

# **The Second *Pada* – Part 1**

## ***Kriya-Yoga*, the yoga of action, and the *Kleshas* – five impediments to a life well lived**

### **I. Introduction.**

In his first *Pada*, *Samadhi Pada*, “meditative absorption,”<sup>1</sup> Patanjali shows us what yoga can accomplish once we learn to control the chattering of the mind and focus on what is important. As a spiritual path, Patanjali identifies practices in the first *Pada* that can lead to the mystical experience of connecting with God.

The first chapter also is useful to us in our goal of learning how to use yoga philosophy, including Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras, as a guide for creating a life well lived, a life filled with positive emotion, engagement, meaning, accomplishment, and nurturing relationships.<sup>2</sup>

The premise of the talks in this series is that achieving success in yoga can result in achieving success in life because, from my experience, life is yoga. I say this because both life and yoga are about success in what is important to us: recognizing and embracing our own special signature strengths; honoring our dreams; and healthy, nurturing engagement with our family, our friends, our workplace, our community, and our world. So, when I say success in “yoga” I also mean success in life. This is a life well lived, a life of well-being, and yoga is a great way to create such a life.

From the perspective of creating a life well lived, Patanjali provides in the first chapter an overview of how to better focus in each moment without distraction. We saw how this level of focus is helpful not only on our spiritual path but also in seeking connection to others and in the identification of opportunities to meaningfully engage the world.

A. The practices, *Abhyasa*, we learned in the first *Pada* assume a person already has the ability to attain *Samadhi*, holding a single-pointed focus, using the object of meditation to go deeper and deeper until, ultimately, the meditator becomes absorbed in God. People skilled in doing so have already learned detachment or dispassion, *Vairagya*, so that they are free from the temptations of the material world, which includes the mind, that distract us from deeper spiritual connection.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Bryant, Dr. Edwin (2009). *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. New York, NY: North Point Press, at 3.

<sup>2</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *What is Success?* Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html)

<sup>3</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *The First Pada – Part 3 Practice*. Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html)

- B. Such people have learned to control and coordinate their body, senses, mind, reasoning, and soul.<sup>4</sup> This means that in their daily lives they are able to hold their focus in each moment so as to more easily experience positive emotions, readily see opportunities for engaging activity and meaningful contributions to family, friends, and community, and recognize invitations for ways to deepen relationships.
- C. What about those of us who have not developed the ability to hold focus such as that required to engage in the practices outlined in the first *Pada*? How do we develop the discipline necessary to live in a world full of temptations and stress, while still maintaining a strong spiritual practice and cultivating a life of well-being?
1. To attain this level of mastery, we have Patanjali's second *Pada*, *Sadhana Pada*. *Sadhana* is generally translated as "practice."<sup>5</sup> It has also been translated to mean a path to realization.<sup>6</sup> In this second chapter Patanjali addresses persons who are either beginners or otherwise have not developed the uninterrupted control of those to whom the first *Pada* appears to have been addressed.
  2. In the second chapter, and continuing into the third *Pada*, Patanjali teaches us how to develop a meditation practice that can hold a single-pointed focus. In addition, he also provides rules for creating the type of holistic balance in our lives needed for success in yoga and life. These rules include what has become known as the eightfold path or eight-limbed path of yoga, *Astanga-yoga*.
  3. These practices are the tool kit for creating a life of well-being. We learn how to slow down and engage with world, carving out the space within us to feel positive emotion, freedom from distraction, while at the same time recognizing opportunities for meaningful activities and accomplishments. We develop the sensitivity it takes to develop and maintain nurturing relationships.

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<sup>4</sup> See, generally, Iyengar, B.K.S. ((1976 ed). *Light on Yoga*. New York, NY: Schocken Books, at 30.

<sup>5</sup> Iyengar, B.K.S. (2002). *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Hammersmith, London, England: Thorsons, at 107.

<sup>6</sup> Feuerstein, Dr. Georg (1989 ed). *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions International, at 59.

