

Intro to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

A brief overview of Patanjali's path to well-being

I. Introduction.

We've reached a point where it is helpful to pause and briefly reflect on what we've discussed so far before moving on.

We began by discussing what a truly successful life looks like. While financial freedom is usually something we think about when defining success, many people, some earlier than others, at some point realize a truly rich life requires something more.

From personal experience, I can attest that there really is something more besides financial freedom if we want a full life. The question then, is "what is the something more?" From my research and experience I offer the following answers to that question.

First, I propose that a successful life, the "something more," is a life of well-being as identified by Dr. Martin Seligman, psychology professor at the University of Pennsylvania, in his 2011 book, *Flourish*.¹

Second, I propose that an understanding of yoga philosophy and engaging in its practices, particularly meditation, is an excellent pathway to creating such a life. Yoga helps us identify and work through our negative patterns of thought and behavior that often get in our way, helping us to build an emotional resilience that enables us to thrive in the world. Yoga teaches us practices for discovering ourselves and then sharing ourselves with grace and meaning in the world.

By way of overview:

- A. In *Flourish* Dr. Seligman identifies five indicators of a life of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, meaning, accomplishments, and nurturing relationships. We discussed each of these in some detail in our very first talk.²
- B. Starting in our second talk we turned our attention to how yoga can help us attain this life of well-being.³ I refer to yoga as a road map for creating such a life.

¹ Seligman, Dr. Martin (2011). *Flourish*. New York, NY: Free Press.

² See the posted outline in this course: Dorigan, William (April, 2016). *What is Success?* www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

³ See the posted outline in this course: Dorigan, William (April, 2016). *Yoga as a Path to a Life of Well-Being*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

1. Following Dr. Seligman’s admonition that we must study ourselves to determine our particular strengths,⁴ we’ve discussed how non-dual Tantric yoga helps us to better understand ourselves and our potential.⁵
 2. We discussed how yoga charts our inner selves, the subtle body, including energy centers called the *Chakras*, and how we can work with all this information to deepen our experience of the world.⁶
 3. Yoga also charts the outer world for us, helping point the way to the innumerable opportunities to find connection and create meaning. We’ve discussed a tool yoga gives us for optimizing our engagement with the world outside us, the *Tattvas*. The *Tattvas* help us recognize where God exists in the world and the numerous ways we have for connecting to God and, thus, to each other.⁷
 4. We’ve also studied *Prana*, the life force that links us all, connecting our inner world with the outer world. We’ve looked into how we transmit energy to each other, whether we know we are doing so or not.⁸
- C. We thus have quite a bit of information to use in learning how to awaken to and experience the attributes of a life of well-being: positive emotions, engagement, meaning, accomplishments, and nurturing relationships.

We are now ready to move into the nuts and bolts of how yoga can help us achieve these goals. For the purpose of deepening our understanding of yoga and identifying the practices it provides, there may be no better resource than Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras*, a true user’s “manual” for creating a life of well-being.⁹

1. Through study and practice of these *Sutras* we develop the ability to discover, experience, and fully appreciate and enjoy all that life has to offer.¹⁰ This

⁴ *Flourish*, at 12.

⁵ See the posted outlines in this course: 1) Dorigan, William (2016). *Our True Nature*; and 2) Dorigan, William E. (2017). *The Creation Story and Maya*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

⁶ See posted outlines in this course: 1) Dorigan, William (2017). *Intro to the Subtle Body*; 2) Dorigan, William E. (2017). *Deep into the Subtle Body*; and 3) the series of four talks on the *Chakras*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

⁷ See posted outline in this course: Dorigan, William (2017). *Tattvas in the Material World*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

⁸ See posted outline in this course: 1) Dorigan, William (2017). *How we Connect—Whether We Know It Or Not*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

⁹ Bryan, Dr. Edwin (2009). *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. New York, NY: North Point Press, at lviii.

¹⁰ Iyengar, B.K.S. (2002 ed). *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. London, England: Thorsons, at 11.

includes learning how to get out of our own way.

