



## **The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali - Commentary by Helen Hamilton**

### **Book Two – Sadhana Pada - Portion on Practice**

The first portion, or pada, of the Yoga Sutras is “Samadhi pada”. This section gives a description overall of what yoga is and how to apply it and eventually is the goal of all practice. In this second pada, or Sadhana pada, we find a more detailed description of how to actually practise. So the first section shows us the way and the goal, and the second section focuses more on how to achieve that. Sadhana is a word that simply means practice, or that which leads to liberation and is generally not used as a term for our spiritual practice. Sadhana is our practice. This pada or portion of the Yoga Sutras involves a term called Kriya Yoga. It's important to understand that if we've had any involvement with the Kriya Yoga of other systems that this is different, a different type of Kriya Yoga. So everyone is encouraged to read this portion with an open mind and not substituting ideas about Kriya Yoga that we may have already come to understand. Kriya simply means movement and does not denote any particular lineage or teaching. Let's see if we can keep an open mind and come to understand what Kriya Yoga means in the way that Patanjali is using this and the way that we understand it.

#### **Sutra 2:1 Accepting pain as help for purification, study of spiritual books, and surrender to the Supreme Being constitute Yoga in practice.**

This sutra is very important because it brings into our awareness a concept called tapas, which has been very misunderstood. Tapas means to burn something, to use something to burn. We look at our suffering, the reason for our suffering is to burn something, to burn the false self away. The illusory sense of a separate being does not really exist as an entity, and yet, it may temporarily exist as an energy or tendencies inside us, and it's these that we must burn away.

The word tapas has come to mean extreme spiritual practice that involves suffering and or damage to the body or treating the body very harshly. This is simply not true. Tapas really means to use something wisely, to use it as fuel for a fire of devotion. This sutra tells us to accept the pain that we feel as being the greatest help in our liberation and our awakening. Tapas then can be seen as using the suffering that we already feel to fuel our liberation. So life is going to trigger us. Things are going to be felt inside our body, and we will experience suffering. But are we using that for the highest purpose? This sutra is asking us to train ourselves, discipline ourselves so that when we feel some suffering going on, we don't just do our best to get through it. But we ask what is this for, and why am I suffering? What am I believing here? In this way, using our suffering to fuel our liberation, we will begin to form new habits so that suffering will be connected directly to meditation, contemplation or inquiry.

Can you imagine the difference in your awakening and your life if every time you suffered, the very next thought would be: What is this trying to show me? or What am I believing here? from a place of curiosity instead of our usual thoughts which are more like: Why is this happening again? What am I doing wrong? How do I stop this?

It makes sense to use our suffering to fuel our liberation because it will be there anyway. We may as well make it worthwhile in terms of using it for the highest purpose. In this way our suffering becomes sacred. Tapas literally means to burn. And here we are burning the tendency to think as a separate being, therefore experience suffering.

Patanjali says in this sutra that accepting pain as help for purification really points to the fact that pain and suffering can be the form that the teacher is taking right now. The spiritual teacher, or the guru, appears in an infinite number of forms, and the experience that we're having right now that we don't want could just well be the way that the teacher is showing up for us right now if we're open to learn and see.

Patanjali also says the study of the spiritual books, or svadhyaya, is essential for practising yoga and surrender to the Supreme being. What does surrender mean to us? Is it something we have to do, or is it a devotion to a particular practice or way of being? If I am focused on the Infinite Self, which is indivisible and formless, I am surrendered in that moment. I am not fueling my love affair with phenomena and separation.

### **Sutra 2:2 They help us minimise obstacles and attain samadhi.**

This sutra explains why these three qualities described in Sutra 1 are so important. Kriya Yoga consists of surrender, study of the scriptures and recognising pain is help towards liberation. But why do those work? In the sutra, Patanjali tells us that they minimise the obstacles and help us attain samadhi, or liberation. If we're reading the scriptures and understanding the best we can, we'll be able to see that obstacles will appear, and that those are not there because we're doing something wrong, but rather because we're doing something right in our practice. If obstacles and triggers are going to appear anyway, let's use them for the highest purpose that will minimise the amount of time we have to feel them. Each time we use them for the highest purpose, it will be one less time before we never feel them again. When we're rejecting these obstacles and triggers, we're really prolonging the amount of time we have to keep experiencing them indefinitely. So when we use even our suffering in the highest way, this is a direct approach, deliberation, very immediate. When we're open to see what any experience is trying to tell us, we need not be suffering even now, even while mental modifications are still moving.

### **Sutra 2:3 Ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred and clinging to bodily life are the five obstacles.**

Patanjali describes the types of obstacles here in this sutra, and he will go on to describe them in more detail in the next set of sutras. The obstacles are ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred, and clinging to bodily life. It's enough in this sutra just to be aware that the obstacles fit into certain categories. Every time that we're suffering from something, it will be in one of these five categories.

### **Sutra 2:4 Ignorance is the field for the others mentioned after it, whether they be dormant, feeble, intercepted or sustained.**

In this sutra, Patanjali begins to describe the first type of obstacle called ignorance. Ignorance is the first reason and the ground and base for all the other four types of obstacles. Patanjali describes four types of ignorance. The first type of ignorance is a dormant ignorance, and this is seen in a baby or a very young child where their mental modifications have not yet begun to play out but are there, dormant like a volcano waiting to erupt.

The next type is called intercepted, and this is what we experience when we begin to practice meditation, contemplation, self inquiry, etc. The mental modifications, or the ignorance of what is real, is temporarily suppressed while the practitioner is beginning their practice. So as we're meditating, contemplating or inquiring, we feel a sense of freedom from suffering, but this doesn't last because the practice is only very new to us.

The next type of ignorance is the feeble ignorance. This is when we are really succeeding in our practice and making great progress towards awakening. We won't be completely beyond suffering, but we'll find that long periods of time can happen without anything being triggered inside us, and even when it does get triggered, it doesn't last very long and has very little effect upon the body, if anything at all. We're not losing our balance or equanimity for very long at all at this stage. This is because our mental modifications have not been allowed to sustain themselves through constantly being activated, and our practices begin to be the way that we're living rather than something we're doing.

The fourth type is something that we experience before we come to the pathway. The sustained ignorance is where it is just constant, and we're experiencing it all the time. Our whole thought process may be in separation or in illusion. Our entirety of our energy and focus is on unknowingly sustaining the sense of separation by thinking about other things and other beings, thinking about ourselves as a separate self, a person. These obstructions or this ignorance is continuously sustained, and we can feel this and hear this when we listen to people speaking who are not yet on the path consciously. We can sometimes hear the egoic sense of separation sustaining itself and reaffirming itself in the way that it thinks and talks. Of course, there's no judgement here. Everyone comes to the path when they are ready, but it helps us to notice how the ego sustains itself and how we might be subtly sustaining it within ourselves even now. We can learn from all of life, and we can perhaps learn most from the way that the ego speaks through other beings who are not yet consciously on the path. We can also learn from the awakened beings, the teachers and sages whose mental modifications and ignorance have been completely extinguished. How do they talk differently? How do they think differently? How do they move differently?

**Sutra 2:5 Ignorance is regarding the impermanent as permanent, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant and the non-Self as the Self.**

This sutra is strikingly beautiful and simple, and perhaps this sutra alone could be enough for liberation if studied adequately. This sutra gives us a beautiful gift to tell us what ignorance actually is. And so in this, we're shown what good discernment is, too. Can we tell the unreal from the real? Can we know what is true and what is untrue? Do we know that so deeply that it's become automatic and effortless so that we don't entertain any thoughts anymore about the untrue? The impure as pure here is used only to distinguish that which is formless and infinite from some mental modification about it. When we are lost in illusion, or ignorance, we will think that what is unreal is real, and we will think that what is real is unreal. We will really believe that the separate self we think we are is what is true. We may even believe that there is no such thing as oneness or unity or Reality. The deepest part of any ignorance or suffering for us is when we are unaware, and what we are devoting ourselves to is not actually real. In fact, we may be convinced that what we are devoted to, a separate sense of self, is actually real. We may be so in love with experiencing ourselves as a separate being and moving through time and space and apparent duality that it never enters our minds that this might not actually be Reality. We are the ultimate Reality, the Infinite Self, which is infinitely powerful, and if we believe that what we're experiencing is real and is Reality, it will feel extraordinarily real. Unfortunately, when we are stuck in that trap, it is very hard to come out of it. The path to liberation then is being able to find out what is true and what is not true and being willing to constantly find out in every moment. Discerning the real from the unreal

allows us to let go of the unreal because it doesn't have the same importance for us anymore. This works in practice by allowing us to lose our fascination with the mind's thought processes and its capacity to endlessly try to fix something by thinking about what we can do as a separate being. Even with our awakening, we might be trying to achieve it by getting it done by believing that we are the one doing the practices, etc.

It's very important to spend some time with this sutra and really allow it to dive deeper into our Awareness. To be able to recognise that which is the Self and distinguish it from that which is the nonself, the separate sense of self which is nonexistent, is vital and is really the only thing that we are coming to do in our awakening. This really is meditation, contemplation and inquiry, bringing attention back to what is real and discarding what is unreal, as less and less important and eventually not important at all.

