

## **Exploring Patanjali Yoga Sutra from the Communication Perspective**

Aditya Kumar Shukla, Ph.D., Sukhnandan Singh, Ph.D., &  
Nirmala Mani Adhikary, Ph.D.  
dr.akshukla26@gmail.com

### **Abstract**

*Patanjali Yoga* is the primary school of thought in the Indian philosophical system known as *Shad-darshan*. It is known for its scientific and practical approach. *Patanjali Yoga*, as such, does not deal with communication directly. Though it is a spiritual treatise, it addresses the behavioral aspects of the Yoga aspirant, thus holding profound ethical significance from the perspective of interpersonal communication. The *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* provides deep insight into the communication process at different levels, leading the aspirant to the ultimate state of consciousness, or Self-realization, liberation, peace, freedom, and bliss. This research aims to describe the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and transpersonal aspects of communication, as well as obstructions and aiding factors, as envisioned in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*.

**Keywords:** Patanjali Yoga Sutra, intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, transpersonal communication, communication

### **Patanjali Yoga Sutra: The Systematic Approach to the Conscious Evolution of Human Beings**

Patanjali Yoga is a significant school of thought within the Indian philosophical system known as *Sad-darshan* (the six systems of philosophy). Yoga has been practiced in India since ancient times, with traces found in

early Vedic texts. Its development continues in the *Upanishads*, which are considered the culminating portions of the *Vedas*. As Swami (1991) noted, “References to yoga practices—spiritual disciplines and meditation techniques, which enable humans to achieve unitive knowledge of the Godhead—are to be found already in the *Katha*, *Svetasvatara*, *Taittiriya*, and *Maitrayani Upanishads*” (p. v).

Sage Patanjali later systematized and organized the study and teachings of yoga. While he was neither the first yoga teacher nor the originator of yoga science, he is regarded as its codifier. Patanjali’s approach was both practical and insightful; he was not merely a religious preacher or priest, but a philosopher and a scientist who deeply understood the complexities of life. As Rama (2019) noted, Patanjali was a great yogi who practiced yoga, conducted experiments, and possessed profound knowledge. He was an enlightened sage who offered yoga science for the benefit of all humanity. *Patanjali Yoga* is considered the most practical and applied form of Indian philosophy, characterized by deep psychological insight and spiritual implications. As Acharya (2011) emphasized, its methods are not tied to any sect, belief, or religion; rather, they offer a universal approach that leads human beings toward their ultimate goal (p. 4).

*Patanjali Yoga Sutra* is regarded as the most precise and scientific text ever written on yoga. It is divided into four chapters and 196 *sutras*: *Samadhi Pada*—this chapter on yoga and its goal consists of 51 *sutras*; *Sadhana Pada*—this chapter on the practice of yoga consists of 55 *sutras*; *Vibhooti Pada*—this chapter on psychic powers consists of 56 *sutras*; and *Kaivalya Pada*—this chapter on oneness consists of 34 *sutras*.

Yoga is a systematic method for exploring the self, gradually leading to a state of liberation or freedom. It is

founded on action and reflection—like the two wings of a bird—neither of which, alone, can take us anywhere. Yoga always pairs philosophical thought with deliberate effort and succinctly outlines the art and science of yoga for self-realization. It is a process of gathering, examining, and reaching beyond the gross and subtle levels of false identity until the jewel of the true self lights up (Acharya, 2011, p. 4). Different modes of communication lead an aspirant to that state of self-realization.

### ***Patanjali Yoga Sutra* and Communication**

The *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* does not directly refer to communication, but by observing its verses (*sutras*) closely, one can discern profound implications from a communication perspective. Communication, in its various forms, serves as a means to reach the highest state of human consciousness described in the *PYS*. Furthermore, communication in its transpersonal form becomes the ultimate state of human interaction, which will be elaborated on later.

It is the humble yet clear conviction of the researchers that the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* holds deep significance from a communication perspective. However, to the researchers' knowledge, the topic remains largely unexplored in depth. Previous communication scholars have provided only sporadic mentions and subtle references. A review of their insights is presented below.

