

Atha yogrnushṛsanam.

Atha, now; yoga, yoga; anushṛsanam, teachings.

Now, the teachings of yoga [are presented]

I. Introduction

- a. New class for our sangha. Unlike previous sangas it is not directly a Vaisnava text. Still much of it is relevant to all practitioners as it is a comprehensive study of how the mind works.
- b. Sankhya and Yoga, the two schools of thoughts discussed in Yoga Sutras, are already presented in Bhagavad Gita
- c. I will present Yoga Sutras, but explain there are differences with Vaisnava philosophy and what they are.

II. Yoga Sutras

- a. All major Indian Schools of thought codify their teachings in a compilation of aphorism called Sutras usually limited to six words per Sutra
- b. Yoga Sutras have 195 verse in 700 words
- c. "A [sūtra](#) is a compilation of aphorisms that expresses the essence of all knowledge in a minimum of words. It must be universally applicable and faultless in its linguistic presentation." (Definition found in Caitanya Caritamrita – Adi Lila 7.106)
- d. 'Su' is cognate of English word 'sew' in that it means thread. It is the thread or essence of a school of thought
- e. It is necessary for all sutras to have commentaries to unpack its meaning.
- f. The main commentary of Pantanjali's Yoga Sutras is by Vyasa (Not established if it is Vyasa, author of the Vedas).

III. Atha

- a. Means "now" indicating the urgency of understanding subject and the urgency in human life to have such knowledge
- b. It is standard for authors of major philosophical schools works to begin their sutra work with "atha" in the very first verse of their work to distinguish their exposition from other schools.
- c. It generally indicates to the reader a demarcation—now that you have studied other things, here is the topmost school of thought.

IV. Yoga

- a. Indicates the subject of Yoga will be discussed

- b. Yoga has several meanings, but here it indicates a fully concentrated mind, or samadhi
 - c. Pantajali categorizes five states of mind—forgetful, wandering, distracted, concentrated, restrained
 - d. Yoga means the last two states, concentrated and restrained
 - e. The stage “distracted” sometimes fixed and sometimes not, is not yoga—and will not efficiently remove the obstacles to yoga.
- V. Anushasanam
- a. “Anu” means to follow and indicates that Pantajali is not presenting his own teachings, but is systemizing or following teachings that have existed before.
 - b. Even before Pantajali many of the main school’s of Indian thought had already appropriated yoga as part of their practice
- VI. Superiority of Yoga
- a. Bhagavad-Gita says that yoga is highest spiritual practice
 - b. Bhagavad-Gita then says that highest Yogi is one who worships God
 - c. A case can be made that Pantanjali was a theist and that in Yoga Sutras he also recommends worship of God.
- VII. Miscellaneous
- a. To achieve the level of concentration where one can effectively meditate one must first purify the mind by kriya-yoga (action yoga) and work through progressive stages of concentration
 - b. Kriya yoga means austerity (tapasya), svadhaya (study and japa) and worship of God (isvarapranidham)
 - c. Astanga yoga, the eight-fold path begins with yama (moral restraints) and niyama (moral observances). One has to observe these stages progressively. The eight stages of yoga represent progressive stages of concentration on the path of yoga.
- VIII. Things I need to clarify
- a. The differences between the five different states of mind
- IX. Question I received to be clarified in next class
- a. Baladeva Vidyabhusana, the great Vaisnava commentator criticizes the school of yoga. Explain why and how that affects our study