**Sutra 2:6 Egoism is the identification, as it were, of the power of the Seer (Purusha) with that of the instrument of seeing (body-mind).**

This sutra describes egoism as identification with that which is used to see, rather than the Seer. So the Infinite Self identifies as the vehicle of seeing and not the seeing itself. The body-mind is the vehicle we use to see and not the actual Seer. At first, the Infinite Self believes itself to be the instrument that's using the body and mind, and in Reality, the body and mind are more like a vehicle or a tool that we're using, an instrument to look and to see that we're seeing. Only when we look through something do we have the capacity to recognise that we're looking. If we have always been looking, seeing, watching, how would we know that, unless by contrast we suddenly have something to apparently look through? This is the nature of egoism, to identify as one object only. It would be like believing that we are the car that we get in and drive somewhere. We can use the car and love the car and look after it, but if we believe we are the car, we'll be in trouble when the car eventually breaks down. We are using this body-mind vehicle to help us see that we're seeing, that we are the one who is aware of all that is seen, and that we are not the seen. We are the infinite Seer itself.

**Sutra 2:7 Attachment is that which follows identification with pleasurable experiences.**

Once we begin to believe that we are the body-mind vehicle, and once we begin to identify with the instrument for seeing, for looking through, and once we think we are that, then we begin to perceive everything else in separation, too, everything else as an object. We actually begin to believe there is an everything else, and the possibility for the sense of attachment arises. Once we think we are a someone or an object or this body, we'll begin to have what seems to be pleasant and unpleasant experiences, and our egoism deepens into becoming attached in our mind only to what we think is going to give us pleasure. Also, the sense of aversion begins to develop, aversion to what we think is going to give us pain. Attachment is directly related to or is a symptom of identification with the body because it's only possible in separation. When we know we are the thing that we are experiencing, we are the body and the thing that seems to be giving the body pleasure or pain, then no attachment or aversion is even possible. Attachment and aversion are symptoms of identification.

Attachment is that mechanism by which we seem to seek pleasure. We think we are a separate being who is experiencing something pleasurable, and that the pleasure actually came from outside of us through the object that we're experiencing. So we go looking for the same pleasure over and over again, lost in the illusion that something outside of us can give us a pleasurable experience. We develop a sense of dependence upon it, attachment to it, a sense of needing it or craving it in order to allow us to feel good because we think the source of pleasure is external to

us. We have to keep doing it over and over again to feel good. This is a never ending cycle that leaves us feeling trapped because to experience pleasure from the outside, we have to think that we are a separate being, and therefore the pleasure can never be total bliss or joy, just a very momentary sense of feeling good which sometimes lasts only a few seconds. Then we have to repeat the experience or find some other way. Attachment therefore is the same as egoism and is based on the capacity to imagine that objects are real and that we are an object experiencing other objects.

### **Sutra 2.8 Aversion is that which follows identification with painful experiences.**

In this sutra, we continue our discussion of the list of obstacles mentioned at the beginning of this pada. Aversion is the next obstacle that we're going to discuss, and here Patanjali shows us that diversion and attraction, or aversion and attachment are one and the same. When we look for fulfilment, or joy, or security from the outside world, we will begin to notice that some experiences seem to give that safety or joy and some don't. Now, mind will begin to feel aversion to the things it thinks deny joy and safety, and it will begin to feel attachment to the things it thinks will bring joy and security. In a way, attachment and aversion are two sides of a coin of duality, and the mind is stuck here for some time because it cannot realise that it is not the external person or thing or experiences giving us the sense of joy or security, or whatever we're looking for. Only the Real Self can see that joy, peace, security, freedom, love come from our very own nature and must be sought inside. The mind can never see this, but it tries to find some kind of sense of stability, joy, peace and security by trying to avoid the things and the people that seem to cause it pain and tries to cling to that which seems to bring it joy.

Consider how differently we feel about our spiritual teacher to how we feel about our enemies and the physical world or those that would do us harm. This describes the message of the sutra completely. While we're trying to avoid things from other beings from a place of aversion, we are still in separation because there is a me who is separate to what it is trying to avoid. This is the cause of all pain.

### **Sutra 2:9 Clinging to life, flowing by its own potency (due to past experience), exists even in the wise.**

Sutra 9 points to the capacity and tendency that we have to cling to life, cling to our physical existence, to feel very much attached to this physical body that we seem to be living in. Patanjali says that this capacity to cling exists even in the wise. Here he's not talking about a fully realised yogi who has mastered the Eight Limbs of Yoga, but that this can be one of the last ways that we cling, or in fact also have an aversion to leaving the physical body. If we cling to this body in this incarnation, simultaneously we must have an aversion to leaving this body, and it really comes down to a deep urge to survive.

Ultimately, that is the last thing that we must look at. Is our survival dependent upon any object like a human body? Are we doing something to make that survival happen? Is my existence the thing that is driving my survival, and is my survival even in question? Am I altered or changed at all when I leave this body? Will my experience be diminished in any way at all? These are all good questions to look at that I had to ask myself, and eventually I came to see that my existence and very survival is the only thing that's never been in question. There is only infinite life for me; there is no other option.

As you begin to look into this sutra, can you see some sense that the existence of the body is necessary for your survival? Even if we recognise that I will be here when the body goes, we still

may be on some level subtly believing that our experience will be much less when the body has gone, that it will be diminished. How do you really know your experience is going to be worse when the body's gone? What if it's better even? Of course, this isn't to deny enjoyment of the body while it is here, but let's not cling to life. Maybe our clinging comes from a misunderstanding, that the body somehow is my base of operations and without it I'm in real trouble, or that I need anything at all to allow my existence to continue. The Self exists effortlessly. Silence is here effortlessly. Awareness is just aware and needs nothing to sustain it. It is not enhanced or diminished by the presence of a body. It just is.

**Sutra 2:10 In subtle form, these obstacles can be destroyed by resolving them back into their primal cause (the ego).**

This sutra speaks about the subtle form of the obstacles and refers to the dormant and feeble variations of them. These obstacles, whether subtle or obvious, can only be ultimately destroyed completely, and their mental modifications, or samskaras, wiped out completely by Self Realisation. If the cause of all ignorance, and therefore obstacles, is the belief in being a separate self, then Self Realisation is the only way to eradicate all ignorance. The deep and profound recognition that all there is is the Infinite Self, and that the separate sense of self never really existed, has the capacity to undo all ignorance. Everything that we have thought to be true then about the problems we are facing in our awakening and in life must be simultaneously wiped out by this recognition that there is only the one Self, and that nothing ever arose out of it such as a separate sense of self. No separation is ever possible, and only this will eradicate all ignorance and therefore all obstacles.

**Sutra 2:11 In the active state, they can be destroyed by meditation.**

This sutra talks about meditation as a way to destroy obstacles. If we look at how we meditate by bringing attention away from the phenomena and back to what is watching those apparent phenomena, we can see that every time we perceive a phenomenon, it's really the play of ignorance. Every time we think we see a thought or an emotion or an experience or another being can bring our attention back to that which is real, infinite and omnipresent and actually excludes the possibility of objects, phenomena having arisen separate to it. So in a way, our meditation destroys ignorance because it begins to show us that every time we think we see a phenomenon, attention goes to it. That phenomenon is the Real Self in disguise, and the only ignorance is a belief that phenomena have arisen and are separate to the Infinite Self from which they arise.

Meditation shows us a phenomenon that we are still believing in as real. When attention goes to a thought, we must really still think there is a thought there to look at. When we encounter what looks like a thought, it really is the Infinite Self in disguise. Meditation is perhaps then the most simple and direct way to destroy all ignorance. Whatever your attention next drifts to in your next meditation, or even as you're reading this, then that will show you that you still think that thing exists.

Ultimately, we can group all phenomena into one category: things that seem to appear, whether subtle or gross, and that attention wants to move towards. Attention drifting away from the Real Self and towards some apparent phenomenon in meditation only shows us that we still aren't 100% convinced that phenomena aren't really real and separate.

This sutra again, has enough wisdom in it to destroy all ignorance.

**Sutra 2:12 The womb of karmas (actions and reactions) has its root in these obstacles, and the karmas bring experiences in the seen (present) or in the unseen (future) births.**

This sutra describes what Patanjali means by the term karma or karmas.

Karma is defined here as experiences that are happening now or may happen in future, imagined lifetimes. These are only experiences that are happening because we're still perceiving phenomena to be real. While we think phenomena are real, we'll keep experiencing them, and that will go on forever in any number of imagined future births until we see through this idea. All ignorance, and therefore all karma, is destroyed, or perhaps more correctly, were seen to never be true. Upon Self Realisation, recognition of the infinite nature of your own Self excludes any other possibility. There cannot be the Infinite Self and phenomena. There cannot be the Infinite Self and anything else at all. There cannot be the Infinite Self and a separate self that needs to merge back into it. When this really hits you, all ignorance is destroyed, and all capacity for future ignorance, too.

**Sutra 2:13 With the existence of the root, there will be fruits also: namely, the births of different species of life, their life spans and experiences.**

Here Patanjali describes ignorance and karma in terms of a root in a plant, and the fruits being the birth of many different species and all apparent phenomena. The root here is the belief in separation, the belief in duality, that form and formlessness are actually two different things. Whether we realise it or not, we believe that all of the phenomena are actually different to the formless, Infinite Self from which they appear, and this encompasses the whole universe of realms, species, types of subtle and gross phenomena. So with the existence of the root, which is the idea of separation and duality, form and formless being different, all the universe of concepts comes into being in our imagination only. There is only the Infinite Self, and we have no capacity left to believe in duality. We can enjoy the apparent duality, but knowing that everything we see, experience and perceive is the one Self in disguise, the formless, attributeless Self appearing to have attributes.

It's important to realise that Patanjali here is asking us to chop the root of all ignorance, which is the idea that two substances could ever exist. There has only been one, and there could only ever be one. Formlessness appearing as form is not actual form, and in the end, form and Formless must be synonyms in our mind. They must mean the same thing and point to the same nothingness.