### **Communication Insight in *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*: The Journey So Far**

The interest of communication scholars in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* and its exploration can be traced back to the end of the 20th century. Saral (1983) stated that there is always an ongoing process of intrapersonal communication between the inner and outer self. According to Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, when the seeker or *yogi* achieves

*Siddhi* or *Ritambara Pragma*, they can engage in transpersonal communication beyond both interpersonal and intrapersonal levels (PYS, 1.48).

Kirkwood (1994), while referencing Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra*, explained how "mental stillness" is required for both communication and spirituality. He claimed that avenues of research remain open to scholars interested in the intersection of communication and spirituality. Kirkwood (1997) further discussed the intrapersonal consequences of speaking from the perspective of Indian thought and derived its implications for ethics in communication. Based on *Shankya-Yoga* philosophy, Kirkwood concluded that speech affects not only the listener but also the speaker; it also influences the speaker's process of self-realization and liberation.

According to Dissanayake (1987), Indian communication theories are reception- and interpretation-oriented, rather than expression-oriented like Western models. The Indian definition of communication is that it is an inward search for meaning. The Indian model of communication is intrapersonal rather than interpersonal, and this intrapersonal process must lead to transpersonal communication, in which the oneness of the world is ambiguously perceived.

Sitaram (2004) discussed the importance of self-realization in the communication process. He explained that the *Yoga* school of Hindu philosophy describes how to acquire knowledge about the inner self and interpret that knowledge to others. He concluded that the primary purpose of communication is to know the inner self and attain *moksha*.

In the words of Kumar (2005a), the intrapersonal dimension of communication holds greater importance than the interpersonal in the Indian approach, as individualism

and manipulation have no place in it. Kumar (2005b) stated that the Indian tradition of public communication is deeply rooted in intrapersonal and transpersonal communication.

Adhikary (2007, 2010a, 2010b, 2014) has discussed verbal communication as a tool for attaining *moksha*. Extending the scope of the communication discipline to Vidya as envisioned in Hinduism (Adhikary, 2010a, 2010b, 2024), and drawing on the Sadharanikaran Model of Communication (SMC) and the Sancharyoga theory, he has explained that communication could also be considered *Sancharyoga*, alongside *Jnana-yoga*, *Bhakti-yoga*, and *Karma-yoga* (for further discussion on the SMC and the *Sancharyoga* theory, see: Adhikary, 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2014).

Stroud (2009) has stated that in Hinduism, communication is a means for self-realization. In Hindu traditions, narratives are used in such a manner that they help the reader or listener move beyond assumed illusions into a more enlightened state. Singh (2014) has discussed communication from the Indian scripture *Sri Madbhagavad Gita* and its intrapersonal, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects, which lead the aspirant to excellence in worldly life and perfection in inner life. Singh (2017) explored the Indian communication perspective with particular reference to the Vedic spiritual tradition. He examined intrapersonal, interpersonal, and mass communication from a spiritual angle and emphasized the role of communication in self-realization and social welfare.

Thus, it can be observed that communication in the Indian spiritual tradition and the *PYS* is an inward search for truth, freedom, and the ultimate goal of life. Furthermore, there are three levels of communication leading to that state: yogic interpersonal communication builds the foundation, intrapersonal communication guides the inner journey

further, and ultimately leads to the highest state of consciousness in *samadhi*. In this state, transpersonal communication becomes a reality.

From the above literature review, it is clear that all these stages are mentioned in one form or another. However, detailed references and discussions regarding these stages of communication, their logical sequence, and their interconnections are lacking. Furthermore, there is little mention of the process, obstructions, and supporting aids.

The present article aims to shed light on this direction. However, before discussing the communication aspect in detail, it is appropriate first to explore the meaning of *Yoga* and the goal of life in the Indian yogic tradition and the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*.

