attention to the work for the sake of the work as such. As a result, he lives in the here and now. He experiences the salary that he receives monthly as an automatic by-product of his state of fulfillment. Such a truck driver is daily in a state of *flow*, which is a modern word for the experience of samadhi. I know this is not a common way of speaking about samadhi, but that is precisely why I must do so. Nor is it a common way of talking about truck drivers, but it would be nice if we would start to think of them in this way.

The naturalness of the flow experience becomes very clear when, for example, we observe our cat or dog in his or her natural functioning.

These beautiful creatures live completely in the here and now, and are therefore always in a state of flow, or in an autotelic state, if you will!

Any athlete who is successful and enjoys his profession is “totally absorbed” in what he does, at least at the times of his peak performance. Then he is in flow! He is really happy inside, fulfilled. Then he delivers his top performance. At that time no distracting thought remains in his mind, and he feels he has everything “under control”. Also every artist knows those moments of ecstasy in which he is completely absorbed in his work. Every dancer knows that he really dances well, when he has become one with the dance, as it were. At such a time, his mind is no longer an interpreting and commenting filter between his consciousness and his physical activity. In that state of flow, the mind has become that *transparent crystal* mentioned in Sutra 41 of the 1st chapter.

A scientist who is discovering a new and hitherto unknown aspect of natural law, will also report that it clicked spontaneously in his consciousness; that there was a moment of an *aha experience*, in which he was beyond his ego, and completely absorbed in his work. On this level of coherent consciousness great things can be achieved. If our consciousness really wants to discover a new aspect of universal truth, or create something really beautiful, then we must function at the level of samadhi. Every true lover or beloved here on Earth experiences that his or her love lifts him or her above the egocentric point of view, and thus he or she experiences the blissful nature of the Self.

The “rising above the ego” refers to the disappearance of the inner dialogue; the silencing of the inner ego voice that is always evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, judging, protecting itself, defending itself, promoting itself, and that sees itself as inferior or as superior, who is easily afraid, worried, sad, frustrated or angry. **That little “I”, experienced as the doer of actions, is transcended in the state of samadhi**, as Patanjali describes here.

Why doesn't everyone experience this successful and fulfilling way of integrated functioning? Because our *bio-computer* is cluttered from the outset with software that is invented by the same little “I”. From our earliest childhood we are conditioned to meet the expectations of

mom, dad, brothers and sisters, friends, the schoolteacher, the pastor, the doctor, the professor, the expert, the television and mainstream society. This continuous programming of our *bio-computer* to become an adapted member of society, suppresses the soul's impulses rising from within. The soul speaks to us through our authentic *feelings*. Up till today, it has been more the exception than the rule, that parents give their child the necessary space to be their authentic self, and guide and encourage their child to listen to, express and follow their soul's inclinations and impulses.

It is only during the last few decades, that the realization has gradually emerged, that following one's soul's impulses is the path to individual happiness and health, as well as to social order and peace. **Only in recent decades, starting in the 1960s, has the realization arisen that education does not necessarily have to be a kind of drilling, a kind of forcing to obedience.** Since that time, children have been brought up more and more in love, openness and wisdom and there is attention for their individual needs, their deeper soul stirrings, their deepest wishes and dreams. It is still the case that the formal educational system is based on the idea that children are blank sheets of paper to be filled by the grown-ups. Based on this artificial and wrong paradigm, children and young people are still overloaded with all kinds of things that do not interest them, and which will not be of use to them in "real life".

Thus, most of us were "deprived of our souls" with the best of intentions, and with that, we lost much of our sanity, our spontaneous enthusiasm for life, our self-confidence, our inner kingdom, our natural sense of inner bliss, our innate wisdom, our self-esteem and self-love! And having been brought up and educated in this way, it is indeed difficult – if not impossible – to understand the universal wisdom of Patanjali and to recognize the things he describes in our daily experience.