**Sutra 2:14 The karmas bear fruits of pleasure and pain caused by merit and demerit.**

Patanjali expounds further here on the nature of karmas, or experiences, as being of two kinds: those caused by merit and demerit. Patanjali is saying that if we have done something right or from a place of truth, this will bring pleasure caused by merit. If we have accumulated demerit and made some decisions and actions from a place of illusion, this will bring pain. Here Patanjali is really explaining the nature of duality and how we are constantly stuck when we think we are a separate self in trying to accumulate more merit and trying to eliminate demerit. Any thought, action or decision or experience that has arisen from illusion can only bring more of that same illusion. Any thought, action or experience that arises from truth can only bring more experience of truth. The karmas always bear their own fruits.

To realise who we really are is to effectively eliminate demerit and painful experiences immediately. All karmas are wiped out, both merits and demerits are wiped out in the understanding of who we really are because we will begin to see there is no such thing as illusion. Any effects of any actions

or decisions made from a place of illusion are seen to be null and void and to never have existed, and that all there is is the truth. That seems to be experienced as if we experience only merits, but even those are wiped out in the ultimate seeing. There can be no dualistic opposites of merit and demerit in the truth. There is just the truth.

**Sutra 2:15 To one of discrimination, everything is painful indeed, due to its consequences: the anxiety and fear over losing what is gained; the resulting impressions left in the mind to create renewed cravings; and the constant conflict among the three gunas, which control the mind.**

This sutra again is incredibly important and gives the key to freedom, total liberation here in this one sutra and again could be used on its own for total freedom. This sutra says in effect, that any experience is painful to one who has discrimination because any experience is happening from a place of separation. Ultimately, it is the idea of separation, or of a me that is experiencing something that is the source of all pain. To the one with discernment or discrimination, it doesn't even matter whether that experience is good or bad in worldly terms, whether it brings pain or pleasure, merits or demerits. Even a good experience will eventually turn bad when it stops. Something that brings pleasure now will bring pain later, and something that brings pain now will bring pleasure when it stops. All experience then can be grouped into one category here, and Patanjali points us to that fact. All experience is ultimately painful because all experiencing is in separation.

With this sutra, we can begin to understand and transcend the limbs of Yama, Niyama and Pratyahara, and we begin to live as those. There is no experience that's going to change who we are anyway. Even an experience of great epiphany or realisation of truth still does not change who we already are. The simplicity and the power of this sutra cannot be understated.

**Sutra 2:16 Pain that has not yet come is avoidable.**

This sutra says that pain that has not yet come is avoidable. So when we experience right now, we're either experiencing something pleasant or painful. But the realisation that all experience is painful drives us deeper into realising that which is not an experience, or that the experiencer and the experience are one and the same. There is no divide between myself and what I'm experiencing. There is no dividing line between inside and outside. When we realise this, the sense of experiencing stops, and I am just here as this Infinite Self. In this way, all future pain that is due to come to us through demerits, aversions, ignorance and obstacles, all mental modifications, can be avoided because whatever the body and mind needs to go through will not be experienced as a separate self. It will just be another way that the Infinite Self is appearing.

So first, in the previous sutra, Patanjali tells us why experiencing a separation will never bring us what we want. Then in this sutra, he tells us how that freedom is realised.

**Sutra 2:17 The cause of that avoidable pain is the union of the Seer (Purusha) and seen (Prakriti, or Nature).**

Again, this sutra could stand alone as a profound teaching or an Upanishad of itself. This sutra says that the cause of avoidable pain is the union of the Seer and the seen. We use these terms Purusha to mean the Seer and Prakriti to mean nature or manifestation. Patanjali explains that the cause of all pain is the idea that there is a difference between the Seer and the seen. This sutra points to explanations given in the fourth and final pada about the nature of manifestation as being only created to help us recognise the difference between the Seer and the seen, therefore may



seem paradoxical. We can use the seen, or the manifestation, whether subtle like thoughts and experiences, or gross like human bodies and planets, to point us back to the Seer.

This is in fact what we do in meditation. In meditation, we use what is seen, the phenomena arising, sounds outside, thoughts inside, experiences, sensations, emotions to point us back to that which is seeing, the Awareness, the Consciousness, the Presence, the Beingness. Eventually we'll come to realise that there is no difference between the apparent phenomena and that which is perceiving them. The Seer and the seen are realised to be the same one thing. Everything that we see is the Seer in disguise. Purusha and Prakriti are seen to be the same, and this is the oneness or the non-duality. All pain is destroyed and all possibility of future pain is destroyed in this seeing.

**Sutra 2:18 The seen is of the nature of the gunas: illumination, activity and inertia; and consists of the elements and sense organs, whose purpose is to provide both experiences and liberation to the Purusha.**

Patanjali goes further into this explanation here in this sutra. He describes the seen, or manifestation as consisting of the nature of the three gunas. Here he calls the gunas illumination or sattva, activity or rajas, inertia or tamas. He points to the fact that the whole manifestation, or Prakriti, consists only of combinations of these three gunas, or different types of energy. When we break it down even further, we can see that the gunas consist of the elements, or manifest as the elements: Earth, fire, air, water, space. Even the sense organs in the body itself are made of only these elements or gunas, and perhaps the purpose of the sense organs (eyes, ears, mouth, etc.) is only to provide information to the Seer and to help it recognise that what it sees is its own self. When this recognition happens, Patanjali says the purpose is to provide both experiences and liberation to the Purusha, the real unmanifest Self.

So here we can see that at first we think we see things, and then we realise what we're seeing is our own Self, that the Seer and the seen are one, and that the gunas and the elements are really made of the Seer, that all is one.

**Sutra 2:19 The stages of the gunas are specific, nonspecific, defined and undefinable.**

In this sutra, Patanjali describes the nature of the gunas as being of four types: specific, nonspecific, defined and undefinable. The first of these is undefinable. This means that the basic substance of manifestation, or gunas is in an undefined condition. Next, we have slightly manifested or defined, so manifestation moves from an undefined into a defined form and then deepens into where it forms into the subtle senses and the mind and then finally into actual objects that we can experience through our senses.

This sutra is really describing the unfolding of the ignorance becoming ever more dense. At first we think there is something called manifestation, and then we think it turns into elements. Then we think it appears as sense perception of mind, and then we think there are objects to perceive and think about. The nature of illusion is that it will seem very real because it's made out of Reality. The Seer creates apparent objects to be seen and believes evermore progressively in the Reality of those objects. The apparent body-mind vehicle that seems to be here perceiving these objects seems to confirm the existence of these objects, whether subtle or gross.

Why is it important to know these stages of manifestation? Ultimately it isn't really, but as we begin to understand how illusion solidifies itself and seems to become ever more real, we will be able to have access to the subtle layers and realms of manifestation. We can begin to realise that all forms are just made of energy, and that they only seem so solid and real because we are thinking about

them so much or believing that they're actually separate to the Seer, the Purusha or the unmanifest. Then we'll have access to perceive the subtle forms of all things, the energy itself, the vibration behind the actual form, and we won't be so much attached to any physical form or believe that anything can actually die or be born. It is one thing to realise the unmanifest Self was never born or died, and it is yet another stage to realise that no object was ever born. No body can ever die because we're beginning to perceive the energy behind the body inside the body, the life force appearing as a body.

Can you imagine how your perception and whole life would be changed if we realised that no form has ever come into existence or had some ending, and it only changes back to a subtle form? The physical body dissolves back into the astral form, the soul, and the elements break down and recycle into another physical form. That's not the same as death. Death is an illusion.

**Sutra 2:20 The Seer is nothing but the power of seeing which, although pure, appears to see through the mind.**

In this sutra, Patanjali begins to focus on Purusha rather than Prakriti. Just to remind us, Prakriti is manifestation and Purusha is the intangible, formless Seer. This sutra says that the Seer or Purusha or Noumenon, Consciousness, Presence is only seeing. This doesn't mean that the seeing is all it can do, or it is an option. It means that seeing is what we are. We are actually made of seeing-ness and nothing else. We seem to change as the Seer because we seem to be able to look through the mind as Patanjali points to here, but this is only because we think there is something called a mind. It seems that we can change from the seeing into an object that is seen. We really begin to believe that we have changed into a body and a mind, and that we are looking through the body, the mind and the senses. This creates the illusion of Seer and seen, Purusha and Prakriti or formless and form. The very moment we believe that the body, the mind and the senses are made up of something other than the seeing itself, we are lost in illusion. We'll begin to imagine a whole world of objects, forms and other people that we must navigate our way through, and we'll begin to believe ourselves to be an object, a person, a someone.

When this sutra is deeply realised, we will come to see that the formlessness is appearing as everything, that the Seer is infinite, and there is nothing to see. As this sinks deeper into our consciousness, we will respond to what we think we see with equanimity because we will realise what it really is. We will also come to realise that the instrument of seeing, the body-mind that we seem to be looking through, is also empty, formless, seeing, appearing to be a human body, and we will lose all fear of death.

