

the science of yoga

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which to think, meditate and dig out the meanings for themselves. The modern student who is interested merely in the theoretical study of the *Yogic* philosophy and is not practising it under an expert teacher has none of these facilities and needs an elaborate and clear exposition for an adequate understanding of the subject. He needs a commentary which not only aims at explaining the obvious meaning but also the hidden significance of the words and phrases used in terms of the concepts with which he is familiar and can easily understand. He wants his food not in 'tabloid' form but in bulk, and if possible, in a palatable form.

२. योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ।

Yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ.

योगः (the essential technique of) yoga चित्त (of) mind वृत्ति (of) modifications निरोधः inhibition; suppression; stoppage; restraint.

2. Yoga is the inhibition of the modifications of the mind.

This is one of the most important and well-known *Sūtras* of this treatise not because it deals with some important principle or technique of practical value but because it defines with the help of only four words the essential nature of *Yoga*. There are certain concepts in every science which are of a basic nature and which must be understood aright if the student is to get a satisfactory grasp of the subject as a whole. The ideas underlying all the four words in this *Sūtra* are of such a fundamental nature and the student should try to grasp through study and reflection their real meaning. Of course, the significance of these words will become sufficiently clear only when the book has been studied thoroughly, and the various aspects of the subject considered in their relation to one another. It might be expected that words of such fundamental importance will be carefully defined and such definitions inserted wherever they are needed. But in the case of the present

Sūtra no such definitions have been given and we can therefore conclude that the author expected the student to acquire a clear idea with regard to the import of the words from his study of the whole book. But as it is necessary for the student not to start his study with wrong or confused ideas it will perhaps be worthwhile considering at this initial stage the import of the words and the *Sūtra* in a general way.

Let us begin with the word *Yoga*. The word *Yoga* in *Saṃskṛta* has a very large number of meanings. It is derived from the root *Yuj* which means 'to join' and the idea of joining runs through all the meanings. What are the two things which are sought to be joined by the practice of *Yoga*? According to the highest conceptions of Hindu philosophy of which the Science of *Yoga* is an integral part, the human soul or the *Jīvātma* is a facet or partial expression of the Over-Soul or *Paramātmā*, the Divine Reality which is the source or substratum of the manifested Universe. Although in essence the two are the same and are indivisible, still, the *Jīvātma* has become subjectively separated from *Paramātmā* and is destined, after going through an evolutionary cycle in the manifested Universe, to become united with Him again in consciousness. This state of unification of the two in consciousness as well as the mental process and discipline through which this union is attained are both called *Yoga*. This conception is formulated in a different way in the *Sāṃkhya* philosophy but on close analysis the fundamental idea will be found to be essentially the same.

Then we come to the word *Citta*. This word is derived from the *Cit* or *Citi* (IV-34) one of the three aspects of *Paramātmā* called *Sat-Cit-Ananda* in *Vedānta*. It is this aspect which is at the basis of the form side of the Universe and through which it is created. The reflection of this aspect in the individual soul which is a microcosm is called *Citta*. *Citta* is thus that instrument or medium through which the *Jīvātma* materializes his individual world, lives and evolves in the world until he has become perfected and united with the *Paramātmā*. Broadly, therefore, *Citta* corresponds to 'mind' of modern psychology but it has a more comprehensive import and field for functioning. While *Citta* may be considered as a universal medium through which consciousness functions on all the planes of the manifested Universe, the 'mind'

of modern psychology is confined to the expression of only thought, volition and feeling.

We should not, however, make the mistake of imagining *Citta* as a sort of material medium which is moulded into different forms when mental images of different kinds are produced. It is fundamentally of the nature of consciousness which is immaterial but affected by matter. In fact, it may be called a product of both, consciousness and matter, or *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, the presence of both being necessary for its functioning. It is like an intangible screen which enables the Light of consciousness to be projected in the manifested world. But the real secret of its essential nature lies buried in the origin of the manifested Universe and can be known only on attaining Enlightenment. It is true that the theory of perception which is developed in Section IV gives some general indication with regard to the nature of *Citta* but it does not say what *Citta* essentially is.