2. We learn how to awaken to, and experience, positive emotions and nurturing relationships.
3. We learn how to live with purpose and with integrity.¹¹
4. Like Dr. Seligman, Patanjali tells us that to be successful we must engage in serious, deep self-study to discover our most inner self, our strengths, and our connection to something bigger than ourselves, and how to best serve that connection.¹²

Tonight we begin our study of these *Sutras* through a short overview of each of the four *Padas*, or chapters. In the talks that follow we will focus extensively on these *Sutras*, starting from their beginning.

II. Background of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

Scholars say Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* compile the history and evolution of yogic thought as of the time he wrote them.¹³ Patanjali's work is considered to be "the authoritative system (*darshana*) of the Yoga tradition."¹⁴

The date of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is a subject of debate. For example, Dr. Edwin Bryant writes that certain scholars date this work to somewhere just after the turn of the Common Era, between 100 and 200 C.E.¹⁵ Mr. Iyengar, on the other hand, places the text much earlier, between 500 and 200 B.C.¹⁶ Noted historian, the late Dr. Georg Feuerstein, writes that the contents and terminology of *Yoga Sutras* suggest that they were written sometime around the Second Century C.E.¹⁷

Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* are considered to be the bible of yoga,¹⁸ and respected as

¹¹ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at xvii.

¹² *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 11.

¹³ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at xxxiii.

¹⁴ Feuerstein, Dr. Georg (2001 ed). *The Yoga Tradition*. Prescott, AZ: Holm Press, at 213–214.

¹⁵ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at xxxiv.

¹⁶ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 1.

¹⁷ *The Yoga Tradition*, at 214.

¹⁸ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at viii.

one of the most important texts in Hinduism and a classic of world thought.¹⁹

These *Sutras* remain vital today, no doubt even more so because of the ever-increasing level of distraction in our modern society. They are, as I mention, an excellent manual for how to create a life of well-being.

- A. For example, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* teach us how to remove patterns of thought and behavior that interfere with our ability to sustain meaningful relationships and participate purposefully in society.²⁰
- B. The *Sutras* offer guidelines for conducting our relationship with ourselves, explaining how we can treat ourselves with greater dignity and respect. This places us in a position to be increasingly aware of life's opportunities because we no longer get in our own way.
- C. We learn to cultivate our body and breathing. Part of creating a life of well-being is maximizing our health and capacity to experience life as fully as we are able.
- D. The *Sutras* teach us meditation. They teach us how to calm our senses and learn to focus on what's inside us so we can better understand ourselves, assimilate what we've experienced, and, from that place, make sound choices as to where and how to participate in the world as significant members of family, workplace, and community.²¹ This is vital for building the emotional resilience we need to function in the world at our highest capacity.²² This is also vital for developing discernment in both our thinking and actions. This enables us to make the choices that best aid us in our effort to create a life of well-being.

The *Yoga Sutras* are broken up into four chapters, called *Padas*. Briefly:

A. First *Pada*.

The first *Pada*, *Samadhi Pada* ("Meditative Absorption"²³), introduces us to yoga, explaining that yoga involves learning how to stop the mind's endless chatter so that union with the Divine can be achieved. It describes the nature

¹⁹ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at xviii

²⁰ See, generally, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at lvii–lviii.

²¹ See, generally, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at lvii–lviii.

²² See the posted outline in this course: Dorigan, William (April, 2016). *What is Success?* www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html (discussion of emotional resilience).

²³ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 3, *et seq.*

of our mind, the different types of thoughts, and obstructions and distractions to our thinking; i.e., typical patterns of negative thinking that block us from enjoying a full and active life. Patanjali describes how to achieve connection to Consciousness, the Divine, and also describes ways to overcome the obstructions and distractions that impede our progress.

Although Patanjali's objective was to describe how to achieve union with our soul, and with God, the lessons of this chapter also gives us the big picture of how yoga can work for us to create a life of well-being.

1. It explains how our attitudes get in our way and prevent us from feeling the positive emotions inherent in our daily experiences.
2. It describes how our mind's chatter prevents us from becoming fully engaged in what we are doing.
3. The chapter explains how the distractions of our thoughts cause us to miss opportunities for meaningful activities and opportunities to serve.
4. We learn in this chapter how such distractions and attitudes can prevent us from accomplishment.
5. Through its explanation of how to create union with the Divine through meditation, the chapter offers us a guide for deepening levels of intimacy.

