

**SRI JOYDIP ASHRAM PRESENTS**

**THE ESSENCE OF YOGA**

**#theessenceofyoga #unyogaday #yogaforhumanwellness #unglobalcompact**

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## The Essence of Yoga



Many people, would like to say that “Yoga” as a philosophy, was an orphan, until recently the state, started celebrating and supporting, yoga. But the real father of Yoga , Maharishi Patanjali, would have a different take on this. Well , what do you really need to do with state support , if the essence of Yoga , according to Patanjali was “*citta vritti nirodha*” , which meant subduing the impression, in the mind. Well some can say , that states across the world, have there own minds, and that also requires subduing time to time , from wrong impressions, to have a better governance, of state altogether .

Though this new agey thoughts , was not there Maharishi’s Patanjali schemes of things . His collection of sutras were more focussed on working of the individual mind, and how those working could create a substantial effect on individual bodies. As a scientist, on the realm of Yoga , he was all there establishing his formulaes of Yoga , and delivering it to the world, with neat and discrete calculations, that how it could work in different levels. But at the end , he was lover of freedom and he left it to reader and practitioner, on the way they would like to apply this scientific formulations. He didn’t suggested any commandments and force any collective drill , nor a set of diplomatic and cultural exercise , neither a set of asanas , nor dress codes , nor protocols, which the religious practitioners often like to do . Rather his focus was altogether on the thought process of Yoga , which true philosophers across the world had always done in earlier times too. It was thi,s which created an universal appeal for yoga where there was nothing imposed to anyone. Everyone was free to move according to there personality types following the broad principles which Maharishi has outlined in the yoga sutras In the sutras , Maharishi was constantly harping on the idea of purification of mind , and how a purified mind would entitled to become free from distortion of thoughts , diseases and different other obstacles and complexity , resulting incredible suffering which human life is subjected to.

Well , people across centuries find , Maharishi Patanjali's doctrine, a good tool to create a lifestyle of healthy mind and healthy body . So , as days passed and different forms of yoga evolved , become popular , people started exploring the origin of Yoga, and they always went back to the writings of this great master and his compilation of sutras on Yoga know popularly as Patanjali's yoga sutras .

This sutras were considered as the only authority of Yoga, across the world , and reading it once , people could realise , and differentiate between all the smoke and noise goes in the name of the Yoga , and underlying real essence.

The essence of Yoga , which Maharishi Patanjali laid down on the four chapters - is understanding the principles of Yoga in the first chapter ( Samadhi pada) , practise of those principles of Yoga in second chapter ( Sadhana Pada) , the power which one gains after practise of yoga, made upto an certain period of time, in the third chapter ( Vibhuti Pada) , and the spiritual salvation, which one get from Yoga, in the last chapter ( Kaivalya Pada) . The essence remains with this four chapters that Yoga is a journey which purifies the mind, and subdues the impressions of mind , resulting a deeper connection with the real essence of his personality – the soul.

## The Essence of Yoga Revisited



We have discussed on the earlier version of this article series, that Maharishi Patanjali was very clear on the essence of Yoga, in the “Yoga Sutras”. Maharishi Patanjali’s Yoga protocol, has a focus on two limbs called – ‘Inner limb’ and ‘Outer limb’ . The outer limb, was the most gross part of the Maharishi Patanjali Yoga protocol, and the inner limb was the more subtler part of Maharishi Patanjali’s Yoga protocol, which was better known as ‘Astanga Yoga’ across the world.

## **Maharishi Patanjali's Yoga Protocol**

In the second chapter of Yoga Sutras , which was a guideline, of how the thought process of Yoga, should be practised in reality, Maharishi Patanjali , defined five preliminary steps, which he categories under the subtitle of “Outer limb of Yoga”. The steps of the outer limb of Yoga, was outlined below. We must , observe how ‘Maharishi Patanjali’ move on a systematic way on defining the step , where the ‘inner and the subtler’ came afterwards the ‘outer and the gross,’. It was this way of disseminating the knowledge of Yoga, and not the random way , which we see so much in modern ‘Yoga literature’ , that made Maharishi Patanjali, codification of the ‘Yoga Sutras’, most authentic and popular ‘Yoga literature’, across the world, for centuries.

## **Are Moral values Important in “Yoga Practise” ?**

Maharishi Patanjali gave a very important emphasis, on maintaining outer discipline, which he described as the cornerstone to start any form of Yoga practise . This can be categorised as moral values which include – not harming , not stealing , truthfulness , celibacy and not being acquisitive.

Sounds like too much to do, just in the first step ?

Well Maharishi also gives profound logic, one after another, why this mental attitude of not harming , not stealing , truthfulness , celibacy and not being acquisitive is important in any form of Yoga practise.