**Sutra 2:21 The seen exists only for the sake of the Seer.**

This sutra goes deeper into the subject discussed in the previous. We'll begin to see that the seen, or the manifestation, that which is observed, exists only for the sake of the infinite Seer, or the seeing-ness itself. If all that arises is made of the seeing, why does the seeing bother to create what is seen, what is observed? Why would the infinite Seer need some such thing to see? The answer to this can be found in much more detail in Pada Four later in the Yoga Sutas. But for now, we can conclude that perhaps the presence of apparent objects allows the infinite Seer to be able to recognise itself through the contrast of moving, changing, apparent forms and beginnings and endings. The Seer which is infinite, formless, unending and nonchanging can begin to recognise itself. Infinite Seer is everywhere appearing as everything, and without the seeming duality of Seer and seen, it cannot recognise itself. Paradoxically, without the presence of apparent objects, it does not need to recognise itself. It is totally at rest. This sutra also goes deeper into the main reason that we can transcend all phenomenality, attachment to the world, the universe and

everything all at once, and we begin to recognise it to be the Seer in disguise. We'll realise there's nothing to be attached to. There's nothing to seek or get rid of. Any imagined fears and triggers in our body-mind vehicle will disappear then because there's nothing to be scared of. There can be no death of any objects, including our own body, just a dissolution of the shape that the Seer was holding itself in. If the goal of yoga is to cease all mental modifications, then it could be achieved with a deep understanding of this sutra alone. There is nothing to think about; there is no thing to think about. Thinking can only occur, or mental modifications, when there is something other than ourself to think about, and you are all that is.

**Sutra 2:22 Although destroyed for him who has attained liberation, it (the seen) still exists for others, being common to them.**

This sutra describes how differently an awakened being, or liberated one, lives compared to someone who has yet to see clearly who they are. It says that the seen, or manifestation or the subtle or gross has been destroyed for the one who has attained liberation. And yet, for others who haven't, it seems to still exist and is agreed upon as being present by humanity. There is only the Seer, and there is nothing to see, and it is only the idea that there's something other than this that confuses us as we're waking up to the truth. There is only unmanifest, and there is nothing to choose to transcend then or to release.

**Sutra 2.23 The union of Owner (Purusha) and owned (Prakriti) causes the recognition of the nature and powers of them both.**

This sutra uses the words Owner, meaning the Seer and owned, meaning the seen, or Prakriti. This sutra talks about the union of the Owner and the owned, or the Seer and the seen causing the recognition of the nature and powers of both. What this means is that when we recognise anything we think we own, like our body, our thoughts, our emotions, our experiences, our relationships will actually be seen to be made of the Owner, or Purusha. Then we'll begin to realise what manifestation really is. The owned is really a collection of imagined objects that are nondifferent than the Owner. Most of us tend to think that the intelligence is inside the forms, and the formlessness is completely insentient. Here we might come to see that it's completely the other way around. There is no such thing as anything to own, and therefore the intelligence is in the Owner itself. Purusha is the sentience. The unmanifest Formless Noumenon is the intelligence. There is only intelligent seeing, and there is nothing for it to see. As this implication unfolds, we will realise that the whole of manifestation must have the same qualities, intelligence and potentialities as the infinite Seer itself, the Owner.

**Sutra 2:24 The cause of this union is ignorance.**

This sutra simply says that the cause of this union is ignorance, and here Patanjali takes us one layer deeper to the ultimate truth than the previous sutra. In the previous sutra, we are talking about the union of the Owner and the owned, and the realisation that both of them are the same thing. Here Patanjali is telling us that no union is actually possible, that that was just a useful word to help us see clearer. Union is only possible between two things, and there aren't really two substances or things. There isn't really a Seer and a seen or there isn't really an Owner and the owned. There isn't really formless and form. This union is only happening in the mind, in imagination, a ceasing to divide that which was never divided or divisible. Or perhaps we could say the infinite Seer recognises its own infinite nature. It sees itself everywhere.

**Sutra 2:25 Without this ignorance, no such union occurs. This is the independence of the Seer.**

This sutra goes deeper into the implications of realising no such union could ever occur, as discussed in the previous sutra. In sutra 25, we see that without the ignorance of form and Formless, or Seer and seen, being believed in, that no such union occurs because there is only the Seer. Patanjali says that this is the independence of the Seer. Perhaps it may serve us to look more closely at what the word independence means here in this context.

Independence of the Seer points to the fact that it needs nothing at all to sustain it, and it is unchanged. It has not changed into the seen. The Infinite Self never became form; it only looked like it became form. It's not even really correct ultimately to say that the Infinite Self is looking at the world of phenomena, or that it experiences anything. It sees only itself in its various disguises.

The massive spiritual implication of this, then, is that we need nothing for our existence. We need no thing to sustain our existence. There is no loss possible when the body seems to die then, and our experience will not be changed at all. Our experience cannot be diminished by the loss of the body that we're seemingly living in. You'll begin to see that we're really looking through the body and using it more like a set of binoculars than a house or a home.

Independence here means total freedom. Total freedom from relying upon any form of phenomena at all. If all forms are really the Seer in disguise, then the Seer is already free. Even now, you are free. You are Infinite and Formless Seeing and there is nothing else that exists other than you. Even the body that we're so afraid to leave is made of you, and there is no object that can exist that is not made of you. Therefore, there can be no union. There can be the idea of union when we are ignorant of the truth. When we are ignorant of the non-dual oneness of the Self, the Seer, we might believe in two, we might believe in form and Formless, and then there'll be fear. All fear disappears upon realising our own independence, even now.

### **Sutra 2:26 Uninterrupted discriminative discernment is the method for its removal.**

This sutra uses the term uninterrupted discriminative discernment as the method for removal of ignorance. The ignorance that was discussed in the previous sutra is the tendency to imagine two-ness, or that creation of forms actually happened, and that they can exist separate to the Seer, or the Infinite Self. Uninterrupted discriminative discernment, then, is a willingness that becomes evermore constant, to see the essence in something, or the permanence. When we think we're seeing forms, we're equally deluded whether that form is something very subtle, like energy, or very gross and tangible, like a human body. Ignorance is only removed by a willingness to see that the essence is the only thing that exists. We can develop the capacity of discriminative discernment bit by bit by letting go gradually of the willingness to think about something and cultivating the curiosity to experience its essence. All forms will seem to come and go and have a reality of their own, and while we invest the form with a sense of reality, it will seem real. But when we are more determined to experience the essence of any form, we will experience peace, spaciousness, freedom at all times whether our mind is full of mental modifications or not. As the capacity for discernment between what is real and unreal begins to deepen, the body and mind begin to be experienced as Formlessness and lightness, and there is a sense of freedom that fuels our devotion to seeing everything and experiencing everything as the essence of Formlessness. The Seer wants to see itself in everything it sees. It wants to lose this idea that there is something called "seen". The seen is just the Seer in disguise, and once this has been understood clearly enough, there's a deep curiosity and devotion to recognise the Infinite Seer.

Uninterrupted discriminative discernment is only possible when we begin to become extraordinarily curious and when we have had enough of reacting and responding to forms that we think are

there, to other beings that we are imagining to be outside of ourself. Our imagination as a separate self is an endless hall of mirrors, reacting and responding to phantoms of our imagination only. Eventually the urge for freedom and to live as this freedom manifests as discernment, or the capacity to continuously and consistently focus on what is real and permanent and changeless.

It's not that we discard the world of forms or remove ourselves from the world. But really, that we fall in love with it on a much deeper level, recognising that it is Christ appearing everywhere in disguise, or the Buddha incognito. As we develop the capacity for discriminative discernment, it will become more and more continuous and a self fulfilling loop as we begin to feel better and better. We're going to want to see the essence of everything more and more. And we'll be less and less interested in thinking about things that aren't really there.

**Sutra 2:27 One's wisdom in the final stage is sevenfold. One experiences the end of 1) desire to know anything more; 2) desire to stay away from any thing; 3) desire to gain anything new; 4) desire to do anything; 5) sorrow; 6) fear; 7) delusion.**

This sutra goes on to describe the way that someone can live when they have developed this continuous discernment and discriminative capabilities. Patanjali says that our wisdom here is sevenfold, and we experience the end of seven things, the cessation of them.

1) The first thing is the desire to know. The cessation of the desire to know is because there is nothing to know, and it has been clearly seen at this point. When I know the essence of anything, I know the essence of everything because everything is the same one infinite Seer in disguise.

2) The desire to stay away from any thing. It's impossible to have any aversion to any thing or to want to stay away from any thing such as another person, or fear, or any physical pain, etc. when we know there is no thing to stay away from. The desire to stay away, or aversion, only comes from thinking it is something other than ourselves.

3) The desire to gain anything new disappears because we begin to see there is nothing new. It is only the same Formless Infinite Seer in disguise, rearranged into new shapes. If we take the analogy of the clouds in the sky, they can look like an infinite number of things. We could rearrange them into different shapes, but it wouldn't make us feel any better or any worse when we realise they're just clouds, the same original stuff.

4) The desire to do anything ceases when we realise that we are infinite, formless and omnipotent. Omnipresence precludes the ability to do anything because anything that we would do would need a body or a vehicle to do it with. Here in this final wisdom, the body is seen to be as empty and formless as everything else in the universe, no more or less special than anything else. The body is the Infinite Seer in disguise.

5) Sorrow ceases because there is nothing to lose. It has been seen clearly here that there is no thing that was ever gained or lost. No relationship really happened, and no death is possible, and no loss is possible. So what is there to be sorrowful about?

6) Fear disappears because there is nothing to be scared of. There is very literally no thing to be scared of. There is nothing. There are no phenomena. There is no thing. Fear is only possible if there is something outside of us and separate to us, and here we come to realise that it's just simply not possible.

7) Delusion ceases here because we can begin to recognise the only error, and that whole reason for suffering, is our belief in duality, that forms, objects, the seen, or Prakriti, actually exist separate to that from which it arose. This is the greatest illusion and the cause of all suffering. When we recognise the seen, Prakriti or manifestation, to be the Seer in disguise, all delusion is gone permanently and can never return.