Patanjali talks about the normal and natural functioning of the human *bio-computer*. Normalness should be defined in terms of an integration of the body-mind-soul system with the Self. Herein lies the essence of samadhi. **Samadhi refers to a state of integration of the**

personality with his or her authentic Self. But if this integrated state was not allowed to develop itself, by being forced, from early childhood on, to function in a prescribed way, then the story of the natural and authentic human being comes across as an Utopia, as an unattainable thing. And indeed, it must remain an utopian state for all those who equate the practice of yoga with effort, who deny themselves the spontaneous joy in life, who impose an unnatural discipline on themselves, who isolate themselves from their fellow human beings, and who are trying – day and night – to fight against the so-called “lower urges” in their nature.

In short, the integrated way of functioning indeed does remain an unattainable ideal, when we apply a “drill” upon ourselves, thereby cutting ourselves off from our innermost Self, and from the impulses and natural tendencies of our soul. Indeed, everything has to be done differently. When the knowledge and experience of the Self is recognized again, and the upbringing and education are aimed at promoting and stimulating a further integration between the Self, the soul and the personality, Patanjali will again be properly understood. The same goes for the understanding of Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Shankara and the many others who proclaimed the message of wholeness.

I have elaborated this topic quite a bit, but without having this perspective on life, this chapter of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra remains difficult to grasp. What is needed in life is the experience of normalness, and with that I mean a *natural normalness*, not the societal normalness. Not the normalness based on living according to the dictates of others – unconsciously based on an incomplete, twisted and untenable materialistic worldview – but the normalness based on the experience of our true Self, our inner stability, our inner peace, our innate wisdom, our innate state of bliss consciousness, our innate ability to love, our innate self-knowledge, our innate self-confidence and our innate self-love. As long as we have not overcome – transcended and healed – the unnatural and stress-inducing conditionings of an unenlightened society, we will not be able to see what is possible on the level of *true normalcy* – which we might better call *naturalness*.

When, on the other hand, our *bio-computer* gets programmed – preferably from the moment of conception – on the basis of true knowledge about life, our brains will learn to work as a coherent whole. Only then will we as humanity start to make use of our full potential. As you may know, most psychologists and anthropologists estimate that the average person is using only 10 - 15 % of his or her full innate potential. Large areas of the brain have been shown to lie waste, and remain dormant. It is as if we all own a beautiful Rolls Royce, which is not able to go faster than 16 km per hour! The countless buttons and switches on the dashboard do not respond to our touch. Clearly, not everything is connected on the inner switchboard of the beautiful automobile.

No wonder we all feel more or less frustrated! No wonder we don't feel well from time to time. No wonder we regularly need a scapegoat, on an individual level as well as on a national and international level, as the news shows us daily. The real cause of our frustration – the real enemy if you will – is the lack of knowledge and experience of our blissful, universal Self; the lack of knowledge about the essence of life; the lack of knowledge about our full potential, and about how we can bring out our innate potential, how we can educate ourselves to psychological health and psychological maturity. (*Education* comes from the Latin *e-ducare* which means *to lead out*, to bring to the surface).

If someone stands up and says that he or she knows how to make life flourish, most people don't listen to him or her. We are too busy dealing and struggling with our daily problems. If he or she insists and says that life is not as difficult and hopeless as it looks, then we find a way to silence this messenger of the solution. (Socrates: a cup of poison; Jesus: the cross; Many saints: food for lions; Six million wise women: the fire stack; Martin Luther King, Kennedy and Gandhi: a bullet; Nelson Mandela: 20 years in prison.).

Fortunately, all these chilling examples are from the past. I have the impression that the collective consciousness of the world – despite the abuses still prevalent everywhere – is gradually awakening. Books describing a new, integrated paradigm of life spring up like mushrooms.