B. Second *Pada*.

The second *Pada*, *Sadhana Pada* ("Practice"²⁴), introduces us to the yoga of action, *Kriya* yoga, practices we need to achieve the objectives of the first *Pada*. Patanjali starts by describing obstacles, *Kleshas*, which can interfere with our goals. He introduces us to the notion of *Karma*, how we shape the quality of our life through our actions. Patanjali then introduces us to the eight limbs of yoga as the method of achieving connection.

This is the nuts and bolts chapter of a nuts and bolts text. It teaches us centuries of life lessons about how to treat others, how to treat ourselves, and how to find the Divine in each moment, as well as the practices for absorbing these lessons and making them habitual. It teaches us the steps leading to meditation, the key lesson of the *Yoga Sutras*.

²⁴ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 169, *et seq.*

C. Third *Pada*.

The third *Pada*, *Vibhuti Pada* (“Mystical Powers”²⁵), concludes Patanjali’s discussion of the eight limbs of yoga by describing the states of meditation. Patanjali then discusses the ramifications flowing from a successful meditation practice, including supernatural or mystical powers, available to a person who has integrated his mind, body, and soul.²⁶

Before scoffing at the notion that such mystical powers exist, consider that, at a minimum, these powers metaphorically offer tremendous lessons on how we can use our strengths to greatly enhance our relationships, whether at home, at work, or in the community, as well as how to be of service. In my book, *Finding the Midline*, I devote Chapters 103 to 107 to an explanation of how the supernatural powers described by Patanjali can inspire us in our daily interaction with others.²⁷

D. Fourth *Pada*.

The fourth *Pada*, *Kaivalya Pada* (“Absolute Independence”²⁸), explains how we can become free of the grasp of *Prakriti*, the material world. Patanjali discusses *Karma* in detail.

We learn here how to truly create our future by the way we participate in the present, utilizing the practices taught in the preceding chapters. We find ourselves liberated from the nagging, often toxic habits that prevent us from experiencing life’s precious offerings.

III. Overview of the first *Pada*.

The name of the first *Pada*, *Samadhi Pada*, refers to “Meditative Absorption.”²⁹ Here Patanjali tells us in Yoga Sutra 1.2, “*yogas citta vrtti nirodhah*,” that yoga involves stopping our mind’s chatter so that we can experience union. He doesn’t tell us in this *Sutra* why we would want to do this or how to do it. That is what the rest of the *Sutras* are about.

A. In *Yoga Sutra* 1.3 Patanjali tells us that when we are able to stop the mind’s

²⁵ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 301, *et seq.*

²⁶ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 175.

²⁷ Dorigan, William (2013). *Finding the Midline*. Winter Park, CO: LuHen Publications, LLC., at 303–315.

²⁸ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 406, *et seq.*

²⁹ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 3, *et seq.*

chatter, the *Vrttis*, we dwell in our own true nature.³⁰ We've already discussed our true nature in some detail.³¹

- B. *Yoga Sutra* 1.4 tells us that when we fail to calm the mind's chatter, that chatter distracts us. In other words, the various and sundry thoughts constantly moving through our mind effectively block or at least hinder our ability to see what's important, to feel the joy or inspiration of the moment, or to find a way to meaningfully express ourselves.
- C. At this point we've barely begun our study of the *Yoga Sutras* and we can already see the major reason we don't quite get where we want in terms of creating a life of well-being. We let our chattering mind inhibit our ability to figure out what is important.
1. How can we experience positive emotion or see the potential for engagement, meaning, accomplishment, or connection to others, when we allow our mind to rule us with its endless whispers of fear, envy, or random babble about where we have to be tomorrow or at 5 pm?
 2. How do we allow ourselves to become lost in the flow of an engaging activity if our mind keeps jabbering about all sorts of unrelated things?
 3. How can we pause and assimilate the implications of a moment to see the invitation to provide a meaningful contribution if, "in the back of our mind," five different topics are clamoring for attention?
 4. How can we take time to enjoy the satisfaction of completing a task if our mind interferes with our effort to savor the accomplishment?
 5. How do we intimately engage in a conversation with a possible new friend when our mind is racing with thoughts about something other than the person right in front of us?
 6. How do we communicate love to our child or partner when, instead of listening to them fully, our mind is running through a checklist of other thoughts?
- D. Not all thoughts move us away from a life of well-being. In *Yoga Sutra* 1.5 we learn that this chatter can be divided into five types that are either detrimental (*Klista*) or not (*Aklista*) to the mind. The five types of chatter are