**Sutra 2:28 By the practice of the limbs of Yoga, the impurities dwindle away and there dawns the light of wisdom, leading to discriminative discernment.**

Now Patanjali begins to dive deeper into the actual methods for removing the mental modifications, or impurities as he calls them here. He tells us directly how to develop discriminative discernment in the rest of this pada. We are introduced to the eight limbs of yoga, which are eight ways of living, or practising, that allow us to transcend all delusion. A wisdom dawns spontaneously, and discriminative discernment capacity arises spontaneously, as we practise these eight limbs of yoga.

**Sutra 2:29 The eight limbs of Yoga are:**

1. **yama (abstinence)**
2. **niyama (observance)**
3. **asana (posture)**
4. **pranayama (breath control)**
5. **pratyahara (sense withdrawal)**
6. **dharana (concentration)**
7. **dhyana (meditation)**
8. **samadhi (contemplation, absorption or superconscious state)**

This sutra names the eight limbs of yoga. The first is yama, or abstinence. The second is niyama, or observances. The third is asana, posture practice. The fourth limb of yoga is pranayama, or breath control. The fifth limb is pratyahara, a sense withdrawal. Six is dharana, or concentration. The seventh limb of yoga is dhyana, or meditation. The eighth and final limb is samadhi, which can be called contemplation, absorption or superconscious state.

In the next sutras, Patanjali is going to describe each one of these limbs in more detail.

**Sutra 2:30 Yama consists of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence and non-greed.**

Sutra 30 begins the description of the first limb of yoga, or yama, or abstinence. Yama is described as non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, non-greed and abstinences.

Non-violence, or ahimsa, really means not to cause harm or not to cause violence. This word has been massively misunderstood as non-killing, in general culture and society. But non-violence is simply that not harming anyone, not causing harm or intending violence. We can see here that there might be a larger definition to this than we have realised. If non-violence, or ahimsa, is about not causing harm, then we cannot really judge any action as being in opposition to yama, or abstinence. We can only try to ascertain the motivation behind any action and discern whether violence or harm was intended. It's important to note that modern society has taken this non-violence, or not causing harm, and only applied it to physical actions, such as the killing of animals, etc. But there is a much deeper aspect to non-violence, and that is in our thoughts and words. When we judge another being, we're really intending harm for ourself and the person we're

judging without realising. Thoughts about another being, and thoughts in delusion of otherness, could even be seen as the greatest form of harm. Of course, we shouldn't blame ourselves. We cannot change our thoughts instantaneously. But if I think about you, and judge you, I am pushing you and imagining you to be outside of myself, and I'm diminishing you by doing that. Perhaps the greatest harm we could cause to anyone is the tendency to see them as separate to ourselves. It is also simultaneously the greatest harm we could ever cause to ourselves because it simultaneously lowers the life force energy in the body-mind vehicle.

Yama is also truthfulness, and this means many things on many levels. Usually, truthfulness is taken only to be speaking the truth, but we could also take it deeper as intention to only think what is true, to think about the truth. As we allow our thoughts to be saturated by what is real and true, so too, will our words and actions be. Truthfulness also has another component. If we say to someone that we will be with them, arriving at their place in 30 minutes, and it's a 15 minute journey, and we know there's no way that we can set off in 15 minutes from our own home, then we're not being truthful. We're lying to ourselves and to that person. This has implications for non-stealing, as we'll see in the next few aspects of yama. Truthfulness is really by intention, and our words, deeds and thoughts will fall into line with that.

The next aspect of yama is non-stealing. Stealing comes on many levels, and again, let's note the capacity to only think of it in terms of physical objects that we can steal. If we look at the example from the truthfulness aspect, we'll see that if we don't message the person that we agreed to meet in 30 minutes and tell them that we're going to be late, we're really stealing their time. As soon as we realise that we're not going to be there at the time that we originally said we would meet them, if we don't take some action, we will be stealing and lying. We won't be truthful, and we won't be practising non-stealing. Even if that other person doesn't really care whether we arrive late or when we said we would, it should matter to us that we be integrous with our intention to be truthful, and to not steal. Stealing can be time, energy, if we create drama in a relationship, but just for the sake of it, we are really stealing someone's energy instead of allowing it to come from inside our own self. Stealing can be of thoughts and ideas, and we see this in the world of plagiarism, copyright, etc. Stealing can finally be in the physical form of money or other resources. But ultimately, it involves the idea that there's something that is owned by someone else, whether that's a thought energy, physical things like money, or anything, and that we can take it from them. Non-stealing really means admitting the truth or practising truthfulness that there is only the one being. That whatever any being has should not be taken from them. Non-stealing can be a subject that we can explore moving forward as a way to live our life.

Next is continence, or moderation of any sense drive. Brahmacharya is the term used here, which has commonly become known as continence only in sexuality, but really this should involve all of the senses. Continence is moderation, so not overeating, oversleeping, overindulging in sex, or any of the drives. This is because anything that we do to excess or overindulging is going to begin to deplete our life force energy. Countenance, or moderation, means that we're not going to expend energy on things that are really not serving our awakening. So there is no particular action that we must practise continence in, but continence is a way of life. If we take the subject of sex and sexuality, we can say that sex practise as an imaginary separate being to achieve some relief, or release, or to feel powerful or wanted is incontinence, or lack of moderation, because it will deplete our life force energy and make it harder to maintain our discriminative discernment for what is real. Sexual relationships practised with someone we love, whether sex is a reflection of our deep sense of oneness and lack of separation or it is a physical expression of that love that we are, is the practice of continence. We can consider all options carefully from this place.

Non-greed or non-grasping really is the capacity to recognise all cravings to be for something more than we think we have right now, or something more than we think we are right now. Whatever we feel we're craving or grasping, we will be greedy about. Any unfulfilled cravings that we have will reflect as greed in our experience. We won't be able to just eat as much food as we want and leave the rest; we'll have to eat it all. We won't be able to leave some wine in the bottom of the bottle; we'll have to finish it all because the craving is still there driving our activities. Cravings for some other state, thing, or a way of being are usually some craving for a different way to feel. Craving will drive a sense of greed of never quite feeling satisfied, and when we do have something that we have gotten through our greed, we will want to hold onto it or want to keep enjoying it. So greed is really coming from cravings for things that we think are real and exist outside of us. What do you crave, and why? Even bliss can be craved, and we can be greedy for bliss.

Perhaps as we look at this aspect of yama more deeply, we might be able to understand a lot of our actions as a separate self. This concludes the description of yama.

**Sutra 2:31 These Great Vows are universal, not limited by class, place, time or circumstance.**

This sutra is giving advice as to how the fully committed aspirant of truth, or yogi, should conduct themselves. He says that these vows are universal, and there is never a time when they should not be applied, no matter where we are in the world, what age we live in and who we are. This may seem extreme because a lot of us will have trouble following these vows at first, but these vows and the capacity to follow them will develop over time. We should not judge ourselves if we cannot follow these all the time. If we judge ourselves, we're really causing harm to ourself and are violating the yama of nonviolence towards ourselves. Compassion arises when we begin to understand the yamas as well because we begin to see that everyone is really acting from a state of nontruthfulness, or delusion, and that inspires them to want to cause harm and to steal. As long as we are doing the best that we can in any moment towards following these observances, we cannot blame ourselves if we fail to apply them in any particular situation.

**Sutra 2:32 Niyama consists of purity, contentment, accepting but not causing pain, study of spiritual books and worship of God (self-surrender).**

This sutra describes niyama, or the second limb of yoga, as consisting of purity, contentment, accepting but not causing pain, study of spiritual books and worship of God.

The first aspect of niyama is purity, and this really pertains to our vibration. This does not imply that we are impure to start off with, but simply denotes an aim to remove the toxins in the body and the mind and the emotions appearing as low frequencies due to habits we may have developed unknowingly. The aim of this study of purity is to allow the body and mind to become very sattvic, light and balanced. A sattvic body and mind helps us to practise more consistently, although it's not necessary to be sattvic in order to practise consistently. We're only going to do all that we can here to help our practice become consistent and effortless.

Purity is really only doing our best to eat the best diet, to think the best thoughts and to feel our emotions and release them. There is no absolute standard in this. Purity has come to mean something else in spiritual circles as leaving our life, on giving up certain things and acting in certain ways. It simply is not true. Purity can be developed in the city as much as in the ashram or forest, and it's really about our intentions rather than our actual actions. If our intentions are pure, or becoming ever purer, then our actions and words will be, too, along with our thoughts.



The next aspect is tapas, or accepting pain and not causing pain. When we accept pain is inevitable, that it's the inevitable result of experiences that arose from a sense of division, we are able to use that pain to help us in our practice. So tapas, or accepting pain, does not mean that we simply let someone walk all over us or treat us badly. It simply means that the suffering we experience is used for the highest purpose until it stops. Tapas also means heat or to burn impurities in the mind and body. As we feel some emotion or inquire into the root cause behind any emotion or belief, we're actually practising tapas. We're not turning away from the pain that's happening in this moment, whether that's mental, emotional or physical, and we're using it for the highest purpose. Tapas is not passivity. It is taking appropriate action from the place where the pain is being used for the highest reason, and that is very different to passivity.

The next category is swadhyaya, which is a study of spiritual books, or scriptures in order to help us understand ourself. When we study these great scriptures, we'll come to understand ourself much better and understand the Self. As we study the great scriptures, it gives us clarity on the way forward and the reason why we continue our practice. These scriptures studied here can be anything that inspires us from a place of a direct teaching of Truth. They can be modern books and teachings from teachers that are still in a human body today or anything as far back as the Upanishads and the Vedas if they inspire us to more truthfulness. If we study the spiritual scriptures or books and teachings, it's really helping us point or aim ourselves towards this. We can't hit a target that we can't see or don't understand. Swadhyaya is aimed at helping us orient our life in a particular direction. All of our life then can be a study of how to apply the scriptures that we are reading and learning.