Authors, teachers and gurus bring forth insights that gradually introduce a more universal paradigm of life in the world. **In my opinion, it is not this guru or that book that brings about the change in the paradigm. It is rather the other way around; I think it is *time itself* that produces all those gurus and books.** In chapter four we will take a close look at the vedic knowledge about the so called *yugas*, commonly referred to as *ages*. We will describe the different *yugas* in which the collective consciousness of the world is changing from ignorance about the essence of life – when people in general do not experience any level of *samadhi* and are internally divided – towards long periods of time in which all human beings are in a natural state of *samadhi* and enjoy the awareness of the blissful essence of life.

In whatever *yuga* we are living, it is essential to know that *samadhi* comes to light when we are focused on experiencing and manifesting our true nature. It is the natural state in which the personality is integrated and lives from pure consciousness, which is the ground state of every individual. **Samadhi literally means that the intellect (*dhi*) functions in a state of equilibrium (*sama*).** When our intellect functions on the level of the Self, we see the reality in the light of truth. We then view all the ups and downs of the “m” in the light of the “o”, so to speak. **We view the physical world as a manifestation of omnipresent consciousness.** We view the functioning of the body-mind-soul system as the expression of consciousness. Only by experiencing deepening levels of *samadhi*, can we ever hope to manifest our full potential and create a peaceful world for all of humanity.

As mentioned before, the last three limbs of the wholeness of life (*dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*) form an intimately connected psychological system. They are the three aspects of our inner psychological functioning. In everyday life they never occur separately from each other. Neither can they be separated from the remaining five limbs of the wholeness of life. But if we are able to be aware of the mechanism involved in these three psychological limbs, we are consciously functioning on a very holistic level. This is the subject of the following Sutra.

Sutra 4. When these three are applied together to one subject, it is called samyama.

Literally, samyama means something like *total control*. This sounds quite absolute and all-encompassing, and indeed it can refer to that. Nevertheless, Patanjali wants to let us know that the concept of samyama also applies to levels of consciousness that are not really absolute or all-encompassing. We should therefore not take them too absolute, as samyama is also still open to development and deepening. Samyama, when understood as a technique that we can practice on a daily basis, is potentially able to generate an absolute level of consciousness.

Samyama can also be translated as perfection, perfect naturalness, the absence of any impediment to natural functioning. It implies a perfect *economy*: the absence of any form of exaggeration, waste or extravagance. Samyama represents the one-pointed focus of the individual intelligence, while staying attuned to the cosmic intelligence. Awareness is naturally directed both “in” and “out”. Consciousness can be likened to a lamp in the doorway. It can be aware of its own transcendental nature and at the same time it can focus on any desired object of attention.

This is the natural and healthy way of functioning of human consciousness. To be sure, it is man’s birthright to be aware of his own inner essence, while he or she is dealing with outer objects and phenomena. **When we regain this natural, relaxed and holistic way of functioning, our mental, physical and social health (and even environmental health) gets optimized.** You can even say that samyama is the prerequisite for becoming truly human. As long as a person has not yet mastered this way of functioning, he or she is still functioning on a *sub-human* level. A society that is formed and even “led” and “governed” by such individuals, is still at a barbaric level. We only have to look at the daily world news to see the consequences of the worldwide lack of samyama.

The meaning of samyama has been interpreted in a very different way, over the last two thousand years. If you read the translations and the commentaries on it, you will see that samyama – considered as the

“highest step” in the practice of yoga – is portrayed as having a degree of difficulty best comparable to becoming an astronaut! This is due to the ignorance that has gripped mankind for thousands of years. Yet the interpretation presented here is consistent with the spirit in which this knowledge was originally written down. In that regard, Patanjali met a similar fate as Jesus of Nazareth. **The original cosmic vision of both enlightened seers has been distorted into a dogmatic teaching that has misled many sincere seekers and kept the masses ignorant.**

As we will see later in this chapter, we can apply samyama to all areas of life. We can use it to understand the essence of people, animals, plants, planets, stars, etc., or we can apply it to inner and subjective aspects of our lives. We can use it, for example, to solve complicated life situations, and also to fathom the nature of our own consciousness. **If we apply the technique of samyama on our own consciousness, a union with ourselves occurs!** If we focus our consciousness (*dharana*) on our own true nature, while refining our attention (*dhyana*), we can spontaneously experience that we are one with ourself (*samadhi*). Thus the true nature of our consciousness gradually or suddenly becomes apparent to us. This is how we can apply samyama to our own consciousness. By doing this daily, we become established in the Self and thereby gain more and more mastery over the fluctuations (thoughts and feelings, etc.) that occur in our mind.

