

COMPLETING YOUR YOGA



CULTIVATING A DAILY MEDITATION PRACTICE

I. Living Your Yoga: What Does and Doesn't Bring Success

अत्याहारः प्रयासश्च प्रजल्पो नियमाग्रहः ।

जनसङ्गश्च लौल्यं च षड्भिर्योगो विनश्यति ॥

atyāhārah prayāsaśca prajalpo niyamāgrahaḥ
janasaṅgaśca laulyaṁ ca śadbhir yogo vinaśayati

There are six things that will make your practice of yoga deteriorate: excessive food or other stimulation; making trips outside; meaningless talk; not keeping your commitments; being around groups of people; and restlessness or inconsistency in your practice.

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1.15)

उत्साहात्साहसाद्धैर्यात्तत्त्वज्ञानाश्च निश्चयात् ।

जनसङ्ग-परित्यागात्षड्भिर्योगः प्रसिद्ध्यति ॥

utsāhātsāhasāddhairyāttattvajñānāśca niścayāt
janasaṅgaparityāgātṣadbhiryogaḥ prasiddhyati

There are six things that will bring you wild success in your practice of yoga: joy in the hard work; a firm resolve to do it; consistency in your practice; seeking to understand suchness; steering clear of doubts; and completely avoiding groups of people.

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 1.16)

II. From the Outer to the Inner: Preparing for Meditation

स्वविषयासंप्रयोगे चित्तस्य स्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणांप्रत्याहारः

svaviṣayāsamprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṅāmpratyāhārah

Learn to withdraw the mind from your physical senses; freed from its ties to outer objects, the mind can arrive at its own real nature.

(Yoga Sutra 2.54)

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।

सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥

yadā hi nendriyārtheṣu na karmasvanuṣajjate
sarvasaṅkalpasannyāsī yogārūḍhastadocyate

One is said to be fully absorbed in yoga when one has renounced all expectation of advantage in one's actions and is unattached to the objects of the senses.

(Bhagavad Gita 6.4)

III. Assume the Position: The Right Posture

समं कायशिरग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥
प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मिच्चितो युक्त आसीत् मत्परः ॥

samaṁ kāyaśiragrīvaṁ dhārayannacalaṁ sthiraḥ
samprekṣya nāsikāgraṁ svaṁ diśaścānavalokayan
praśāntātmā vigatabhīrbrahmacārivrate sthitaḥ
manaḥ saṁyamya miccīto yukta āsīta matparaḥ

Holding the body, head, and neck even, unmoving, and steady, one should concentrate the gaze at the place of the tip of one's nose and not be looking elsewhere. Calm and free from fear, steady in one's vow of celibacy, having restrained one's mind, One should sit having fastened his thought on me, intent on me.

(Bhagavad Gita 6.13-14)

IV. The Definition of Meditation

देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा
deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā
तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम्
tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam
तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासम् स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः
tadevārthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyamiva samādhiḥ

Locking the mind on an object is focus. And staying on that object over a stretch of time is fixation. Perfect meditation then sees this same object as its simple self: its clear light, totally void of any nature of its own.

(Yoga Sutra 3.1-3)

V. The Purpose of Meditation

समाधिभावनार्थः क्लेशतनूकरणार्थश्च

samādhi bhāvanārthaḥ kleśatanūkaraṇārthaśca

Now the whole purpose of meditation is to make our negative thoughts dwindle away.
(Yoga Sutra 2.2)

अथेदानीं प्रवक्ष्यामि समाधिक्रममुत्तमं ।

मृत्युघ्नं च सुखोपायं ब्रह्मानन्दकरं परं ॥

athedānīm pravakṣyāmi samādhikramamuttamaṁ
mṛtughnaṁ ca sukhopāyaṁ brahmānandakaraṁ paraṁ

And so now I will describe to you the higher stages of deep meditation: the way that we can slay death itself, a path of pleasure, the highest method to reach the bliss of the Pure One.

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika 5.2)

VI. What to Meditate On: Compassion and Wisdom

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां

भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्

maitrīkaruṇāmuditaopekṣaṇām sukhaduḥkhaṇyāpuṇyaviṣayāṇām
bhāvanātaścittaprasādanaṁ

You must use kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Learn to keep your feelings in balance, whether something feels good, or whether it hurts; whether something is enjoyable, or distasteful. This practice makes the mind bright and clear as pure water.

(Yoga Sutra 1.33)

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्माणि च कर्म यः ।

स बुद्धिमान्मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥

karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyedakarmani ca karma yaḥ
sa buddhi mānmanuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛitsnakarmakṛt

One who sees inaction in action and action in inaction
Has understanding among men, disciplined in all actions he performs.
(Bhagavad Gita 4.18)

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।

सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥

ātmaupamyena sarvatra samaṁ paśyati yo'rjuna
sukhaṁ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṁ sa yogī paramo mataḥ

One who sees that everything is equally coming from oneself, whether it is suffering or
happiness, is to be considered the supreme yogi.
(Bhagavad Gita 6.32)

पुरुषार्थशून्यानाम् गुणानाम्प्रतिप्रसवः कैवल्यम् स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तिरिति

puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānāmpratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā
citiśaktiriti

Total purity is where those who have grasped the emptiness
of the person and of things develop each of the high qualities. It too is something that comes
through the power of the mind, for those who dwell in their own true nature.
(Yoga Sutra 4.34)

सलिले सैन्धवं यद्वत् साम्यं भजति योगतः ।

तथात्ममनसोरैक्यं समाधिरभिधीयते ॥

salile saindhavaṁ yadvat sāmyaṁ bhajati yogataḥ
tathātmamanasoraikyaṁ samādhirabhidhīyate

Just as salt, when poured into water, becomes then inseparably mixed with it, so too does our mind unite as one with its own true nature; we call this “samadhi.”

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika 4.5)