³⁰ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 22. See also, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 52. NOTE: the discussion in this talk is based on these two sources, unless otherwise noted. Specific references to Dr. Bryant and Mr. Iyengar's texts will be made throughout where appropriate.

³¹ See the posted outline in this course: Dorigan, William (2016). *Our True Nature*. www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks.html

identified in *Yoga Sutra* 1.6 as right knowledge (*Pramana*), error (*Viparyaya*), imagination (*Vikalpa*), sleep (*Nidra*), and memory (*Smrtayah*). Patanjali then elaborates on each of these five in *Yoga Sutras* 1.7 to 1.11.

- E. In *Yoga Sutras* 1.12 to 1.16, and 1.20 to 1.29 Patanjali explains that we stop the mind's chatter through repeated practice (*Abhyasa*) and detachment (*Vairagya*)³² including meditation that contemplates God (*Yoga Sutra* 1.23).
- F. *Yoga Sutras* 1.17 to 1.19 describe states of union or connection, *Samadhi*.
- G. In *Yoga Sutras* 1.30 and 1.31 Patanjali lists thirteen obstacles or distractions (*Antarayas*) to achieving union: disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, lack of discipline of the senses, erroneous views, lack of perseverance, backsliding, sorrow, despair, unsteadiness of the body, and irregular breathing.³³
- H. *Yoga Sutra* 1.32 states that a single-minded effort prevents these obstacles from arising. *Yoga Sutra* 1.33 teaches that the qualities of friendliness, compassion, joy, and equanimity keep the mind in a state of well-being.³⁴ I've seen the word "spaciousness" used in lieu of equanimity. *Yoga Sutras* 1.34 to 1.40 describe various methods of single-pointed meditation for creating such a mind.
- I. *Yoga Sutras* 1.41 to 1.49 describe various states of transformation, *Samapatti*, leading to states of *Samadhi*, a *Sattvic* or pure mindset, and direct spiritual perception.

IV. Overview of the second *Pada*.

The name of the second *Pada*, *Sadhana Pada*, refers to "Practice."³⁵ In his first chapter Patanjali teaches us what yoga is and what the fruits of a yoga practice can be. He shows us an overview of a mystical life, a life of connection to God. Again, every point he makes is pertinent to how we can make those connections in the world that will enrich our life, create meaning, and wrap us in nurturing relationships.

In this second chapter, starting in *Sutra* 2.1, Patanjali introduces us to the practices and attitudes that create such a life. He describes the yoga of action, *Kriya* yoga. He tells us that success in yoga requires zeal in practice (*Tapas*), study, including self-

³² *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 61–63; discussing *Yoga Sutra* 1.12).

³³ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 83–84.

³⁴ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 86–87; *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 128–130.

³⁵ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 169, *et seq.*

study³⁶ (*Svadyaya*), and surrender to God (*Isvara Pranidhanani*).³⁷ These same traits are required to build the emotional resiliency we need to fully awaken to and embrace positive emotion, engagement, meaning, accomplishment, and nurturing relationships. These goals require effort, serious self-analysis and study of enlightening material, and commitment.

- A. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.2 to 2.10 Patanjali explains that yoga will reduce what he calls “afflictions,” *Kleshas*. These afflictions inhibit our capacity to fully create the life we seek. Patanjali identifies the afflictions as: spiritual ignorance (*Avidya*), ego (*Asmita*), desire or attachment (*Raga*), hate (*Dvesa*), and clinging to life (*Abhinivesah*).
- B. *Yoga Sutra* 2.11 teaches that the chattering of the mind caused by the *Kleshas*, afflictions, can be stilled by meditation.