The third word we have to consider in this *Sūtra* is *Vṛtti*. It is derived from the root *Vṛt* which means 'to exist'. So *Vṛtti* is a way of existing. In considering the ways in which a thing exists we may consider its modifications, states, activities or its functions. All these connotations are present in the meaning of *Vṛtti* but in the present context this word is best translated by the words 'modifications' or 'functionings'. Sometimes the word is translated as 'transformations'. This does not seem to be justified because in transformation the emphasis is on the change and not on the condition. The transformations of *Citta* may be stopped and it may still remain in one particular modification as happens in *Sabīja Samādhi*. As the ultimate aim of *Yoga* is inhibition of all modifications in *Nirbīja Samādhi* it will be seen that the word 'transformation' will not adequately express the meaning of the word *Vṛtti*. Besides, the word 'transformation' has to be used for the three *Parīṇāmas* dealt with in the first part of Section III. Since *Citta* has a functional existence and comes into being only when consciousness is affected by matter, the word 'functionings' perhaps expresses to the maximum degree the significance of *Vṛtti* in the present context, but the word 'modifications' is also used generally and understood more easily and may therefore pass.

In trying to understand the nature of *Citta-Vṛttis* we have to guard against a few misconceptions which are sometimes prevalent among those who have not studied the subject deeply. The first thing to note is that *Citta-Vṛtti* is not a vibration. We have seen above that *Citta* is not material and therefore there can be no question of any vibration in it. Vibrations can take place only in a vehicle and these vibrations may produce a *Citta-Vṛtti*. The two are different though related. The second point to be noted in this connection is that a *Citta-Vṛtti* is not a mental image though it may be and is generally associated with mental images. The five-fold classification of *Citta-Vṛttis* in I-5 definitely shows this. Mental images may be of innumerable kinds but the author has classified *Citta-Vṛttis* under five heads only. This shows that *Citta-Vṛttis* have a more fundamental and comprehensive character than the mere mental images with which they are associated. This is not the place to enter into a detailed discussion of the essential nature of *Citta-Vṛttis* because the question involves the essential nature of *Citta*. But if the student studies carefully the six *Sūtras* (I-6-11) dealing with the five kinds of *Vṛttis* he will see that they are the fundamental states or types of modifications in which the mind can exist. The author has given five types for the modifications of the lower concrete mind with which the ordinary man is familiar. But the number and nature of these different types are bound to be different in the higher realms of *Citta*.

The last word to be considered is *Nirodha*. This word is derived from the word *Niruddham* which means 'restrained', 'controlled', 'inhibited'. All these meanings are applicable in the different stages of *Yoga*. Restraint is involved in the initial stages, control in the more advanced stages and inhibition or complete suppression in the last stage. The subject of *Nirodha* has been dealt with in considering III-9 and the student should read carefully what is written in that connection.

If the student has understood the meaning of the four words in this *Sūtra* he will see that it defines in a masterly manner the essential nature of *Yoga*. The effectiveness of the definition lies in the fact that it covers all stages of progress through which the *Yogi* passes and all stages of unfoldment of consciousness which

are the result of this progress. It is equally applicable to the stage of *Kriyā-Yoga* in which he learns the preliminary lessons, to the stages of *Dhāraṇā* and *Dhyāna* in which he brings the mind under his complete control, to the stage of *Sabīja Samādhi* in which he has to suppress the 'seeds' of *Samprajñāta-Samādhi* and to the last stage of *Nirbīja Samādhi* in which he inhibits all modifications of *Citta* and passes beyond the realm of *Prakṛti* into the world of Reality. The full significance of the *Sūtra* can be understood only when the subject of *Yoga* has been studied thoroughly in all its aspects and so it is useless to say anything further at this stage.

३. तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् ।

Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam.

तदा then द्रष्टुः (of) Seer स्वरूपे in his 'own form' or essential and fundamental nature अवस्थानम् establishment.

3. Then the Seer is established in his own essential and fundamental nature.

This *Sūtra* points out in a general way what happens when all the modifications of the mind at all levels have been completely inhibited. The Seer is established in his *Svarūpa* or in other words attains Self-realization. We cannot know what this state of Self-realization is as long as we are involved in the play of *Citta-Vṛttis*. It can only be realized from within and not comprehended from without. Even the partial and superficial comprehension which we can obtain under our present limitations by means of study and reflection is possible only after we have mastered the whole theory and technique of *Yoga* outlined in this treatise. The higher stages of consciousness which unfold in the state of *Samādhi* and which are referred to in I-44 and 45 are called *Rāmbharā* or truth-right-bearing. In their light the *Yogi* can know the truth underlying all things in manifestation. But he can know the truth in this way of only those things which are part of *Dṛśyam*, the Seen, not of the *Draṣṭā*, the Seer. For this he has to practise *Nirbīja Samādhi* (I-51).

४. वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र ।

Vṛtti-sārūpyam itaratra.

वृत्ति (with) modifications (of the mind) सारूप्यम् identification; assimilation इतरत्र elsewhere, in other states.

4. In other states there is assimilation (of the Seer) with the modifications (of the mind).

When the *Citta-Vṛttis* are not in the state of *Nirodha* and the *Draṣṭā* is not established in his *Svarūpa* he is assimilated with the particular *Vṛtti* which happens to occupy the field of his consciousness for the moment. A simile will perhaps help the student to understand this assimilation of consciousness with the transformation of the mind. Let him imagine a lighted electric bulb suspended in a tank full of limpid water. If the water is churned violently by some mechanical contrivance it will make all kinds of patterns in three dimensions round the bulb, these patterns being illuminated by the light from the bulb and changing from moment to moment. But what about the bulb itself? It will disappear from view, all the light emanating from it being assimilated with or lost in the surrounding water. Now, let him imagine the churning of water slowed down gradually until the water becomes perfectly still. As the three dimensional patterns begin to subside gradually the electric bulb gradually emerges into view and when the water is quite at rest the bulb alone is seen. This simile illustrates in a rather crude way both the assimilation of the consciousness of the *Puruṣa* with the modification of the mind and its reversion to its own unmodified state when the mind comes to rest. The mind may come to rest either through *Para-Vairāgya* developed by *Īvara-praidhāne* or through the practice of *Samādhi*, the result in both cases is the same—Enlightenment—and Liberation.

This *Sūtra*, like the previous one, is meant to answer only in a general way the question 'what happens to the *Puruṣa* when he is

just as a seed grows into a tree, but into a particular kind of tree according to the nature of the seed.

The other means of utilizing the power which is latent in *Prāṇa* is *Bhāvanā*. This word literally means 'dwelling upon in mind'. Let us try to understand its significance in the present context. The object of the dual practice prescribed in this *Sūtra* is to contact the Divine Consciousness of *Īvara*. The *Japa* has the effect of attuning the vehicles. But something more is necessary in order to bring down the Divine influence and establish contact with the Divine Consciousness. If an electric current is to flow into a mechanism we need not only conductance or capacity to transmit the current but also voltage, pressure to make the current flow. In the same way in order to make it possible for the individual consciousness to draw nearer to the Divine Consciousness we need not only attunement of the vehicles but a drawing force, an attraction which corresponds to voltage in the flow of the electric current. This force which draws together the two—the *Jīvātmā* and the *Paramātmā*—may take different forms. In *Bhakti-Yoga*, for example, it takes the form of intense devotion or love. In *Mantra-Yoga* it takes the form of *Bhāvanā* or intense meditation on the significance of the *Mantra* and the object which is sought to be gained. This *Bhāvanā* is not merely an intellectual process like the one we employ in finding the solution of a mathematical problem. It is a joint action of all our faculties in the pursuit of a common goal. So that not only the spirit of intellectual enquiry is there but also the deep yearning of the lover who wants to find the Beloved and the will of the *Haṣṭa-Yogi* who wants to break through all the barriers which separate him from the object of his search. This kind of *Bhāvanā* polarizes all our powers and faculties and produces the necessary concentration of purpose. Thus gradually the distractions which take the mind of the aspirant away from the object of his search are removed and he is able to turn his attention inwards.

२९. ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च ।

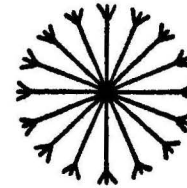
Tataḥ pratyak-cetanādhigamo
'py antarāyā-bhāvaś ca.

ततः from it (this practice) प्रत्यक् (of) in-turned; in the opposite direction चेतना consciousness अधिगमः attainment अपि also अन्तराय (of) hindrances; obstacles अभावः absence; disappearance च and.

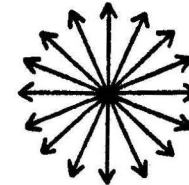
29. From it (result) the disappearance of obstacles and turning inward of consciousness.

In this *Sūtra* Patañjali has given the two results which ensue from the practice prescribed in the previous *Sūtra*. First, the awakening of a new kind of consciousness which is called *Pratyak Cetanā*, and second, the gradual disappearance of the 'obstacles'.