### **The Goal of Life in Bharatavarshiya Yogic Tradition & Patanjali Yoga Sutra**

Communication is the basis of human existence and is directly linked to life. The purpose of communication is also directly related to the meaning of life. In the Indian spiritual tradition, the goal of life is to reach the state of our Real Self—a divine reality called *moksha*, *kaivalya*, *nirvana*, self-realization, God-realization, or liberation—associated with the state of inner freedom and the realization of the ultimate truth. The self and *God* in the Indian tradition are ultimately equitable (Dasgupta, 2018). In this view, the human being exists in a transformed inner state. This is not merely a theoretical assumption, but the supreme goal for spiritual aspirants and truth seekers—one that has been achieved by some and is currently pursued by many. It is also the highest goal and ideal embedded in the psyche of followers of the Indian spiritual tradition.

According to Shastri (1976), “the word *Yoga* means union, but the special import of the word is the union of the individual soul with the Great divine soul” (p. 202). *Yoga* is

for all and is universal. It is purely spiritual and does not contradict anyone's sincere faith. *Yoga* is union with God—union with all. According to Vidyaranya (1996), “the practice of concentration or union with the Supreme Spirit—*yukti*—is *Yoga*” (p. 87).

Thus, *yoga* implies a state of the *atman* (Radhakrishnan, 2004, p. 532). *Yoga* means “yoking.” It is the yoking of the mind and body and the internalization of mental activities to achieve equilibrium of the mind, body, and intellect. One could call this the internalization of the macrocosm within the microcosm. According to Bartley (2011), in Indian culture, any discipline of physical and mental self-cultivation and self-transformation aimed at freeing one from rebirth is called *yoga*.

In the *Srimadbhagavad Gita*, equanimity amid success and failure is described as *yoga* in the phrase “*Samatvam Yoga Uchyate*” (Geeta 2.48). Elsewhere, it states, “Severance of contact with sorrow is called *Yoga*; and *yoga* has to be practiced with perseverance and an undepressed heart” (Geeta 6.23).

In the words of Aurobindo (1999), “the aim of our *Yoga* is *Jivanmukti* in the universe; we have to live released in the world, not released out of the world” (p. 104). Further, he says that the complete practical aim of *yoga* is “to rise into divine existence, force, light and bliss and recast in that mold all mundane existence” (p. 102). For him, *yoga* is a means to arrive “at union with the Truth behind things through an inner discipline which leads us from the consciousness of the outward and apparent to the consciousness of the inner and real” (p. 327). He defines *yoga* as “the science, the process, the effort and action by which man attempts to pass out of the limits of his ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness” (p. 327). It is a “methodized effort towards self-perfection”

(p. 6). Thus, *yoga* is the means by which one becomes connected to, identifies with *Isvara*, *Brahman*, or *Paramatman*, or attains *moksha* or self-realization.

This inner discipline or methodized effort is directly linked to interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, leading to the stage that PYS calls abiding in one's real nature (PYS, 1.3). It is the knowledge of *atman* (PYS, 1.1).

Patanjali defined *yoga* as “*yogascittavrittinirodhah*” (PYS, 1.1). *Yoga* is the restraint of mind–body adjustments. Patanjali explains that once the mind is appropriately restrained, the “seer,” or the “soul, the true self,” can rest in its true nature (PYS, 1.3). Furthermore, if the mind is not under control, it continues to assume the form of the “*vrittis*,” or the perturbations of the mind, and these *vrittis* become the cause of human suffering. This state of self-realization, or *moksha*, is the primary aim of Patanjali *yoga*.

### **Steps to Self-Realization**

There are three approaches for reaching this state of consciousness, as described by Sage Patanjali, based on the different levels of aspirants.

For advanced practitioners, it is the practice of non-attachment (*abhyasa-vairagya*; PYS 1.12). This method is not for those grossly attached to the world but rather for highly evolved souls who are earnestly and single-mindedly pursuing self-realization. Through practice and non-attachment, the thought waves (*vrittis*) are controlled (PYS, 1.12). It is a repeated effort (PYS, 1.13) and an uninterrupted discipline maintained over a long period that gives permanent control over the mind's thought waves (PYS, 1.14).

