

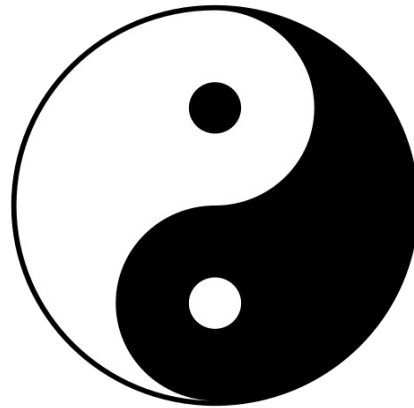
# Commentary On The Yoga Sutras

The Worlds Oldest Meditation & Self-Hypnosis Manual Explained From A Zen  
Perspective

By

A.E.Abedi

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# Introduction

This is a commentary on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (translated by BonGiovanni<sup>1</sup>) with an emphasis on it as a meditation & self-hypnosis manual – and psychological manual - that anyone can benefit from once they understand what it is saying.

All one can really do when they approach a text as old and tightly written as the yoga sutras is do an interpretation. Simply translating the words from the ancient Sanskrit into English is an act of interpretation. This commentary on the Yoga Sutras is no more and no less than an interpretation.

While yoga seeks to outline a system of mental development, zen is just the Japanese pronunciation of Dhayana (Chan in China). In other words, the Far East took the basic concept of meditation and applied it to ALL aspects of life making life itself a form of meditation.

Since Zen is about stripping the mind of beliefs so the mind – and world – can be experienced directly. This means that any method that adds perspective to a basic meditation technique to clear the mind of clutter is a "self-hypnosis" technique as one is required to believe in it that way a person might believe in the tenets of a religion. Thus the Yoga Sutras is a meditation, psychology and self-hypnosis manual for the Indian spiritual seeker.

Since my primary goals in approaching this text is for (1) how a zen user can use it and (2) that this book literally is the oldest compilation of meditation & self-hypnosis techniques known to man, written thousands of years after the first known archaeological find of the existence of yoga itself, I don't need to get every piece of this writer's philosophy across to accomplish my goal. The techniques written down in the Yoga Sutras, especially in the first book, were probably floating around in the region for thousands of years, long before the Vedic religion came into India, i.e. long before 3000 BC. Thus it probably contains inaccurate superstitious elements in it as it was passed down through the ages. I do my best to separate fact from fiction for a zen practitioner.

Based on my reading/interpretation of the Yoga Sutras I've classified the four books as follows;

1 A commonly available public domain text from sacred-texts.com <http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/yogasutr.htm>

Book One - "Contemplations" is an introduction to meditation and psychology

This is the original work of the Yoga Sutras that I like to call Patanjali's' introduction to yoga as I think it's the oldest. It lacks an emphasis on one type of technique as the best. Simply lists them matter of factly.

Book Two: "On Spiritual Disciplines" - Patanjali's Students Introduction to Meditation

Here the passion for a religious or traditional approach filled with scripture and duty, as per the old code, starts right from the beginning. To me it seems most likely that this was a student who applied a few techniques from the first book to the exclusion of all else and magnified it. I classify this as the self-hypnosis part of the book.

Book 3 is titled "Divine Powers" but it's impossible to find any yogic adept flaunting the "divine" or supernatural powers the book claims to teach. Thus I have to assume that, at least in the context of the culture it comes from, the book is made up. A con, so to speak. Yet, on the other hand, some correlations can be made to modern scientific knowledge – to some extent - and one can find correlations in far eastern martial arts (supposedly brought to the far east by the master of Zen, Bodhidharma, an Indian), such as in the stories of ninjas, so I have done a commentary on book 3 from the perspective of what MIGHT be possible.

Books 4. "On Realizations:" The Non-Patanjali Books or the later additions, that have truths and mistruths in them and seem to have been compiled by multiple people and from different schools of thought and probably con artists or just someone having fun with an old text (books were not considered to be 'written in stone' back when the Yoga Sutras came into being), which means that many other writers could have, and probably, did add their own thoughts to the list. "Realizations" is just someone writing what they realized after reading the text using folk wisdom as a guide. I have included book 4 as "The Later Additions" as it provides a useful basis for insights into culture as a whole.

**The titles I settled on turned out like this;**

Book One – Philosophy Of The Mind

Book Two - The Teachings Of The Path Of The Sage

Book Three - The Teachings Of The Hypnotist, Con Artist or Warrior

Book Four - Ramblings.

## **The Difference Between Indian & Chinese Sages**

First off, a sage in Eastern traditions is simply someone who follows the path of wisdom of that culture. A sage in western cultures is someone with divine blessing (seen as a "saint" or "holy man/woman") that is above normal people. That is not the case in Eastern traditions. While the word "holy" is used in both cultures, they come with different connotations. That said, there are even further differences between the typical Indian and Far Eastern sage.

The difference between the Indian Yogic approach to Dhayana and the Chinese or Japanese approach to Zen (the Japanese word for "dhayana" derived from the Chinese word for it, i.e. "Chan") lies in their philosophical approaches. While an Indian Yogi seeks to still the mind completely and cease interacting with life (like an ascetic) the Far Eastern Zen Practitioner seeks to still the mind and then flow from it spontaneously. Both systems share the dhyanic meditation technique from the yoga sutras. But while yoga seeks to outline a system of mental development beginning with the dhyanic meditation technique as a starting point, zen makes the dhyanic meditation the only technique of relevance. [Zen is just the Japanese pronunciation of Dhayana (Chan in China). In other words, the Far East took the basic concept of meditation and applied it to ALL aspects of life making life itself a form of meditation.]

This difference is explained by Joseph Campbell in his book Oriental Mythology:

The key to the art is presented in the opening aphorism: *yogas cittavrtti-nirodhyah*: "Yoga is the (intentional) stopping of the spontaneous activity of the mind stuff."

*The archaic psychological theory implied in this definition holds that within the gross matter of the brain and body there is an extremely volatile subtle substance, continually active, which assumes the forms of everything presented to it by the senses, and that by virtue of the transformations of this subtle matter we become aware of the forms, sounds, tastes, odors, and pressures of the outer world. Furthermore, the mind is in a continuous ripple of transformation - and with such force that if one should try without yogic training to hold it to a*

*single image or idea for as long, say, as a minute, almost immediate it would be seen to have already broken from the point and run off into associated, even remote, streams of thought and feeling. The first aim of yoga, therefore, is to gain control of this spontaneous flow, slow it down, and bring it to a stop.*

*The analogy is given of a surface of a pond blown by a wind. The images reflected on such a surface are broken, fragmentary, and continually flickering. But if the wind should cease and the surface become still - nirvana: "beyond or without (nir) the win (vana)" - we should then see that all the broken images, formerly only fleetingly perceived, were actually but fragments of these true and steady forms, now clearly and steadily beheld. And we should have at our command thereafter both the possibility of stilling the pond, to enjoy the fundamental form, and that of letting the winds blow and waters ripple, for the enjoyment of the play (lila) of the transformations. One is no longer afraid when this comes and goes; not even when the form that seems to be oneself disappears. For the One that is all, forever remains: transcendent - beyond all; yet also immanent - within all. Or, as we read in a Chinese text about contemporary with the Yoga Sutras:*

*The True Men of old knew nothing either of love of life or of the hatred of death. Entrance into life occasioned them no joy; the exit from it awakened no resistance. Composedly they went and came. They did not forget what their end would be. They accepted their life and rejoiced in it; they forgot all fear of death and returned to their state before life. Thus there was in them what is called the want of any mind to resist the Tao, and of all attempts by means of the Human to assist the Heavenly. Such were they who are called True Men. Being such, their minds were free from all thought; their demeanor was still and unmoved; their foreheads beamed simplicity. Whatever coldness came from them was like that of autumn; whatever warmth came from them was like that of spring. Their joy and anger assimilated to what we see in the four seasons. They did in regard to all things what was suitable, and no one could know how far their action would go.*

*But whereas the usual point of view and goal of the Indian has always been typically that of the yogi striving for an experience of the water stilled, the Chinese and Japanese have tended, rather, to rock with the ripple of the waves. Compared with any of the basic theological or scientific systems of the West, the two views are clearly of a kind; however, compared with each other in their own terms, they show a diametric contrast; the Indian, bursting the shell of being, dwells in rapture in the void of eternity, which is at once beyond and within, whereas the Chinese or Japanese, satisfied that the Great Emptiness indeed is the Mover of all things, allows things to move with them, participate in the rhythm of the Tao.*

*Great, it passes on.  
Passing on, it becomes remote.  
Having become remote, it returns.  
Therefore the Tao is great; Heaven is great.  
Earth is great; and the sagely King is also great.  
Man's law is from the Earth; the Earth's from heaven;  
Heaven's from the Tao.  
And the law of the Tao is its being what it is.*

*Instead of making all stand still, the Far Eastern sage allows things to move in the various ways of their spontaneous arising, going with them, as it were, in a kind of dance, "acting without action." Whereas the Indian tends to celebrate the catalepsy of the void:*

*For me, abiding in my own glory:  
Where is past, where is future,  
Where is present,  
Where is space,  
Or where even is eternity?*

*These, then, are the signatures of the two major provinces of the Orient, and although, as we shall see, **India has had its days of joy in the ripple of the waves and the Far East has cocked its ear to the song of the depth beyond depths**, nevertheless, in the main, the two views have been, respectively, "All is illusion: let it go," and "All is in order: let it come": in India, enlightenment (samadhi) with the eyes closed; in Japan, enlightenment (satori) with the eyes open. The word moksa, release, has been applied to both, but they are not the same.*

To be clear, my approach here is one of zen and like other zen practitioners before me, I interpret the Yoga Sutras in a way that many people from the Indian culture wouldn't necessarily agree with.



## Introduction To Zen

We have all heard the story of the 5 blind men and the elephant. It goes something like this; When encountering an elephant for the first time one blind man touched his leg and declared that an elephant was like a tree trunk. Another blind man grabbed the elephant's trunk and declared that an elephant was like a snake. The third his tail and thought an elephant was a rope. The fourth his ears and decided he was like a bird and the fifth his belly and decided he was like a cow. Each blind man had a different understanding and perspective of an elephant depending on his perspective.

Since zen is an experience and not a philosophy (though philosophy certainly seems to be a part of it) a person can develop a different understanding of zen based on their experience. So this section examines zen from many perspectives to make it as easy to comprehend as possible while trying not to fit it within any particular category permanently.

### Zen As A Philosophy Of The Mind

Sometimes I choose to describe Zen as a philosophy

I call zen “a philosophy” in the original sense of the word as ‘the love of wisdom’ and a philosopher being ‘a lover of wisdom’. True Wisdom, of course, is indefinable or as Socrates put it, “The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing”. By these definitions Zen certainly does seem to qualify as a philosophy.

Wisdom in zen is learning to live in a way that is most conducive to a peaceful state of mind that is accepting of all the good and bad that happens in life which you can rarely do anything about. Zen is not about knowledge or know “the truth of existence” or having any sorts of answers to these sorts of questions.

Alan Watts writes in the first paragraph of his book “The Way of Zen”:

*“Zen Buddhism is a way and a view of life which does not belong to any of the formal categories of modern Western thought. It is not religion or philosophy; it is not a psychology*

*or a type of science. It is an example of what is known in India and China as a 'way of liberation', and is similar in this respect to Taoism, Vedanta, and Yoga. "*

Siddhartha (AKA The Buddha) taught a 'path of liberation' in other words, if you follow these certain principles you will achieve this goal i.e. "enlightenment" or "nirvana". It's like saying if you hold a baseball bat in a certain way then you will achieve a certain distance for that ball providing you hit the ball thrown at you in a certain way. A slow moving strike of the bat gets you a ball that moves away from you (in the direction of your hit) at a low velocity while hitting the ball harder will get you a higher velocity hit, maybe even a home run if struck just right. The point is that you know that certain actions, when done precisely, will achieve certain specific goals.

In the same way, what Siddhartha was simply teaching (which later came to be called "Buddhism") was just a set of rules that included moral and ethical principles with philosophical insights to help a 'seeker after truth' to focus their minds and find the peace of mind that they were seeking. The ethical and moral rules were for mental balance and not meant to be followed like they were commandments from any God. It was simply advice from a teacher to his students.

Thus;

### Zen isn't a religion

*Buddhism has neither creed, code, nor cult. There is nothing that is binding upon the Buddhist, nothing they are supposed to believe in. There is no authoritative code, and there is no positive doctrines that the believer has to ascend to, It's true that Buddhists do observe certain precepts of moral and ethical behavior, however they don't regard the observation of them as following a divine will. It's simply a pledge you take to yourself. And, furthermore, Buddhism has no particular cult. That is to say, there are no specific sacraments or forms or worship that are binding upon all Buddhists. You might then say that Buddhism is a form of philosophy, but again this would not be quite correct because what we understand by philosophy in the west is the elaboration of certain ideas, certain theories about the nature of the universe, the nature of man or the nature of knowledge. And Buddhism is not particularly concerned with elaborating ideas.*

***The nearest thing in our culture to Buddhism, although it isn't exactly the same, is probably psychotherapy. And the reason is that what constitutes the essence of Buddhism***

*is not beliefs, not ideas, not even practices, but a way of experiencing” Allan Watts – Buddha and Buddhism<sup>2</sup>*

Where I differ from Alan Watts and why:

While “philosophy” is not Alan Watt's chosen word for the zen path. when he tries to connect it to a modern example, I think it is an appropriate name for zen for our time as having a philosophy to deal with life in an effective and, dare I say, BALANCED manner... requires a personal philosophy. It's all about how we, as a culture, "see" it, i.e. our “philosophy” about it. Psychotherapy as a modern science has lost all the credibility that it had in Alan Watts time and no there is no cultural position, at the moment for philosophers, so let *finding and teaching paths of liberation* be the new way of describing philosophy. At least for this book.

In Alan Watts time psychology was at the cutting edge of mental science. Hypnosis was entering its modern form. Carl Jung's ideas had spread. A man named Timothy Leary and used an unknown drug called LSD to prove that he could use it to have rehabilitation success rates for prisoners that, until that time, were simply unheard of (and probably still are). In any case, Timothy Leary spent a decade in jail for having a pinch of marijuana on him (which is now legal in several States) and LSD was banned making further research on it illegal.

As psychology was brought to a halt from Big Government on drug research and it's effect on human psychology, another front for psychotherapy opened up which also emerged with unheard of success rates called Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), which led to the modern popularity Hypnosis. Turns out this is something most people can learn in a weekend (the Ancient Greeks had dream temples based on a self-hypnosis concept that was unregulated whatsoever) and one can become pretty good at hypnosis and NLP in just a few months. The techniques work irrespective of theories in textbooks one has about a patients neurosis. Thus making it unprofitable - to the extreme - for big companies. Fortunately, NLP has been around for so long that many people in the psychology profession use it though not in psychiatry as their trade is in drugs and like how everything looks like a nail to a hammer, all the solutions of a psychiatrist's involves drugs.

Here is an extract from a more mainstream source of information;

Article:

2 A lecture from 1960

## ***Why Psychiatry Holds Enormous Power in Society Despite Losing Scientific Credibility It helps to be funded by Big Pharma.<sup>3</sup>***

*While Big Pharma financial backing is one reason psychiatry is able to retain its clout, this is not the only reason. More insidiously, psychiatry retains influence because of the needs of the larger power structure that rules us. And perhaps most troubling, psychiatry retains influence because of us—and our increasing fears that have resulted in our expanding needs for coercion.*

*But before discussing these three reasons, some documentation of psychiatry's lost scientific credibility in several critical areas.*

### *Psychiatry's Lost Scientific Credibility*

*DSM Invalidity. In 2013, the American Psychiatric Association's diagnostic bible, the DSM, was slammed by the pillars of the psychiatry establishment. Thomas Insel, director of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the highest U.S. governmental mental health official, offered a harsh rebuke of the DSM, announcing that the DSM's diagnostic categories lack validity, and he stated that "NIMH will be re-orienting its research away from DSM categories." Also in 2013, Allen Frances, the former chair of the DSM-4 taskforce, published his book, *Saving Normal: An Insider's Revolt against Out-of-Control Psychiatric Diagnosis, DSM-5, Big Pharma, and the Medicalization of Ordinary Life.**

*Psychiatric Treatments May Cause Increased Suicide. The FDA —despite protests by the psychiatric establishment—has issued "black box warnings" about the potential for increased suicidality for patients under the age of 25 who use antidepressants. In 2014, AlterNet reported about a University of Copenhagen study comparing Danish individuals who committed suicide to matched controls between the years 1996 and 2009. The researchers found that taking psychiatric medications in a prior year was linked to a 5.8 times increase in suicide; contact with a psychiatric outpatient clinic was associated with an 8.2 times increase; visiting a psychiatric emergency room was linked to a 27.9 times increase; and admission to a psychiatric hospital was linked to a 44.3 times increase in suicide.*

*While correlation by itself does not necessarily mean causation, an accompanying editorial in the same journal where the article was published pointed out that associations with the features detailed in this particular study indicate a good possibility of a causal relationship.*

<sup>3</sup> Alternet January 6 2015

<http://www.alternet.org/why-psychiatry-holds-enormous-power-society-despite-losing-scientific-credibility>

*Among the reasons why psychiatric treatment could well cause increased suicide, besides the adverse effects of medication, is the stigma and trauma of treatment, as the editorial authors state: "It is therefore entirely plausible that the stigma and trauma inherent in (particularly involuntary) psychiatric treatment might, in already vulnerable individuals, contribute to some suicides."*

*Corruption of Psychiatry by Big Pharma. Big Pharma heavily funds university psychiatry departments, sponsors conferences and continuing education for psychiatrists, advertises in their professional journals, and pays well-known clinicians and researchers to be speakers and consultants. I documented in 2007 and updated in 2012 how virtually every way the public and doctors get information about mental health has been corrupted by drug company dollars. In 2008, congressional investigations of psychiatry revealed that major psychiatric institutions such as the American Psychiatric Association and several "thought leader" psychiatrists, including Harvard psychiatrist Joseph Biederman, were on the take from drug companies, creating obvious conflicts of interest and further damaging psychiatry's credibility.*

For all the above reasons, and others, I differ with Alan Watts on calling Zen 'like psychotherapy'. Philosophy seems to have no positive or negative connotations in our culture, in our time, as it simply doesn't exist on a basic educational level so no one has had a chance to destroy it yet. So philosophy is the best word for our time, I think.

## **How Zen Differs From Traditional Views Of Philosophy**

Since this is a path of mental liberation it is meant to be experienced and only talked about enough so that it CAN be experienced.

A philosophy, while originally meaning the love of wisdom (which is an infinite search for knowledge, i.e. with no end in sight if Socrates wisdom is anything to judge by), it is now about beliefs that are wrapped around something the "philosopher" has taken to be an inarguable fact (to students of philosophy who generally exist as a tiny minority in college populations).

Descartes, for example, began his philosophy with the assumption that "*I think therefore I am*"<sup>4</sup> and goes on from there piling one assumption upon the other. Clearly Descartes hadn't heard of meditation in his time. Millions of people have learnt how to stop their endless mind chatter and silence the mind since Descartes time. Add the science of meditation to the facts

4 Meditations on First Philosophy by Rene Descartes (1641)

available to us and Descartes philosophy falls apart like a game of Jenga where the foundation stick, holding everything together has been pulled out thus making the entire structure fall.

Philosophy rests on assumptions and is often subject to such problems. To begin with Descartes stops thinking when asleep and consequently ceases to exist every night. So his philosophy had many holes in it but for people of his time, all high on coffee and conversation as their main past times, this must have been acceptable. Zen also rests on assumptions but the end point isn't a theory of the universe or of existence but one of experience.

Since the experience of Zen is the same, even if a different set of assumptions are used to get you to that experience, it is still the same thing. In fact, Zen can be said to have a fluid philosophy in that how it is taught differs greatly from teacher to teacher and time to time.

Zen is about letting go of thoughts and often includes meditation practice of no-mind and no-thoughts. Descartes wouldn't exist in Zen, or at least his philosophy wouldn't or couldn't exist. Yet I can put zen practice into words and thus have formed my own philosophy of how to explain zen (or 'dhyana" in meditation, i.e. it's originally a meditation technique extended to all aspects of life). In other words, just because Zen doesn't fit the format of philosophy doesn't mean it can't be talked about and explained in a philosophical manner that gets the meaning across.

## **The Difference Between Spirituality In The East VS The West**

In the east, particularly Ancient China, spirituality is about a mental attitude that is maintained. While in the west, spirituality has this otherworldly tinge around it. A Saint in the west is "Holy", a "Man/Woman of God", "Untouchable by the Devil" etc. A Saint in Ancient China of the Taoist or Zen path are often represented by smiling and laughing individuals who are even portrayed being clumsy or drunk. In the west the idea of "holy" separates the individual from ordinary acts and he is often portrayed with a halo around his head with everyone around him in awe or being clumsy or caught up in the world. This idea of holy doesn't seem to have existed in Ancient China beyond a form of ancestor worship common to ancient tribal peoples, i.e. one respected and revered ones lineage, both personal lineage and cultural lineage. If you compare and contrast these two concept of holiness you realize that one is "holy" while the other is just human.

That is the basic point to be understood here, Taoist "spirituality", which has been carried on by zen, is distinctly human in every way. While the west reveres its spiritual leaders as holy

men or women, in the east they are revered as accomplished human beings who have learned to flow with life. In the west the spiritual people are above the people. In the east the “spiritual” people are more human than anyone else. They lack the basic inhibition trained into people as youths so they live instinctively rather than through a belief system.

I have been putting spiritual in the parenthesis like this “spiritual”, because the differences between east and western conceptions of spirituality is so large that I feel uncomfortable using the same word as it doesn’t convey the meaning of the words in it’s context.

### **Zen Can’t Be Described Thus, ‘Those who know do not speak’**

Many People will recite as if by rote that, “One who knows does not talk. One who talks does not know.” suggesting that a true zen practitioner says nothing.