In fact, reading and absorbing the knowledge contained in this book can be understood as one great samyama exercise that relates to the true nature of our own consciousness. By studying the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, we constantly focus (= *dharana*) on the nature of consciousness; we systematically refine (= *dhyana*) our understanding of it; we identify more and more with the true nature of our own consciousness (= *samadhi*). The indescribable benefit of the daily practice of samyama is expressed in the following Sutra.

Sutra 5. By fully mastering samyama, the light of consciousness dawns.

By becoming fully absorbed in the object of our one-pointed focus of attention, a purification of our mind takes place. Our mind is becoming

more and more transparent. It is less and less a jammer that disturbs or disrupts our contact with what we are doing.

In a commentary on the Yoga Sutras, attributed to a certain Veda Vyasa, the commentator explains that as samyama becomes more and more part of the natural functioning of the mind, the knowledge that the mind acquires becomes purer and purer. In a general sense we could say that the longer we practice samyama, with regard to more and more subtle objects of attention, our knowledge and our understanding of these topics will become more and more clear. More and more characterized by truth.

As mentioned before, many commentators make something very complicated out of the “technique of samyama.” In reality it is not complicated! **It represents the natural, calm and spontaneous process of increasing integration of the soul with the personality, and furthermore, the increasing integration of the soul with the Self.** This can never be accomplished by a complicated effort! In this chapter, Patanjali discusses the effortless process of samyama in detail. He presents it as a mental technique that we can master and with which we can gradually fully convert our innate potential into actual reality.

On the one hand, life is absolutely simple, but on the other hand it is infinitely complex! We will have to do some-thing very intelligent in order to be able to express our full innate potential. **We need to focus on the inner field of all possibilities.** Only then can we hope to do something with it; only then it could start to work for us! Life is meant to transform our mental visions and inspirations into concrete experiences in everyday life.

Life starts out like a diamond in the unpolished form. As long as we have not cultivated the diamond, it seems a worthless pebble ... and “for all practical purposes” it is therefore a worthless pebble. Only after we have cultivated and polished it patiently and carefully – with highly intelligent and precise techniques – the gem will reveal its innate beauty. The same is true with regards to our own consciousness. It will only shine when we have given it a lot of attention. Whenever we think or say “I”, it is good to remind ourselves that it stands for the infinite potential that is inherent in the Self. We should often remind

ourselves of the fact that the “I” is really a field of all possibilities!

The expression “I” is symbolic of many interesting, internal ingredients. It stands for: intelligence, inspiration, intuition, intention, infinity, immortality, internal potential, inwardness, insight, intuitive knowing. Basically, the expression “I” means the same as the “O” in the vedic expression “OM”. In chapter one we saw that the “O” stands for the unmanifest, the pure subjectivity. While “OM” stands for the combination of the absolute and the relative, the expression “I” stands for the internal dynamism that is inherently lively inside the “O”, and is responsible for bringing out the manifest creation from the abstract nothingness, symbolized by the “O”.

