

Introduction to Yoga Philosophy

5: Key Doctrines of Yoga (2)

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The second part of *Yogasutra* first elaborates the concept of fivefold *klesha* already referred to, and further deals with how in the normal, non-Yoga state, attempts can be made progressively to attune one's life to Yoga.

Following is an analysis of topics treated in part two:

- (1) Means to achieve purity of mind as well as reduction of *kleshas*, called *Kriya Yoga* – preparation for Yoga. [1-2]
- (2) The five *kleshas* defined: *avidya, asmita, raga, dvesha, abhinivesha*. [3-9] Process of their end. [10-11]
- (3) *Kleshas* cause the store of good and bad deeds resulting in birth, life and worldly experience, pleasurable and painful. [12-14] For the discreet, all worldly experience is painful. [15]
- (4) (Fourfold scheme of the treatment of the subject of *Yogasutra*: suffering, its cause, liberation, its means. Taken up for detailed exposition.) Suffering. [16] Cause of suffering: union of the observer (*purusha*) and the observed (worldly objects). [17] 'Observed' defined and detailed. [18-19, 21-22] 'Observer' defined. [20] 'Union' defined. Its cause. [23-24]
- (5) 'Liberation' defined: end of contact. [25] 'Means of liberation' defined: discrimination. [26] Seven heads of discrimination. [27]
- (6) Contributory factors: the eight 'limbs' of Yoga (*yama, niyama* etc.). Introduction and enumeration. [28-29] *yamas*. [30-31] *Niyamas*. [32] Aids to *yamas* and *niyamas*. [33-34] Indications of perfection of *yamas* and *niyamas*. [35-45] *Asana*. Its perfection. [46-47] *Pranayama*. Its types and perfection. [48-53] *Pratyahara* and its perfection. [54-55]

What is the occasion for Yoga? – The very fact that all worldly life is full of suffering. There are no doubt moments of pleasure; but they are mixed up with pains. For the discreet, therefore, all is suffering. This situation justifies going to the roots of suffering and finding out ways of its total end.

The Yoga system views that the suffering is rooted in five causes, also deemed suffering. They are: ignorance, ego, attachment, hatred, and urge to live. Though apparently five, they are really so many forms of ignorance which is to view as eternal, pure, pleasure and self what is in fact perishable, impure, pain and non-self. This fundamental error leads to its sequels. Ego is mistaken identity of the elements of sight (*purusha*) and seen (intellect). Attachment follows pleasurable experience; hatred, painful one. Urge to live is founded on the experience of death in the previous life; and is found existing in everyone from the learned to insects. *Kleshas* lead to storing of deeds (*karmashaya*) and cause birth, life and

worldly experience consisting of pleasure and pain (as a common man thinks; for the discreet, all is pain). They are progressively terminated by 'Kriya Yoga' (penance, reading of sacred texts and devotion to God) and successive practice of meditation.

To explain briefly the four topics of Yoga:

- (1) What is to be got rid of is the suffering in future. The present suffering which merges into the past the next moment does not worry the Yogin.
- (2) Cause of the suffering is the union of the observer (pure consciousness) and the observed (elemental world). The observer is pure by nature. As he re-views the perception of objects by the intellect, he seems to identify himself with it.
- (3) Liberation of the observer resulting from the disunion is the goal.
- (4) Firm realisation of the distinction of the observer and the observed is the means. Realisation of this distinction founded on the light of knowledge can take place only in a pure mind. For the purity of mind, practice of the eight 'limbs' (contributory factors) of Yoga is recommended.

The eight 'limbs' of Yoga (*samadhi, asamprajnata*) are:

Yama; niyama; asana; pranayama; pratyahara; dharana; dhyana and samadhi (samprajnata).

Of these, the first five are external (farther) limbs; the remaining three, together known as *samyama*, are internal (closer) limbs. This explains why the last three are taken up for explanation in the next chapter.

- *Yama*: non-injury (mercy), truthfulness, honesty (abstention from theft), celibacy.
- *Niyama*: cleanliness, contentment, penance, study of sacred texts, devotion to God. Acquisition of material goods. When observed unconditionally, these are deemed Great Vows.

Perfection in *yamas* and *niyamas* is indicated by certain powers. For example, when non-injury is perfected, no creature harbours enmity in the presence of the practitioner. When truthfulness is perfected, whatever the practitioner says comes true. At the perfection of honesty, all precious things are at the command of the practitioner.

- *Asana*: Posture, providing steadiness and comfort.
- *Pranayama*: Holding of breath. Perfection in this leads to the removal of the obstruction of knowledge and results in the capability of the mind for meditation.

- *Pratyahara*: Withdrawal of senses from their objects. This leads to the merger of the senses into mind which is halted. This establishes total control over the senses.

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