I would like to point out to those individuals that this quote that they think describes all of zen is chapter number 56 of the 81 chapter Tao Te Ching... so the source document contradicts them on this claim. Also, the rest of the stanza goes something like this:

*1. One who knows does not talk. One who talks does not know. Therefore the sage keeps his mouth shut and his sense-gates closed.*

In other words, what this ancient zen POEM is describing, what seems to be, a meditation technique and probably is one of the source documents for the “vow of silence” practice that some monks are famous for. A look at the rest of the chapter suggests that the writer is describing a meditation technique based on the idea of ‘words can cloud your experience’ and what a person can gain from this practice and what sort of results one can observe for such a person;

*2. "He will blunt his own sharpness, His own tangles adjust; He will dim his own radiance, And be one with his dust."*

*3. This is called profound identification.*

*4. Thus he is inaccessible to love and also inaccessible to enmity. He is inaccessible to profit and inaccessible to loss. He is also inaccessible to favor and inaccessible to disgrace. Thus he becomes world-honored.*

Another translator (Legge) puts it as:

*He who knows (the Tao) does not (care to) speak (about it); he who is (ever ready to) speak about it does not know it.*

Yet another, more poetic, translation of the same chapter of the poem;

*He (who knows it) will keep his mouth shut and close the portals (of his nostrils). He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will temper his brightness, and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity (of others). This is called 'the Mysterious Agreement.'*

*(Such an one) cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness:--he is the noblest man under heaven.*

Clearly the point of chapter 56 out of 81 of the world's oldest zen poem isn't that one can't speak about zen but more along the lines of, 'one shouldn't be talking as much as practicing it'.

### **“Zen Is So Mysterious”**

Other people will say that zen is so mysterious that you have to talk in it in the negative, i.e. describe what it's not like rather than what it is like because there are no words to describe the experience. Problem of just talking in the negative is that you are still using words and words convey a conception so you are providing a person with mental impressions you have just chosen to accept these descriptions as the right way to give a person mental impressions about zen.

You can talk about zen by describing it just like just like you can describe the taste of strawberries by saying sweet and tangy. You still can't convey the accurate experience of eating a strawberry but you can provide mental impressions (words/ descriptions) that indicate the right direction to look in, like a finger pointing towards the moon.

Words lack the ability to convey the experience of eating and tasting a strawberry. In the same way you can never understand zen by words alone because it must be experienced.

*“Were language adequate, it would take but a day to fully set forth the Tao [The Path Of Zen]. Not being adequate, it takes time to explain material existences. Tao is something beyond material existences. It cannot be conveyed either by words or by silence”* Chang Tzu



## The Concept Of The Self (Or Lack Of It) In Zen

In ancient India a concept developed called Maya which means illusion, i.e. since the world is considered to be impermanent (constantly changing) and you can interpret the world in any way with your mind, it is considered to be an illusion.

For example a tree can be seen just as a separate plant or as something which connects with the earth and sky and the animals around it; (i.e. a tree can be seen as an object OR as a pattern of the environment which will disappear when the pattern changes such as a change in the weather patterns which can change patterns of growth from green regions to desert and back again as it does in changing ice ages).

Thus a common though ancient perspective on attachment was formed that if you hold onto your psychological and mental foundations, your images to reality, you are holding onto something that will dissolve away... eventually. SO you are holding on to something which is inherently unstable, whether it be life which comes and goes with birth and death or the features of the landscape around you.

Even mountains grow or shift and/or erode over time, though generally too slowly to notice unless man changes its nature, by say, cutting all the trees then a safe mountain can become a mudslide hazard and fall apart etc.

This understanding of the fluidity of life and living life, not as a Utopia but an ever changing pattern, is at the root of the ancient psychological position of learning to be 'detached' from the world (the practice of non-attachment).

Siddhartha (AKA The Buddha) essentially agreed with this philosophical position of ancient Indian philosophy but took it one step further by saying that not only is the world an illusion but so is the self (the part of us that we refer to when we say "I").

To put it in other words, you are not the person you were a year ago and you can probably see the ways in which you have changed or grown in the last year or 10 years or 30 years. You probably see the world in a different way than you did a year ago or 10 years ago or 30 years ago. Since you see the world differently you have a different image of yourself as well in relation to the world. You, at the very least, DEFINE (see) yourself differently than you did a year or 5 or 10 or 20 or 30 years ago.

What you are capable of, what you are, what you like most... all of these definitions tend to change for **every** person given enough time or given changes in circumstances of life.

The ancient philosophers noticed that as soon as you ‘imagined’ an event happening to you or your role in any situation, you first have to PLACE yourself IN it;

i.e. you have to imagine your role or character, then you decide what to do or how to feel. Now, this tends to happen very fast for most events as your story and behaviour has already been established over time.

In other words, every time you imagine yourself or a situation that you are in, you are, in a sense, recreating yourself (which is what a Zen practitioner means when they say “death & rebirth”).

In the Scientific American MIND magazine an interview with neuroscientist Eric Kandel also proves the same concept of Siddhartha’s which is now a fundamental part of Mahayana Buddhism or simply ‘Zen Buddhism’.

**Here is how Eric Kandel defines the memory you have of your “self”:**

Scientific American Mind magazine in an interview with the Nobel laureate Neuroscientist Eric Kandel<sup>5</sup>:

*Mind: We tend to think of memory as a kind of library that holds a record of events and facts that can be retrieved as needed. Is this an accurate metaphor?*

*Kandel: No, memory is not like that at all. **Human memory reinvents itself all the time.** Every time you remember something, you modify it a little bit, in part dependent on the context in which you recall it. That is because the brain’s storage is not as exact as written text. It is always a mixture of many facades of the past event: images, pictures, feelings, words, facts and fiction—a “re-collection” in the true sense.*

Modern neuro-science agrees with the Zen Buddhist idea of an impermanent self. As Eric Kandel points out that, “Every time you remember something, you modify it a little bit, in part dependent on the context in which you recall it.” In other words you recreate your image of yourself to fit the new situation. If the self was something permanent and real, then your image of yourself would always remain the same. The fact that you can consciously or unconsciously change your image of yourself and react to situations in a new way - or just create a new you - proves that the self is something you make up as part of living in society.

5 In Search of Memory: An Interview with Nobel Laureate Eric Kandel By Steve Mirsky, May 24, 2006

**What does this mean?** This means that you are not limited to being any particular 'self' or person. If you feel like you have low self-esteem you can change that self. If you feel like you are not comfortable in social situations, you can change that image too. Any limiting image you have of yourself can be changed as you create your 'self' or how you want to be.

This is how Alan Watts described the illusory self from a zen perspective which was illuminating for me and may it be for you too;

*“The ability of a pattern to contain elements that represent its former states is what we call memory. In engineering language we would call it feedback, because feedback is the system whereby any system of energy is enabled to record the results of its own action so that based upon that record it can adapt, and as it were, make plans for the future. It can in other words, correct its action. So because human beings have memory, the capacity of the pattern of the nervous system to record its former states, the human being can make predictions about the future and in general control its activity.*

*But from this extraordinary marvelous ability there arises a confusing by-product. And that is this feeling that here is a constant entity, like the screen of a television. In other words, because a certain element of permanence runs through these changing patterns, this permanent behavior of the pattern, or permanently repeating behavior of the pattern, gives the impression of some substantial mind stuff or mind entity underlying the pattern and upon which the pattern is recorded. It's the same sort of illusion that arises when, for example, I take a flashlight and rotate it in the dark, and you see a continuous circle of light. It appears that the light leaves a track behind it because the moving light leaves a memory upon the retina of the eye, and that is what gives us the illusion of seeing a constant circle of light.*

*And so a similar illusion arises from the repetitive pattern of the nervous system, and gives us the impression that there is this constant thing, the experiencer, who lasts, and endures like a substance from the past, through the present, and into the future.” Alan Watts – Lecture on Mahayana Buddhism*

## **Zen Is Iconoclastic**

Iconoclastic means a person who likes to break idols. A zenist likes to break mental idols.

Since everything has it's being in a mental conception (a belief or a label to categorize experience is what gives an object it's meaning), there is nothing zen can't go beyond.

Nothing in the material world is meant to last and ideas are from the material world so they aren't meant to last as well.

In *Religion of the Samurai*<sup>6</sup>, Kaiten Nukariya writes;

*The Scripture is no more nor less than the finger pointing to the moon of Buddhahood. When we recognize the moon and enjoy its benign beauty, the finger is of no use. As the finger has no brightness whatever, so the Scripture has no holiness whatever. The Scripture is religious currency representing spiritual wealth. It does not matter whether money be gold, or sea-shells, or cows. It is a mere substitute.*

And;

*Zen is completely free from the fetters of old dogmas, dead creeds, and conventions of stereotyped past, that check the development of a religious faith and prevent the discovery of a new truth. Zen needs no Inquisition. It never compelled nor will compel the compromise of a Galileo or a Descartes. No excommunication of a Spinoza or the burning of a Bruno is possible for Zen.*

*On a certain occasion Yoh Shan (Yaku-san) did not preach the doctrine for a long while, and was requested to give a sermon by his assistant teacher, saying: "Would your reverence preach the Dharma to your pupils, who long thirst after your merciful instruction?" "Then ring the bell," replied Yoh Shan. The bell rang, and all the monks assembled in the Hall eager to bear the sermon. Yoh Shan went up to the pulpit and descended immediately without saying a word. "You, reverend sir," asked the assistant, "promised to deliver a sermon a little while ago. Why do you not preach?" "Sutras are taught by the Sutra teachers," said the master; "Çastras are taught by the Çastra teachers. No wonder that I say nothing." This little episode will show you that Zen is no fixed doctrine embodied in a Sutra or a Çastra, but a conviction or realization within us. To quote another example, an officer offered to Tüng Shan (To-zan) plenty of alms, and requested him to recite the sacred Canon. Tüng Shan, rising from his chair, made a bow respectfully to the officer, who did the same to the teacher. Then Tüng Shan went round the chair, taking the officer with him, and making a bow again to the officer, asked: "Do you see what I mean?" "No, sir," replied the other. "I have been reciting the sacred Canon, why do you not see?" Thus Zen does not regard Scriptures in black and white as its Canon, for it takes to-days and tomorrows of this actual life as its inspired pages.*

<sup>6</sup> The Religion of the Samurai, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913] - Chapter 3: The Universe If The Scripture Of Zen - See Taoist-Books.com for full book download.

## What Is Nirvana?

Nirvana is a very revealing word. It simply means to *extinguish* or to *blow out*. In other words, it's to let go of yourself and experience the world directly without ego or any story to explain the world whatsoever, thus having 'blown out' the structure that was holding your world view together, setting you free of ignorant beliefs.

Put another way, Nirvana is to live without an ego or even a personality as it has extinguished. You live directly from the mind. You live "at cause" with the world, you being the one being "caused" to do things, as described in the yoga sutras, "*for those beings who are merged in unitive consciousness, the world is the cause*". How can it be any other way? When your personality and attachment to desires and results is gone you can't help but pick up stuff from the outside to fill the void. You live like the description in the Tao Te Ching managing your *affairs without doing anything*<sup>7</sup>, *as you have no desire for or against managing your affairs*.

## What is "Enlightenment"?

Enlightenment has been described as a mental trick that takes you from being a frustrated member of the rat race to just a person living life. Bodhidharma simply defines enlightenment as '*awareness, supreme awareness*'.

Other's will describe it as '*being aware of and living from your Original Mind*', for example zen scholar D.T. Suzuki uses the word "Reason" as the proper translation for the 'tao' in his translation of the Tao Te Ching indicating he thinks Tao refers to the zen state. Suzuki also described enlightenment as "*the same as ordinary every living except you are two inches off the ground*". He's referring to the mental weight of one's worries or beliefs being released. It's like discovering you were walking around in lead shoes and you feel lighter after taking off the lead shoes and walking around.

In zen, enlightenment can come to anyone at any time. As one writer explains it's about attaining enlightenment or awareness of the Original mind or "*mushin*":

*In the attainment of this state of mind (mushin), some are quicker than others. There are some who attain to a state of mushin all at once by just listening to a discourse on the Dharma, while there are others who attain to it only after going through all the grades of*

<sup>7</sup> Chapter 2 verse 3 of the Tao Te Ching as translated by J. Legge in 1891

*Bodhisattvaship<sup>8</sup> such as the ten stages of faith, the ten stages of abiding, the ten stages of discipline, and the ten stages of turning-over. More or less time may be required in the attainment of mushin, but once attained it puts an end to all discipline, to all realization and yet there is really nothing attained. It is truth and not falsehood. Whether this mushin is attained in one thought or attained after going through the ten stages its practical working is the same and there is no question of the one being deeper or shallower than the other. Only the one has passed through long ages of hard discipline.*

Basically it says that no matter how much you meditate or don't meditate, 'when you get it, then you get it'. Since zen is a state of mind which is natural, it simply has to be understood to be practiced and thus the smart ones will get enlightened fast and the slow witted will get it slowly or never. But once zen is attained, it is the same for everyone in it's basic understanding and experience.

One ancient master describes the enlightened philosopher in this manner:

*Knowest thou that leisurely philosopher who has gone beyond learning and is not exerting himself in anything?*

*He neither endeavours to avoid idle thoughts nor seeks after the Truth;  
[For he knows that] ignorance in reality is the Buddha-nature,  
[And that] this empty visionary body is no less than the Dharma-body.<sup>9</sup>*

What is reincarnation?

In zen, death & rebirth (reincarnation) is seen as a psychological phenomenon following from the illusion of the self.

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng's Tan Ching, Writes;

*What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means "the other shore reached". When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called "this shore". When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is "reaching the other shore". Hence Paramita.<sup>10</sup>*

8 In this context it just means an *apprenticeship*

9 Yoka Daishi's "Song Of Enlightenment" - Manual of Zen Buddhism by Suzuki

10 Hiu Neng's Tan Ching - Manual Of Zen Buddhism by Suzuki

The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience 'death and rebirth' (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your consciousness stays steady and thus you don't experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old 'self') and you are creating a new one. Your 'self', i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.

### Zen Model/Path: Ten Oxherding Pictures

**Key:** The Cow or Ox represents the mind. The Person is you or the one seeking to learn about the mind and experience zen (which is a mental experience). You can imagine the cow/ox as a bicycle or a car and get an idea of the learning process these series of images seek to explain.

1

*The first picture, called 'the Searching of the Cow,' represents the cowherd wandering in the wilderness with a vague hope of finding his lost cow that is running wild out of his sight. The reader will notice that the cow is likened to the mind of the student and the cowherd to the student himself.*



*"I do not see my cow,  
But trees and grass,*

*And hear the empty cries  
Of cicadas."*

The person is unaware of his or her mind except as a word or something they have been told they "possess".

One is embedded in communal life, following societies norms of what's right and wrong. Including what one should hope for, think or dream about i.e. following what they are told without any thought except where allowed by society itself. The person reacts to life instinctively like an animal in its natural habitat.

**If the mind were a bike or a car:** This is the time when you know nothing about riding a bike or driving a car.

2

*The second picture, called 'the Finding of the Cow's Tracks,' represents the cowherd tracing the cow with the sure hope of restoring her, having found her tracks on the ground.*



*"The grove is deep, and so  
Is my desire.  
How glad I am, O lo!  
I see her tracks."*

Here one begins to learn about the mind (themselves). You figure out what you mind is composed of by what you react to in fear, pain or pleasure. You learn that all senses feed the mind with information. You know you can think logically about stuff and thus logic is an aspect of the mind. In other words, one learns about their mind by learning what sorts of behaviours, thoughts and actions count as mental activity. These are the footprints of the mind



**If the mind were a bike or a car;** Now you begin to learn how the bike or car operates without actually beginning to learn how to operate one yourself. You learn about riding a bike and driving a car intellectually (mentally) first.

3

*The third picture, called 'the Finding out of the Cow,' represents the cowherd slowly approaching the cow from a distance.*



*"Her loud and wild mooing  
Has led me here;  
I see her from afar,  
Like a dark shadow."*

The more you study the philosophy of the mind or engage in discussions about the mind and its attributes, the clearer becomes your understanding of it.

Being able to see your cow means you are beginning to get an idea of what your mind is. In other words, the mind is getting to know itself.

**If the mind were a bike or car;** Here you begin to learn how to ride a bike or drive a car by practicing regularly.

4

*The fourth 'picture, called 'the Catching of the Cow,' represents the cowherd catching hold of the cow, who struggles to break loose from him.*



*"Alas! it's hard to keep  
The cow I caught.  
She tries to run and leap  
And snap the cord."*

You seek to take control of the mind. You understand you have to silence it but it keeps chattering on. You discover trying to grab ahold of the mind with the mind is like a snake eating its tail (a catch-22 situation). It's like how difficult it is to quiet the mind when you first learn how to meditate. In fact, learning to meditate and fight while not letting the mind get in the way of fighting (sparring/practice) was probably the technique being employed. A basic meditation technique, called zazen, would also be a part of the Samurai's practice here.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** Now you are beginning to get the hang of riding the bike or driving the car.

## 5

*The fifth picture, called 'the Taming of the Cow,' represents the cowherd pacifying the cow, giving her grass and water.*



*"I'm glad the cow so wild  
Is tamed and mild.  
She follows me, as if  
She were my shadow."*

You have begun to gain control of your mind. You can sit in meditation for a while. You can change bad habits into good habits. You can flow when working (or fighting if a Samurai) or doing any activity to some extent. You move smoother and your reflexes are faster. You have a mind that you have some control over.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You have become a fairly good bicycle rider or car driver by now. You drive easily and freely wherever you want to go.

6

*The sixth picture, called 'the Going Home Riding on the Cow,' represents the cowherd playing on a flute, riding on the cow.*



*"Slowly the clouds return  
To their own hill,  
Floating along the skies"*

*So calm and still.*

You have a complete grasp of zen philosophy and practice. You have attained “the flow’. You can do your meditation easily and it feels as if no time passes because you’re enjoying it. You can fight (or engage in your profession) without thinking, having become an expert. You can change your mind, in accord with circumstance, instantly. Habits are easy to change.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You are now so good at your bike and/or car that you can do tricks. You now have real skill.

7

*The seventh picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and the Remembering of the Man,' represents the cowherd looking at the beautiful scenery surrounding his cottage.*



*"The cow goes out by day  
And comes by night.  
I care for her in no way,  
But all is right."*

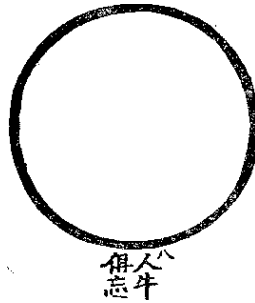
One has mastered zen in daily life and can now do all the daily activities and chores that is normal to everyday life as if one were on vacation or if the the mind has no attachments (non-attachment is mastered). You just do what needs to be done.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You can do really good tricks on your bike or in your car. The bike has become an extension of your body as if you and the bike were one.

8

28

*The eighth picture, called 'the Forgetting of the Cow and of the Man,' represents a large empty circle.*



*"There's no cowherd nor cow  
Within the pen;  
No moon of truth nor clouds  
Of doubt in men."*

You attain the supreme flow of zen where both you and your mind don't exist. You just live in the world as if it were an extension of you.

Here you see beyond the categories and labels created by your mind to explain things. Everything just is.

Rather than using the mind to control the mind one just lets go. Without the mind to create a conception of the self, the self no longer exists. Without the mind creating labels to structure observation (the impressions from the senses) there is no external world. The external world has no meaning, it's an illusion.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You and the car don't even exist. Well, the analogy breaks down here but the idea is that you transcend both yourself and the world, mentally, i.e. it's a meditation technique result called dhyana in Yoga and Zen in Japanese.

## 9

*The ninth picture, called 'the Returning to the Root and Source,' represents a beautiful landscape full of lovely trees in full blossom.*



*"There is no dyer of hills,  
Yet they are green;  
So flowers smile, and titter rills  
At their own wills."*

Your consciousness is irrevocably changed by the meditative experience but as you come down from your state of meditative ecstasy you discover that nothing has changed. The world is the same as it was before. There is no deep meaning to life or events. No gods or goddesses or angels. Everything just is as it is.

**If the mind were a bike or a car;** You discover the bike/car exist. Despite disappearing they have returned. You drive/ride when you need to.

10

*The tenth picture, called 'the Going into the City with Open Hands,' represents a smiling monk, gourd in hand, talking with a man who looks like a pedlar.*



*"The cares for body make  
That body pine;*

30

*Let go of cares and thoughts,  
O child of mine!"*

As human beings we tend to be communal in nature and the full experience of learning comes when we cease to become the student and become the teacher. In other words we complete a natural human cycle of learning a skill and passing it on to the next generation. Once a person learns zen one teaches zen. That is the path.

We have come full circle in this simpler and more natural path of learning about zen, how to dissociate from the world and the labels we impose on it to returning back to the world.

**If the mind were a car or bike;** Now you teach what you have learned.

### **A Quick Introduction To Zen With Bodhidharma**

Bodhidharma is the founder of Zen (& martial arts!) in China and, thus by transmission, Japan. So any in depth look at zen should begin with his writings which are simple, to the point and devoid of any mystical mumbo jumbo. As long as the translations are accurate, what he said 1500 years ago is understandable today. (some of the stuff here is repetitive but it fits and thus provides another useful perspective on important information)

**A few quotes from Bodhidharma extracted from a very lucid translation of Bodhidharma's sermons by Red Pines<sup>11</sup>;**

***Bodhidharma: What is the mind? You ask. That's your mind I answer. My answer is your mind. If I had no mind how could I answer; If you had no mind how could you ask. That which asks is your mind.***

What he is saying is that the act of perceiving anything be it question a thought or an image or anything else, that is an act of the mind. If you ask for a definition of the mind it is your mind that is asking for that definition.

So you got your answer, anything you say, do ask, want or imagine that is the mind itself.

**Definition of the mind in more detail;**

11 Bodhidharma <http://www.amazon.com/Teaching-Bodhidharma-English-Chinese-Edition/dp/0865473994>

Your mind creates your thoughts. If you try to describe your mind then that is basically you using your mind to describe your mind.

In other words, your mind is creating images and thoughts to describe itself so it can only do so by analogy and if your mind is engaged in any task that an earlier analogy did not take into account then your mind has to come up with a new analogy.

So any description your mind comes up with an image of itself is like a camera looking into the lens of another camera and constantly moving backward in a sort of infinite regression. If you try to conceptualize an end mind, it's like the woman who believed the world was set on a large turtle and when asked what was underneath 'the turtle that held the world up', she replied; '*nice try. It's Turtles all the way down.*'

In other words, as soon as you imagine something about the mind, the mind is distancing itself from itself to describe itself and you can do this forever. Ultimately you discover the mind can't be understood, only experienced.

**Bodhidharma says: *But the mind has no form and its awareness no limit.***

This means that any form or image you can imagine is a creation of your mind and since it is a creation of your mind, the mind itself has no form, i.e. the mind isn't a thing that you can find like a stone, it is formless as it is not made of matter.