Thus the “O” contains the sense of “I”, in all that exists. In this light we can make sense of what the great medieval mystic Meister Eckhart used to say. He made a point of saying that basically only God has the right to say “I”! Wonderful, isn’t it? From this perspective it also makes sense that the word “I” in the English language is always capitalized. **So from now on be aware that whenever you think or say “I” you are essentially referring to your cosmic, divine nature.** Ultimately, it is the “I”, within the “O” that is expressing itself as the manifest creation! So the “I” is in reality everything! It is the absolute Self, and it is also its manifestation! Therefore, the Upanishads proclaim that the *jiva*, the individual self, is *Brahman* (the totality), and nothing else: *Jivo Brahmaiva, na parah!* Thus the “I” is in reality cosmic. It stands for the entire range of life, from the absolute stillness of our pure subjectivity, to the eternal dynamism of our expressed, manifest nature. This is also the conclusion that the Yoga Sutra reaches in its last chapter, chapter four. And at whatever level of awareness our sense of “I” is currently stationed, the technique of samyama can be practiced successfully. This is the theme of the next Sutra.

Sutra 6. Samyama is applicable to all levels of development.

Here Patanjali confirms what was already suspected from the previous Sutras. Samyama guides our consciousness into the light of pure creative intelligence. And that is what life *itself* does when it is lived in the ideal way. **Samyama is thus a term that describes the natural**

process of evolution towards the complete integration of the mind with the Self. This is the essence of Yoga: the union of the small self with the big Self; the integration of the small “i” with the big “I”. But as we have seen above, samyama can also be understood as a special technique with which we can accelerate the natural process of evolution. What does the “acceleration of our evolution” mean? It refers to the acceleration of the process of becoming aware of our true, cosmic nature. **An acceleration of the realization of the one, indivisible spiritual substance that makes up life in all its diversity.**

And since life develops simultaneously on *all* levels of creation, samyama can be used on all levels of awareness. The thing is: there *is* only one consciousness in the entire universe! So once we are conscious in *some* way, we are connected to the field of all possibilities that is cosmically active in all ways.

Take a look at your dog or your cat, for example. These wonderful animals are completely authentic. **They are all themselves!** They are completely absorbed in their own way of functioning! **In other words, they are in *samadhi* all the time!** So they control *at their level* that area of life that is called the eighth limb of yoga in yoga philosophy. Above we saw that samyama consists of the joining of the last three limbs of yoga: *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi*. Let us see how our dog or our cat is practicing the sixth aspect of yoga, the “*dharana*” value. Well, you know how they are totally focused on food, and in the case of a dog, they are also totally focused on their owner. A dog typically has an admirable focus in everything he does. **That in itself is a perfect example of *dharana*.** Also the cat is perfectly focused in all that he does.

And what about their expertise in the second aspect of samyama, *dhyana*? Well, since their attention is almost non-stop on the themes that make up their lives: the love for food and the love of and for their owner, that love can gradually become deeper and deeper. This is the *dhyana* aspect. It grows spontaneously in time. When it comes to food, their focus on it is so strong that their consciousness is fully absorbed by it. Their nose and mouth are totally geared to it, and they have an almost unerring knowledge of what is good and what is not so good

for them. Thus the refinement of their attention results in the unification of their awareness with the object of their attention, be it the food or their owner. That is a state of samadhi, mental absorption in the object of attention. **So all three aspects of samyama are present in the awareness of our beloved four-legged friends.**

Studying the nature of samyama, we further come to realize that *in a sense* it is always present at all levels of human functioning. Even in the normal waking state one is somehow completely absorbed in the process of life! Life by nature is very fascinating and intriguing. Whether one is a beggar living in a slum or one is a millionaire living a high society life. A significant level of mental absorption (*samadhi*) is always present. The same is true with regard to the *dhyana* value. There is always something that a person has set his mind on and about which he meditates consciously or unconsciously. Often the word *money* forms a kind of mantra that is constantly meditated upon. In many cases, *sexual gratification* or *social standing* are the predominant mantras.

The *dharana* value in the waking state is evident in the goals that people set for themselves. The life-goals that are normally present in the waking state of consciousness are classified by the vedic literature into four categories: **kama, artha, dharma, and moksha**. These respectively stand for:

Kama: the desire to fulfil sensory and physical needs. These, of course, include the need for food and drink, as well as the need for clothing, shelter, sexual gratification and the like.