For medium-level practitioners, who are advanced aspirants in between, the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* prescribes *kriya yoga*, which includes: *tapa*, *swadhyaya*, and *ishwarapranidhana* (PYS, 2.1). *Tapa* means enduring the



ups and downs of life with equanimity and adopting a life of austerity. *Swadhyaya* refers to self-study, self-awareness, and self-refinement in the light of spiritual scriptures.

*Ishwarapranidhana* means devotion to God, performing one's duties to the best of one's ability, and offering the fruits of *karma*, whether good or bad, to God.

For beginners, it is *Ashtanga Yoga*, or eightfold Yoga (PYS, 2.29). This path is intended for those at the initial stage who wish to follow the yogic way and realize their true nature. The eight stages are:

- *Yama*, or abstention from harming others, falsehood, theft, incontinence, and greed (PYS, 2.30).
- *Niyama*, or observances such as cleanliness, contentment, mortification, self-study, and devotion to God (PYS, 2.32).
- *Asana*, or physical posture, provides a stable base for prolonged meditation practices.
- *Pranayama*, or control of the *prana*, purifies the subtle *pranic* channels, increases vitality, and fosters a stabilized mental state.
- *Pratyahara* is the withdrawal of the mind from sensing objects and its redirection toward the inner self.

These first five stages are called *bahirang yoga*, dealing with the external preparation for Yoga. The following three stages are called *antarang yoga*, which address the internal aspect of Yoga. The first five stages serve merely as preparatory steps for the final three.

*Dharana* is the sixth stage. It means focusing the mind on a single point (i.e., an object of meditation). It is the concentration of the mind on a particular object (PYS 3.1). It is the steadfastness of reason (Radhakrishnan, 2004, p. 537).

*Dhyana* is the seventh stage. *Dhyana* means the uninterrupted continuity of awareness of the object of meditation. It is an unbroken flow of knowledge toward that

object (PYS 3.2; Swami Vivekananda's translation). When concentration on a particular object of knowledge becomes continuous, providing an explicit understanding of the same, it is known as *dhyana* or meditation (PYS, 3.2).

*Dhyana* culminates in *samadhi*, where the sense of ego is lost. It is the state of absorption in the *atman*. In this state, the mind is so deeply absorbed in the object of contemplation that it becomes one with it. It represents a state of absolute identity among the subject, the object, and the process of meditation. This stage is considered one of total transformation or self-realization.

### **The Process of Self-Transformation**

It will be proper here to highlight and discuss the basic philosophy of *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* to understand the process of self-transformation and self-realization that takes place through the above steps, and further, its relation to the communication process.

*PYS* is based on the philosophical foundation of the *Sankhya* school of Indian philosophy, which holds *Purusha* and *Prakriti* as the two basic building blocks of the universe and human existence. *Purusha* is the witness self, while *Prakriti* is the cause of creation and comprises three *gunas* (*satwa*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). In the primordial state, when *Prakriti* is at rest, the three *gunas* are in a state of balance or equilibrium. With their agitation or disturbance, the evolution of *Prakriti* begins and manifests as worldly existence. Different levels and combinations of *gunas* determine the various mental states of human beings.

Its five stages are: disturbed (*kṣipta*), stupefied (*mudha*), restless (*vikṣipta*), one-pointed (*ekagra*), and well-controlled (*niruddha*). When *rajas* and *tamas* are predominant, the mind becomes disturbed (*kṣipta*). When *rajas* dominates, the mind becomes hyperactive, and when *tamas* dominates, the mind loses its ability to distinguish

good from evil. It moves quickly from one object to another without pause. It is constantly agitated by external stimuli but lacks the discernment to distinguish right from wrong. In this state, the mind jumps from one thing to the next, never remaining focused, and represents an imbalanced and dysfunctional condition.