Let us first try to understand what is meant by *Pratyak Cetanā*. There are two kinds of consciousness of diametrically opposite nature—*Pratyak* and *Parāṅga* or inward-turned and outward-turned. If we study the mind of the ordinary individual we shall find that it is entirely outward-turned. It is immersed in the outer world and is occupied all the time with the procession of images which pass continuously in the field of consciousness. This outward-turned consciousness is caused by *Vikṣepa*, the projection outward by the lower mind of what is present within it at the centre. As we shall deal with the question of *Vikṣepa* fully in discussing the next *Sūtra* let us leave it here and try to understand what *Pratyak Cetanā* is. As has been pointed out above *Pratyak Cetanā* is the inward-turned consciousness or consciousness directed towards its centre. It is thus the exact opposite of the outward-turned or *Parāṅga Cetanā* as illustrated in the following figures.



PRATYAK CETANĀ



PARĀṄGA CETANĀ

FIG. 2

The whole aim and process of *Yoga* consists in withdrawing the consciousness from without to within, for the ultimate mystery of life is hidden in the very heart or centre of our being and can be found only there and nowhere else. In the case of the *Yogi* the tendency of the lower mind to run outwards and to keep itself busy with the objects of the outer world must therefore be replaced gradually by a tendency to return automatically to its 'centred' condition without effort. It is only under these conditions that it can be 'joined', as it were, with the higher principles. But it may be pointed out that this mere tendency to be pointed towards the centre is not *Pratyak Cetanā* although it is a necessary stage in its attainment. It is the actual contact with the higher principles resulting in the irradiation of the personality by the influence of these higher principles (*Ātmā-Buddhi-Manas*) which is the essence of *Pratyak Cetanā*. The contact is no doubt indirect but it is sufficiently effective and real to enable the personality to derive from it many advantages. The strength of the *Ātmā*, the illumination of *Buddhi* and the knowledge of the higher mind gradually filter down into the personality in an ever-increasing measure and provide the necessary guidance and momentum for treading the path of *Yoga*. The contact becomes direct only in *Samādhi* when consciousness leaves one vehicle after another and becomes centred at deeper and deeper levels.

The other result of *Japa* and meditation on *Pranava* is the gradual disappearance of the obstacles which lie in the path of the *Yogi*. These obstacles are of various kinds—impurities and disharmonies in the vehicles, weaknesses of character, lack of development etc. But *Pranava* as we have seen touches the very heart of our being, arouses in the microcosm vibrations which can bring out from it all the latent powers and faculties which lie sleeping there. So all obstacles whatever their nature, yield to its dynamic stimulation. The deficiencies are made up by the growth of the corresponding faculties or the flow of additional power. The impurities are washed away. The disharmonies in the vehicles are smoothed out and the vehicles become attuned to one another and to the Supreme Consciousness of *Īvara*. And so a complete regeneration of the individuality takes place, a regeneration which makes it fit to tread the path of *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* or *Īvara-Pranidhāna*.

It is obvious that an instrument so effective and powerful in its action cannot be used in a haphazard and careless manner without involving the *Sādhaka* in all kinds of difficulties and dangers. A careful consideration of the necessary conditions and their strict regulation is therefore absolutely necessary. This is not the place to deal with these conditions in detail. It is enough to point out that purity, self-control and a very cautious and gradual use of the power are some of the essential conditions. So the practice can be taken up usefully and safely only after *Yama* and *Niyama* have been mastered to a considerable extent.

The seven *Sūtras* from 1-23 to 1-29 form, in a way, a separate set giving the technique of the path of mysticism on which the aspirant goes direct to his goal without studying and mastering the intermediate planes which separate him from the object of his search. On this path self-surrender is the only weapon and in using this weapon, *Japa* and meditation on *Pranava* constitute the sole technique. The *Japa* and meditation turn the consciousness of the aspirant right about in the direction of his goal, remove all the obstacles and self-surrender does the rest.

३०. व्याधिस्त्यानसंशयप्रमादालस्याविरतिभ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिक-
स्वानवस्थितत्वानि चित्तविक्षेपास्तेऽन्तरायाः ।

Vyādhi-styāna-saṁśaya-pramādālasya-
virati-bhrānti-darśanālabdhabhūmi-
katvānavasthitatvāni citta-vikṣepās
te 'ntarāyāḥ.

व्याधि- disease स्थान- dullness; languor; drooping state संशय-
doubt प्रमाद- carelessness आलस्य- laziness अविरति- hankering after
objects भ्रान्तिदर्शन- delusion; erroneous view अलब्धभूमिकत्व- non-
achievement of a stage; inability to find a footing अनवस्थितत्वानि
(and) unsteadiness; instability चित्त (of) mind विक्षेपाः distractions
(causes of distraction) ते they (are) अन्तरायाः obstacles; hindrances.