Artha: The desire to acquire money or other forms of material wealth in order to live a comfortable life. Most people carry out their day-to-day professional activities primarily to ensure this goal.

Dharma: This term literally means: “that which supports”. Any person with a more or less orderly state of mind, intuitively feels that one is strengthened from within when one sticks to ethical rules. When people are growing in psychological health and maturity, they naturally want to develop more of their inborn potential and also contribute to the welfare of their fellow human beings. When we do healthy

things, we feel strengthened from within. In vedic terms we are living a *dharmic* life, when we live according to the laws of nature. The Yamas and the Niyamas express the ten laws of nature that uphold our life when we are able to act in accordance with them. It is a law of nature that things go well for people who do well: “Whoever does good, meets good” is a universal experience. “As one sows, so shall one reap,” is a universal village wisdom. **Physics confirms this human experience in Newton’s law, which states that every action elicits an opposite and equal reaction.**

All the religions of the world subscribe to this natural principle and express it in words like these: **“Whatever you do not want to happen to you, do not do that to anyone else.”** **Positively stated: Treat your fellow human beings in a way that you would like to be treated yourself.** This is the essence of all ethics, and yes, it is the essence of all wisdom! By supporting someone else, we support ourselves! This is a natural fact that can be explained by modern quantum physics which states that all forms of existence are the expression or manifestation of *one* underlying field. This modern discovery provides a confirmation of the ancient insight of the yoga philosophy, which furthermore states that this field of underlying unity is a field of bliss! **Since we all are ultimately one with that blissful level of existence – pure consciousness – we sooner or later want to experience that underlying field of blissful unity.** Every human being therefore has the built-in desire and the built-in capacity to experience and understand the underlying field of unity. This forms the fourth and final category of human goals:

Moksha: The desire for freedom or inner liberation. Every person – and yes, every living creature – naturally wants to feel free. **That is because his inner conscious-ness is already essentially free. Freedom is an inherent quality of our source and substance – pure conscious-ness.** Consciousness has an inherent and invincible need, an inner urge, to experience and understand itself. **Thus, as soon as one experiences one’s true identity, one realizes that one is free.** One also realizes that in essence one has always been free and that one will always remain free. Indeed, freedom *is* the essential characteristic of our own consciousness! The universal and eternal urge for freedom is

thus referred to by the term *moksha* as the most abstract but nevertheless all-pervading desire inherent in every human being. It is the life-goal of every living creature. **In the human form, this desire for freedom can reach its absolute climax in the spiritual experience of moksha.**

So, returning to the theme of this Sutra, which states that samyama is applicable to all levels of mental evolution, we see that Patanjali describes in technical terms what are natural aspects of the growth of consciousness. From the first conception of life, as in unicellular organisms, to the multicellular organisms such as dogs, cats and humans, we find the three aspects that make up the process of sam-yama. And samyama is gradually perfected in the seven stages of growth of human consciousness: sleep, dreaming, waking, transcendental consciousness, cosmic consciousness, god consciousness, and finally unity consciousness!

Sutra 7. These three limbs are more intimate than the previous five limbs.

Indeed, we already noticed that ourselves, didn't we? Let us briefly review the five previous limbs:

Yama relates to our behavior towards others, and to our dealing with the universal and eternal laws of nature.

Niyama relates to our dealings with ourselves, our self-management.

Asana refers to certain physical postures, that promote the smooth and integrated functioning of our body, as the seat (= *asana*) of the soul.

Pranayama refers to managing the life-energy that feeds our body through the air we breathe.

Pratyahara relates to the management of our senses.

Dharana, **Dhyana** and **Samadhi** have to do with the management of the more intimate, internal aspects of our existence, namely mind, intellect and the sense of self – consciousness as such –, respectively.

The last three levels of our individuality are nearer to our true selves than the first five levels. Therefore they are more intimate indeed.