Note the significance of meditation practice in creating a life of well-being. In the first chapter Patanjali outlines numerous obstacles that can cause mind chatter, such as disease, inertia, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, lack of discipline of the senses, erroneous views, and lack of perseverance, among others (*Yoga Sutras* 1.30 and 1.31). He prescribes a number of meditation practices for overcoming these obstacles. Here, in the second chapter, Patanjali tells us that our path will be subject not only to those obstacles, but also to certain afflictions, and that meditation is a cure for such afflictions just as it is a way of overcoming the obstacles he identified in the first chapter.

- C. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.12 to 2.16 Patanjali discusses *Karma* and explains we can escape from the web of problems our conduct creates.
- D. *Yoga Sutras* 2.17 to 2.28 describe our human nature and our relationship to God, and tells us we can become free of the distractions of the world that prevent us from a life of well-being and connection.
- E. *Yoga Sutra* 2.29 introduces the eight-limbed path of yoga, the means for creating the life we want. The eight limbs, listed in *Yoga Sutra* 2.29 are: 1) vows of abstention (*Yamas*)—ways to treat others; 2) observances (*Niyamas*)—ways to treat ourselves; 3) posture (*Asana*); 4) breath control (*Pranayama*); 5) withdrawal of the senses (*Pratyahara*); 6) single-pointed focus (*Dharana*); 7) meditation (*Dhyana*); and 8) absorption (*Samadhyah* or *Samadhi*).
- F. *Yoga Sutra* 2.30 lists the five *Yamas*: 1) non-harming (*Ahimsa*); 2) honesty (*Satya*); 3) non-stealing (*Asteya*); 4) sexual restraint (*Brahmacarya*); and 5) lack of greed (*Aparigraha*). *Yoga Sutra* 2.31 admonishes that the *Yamas* are

³⁶ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 108–109.

³⁷ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 108.

universal vows, applicable to everybody regardless of place, time, or class.

- G. *Yoga Sutra* 2.32 lists the five *Niyamas*: 1) purity (*Sauca*); 2) contentment (*Santosa*); 3) burning desire (*Tapas*) 4) study of scriptures and the self (*Svadyaya*); and 5) surrender to God (*Isvara Pranidhani*). *Yoga Sutra* 2.33 advises that when we are faced with thoughts that run contrary to the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* we should cultivate counteracting thoughts.
- H. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.34 to 2.39 Patanjali discusses the five *Yamas* in more detail.
- I. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.40 to 2.45 Patanjali discusses the five *Niyamas* in more detail.
- J. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.46 to 2.48 Patanjali discusses *Asana*.
- K. In *Yoga Sutras* 2.49 to 2.53 Patanjali discusses *Pranayama* and its effects.
- L. *Yoga Sutras* 2.54 and 2.55 discuss *Pratyaharah*.

The last three limbs of the eight-limbed path of yoga, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*, are discussed at the beginning of the third chapter or *Pada*.

V. Overview of the third *Pada*.

The name of the third *Pada*, *Vibhuti Pada* means “Mystical Powers.”³⁸ Thus far Patanjali has described the power of yoga and the practices that help us harness this power to create a meaningful life full of connection. In this chapter, Patanjali completes his discussion of the final three limbs of yoga, part of the process of meditation, and discusses the integration of these powers. He then shares with us the breadth of these powers.

- A. In *Yoga Sutras* 3.1 to 3.3 Patanjali discusses the final three limbs of the eight-limbed path of yoga; these are *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi*.
- B. *Yoga Sutra* 3.4 identifies *Samyama*, the integration of the last three limbs. Patanjali then describes in *Yoga Sutras* 3.5 to 3.8 the state of being arising when *Samyama* is attained, telling us that the last three limbs are a more internal practice than the first five limbs, and lead the practitioner to the soul.
- C. Patanjali then explains in *Yoga Sutras* 3.9 to 3.14 the experience and significance of restraining rising thoughts, *Nirodha*, to a point of tranquility, *Prasanta*. *Yoga Sutra* 3.15 points out that transformation follows a regular sequence, *Krama*. These *Sutras* lay the metaphysical groundwork for a discussion of the mystical powers that follows.