Tonight we start our study of the second *Pada* by looking at what Patanjali calls the yoga of action, *Kriya-yoga*, and the *Kleshas*, the five afflictions Patanjali refers to as the impediments to *Samadhi*.<sup>7</sup> These afflictions are those things that disturb the mind's equilibrium, preventing success in yoga.<sup>8</sup>

## II. *Kriya-yoga*, the yoga of action.

Patanjali starts out the second *Pada* by introducing us to the path of action we must take in order to be successful in yoga.

Yoga Sutra 2.1 identifies the path of action, *Kriya-yoga* as consisting of three parts: 1) zeal in practice, or self-discipline (*Tapah*, or *Tapas*); 2) study, including study of self and study of scripture (*Svadyaya*); and 3) surrender and dedication to the Lord (*Isvara Pranidhanani*).<sup>9</sup>

A. The first part of this three-part path of action identified in Yoga Sutra 2.1 is *Tapah*, or *Tapas*. This word refers to a burning desire to be rid of those things that block our ability to attain full absorption in *Purusha*. In our every day life, we can consider this to mean a burning hunger to live a life of well-being. We need *Tapas* to remove patterns of thought and behavior that inhibit our ability to see connection in the world and how we get in our own way.

1. We talked earlier about the twin pillars of yoga identified in Yoga Sutra 1.12: practice (*Abhyasa*) and dispassion or detachment (*Vairagya*). Dr. Bryant tells us that the “means” for success in yoga identified in Yoga Sutra 2.1, the *Kriya-yoga* or path of action, differs from the “means” set forth in Sutra 1.12 because the means in the first *Pada* assume that a person has conquered *Tamas* and *Rajas Gunas* and the mind has become primarily lucid, or *Sattvic*. Because Sutra 2.1 is directed more towards those who have yet to develop that level of control over the *Gunas*, *Tapas* is required to develop the discipline necessary to control the senses.<sup>10</sup>
2. Controlling the senses includes controlling what we eat, what we listen to or read, or what we otherwise expose ourselves to.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 175.

<sup>8</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 111-113.

<sup>9</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 108; *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 169.

<sup>10</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 170.

<sup>11</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 170.

3. Swami Satchidananda, founder of the Integral Yoga tradition, writes that *Tapas* also can be defined: “to burn or create heat,” with this burning or heat purifying ourselves in the process. In this sense, he says Yoga Sutra 2.1 requires self-discipline in our physical actions, our speech, and our thoughts.<sup>12</sup>
4. Citing Vyasa, Dr. Bryant points out that we must direct our self-purification to include choices as to who and what we expose ourselves to in the world so as to avoid the continual influence of *Tamas* and *Rajas*.<sup>13</sup>

Echoing Dr. Bryant, to create a life well lived, we must be selective as to what we spend our time doing and who we spend our time with. We even need to make choices as to how we focus our mind. Recalling what we learned from Dr. Barbara Fredrickson at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, author of the book *Positivity*,<sup>14</sup> if we dwell on negative emotions we can hardly expect to be receptive to opportunities to experience positive emotion.<sup>15</sup> When we are fostering anger or sadness, we are less likely to recognize invitations to engage in meaningful activities, which cumulatively create a life of purpose. If we engage people while under the influence of negative emotions we will find it difficult to develop those relationships. Conversely, if we approach people in a state of positive emotion, such as joy, gratitude, serenity, curiosity, or respect, by way of example, the chance to develop that relationship into something of value increases.

Making choices like these requires burning desire, *Tapas*.

- B. The second part of the three-part yoga of action identified in Yoga Sutra 2.1 is *Svadyaya*, self-study and study of the scriptures.

*Svadyaya* includes repetition of sacred *Mantras*, including *Om*. This type of study gives us guidance for better understanding our true nature and ultimately connecting to *Purusha*.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Satchidananda, Swami (2003 ed). *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Buckingham, VA: Integral Yoga Publications, at 79-80.

<sup>13</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 170.

<sup>14</sup> Fredrickson, Dr. Barbara (2014). *Positivity*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press (Kindle Version: retrieved from [www.Amazon.com](http://www.Amazon.com)).

<sup>15</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *What is Success?* Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html)

<sup>16</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 108-109.