**Bodhidharma: *All appearances are illusion. They have no fixed existence or constant form. They are impermanent.***

People grow old and mountains erode over the millennia by the wind and rain (or a strong rainfall). In other words, given a large enough perspective on time, everything you can see, touch, smell, feel or hear is impermanent. In fact a sound or the taste of something or a smell is by its very nature impermanent. Everything in the material world exists as a flow of information to our senses that is ever changing.

**Bodhidharma: *"The mind's capacity is limitless, and its manifestations are inexhaustible. Seeing forms with your eyes, hearing sounds with your ears, smelling odors with your nose, tasting flavors with your tongue, every movement or state is all your mind. At every moment, where language can't go, that's your mind."***



Anything you experience can be remembered in the mind thereby making its capacity seem limitless. Anything you can name or classify is a “manifestation” and you can make up anything on and on forever making it seem limitless. What you sense by smell or touch is sensed by your mind. Where language can’t go (such as explaining the taste of strawberries), that too is the mind.

***Bodhidharma: “And as long as you’re subject to birth and death, you’ll never attain enlightenment.”***

In zen death & rebirth is seen as a psychological phenomenon following from the illusion of the self.

An ancient Zen Scholar, Hui-Neng’s Tan Ching, Writes;

*What is Paramita? This is a Sanskrit term of the Western country. In Yang it means “the other shore reached”. When the meaning (artha in Sanskrit) is understood, one is detached from birth and death. When the objective world (visaya) is clung to, there is the rise of birth and death; it is like the waves rising from the water; this is called “this shore”. When you are detached from the objective world, there is no birth and death for you; it is like the water constantly running its course: this is “reaching the other shore”. Hence Paramita.<sup>12</sup>*

The idea being expressed here: When you cling to the world you have to create to create a self to deal with each new situation, thus you experience ‘death and rebirth’ (of the ego). When you let go and dwell in the zen state your consciousness stays steady and thus you don’t experience birth and death (of the ego).

For example: When you try and do good deeds you are trying to create a new self. By working on being better and better, you are destroying an old way of being (the old ‘self’) and you are creating a new one. Your ‘self’, i.e. how you define or imagine yourself to be, is going through death and rebirth.

### **Definitions drawn from Bodhidharma's sermons;**

Enlightenment = heightened awareness that can be maintained constantly

12 Hiu Neng’s Tan Ching - Manual Of Zen Buddhism by Dr. Suzuki

Nirvana = a state where the self (or yourself that you create in your mind) ceases to exist and all the world is experienced directly.

**Bodhidharma: “To search for enlightenment or nirvana beyond this mind is impossible.”**

Recognizing and living in the mind is by itself enlightenment. Enhanced awareness is one of the effects of said enlightenment.

The idea here is that as soon as you begin ‘seeking’ an experience, you have put that experience into a category and separated it from yourself.

Then you chase this conception you have of what ‘enlightenment’ or ‘nirvana’ should be. As long as you have an image to chase, i.e. your mind is chasing something it has created; you will be like a donkey with a carrot forever just out of reach, going round and round attaining nothing. Why? Because all enlightenment/ nirvana are attributes of your mind itself (it is your “original mind” to be more precise). You already have what you seek. So looking for what you already have is pointless .

### **Going deeper;**

To know that an object you perceive is a tree is a conception you have that you have created in your mind and imposed on it. What you’re perceiving could just as easily be called an air filter or a lung of the earth or a home for the spirits and every such definition is accurate in its particular context in that it is an image the mind has of its surroundings.

Thus noticing an object without defining it is your mind in a state of direct experience... which can be fun, like when you are engaged in a game or boring like if you are waiting in line. The key is not to go meta on what you are experiencing, i.e. if you are having fun, don’t think about the fun you’re having, just stay involved in enjoying yourself without any self-reflection, pondering or imagination – daydreaming or in any way being mentally not there which can included thinking of others opinions which take you away from your own experience

Same goes for if you are bored. Enjoy the boredom as it helps differentiate the boring time from the fun times. You could go ‘meta’ (outside of the experience of the situation) by imagining how bored you are and what a waste of time it is or go into an escape made by fantasizing doing something else (like daydreaming to pass time) but don’t. Simply experience waiting in line as waiting in line without imposing any value judgment such as fun or boring,

good or bad, and you are experiencing waiting DIRECTLY without any mental wanderings. That is a form of zen. Practice it and waiting can serve as a meditative practice, as can work as keeping your mind on your task is easier if your whole body is engaged. That's probably why Monks in Zen Monasteries had so many chores and physical practices, i.e. as a form of mediation.

In short just experience. Notice and observe without conception, i.e. without thinking of anything in particular. Take the example of a baby, they have no conception of right or wrong, up or down, male or female – so they experience life directly and respond to it without imposing conception of how things are and THEN responding to how they think is appropriate (and I mean non-habitual behaviors as well).

# Book 1

## Philosophy Of The Mind

### ***1.1 Now, instruction in Union.***

There is no preamble to this text. It's a straightforward, 'Ok, now I will teach you how to achieve union'. It's meant to be understood by the novice. In other words, it's a basic meditation manual that is as concise as it is ancient. Note that "yoga" literally means to 'join together' or 'to become one' or more succinctly "union". I also like the term "individuation" from the Swiss psychoanalyst Carl Jung, i.e. joining the different aspects of the mind together into one (though Jung would have probably disagreed with this use of his term).

### ***1.2. Union is restraining the thought-streams natural to the mind.***

This sutra indicates that this is a manual to attain zen or 'dhayna'. Said another way, "*Yoga is the (intentional) stopping of the spontaneous activity of the mind stuff.*"<sup>13</sup> i.e. stopping the mental chatter (essential to zen practice) is what meditation, and thus yoga, is all about.

The most traditional technique is to count your breaths, while breathing deeply and slowly, to slow down the mental chatter and focus the mind. A more advanced technique tells you to find the "gap" between thoughts and learn to space it out till you can maintain the no-thought state for long periods of time. I've included 2 meditation techniques below, from a Zen classic, to help a person get started.

**In more detail;** "Restraining" thoughts that are natural to the mind refers to the duality that arises when you define yourself as "I" and start labeling the rest of the world thereby creating "the 10 thousand things". When you remove such thoughts all you see is "that", "that" and "that", i.e. it's all part of the same unified experience of living. From a Zen perspective, you achieve union with yourself by getting rid of extraneous thoughts and conceptions.

In other words, creation of the ego (which is a natural behaviour of the mind) takes you away from the experience of union. Letting go of the ego (storytelling or 'meaning making' aspect of the mind) is restraining thoughts streams natural to the mind. This often manifests itself as constant mental chattering or inability to maintain mental silence.

**Two meditation techniques from the *The Religion Of The Samurai*<sup>14</sup> used to attain dhayana (zen);**

***Zazen, or the Sitting in Meditation.***--Habit comes out of practice, and forms character by degrees, and eventually works out destiny. Therefore we must practically sow optimism, and habitually nourish it in order to reap the blissful fruit of Enlightenment. The sole means of securing mental calmness is the practice of Zazen, or the sitting in Meditation. This method was known in India as Yoga as early as the Upanisad period, and developed by the followers of the Yoga system. But Buddhists sharply distinguished Zazen from Yoga, and have the method peculiar to themselves. Kei-zan describes the method to the following effect: 'Secure a quiet room neither extremely light nor extremely dark, neither very warm nor very cold, a room, if you can, in the Buddhist temple located in a beautiful mountainous district. You should not practise Zazen in a place where a conflagration or a flood or robbers

may be likely to disturb you, nor should you sit in a place close by the sea or drinking-shops or brothel-houses, or the houses of widows and of maidens or buildings for music, nor should you live in close proximity to the place frequented by kings, ministers, powerful statesmen, ambitious or insincere persons. You must not sit in Meditation in a windy or very high place lest you should get ill. Be sure not to let the wind or smoke get into your room, not to expose it to rain and storm. Keep your room clean. Keep it not too light by day nor too dark by night. Keep it warm in winter and cool in summer. Do not sit leaning against a wall, or a chair, or a screen. You must not wear soiled clothes or beautiful clothes, for the former are the cause of illness, while the latter the cause of attachment. Avoid the Three Insufficiencies-that is to say, insufficient clothes, insufficient food, and insufficient sleep. Abstain from all sorts of uncooked or hard or spoiled or unclean food, and also from very delicious dishes, because the former cause troubles in your alimentary canal, while the latter cause you to covet after diet. Eat and drink just to appease your hunger and thirst, never mind whether the food be tasty or not. Take your meals regularly and punctually, and never sit in Meditation immediately after any meal. Do not practise Dhyana soon after you have taken a heavy dinner, lest you should get sick thereby. Sesame, barley, corn, potatoes, milk, and the like are the best material for your food. Frequently wash your eyes, face, hands, and feet, and keep them cool and clean.

14 The Religion of the Samurai, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913] - Chapter 8

*'There are two postures in Zazen--that is to say, the crossed-leg sitting, and the half crossed-leg sitting. Seat yourself on a thick cushion, putting it right under your haunch. Keep your body so erect that the tip of the nose and the navel are in one perpendicular line, and both ears and shoulders are in the same plane. Then place the right foot upon the left thigh, the left foot on the right thigh, so as the legs come across each other. Next put your right hand with the palm upward on the left foot, and your left hand on the right palm with the tops of both the thumbs touching each other. This is the posture called the crossed-leg sitting. You may simply place the left foot upon the right thigh, the position of the hands being the same as in the cross-legged sitting. This posture is named the half crossed-leg sitting.*

*'Do not shut your eyes, keep them always open during whole Meditation. Do not breathe through the mouth; press your tongue against the roof of the mouth, putting the upper lips and teeth together with the lower. Swell your abdomen so as to hold the breath in the belly; breathe rhythmically through the nose, keeping a measured time for inspiration and expiration. Count for some time either the inspiring or the expiring breaths from one to ten, then beginning with one again. Concentrate your attention on your breaths going in and out as if you are the sentinel standing at the gate of the nostrils. If you do some mistake in counting, or be forgetful of the breath, it is evident that your mind is distracted.'*

*Chwang Tsz seems to have noticed that the harmony of breathing is typical of the harmony of mind, since he says: " The true men of old did not dream when they slept. Their breathing came deep and silently. The breathing of true men comes (even) from his heels, while men generally breathe (only) from their throats." At any rate, the counting of breaths is an expedient for calming down of mind, and elaborate rules are given in the Zen Sutra, but Chinese and Japanese Zen masters do not lay so much stress on this point as Indian teachers.*

**The Breathing Exercise of the Yogi.**--Breathing exercise is one of the practices of Yoga, and somewhat similar in its method and end to those of Zen. We quote here Yogi Ramacharaka to show how modern Yogis practise it: "(1) Stand or sit erect. Breathing through the nostrils, inhale steadily, first filling the lower part of the lungs, which is accomplished by bringing into play the diaphragm, which, descending, exerts a gentle pressure on the abdominal organs, pushing forward the front walls of the abdomen. Then fill the middle part of the lungs, pushing out the lower ribs, breastbone, and chest. Then fill the higher portion of the lungs, protruding the upper chest, thus lifting the chest, including the upper six or seven pairs of ribs. In the final movement the lower part of the abdomen will be slightly drawn in, which movement gives the lungs a support, and also helps to fill the highest part of the lungs. At the first reading it may appear that this breath consists of three distinct movements. This, however, is not the correct idea. The inhalation is continuous, the entire

*chest cavity from the lower diaphragm to the highest point of the chest in the region of the collar-bone being expanded with a uniform movement. Avoid a jerking series of inhalations, and strive to attain a steady, continuous action. Practice will soon overcome the tendency to divide the inhalation into three movements, and will result in a uniform continuous breath. You will be able to complete the inhalation in a couple of seconds after a little practice. (2) Retain the breath a few seconds. (3) Exhale quite slowly, holding the chest in a firm position, and drawing the abdomen in a little and lifting it upward slowly as the air leaves the lungs. When the air is entirely exhaled, relax the chest and abdomen. A little practice will render this part of exercise easy, and the movement once acquired will be afterwards performed almost automatically."*

### **1.3. Then the seer dwells in his own nature.**

So, what is your "nature"? Your nature is your original mind. Your mind without conception. Your nature is that part of you that doesn't exist in conception, like when you get lost in the beauty of a sunset or any landscape. In other words, when you silence the mind with meditation you can experience your nature directly without thoughts and conception.

As it is, by letting go of various thoughts and emotions that one imagines around one's 'self' is what opens the door to direct experience. This direct experience brings you to the 'mystical experience' of oneness that people have felt when the ego dissolves and thus you cease experiencing the world around you through the ego and live it directly, like a baby with no concept of self, but as an adult who can enjoy the world with confidence.

#### **Alan Watts;**

*"When I use the word mysticism I am referring to a band of experience – a state of consciousness, shall we say – that seems to me to be as prevalent among human beings as measles..."*

*One ordinarily feels that one is a separate individual in confrontation with the world that is foreign to one's self, that is 'not me' In the mystical kind of experience, though, that separate individual finds itself to be of one and the same nature or identity as the outside of the world. In other words, the individual suddenly no longer feels like a stranger in the world, rather, the external world feels as if it were his or her own body." Lecture on Mysticism and Morality by Alan Watts*

In other words, when you 'restrain' the thoughts that arise from your ego you attain union with yourself and your experience with all of its perspectives and emotions as its all mental experience. To do that you have to silence the mind from any mental chatter or random thoughts using meditation.

A technique from *The Religion of the Samurai*<sup>15</sup> describes it another way which contains the more popular conception of mysticism, i.e. an experience of divinity;

***Calmness of Mind.***--*The Yogi breathing above mentioned is fit rather for physical exercise than for mental balance, and it will be beneficial if you take that exercise before or after Meditation. Japanese masters mostly bold it very important to push forward. The lowest part of the abdomen during Zazen, and they are right so far as the present writer's personal experiences go.*

*'If you feel your mind distracted, look at the tip of the nose; never lose sight of it for some time, or look at your own palm, and let not your mind go out of it, or gaze at one spot before you.' This will greatly help you in restoring the equilibrium of your mind. Chwang Tsz thought that calmness of mind is essential to sages, and said: "The stillness of the sages does not belong to them as a consequence of their skilful ability; all things are not able to disturb their minds; it is on this account that they are still. When water is still, its clearness shows the beard and eyebrows (of him who looks into it). It is a perfect level, and the greatest artificer takes his rule from it. Such is the clearness of still water, and how much greater is that of the human spirit? The still mind of the sage is the mirror of heaven and earth, the glass of all things."*

*Forget all worldly concerns, expel all cares and anxieties, let go of passions and desires, give up ideas and thoughts, set your mind at liberty absolutely, and make it as clear as a burnished mirror. Thus let flow your inexhaustible fountain of purity, let open your inestimable treasure of virtue, bring forth your inner hidden nature of goodness, disclose your innermost divine wisdom, and waken your Enlightened Consciousness to see Universal Life within you. "Zazen enables the practiser," says Kei-zan, "to open up his mind, to see his own nature, to become conscious of mysteriously pure and bright spirit, or eternal light within him."*

*Once become conscious of Divine Life within you, you can see it in your brethren, no matter how different they may be in circumstances, in abilities, in characters, in nationalities, in language, in religion, and in race. You can see it in animals, vegetables, and minerals, no matter how diverse they may be in form, no matter how wild and ferocious some may seem in nature, no matter how unfeeling in heart some may seem, no matter how devoid of*

15      *The Religion of the Samurai*, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913] - Chapter 8



*intelligence some may appear, no matter how insignificant some may be, no matter how simple in construction some may be, no matter how lifeless some may seem. You can see that the whole universe is Enlightened and penetrated by Divine Life.*

#### **1.4. Otherwise he is of the same form as the thought-streams.**

When you aren't silencing the mental chatter of the mind then you are living what you are thinking in a a very real way. If you think angry thoughts you will be angry. If you think happy thoughts you will be happy. In other words, whatever your thoughts (and the emotions those thoughts create in you) dictate how you will feel and act. You have become the same as your thoughts and will behave/feel as your thoughts suggest.

This can be used as a positive meditation technique as well (as a sort of reprogramming of the mind). Using the mental fact, that you become what you think of, you can imagine nice thoughts. If you imagine peaceful things you will be peaceful, i.e. you will embody the thought forms of peace.

In the same way if you focus on physical relaxation you can't help but relax mentally as well, as the mind and body are connected. Physical relaxation can't help but relax you mentally as well. On the other side, if you think stressful thoughts your body will tense up again. To remove the stress all you have to do is think peaceful thoughts and do pleasant visualizations. Always you will be the same form as your thoughts.

The Cleveland Clinic<sup>16</sup> calls this “the mind-body connection” and provides the following information:

*“The mind-body connection means that you can learn to use your thoughts to positively influence some of your body’s physical responses, thereby decreasing stress. If you recall a time when you were happy, grateful or calm, your body and mind tend to relax.*

*Research has shown that when you imagine an experience, you often have similar mental and physical responses to those you have when the event actually happens. For example, if you recall an upsetting or frightening experience, you may feel your heart beating faster, you may begin to sweat, and your hands may become cold and clammy.*

16 <http://my.clevelandclinic.org/>

*Whether you have been diagnosed with an illness or need to prepare for a medical procedure such as surgery, it is very important to minimize the negative effects and maximize the healthy, healing aspects of your mind-body connection.”<sup>17</sup>*

### **1.5. The thought-streams are five-fold, painful and not painful.**

Now begins the description of the different types of thoughts that arise from the immersion of one's self in the different types of knowledge. This is one of the psychological theories presented in this text. In the categorization system used by the original writer of the Yoga Sutras (Pantajali) there are 5 basic types of thought.

### **1.6. Right knowledge, wrong knowledge, fancy, sleep and memory.**

These are the categories or “labels” the writer uses to describe the types of thought and states of mind as per his method of classification.

### **1.7. Right knowledge is inference, tradition and genuine cognition.**

**There are three types of “Right Knowledge”:**

1. **Inference** refers to logical deductions arrived at through the process of the dialectic, i.e. your ability to reason. The dialectic is a “conversation” whose goal isn't to win an argument but to arrive at the most logical and agreeable (unchallenged by logic) definition or explanation. Plato's dialogues uses the method of the dialectic - or logical inferences through conversation - to arrive at various conclusions. As long as one's knowledge and reasoning skills are used to the best of one's ability, with a willingness to expand or change one's conclusions if the information indicates so, then you are using inference to obtain knowledge in the right way.
2. **Tradition** refers to the beliefs of the culture a person is in. The Yoga Sutras were written at a time (around 500BC to 200BC) when the Indian Vedic culture was fully established and thriving. Following tradition was very important for the ancient vedics, or any culture or religion seeking stability in daily ritual and yearly festivals which help bind a community together. The traditions that bind a community together tend to be designed over time specifically for the community to function well, i.e. to grow and

<sup>17</sup> <http://my.clevelandclinic.org/services/heart/prevention/emotional-health/stress-relaxation/mind-body-exercises>

expand in a peaceful manner. So the second form of right knowledge is following the traditionally accepted norms in your community as that is right for your community/culture and you.

3. **Genuine cognition**; If you hear something in the dark and imagine those noises are caused by ghosts (or a tiger when it's actually a cow) then you are dealing with false cognition/perception. In other words, if you see a vine and recognize it as a vine and not a snake then you are using genuine cognition.

### ***1.8. Wrong knowledge is false, illusory, erroneous beliefs or notions.***

Wrong knowledge is a belief or notion that is factually wrong. Erroneous beliefs come and go like when you believe one thing when you are drunk but that belief changes when you sober up. If you believe the sun comes up in the west or that the earth is flat, you believe something that is false. You are in error or you have a wrong notion of the nature of the world.

### ***1.9. Fancy is following after word-knowledge empty of substance.***

There are many ways of looking at this, especially in our modern culture where books are so common, so I will just outline a few;

One sort of fancy is simply to daydream or read mindless fiction. They may be fun from time to time but is a waste of time if done continuously and for no other purpose than entertainment. That said, reading fiction can be helpful to de-stress for some people, especially if used in moderation, so I'll leave that there.

Another type of fancy is to chase after knowledge like studying many subjects and reading tons of books but you miss out on living. Or learning about other cultures while not understanding your own culture or yourself. In other words, you are seeking world knowledge unrelated to your life and thus empty of substance.

It may simply be that the writer believed that any knowledge except the art of yoga is a waste of time and is chasing after world knowledge rather than knowledge that leads one to union (yoga) is a waste of time. Which very well may be if you seek mental liberation (peace) in the world and think that only reading a bunch of books rather than meditating will get you there.

**1.10. Deep sleep is the modification of the mind which has for its substratum nothingness.**

Sleep is that aspect of the mind that consists of no thoughts. Even REM sleep doesn't exist in deep sleep. But even if dreams are dreamt they are simply fantasies that emerge and disappear into the nothingness of sleep.

So the sentence is literally true. At a deep level of sleep there is nothing. No dreams, no awareness, no consciousness, no thoughts, just sleep i.e. nothing.

**1.11. Memory is not allowing mental impressions to escape.**

Memory involves - quite literally - holding on to the details of what you perceive, i.e. not allowing your mental impressions to escape into forgetfulness. There are more involved definitions and explanations of how memory works but the writer here is just concerned with classifying types of knowledge of the mind (a philosophy of mind, so to speak), so this is enough.

**1.12. These thought-streams are controlled by practice and non-attachment.**

All types of thoughts can be controlled with meditation practice and embodying the state of non-attachment. Letting thoughts go, rather than holding on them, is a form of non-attachment to thoughts (so you don't think about your thinking).

In other words, the various modes of cognition and streams of thought that have been outlined, that takes you away from the zen state, CAN be controlled with the practice of meditation and letting go.

Here one of the instructional parts of the yoga sutras is beginning, starting with tips and definitions.

**1.13. Practice is the effort to secure steadiness.**

This is a definition of purpose. The writer is telling you to practice meditation until you can do it easily and continuously (i.e. till you are "steady").

You practice driving to develop the skill of driving. The more you practice driving the steadier you become at it. You could describe the same idea with a bike, i.e. the more you practice riding a bike the steadier you become at riding. In other words, practice makes perfect.

***1.14. This practice becomes well-grounded when continued with reverent devotion and without interruption over a long period of time.***

This describes **how** one must practice. If you practice bike riding with devotion you can learn to do tricks on your bike, i.e. your ability to ride a bike has become a well grounded skill you have. Same with driving a car, i.e. practice makes perfect. Same goes for meditation.