30. Disease, languor, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldly-mindedness, delusion, non-achievement of a stage, instability, these (nine) cause the distraction of the mind and they are the obstacles.

It was pointed out in the last *Sūtra* that the turning outward of consciousness is caused by *Vikṣepa*. In this *Sūtra* Patañjali gives a number of conditions which cause the mind to be distracted and which consequently make the successful practice of *Yoga* impossible. This distracted condition of the mind in which it is constantly flung about in all directions, away from the centre, is called *Vikṣepa*. Since this condition of the mind is the opposite of that needed for the practice of *Yoga* we have to understand clearly the nature of *Vikṣepa* and the means to avoid it. To enable us to do this let us first cast a glance at the mind of the average man of the world. There are two general characteristics which we are likely to find in the large majority of people. The first is the lack of purpose. They drift through life being carried along on its currents in a helpless manner. There is no directive force within them which can modify their circumstances and give a certain direction to their life. Even when they decide to pursue any particular objective they are easily thrown off the track by any obstacles that may come in their path. In short, they have not developed concentration of purpose which enables a man to pursue an aim relentlessly until he has achieved it. Of course, there are some exceptional people who have developed a strong will and have the capacity to pursue a fixed aim till success is gained. Such people generally rise to the top in their respective spheres of work and become captains of industry, great inventors, scientists and political leaders.

Now, though the *Yogi* has no ambitions and the pursuit of any worldly aims does not form part of his life, still, he does need concentration of purpose like any ambitious man working in the outer world. The pursuit of *Yogic* ideals requires in fact more concentration of purpose than that of any worldly aim can, because in the first place, the difficulties are greater and in the second place, the sphere of work is inside and the objective is to a great

extent unknown and intangible. The *Yogi* has generally to work against great odds, the results of his efforts take a long time to appear and even when they do appear do not bring with them the kind of satisfactions for which the lower nature of man generally craves. So, only an extraordinary concentration of purpose can enable him to keep to his course in the face of difficulties and obstacles. If this is not present he is likely to suffer from frustration and the disintegration of his mental forces to which such frustration generally leads. Under these circumstances distractions of all kinds such as those mentioned in the present *Sūtra* are likely to arise and cause the mind to be thrown constantly off the track.

The second general characteristic of the ordinary mind is that it is constantly and completely turned outwards. It is used to taking interest only in the objects of the outer world and this habit has become so strong that any effort to reverse the direction of consciousness and to make the mind withdraw from the periphery to the centre is accompanied by a mental struggle. Even in the case of people who are generally called introverts the tendency is merely to keep oneself occupied with one's mental images in disregard of what is happening in the outer world. This is rather an abnormal condition of the mind and is quite different from that condition in which the mind is directed to its centre and is thus attuned to the higher principles.

This centrifugal tendency of the mind does not matter in the case of the ordinary man because his interest and field of work is in the external world and the question of drawing the mind within does not arise. But the *Yogi* has to draw the mind within and the centrifugal tendency must therefore be replaced by a centripetal tendency so strong that it requires definite force of will to keep the mind directed outwards. These two tendencies which make the mind inward-turned or outward-turned correspond to *Pratyak* and *Parāṅga Cetanā* and may be illustrated by the same diagrams which were used in representing the two forms of consciousness in dealing with the last *Sūtra*.

This condition of the mind in which it is turned outwards and is subject to distractions is also called *Vikṣepa*. It is the normal condition in the case of the ordinary man and is taken as

a matter of course by him because he grows up with it and it does not interfere with the kind of work he is required to do. The word *Vikṣepa* is used generally only in this ordinary sense and it is very probable that it has been used by Patañjali in this sense in the present context. But there is a mystery underlying this natural tendency of the mind to remain outward-turned which throws some light on the nature of *Vikṣepa*. It is worthwhile referring to it briefly here.

If we are to understand this mystery let us first consider the formation of a virtual image by a mirror. We all know that if an object is placed in front of a plain mirror an exact image of it is seen in the mirror and the image appears to be on the other side of the mirror at the same distance as the object is in front of it. The formation of such an image can be illustrated by the following diagram.