We study ourselves inside and out. This means we go far beyond looking at our emotions the way self-help manuals, psychologists and psychiatrists ask us to do. We seek out anything that will help purify our mind, even to the extent that we select particularly useful material such as the Bhagavad-Gita, and read them over and over to allow them to permeate and re-shape us.<sup>17</sup>

1. Using the Bhagavad-Gita as an example, we can learn what a meaningful life looks like by reading Krishna's treatise on duty and devotion to something bigger than ourselves. If we wish to live a life of purpose, this is just one example of many resources we can study.
  2. We may find great value in seeking help from therapists but we can also learn more about how to get along in the world and enjoy our time on the planet by engaging in some serious personal examination. We can be brutally honest with ourselves as to what we may be doing or saying that keeps us from connecting more deeply with others. This is where a good friend can come in handy; somebody we can trust to be honest with us as well as discrete. Such a friend can help guide us through the type of tough introspection some of us need to break old patterns of thought and behavior.
- C. The third part of the three-part yoga of action is *Ishvara Pranidhanani*, surrender to the Lord. Mr. Iyengar describes this as a surrender of mind, body, and soul to God out of love.<sup>18</sup> Swami Satchitananda suggests that we might look at this requirement as a reminder to dedicate our actions as service to humanity.<sup>19</sup> We can identify our signature strengths and then seek each day to find a way to offer them in some act of service.

Regardless of our spiritual beliefs, this third-part of the three-part yoga of action directly correlates with University of Pennsylvania behavioral psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman's conclusion that we must live a life of meaning and purpose in order to experience a true life of well-being.<sup>20</sup>

In Yoga Sutra 2.2 Patanjali advises that this path of action, *Kriya-yoga*, will help us avoid the afflictions of life, the *Kleshas*, and help us attain *Samadhi*.

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<sup>17</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (Swami Satchitananda), at 81.

<sup>18</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 108.

<sup>19</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (Swami Satchitananda), at 83.

<sup>20</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *What is Success?* Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html); see generally, Seligman, Dr. Martin (2011). *Flourish*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

### III. The Kleshas.

Having provided us with the definition of the yoga of action, Patanjali next turns his attention to the five impediments that life will continually put in our path, the *Kleshas*.

A. Yoga Sutra 2.3 identifies the five impediments to *Samadhi* known as the *Kleshas*: ignorance (*Avidya*); ego, pride (*Asmita*); attachment, desire (*Raga*); aversion, dislike or hate (*Dvesa*); and clinging to life, fear of death (*Abhinivesah*). These impediments are also known as afflictions,<sup>21</sup> obstacles,<sup>22</sup> or forces of corruption.

1. These five afflictions or impediments are types of unhelpful thoughts, *Klista Vrttis*, chatter of the mind, which strengthen the *Gunas* of *Tamas* and *Rajas*, which in turn create *Karma* that can perpetuate *Samsara*, the cycle of birth, death, and re-birth.<sup>23</sup>
2. Dr. Bryant discusses the position by some that Patanjali's reference to *Aklita Vrttis* in Yoga Sutra 1.5 suggests there are some thoughts not produced by the *Kleshas* that lead to a *Sattvic*, or lucid mind, resulting in creative engagement in the world.<sup>24</sup>
3. These impediments can also be viewed as five broad categories of how we get in our own way when trying to create a life of well-being. For example, we behave in ways that ignore the rights and feelings of others. We act in ways that ignores our connection to each other, forgetting perhaps how what we do influences each other's lives, even if indirectly. We allow ego, desire, aversion and fear to cloud our emotions, preventing us from positive experiences that make for a life well lived.

B. The first of the five afflictions, ignorance, *Avidya*, is discussed in Yoga Sutras 2.4 and 2.5. This refers to spiritual ignorance, a state of mind where we confuse everything in the material world, including our body and our thoughts, as being the true nature of things. We forget that our true nature is divine, a manifestation of God if we follow a Tantric viewpoint.

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<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 111; *The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali* (Feuerstein), at 61-62.

<sup>22</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* (Swami Satchitananda), at 84.

<sup>23</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *The First Pada – Part 1 The nature of how we think*. Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html)

<sup>24</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 176.

Regardless of our spiritual belief, this means we forget that we are part of a collective whole and that the world doesn't spin around us. We forget that a key element of creating a life of well-being is meaningful engagement in the world.