***1.15. Desirelessness towards the seen and the unseen gives the consciousness of mastery.***

Non-attachment towards the external world of things and the internal world of emotions means you have reached a master level of accomplishment.

Desire leads you to attachment because when you desire something your mind is grasping towards that which you want rather than being calm and steady. Examples;

Seen: If you 'can't live without' that hot fudge ice cream sundae or pizza etc. then you are attached to eating. Non-attachment would be able to enjoy your food while not particularly caring what it is as long as the hunger is taken care of.

Unseen: Emotions may be unseen but they can just be as addictive as anything you can see. Though here the reference to "unseen" is probably the spiritual world (from the Indian perspective). From a zen perspective this would be an emotional attachment to a story, or fantasy, you like to imagine. Only the mind and its perceptions, such as emotions, are real factually. Some examples;

If you like the smell of roses and must have them everywhere or are in love with love and thus must always have a boyfriend or girlfriend, can't stop eating, being depressed, seeking entertainment distractions etc., you are attached to senses which you can't "see" but you can certainly feel.

Learning detachment can help you become more flexible in any situation, at the very least.

Maintaining a state of desirelessness towards the external world gives you mastery over it as the external world doesn't have power over you. You, in fact, gain a mastery over your desire. For example, before practicing non-attachment on the smell of pizza (continuing from the earlier example) you would send your mind after it, desiring pizza even more if you can't get your hands on it. Now you don't care if you have the pizza or not and can just enjoy the smell of a pizza shop you pass by and forget about it. The desire for pizza no longer controls you. You have gained mastery over the desire that used to propel you to satisfy it. You have become "desireless" through non-attachment.

Same logic would apply for emotional attachments. Maintaining desirelessness towards any person or accomplishment or need for family (as in the ascetic world) etc. gives you mastery over the external world as it can't boss you around by making you chase after emotional attachments to a non-static world.

***1.16. This is signified by an indifference to the three attributes, due to knowledge of the Indweller.***

Living from the original mind produces indifference of its own and thus will be naturally indifferent to attributes of any kind due to non-attachment.

***1.17. Cognitive meditation is accompanied by reasoning, discrimination, bliss and the sense of 'I am.'***

This one suggests that thought and maintaining certain thoughts is a form of meditation or that by meditation one attains the ability to reason, heightened awareness and a feeling of bliss. This is very different from how people normally see meditation (as just a relaxation technique) but this isn't too far from the truth as a recent study published in Time Magazine has shown;

*"Everyone around the water cooler knows that meditation reduces stress. But with the aid of advanced brainscanning technology, researchers are beginning to show that **meditation directly affects the function and structure of the brain, changing it in ways that appear to increase attention span, sharpen focus and improve memory.***

***One recent study found evidence that the daily practice of meditation thickened the parts of the brain's cerebral cortex responsible for decision making, attention and memory.*** Sara Lazar, a research scientist at Massachusetts General Hospital, presented

*preliminary results last November that showed that the gray matter of 20 men and women who meditated for just 40 minutes a day was thicker than that of people who did not. Unlike in previous studies focusing on Buddhist monks, the subjects were Boston-area workers practicing a Western-style of meditation called mindfulness or insight meditation. "We showed for the first time that you don't have to do it all day for similar results," says Lazar. What's more, her research suggests that meditation may slow the natural thinning of that section of the cortex that occurs with age.*

*The forms of meditation Lazar and other scientists are studying involve focusing on an image or sound or on one's breathing. **Though deceptively simple, the practice seems to exercise the parts of the brain that help us pay attention.** "Attention is the key to learning, and meditation helps you voluntarily regulate it," says Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin. Since 1992, he has collaborated with the Dalai Lama to study the brains of Tibetan monks, whom he calls "the Olympic athletes of meditation." Using caps with electrical sensors placed on the monks' heads, Davidson has picked up unusually powerful gamma waves that are better synchronized in the Tibetans than they are in novice meditators. Studies have linked this gamma-wave synchrony to increased awareness."<sup>18</sup>*

**Alternate reading;** This sutra defines this sort of thought based "meditation" as the ability to reason or the mental satisfaction of solving problems. Mathematicians will often talk of how solving math problems get them a mental high. Many kids have probably experienced this sort of mental high ("bliss") in school. Solving any sort of problem or using your knowledge to choose the right path (i.e. you use your ability to "discriminate" between different pieces of information) results in a sort of bliss. Learning to separate yourself and be at peace with yourself will also give you a sense of bliss. Something one also experiences by practicing mantras such as "om" or "I am" as the word for chanting. In other words, these are just different descriptions of deep thought which the writer describes as forms of meditation (all aspects of the mind are meditative if the persons lives from their Original Mind).

**A meditation practice to experience bliss that uses visualizations rather than chanting:** Breathe in deeply and fully expanding your chest and even your belly (as it helps expand your lower lungs) to its fullest extent and then SLOWLY exhale till your lungs are completely empty or close to it. Follow this with another deep breath and continue this for a while. If you like you can imagine yourself sitting in a golden bubble of light and when you breathe in you can fill your body with light and when you exhale the light stays in and any stress or darkness should be imagined being blown away. Do this for 3 to 15 minutes. Basically, practice this till you feel really good and then continue for a while after till you feel blissful. Generally 3 minutes is

18 How to Get Smarter, One Breath at a Time By Lisa Takeuchi Cullen. Time Magazine, Jan. 10, 2006

enough for this breathing meditation with visualization to take effect. Some may need more time and some may need less but the longer you can maintain a nice slow and deep breathing pattern the deeper this experience of bliss will become.

By the end you should have the experience of “I am feeling great”.

***1.18. There is another meditation which is attained by the practice of alert mental suspension until only subtle impressions remain.***

This sounds more like the ZaZen practice common in cultures that practice zen (China & Japan). The technique involves focusing on just your breath till your mind and body are so relaxed you are focused on nothing in particular. See 1.2 for more details of the Zazen meditation practice. Experiential meditation for a proper grasping on the concepts here;

**Basic “object” meditation practice:** This practice involves focusing your mind on an object till no other thoughts enter your mind. You could focus on a picture on an idol or even a candle flame while allowing all your thoughts to just burn up in the flame, leaving your mind silent. This practice should increase your ability to concentrate providing you can maintain a state of undivided attention on the object you have chosen to focus on. Transition to:

**Alert Mental Suspension:** After being able to focus your mind on one object for a long period of time (to gain steadiness), you simply practice focusing your thought on no object whatsoever and sort of “let go” so you are alert but not focused on anything. Maintaining this should get you to the state described.

**1.19. For those beings who are formless and for those beings who are merged in unitive consciousness, the world is the cause.**

Definitions: Those who practice zen are essentially formless. Those who practice dhayana meditation are merged in “unitive consciousness”<sup>19</sup>. (See 1.2 and 1.3 for meditation techniques to silence the mind).

Examples: An accountant retains the form of an accountant. A sheep herder that of a sheep herder. Every person in a profession or a style of life wears clothes and thinks thoughts according to their experiences and daily living. These people have a specific form.

<sup>19</sup> Zen is the Japanese pronunciation of “Dhayana”. Dhayana is, of course, the meditation technique of clearing out your thoughts till your mind is silent and thus in a state of “unified consciousness”.



Zen practitioners 'move with the flow' (as explained in the introduction to zen) and can thus be said to react to the world, i.e. the world is the cause and they are the effect.

As one zen master put it, *"In summer we sweat; in winter we shiver"* or as expressed in a poem:

*When cold, we gather round the hearth before the blazing fire;  
When hot, we sit on the bank of the mountain stream in the bamboo grove.*

In other words, *'we just live and do what we have to do as the weather or circumstance dictates'*. There is no planning or happiness or sorrow with the change of weather. Just reactions to the cause.

The same applies to those practicing meditation to the point where the mind can be silenced, i.e. "unitive consciousness" or dhayana/zen can be maintained for short or long periods of time.

### ***1.20. For others, clarity is preceded by faith, energy, memory and equal minded contemplation.***

One can master meditation by utilizing faith, energy, memory and equal minded contemplation (treating all thoughts and aspects of life with equal calmness and balanced mind and emotion).

Side note for comparative thinking: You can achieve clarity of mind on any issue through;

1. Faith in your ability to find an answer/solution or faith in a belief like a religion
2. Having high levels of energy such as through regular and intensive exercise or meditation or through eating and sleeping right etc.
3. Memory that is accurate and consistent enough to make logical inferences and as correct conclusions as possible
4. and the ability to approach a problem with a balanced state of mind taking all issues into account OR a careful and calm thought "meditation" on the good and bad aspects you are facing (like comparing and contrasting the positive and negative aspects of a situation before making a decision about it).

### **1.21. Equal Minded contemplation is nearest to those whose desire is most ardent.**

Maintaining a calm and balanced perspective and meditative state applied to all aspect of living life will only be done by those who genuinely desire to do that.

### **1.22. There is further distinction on account of the mild, moderate or intense means employed.**

The kind of state you attain is affected by the type of technique you used. 10 minute daily meditation will be lighter than a half hour daily meditation which will be lighter than a one hour daily meditation and so on.

### **1.23. Or by surrender to God.**

This is considered to be one of the easiest techniques in the sage/mystics arsenal. 'Surrendering to God' is a technique of dissolving the ego by focusing on the Divine, however you may conceive of it, and is the only ancient yogic technique to have entered western religions (at least openly).

The technique is called Bhakti Yoga or focusing on *the love of God*. This is considered to be the easiest way of implementing this technique to dissolve the ego and experiencing oneness/zen.

Of course, in Hinduism the "Gods" one normally focuses on are Krishna or Shiva or a Goddess, as the famous Bengali yogi put it;

*"When I jumped up like a madman and seized [a sword], suddenly the blessed Mother revealed herself. The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent Ocean of Consciousness. As far as the eye could see, the shining billows were madly rushing at me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up. I was caught in the rush and collapsed, unconscious ... within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother."* Mahendranath Gupta,

Ramakrsna Kathamrta translated by Swami Nikhilananda as The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1952), Book 1, p. 15<sup>20</sup>

### **The yoga journal defines Bhakti Yoga as;**

*“The Sanskrit word bhakti comes from the root bhaj, which means “to adore or worship God.” Bhakti yoga has been called “love for love’s sake” and “union through love and devotion.” Bhakti yoga, like any other form of yoga, is a path to self-realization, to having an experience of oneness with everything.”* Yoga Journal - Jul 16, 2008

This is basically a self hypnosis technique using the power of meditation and the emotion of love. One can use self-hypnosis nowadays to lose weight or quit smoking and even to increase one's capacity to be more open hearted. Bhakti yoga is specifically about focusing all your intention and desire on loving God till that’s all the remains in your thoughts. This is said to have a transformative effect on consciousness.

Basically, Bhakti Yoga involves focusing on *‘loving God’* to the point where everywhere you look you see the Divine. Of course, you have to actually believe in and love God to make this technique work.

If this sounds familiar it's because it is. All of the Abrahamic traditions seem to use this technique as the foundation of their spirituality.

For example: Jesus seems to have talked about this technique...

### **Jesus’s Two Main Commandments (Bhakti Yoga Techniques?);**

*Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’*

*And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* Matthew 22:39 (New International Version)<sup>21</sup>

If you love God *‘body, mind & soul’* then you are basically thinking about nothing but God. You would see other people as Godlike (if Hindu) or with *‘the Divine Spark’* (as some Zen & Christian Mystics have called it) as in Christianity, but the principle remains the same that love would permeate your mind and life as it flows from you towards the world like a river as

20 Short biography online of the saints <http://www.om-guru.com/html/saints/ramakrishna.html>

21 Matthew 22:35–40 and Mark 12:28–34.

*'everywhere is the face of God'*<sup>22</sup>. Thus, *'love your neighbor as yourself'* (commandment #2) is a natural result of following commandment number 1 of *'loving God body mind & soul'*.

**Echoes of this technique is even found in the Old Testament;**

*"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."*  
Deuteronomy 6:5 (New International Version)

This technique is also used by the Sufis of Islam which they call *dhikr* or a 'meditation on the love of God' and they say the result is that *'everywhere one looks one sees the face of God'*<sup>23</sup> as one would expect with proper application of this meditation technique. In other words, yoga may connect all mystics of all religions together in a fundamental way.

#### **1.24. God is a particular yet universal indweller, untouched by afflictions, actions, impressions and their results.**

From a zen perspective, living in/from your original mind is living in "god" consciousness. God in western religions is seen as a separate being but in eastern religions god is the soul of the universe that exists in everything and spirituality is simply about experiencing that world and universe binding unity.

Traditional perspective: Here the yogi is defining what to focus on when you 'surrender' your ego<sup>24</sup> to God, i.e. the definition of God. In this case the yogi is asking you to conceive of a certain image of the Self or "God" and focus on it till your mind has embodied it (a type of self hypnosis). He asks that you define this self as being 'untouched by afflictions, actions impressions and their results' i.e. no attachment to the world or pain or pleasure or ambition or any other emotion or theory.

#### **1.25. In God, the seed of omniscience is unsurpassed.**

In the Original mind ("God" within you) you find the seed of all the abilities the mind.

22 Sufis (mystic of Islam)

23 Wheresoever you look is the face of God.- Qur'an 2:115

24 See the introduction to zen

### ***1.26. Not being conditioned by time, God is the teacher of even the ancients.***

Obviously, “God” (the “Original Mind” in zen) has exists forever and thus has taught everyone in history.

### ***1.27. God's voice is Om.***

Basically: ‘Invoke the divine (original mind) within by chanting Aum’.

Silence and stillness of mind can be created by chanting. Silence of the mind created by chanting Om helps bring about and maintain a zen state.

Chanting: You just take a deep breath, filling your lungs, and as you slowly exhale say.

“AAAAA UUUUUUUU OOOOO MMMMMMM”. Repeat. Do this 5 to 10 minutes or more till mental chatter ceases.

### ***1.28. The repetition of Om should be made with an understanding of its meaning.***

Doing this puts a conception into your meditation. Like in self-hypnosis when you use an image or belief you want to embody. Without a goal you have nothing to aim for. In the same way if you chant OM while seeing it as a “the word of God”, it will have a different effect on your psyche than one without any belief attached to the chanting. For the zenist, the chanting is enough. No belief or imagination is necessary (in fact, it's a hindrance).

### ***1.29. From that is gained introspection and also the disappearance of obstacles.***

This meditation practice helps one to think better. It also makes your life flow smoother (disappearance of obstacles). In other words, from a yogic (or religious) perspective this technique invokes the divine in your life. In zen it is simply an easy technique to help clear the mind of mental chatter and experience the Original Mind (zen mind) which will improve your ability to think.

### **1.30. Disease, inertia, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, laziness, sensuality, mind-wandering, missing the point, instability- these distractions of the mind are the obstacles.**

These are all things that distract a person from achieving success at the meditation techniques in the yoga sutras.

Disease: You can't focus on meditation if ill. Thus this can be a before you can proceed effectively.

Inertia: Being stuck in a rut i.e. your habits of living that you become adapted to and/or "addicted" to can become an obstacle.

Doubt: Doubt can make you revolve between your options (dithering between opposites) without knowing what to do.

Lack of Enthusiasm: No desire to accomplish anything leads to nothing getting accomplished. If you want to succeed at meditation you have to be enthusiastic about it.

Laziness: Being lazy means you couldn't or didn't want to put in the necessary effort to learn a skill or become accomplished at it.

Sensuality: Getting distracted physical pleasure means you can't turn inwards. This doesn't mean lifelong asceticism. The God Shiva is well known for having bouts of ascetic behaviour followed by sensual behaviour.

Mind wandering: Daydreaming.

Missing the point: Lack of comprehension skills.

Instability: Insanity, hidden neurosis or other such psychological problems.

Patanjali is basically saying the meditation techniques here help clear your head and with it your life (or how you live it) to a great extent provided you are not overcome by distractions.

**1.31. Pain, despair, nervousness, and disordered inspiration and expiration are co-existent with these obstacles.**

The distractions previously listed is behaviour that creates these negative/limiting emotions.

**1.32. For the prevention of the obstacles, one truth should be practiced constantly.**

This is not just a meditation technique but a learning technique. Basically it's saying that if you think about just one fact all the time you will learn it well.

Practicing one truth constantly is to contemplate an idea like a mantra.

For example: Suppose these are one of the truths you are supposed to learn well; [both aphorisms are quotes from Socrates<sup>25</sup>]

*Wisdom begins in wonder.*

*The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.*

Technique: Take one of the quotes from Socrates above and write it down on a piece of paper and keep it with you and glance at it often and think about it all day. Then you will be practicing the technique in this sutra.

If you think about an aphorism constantly you will connect it to many areas of your life and understand it better. By thinking about the aphorism all the time, day after day, you will have associated into enough areas of life that you will be able to embody it which can also be described as 'embodying an idea through contemplation' i.e. meditation on an idea.

**1.33. By cultivating friendliness towards happiness and compassion towards misery, gladness towards virtue and indifference towards vice, the mind becomes pure.**

Here Pantajali describes meditation techniques using emotions. By focusing your emotions on certain attitudes and emotions you can develop a "pure mind".

25 Socrates was an ancient Greek philosopher who was born around 469 BC

By being friendly to happiness you seek to encourage the feeling of being happy, for no reason, all the time. Thus you develop the skill of staying happy.

Practicing compassion towards misery helps you accept things as they are. Thus you develop understanding and empathy.

Gladness towards virtue helps you seek truth over lies and delusions. This helps purify your thoughts and emotions.

Indifference towards vice means you don't see anything as evil. Bad things may happen. People may do bad things but this is none of your concern. You don't hate them for what they have done. Vice is just a behaviour that is irrelevant to you (and your path) and thus you are indifferent to it. Thus vice can have no power (influence) over you.

You basically seek to balance your mind in a way that is known to be conducive for peaceful living (mind-body-soul).

### ***1.34. Optionally, mental equanimity may be gained by the even expulsion and retention of energy.***

Patanjali is saying that mental balance may be gained by keeping your energy in balance. This sounds like he's just saying "Everything in moderation" as per the Ancient Greeks and he very well may be. He makes it clear that this is an optional technique for mental balance. Let's take a look at the possibilities;

"Even expulsion and retention of energy" - Meditational: You could be practicing meditation and using a breathing exercise to boost your energy levels by practicing it regularly. In this case, doing the exercise in moderation and not practicing the exercise too much (or practicing it regular intervals) is enough for balance.

"Even expulsion and retention of energy" - Physical: Some sort of combination of work or intense physical activity followed by rest and relaxation, never overdoing it. Eating just enough to stay healthy and in shape with nothing in excess (so no eating till full). Entertainment and work in right proportion etc, are all examples of activities that build and expend energy in balanced proportions.



### **1.35. Or activity of the higher senses causes mental steadiness.**

Since I am dealing with zen here the most reasonable interpretation is that the higher senses are senses such as reason and intuition. The idea is that calm reasoned thought can cause mental steadiness, as we know from a reading of the philosophy of zen and it's past masters (see introduction). For someone who is emotional, practicing logic towards all events & situations in their lives can help bring about mental stability. In other words, Patanjali is describing the different types of ways to maintain mental balance.

### ***1.36. Or the state of sorrowless Light.***

This is a description in the negative, a common way of describing the state of mental liberation in the yogic & zen systems of thought. Sorrowless Light may simply be just that, the description of a meditation technique of visualizing light in a way that was very effective for that time. I don't think imagining a "sorrowless" light would help much in our time. We like positive images to focus on like 'golden light' or 'loving/joyful white light' and so on rather than something like "sorrowless". One could also say "pure light empty of emotion" such as "the Sun" thereby giving the meditator a focus to use when visualizing light.

### ***1.37. Or the mind taking as an object of concentration those who are freed of compulsion.***

This is the same as saying 'learn from your idols' or 'learn from the sages' you find in your culture and think about their behaviour and emulate them. Basically, learning from the best.

In this context it means learn from the teachings and actions of accomplished yogis and/or zen practitioners and masters.

### ***1.38. Or depending on the knowledge of dreams and sleep.***

Simply put, finding mental balance or peace by dream interpretation and thus using your sleep as a means of communicating with your inner self or as a means of refreshing yourself. Another technique that the ancient yogis seemed to use with the understanding that one's interpretation of dreams is only as good as your knowledge of interpretation. Patanjali's just seems to be listing a bunch of psychological techniques common to his time.

### **1.39. Or by meditation as desired.**

Finally, you can just meditate, as needed, for mental balance/peace/relaxation.

### **1.40. The mastery of one in Union extends from the finest atomic particle to the greatest infinity.**

This is a very old and common philosophical observation that one can feel connected to the smallest particle, all the way to infinity, when in a state of Union/Yoga (Original Mind), at least, that's what it means to me given the context of this sutra (also see sutra 1.3). Many poets seem to be familiar with it and the Dalai Lama repeats it often saying "All is one"<sup>26</sup>;

*"I see the world in a blade of grass, the universe in a single grain of sand"*  
Walt Whitman

*"To see the world in a grain of sand, and a heaven in a wildflower, is to hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour."*  
William Blake

### **1.41. When the agitations of the mind are under control, the mind becomes like a transparent crystal and has the power of becoming whatever form is presented. knower, act of knowing, or what is known.**

"When the agitations of the mind are under control" is the very definition of the result of a dhyanic meditation technique. In other words, this sutra tells you what will happen when you embody the dhyanic/zen state. What this is saying is that when you master zen/yoga/union you become like a mirror to the world.... like a crystal that seems to contain whatever it is that it is reflecting. (also see 1.4)

### **1.42. The argumentative condition is the confused mixing of the word, its right meaning, and knowledge.**

<sup>26</sup> It's even become a joke: The Dalai Lama walks into a pizza shop and says "can you make me one with everything?"

Thoughts of the educated or thoughtful tend to mix words with their knowledge of things and right meaning (and wrong meanings) into a confused rambling. For example: A tree may be seen as a source of wood when it's real meaning is that of being a home to squirrels and birds. Your knowledge of yoga/zen will tell you it's all one and the same (arbitrary lines drawn between a tree and the earth or the air as labels as a means of communication, rather than a statement of reality).