³⁸ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 301, *et seq.*

- D. *Yoga Sutras* 3.16 to 3.56 describe the mystical powers and how we can reach liberation. The mystical powers include the Eight (*Asta Siddhis*), or superpowers, we may have learned about through the stories of Hanuman: the power to become tiny (*Anima*), the power to be large (*Mahima*), the power to become light (*Laghima*), the power to become heavy (*Garima*), the power to dominate and obtain whatever one wants (*Prapti*), the power of freedom of will (*Prakamyā*), power over all (*Isatva*), and the power to subjugate anyone or anything (*Vasitva*).³⁹
- E. These powers are alluded to in *Yoga Sutra* 3.45.⁴⁰
1. Dr. Bryant points out that only the first of the eight powers, *Anima*, is actually identified by Patanjali who uses the term “*Animadi*,” meaning minuteness, “etc.”
 2. He writes that this form of the word likely indicates that Patanjali knew the people of his time were so familiar with the list of eight that Patanjali did not need to include them all.⁴¹
 3. Mr. Iyengar also makes this same point, noting the word *Animadi* as meaning powers “such as.”⁴²
 4. Consider that while we may scoff at the notion of supernatural powers such as discussed by Patanjali, the list was so well known around the beginning of the Common Era that they didn’t even need to be listed in such a scholarly text.⁴³ Keep in mind, for example, the supernatural powers attributable to Jesus who lived around this time.
 5. We discuss these powers, including their powerful metaphorical value, later in these talks.

³⁹ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 177.

⁴⁰ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 383–385. In Mr. Iyengar’s commentary, this *Sutra* is numbered 3.46. The numbering differs from that used, for example, by Dr. Bryant, because Mr. Iyengar adds an additional *Sutra*, found in his commentary at *Yoga Sutra* 3.22: “*etana sabdadi antardhamam uktam*” which he translates as “In the same way as described above, he is able to arrest sound, smell, taste, form and touch.” Mr. Iyengar comments that some texts omit this *Sutra* because it can be inferred from the previous *Sutra*. *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 206. The actual list of the eight powers is found in Mr. Iyengar’s commentary (2001 ed) at page 177.

⁴¹ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 384.

⁴² *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 227–228.

⁴³ See, generally, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 331–334.

VI. Overview of the fourth *Pada*.

The name of the fourth *Pada*, *Kaivalya Pada*, means “Absolute Independence.”⁴⁴ Patanjali explains how we can become free of the grasp of *Prakriti*, the material world, and moves us to the soul.

- A. *Yoga Sutra* 4.1 provides five ways that the mystical or supernatural powers can be obtained: birth, spiritual experiences through herbs, *Mantra*, devotional practice, and *Samadhi*.
- B. In *Yoga Sutras* 4.2 to 4.14 Patanjali discusses the affect of *Prakriti* or matter on how our mind functions. He also discusses *Karma* and the *Gunas*.
- C. *Yoga Sutras* 4.15 to 4.28 discuss the mind’s processes as it seeks to find connection or union with Consciousness. The balance of the chapter, *Yoga Sutras* 4.29 to 4.34 lead us to *Kaivalya*, absolute liberation, where our soul is no longer subject to the effects of the *Gunas*; i.e., the properties and tendencies of the material world. At that point we return to *Purusha*.

According to Dr. Bryant, Patanjali stops here and doesn’t describe how a person continues to carry on life in the world in this state.⁴⁵ Mr. Iyengar suggests we turn to the *Bhagavad Gita* (XVIII.61-62) for guidance, surrendering all actions as well as ourselves to God.⁴⁶

I write in *Finding the Midline* that when our thoughts are of God, Supreme Consciousness, we will necessarily find only God in everyone and everything.⁴⁷ From the perspective of creating a life of well-being, think of Dr. Seligman’s emphasis on finding meaning in our lives, using our strengths to serve something bigger than us. We detach ourselves from the outcome and act out of that desire to serve.

VII. Conclusion.

We now begin our discussion of Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* in far more detail. We will focus, as we have so far in our previous talks, on how Patanjali’s teachings can help us create a life of well-being.

⁴⁴ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 406, *et seq.*

⁴⁵ *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 457–459.

⁴⁶ *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 286–287.

⁴⁷ *Finding the Midline*, at 301, *citing Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 274–275.