1. We forget that our true nature is our soul, believing, instead, that we are our body, our thoughts, our accomplishments, and our possessions. We confuse the material world, *Prakriti*, with the Divine, *Purusha*.<sup>25</sup>
2. This type of ignorance is the source of the other four *Kleshas*.
3. Yoga Sutra 2.4 teaches that while the other four *Kleshas* exist in either fully active, intermittent, or dormant states, ignorance is never dormant. It exists in an active state until such time as we become fully liberated, no longer confusing our divine nature with the material world.<sup>26</sup>
4. Ignorance will prevent us from creating a life well lived. I write about each of these five *Kleshas* in my book, *Finding the Midline*.<sup>27</sup> Regarding ignorance, I tell a story about how my girlfriend Nancy loved ballet and pleaded with me for some time to go to a performance. Firmly believing I would not have a good time, I refused to go until at one point a good buddy of mine told me to stop being a jerk. So, I went. I thought it was one of the most amazing events I'd ever experienced and I immediately ordered season tickets to every dance performance at the venue. My relationship with Nancy received a giant booster shot.

My point in telling this story is that ignorance, acting without knowing the facts, can prevent us from seeing the potential in the moment. When we are blind to the invitations of the moment we miss out on opportunities to experience all the things that make a life worth living: positive emotions, engaging activities and accomplishments, chances to serve, and nurturing relationships.<sup>28</sup> Ignorance of the facts can also allow us to act and speak in ways that create disharmony and separation from others. This is a great time for *Tapas*, exercising discipline to refrain from acting precipitously and to keep our mouth shut if we are not operating based on what we know to be true and without a real need to have to act or speak.

It is worth a moment to address the issue of how to use this information if we don't have a belief in God. Why, then, should we behave ourselves and act

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<sup>25</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 181; 184.

<sup>26</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 176-185.

<sup>27</sup> Dorigan, William (2013). *Finding the Midline*. Winter Park, CO: LuHen Publications, LLC., at 249-258.

<sup>28</sup> *Finding the Midline*, at 249-250.

out of a desire to connect to God if we don't believe that God exists? Ultimately, the answer is still the same: we need to be of service to something bigger than us, whether it is God or humanity, in order to look back on our lives with satisfaction. A life filled with self-indulgence, without this aspect of service, will be a life we regret as our days draw to a close.

Note that there is a distinct correlation between Patanjali's path to a life of success, total absorption in *Purusha*, and the path to success outlined by behavioral psychologist Dr. Martin Seligman, a highly regarded professional whose life's work has been devoted to studying what constitutes a life of well-being. Like Swami Satchitananda, Dr. Seligman concludes that a life of success requires service to humanity. We can go off and do whatever we want but, when life draws to a conclusion, we will look back on what we did that helped others in order to be satisfied our life was worthwhile.<sup>29</sup>

Note, too, Tantric yoga recognizes a life of service as the gateway to happiness and joy. In our discussion of the attributes of the Divine, which, according to non-dualist Tantric philosophy, constitutes our psychological makeup as well, we saw how the truly successful life requires *Sat-Chit-Ananda*: recognizing our own particular gifts and talents, expressing them in service to a greater good, and then experiencing the joy that arises within us as a result of that process.<sup>30</sup>

- C. The second of the five *Kleshas* is Ego, *Asmita*, discussed in Yoga Sutra 2.6. This impediment flows directly from *Avidya*, ignorance. We forget that we are each a divine creation or manifestation, depending upon our belief or, alternatively, that we live in a highly interdependent world. We fail to take into consideration that to some degree or another we rely on each other: the man I ignored in the coffee shop plows my road at 6 a.m. The woman whose parking place I raced to take is the nurse who will be taking care of my good friend tonight in the emergency room.

Our thoughts, *Vrttis*, and our highest intelligence, *Buddhi*, collude in such a way as to cause us to believe that who we are and what we do in the world is our true nature. We associate ourselves with the material world and not our true Self.