If a person is harmful, then he attracts all kind of harmful people around him, who does his harm only . You can really go , on and on , on why this external discipline, which many so called 'Yoga protocols ' made only a passing mention, was so important, before even starting a practise, as this five moral values build the mental attitude , which is required for any form of 'Yoga practise'.

### **Why Stealing , Lying , Lusting would not help in Yoga Practise ?**

A man who steals , or who often lies , or lusty and acquisitive , if dragged to a 'yoga practise' without understanding the basic yoga values and mental attitude, and how it work in life , could never use 'Yoga' in its fullest extent , to transform his life.

Yoga is a way of life , where it could be practically seen, how the inner patterns of consciousness, created the outer realities of life .

Imagine , what a thief would see when he went to practise 'Yoga' .

Would he not only experience his inner patterns of stealing, was creating all kinds of things , situation , and people provoking him to continue, with the vicious cycle of stealing?

Isn't that kind of mental attitude would always lead to poverty thinking, rather than prosperity thinking, which never let him to be free from the practise of stealing ?

In the same way, the liar or the lusty or acquisitive people, would have that inner pattern of consciousness, that will create those situations , people and things which will eventually reinforce his thoughts of lies and lust, in outer realities.

That's why this outer discipline is considered, as the first step of Maharishi Patanjali's Yoga protocol, which might have only a passing mention in other forms of Yoga protocol.

The great vow of Yoga , starts from external discipline. It is the practising discipline is the basic to any form of 'Yoga' . It is not by celebrating a particular day you can make the 'great vow of Yoga' stronger . But , It is by practising every day the great vow of Yoga becomes stronger.

## Making Great Vow of Yoga Stronger

Beyond the external discipline which helps you to take the basic step towards 'Yoga', there is a conscious choice which we have to always make in the path of Yoga . And this conscious choice is called inner discipline. Because , though morality like Non harming , Non stealing , Non lusting and Non acquisitive can be imposed, by religious rigour and order but inner discipline always requires a choice made from inside.

## Love the house you live

So how do you think your life would be if you don't love the house you live in ? Your body is the house you live in . But many people doesn't love the house they live. That is where you make a choice . Many people obviously doesn't clean their body everyday which Maharishi Patanjali suggest as an important discipline. But its a conscious choice again to clean the body , everyday . Once you have made the

conscious choice , and practised it for sometime , it becomes an habit . And now this becomes automatic and you don't have to put a lot of effort. That is the way , we practise an inner discipline.

## Being Contended

The most important choice in life , is to be contended which is a part of inner discipline which Maharishi Patanjali suggest before you even start the practise of Yoga. Many people like to believe that they will become contended, when they get this or that . This is exactly , what makes your discontent , as contentment which is dependent in external situation , is short lived. So making the habit of contentment, independent of external situation is an inner discipline. It doesn't comes to you usually , and it requires practise . But if it comes usually , would you like to say it an inner discipline ?

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Many things happen, when you are contended. One of them, is a growing sense of gratefulness. And, that brings an intensity in life and Yoga practise . This intensity helps one to become more aware about his 'self' . Finally, it opens the door, that one can embrace, the ideal of pure awareness.

## **Awareness – Mindfulness on 'Now and here'**

Time and Space, plays a critical role on this process. Most of the time, we find our mind to be either behind a time point, or ahead of a time point. To be more specific, our mind constantly oscillates between past and future, without resting in 'Now' . To bring the mind, in now, is a very important spiritual practise, which needs a lot of self restrain for the mind, to move away from the 'junk thoughts' and breed 'quality thoughts' . The ideal of pure awareness, is to be in 'now and here'. It is to catch the thought, which is happening in your mind right now, and be absolutely attentive to it.

## **The Postures**

The restrain of body by postures plays an important role in restraining the dualities and the different tendencies of mind. Infact, Maharishi Patanjali was remarkably minimal in definition of the postures, which are so elaborated in modern Yoga practices in the form of asanas. He devoted only three sutras, on defining the purpose of 'Postures' which is popularly known as 'Asanas'. Within these three sutras, he also elaborates, the broad guideline for practising these postures . In the first sutras on postures, he mentions that postures in general will give body, steadiness and ease . This steadiness and ease, will help them to experience such effortlessnes, that it would reveal, infinite universe and the body as 'indivisible'. Finally, in the third sutra on postures, he mentions how this experience will lead one to an state, where one's own body will be unaffected, by the play of opposites or dualities like – heat and cold , fire and water , bliss and pain. As mentioned in the

opening of this paragraph, a proper practise for a long duration of postures, and will extend this unaffectionate tendencies, to the dualities of nature into the level of mind too.

## **Bibliography**

Yoga Sutras of Maharishi Patanjali