The last aspect of niyama is Ishvara, or worship of God or self-surrender. Worship of God here points to the Infinite Self, the Supreme Consciousness, the Noumenon or Brahman. God is not some figure outside of us but is our very own self and is infinite and omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. Worship of God then becomes an ever greater willingness to experience our own infinite formlessness. To directly experience ourselves, or to directly experience God is one and the same thing. This is in contrast to thinking about God or thinking about the Infinite Self, and it's best practised by direct experience.

The other side of Ishvara then is self surrender, or letting go progressively of the ideas that come from the separate sense of self. Anything that we are interested in as a separate self, we must eventually be willing to let go of. No thought is true from the sense of separation and so self surrender is really surrender of the illusion of there ever being a separate self. In this way, the two aspects of Ishwara, worship of God and self surrender, are one and the same thing: experiencing what we are and releasing what we're not. Worship and self surrender will develop over time, and we shouldn't blame ourselves if we find ourselves thinking as a separate self. We're doing the best that we can, and as we celebrate our progress so far, we'll be able to achieve more of it. So all of these together, make up the second limb of yoga or niyama.

**Sutra 2:33 When disturbed by negative thoughts, opposite (positive) ones should be thought of. This is pratipaksha bhavana.**

In this sutra, Patanjali describes a little trick that we can use to help the mind let go of negative thoughts. If we are unable to go directly from thinking about Reality, or ourself in terms of negative thoughts, to directly experiencing the Formlessness or Ishvara, it can help to replace those negative thoughts by the opposite, or positive thoughts. So if we're thinking of unworthiness within our own self and feeling not good enough, we can begin to replace those thoughts with ideas of our own worthiness. The recognition that we must be worthy because we are the Infinite Self is a thought that is opposite to the sense of unworthiness that often comes with being a separate self. It's important to note that this is only a helpful step being described here, and eventually we'll have to let go of even these positive thoughts because they're still a modification imposed by the mind on Reality. By replacing negative ones with their opposite positive thoughts, we might find it much easier than to make the jump to the direct experience of Reality. Patanjali gives us this method to help us let go of thoughts and separation gradually, which we may find to be much easier. This practice is called pratipaksha bhavanam.

**2:34 When negative thoughts or acts such as violence, etc. are caused to be done or even approved of, whether incited by greed, anger or infatuation, whether indulged in with mild, medium or extreme intensity, they are based on ignorance and bring certain pain. Reflecting thus is also pratipaksha bhavanam.**

In sutra 34, Patanjali goes on to describe pratipaksha bhavanam in evermore detail, giving a further explanation here. The aim of this practice is to defuse the sense of negativity or the increasing vibration of negative thoughts or actions, either by replacing them with positive thoughts or by being able to let them go completely. In this sutra, we see that the negative thoughts can be about someone else or acts done to other beings, and that we are really participating in this even if we don't directly cause harm to someone or something. When we simply allow or go along with something that we don't agree with, whatever reason it's done by and for, we are really indulging in these negative thoughts, also. Even if we don't act physically, we are still going to be impacted by the negativity of this thought or action even if someone else is doing it. In effect, we're giving our permission and our agreement energetically with this action, and the pain will always come back to us just as much as it does the person who actually performs the act or says the words.

**2:35 In the presence of one firmly established in non-violence, all hostilities cease.**

This sutra begins one of a sequence that tells us the benefits of developing yamas and niyamas. Here in this sutra, we're told that when one is established in non-violence, or not causing harm, the people and even the animals around us will feel it impossible to commit any act of violence. The vow of non-violence and it being developed as a way of life so that it is automatic and effortless temporarily overrides any violent or harmful tendencies of anyone around us. It helps to ensure our own safety physically, but it also allows the other person a temporary reprieve from having to try to cause harm, which could also be a glimpse into their own true nature and a moment of recognition that they do not need to act that way.

When we realise that non-violence is the way of the Self, because everything that we would cause harm to or violence to is really our own self, that is reflected also in the beings around us, and to begin to recognise and support this non-violence within our own self also applies to our own self. Even if someone has extremely violent tendencies and ways of being, still the one established in yoga will find that it's impossible for them to be harmed.

## **2:36 To one established in truthfulness, actions and their results become subservient.**

This sutra speaks about truthfulness and asks us to begin to live this way and also tells us about the benefits of it. Truthfulness is really honesty, and when we are honest in our speech, it doesn't necessarily mean being rude or direct, rather, stating as honestly as we can with our thoughts, words and actions what we value most. The major benefits of living in truthfulness and honesty is that everything that we would have to work to achieve otherwise or extend some effort towards having or becoming is given effortlessly and automatically. Patanjali says our actions and their results become subservient to that truth that we are valuing and practising. What does this mean? It means that our word becomes law, and that things manifest immediately from this.

When we're established in truth, we need not fear any experience. All of our experiences that we don't like when we experience them are coming from the lies that we're telling ourselves. Of course, we don't lie maliciously to ourselves or others. But every time we speak as a separate being, or think as a separate being, it is a kind of lie when we can live from a place of truthfulness. Everything that we have wanted to achieve will begin to happen effortlessly for us as a manifestation of those truthful thoughts and emotions. Truthfulness becomes a way of life and we see the benefits and rewards of it very easily. When we live this way, we'll see instantaneous results. The absoluteness of our conviction to truth will reflect as an immediate way of living, and so the truth will guarantee that our experience will be what we want it to be. From this comes a deep peace and contentedness and a lack of fear.

## **2:37 To one established in non-stealing, all wealth comes.**

This sutra talks about the benefits of non-stealing and points to the fact that whatever we're trying to steal, whether it be ideas, time, money, even air will come to us easily and effortlessly when we're content with what we have. We all steal in very subtle ways, and we may not realise this. If we ask someone a question with misleading intentions, or we're even confused about that question in our own mind, we're really stealing some time and energy from the other person because we didn't take the time to formulate the question clearly within ourselves first. Of course, we do not need to judge or berate ourselves, but really just to value what we do have even more wisely. We value what we already have, the time that we have, the air that we have, the energy that we have, the money that we have right now, even the insight that we've gained into our own nature through our awakening process. Only more is going to come from that. When we try to take something from someone else whether subtly or overtly, we're really stating that we don't have enough, and we begin to experience that as a lived reality. Non-stealing also can mean that we can begin to allow, to circulate that knowledge and abundance, and as we give from a place of feeling good, we're really cancelling out any intention to steal. Wealth is really about feeling our abundance in an internal way. Rather than accumulating anything and hoarding it, we are allowing it to pass through us and to circulate. Inner abundance is of peace, joy, sense of freedom, feeling unlimited, feeling free, and as we allow that to pass to others as well through our example, through our words, we'll find more of it coming to us. This will also reflect in our outer world in terms of physical resources. Abundance is not stockpiling or having excess of anything, but rather having more than enough always and being so certain of this that we need not waste any time thinking about it.

## **2:38 By one established continence, vigour is gained.**

This sutra says that when we are established in continence, then vigour is gained. So when we are established in only expending what energy we need to and expending energy from a place of truth, we'll find that our life force begins to accumulate in the body rather than being depleted. We'll also find a sense of well-being beginning to happen for us, the life force or prana being abundant in

supply. When we're practising continence, we're really stating that we have enough life force for whatever we need, and that we don't need to expend it unwisely. Eventually, we will begin to radiate light energy, Presence to others without realising. Some people will begin to notice that there is something different about us and they will naturally want to be near us.

**2:39 When non-greed is confirmed, a thorough illumination of the how and why of one's birth comes.**

This sutra says that when we're established in non-greed, we'll be able to understand what drove this present incarnation to come into existence. We will know what desires remain within us that spurred another physical incarnation. Whatever caused this physical incarnation is always our unfulfilled desires to feel safe and to feel free and to feel loved. When we're established in non-greed, we'll be able to observe our desires and cravings and see that we can transcend them. When we participate in greed, we're only fulfilling these cravings over and over again for them to arise again, and we will finish this lifetime in the same place that we started it by trying to fulfil desires from our external experiences. In contrast, when we're established in non-greed, we'll be able to observe these cravings without acting upon them and transcend these desires once and for all. As we don't try to fulfil these cravings, we'll see that the source of fulfilment for anything is from the inside, from our own true nature, and that this is more important to learn as a lesson. We will see which desires we didn't transcend and cravings last lifetime and what caused this incarnation.

**2:40 By purification arises disgust for one's own body and for contact with other bodies.**

This sutra says that by purification of the mental modifications and by practice of the eight limbs of yoga, disgust arises for one's own body and for contact with other bodies. It's important to realise that the word disgust does not mean aversion, dislike, hatred, or any of the usual associations of the word disgust that we might have. The word disgust could be more accurately translated or understood in this context to mean disinterest and lack of specialness. Whether we realise it or not, our body has been our main focus as a separate self, trying to make sure it has what it needs, trying to make sure it isn't ageing too fast, trying to make sure it lives long and feels better and all of these things. Naturally, to try to get our desires fulfilled, we may also engage in more sexual intercourse than we usually would. Usually we're driven to unite with another being to try to feel intimacy and love and to feel wanted and needed and safe. As our process continues with the eight limbs of yoga, we'll find that perhaps we have this disgust developing of the body, which only means that we're not treating it any differently than any other object. Normally, we give the body a specialness and say that it is the most important object in the world to us. We may even put the value of this body over other people's bodies. When this kind of purity develops through our practice of the eight limbs, we'll find that we're able to look after the body without being obsessed with it. We'll find that the body's natural intelligence begins to arise again, that it knows what to do to look after itself and needs minimal input from us. This purification will result in the decrease in sexual desire, but we will find that when we do engage in sexual union, it will be fulfilling and a deeply rewarding experience. This is because we're not fascinated with our physical bodies so much anymore, and we're able to experience union and intimacy on many levels.