**1.43. When the memory is purified and the mind shines forth as the object alone, it is called non-argumentative.**

When confusion from the mixture of meaning with words and knowledge has been cleared, by not having a confused and cluttered memory, then the mind just exists on its own. This is the non-argumentative state. To be fair, this is kind of confusing unless its referring to clearing emotions attached to memory. For example; forgiving people in memories with anger in it would purify that memory and so on. A purified memory, by this explanation, would be a memory without attachment to any emotion as emotion can confuse the real meaning of something with confused thoughts and emotions.

**1.44. In this way the meditative and the ultra-meditative having the subtle for their objects are also described.**

These same definitions can be applied to any explanation of meditation. For example; In dhayana/zen, once your mind is "purified" or "trained" from the meditative exercises of the various sorts listed here, one can live directly from the mind. Thus the state of confusion which prevents the mind from 'shining on its own and in its own right' has been dissolved.

You become **just** your original mind or like Emerson describes it, "*an eyeball*"<sup>27</sup>. This is a non-argumentative state of mind.

**1.45. The province of the subtle terminates with pure matter that has no pattern or distinguishing mark.**

Emotions and meditations end with matter. The subtle (meditative techniques) and the world of matter are separate. OR you have done everything you need to do in the realm of thought when you no longer see the world with labels. (also see 1.42)

***1.46. These constitute seeded contemplations.***

Basically, 'this concludes our tour of stuff to ponder' or 'This ends the list of guided meditations on the mind'. All meditation techniques are essentially seeded contemplations/exercises.

***1.47. On attaining the purity of the ultra-meditative state there is the pure flow of spiritual consciousness.***

Zen perspective: Since your original mind (or most human part of you) is the ultimate expression of the universe in you... attaining awareness of your own mind and living directly from it (as per the dhayana/zen state) is called "spiritual consciousness". This is certainly not the same as spiritual consciousness imagined by religious thought (as gifted from some divine being). So all this sutra is saying, in the context of my understanding and this book, is that practicing these meditations can help you attain and maintain the zen state and the Original Mind is the source of all "spirituality".

***1.48. Therein is the faculty of supreme wisdom.***

From a zen perspective: Practicing the zen/dhayana state is "supreme wisdom".

If one chases union with God then one has conceived of the inconceivable to make it possible to pursue. In other words, you are chasing an image of God. So real wisdom comes with the letting go of all images and becoming, as is commonly portrayed in Zen art, like a clumsy fool engaged fully in life and enjoying it thoroughly. Living life directly and openly with no conceptions or assumptions of one's own knowledge is wisdom in the Far East. In the western religions (at the western end of India is where the dividing line between east & west is drawn) wisdom is supposed to be some sort of knowledge that a person has that God has given them and no one but a person chosen by God can receive. In the Far East not knowing anything and just flowing with life IS wisdom.

***1.49. The wisdom obtained in the higher states of consciousness is different from that obtained by inference and testimony as it refers to particulars.***

The experience and thus knowledge obtained from the meditation practices and techniques is different from knowledge obtained from using logic or reasoning skills or the knowledge gained from hearsay or gossip or even study.

Knowledge obtained from one way of living will be different than knowledge obtained from another way of living. In the same way, knowledge and experience gained from meditative practices will be different from knowledge & experiences gained from non-meditative practices.

***1.50. The habitual pattern of thought stands in the way of other impressions.***

Your habitual way of seeing the world can block your ability to notice other things.

For example: Eskimos have 72 names for snow. This means an Eskimo will notice more types of snow than us because our habitual patterns of thought don't allow for 72 names for snow. Our habit of how we think and categorize (label) our world will affect what we notice and how we notice it. So to an Eskimo our habitual pattern of thought stands in the way of us seeing the variety of snow that falls from the sky. In the same way our habitual patterns/beliefs will limit our perception.

***1.51. With the suppression of even that through the suspension of all modifications of the mind, contemplation without seed is attained.***

If we can let go of all our (habitual) categories or labels of the world we can reach a level of thought and thinking that has no definition (no "seed") as it's source.

## **End of Book 1**

## **Book 2**

### **Teachings Of The Path Of The Sage (Particularly The Indian Sage)**

The following book starts with a scriptural outlook and then describes his philosophy of mind from scratch so it makes me think it's written by a different person or group of people. I like to think of this as "Patanjali's Student". i.e. some person took Patanjali's techniques as outlined in book one and when he or she was done, she/he wrote down their observations and techniques as they saw them.

Whatever the case may have been, let's begin;

#### ***2.1 Austerity, the study of sacred texts, and the dedication of action to God constitute the discipline of Mystic Union.***

Austerity builds your willpower and helps you develop greater control over your emotions and impulses. The most common form of austerity is fasting which you will find in all religions in some form or the other. Even Jesus fasted for 40 days & nights in the desert<sup>28</sup>. Next, study scripture to learn the proper way of living. The study of sacred texts, in this context, refers to the texts from India such as the Upanishads and even this one, i.e, the Yoga Sutras. Finally dedicating your actions to God rather than acting for yourself, is fundamental to the path of the Sage. Altogether, austerity, studying scripture and doing everything for God are all techniques of union for the mystic/sage.

#### ***2.2 This discipline is practised for the purpose of acquiring fixity of mind on the Lord, free from all impurities and agitations, or on One's Own Reality, and for attenuating the afflictions.***

Here the writer explains what this (2.1) technique is used for, i.e. to learn to fix your mind on the sublime (whatever conception of the "Divine" your education & understanding leads you to

believe or imagine) for the purpose of clearing out negativity and distraction (afflictions), such as developing a state of the non-attachment of zen/dhayana or of devotion to God as per Bhakti Yoga (see 1.23).

### ***2.3 The five afflictions are ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and the desire to cling to life.***

The five afflictions (distractions) are,

1. lack of knowledge or “ignorance”,
2. The story you create to give yourself importance or “egotism”.
3. Your “attachment” to the world around you.
4. “Aversion” to learning new things or dealing with change. And, finally,
5. “the desire to cling to life” or the fear of death. Fear of death or lack of awareness of your eventual death, as is inevitable for everyone, will make you think superficial things are important when they are not. You can’t live life without a balanced perspective on death as life is defined by death (you only know something is alive because it’s not dead) and so on.

These are the five challenges Sages have to overcome.

### ***2.4 Ignorance is the breeding place for all the others whether they are dormant or attenuated, partially overcome or fully operative.***

Ignorance, or lack of knowledge is the source of all of the problems. So in this sutra “the five afflictions” become one basic affliction/problem and that is a lack of knowledge & understanding, i.e. ignorance. No matter what emotional problem (attachment) you have, at its root is ignorance. In other words, from ignorance spring all problems of the Sage.

### ***2.5 Ignorance is taking the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure, evil for good and non-self as self.***

Ignorance is mistaking something for its opposite.

Taking non-eternal for the eternal: Non-eternal is the world and body ... and the eternal is the Self in the Indian tradition, it can also be seen as “the true self” in the meditation techniques used to “purify” one’s self to experience the eternal Original Mind. Ultimately, your original

mind, before conception (i.e. the zen state) is the only eternal we can know (at least, from a zen perspective).

Impure for pure: Here Patanjali is probably talking about traditional forms of knowledge such as the virtue of cleanliness, proper thinking etc. What is socially acceptable as per the scriptures, as outlined earlier.

Evil for good: Taking what is evil to be good is obviously a bad sign.

Non-self for self: Taking the non-self for self is probably just as simple as taking your ego and story etc. as your true self when it is just a fiction you created to get along in life the way you do now.

## ***2.6 Egoism is the identification of the power that knows with the instruments of knowing.***

Simply, mistaking your Original Mind for the story you use to understand and perceive the world is the ego. Another way of saying this is that, ego is the story you create to define yourself.

## ***2.7 Attachment is that magnetic pattern which clusters in pleasure and pulls one towards such experience.***

Attachment magnetizes you to seek the object(s) of your desire.

The simplest way I can think of for saying this is that what you do regularly for enjoyment becomes more and more what you like to do, i.e. it becomes a habit that you seek for pleasure. This is an ancient observation of human psychology which can even be shown to be true using modern psychology. Consider how the brain works itself. Our brain adapts to new behaviour by growing new neural connections<sup>29</sup> between our brain cells thus creating more brain mass in response to any new skill or habit which learned gives new meaning to the idea of creating a “magnetic cluster” of behaviour.

29      Called “Brain Plasticity”



## ***2.8 Aversion is the magnetic pattern which clusters in misery and pushes one from such experience.***

The explanation for this is the same for 2.7 but the opposite. While positive clusters will propel you towards something, a negative cluster will push you away from something. The basic psychological principle of 'people seek pleasure and avoid pain'.

## ***2.9 Flowing by its own energy, established even in the wise and in the foolish, is the unending desire for life.***

This is just as simple as 'everyone desires to live'. Said another way, given a normal life, no matter how mentally handicapped or intelligent a person may be, everyone wants to live rather than die.

Thus there is a natural state of mind in everyone that is life affirming. This natural state is said to have it's own "flow".

## ***2.10 These patterns when subtle may be removed by developing their contraries.***

When habits are forming you can remove them by focusing on its opposite.

In other words, you can change a habit of sleeping late by waking up early on a regular basis until your habit changes (generally 21-30 days). You can apply the same technique if your goal is to wake up later in the day rather than early by forcing yourself to stay up late at night and then allowing yourself not to get out of bed in the morning.

Simply put, regularly doing the opposite of what you don't want helps create the habits you DO want. At least when the habits aren't too ingrained in you.

## ***2.11 Their active afflictions are to be destroyed by meditation.***

Any negative habit can be "destroyed" by meditation. Hypnosis is well known to have a great record of creating a change in a person's habits using just their focus on affirmations that they

want to implement in their lives. Meditation can be used as a powerful self-hypnosis technique to change your habits and your life.

### ***2.12 The impressions of works have their roots in afflictions and arise as experience in the present and the future births.***

In Indian philosophy what you do dictates your experience in the present and in future births (reincarnations).

In Zen, death and rebirth is of the ego or self itself. As covered in the section on “The Self” in the Introduction to Zen, each time you leave a zen state you have to create a self for yourself by creating a story to explain your past and present. You create a self based on what you think is important in your collection of memory impressions from what you remember. Same goes for waking up after sleep or experiencing a traumatic or enlightening experience which changes your life by changing your perspective on it.

### ***2.13 When the root exists, its fruition is birth, life and experience.***

In Indian philosophy, not having transcended leads to rebirth to a new life and experience.

Zen perspective: This is as simple as saying; If you have an “I” from which to exist, then you will create/birth a self (a definition of yourself & a story of yourself) and the result of this is living a life around this story about yourself and experiencing life accordingly.

This is the same as saying that if you create an ego then the structure of beliefs for that ego (its story) leads to the experiences that particular ego attracts. This is the psychological truth embedded in the Indian creation myth when Brahma (God/I) goes to sleep and dreams the world.

For example; Being a teacher will make your life about teaching. If you are a thief then your life will be about stealing. If you change from a thief to a teacher you have given birth to a new life and experience.

### ***2.14 They have pleasure or pain as their fruit, according as their cause be virtue or vice.***

This is as simple as saying that good behaviour and good deeds leads to good results and bad deeds and behaviour leads to bad results. It all depends on what you start with, i.e. good or bad. Echoes of this belief seems to be in the Bible;

*“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: **for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**” Galatians 6:7*

Only here it's not seen as a religious belief but an observable fact of life, or 'path of liberation' type belief, which is like a scientific equation, “every action leads to an equal and opposite reaction”.

### ***2.15 All is misery to the wise because of the pains of change, anxiety, and purificatory acts.***

Indian perspective: Life is miserable because everything changes (or everything is “an illusion”).

Looking at it another way; Notice how simple everyday things can cause stress and anxiety. Life has its troubles. Simply living through unexpected pain and horror or just simple stress of everyday living can be seen as misery as one has to leave their state of meditative bliss (original mind which is in peace) to live it.

Since suffering is prevalent in everyday life 'the wise' would be aware of this. Even fasting can be considered a “purificatory act” and requires effort (nothing in life is easy). The point being that the basic clarity and boost in will power that fasting can give you requires the pain of effort and adjustment to the change. “All is pain”.

Buddhist perspective: “Life is suffering” is one of the professions of the Buddhist faith. This is said not because that is the definition of life but because pain and pleasure is tied up in life. Pleasure, of any kind, is fleeting. As pain is. Yet one defines the other (you wouldn't know pain if it wasn't for pleasure and vice versa).

Going deeper: Simply by living one has to make an effort to adapt. No meditational ecstasy can be maintained forever. Simply going to the restroom, eating and sleeping indicate the passage of time through peaceful and painful aspects of life to the point where the change itself - from peace to not peaceful and back again - can be stressful in it's own right. Everything changes and everything living moves towards only one goal, death. When you

understand that all change is the passage of time leading to your eventual body death then you see the sadness of change, of old age and death. Life is “suffering”, in one way or another, from birth to death. Zen is the acceptance of that and living it.

### ***2.16 The grief which has not yet come may be avoided.***

Maintaining a neutral attitude one can deal with the grief that hasn't yet come but is inevitable by the simple act of living. This story illustrates this attitude;

There was a farmer whose horse ran away. All his neighbors came by to say how sorry they were at his misfortune. All he said was, "We shall see". Next, his horse returns fallen and is followed by a group of wild horses. His neighbors congratulate on his good fortune and the farmer once again says, "We shall see". Then his son falls off the same horse and breaks his leg. The neighbors once again exclaim at his misfortune and once again he says, "We shall see". In a few days the army comes by collecting young men for a war. The farmer's son was ignored as his leg was broken. His neighbors congratulate him and all he says is, "We shall see".

Keeping a neutral state helped the farmer avoid grief at every turn! He also wasn't overjoyed at everything positive that happened nor was he depressed by every negative thing that happened. Without the extreme highs and lows of emotions, one is more balanced and calm.

### ***2.17 The cause of the avoidable is the superimposition of the external world onto the unseen world.***

When you assume the external world represents your inner world, of the mind and emotions, you create problems that may have been avoidable if you hadn't done that. In the same way if you take values and perceptions from the external world (everyday world of matter) and superimpose it on the unseen world (of the mind) you create another sort of problems.

Comparing and contrasting for perspective;

Projecting your beliefs onto life colors life with your beliefs preventing you from understanding things as they really are. Assuming the external world defines your inner world creates an inner belief system from the world of matter that could not possibly be true. A meaningless event can be turned into something big by spinning a story around it and thus adding meaning

to it. Or an external event can be taken and used to add meaning to an internal experience where there is none.

So, all just IS.

i.e. everything just is what it is, all other meanings to events or things are added by ourselves and is thus just a creation of the mind.

For example; a rock or penny found by accident on the road could become a lucky rock or lucky penny. By imposing a belief onto a random object (rock/penny) you have created meaning where there was none, i.e. you took a belief/meaning and imposed it on the external world and thus making that object (external object) represent the unseen world (i.e. luck or a belief in help from some unseen source). This is more commonly known as Superstition.

I wrote a little poem to illustrate this;

Events just happen.

Things just are.

No meaning is there to find.

All is just 'that', 'that', 'that' and 'that'.

***2.18 The experienced world consists of the elements and the senses in play. It is of the nature of cognition, activity and rest, and is for the purpose of experience and realization.***

The world is like a school where you learn about yourself using your senses.

This sutra basically describes the world as “perception” (cognition), “doing stuff” (activity) and “not doing stuff” (rest).

And the world's purpose? To experience it and to realize stuff. It's like saying the purpose of life and living in the world is to “Know Thyself”<sup>30</sup>.

30 Ancient Greek aphorism written on the ancient Greek Temple for Apollo at Delphi

***2.19 The stages of the attributes affecting the experienced world are the specialized and the unspecialized, the differentiated and the undifferentiated.***

Our experience is composed of stuff we have categorized to live in. Basically, there are many ways of defining things from something as “specialized” as a bow and arrow to something “unspecialized” like a rock which can be used as a weapon, a paper weight or raw material for a statue. The point is that there are many different things in your world in many states of composition.

***2.20 The indweller is pure consciousness only, which though pure, sees through the mind and is identified by ego as being only the mind.***

The “indweller” in Indian thought is the self or “monad” as the core of the human being. Basically, what this is saying is that all you are at your core is a perceiver and nothing else and that the mind exists separate from you. This perceiver is ‘pure consciousness’ which sees the world through the mind & can be mistaken for the mind by our story making & believing faculties (ego).

This theory fits in with how Indian sages and western spiritualists see the world, even today. From a Zen perspective this is inaccurate. Too much metaphysics, none would be better. Clearly if you look for a mind separate from you which your ego mistakes for you, you are dealing with sophisticated metaphysics about what and who you are.

In hypnosis we know that people can brainwash themselves into believing things simply by focusing on it all the time. If you believe in a bunch of metaphysics and you focus your mind on it with the power of meditation and self hypnosis you will find what you are looking for.

The whole ‘mind, body and soul’ thing is something which, created or uncreated by man, cannot be proven and thus is irrelevant to the practice of zen. In ancient Chinese and zen thought there is no real separation between mind and body and the mind is seen to be a part of the body and wouldn’t exist without the body as one creates the other i.e. you are a “human being” not a “mind+soul+body” that have been combined in various mixtures in each human being BUT if you come up with those categories and look at the world looking to fit it into your categories, you surely CAN do that.

## **2.21 The very existence of the seen is for the sake of the seer.**

I wonder if this was the very first written formulation of the existential question; *If a tree falls in a forest with no one to see or hear it, did it really fall?*

Only here it is said as a statement of fact, all that is, is for the observer. It's like saying, what you can see (all of existence) is INTENDED for you to perceive it. In fact, it wouldn't be complete without the perceiver to perceive it.

## **2.22 Although Creation is discerned as not real for the one who has achieved the goal, it is yet real in that Creation remains the common experience to others.**

Indian perspective is: *You (the yogi) may realize the world is just an illusion but others don't.*

From a zen perspective, is just, *'you live in a world beyond labels and categories (Original Mind) but other people don't.'*

**Strict zen interpretation:** One who goes beyond labels sees that the world transcends how we describe it, yet how we describe it (social conceptions of the world) is normal social behaviour and thus is normal for other people not practicing these meditations.

This sutra reminds me of a european nursery rhyme which may have had it's genesis in some such belief;

*"Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream  
Merily, merily, merily, merily, life is but a dream"*

## **2.23 The association of the seer with Creation is for the distinct recognition of the objective world, as well as for the recognition of the distinct nature of the seer.**

When you associate the perceiver with the world, the world exists for the perceiver to perceive, as well as for the perceiver to understand himself.

### ***2.24 The cause of the association is ignorance.***

It's ignorance that leads to these sorts of mix ups (associations).

### ***2.25 Liberation of the seer is the result of the dissociation of the seer and the seen, with the disappearance of ignorance.***

Detaching from the world reduces ignorance and leads to mental liberation. In fact, part of the liberation process involves “disassociating” from the world so that one becomes non-attached to it. It's the lack of attachment that helps to eliminate ignorance.

### ***2.26 The continuous practice of discrimination is the means of attaining liberation.***

Continuing with this “discrimination” towards attachment to the world (things), one becomes liberated from attachment.

### ***2.27 Steady wisdom manifests in seven stages.***

This writer has categorized his yogic experiences into seven levels or categories or stages.

### ***2.28 On the destruction of impurity by the sustained practice of the limbs of Union, the light of knowledge reveals the faculty of discrimination.***

Regular practice of the following ‘8 limbs of union’ clears the head and helps you think clearly. (Note: This is the traditional form of yoga OR the form yoga has taken after this book was written – probably after Siddhartha's time - that has become traditional in India).

### ***2.29 The eight limbs of Union are self-restraint in actions, fixed observance, posture, regulation of energy, mind-control in sense engagements, concentration, meditation, and realization.***



The 8 ways to help you stabilize your mind and thus your experience of zen are;

Self-restraint in actions & fixed observance; You follow only those actions which are deemed appropriate for you in your mode of life and observe them regularly. In ancient India that would mean you only eat one meal a day and dedicate yourself to meditation for the rest of the time. Stuff like marriage or farming or engaging in music or stealing (i.e. good stuff & bad stuff are all banned) etc. are all extra actions that need not be taken.

Self-restraint in posture; Holding still, as in the classic yogic posture is said to still the mind. In the same way that thinking relaxing thoughts is known to relax the body. Since the initial goal of the yogi is to still the mind and stop the idle mental chatter (that everyone has). A yogic ideal is to be able to sit in the yogic position for many hours at a time. Eating right and proper exercise would also probably be included here. Yoga poses as taught in the west as “Yoga” is what this is referring to.

Regulation of energy; Not expending your energy on useless or non-yogic activities is the idea here. So alcohol (something that can reduce your energy even after you sober up) would be included in this as would any sexual activity as that would expend energy (or this part goes in “self-restraint in actions” and instead pranayama, or breathing exercises to regulate energy, comes here).

Mind control in sense engagements; Not getting attached to the world around you is the concept here. Not losing yourself in a movie or not getting emotionally caught up in a fair or park or any other sense engagement (such as emotions such as love or anger) is the idea. The lesson is one of non-attachment, covered earlier.

Concentration; Basic “object” meditation practice for developing concentration: This practice involves focusing your mind on an object till no other thoughts enter your mind. You could focus on a picture on an idol or even a candle flame while allowing all your thoughts to just burn up in the flame, leaving your mind silent. This practice should increase one's ability to concentrate.

Meditation & Realization; Practicing meditation & learning to embody the meditative states (realization) in your daily life is the last part of the 8 limbs of yoga.

All of these, artificially created (from a zen perspective), “limbs” or practice advice for the Sage helps make your meditative practice more effective.

### ***2.30 Self-restraint in actions includes abstention from violence, from falsehoods, from stealing, from sexual engagements, and from acceptance of gifts.***

Self-restraint in actions includes, avoiding violence, avoiding lies, avoiding stealing, avoiding sex and avoiding gifts.

This sutra explains exactly what you are to practice self-restraint on in Patanjali's system of yogic practice. Notice that all the things considered to be moral virtues in western religions (particularly the monastic ones) is just a way to settling the mind as part of the yogic practice in the Indian one.

Note: Acceptance of gifts may have included the bowl of food (once a day) that renunciates (yogis) in Indian culture practiced. It's possible that in Patanjali's system (who is often considered to be a mountain sage) a yogi was expected to forage for himself and not go into a village for food as became the tradition in later times.