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<sup>29</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *What is Success?* Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html); see generally, Seligman, Dr. Martin (2011). *Flourish*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

<sup>30</sup> See the posted outline for the talk in this series: *Our True Nature*. Dorigan, William (2014). [www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html](http://www.findingthemidline.com/midlinetalks/html)

1. Dr. Bryant explains this as false identification; we identify our true nature in terms of such things as our body, our mind, our appearance, or other labels (male, tall or short).<sup>31</sup>
2. In *Finding the Midline* I write that ego is not a bad thing. A healthy ego is what helps drive us to create meaning in the world, accomplish important tasks, and otherwise make the world a better place. A healthy ego propels us to develop our signature strengths. It helps remind us to take care of ourselves.

Ego is a problem when we forget our connection to each other and think everything is about us, experiencing negative emotions when Oprah doesn't lead a marching band up to our front door every time we do something we think is significant.<sup>32</sup>

- D. Yoga Sutra 2.7 identifies the third impediment or affliction as *Raga*, which means attachment or desire. This affliction arises out of memories of pleasurable experiences. We want to repeat them. We want more. Our desire for a repeat performance can stimulate feelings of longing or greed. We push for pleasure.<sup>33</sup>

Desire can and does serve us in our quest for a life of well-being. It is out of desire for nurturing relationships, for example, that many of us seek counseling or maybe go to the gym. It is out of desire to help others that we engage in service. When we are operating with a lucid mind, a *Sattvic mind*, we are able to properly balance the energies of desire that can draw us away from the life we seek.

- E. The next affliction is aversion, even hatred, *Dvesah*, identified in Yoga Sutra 2.8. We can fall victim to our desires based on memories of pleasurable experiences. If we can't indulge ourselves or otherwise get what we want, we can become sad, resentful, angry or even hateful. We can feel unworthy, pained, and otherwise distressed.<sup>34</sup>

Similarly, memories of past, painful experiences can trigger feelings of aversion in the present just because the current situation is reminiscent of something distasteful from the past.<sup>35</sup> Projecting those memories of past

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<sup>31</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 187.

<sup>32</sup> *Finding the Midline*, at 251-252.f

<sup>33</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 115.

<sup>34</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 116.

<sup>35</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 190.

experiences onto the current situation can cause us to avoid the new situation even though it is different and full of potential.

- F. The fifth affliction is clinging to life or fear of death, *Abhinivesah*, identified in Yoga Sutra 2.9. The scholars suggest that this impediment arises from both a love of life as well as imprints, or *Samskaras* of the loss of past lives by death.<sup>36</sup>

In *Finding the Midline* I talk about an occasion in which I was feeling sad about the prospect of dying. I flashed back on some of the top highlights of my life. I noticed that none of them involved a bunch of money, nor were they events likely to be on anybody's "bucket list" of cool things to do. Rather, the things that really meant the most to me all involved nurturing relationships.

I don't know if our fear of death or clinging to life is due to memory of past deaths. Maybe that is the case or maybe our mind for whatever reason from time to time gathers together various memories of past losses and sad goodbyes and then projects us forward to what it will feel like when we die. I view this sutra as teaching us the important lesson of learning how to use our time in pursuit of positive emotion, engaging activities, meaning and nurturing relationships.<sup>37</sup>

- G. According to Yoga Sutra 2.10, the *Kleshas* exist within us so long as we are alive, since they are part of the chattering of our mind which continues so long as the mind operates. According to Mr. Iyengar, a way of combating the *Kleshas* is to turn the mind inward.<sup>38</sup> In Yoga Sutra 2.11 Patanjali states that meditation is a way to silence the *Vrttis* arising from the *Kleshas*. Citing Vyasa, Dr. Bryant suggests that the *Kriya-yoga*, the yoga of action identified in Yoga Sutra 2.1, weakens the impact of the afflictions, and then meditation eliminates them, at least as much as can occur prior to attaining the highest state of *Samadhi*.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See, generally, *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 116-117; *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 191-192.

<sup>37</sup> *Finding the Midline*, at 257-258.

<sup>38</sup> *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 117-118.

<sup>39</sup> *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, at 194-195.

### **III. Conclusion.**

Patanjali spells it out for us right out of the box: to create the life we want we have to be fully committed, engage in serious personal work, and dedicate ourselves to serving mankind. Our mind will get in the way, simply because that is the way we are wired as humans.

Next week we continue our study of the second Pada, looking at *Karma*.