Again, let's be sure to look at disgust in terms of disgust of the specialness we've given it, the body, rather than disgust for the body itself. This Infinite Self treats all apparent objects from a place of equanimity. When we can value all objects as equally divine, including our own body, we give no special value to any one particular body or object.

**2:41 Moreover, one gains purity of sattva, cheerfulness of mind, one-pointedness, mastery over the senses, and fitness for Self-realisation.**

This sutra continues from the previous one, and begins to point out the benefits of this disgust and purity arising. One of the ways we'll benefit is we'll begin to notice sattva, or balance, developing inside the mind. We'll find ourselves much more able to focus our attention and energy on one goal. We'll begin to achieve mastery over the senses and be ripe for self Realisation. Mastery over the senses simply means that we're not thinking about what we're experiencing all the time or craving sense experiences. We'll be able to let go what goes, and let come what comes. We won't be craving anything. We'll be practising pratyahara and be deeply established in this process. Another necessary trait that we can develop from this purity and sattva is one-pointedness of attention, or the ability to stay with one subject long enough to realise it, and in this case, self Realisation or awakening. So the first sutra, Sutra 40, discusses the physical purity, and this sutra discusses the mental purity, and what gives us everything we need to fully wake up to who we are.

#### **2:42 By contentment, supreme joy is gained.**

This sutra says that, in the presence of contentment, supreme joy is gained. What is contentment though? It is really an absence of cravings, an absence of having to try to get something. If something doesn't appear for us in our lives, we are equally content. Then when something comes and then tries to leave, we're also equally content. Contentment then is not being disturbed by the comings and goings of phenomenality in our experience. It means we're not searching outside of ourselves for something that we don't think we have, whether that's love, freedom, safety, security, and more. It means that we don't have any aversion or attraction to any particular objects, including our own body. The objects just are appearing inside the Great Self.

#### **2:43 By austerity, impurities of body and senses are destroyed and occult powers gained.**

This sutra says that by austerity, which is really spiritual practice, or tapas, to burn away impurities in the body and mind and the senses, occult powers are obtained. These occult powers refer only to the siddhis that we'll read about in the next pada, or portion. These are just natural skills of an accomplished yogi as the realisation of the Oneself deepens into the mind and body. This sutra can be appreciated because it speaks to us of the purpose and value of our suffering, and that suffering can be used to the holiest of purposes, which is to burn away these impure thoughts which then affect the mind and the body and even our experience in the world. These thoughts will also even affect our ability to undergo spiritual practice effectively and consistently, and so we must burn these away. When we suffer as an apparent separate self, we may feel we're getting nowhere, but if we're using that suffering for the highest purpose, then we are on the highest path, the highest purpose here being to allow these impurities to burn away. Impurities are only thoughts or mental modifications as we started with in Pada 1, Sutra 1. These impurities are only thoughts about life as a separate self. It's important to bring it back to this simple fact every time. When we think about ourselves as a separate being, we are constantly reinforcing the sense of illusion and are undoing the effects of our sadhana practice. To burn away the tendency to think as a separate self is the only worthwhile thing doing in our whole lives.

#### **2:44 By study of spiritual books comes communion with one's chosen deity.**

This sutra says that by study of scriptures, or swadhaya, we can gain knowledge and connection with our chosen deity. Each one of us has a chosen deity looking after our spiritual practice and guiding us, giving us intuition and insight and lending us their spiritual power until we can have our own in equal quantities. The word for this chosen deity is Ishtadevata, and we can have the vision, or the understanding, or the darshan, or the blessing from them when we read about them, learn about them and understand. Life is so kind that every single being who wants to awaken has an

infinite amount of help, and each spiritual aspirant has been assigned a deity that can oversee and help and guide. The study of scriptures, then is not only to find out about the truth, but also to help us connect and feel resonance with that deity. There are specific mantras for each one of us that can help us connect with that being. Of course, all deities or beings that we connect with are simply aspects of our own self, but they are individual aspects that have done the work already that we are doing now and can help shortcut the path and circumnavigate obstacles that would otherwise cause us great delays. If we continue to focus our attention on the chosen deity, we may have visions or intuitions or dreams about them, and their guidance will become much clearer to us and the path will speed up.

### **2:45 By total surrender to God, samadhi is attained.**

Sutra 45 talks about the same thing as the previous sutra, that the connection here is to the Supreme Godhead, or by total surrender to God, Ishwara, as we've heard before. This sutra says that by total surrender to God, samadhi is attained. Samadhi is the eighth and final limb of yoga in which there is complete, effortless and continuous absorption of any sense of separateness into the Infinite Self. Samadhi simply means where we're living as the Infinite Being constantly and effortlessly. It doesn't take any sustaining and no inquiry needs to happen at this stage. There is no way to not be the Infinite Being during Samadhi. Samadhi begins first as an experience when there are many temporary samadhis, but ends as a place in a way of living, and we achieve this by total surrender to God. What does this total surrender mean, though, and how do we achieve it? It simply means to be willing to see the untruth of any thought that suggests that we are anything other than this Godhead already, and all of these thoughts must be eventually surrendered. In essence, our thoughts, or mental modifications can be sorted into two categories: those that are of separation and those that are from unity. Eventually we must go beyond all thoughts and into the silence of the Infinite Self. But here, for a while, in order to attain Samadhi, it might be wise for us to value those thoughts that come from a place of unity and disregard the thoughts from separation. This is surrender.

### **2:46 Asana is a steady, comfortable posture.**

This sutra talks about the asana as being a steady, comfortable posture. Many of us tend to think of asanas as only being physical postures or ways that we move the physical body, but the word asana has deeper roots than just regarding the physical body. As we use the physical asanas, we'll begin to feel that we're also working on an energetic level, on a mental level and an emotional level, and we will see that they're all one in the same. Asanas are really movements of the soul, postures done by the soul, and eventually the soul takes the one seat as the Infinite Consciousness. This is the sturdy posture described in the sutra. Patanjali says that asana is a steady, comfortable posture, and perhaps the greatest posture of all is to remain fixed and focused as the Infinite Self in samadhi. First, our samadhi will need effort, or vigilance to maintain it, surrendering thoughts of separation as they come to the surface. Eventually, our steady posture will be effortless, and we'll be effortlessly living as the Self. Asanas can be performed on the physical level to help the body release impurities and the mind release impurities as part of our sadhana, or practice, but let's not make the mistake of thinking that asanas are only physical postures. They are so much more.

### **2:47 By lessening the natural tendency for restlessness and by meditating on the infinite, posture is mastered.**

This sutra describes the natural tendency for the mind to come back to stillness on its own, and that by working with the body to allow it to master certain asanas, the stillness of the mind, or the

absence of mental modifications, is much more easily achieved. The body is restless because of lower frequencies coming from the thoughts, and the mental modifications and toxins we have imbibed from a rajasic or tamasic place inside our consciousness. We overstimulate ourselves, we push ourselves too hard and we don't take the proper rest or sleep usually. Here we're asked to begin to allow the body to have some time to come to stillness, and this can be allowed even while the body is moving in an asana. The body's movement is an expression of the stillness, eventually, rather than an expression of the disturbance or restlessness. As the body is able to do more and more of the yoga asana slowly and sattvically, the mind is also able to come to quietness. The deeper meaning to this sutra, though, is that as we take the infinite posture, or we take the posture of being the Infinite Self, devoting our efforts and our consciousness to the recognition of who we really are and abiding as that Formless Infinite Reality, then the body will also reflect this even more. Patanjali is implying here that by meditating on the Infinite Formlessness, restlessness will disappear anyway. Infinite Formless Reality that we are is inherently still even when it seems to move as all of these forms because it is everywhere and there is nowhere for it to move to. So we can't really say with this sutra that we do or don't need to do asanas because meditating on the formlessness is enough. As we meditate on the Formlessness, we'll be more inclined to do the physical asanas, and as we do the physical asanas, we'll be more inclined to meditate on the Formlessness. All we need to do as aspiring yogis is to foster this ever-increasing spiral upwards into greater stillness of mind, body and soul.

#### **2:48 Thereafter, one is undisturbed by the dualities.**

This sutra describes what happens and how we can live when the natural tendency for restlessness has disappeared, and it says that we're no longer disturbed by the dualities of life from this place. To live like this in our everyday experience is to be this equanimity. We're not uplifted when someone praises us, and we're not hurt by someone insulting us. There's no lifting up or pulling down from anything externally. If we choose success or failure in our worldly pursuits, it doesn't matter because ultimately, we don't need anything from them. We may begin to realise that failure in a particular outcome is just the beginning of success in another way that we haven't seen yet. Can you imagine how it would feel to be impervious to any external influence at all, remaining firm in our infinite posture or asana? How would it feel to be unable to be disturbed if the body was in pain or tired, totally blissed out, peaceful or even if the body was dying? This is the fullest benefit of taking the seat of being the Infinite Self, being seated in our own infinite nature effortlessly in samadhi, as samadhi is described in this sutra. Not only are we not disturbed by duality, we have no capacity to be disturbed ever again.