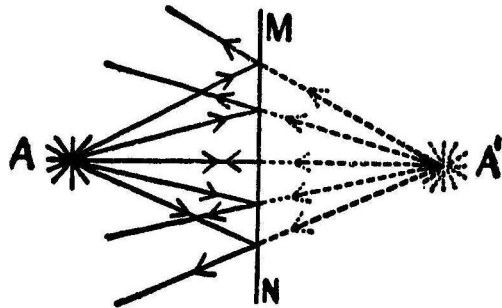


FIG. 3

A is the object and A' is its image formed by the mirror MN. It will be seen that all the rays coming from the object and striking the mirror are reflected in such a manner that if the reflected rays are produced backwards they would meet at the point A' where the image of the object is seen. It is because the reflected rays all seem to come from the point A' that the virtual image of the object is seen at that point. It is easy to see that this virtual image is a pure illusion produced by the peculiar reflection of light rays. But the important point to note in this phenomenon is that an object can be seen at a place where there exists nothing at all corresponding to it.

In a similar manner the familiar world of forms, colours, sounds etc. which we see outside us and in which we live our life is formed by a mysterious process of mental projection. The vibrations which are conveyed through the sense-organs to our brain produce through the instrumentality of the mind an image in our consciousness but the mind projects this image outwards and it is this projection which produces the impression of a real world outside us. As a matter of fact, this impression of the familiar solid and tangible world outside us is a pure illusion. The world image we see is a virtual image in the sense that the objects we see outside us are not there at all. Their appearance there is based on the external world of atoms and molecules and their vibrations which stimulate the sense-organs as well as on the inner world of Reality which is the ultimate basis of the mental image. The mind brings about the interaction of spirit and matter and in addition projects the result of this interaction outside as a virtual image as shown in the following diagram:

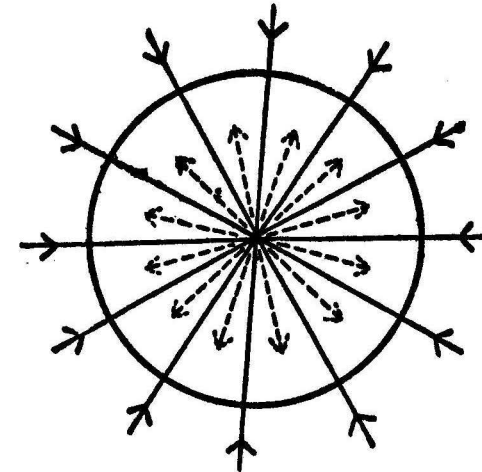


FIG. 4

It is this projection outwards by the lower mind of what is really within which constitutes the fundamental nature of *Vikṣepa* and which lies at the basis of this outward-turned condition of the mind.

The fact that the world image which we see outside us is an illusion does not necessarily mean the denial of the physical world. The physical world is the stimulator of the world image but the image is the mind's own creation (in the light of Reality). This is not in contravention of modern scientific ideas. Take, for example, the question of colour. All that Science knows is that light vibrations of a certain frequency give the impression of a certain colour. It knows only the objective side of the phenomenon but as to why a certain frequency of vibration gives the impression of a particular colour it cannot say. The physical world of Science is merely a world of whirling atoms and molecules and the play of various kinds of energies. The mental world which springs forth in our consciousness through the instrumentality of the physical world is something quite apart from, though dependent upon, the physical world. There is a gulf between the two which Science has not been able to bridge and will not be able to bridge until it takes into account the world of Reality which expresses itself through the phenomena of consciousness.

Patañjali has enumerated nine conditions of the mind or body which cause *Vikṣepa* and thus serve as obstacles in the path of the *Yogi*. Let us briefly consider these before we proceed further.

(1) **DISEASE:** This is obviously a hindrance in the path of the *Yogi* because it draws the mind again and again to the physical body and makes it difficult to keep it directed inwards. Perfect health is a necessity for treading the path of *Yoga* and that is, no doubt, one of the reasons why the author has included *Āsana* and *Prāṇāyāma*, two practices of *Hatha-Yoga*, in his system.

(2) **LANGUOR:** Some people have an apparently healthy physical body but lack nerve power so that they always feel below par and disinclined to take up any work requiring prolonged exertion. This chronic fatigue is in many cases psychological in origin and due to the absence of any definite and dynamic purpose in life. In other cases it is due to some defect in the *Prāṇamaya Kośa* which results in an inadequate supply of vital force to the physical body. Whatever its cause it acts as an obstacle because it undermines all efforts to practise *Sādhanā*.