### ***2.31 These five willing abstentions are not limited by rank, place, time or circumstance and constitute the Great Vow.***

These practices are considered to be important to achieving the goal of meditation (union) in the Indian system. To achieve this state these practices MUST be followed. The sutra doesn't specify whether these abstentions are important AFTER the meditative goal is attained. Some people may interpret this is a lifelong practice of asceticism. Some may remember the story of Shiva and his wife Shakti and how he would switch between asceticism and eroticism on a regular basis and think this is just for the goal of union and NOT after that (or in-between that), i.e. after meditative practice you can drop any or all of these abstentions. In zen living from the Original Mind is paramount (there is no "vow" to make).

### ***2.32 The fixed observances are cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study and persevering devotion to God.***

These are habits to be cultivated and maintained throughout the Sage's life/practice, i.e. 1. one must develop the habit of cleanliness, 2. of maintaining the emotion of contentment in everything you face, 3. the habit of not needing anything but the bare minimum (austerity), 4.

regular study to gain knowledge and 5. a devotion to transcendence (also see Bhakti Yoga 1.23).

### ***2.33 When improper thoughts disturb the mind, there should be constant pondering over the opposites.***

This is the same technique as in 2.10 with a little more detail. If you have a thought on something that is the opposite of what you have to do for yoga practice, then you focus on it's opposite to move away from such thoughts.

This is probably one of the oldest self hypnosis techniques known to man. To quit cigarettes you have to convince yourself of the opposite (cigarettes are bad and you can live happily without them). To lose weight you have to think less of food or satisfy yourself more with lack of food. Only the opposite of 'alot of eating' can lead to weight loss, i.e. eating much less.

If you want to change a habit you have to focus on its opposite.

If you want to change the habit of negative thinking you have to focus on positive thinking.

### ***2.34 Improper thoughts and emotions such as those of violence- whether done, caused to be done, or even approved of- indeed, any thought originating in desire, anger or delusion, whether mild medium or intense- do all result in endless pain and misery. Overcome such distractions by pondering on the opposites.***

Here is a list of problems that this technique can be used for, common to ancient (& present) society, that Patanjali believed could be cured by any individual pondering on it's opposites. A meditator, when pondering on something, would naturally embody the traits being focused on to experience them making it sort of like self-hypnosis i.e. in that you reprogram your mind with meditation on specific goals, exactly like self-hypnosis.

### ***2.35 When one is confirmed in non-violence, hostility ceases in his presence.***

Now Patanjali begins talking about the effects of embodying certain beliefs and their corresponding emotions. This first is that when a person embodies nonviolence then people are said to become less hostile in that person's presence. People were said to become peaceful and nonviolent around Siddhartha (also called "The Buddha").

***2.36 When one is firmly established in speaking truth, the fruits of action become subservient to him.***

This is kinda like saying that 'a person secure in his own individuality can choose his destiny'. In approaching this it's a good idea to take 'speaking truth' as what is true not only in the external world and in society but in yourself as well.

So this would read, 'the fruits of actions become subservient to one who can determine the right thing to do & say in every situation'. Fruits of action means the result(fruit) of any thing(action) you have done.

***2.37 All jewels approach him who is confirmed in honesty.***

*Jewels* in Indian thought tends to refer to spirituality in some form. In Buddhism, there are the Three Jewels which are "The Buddha" (or enlightenment), The Dharma (way of life prescribed by Siddhartha) and the Sangha (community of other like minded individuals).

So all this is saying is that the heart of what culture deems as "spiritual" becomes a part of a person who embodies honesty (outwardly and inwardly) to their core.

***2.38 When one is confirmed in celibacy, spiritual vigor is gained.***

Here celibacy means no sexual thought whatsoever. This is like saying to the male football or basketball player before an important game to keep away from sex so you don't deplete your energy. This is a very old concept and seems to have relevance in modern day sports which is probably the closest equivalent we have to the extreme pursuit of asceticism in ancient cultures from India to Greece, i.e. it was athletic and engaging in its practices (especially in a community setting, which it often was, as even forest or mountain yogis would know the other yogis around them) was like engaging in a serious athletic competition.

Ultimately, this can be interpreted in two ways;

1. An ascetic ideal of celibacy for the Sage, which many yogis practice even today, and was a well known practice in ancient times from India to Greece.
2. As preparation for a deeper more powerful meditation following the example of Shiva from Indian mythology, i.e. celibacy becomes a means of increasing ones energy levels as an enhancement to normal meditation.

### ***2.39 When one is confirmed in non-possessiveness, the knowledge of the why and how of existence is attained.***

Let's work on this from the back. What is existence? That question isn't asked in this sutra because it's been covered, i.e. existence is just what exists around us. Objects, people, cultures and societies. Everything that we have names for. That's it. (Or as Indian Sages put it, "The world is an illusion/Maya")

When you no longer seek to possess things you embody the principle of non-attachment. When you are not attached to anything then you are ready to learn. When you are ready to learn you can figure out the 'how and why of existence'.

What this sutra says is what we can know about the world around us, is HOW and WHY it exists.

Problem of attachment: When we seek to possess objects, either actually or in our minds, we get attached to them and fail to see them or anything else as it really is without our attached meaning to it. In other words we become blinded by our attachments to objects or beliefs.

Problem of ideas/beliefs: If we let go of our possession of the idea of elephants as beasts of burden, like it's an ox or cow, we notice that they seem to be far more intelligent than we had previously imagined. If we let go of conceptions of apes as dumb we discover we can teach them sign language. Being non-possessive is the same as letting go.

An idea of life we may have and hold onto creates a conception in our mind of how things "should be" and if it changes it can cause a lot of mental pain.

The idea of this sutra is that not holding on to ideas or conceptions of reality helps you see things as they really are and you can explore the information sources you have at hand and apply them to your observations to determine how things came into being and why it exists as it does now.

## **2.40 From purity follows a withdrawal from enchantment over one's own body as well as a cessation of desire for physical contact with others.**

This is describing an effect of a meditational practice of detachment from the body. Like a person living on a mountain top or in a forest for a long time would become detached from society and the idea of being a part of it, so does this meditational practice/technique of “purity” separate a person from any desire to be with or hang out with people altogether. By meditational practice I mean mind AND body, i.e. this isn't avoiding something you want, it's not wanting altogether.

## **2.41 As a result of contentment there is purity of mind, one-pointedness, control of the senses, and fitness for the vision of the self.**

When you develop a mastery of contentment you will be more relaxed (“control over your sense”) and focused (“one pointedness”). Your mind will be clearer and won't have negative emotions influencing it so much (or not at all, i.e. ‘purity’). This will help control your impulses so that you can create the self that you want.

Going deeper: This outlines the state of mind a person must be in for the yogic technique of visualizing a self and becoming one with that self (dhyana on a “True Self”). Cultivating the feeling of contentment is as difficult as is the feeling of gratitude (a more traditional religious technique) but once achieved has its own psychological benefits.

**Psychology Today<sup>31</sup> has this to say about contentment:**

*Feeling good about ourselves is important to a contented life. But the secret to feeling good about ourselves is unconditional self-acceptance.*

*As children we often develop what psychotherapists refer to as conditions of worth. Conditions of worth are the rules we learn in childhood for what we must do to be loved. For example, we learn that we must be attractive, popular, sporty, tidy, respectful, funny, or whatever in order to feel accepted. Everybody has their own unique combination of conditions of worth. For one person, it might be to please other people. For someone else it is to be the smart one. For another it is to always keep their feelings in check.*

31 Psychology Today: The Secret to a Contented Life <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/what-doesnt-kill-us/201306/the-secret-contented-life>

*To truly feel good about ourselves we have to learn to be aware of our conditions of worth and let them go. The secret is to learn to value ourselves on our own terms, unconditionally.*

Once a state of contentment has been achieved in yogic terms (which usually means a lot of meditation along the lines previously outlined in this book till all of one's attachments are *burned* away which brings the skill of concentration into play), then your mind becomes pure of its distractions. With contentment you don't need to act on any passing desire and thus you have true "control" of the self. With your practice of meditation day in and day out you have the skill of concentration or "one pointedness".

Now, according to this sutra, you are ready to face yourself or have a vision of your "true self" as a monad 'at the center of the mind and body'. This is a very real belief in Indian thought and thus in many of its yogic practitioners. In Zen thought/language there is no distinction between mind and body so further subdivision to the logical end of some "self" never arose in its "mysticism" making it very earthy and attainable to anyone due to its lack of cadavers to chase after (i.e. your mental conceptions of what you seek are in themselves an illusion and thus a distraction as if you seek something which only exists in your mind, such as "enlightenment of the true self" that it never existed in real life to begin with, just in your imagination so you will be forever chasing that idea like a donkey hooked up to a carrot just out of his reach.).

### ***2.42 Supreme happiness is gained via contentment.***

While a religion may ascribe "supreme happiness" to some belief, here the definition of happiness is defined as 'maintaining the feeling of contentment'. Simple.

### ***2.43 Through sanctification and the removal of impurities, there arise special powers in the body and senses.***

This is the belief that practice of meditation and asceticism both mentally and physically one becomes better at things than other people whose minds are filled with distractions and lack the ability to focus for any real duration of time. In other words, following the path of the Sage leads to develop skills that others don't have (i.e. "special powers"). It's like saying that a runner from an athletic meet (such as the Olympics) is so trained that he has the special ability to outrun anyone in his village, town or city as they have developed special power in running.

## **2.44 By study comes communion with the Lord in the Form most admired.**

Here “study” is getting to know your object of meditation (see Bhakti Yoga 1.23), be it an emotion, belief or a cluster of such things as would be represented by a God (dhayana was often used on cherished idols - “form most admired” - in Indian culture as the first step to transcendence from conventional culture). Once the object or goal is defined and one meditates upon it or contemplates it one connects with it in a fundamental way that makes them feel they are connected to their most cherished ideals/ideas.

Here are the words of an Indian mystic/yogi ‘communing with his Lord in the form most admired’:

*“When I jumped up like a madman and seized [a sword], suddenly the blessed Mother revealed herself. The buildings with their different parts, the temple, and everything vanished from my sight, leaving no trace whatsoever, and in their stead I saw a limitless, infinite, effulgent Ocean of Consciousness. As far as the eye could see, the shining billows were madly rushing at me from all sides with a terrific noise, to swallow me up. I was caught in the rush and collapsed, unconscious ... within me there was a steady flow of undiluted bliss, altogether new, and I felt the presence of the Divine Mother.”* Mahendranath Gupta, Ramakrsna Kathamrta translated by Swami Nikhilananda as The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna (Mylapore: Sri Ramakrsna Math, 1952), Book 1, p. 15<sup>32</sup>

## **2.45 Realization is experienced by making the Lord the motive of all actions.**

Making “the lord the motive of all action” is the same as Bhakti yoga (see 1.23) making this more advice for the Indian Sage.

## **2.46 The posture should be steady and comfortable.**

Once again we are moving from psychological theory to specifics of the meditation technique, which starts out the same as many other yogic meditation techniques. You take a steady and comfortable bodily position. Either laying down flat on the ground, sitting in a chair with your

32 Short biography online of the saints <http://www.om-guru.com/html/saints/ramakrishna.html>



back straight and feet flat on the ground (no crossed arms or legs) or in a more classic yogic sitting posture if that is comfortable for you.

***2.47 In effortless relaxation, dwell mentally on the Endless with utter attention.***

A meditation technique for the Indian Sage.

In a state of relaxation (following from the previous sutra), such as the mental relaxation achieved when practicing self hypnosis, fix your meditative trance/ability on the “endless”.

What is the endless? It probably means the universe and existence itself (OM – see 1.27 to 1.29 and 1.24). As if you look at the universe and life as eternal, i.e. it's always been this way and there really is no difference between the emotional states of people across the ages, just different toys/technology and different socially acceptable ways of directing these emotions.

So when you look (dwell on in a relaxed meditative state) on the universe with it's life, birth and death cycles that seem to go on forever. The Universe seems to go on forever. You can look at the horizon and dome of the earth around you and it can feel endless. Dwell in this state of meditative attention. (see 1.27 to 1.29 and 1.24)

***2.48 From that there is no disturbance from the dualities.***

In this state you transcend the dualities of life (you embody the dhayana/zen state, see 1.2).

***2.49 When that exists, control of incoming and outgoing energies is next.***

The next step will be to control your energy levels (probably with pranayama, i.e. breathing exercises. See 1.2 and 1.3) but will also include regulating your daily habits/routine.

***2.50 It may be external, internal, or midway, regulated by time, place, or number, and of brief or long duration.***

This simply says there are many kinds of energy. You could get it by the feeling of a group such as a sermon or festival (“external”). It could be the time of day such as early morning after a good night's sleep (as it's a time of high energy etc, i.e. “internal”). There are many types of energy a person experiences during their day - and throughout their lives (“number” of years) - which range from a short duration to a long duration.

### ***2.51 Energy-control which goes beyond the sphere of external and internal is the fourth level- the vital.***

Breathing exercises – or “pranayama” as its called in yoga (see 1.2) - help increase a person's vital energy (such as practicing the Far Eastern meditation techniques of QiGong/ChiGung).

### ***2.52 In this way, that which covers the light is destroyed.***

Here the idea is that these practices increase your energy levels or ‘destroys the veils’ from your perception allowing you to see the world as it is, i.e. that which I have defined in this book as the Zen State but in the Indian system of philosophy would be 'the Self that is the same as God'.

This reminds me of the favorite quote of the lead singer from The Doors;

*"If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite." -*  
William Blake

### ***2.53 Thus the mind becomes fit for concentration.***

Once you have done all this you know how to concentrate. Time Magazine talks about a study that seems to confirm the benefits of meditation and concentration is one of them:

*One recent study found evidence that the daily practice of meditation thickened the parts of the brain's cerebral cortex responsible for decision making, attention and memory. Sara Lazar, a research scientist at Massachusetts General Hospital, presented preliminary results last November that showed that the gray matter of 20 men and women who meditated for just 40 minutes a day was thicker than that of people who did not. Unlike in previous studies focusing on Buddhist monks, the subjects were Boston-area workers practicing a Western-*

*style of meditation called mindfulness or insight meditation. "We showed for the first time that you don't have to do it all day for similar results," says Lazar. What's more, her research suggests that meditation may slow the natural thinning of that section of the cortex that occurs with age.*

*The forms of meditation Lazar and other scientists are studying involve focusing on an image or sound or on one's breathing. Though deceptively simple, the practice seems to exercise the parts of the brain that help us pay attention. "Attention is the key to learning, and meditation helps you voluntarily regulate it," says Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin. Since 1992, he has collaborated with the Dalai Lama to study the brains of Tibetan monks, whom he calls "the Olympic athletes of meditation." Using caps with electrical sensors placed on the monks' heads, Davidson has picked up unusually powerful gamma waves that are better synchronized in the Tibetans than they are in novice meditators. Studies have linked this gamma-wave synchrony to increased awareness.<sup>33</sup>*

### **2.54 When the mind maintains awareness, yet does not mingle with the senses, nor the senses with sense impressions, then self-awareness blossoms.**

This is the yogic ideal of the dhayana/zen state which many zen masters seem to have mastered.

What he is saying is that if you are maintaining the, let's call it "true", zen state then you are not only **not** attached to your senses and feelings but completely detached from them to the point where they don't even cause you to flinch, emotionally or mentally. A state of complete concentration of fixed purpose that no one can move you from. This is the yogic equivalent of the 'immovable spot from which to move the world' that Archimedes wished for<sup>34</sup>.

It is here, Pantajali claims, that one's self awareness really blossoms.

### **2.55 In this way comes mastery over the senses.**

Once you have accomplished this you have achieved mastery over the senses.

33 Time Magazine <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1147167,00.html#ixzz2K4m1s48a>

34 Ancient Greek philosopher Archimedes theorized that if an immovable spot could be found he could stand there and move the whole world from it.

What sort of mastery of the sense? Probably of the kind that we DO have verified stories of from Alexander to the Zen masters of China. This story illustrates what sort of mastery over the senses these ancient meditators were documented to have had;

### **Story from Alexander's time:**

A yogi, who had decided to travel with Alexander from India, told Alexander to prepare a funeral pyre for him. As he sat on it and the fire was lit he told Alexander that he would see him in a year at Babylon (a year later Alexander died from poison). Of course, the yogi sat in the meditative posture on the funeral pyre as the fire burned his body away without saying a word<sup>35</sup>. You can find this sort of mastery in the Zen world of ancient China as well (see **bold** part of extract below)

How this sort of mastery is seen from a zen perspective;

*“The story is told of a zen monk who wept upon hearing of the death of a close relative. When one of his fellow students objected that it was most unseemly for a monk to show such personal attachment he replied; ‘Don’t be stupid! I’m weeping because I want to weep.’ The great hakuin was deeply disturbed in his early study of zen when he came across the story of the master Yen Tao, who was said to have screamed at the top of his voice when murdered by a robber. Yet this doubt was dissolved at the moment of his satori (enlightenment) and in Zen circles his own death is felt to have been especially admirable for its display of human emotion. On the other hand, **the Abbot Kwaisen and his monks allowed themselves to be burned alive by the soldiers of Oda Nobunager, sitting calmly in the posture of meditation.** Such contradictory ‘naturalness’ seems most mysterious, but perhaps the clue lies in the saying of Yun-Men;*

*In walking just walk. In sitting, just sit. Above all, don’t wobble.*

*For the essential quality of naturalness is the sincerity of the undivided mind which does not dither between alternatives. So when Yen- tao screamed, it was such a scream that it was heard for miles around*

*But it would be wrong to suppose that this natural sincerity comes about by observing such a platitude as ‘Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. When Yes tao screamed he was not screaming in order to be natural, no did he first make up his mind to scream and then implement the decision with the full energy of his will. There is a total*

35 Kalanos <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalanos>

*contradiction in planned naturalness and intentional sincerity. This is to overlay, not to discover, the 'original mind'. Thus to try to be natural is an affectation to try not to try to be natural is also an affectation.*<sup>36</sup>

Zen experience lies “between thoughts” as per one of the instructions of the dhyanic meditation technique and zen is the word for dhayana. In other words, what these masters of years of meditation could do was to sit between thoughts so well that even fire couldn't move them from their chosen position. That is mastery of the senses that I think this sutra refers to, i.e. the ideal level of accomplishment for the Sage.

## **End of Book 2**

## Book 3

### The Teachings Of The Hypnotist, Con Artist or Warrior

Introduction: Here is where the book takes on fantasy-like or warrior-like dimensions and was probably added on later (as many scholars believe). The superstitious can read this and think these are techniques for supernatural ("divine") powers and an ancient warrior could have seen this book as keys to martial arts power. This may also be the part of the book that may have been written by some con artist to make it seem like it is possible for the superstitions of the population to be true which may later have inspired martial artists of the Far East. The book could also be read as something with a magician's (illusionist/trickster) secrets hinted at but only passed down in person from master magician to apprentice. We do know that Yoga derives from Shaman like techniques<sup>37</sup> and we know Shaman's would use tricks to scare violent people away to protect themselves<sup>38</sup>, so maybe this was meant as a way to provide a psychological defense for yogis like the shamans did (though I doubt that). We do know that some types of Yoga Postures<sup>39</sup> can be traced all the way to Gobleki Tepe<sup>40</sup> (10,500 BC), well, its something I noticed anyways (Could the Shaman<sup>41</sup> of the cave of Lascaux<sup>42</sup> be in the traditional Savana or "corpse" pose<sup>43</sup>?). So it's possible that techniques that first came about to help the warriors of the tribal cultures<sup>44</sup> of the deep past eventually found thier way into this book in some form or another. In any case, having such thoughts in a "spiritual" classic may have led warrior cultures to imagine how creating such illusions could be made possible to enhance thier own art (some of the sutras here remind me of martial arts tactics from the Far East such as the stories of Ninjas and I've footnoted several youtube videos to show the correlations). Whatever the case may be, this part of the book is a part of the Yoga Sutras

37 *"the yogi, as a high transformation of the shamanistic techniques and experiences of ecstasis"* Joseph Cambell, Primitive Mythology, Page 437

38 Same book, i.e. Primitive Mythology by Joseph Campbell

39 Mula Bandha posture [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mula\\_Bandha](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mula_Bandha)

40 New figurine discovered at Gobleki Tepe <https://www.dainst.blog/the-tepe-telegrams/2017/08/09/a-short-note-on-a-new-figurine-type-from-goebekli-tepe/>

41 As identified by Joseph Campbell in Primitive mythology page 258

42 The Shaman of the Lascaux cave of 15000 BC

43 Savana/corpse pose <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shavasana>

44 Martial arts can be traced well into pre-history [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial\\_arts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martial_arts)

(from a time when superstitions and rumor had more power than facts and logic or as a derivative of ancient warrior techniques/lore/beliefs) so it does come within the domain of my commentary.

### **Zen On “Supernatural Powers”**

Although zen is the Japanese word for dhayana, the Indian yogic technique, it is unique from yoga as it doesn't seek physical or mental powers that people in those culture think of concerning yogic meditation. In fact, in zen supernormal powers are seen as impediments to enlightenment and there are many stories taught to illustrate this view (The following is an extract from The Religion Of The Samurai);

*Yoga claims that various supernatural powers can be acquired by Meditation, but Zen does not make any such absurd claims. It rather disdains those who are believed to have acquired supernatural powers by the practice of austerities. The following traditions clearly show this spirit:*

*"When Fah Yung (Ho-yu) lived in Mount Niu Teu (Go-zu-san) he used to receive every morning the offerings of flowers from hundreds of birds, and was believed to have supernatural powers. But after his Enlightenment by the instruction of the Fourth Patriarch, the birds ceased to make offering, because he became a being too divine to be seen by inferior animals."*

*"On one occasion Yang Shan (Kyo-zan) saw a stranger monk flying through the air. When that monk came down and approached him with a respectful salutation, he asked: 'Where art thou from? 'Early this morning,' replied the other, 'I set out from India.' 'Why,' said the teacher, 'art thou so late?' 'I stopped,' responded the man, 'several times to look at beautiful sceneries.' Thou mayst have supernatural powers,' exclaimed Yang Shan, 'yet thou must give back the Spirit of Buddha to me ' Then the monk praised Yang Shan saying: 'I have come over to China in order to worship Mañjuçri, and met unexpectedly with Minor Shakya,' and, after giving the master some palm leaves he brought from India, went back through the air.'"*

*It is quite reasonable that Zenists distinguish supernatural powers from spiritual uplifting, the former an acquirement of Devas, or of Asuras, or of Arhats, or of even animals, and the latter as a nobler accomplishment attained only by the practisers of Mahayanism. Moreover, they use the term supernatural power in a meaning entirely different from the original one. Lin Tsi (Rin-zai) says, for instance: "There are six supernatural powers of Buddha: He is free from the temptation of form, living in the world of form; He is free from the temptation of .sound, living in the world of sound; He is free from the temptation of smell, living in the world of*

*smell; He is free from the temptation of taste, living in the world of taste; He is free from the temptation of Dharma, living in the world of Dharma. These are six supernatural powers."*

- The Religion of the Samurai, by Kaiten Nukariya, [1913]

I think it's reasonable to assume that the stories of supernatural powers common to the culture were hijacked by zenists who stripped them of their power with the goal of showing what the true path of zen and enlightenment is. In other words, these stories were seen by fake by the zen masters themselves but they used the stories anyways as they were prevalent in that culture for thousands of years (if not longer) and brought them to ground with the mental path of zen practice, i.e. lowered thier value compared to zen practice to show thier irrelevance.