#### **2:49 That (firm posture) being acquired, the movements of inhalation and exhalation should be controlled. This is pranayama.**

This sutra says that once the firm posture has been acquired, we should begin to practise pranayama. So naturally, as we begin to become devoted to the Infinite Self, we will begin to feel some kind of power building up inside the body and mind from our devotion. Devotion to the Infinite Self is really love of love itself or love of the truth. And therefore, we're not expending so much time being devoted to illusion. Naturally as a devotion to truth increases, our posture, both physically, mentally and spiritually will become more firm, rooted in stillness and in our infinite nature. It's natural that from here, the urge to practise pranayama will begin to emerge, which is the control and restraint of prana from being spent thinking about separation, thinking about apparent others, thinking about things we want or need. Naturally, an inclination will grow, to begin to realise and live as that which is the source of all things that could be needed or wanted. The link between prana and breath will become more and more obvious, and the limbs of pratyahara and pranayama are going to become obviously linked. As we develop the urge to bring our attention and awareness

inside to the Formless Reality, power is going to begin to accumulate in the body as prana. As that prana accumulates in the body more each day, naturally our devotion and our urge to turn inwards will increase. Pratyahara and pranayama go hand in hand then towards our self realisation, and we only need to gently encourage that. As the prana is controlled through pranayama, so too the mind will follow suit, and the body, and become more smooth and controlled. We'll begin to lose the sense of a someone doing something, even that we are someone doing our spiritual practice, and be able to let this go. We'll begin to see that even spiritual practice is just arising spontaneously inside the Great Self, slowly and gradually changing rajas and tamas into sattva. But as we see this, we'll see that we are not even affected by the three gunas, that we are just watching the conversion from the other two into sattva.

**2:50 The modifications of the life-breath are either external, internal or stationary. They are to be regulated by space, time and number and are either long or short.**

This sutra begins to explain pranayama and how to work with the 8 limbs of yoga. Patanjali describes pranayama as a modification of the life breath, and that they're either external, internal or stationary. Internal refers to inhalation, and external refers to exhalation. Stationary means retention of breath, so this pause between the end of the inhale and the beginning of the exhale, and the natural pause between the end of the exhale and beginning of the inhale. Cautionary note here should be added that we should not practise retention of breath on purpose until advised to do so by a teacher, or until it begins to happen spontaneously by itself, which should never be forced because retention of breath liberates a tremendous amount of lifeforce energy. When it begins to happen by itself, it is safe to allow it then. Naturally, we'll all experience the breath stopping in deep meditation or through moments throughout the day. But in those moments where breath stops in the waking state, usually we've some kind of tension or stress, and we're holding our breath without realising. Naturally as meditation deepens, we'll find that breathing might slow down anyway and begin to just take a pause. In deep samadhi, the breath can stop for a tremendous length of time, and it will not endanger the body. In fact, it will vitalize the body and the mind from there. Again, it should never be forced. Patanjali says that these are regulated by space, time and number and are either long or short. So the space regulator refers to where we put our attention as we're inhaling and exhaling, and we are using a very simple pranayama of bringing the attention from the root chakra up to the third eye or brow during the inhalation, and then allowing attention to trace the path back down from the brow chakra or third eye to the root chakra upon exhalation.

Time regulation is how long it takes to inhale and exhale. As we begin our pranayama practice, it's easier just to let the inhale and exhale happen on their own, for however long they take. But naturally, we'll feel an inclination towards the breath slowing down. It may even begin to happen on its own. We might find that the inhalation is slower than the exhalation at first, but these will begin to even out. Some practices ask us to count while we're tracing the path of the attention from the root to the third eye. We're asked to also count to allow the inhalation and exhalation to be the same. So we may count to five on the inhalation and five on the exhalation to even it out. Again, this should be done when advised to or when it begins to happen by itself. The number is referring to the number of times we do this cycle. So an inhale and an exhale and any retention that happens by itself counts as one cycle. So you may begin by simply doing the pranayama for a certain amount of time, and gradually we could move to allowing a certain number of cycles, and then even more gradually beginning to add a count to it of five and then maybe ten later, over many months as you begin to see the breath slow down anyway. This will naturally happen, and retention will start to happen by itself at the right time.



**2:51 There is a fourth kind of pranayama that occurs during concentration on an internal or external object.**

This sutra describes a fourth type of pranayama that begins to happen by itself, and we briefly touched upon it in the description of sutra 50. Pranayama happens naturally and spontaneously whenever we are deeply devoted to something, excited by something or engrossed in it. If you think about the last time you watched a really good movie, read a good book or even during good sexual intercourse, or during a meal or anything enjoyable or during deep meditation, naturally the breath stops in those moments all by itself. The concentration and the deep meditation, the sixth and seventh limbs of yoga before we reach samadhi, will automatically come with pranayama happening spontaneously. Breath will begin to stop by itself more and more often. This kind of pranayama will just be noticed to occur by itself. We cannot make it happen, nor should we try, but we can notice it occurring. It points to a deeper fact of our spiritual awakening which is useful to explore. When concentration and meditation become the same thing, or Dharana and Dhyana, we find that naturally the breath, mind and prana, which are really all the same thing, come to a standstill anyway. We'll find that the vital force is completely still, and that the mind stops also, along with the breath. In a way, all breathing in and out is an expression of separation, of fear, and is an expression or reflection of the desire for survival or existence to continue. As we realise that our existence has never been in question, and that we cannot cease to exist, and that all forms are ultimately expressions of the Formlessness only, the fear for the end of existence and the desire to continue existing fall away. There is no need to desire the continuation of our existence when we see that it can never stop. There's also no need to fear an imagined end to our existence when it can never stop. This is why this spontaneous pranayama begins to happen by itself. Of course, this should not be forced, either.

**2:52 As its result, the veil over the inner Light is destroyed.**

This sutra says that as its result, the veil over the inner light is destroyed. This simply points to the result of effective pranayama is to destroy any veil of ignorance over Reality. Simply put, when our pranayama is perfected, samadhi occurs effortlessly, and concentration is perfected and Reality is obvious, and there is no deviation from this. This sutra points to a deeper fact that the restlessness of the mind, or the mental modifications, is the veil of ignorance, and that the moment the mind stops even for a moment, Reality becomes obvious. We can see this in our experience if you've ever had a glimpse of Reality. The mind stopped in that moment. We may feel the mind was stunned into silence by that revelation, but what if it was the other way around? What if, just because the mind stopped for a moment, Reality became clear? When we're not creating a disturbance on the surface of the lake, the bottom of the lake is easy to see in the crystal clear waters.

This sutra gives us a shortcut here to realise that it's not only the absence of mental modifications that can bring us enlightenment, but also the realisation that we are before and beyond any one mental modification, and we are not affected by them. Simply put, we are not affected by the mind. It's happening inside us, and a deeper unfolding of this will become clearer as we recognise that the mind is also made of Formless emptiness. All thoughts are insubstantial. Mental modifications then are simply seen to be vibrations on the surface of the Great Lake of our being and have nothing to do with the lake itself and cannot obscure the Lake of Being from recognising itself.

**2:53 And the mind becomes fit for concentration.**

This sutra continues from the previous one and says that the mind then becomes fit for concentration. Again, let's remind ourselves here that concentration does not mean effort. It means

steadiness of attention, or attention coming back to something over and over again on its own as we do in meditation, and as we do in contemplation and self inquiry, simply from an outpouring of devotion. Concentration, increasing in capacity, is a reflection or an outcome of our devotion to truth increasing, and our devotion to truth increases as our capacity to concentrate upon it increases. Again we find an upward spiral developing with only one inevitable conclusion. The eventual resting place as samadhi where our attention effortlessly remains open on the Infinite Self and has somehow forgotten how to contract around an illusionary object, where our mind is still because there's nothing to think about. Concentration is called dharana, and as we begin to realise that our superpower as aspiring yogis is to develop this concentration capacity, we begin to realise that freedom is inevitable. Anything that we focus upon with our concentration long enough and consistently, we will eventually become and begin to live as we spoke about in pada one. So for a combination of the first few limbs of yoga, we begin to practise pratyahara and pranayama, which then leads us to a capacity to concentrate and then deeper into capacity to meditate effortlessly more and more and eventually into samadhi.

**2.54 When the senses withdraw themselves from the objects and imitate, as it were, the nature of the mind-stuff, this is pratyahara.**

This sutra describes the development of pratyahara as one of the limbs of yoga. So as our breath control or pranayama deepens, we experience more and more periods of stillness throughout the day of being our authentic self, more moments where Reality is just clear, and the body is beginning to relax deeper in our meditations. Here in pratyahara, the senses are disconnected from the objects that we're experiencing through the senses, or attention stays on the Infinite Self even while we're looking at apparent objects and experiencing them through the senses. Pratyahara really is that place inside where we no longer want to think about what we think is out there being experienced through our senses. We just want to experience it, and that our devotion and discernment capacity is turned upon Infinite Formless Reality of the Self more and more often. In and of themselves, the senses are neutral, and they just help the body navigate through life and begin to discern the difference between the Real and the unreal, or the seer and the seen. It is only when we think about and crave what we experience through the senses that we find ourselves caught in illusion. With pratyahara, the senses have been unhooked from the mind and the mind is increasingly turned inwards towards the Self.

**2:55 Then follows supreme mastery over the senses.**

When we master pratyahara, there is supreme mastery over the senses. What this means in actuality is we're no longer seeking sense pleasures. We can still enjoy our food, watch a good movie, and have a conversation with a friend. We can still indulge in sex, but there is no craving possible then. There's just an enjoyment of whatever the senses are enjoying, but the devotion and the attention remains firmly rooted in the internal environment of the Formless Reality. Enjoying sense pleasure is different than seeking it or even needing it, and it becomes increasingly replaced by the joy that develops naturally from the expression of our devotion to the Formless Reality.

This is the final sutra in pada 2, and it really points to a place where we are able to deepen our devotion, concentration and meditation, approaching that point where it becomes effortless and continuously upon the Infinite Self, and samadhi dawns upon us, as us.