(3) **DOUBT:** An unshakeable faith in the efficacy of *Yoga* and its methods is a *sine qua non* for its successful practice. Such faith

is needed in achieving success in any line of endeavour but more so in this line because of the peculiar conditions under which the *Yogi* has to work. In the Divine adventure which he has undertaken the objective is unknown and there are no clearly defined standards by which he can judge and measure his progress. Doubts of various kinds are therefore liable to arise in his mind. Is there really any Reality to be realized or is he merely pursuing a mirage? Are the methods he is using really effective? Are those methods the right methods for him? Has he the capacity to go through all the obstacles and reach the goal? These and other doubts of a similar nature are liable to assail his mind from time to time especially when he is passing through the periods of depression which come inevitably in the path of every aspirant. It is at these times that he needs *Sraddhā*—unshakeable faith in his objective, in himself and in the methods which he has adopted. It may not be possible to avoid these periods of depression and doubt especially in the early stages but it is his behaviour and reaction to them which show whether he has true faith or not. If he can ignore them even though he feels them, he comes out of the shade into the sunshine again and resumes his journey with renewed enthusiasm. If he allows these doubts and moods to interfere with his *Sādhanā* and relaxes his efforts, they acquire an increasing hold on his mind until he is completely side-tracked and abandons the path altogether.

(4) **CARELESSNESS:** This is another obstacle which besets the path of many aspirants for the *Yogic* life. It has the effect of relaxing the mind and thus undermines its concentration. Some people are careless by nature and when they come into the field of *Yoga* they bring their carelessness with them. Carelessness is a weakness which prevents a man from achieving eminence in any line of endeavour and condemns him to a mediocre life. But in the field of *Yoga* it is not only an obstacle but a great danger and the careless *Yogi* is like a child who is allowed to play with dynamite. He is bound to do himself serious injury sooner or later. No one should think of treading this path who has not conquered the habit of carelessness and learnt to pay careful attention not only to important things of life but also to those which are considered unimportant.

(5) **LAZINESS:** This is another habit which results in a distracted condition of the mind. Although it results in the same kind of ineffectiveness in life as in the case of languor it is yet different. It is a bad mental habit acquired by continued yielding to the love of comfort and ease and tendency to avoid exertion. If we may say so, languor is a purely physical defect while laziness is generally a purely psychological condition. A restoration to health automatically cures the former but a prolonged discipline based on the execution of hard and difficult tasks is the only means of curing the latter.

(6) **WORLDLY-MINDEDNESS:** The worldly man is so immersed in the interests pertaining to his outer life that he does not get time even to think about the real problems of life. And there are many people who pass through life without having ever given any serious thought to these problems. When a person takes to the path of *Yoga* as a result of the dawning of *Viveka* and of his becoming alive to the illusions of life the momentum of the past is still behind him and it is not so easy to shut out the interests of the worldly life suddenly and completely. These hankerings after the objects of the world still continue to trouble him and cause serious distraction in his mind. Of course, all depends upon the reality of the *Viveka*. If we really see the illusions which are inherent in the pursuit of worldly objects like wealth, honour, name etc. then we lose all attraction for them and naturally give up their pursuit. But if the *Viveka* is not real—is of the pseudo-variety—the result of mere 'thinking', then there is constant struggle between the desires which drag the mind outside and the will of the *Yogi* who tries to make the mind dive within. Thus, worldly-mindedness can be a serious cause of *Vikṣepa*.

(7) **DELUSION:** This means taking a thing for what it is not. It is due generally to lack of intelligence and discrimination. A *Sādhaka* may, for example, begin to see lights and hear sounds of various kinds during his early practices. These things are very spurious and do not mean much and yet there are many *Sādhakas* who get excited about these trivial experiences and begin to think they have made great progress. Some think that they have reached high states of consciousness or are even foolish enough to

think that they have seen God. This incapacity to assess our supernormal experiences at their proper worth is basically due to immaturity of soul and those who cannot distinguish between the essential and non-essential things in spiritual unfoldment find their progress blocked at a very early stage. They tend to get entangled in these spurious experiences of a psychic nature and are soon side-tracked. It is easy to see that the unhealthy excitement which accompanies such undesirable conditions of the mind will cause great distraction and prevent it from diving inwards.

(8) **NON-ACHIEVEMENT OF A STATE:** The essential technique of *Yoga* consists, in the earlier stages, in establishing the mind firmly in the stages of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*, and after *Samādhi* has been attained, in pushing steadily, step by step, into the deeper levels of consciousness. In all these stages change from one state to another is involved and this is brought about by persistent effort of the will. Sometimes this passage is easy and comes after a reasonable amount of effort. At other times the *Yogi* seems to make no progress and a dead wall appears to be facing him. This failure to obtain a footing in the next stage can cause distraction and disturb the perfect equanimity of the mind unless the *Yogi* has developed inexhaustible patience and capacity for self-surrender.