This book takes the meditation techniques already outlined in the first two books and extrapolates from these techniques as to what one can do with them. I think a person with an adequate knowledge of meditation an and an ability to explain things well (such as a wandering market performer would have) could probably have written this book. All he had to do to sound real about many of the techniques it to basically strings ideas together and say 'this is how it's done'. Since the writer would say Patanjali wrote it and thus wouldn't claim authorship himself (as per the tradition of that time period), he could easily get away with not being able to prove it. Thus the techniques in book 3 becomes a validation for stories that were already common to the ancient world long before the yoga sutras were ever written.

Since I have not seen any proof for many of these techniques beyond rumor and superstition or magic tricks or as the inspiration for martial arts techniques which are done in a completely different way than the method outlined in the text, so I basically assume that elements in it could have originally been a con (or added later as a con as is the tradition of how these ancient books in India were compiled, i.e. books in ancient India were put together over time, by any people and said to be from some sage).

Lets begin.

### ***3.1 One-pointedness is steadfastness of the mind.***

Focusing on one thing is the way to develop a steady mind.

### ***3.2 Unbroken continuation of that mental ability is meditation.***



Keeping your attention focused on one thing continuously is the required meditation technique.

### ***3.3 That same meditation when there is only consciousness of the object of meditation and not of the mind is realization.***

When you can maintain conscious awareness of ONLY the object and not yourself (or your mind watching the object) then you have attained the goal (realization) of this meditation.

### ***3.4 The three appearing together are self-control.***

Maintaining awareness of the object (steadily), in unbroken continuation while not being aware of anything BUT the object is when you have developed self-control.

### ***3.5 By mastery comes wisdom.***

Maintaining this self-control you develop mastery and then you will understand.

### ***3.6 The application of mastery is by stages.***

You attain mastery in stages.

### ***3.7 The three are more efficacious than the restraints.***

This is the most effective technique for the warrior.

### ***3.8 Even that is external to the seedless realization.***

Even this technique is external to experiencing directly (spontaneously) from the mind with no object or thought to focus on (zen).

### **3.9 The significant aspect is the union of the mind with the moment of absorption, when the outgoing thought disappears and the absorptive experience appears.**

The most important aspect of this meditation is when thoughts cease and all that exist is the mind (absorbed in the experience).

### **3.10 From sublimation of this union comes the peaceful flow of unbroken unitive cognition.**

Mastering this technique brings a the warrior into the peaceful state of unbroken concentration.

### **3.11 The contemplative transformation of this is equal mindedness, witnessing the rise and destruction of distraction as well as one-pointedness itself.**

You can observe this meditation technique with a balanced mind, watching the rise and fall of distraction. You can also observe the focus (one pointedness) of the mind itself.

### **3.12 The mind becomes one-pointed when the subsiding and rising thought-waves are exactly similar.**

When all your thoughts are the same (about the object) then the mind is focused on the object/meditation, i.e. Your mind has attained "one pointedness".

### **3.13 In this state, it passes beyond the changes of inherent characteristics, properties and the conditional modifications of object or sensory recognition.**

In this focused meditative state you stop noticing details of your surroundings.

### **3.14 The object is that which preserves the latent characteristic, the rising characteristic or the yet-to-be-named characteristic that establishes one entity as specific.**

An object is that which has the matter that make up that object. Or in other words, an object is water by having the characteristics of water and that characteristic defines it or an object is a stone if it has the characteristics of a stone.

### **3.15 The succession of these changes in that entity is the cause of its modification.**

If something changes in the characteristics of an object, the object changes. If water boils and disappears then the change in its characteristics was the cause of this disappearance. By the same logic if water turns into ice its also a change in the object.

### **3.16 By self-control over these three-fold changes (of property, character and condition), knowledge of the past and the future arises.**

Thinking logically about events and how they are put together can give you an idea of how the future will go by using the past and present as a guide. For example; Your knowledge of matter and how it functions can be your guide to its past behaviour or future behaviour. Another example; your knowledge of cold applied to water can reveal its future as ice.

Here is where the book takes on fantasy-like dimensions. The superstitious can read this and think these are techniques for supernatural ("divine") powers. Alternatively, this part of the book may have been written by some con artist to make it seem like it is possible for the superstitions of the population to be true, which may later have inspired martial artists of the Far East.

### **3.17 The sound of a word, the idea behind the word, and the object the idea signifies are often taken as being one thing and may be mistaken for**

**one another. By self-control over their distinctions, understanding of all languages of all creatures arises.**

Words can have different meanings for different beings. For example; water has a different meaning and application for humans than for cats (who don't like water as much as humans). By removing your own projections of what a word means to you, you can learn to understand how other beings (including animals) think.

**3.18 By self-control on the perception of mental impressions, knowledge of previous lives arises.**

Learning to remove your projections on your thoughts or observations (developing a mental state "empty mind") can help you perceive your previous lives.

Zen perspective: By letting go of mental impressions and attachment to them you can learn to understand your previous mental states (in zen a previous mental state, with all its emotions and thoughts, IS a previous "life" or "incarnation" of the mind).

**3.19 By self-control on any mark of a body, the wisdom of the mind activating that body arises.**

By observing the body, in your meditative state, you can learn to read it and understand it.

**3.20 By self-control on the form of a body, by suspending perceptibility and separating effulgence therefrom, there arises invisibility and inaudibility.**

This basically seems to be saying that you can use your mind as an invisibility cloak (like in Harry Potter), i.e. Using your mind in its meditative state and concentrating on the body you can suspend the ability to perceive and block the light bouncing off a body to make it invisible!

Alternative "warrior" interpretation: Learning to walk without sound or with invisibility is something a ninja or assassin would seek to attain (and reputed to be able to do so... in fact, walking without sound was also a known Native American warrior attribute). Such people

would have many tricks up their sleeves like the famous smoke bomb of the ninja that distracts a person and clouds their perception allowing them to escape. In fact one can say the ninja LITERALLY '*suspended the perceptibility*' of the viewer to disappear quietly while the smoke bomb provided noise and visuals for the escape. Sounds like an ancient magic trick which few understood. Nowadays though, everyone knows about magic tricks.

### **3.21 Action is of two kinds, dormant and fruitful. By self-control on such action, one portends the time of death.**

By meditating on the action you seek to take you can see its result. By meditating on all actions being taken one can foresee the time of death.

Alternatively this can be interpreted as using reason you can know if a type of action you do is dangerous and if doing could lead to death. Such as trying to fight a tiger with your bare hands would give you an idea of when you would die or that eating lots of sweets and becoming fat would also suggest an early death.

### **3.22 By performing self-control on friendliness, the strength to grant joy arises.**

Using your meditative state you can generate friendliness and send it into other people so they can experience it themselves. {Sounds like one of the source texts for George Lucas's version of Jedi in Star Wars!}

Alternatively, by learning to embody friendliness you project friendliness and other people can feel that friendliness. As it is some people are known to 'brighten a room as soon as they enter it'. This seems to be a similar, if not exactly the same, concept. Basically, this is a self-hypnosis and rapport building technique.

### **3.23 By self-control over any kind of strength, such as that of the elephant, that very strength arises.**

In your meditative state you can embody the strength of any animal (such as an elephant) and embody that level of strength in yourself.

Alternatively, one can feel stronger by imagining something which is strong. It's like saying that if you imagine yourself like a broken tree you will feel less strong than if you imagined yourself like a steel (metal) beam. By meditating on an object which signifies strength you can embody that in your mind-body and thus develop greater strength... or whatever emotion of feeling you seek to focus on in this manner. Certainly a meditative technique a martial artist would find useful in training or in a fight.

I actually remember that in NLP imagining oneself as a puma ready to face any challenges was a motivational technique that proved to be very effective. Simply imagining a positive thing can make one positive. This sounds like the exact same type of technique.

### **Related:**

#### **Mayo Clinic: *The health benefits of positive thinking*<sup>45</sup>**

*Researchers continue to explore the effects of positive thinking and optimism on health. Health benefits that positive thinking may provide include:*

*Increased life span*

*Lower rates of depression*

*Lower levels of distress*

*Greater resistance to the common cold*

*Better psychological and physical well-being*

*Reduced risk of death from cardiovascular disease*

*Better coping skills during hardships and times of stress*

*It's unclear why people who engage in positive thinking experience these health benefits. One theory is that having a positive outlook enables you to cope better with stressful situations, which reduces the harmful health effects of stress on your body. It's also thought that positive and optimistic people tend to live healthier lifestyles — they get more physical activity, follow a healthier diet, and don't smoke or drink alcohol in excess.*

### **3.24 By self-control on the primal activator comes knowledge of the hidden, the subtle, and the distant.**

By meditating on the source on consciousness/power/energy (which would probably be the

45 Positive thinking: Stop negative self-talk to reduce stress <http://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/positive-thinking/art-20043950>

heart in Indian psychology, i.e. 'where the Self resides'<sup>46</sup>) one can attain knowledge of things hidden from others (such as secrets), of stuff in the world of the "spirit" (such as the world of energy by which aura or chakras are perceived) and of events happening far away.

Alternatively, from a Far Eastern Qi Gong point of view, building and mastering the "Dan Tein" (source of chi – energy - in the Far Eastern systems of Qi Gong used in martial arts) can connect a person to the chi field that pervades the planet. Connecting to the chi field, which pervades everything, would be able to provide knowledge of hidden secrets (or stuff simply hidden from view such as something buried underground), chi fields (the subtle) and events happening far way (as its all connected in the world of chi)... to the adept. {Another source for George Lucas's version of the Jedi? i.e. Mastery of "the force" also leads to such skills. Note: Latest version of the Jedi, "Rey", doesn't require the development of skills (as if the source of power for the Jedi is 'The Holy Ghost') or even books, which are burnt in the movie as per the Christian tradition of knowledge, i.e. all you need is the profession of faith as established by the Church/priest. This may be the natural result of George Lucas making the source of a Jedi's power being in "midichlorians"<sup>47</sup> rather than something that is natural to human beings in general, as it is in Eastern meditative practices. This fictional element is what makes levitation and other force powers you don't see in real life, possible. It also makes a supernatural being, such as Rey in the new Star Wars sequels, possible as midichlorians can create force powers without any effort on the part of the individual, i.e. Rey is basically a female Jesus but from a Star Wars perspective where "Son of God" become "Daughter of the Force"}.

This sutra also provides great cover for a magician trying to appear psychic as part of a magic show (such as those done by mentalists in thier shows even today<sup>48</sup>).

Here is a short section/interlude which are tips on using reason (reason, science and "spirituality" was all part of the same science at one time)

### **3.25 By self-control on the Sun comes knowledge of spatial specificities.**

By meditating on the sun you can gain knowledge of space (such as distance), i.e. Thinking about the sun can lead to scientific insights.

46 Mundaka Upanishad

47Force powers are created by midiclorigans <https://starwars.fandom.com/wiki/Midi-chlorian>

48 Look up mentalism on Google

### **3.26 By self-control on the Moon comes knowledge of the heavens.**

By meditating on the moon you can learn about the skies. (In Indian mythology rebirth/reincarnation is the standard belief, with the afterlife just being a temporary place from which one is reborn on to Earth. So "heaven" here must mean skies rather than the Middle-Eastern/Western meaning of the word heaven)

If you observe the moon you can chart it's orbits. Basically saying observation is how you learn about patterns.

### **3.27 By self-control on the Polestar arises knowledge of orbits.**

By meditating on the North Star you can learn more about the orbits of the stars and planets.

Perfect example of what I mean. If you look at the polestar continuously you WILL notice the turning of the stars. This could be a simple explanation for why or how some people know about the orbits of stars. Such as the Egyptians and Sumerians were known to have had.

### **3.28 By self-control on the navel arises knowledge of the constitution of the body.**

By meditating on the navel (belly button area) you can understand how the body is put together.

### **3.29 By self-control on the pit of the throat one subdues hunger and thirst.**

By meditating on the base of the throat a person can control feelings of thirst and hunger.

It's possible that by believing that concentrating on the throat subdues hunger and thirst probably does achieve that goal. It could be the placebo effect in a meditative and self-hypnosis context.

***Placebo effect***<sup>49</sup>: Also called the placebo response. A remarkable phenomenon in which a placebo -- a fake treatment, an inactive substance like sugar, distilled water, or saline solution

49 Medicine Net <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=31481>



*-- can sometimes improve a patient's condition simply because the person has the expectation that it will be helpful. Expectation to plays a potent role in the placebo effect. The more a person believes they are going to benefit from a treatment, the more likely it is that they will experience a benefit.*

### **3.30 By self-control on the tube within the chest one acquires absolute steadiness.**

By meditating on the center of the chest one can become steady in everything they do.

Same explanation as above. This means with this belief a warrior, when thrown off guard, could gain steadiness of mind & body.

Once again the fantasy-like sutras begin.

### **3.31 By self-control on the light in the head one envisions perfected beings.**

By meditating on the light in your head (whatever that means) you can actually see perfected beings, such as accomplished yogis that have transcended this world or the Gods and Goddesses themselves. It could also mean that such a practice can help you IMAGINE what perfected beings are like (like a model to attain to).

Alternatively, it could be interpreted that by visualizing light in your head everything appears brighter as if everyone, the the field of chi, was perfect.

### **3.32 There is knowledge of everything from intuition.**

That appears to be the very definition of intuition, i.e. it provides you with knowledge of anything from how you feel about it. How clear your head and emotions are will dictate how accurate your intuition would be. Simple bigotry can also be seen as intuition from a normal uneducated person. Yogis probably see it as 'intuition to understand all of existence comes from these techniques'.

### **3.33 Self-control on the heart brings knowledge of the mental entity.**

By meditating on the heart you can understand the mind better.

In depth: In the Indian system of thought, mind and soul and heart are considered to be separate components of a human being (as if humans were a machine with parts). So it's saying that by focusing on the heart you can learn more about the mind.

By classifying heart as different from mind (mind being in the head, where the eyes are, I would assume) you create a distinction that makes you compare and contrast the two and you learn more about those concepts through the comparison.

In Chinese Taoist thought heart would be part of the mind and would make this statement irrelevant. This is normally written as "mind-body" to indicate you can't have one without the other. To say that one come before the other is like asking that questions, '*what came first? The chicken or the egg?*'.

Nowadays this is more commonly accepted than ever before;

*Today, we accept that there is a powerful mind-body connection through which emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and behavioral factors can directly affect our health.*

*Mind-body medicine focuses on treatments that may promote health, including relaxation, hypnosis, visual imagery, meditation, yoga, and biofeedback.*

*Over the past 20 years, mind-body medicine has provided evidence that psychological factors can play a major role in such illnesses as heart disease, and that mind-body techniques can aid in their treatment. Clinical trials have indicated mind-body therapies to be helpful in managing arthritis and other chronic pain conditions. There is also evidence they can help to improve psychological functioning and quality of life, and may help to ease symptoms of disease.<sup>50</sup>*

### **3.34 Experience arises due to the inability of discerning the attributes of vitality from the indweller, even though they are indeed distinct from one another. Self-control brings true knowledge of the indweller by itself.**

50 Medicine Plus <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/magazine/issues/winter08/articles/winter08pg4.html>

This sounds like complete gibberish to me. The first sentence is saying that all experience arises from a person's inability to differentiate between the world and the Self. So, if one could tell the difference, experience would end. The second sentence says that meditation can lead one to understand the Self that resides in the heart (standard Indian philosophy of how a human being is composed, outlined in the Upanishads). Of course, in Zen such distinctions are imaginary anyways.

### **3.35 This spontaneous enlightenment results in intuitional perception of hearing, touching, seeing and smelling.**

Enlightenment leads to intuition permeating everything, i.e. you become psychic in all your senses.

Alternatively: This could be interpreted as the zen state, i.e. a spontaneous realization of zen (called *satori* in zen culture), once achieved, is like using the senses intuitively, without thought. In other words, the spontaneous state of directly experiencing the world as "that" as described in the introduction to zen at the beginning of the book.

### **3.36 To the outward turned mind, the sensory organs are perfections, but are obstacles to realization.**

If you are focused on the external world your senses are exactly what you want and need but these same senses create attachment to the world and attachment is an obstacle to realization. In other words, your sensory organs (senses) can cloud your perception of reality.

### **3.37 When the bonds of the mind caused by action have been loosened, one may enter the body of another by knowledge of how the nerve-currents function.**

This sutra can be interpreted in many ways. The most obvious one is that when the mind is more free – from the dissolving of Karma OR by long hours/ days/ weeks/ years of meditation – one can actually enter the body of another person to (a) perceive the world through their eyes, or, (b) to take possession of this other person's body, through the "nerve currents" which in the Indian system would be chakras and the Chinese system would be the meridians (acupressure/ acupuncture points). There are no stories of people taking over other people's

bodies from the ancient world but there are stories of possession (such as that by ghosts), so that's what the author most likely intended to mean, i.e. This sutra may have been meant as an explanation for the superstitious belief of possession by ghosts/spirits common to all cultures and civilizations.

Alternatively, the simplest explanation would be that one can empathize with how a person is feeling when they are not caught up in their own ego perceptions. This is kinda like saying, 'to defeat your enemy you have to think like them by pretending to step into their mind and think like them'. There are even creativity techniques designed to help a person glean insights into things by "stepping" into the mind of another<sup>51</sup>, such as an expert in a field of knowledge, as a meditative exercise to try and get the mind to image what another person might think like.

### **3.38 By self-control of the nerve-currents utilising the lifebreath, one may levitate, walk on water, swamps, thorns, or the like.**

By meditating on the energy that surrounds/permeates your body (chakra system in Indian thought and meridians or dantein in Far Eastern science), using pranayama (breathing exercises to increase your energy) you can levitate on walk on things that people can't normally walk on, such as water or air. Stories of people being able to do this fills the entire East.

Alternative Reading From Martial Arts: This sutra may have inspired martial arts legend and fact/technique in China. Ninja's are reputed to have been able to run on water (as shown in the movie Remo<sup>52</sup>) and in real life you can find Shaolin Monks (masters of Kung Fu, that utilize breathing techniques, after years of Qigong practice<sup>53</sup>) run across water with nothing but a thin reed mat<sup>54</sup>. Such techniques make it into Chinese martial arts movies all the time<sup>55</sup> showing how common – and unspiritual – such abilities are seen in the Far Eastern martial arts traditions... but NOT actually walking on water, furthering my theory that such yoga sutras inspired Far Eastern martial arts traditions. Bodhidharma was, afterall, an Indian monk and it is to him that martial arts, such as that from the Shaolin Temple, are attributed.

In depth:

51 Such as the "Borrowed Genius" technique by Win Wenger <http://www.winwenger.com/borrow1.htm>

52 Running on water in the movie Remo <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmSmZRCI6A4>

53 Shalin monk martial arts training techniques <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i9Ac3P52wco>

54 Chinese kung fu master runs on water <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CmVr0M4wmRw>

55 Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon Bamboo tree fight scene movie clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXIJv1NoXmo>

This sounds like an explanation for a common superstition that goes back to the time when Gods walked the earth and everything had mythological significance. Afterall, stories of Saints or Masters 'walking on water' is so old and is in so many cultures that it has to be seen as an ancient superstitions belief (at the very least). It certainly permeates the Middle East where Jesus comes from, whom the Bible claimed did just that. Note: All religions believe only their religion had the true miracles and others didn't. So Christians believe only Jesus walked on water and other stories are just superstitions. Muslims believe only divinely inspired Saints can walk on water, of which Jesus was one. In the East, where paths of liberation – or meditative practices such as yoga – rather than religious experience are the sources of such "miracles", everyone can attain them with practice.

A zen interpretation would be that learning to control your mind with years of meditation can give one the feeling AS IF they could levitate, walk on water or thorns or the like (which is clearly not what this sutra is saying) and at the end of Book 2, as well as in the introduction, I have covered how a zen (or yogic) meditation master, of the sage path of years of meditation, could sit in a fire and burn away the body without flinching. I think these sorts of detachment from the senses created a supernormal or superhuman type aura around the ancient yogis and meditation masters of the far east to the point where it was believed that they could do the supernatural things outlined in this sutra.

I covered how zen doesn't condone belief in supernatural power or at least it's pursuit as it is the very antithesis of the zen experience, i.e. there is no place in zen philosophy for anything but zen as everything else is imaginary (a story a person creates to explain things). From a zen perspective, if something cannot be confirmed with actual science and reason, then its imaginary or just superstition.

### **Other things I've noticed or correlations that can make people theorize that such things may be possible;**

Self- Hypnosis technique: There is a hypnosis technique where people gather round a sitting or laying down person and, while chanting "Light as a feather stiff as a board", a few people are able to lift him as if he were almost weightless. Using just the two forefingers of the hands clasped together. This can even be observed on youtube today, showing that this technique can be done by everyone proving that no ability or skill in meditation is necessary to perform this trick<sup>56</sup>. In one experiment in a video on youtube (conducted by kids)<sup>57</sup> a scary line was added, probably to help spread it using the fear factor, but one can omit that line and focus just on "light as a feather, stiff as a board" and achieve the same weightless like results from

56 Light as a feather, stiff as a board technique [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E4\\_7O4TTKw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6E4_7O4TTKw)

57 Light as a feather stiff as a board done by kids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqtUI44ZcBk>

anyone irrespective of their experience or lack of it in meditation<sup>58</sup>. Fascinating, huh? What if Jesus just managed to lighten himself by constant thought on such a phrase and then wearing wooden sandals and walked on the dead sea, during a dry season? i.e. The dead sea is known for being ridiculously easy to float on because of its salt content <sup>59</sup> and then the story changed (all Gospels are written in Greek dated to at least 70 years after Jesus).

