

CHAPTER I - THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN



My apologies to Paul Scott for plagiarism. However the Pādaḥ (four parts) which comprise the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali are often known as Rāja Yoga. Also one view of this text is that Patañjali had four students and that the chapters of the Yoga Sūtra are arranged as four sādhana, each one according to the level students personal development and thus offering a different role. In this context the title is apt, with its four chapters Patañjali has composed a complete teaching on royal or classical Yoga.

I will attempt through four articles to present an introduction to theses teachings through which the student can form their own understanding. As is the tradition I first offer my respects to Patañjali and the lineage of teachers who have helped to carry these insights to our age and culture. I acknowledge that we can only surmise as to exactly what Patañjali meant and thank my teacher TKV Desikachar for guiding me towards this understanding.

This article looks at Chapter One, titled Samādhi Pādaḥ or the book on integration, its 51 verses reflecting the theme of mindfulness.

First by asking for our attention.

C1 v1

'Now follow the teachings of Yoga.'

Then by offering a direction for our attention with a definition of what Yoga is.

C1 v2

'Yoga is the containment of the activities the mind.'



The Yoga Sūtra next explores the idea of the mind as a tool with positive or negative possibilities.

C1 v5

‘The activities are fivefold and from them arise disturbance or composure.’

So what is the role for the mind?

C1 v16

‘The highest dispassion is awareness of the source of life resulting in an absence of thirst for the forces of nature.’

Where do we start?

C1 v20

‘For others faith precedes firmness, remembrance, integration and insight.’

However Patañjali reminds us that it is not easy to succeed in this venture.

C1 v21

‘It is the intensity of the attempt that is important.’

C1 v22

‘There are also distinctions of mildness, moderateness and intensity.’



Furthermore distractions appear within the mind and cause difficulties with their potential to disturb our sense of mindfulness.

C1 v30

‘Disease, dullness, doubt, carelessness, laziness, over-indulgence, delusion, non-achievement and instability are obstacles which distract the mind.’

There are ways of working with distractions.

C1 v32

‘For the purpose of countering them follow one truth.’

This can lay a foundation for development of the mind as a positive tool.

C1 v40

‘Such a person has control from the smallest to the greatest.’

How can we know when this state of mindfulness is present?

C1 v47

‘On the maturity of pure union there is the clear vision of the seer.’

This is said to lead to a state where:

C1 v48

‘There the insight is filled with truth.’



What also happens to such a mind?

C1 v50

‘The tendencies born from that oppose other tendencies.’

Finally, when the mind dissolves even this patterning:

C1 v51

‘When even that is contained, all is contained; this is integration without seed.’

Thus with the last Sūtra we have returned to the starting point.

C1 v2

‘Yoga is the containment of the activities the mind.’

The mind has become the flawless jewel in the crown of our being.

So the first chapter of the Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali has presented the nature of the mind, its fluctuations, problems and possibilities. This article is a brief introduction to the profound wisdom and insight within this chapter.

The next article introduces Chapter Two Sādhana Pādaḥ or the book on preliminary practices and its proposals for the means to steady a distracted mind.