(9) **INSTABILITY:** Another kind of difficulty arises when the *Yogi* can get a foothold in the next stage but cannot retain it for long. The mind reverts to its previous stage and a considerable amount of effort has to be put forth in order to regain the foothold. Of course, in all such mental processes reversions of this nature are to a certain extent unavoidable. But it is one thing to lose one's foothold in the next stage because only practice makes perfect and another thing to lose it because of the inherent fickleness of the mind. It is only when the instability is due to the inherent unsteadiness of the mind that *Vikṣepa* can be said to be present and special treatment is called for.

It should be noted that the nine obstacles enumerated in this *Sūtra* are of a particular type—those which cause *Vikṣepa* and thus hinder the *Yogi* in the practice of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. There can be other kinds of obstacles also. Every serious defect of character can become an obstacle. *Karma* can place obstacles

in the path of the aspirant which make the practice of *Yoga* for the time being impossible. Attachments to objects, persons or ideas frequently stand in the way of many aspirants taking to the life of *Yoga*. These different kinds of obstacles are dealt with in their proper places. Defects of character, for example, in the treatment of *Yama-Niyama*.

The reason why Patañjali has dealt here with this class of obstacles in particular lies, of course, in the fact that this is the *Samādhi Pāda* and he is dealing with all the essential factors involved in understanding this important subject. He gives in this *Sūtra* some idea with regard to the nature of obstacles which cause *Vikṣepa* before dealing in eight subsequent *Sūtras* (I-32-39) with the various methods which may be adopted for overcoming this tendency.

३१. दुःखदौर्मेनस्याङ्गमेजयत्वश्वासप्रश्वासा विक्लेषसहसुवः ।

Duḥkha-daurmanasyāṅgamejayatva - śvāsa -
praśvāsā vikṣepa-sahabhavaḥ.

दुःख- pain दौर्मेनस्य- despair, depression etc., caused by mental sickness अङ्गमेजयत्व- shaking of the body; lack of control over the body; nervousness श्वासप्रश्वासाः (and) inspiration and expiration; hard breathing विक्लेष distraction सहसुवः accompanying (symptoms).

31. (Mental) pain, despair, nervousness and hard breathing are the symptoms of a distracted condition of mind.

After enumerating in the last *Sūtra* those conditions which cause *Vikṣepa* the author gives in this *Sūtra* a number of symptoms by which the presence of *Vikṣepa* can be recognized. The first of these is pain. The presence of pain either physical or mental always shows some serious defect or disharmony in the vehicle. Physical pain is a sign of positive disease while mental pain shows

definitely that the mind is not in a natural healthy state. It is either in a state of inner conflict, torn between opposite desires or under the domination of *Kleśas*. Pain is an indication provided by Nature to bring to the notice of the person concerned that all is not well with him. But while most people would run to a doctor if there is any physical pain very few people think of having their mind examined or examining it themselves even when they are suffering excruciating mental pain. But that is what is needed really.

When pain is combined with a consciousness of impotence or incapacity to remove it effectively it leads to despair, despair then leads to nervousness which is merely an outer physical symptom of despair. Nervousness when it reaches a certain degree of intensity disturbs the breathing because it disorganizes the flow of *Prāṇic* currents. So these four symptoms really represent the four stages which follow one another when the mind is in that undesirable condition which causes *Vikṣepa*.

Since they are mere symptoms the proper way to deal with them is to treat the mind for the fundamental disease which afflicts it. And this will involve a long and tedious course of discipline of our whole nature because all parts of our nature are inter-related. The whole problem of human suffering and misery has been dealt with in Section II by Patañjali in a masterly manner in his theory of *Kleśas*. It will be clear to anyone who has understood this theory that there can be no cheap but effective solution of the problem of human suffering except through the conquest of the Great Illusion. As long as this is not achieved and the mind remains subject to the illusions of the lower life, suffering and misery must remain and the outer symptoms which reflect the disordered condition of the mind must continue to appear in greater or lesser degree.

But as has been pointed out already, Patañjali is not dealing here with the fundamental problem of human suffering and misery but with those particular conditions of the mind which produce *Vikṣepa* and interfere with the practice of *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. This problem is of a more limited nature and has to be tackled by adopting means of a more limited and specific nature. These are dealt with in the following eight *Sūtras*.