**The magician theory for levitation etc:** When young I saw a wandering magician perform a trick in that region called the levitation technique. After a few magic tricks and talk of supernatural help he lay down and covered himself with a blanket. Then he started rising into the air. It was a shocking moment for everyone. Some kids managed to sneak a peek under the blanket and he was standing on a chair while holding a stick, parallel to the ground, to simulate his body. How many magicians must have been roaming the countryside as far back as the glory days of Ancient India, I have no idea but there must have been many.

**Walking on hot coals:** This is a common modern technique<sup>60</sup>. It's also a hypnosis technique, called a group hypnosis technique, and has been tried successfully by many people<sup>61</sup> (I haven't had the opportunity yet).

**Conclusion:** Normal magician tricks and normal powers of the mind could have led to people imagining stories of levitation and flying and walking on water, which became part of the beliefs of the ancient world. While one could observe some of the simpler techniques and manifestation of the powers of the human mind, one just imagined *what if* and thus the fairy tales spread. Seen as a technique for warriors such as Ninjas this becomes more of a manual of martial arts tricks rather than a manual for "divine spiritual powers".

### 3.39 By self-control over the maintenance of breath, one may radiate light.

This sutra simply claims that breathing meditation (pranayama) is the means to attain the goal of "radiating light". Once again, this sounds like something you might see in a fantasy/fiction movie.

Alternatively: A simple reading for warriors might have been, 'use breathing meditation to enhance your energy'. Breathing meditation is what martial artists use, even today, to

58 Another example of light as a feather stiff as a board <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXXcQXt9QBo>

59 Floating in the Dead Sea <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhkijfRtMOo>

60 Walking on red hot coals <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iBFwpKV6ak>

61 Tony Robbins fire walking <http://www.tonyrobbinsfirewalk.com/physics-of-hot-coals/>

enhance their energy... especially if they are learning how to break boards or bricks. The martial artist masters explain that the breath & mental focus is the key to breaking bricks and boards (with lots of practice). It's also the technique of radiating energy from your hands (for Qigong masters) but it still can't be actually seen by the physical eyes<sup>62</sup>.

### **3.40 By self-control on the relation of the ear to the ether one gains distant hearing.**

By meditating on the connection between your ears and the ether (energy/chi field ?) one can gain the ability to hear things that are far away.

Once again, a technique for which there is no precedence except in superstition (as psychic ability) and movies. Physical – scientific - techniques to enhance your senses do exist though<sup>63</sup>.

### **3.41 By self-control over the relation of the body to the ether, and maintaining at the same time the thought of the lightness of cotton, one is able to pass through space.**

By meditating on the connection between the body and ether (energy/chi field), while maintain the thought of lightness, you can pass through space. (!)

OK. Sounds like a teleportation technique doesn't it? It's sutras like these that probably gave rise to Theosophy of the late 1800's and they must have made up all those 'masters' who could do such things because they seem to have disappeared with the movement itself (none of the leaders could do any of the stuff they claimed the hidden masters' could do so it just sounds like a cult). Unless I can see such a feat I refuse to believe it. Also, I'm pretty sure that Richard Bach used this theory in his fictional book *Illusions* and/or *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*.

A simple reading for warriors might have been that 'imagining yourself light as cotton you can FEEL as if you pass through space'. We know some Tibetan Monks could run all day and night to carry message and not get tired (by imagining themselves to be as light as cotton?).

62 Qigong master healer <https://www.wimp.com/man-with-supernatural-healing-powers/>

63 How to train your sense like the Daredevil <http://www.thebioneer.com/how-to-train-your-senses-like-daredevil-echolocation-training-neuroplasticity-and-more/>

They must have used some technique like this one (if not this very technique) plus a lot of practice to accomplish those feats of endurance.

### **3.42 By self-control on the mind when it is separated from the body- the state known as the Great Transcorporeal- all coverings are removed from the Light.**

Lots of words here that can mean many things, so I'm going to make some assumptions. 'Mind when separated from the body', if astral travelling, then meditating while astral travelling can lead to deep insight into the reality of things, is what this sutra seems to be saying. If 'Light' means Self then this means that meditating in the astral state leads to perception of your true self. In zen, of course, all these categories are superfluous.

### **3.43 Mastery over the elements arises when their gross and subtle forms, as well as their essential characteristics, and the inherent attributes and experiences they produce, is examined in self-control.**

Examining objects in a meditative state can give you mastery over the elements.

Sounds like an ancient explanation for belief in magic.

### **3.44 Thereby one may become as tiny as an atom as well as having many other abilities, such as perfection of the body, and non-resistance to duty.**

Once again sounds like magic. Probably was a sutra made to explain a superstitious belief as if it was true.

Alternatively: Mentally (in the imagination) one can become as tiny as an atom or as large as a planet. With the ability to imagine properly you can create a better physical self (body). Non-resistance to duty sounds like the zen state of the ancient Samurai. Ancient Indians took their duty (dharma) very seriously and not having any resistance to do one's duty to society would be a sublime state to reach.

### **3.45 Perfection of the body consists in beauty, grace, strength and**



### **adamantine hardness.**

A definition of perfection of the body. Martial artists develop "adamantine" hardness to break bricks and the martial arts have strength and grace. Of course, this sutra probably refers to fairytale like perfection.

### **3.46 By self-control on the changes that the sense-organs endure when contacting objects, and on the power of the sense of identity, and of the influence of the attributes, and the experience all these produce- one masters the senses.**

By meditating on your senses, changes in them, the attributes of what is being sensed, how identity influences such perceptions, and your experience of sensing, you can master your senses. Sounds like a regular technique to exercise your senses<sup>64</sup> but is probably just gibberish.

### **3.47 From that come swiftness of mind, independence of perception, and mastery over primordial matter.**

You will develop a sharp mind, freedom of thought and an ability to make things magically. (gibberish derived from gibberish)

### **3.48 To one who recognizes the distinctive relation between vitality and indweller comes omnipotence and omniscience.**

When you can see the difference between energy and the Self (residing in the heart, as per Indian philosophy) then you gain great power and knowledge of everything.

There is no such difference between vitality and "indweller" in zen (see 3.33).

### **3.49 Even for the destruction of the seed of bondage by desirelessness**

64 How to train your sense like the Daredevil <http://www.thebioneer.com/how-to-train-your-senses-like-daredevil-echolocation-training-neuroplasticity-and-more/>

## **there comes absolute independence.**

Destorying attachment through eliminating desire leads to absolute independence.

### **3.50 When invited by invisible beings one should be neither flattered nor satisfied, for there is yet a possibility of ignorance rising up.**

When you get an invitation by spirits to join them (or learn from them) you shouldn't be flattered or satisfied as this doesn't indicate permanent accomplishment and you can still make mistakes.

Thoughts: Sounds like a guy is assuming invisible beings exist and is telling his audience not to be flattered if such call comes for them as pride can make you blind i.e. you can think ignorant thoughts even after being sought and accepted by invisible beings as a student.

I think it's a tactic a hypnotist magician might use to build understanding between him and his audience of his powers yet fallibility as a person. In other words, he's making stuff up for the hypnotic effect. Such as, *'O people, I encountered a spirit and my pride chased him away. So I'm careful now. You too, if you should encounter a spirit, should be respectful and conscious of keeping your ego in check'* and so on. While the superstitious audience is gobbling it up as if it were real, thinking they might need this information for dealing with the spirits.

### **3.51 By self-control over single moments and their succession there is wisdom born of discrimination.**

Being aware of, and meditating on, each moment you can build your ability to discriminate (notice things better) and develop a better understanding of them.

### **3.52 From that there is recognition of two similars when that difference cannot be distinguished by class, characteristic or position.**

Noticing details can help you notice similarities between objects that otherwise can't be compared using normal modes of classification.

**3.53 Intuition, which is the entire discriminative knowledge, relates to all objects at all times, and is without succession.**

Intuition is a powerful kind of knowledge in and of itself and transcends time. Sounds like the basic definition of what being “psychic” is supposed to be like in common pop culture and what must have been common pop culture back then.

**3.54 Liberation is attained when there is equal purity between vitality and the indweller.**

When the inner consciousness (the Self) and the energy of a person is equally “pure” one attains liberation. Once again, there is no such difference in zen (see 3.33).

**End of Book 3**

## **Book 4**

### **Ramblings**

Many scholars agree that this book is definitely a different person(s) or a later addition. In fact, the yoga sutras is a collection from many writers over a long period of time but were attributed to one person possibly as a sign of honor or respect as was the tradition. Despite the agreement that this book is definitely not by Patanjali and even contradicts the earlier yoga sutras in some ways, while repeating some sutras in a haphazard manner, it still made it into the original Yoga Sutras text. I thought I should at least point out how crazy and confused this book sounds rather than leave it out (which was my first inclination). You can skip this part of the commentary if you want as this book has no value from a yogic perspective. All it has are some interesting correlations to culture and common sense/knowledge. I mostly did the commentary to show the guy who wrote it may have been a student but was certainly not a yogi, sage or warrior.

#### **4.1 Psychic powers arise by birth, drugs, incantations, purificatory acts or concentrated insight.**

The belief here, as must have been common in the culture (even today), was that simply being born can make you a psychic (like the Oracle of Delphi in the Ancient Greek culture), austerity could make one psychic, meditation (concentrated insight) could make one psychic and drugs could too. Except for "birth" all the acts for mental enhancement involves altering perception in some way. In our western culture alcohol, caffeine, energy drinks, sugar and smoking cigarettes and marijuana (a growing trend) is a more culturally acceptable way of altering perception though cigarettes seem to be on the decline (and there is a huge underground, illegal, drug culture as well as which a great deal of research has been done). No matter what, history shows that cultures seek to alter their perception in some way through outside agents through oral consumption and the yoga sutras clearly had some acceptable drugs of their own, whatever they may have been.

**Cultural correlation:** In the ancient Vedic religion their god Indra is known to have attained powers through drinking Soma. A drug concoction of some sort. So this belief must have been prevalent in the culture of the time. It also arose in western culture as well with the movement of the 60's and the research and books of Timothy Leary and Aldous Huxley who did extensive research on LSD before this research was banned by Nixon. Timothy Leary showed a self-improvement rate on prisoners using LSD which has never been matched since. Much of that research is still available today. Clearly, the fascination of human beings with drugs and their effects to *alter perception* goes back to ancient times. More conventionally meditation, self-hypnosis and hypnosis is used to alter perception in the "new age" segment of our culture which has gained considerable public and psychiatric acceptance in the last few decades.

**Timothy Leary came up with a model of the mind based on personal experimentation on a scale that is really quite impressive. One of his co-explorers by the name of Robert Anton Wilson has written about it in detail, available online at <http://deoxy.org/8circuit.htm> called "Timothy's Leary Eight Circuits of Consciousness" where he writes about "circuit 5":**

*The opening and imprinting of this circuit has been the preoccupation of "technicians of the occult"—Tantric shamans and hatha yogis. While the fifth tunnel-reality can be achieved by sensory deprivation, social isolation, physiological stress or severe shock (ceremonial terror tactics, as practiced by such rascal-gurus as Don Juan Matus or Aleister Crowley), it has traditionally been reserved to the educated aristocracy of leisure societies who have solved the four terrestrial survival problems.*

*About 20,000 years ago, the specific fifth brain neurotransmitter was discovered by shamans in the Caspian Sea area of Asia and quickly spread to other wizards throughout Eurasia and Africa. It is, of course, cannabis. Weed. Mother Mary Jane.*

**Elsewhere, online, there is a summary of brain circuits with its related stimulants<sup>65</sup>;**

*Wilson suggests how certain drugs may activate the various circuits, something like the following:*

*1st circuit: Comfort foods- sugar, dairy products. Sedatives may deaden alarm sensations and produce a sense of security - alcohol, for example.*

65 Page: [https://www.erowid.org/culture/characters/leary\\_timothy/leary\\_timothy\\_8-circuit.shtml](https://www.erowid.org/culture/characters/leary_timothy/leary_timothy_8-circuit.shtml)

*2nd circuit: Stimulants in general, as well as alcohol in large amounts (the classic aggressive drunk)*

*3rd circuit: Stimulants, possibly, and no doubt 'Smart drugs' would fit here.*

*4th circuit: Ecstasy, as well as many others - generally any drug which defeats social inadequacy programming.*

*5th circuit: Sex is the big one, when it goes from being mere satisfaction of physical drives and becomes oceanlike ecstasy. Otherwise, marijuana, and most hallucinogens in moderate doses.*

*6th circuit: LSD*

*7th circuit: Psilocybin, Peyote, possibly LSD, many of the natural psychedelics.*

*8th circuit: Ketamine? Excessive doses of many drugs may produce this, as well as those which produce near-death experiences.*

People smoking marijuana have noticed an increase in creativity while studies have shown the part of the brain affected most is the frontal lobe. The frontal lobe is what separates us from the apes. The fact that marijuana affects this most creative - and human - part of the brain is interesting at the very least. What's more interesting that, taking into account the creativity/thought boost, after some time of use people have shown that even the slight disruption in motor skills (compared to alcohol) become evened out to where there are no longer discernible from non-high states. All of this information was covered in documentaries on CNN and it doesn't even include the medical benefits (not relevant to the sutra).

## **4.2 Transformation into another state is by the directed flow of creative nature.**

You change your state by being creative. Same as saying, you can change your emotional state with self-hypnosis.

### **4.3 Creative nature is not moved into action by any incidental cause, but by the removal of obstacles, as in the case of a farmer clearing his field of stones for irrigation.**

This is saying that to clear your head and be creative you need to clear up any obstacles you may have. This is like saying to clear writer's block you need to clear up your what's blocking you. Or to reduce stress and become more clear headed you have to clean your room.

### **4.4 Created minds arise from egoism alone.**

Your ego, which is a creation of your mind through experience and the stories you spin around those experiences, creates a mind. Fake personalities arise from egoism etc. There is no sense of depth in these sentences beyond what is culturally acceptable.

### **4.5 There being difference of interest, one mind is the director of many minds.**

One person can be a leader. If you are a leader of a group then your mind is directing other minds. Thus one mind can direct other minds. Another very shallow statement. It's like saying that a group, under a leader, comes into being when there is a difference of interest in a community.

### **4.6 Of these, the mind born of concentrated insight is free from the impressions.**

The traditional belief as outlined in the earlier books that a mind experienced in meditation can free itself from distractions to the point of being untouched by the world i.e. free of impressions.

**This goes on for a while, repeating stuff that has already been outlined in a form most culturally acceptable to the people, while not really saying anything new.**

**4.7 The impressions of unitive cognition are neither good nor bad. In the case of the others, there are three kinds of impressions.**

The dhyana (zen) state leads to impressions which are neither good or bad as everything just IS.

**4.8 From them proceed the development of the tendencies which bring about the fruition of actions.**

Your actions leads to fruits of those actions.

**4.9 Because of the magnetic qualities of habitual mental patterns and memory, a relationship of cause and effect clings even though there may be a change of embodiment by class, space and time.**

Restatement of a sutra from an earlier book. Basically, your mental habits create an effect of 'cause and effect' as you attract those behaviours to yourself that you like to do... even if you move to a different country.

**4.10 The desire to live is eternal, and the thought-clusters prompting a sense of identity are beginningless.**

Everyone desires to live and ones sense of identity goes back into the past forever. Note: This isn't true. Babies lack a sense of identity but develop it as they grow older. Once again, this sounds like a restatement of previous sutras as if someone has read the other books and is now writing down their thoughts and adding it to the book.

**4.11 Being held together by cause and effect, substratum and object- the tendencies themselves disappear on the dissolution of these bases.**

When a cause disappears so does its effect. When wood is burned, the cause and effect that holds the wood together as an object, can be said to "dissolve".



#### **4.12 The past and the future exist in the object itself as form and expression, there being difference in the conditions of the properties.**

This sounds like part of an earlier sutra (3.16) and seems to be restating or re explaining that fact but in accordance with an alternative “Sherlock Holmes” kind of reading, i.e. you can figure out the past and future of an object by paying attention to its characteristics and how those characteristics are changing. For example, a termite eaten piece of wood can tell you about it’s past (it was a tree and died and this piece got termites). You can also tell the future of the piece of wood (it will dissolve to nothing as it is eaten by termites).

#### **4.13 Whether manifested or unmanifested they are of the nature of the attributes.**

Sounds like complete nonsense.

#### **4.14 Things assume reality because of the unity maintained within that modification.**

Things are real because they retain their shape. Wood is wood because it is the form of wood. If the unity is broken, say by burning it, the piece of wood would disappear into the “unseen”.

#### **4.15 Even though the external object is the same, there is a difference of cognition in regard to the object because of the difference in mentality.**

People see things differently from one another or your thoughts/beliefs can color an object. A tree to you is a holy plant to another person and so on.

#### ***4.16 And if an object known only to a single mind were not recognized by that mind, would it then exist?***

If a tree falls in a forest does it exist? It's incredible how old this philosophical thought seems to be.

**4.17 An object is known or not known by the mind, depending on whether or not the mind is colored by the object.**

This says that an object can be known or not known as long as it is perceived by the mind.

**4.18 The mutations of awareness are always known on account of the changelessness of its Lord, the indweller.**

You are aware of the different types of awareness you have because of the changelessness of your inner consciousness (The Self) which is beyond change. Not very zen like and it's beliefs of self like these are where Chinese & Japanese "Zen" philosophies diverge from the Indian ones.

**4.19 Nor is the mind self-luminous, as it can be known.**

I have no idea what this is trying to say. Probably complete gibberish. The sun is "self-luminous" and it can be known.

**4.20 It is not possible for the mind to be both the perceived and the perceiver simultaneously.**

True. A standard zen idea about the capabilities of the mind. i.e. you can't talk about the mind and practice dhyana (zen) at the same time as the states are mutually exclusive. Said another way, you can't observe the mind with the mind.

**4.21 In the case of cognition of one mind by another, we would have to assume cognition of cognition, and there would be confusion of memories.**

This is talking as if minds exist free of the body and if it perceives another mind it could get confused by the other mind's memories. In other words, the ideas/sutras are just getting ridiculous.

#### **4.22 Consciousness appears to the mind itself as intellect when in that form in which it does not pass from place to place.**

Consciousness appears as the intellect when you see consciousness as intellectual. It's probably nonsense like this that gave away the books later authorship. He seems to be repeating the thought of 'what the mind believes, the mind sees', again and again, in different ways as if he's rambling or trying to get it right. In zen, of course, these distinctions don't exist.

The thoughts seem to be revolving around the idea expressed in 4.16 making the sutras circular in nature rather than progressing from one idea to another.

#### **4.23 The mind is said to perceive when it reflects both the indweller (the knower) and the objects of perception (the known).**

This is like saying that you only perceive things when your consciousness reflects the objects (or the mind perceives by being colored by the object 4.17, i.e. repeating the same idea over and over). Interestingly enough, the eyes DO see objects by reflecting an image of objects onto the retina of the eye but this isn't what he seems to be saying.

#### **4.24 Though variegated by innumerable tendencies, the mind acts not for itself but for another, for the mind is of compound substance.**

Random stringing together of words/thoughts, probably. Yogis don't generally see the mind as a "compound substance" but a unitary one, so this writer probably wasn't even a yogi. At least not a real one.

#### **4.25 For one who sees the distinction, there is no further confusing of the mind with the self.**

Another un-zenlike restatement from book 3 (3.34). Further solidifies my case of some guy just rambling.

#### **4.26 Then the awareness begins to discriminate, and gravitates towards liberation.**

When you discriminate between mind and self then you automatically move toward liberation or freedom of mind and soul (liberation). Another restatement/rambling.

#### **4.27 Distractions arise from habitual thought patterns when practice is intermittent.**

When your practice is irregular it's because of distraction from bad habits. Another weird restatement.

#### **4.28 The removal of the habitual thought patterns is similar to that of the afflictions already described.**

Habitual thought patterns are removed by the stuff outlined in the previous sutras of this book. Sounds like complete rubbish to me.

#### **4.29 To one who remains undistracted in even the highest intellection there comes the equalminded realization known as The Cloud of Virtue. This is a result of discriminative discernment.**

“Cloud of virtue” sounds like something this guy made up. What he is saying is that when thinking if you can reach deep thought (like not noticing what is going around you because you are in deep thought) they you are in a virtuous state. He’s probably just calling his own habit of thinking as a virtuous state as any egotistical person would. Sounds like a Brahmin<sup>66</sup> philosopher validating his beliefs.

66 Hinduism's version of a priest, determined by birth in a particular class of society.

#### **4.30 From this there follows freedom from cause and effect and afflictions.**

The idea behind liberation is that it frees you from the world (cause and effect) and from its afflictions. So he's saying that following the gibberish here gets you there ... which is highly doubtful, unless you include the entire yoga sutras by assuming that the writer(s) of this last book is the same guy. Then this can just be taken as a concluding sutra for the book that someone came up with, like 'do this and you'll live happily every after'.

#### **4.31 The infinity of knowledge available to such a mind freed of all obscuration and property makes the universe of sensory perception seem small.**

Having infinite knowledge makes other things seem small. If the mind is freed from property then how is one to measure the universe of perception to determine what is small? Sounds like a philosopher (not a yogi) saying that infinite knowledge makes the world seem small. A common but not particularly insightful or unique thought in the history of religion.

#### **4.32 Then the sequence of change in the three attributes comes to an end, for they have fulfilled their function.**

My guess is that he's making stuff up but it seems like he's saying is that infinite knowledge make class, matter and other characteristics not change anymore as they have fulfilled their purpose.

#### **4.33 The sequence of mutation occurs in every second, yet is comprehensible only at the end of a series.**

Each movement can be divided into tiny movement but you only notice the whole movement. Like how you might notice the arm is moving in stages if you move it around with the flashing of disco lights in the same way, without the disco lights (as is normal in ancient India) the guy noticed that the whole movement of the arm could be classified as micro movements and that people only talk about the whole movement without it's micro movement for the sake of simplicity.

Reaction? OK. Whatever. So things occur in every moment of every day and you only notice them after a period of time. He's just rambling.

**4.34 When the attributes cease mutative association with awarenessness, they resolve into dormancy in Nature, and the indweller shines forth as pure consciousness. This is absolute freedom.**

When everything ceases, the Self (the monad) shines forth and you attain perfect freedom. Rubbish from a zen perspective. Sounds like he's just repeating 3.34 in his own words.

## **End of Book 4**

**The end of this commentary of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**