In the second stage (*mudha*), *tamas* dominates the mind and is characterized by inertia, vice, ignorance, lethargy, and sleep. In this state, the mind is so sluggish that it loses its capacity for sound reasoning and becomes hostile and dull. In the restless stage (*viksipta*), *rajas* is predominant.

These first three stages of the mind act as impediments on the path of inner growth and self-realization. At this level, one experiences pain, misery, and unpleasant emotions. However, the following two stages are calmer and more peaceful. Thus, all the modifications of the mind (*vṛttis*) are found in the earlier three stages. In the one-pointed and well-controlled states, there is no such modification. In the lighter aspect of *Prakṛti*, there is a predominance of *sattva*, which characterizes the one-pointed state of mind (*ekagra*). In this tranquil state of near-complete stillness, one can perceive the fundamental nature of things. This fourth state is conducive to concentration, and the Yoga system aims to cultivate and sustain this state of mind for as long and as consistently as possible.

In the well-controlled state of mind (*niruddha*), there is no disturbance, only a pure manifestation of *sattvic* energy. In this state, consciousness reflects its purity and entirety in the mirror of the mind, and one becomes capable of exploring one's true nature. Only the last two states of mind are positive and supportive for meditation. The eightfold path and other practices described in the *Patanjali*

*Yoga Sutra* gradually evolve the aspirant toward attaining these states.

When all the changes stop and the state of perfect stillness is reached, *Purusha* (pure consciousness) sees its true nature reflected in the mind. As *Samadhi*, this is the cherished state of the super-conscious mind (Vivekanand, 1947, p. 181). *Samadhi* is the state of complete transformation.

### **Communication Insight from Patanjali Yoga Sutra**

With the above-discussed process of self-transformation, it is now appropriate to discuss communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* point of view. Intrapersonal communication is the key to the conscious self-evolution defined by the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*. However, it is not possible for a scattered mind. A minimal level of mental stability and concentration must be present for its functioning. This foundation is laid by yogic interpersonal communication based on the *bahirang* aspect of Yoga.

### **Yogic Interpersonal Communication**

Patanjali Yoga Sutra is the process of self-discipline gradually sublimating human nature from gross to subtler level, and the real work starts after *Pratyahara*. Till then, it is all as if the preparatory phase. Our outer, behavioral, physical, vital, and psychological aspects must be disciplined and stabilized to the extent; it is ready for *Antarang yoga*, advancing with *Dharna*, *Dhyana* & *Samadhi*.

*Yama-Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama* & *Pratyahara* take care of this outer aspect. Some of them affect our communication directly, and others indirectly. The values and practices directly affecting our interpersonal communication are:

In *Yama*, nonviolence, truthfulness, and continence in thought, word, and deed give behavioral integrity and mental stability to the communicator. In *Niyama*, *Shaucha* gives the necessary purity and poise to the communicator. *Santosha* provides the essential insight and patience with the least expectation from others. *Tapa* gives the strength to endure the opposing currents of life with equanimity. *Ishwara Pranidhana* gives the divine faith to hope for the best and face the worst as a communicator. Besides these, the rest of *Yama*—non-stealing and non-possessiveness—and *Niyama*, *Swadhyaya*, directly refine and strengthen the communicator. *Asanas* and *Pranayama* also indirectly affect communication by providing physical strength, mental stability, and vitality.

*Yama-Niyamas* have further higher potential regarding communication. According to the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, the prolonged and sincere practice of *yama-niyama* with perfection empowers the aspirant with some unique qualities, having profound significance concerning communication.

With the perfection of *Ahimsa*, all living creatures will feel no enmity in his presence (PYS, 3.35). Truthfulness gives the power of blessing and curse (PYS, 3.36). With *Brahmacharya*, one acquires spiritual energy (PYS, 3.38). With *Aparigraha*, one gains knowledge of his past, present, and future existence (PYS, 3.39). With *Shoucha* (cleanliness), there arises indifference towards the body and sensual pleasures (PYS, 3.40). Moreover, one achieves purification of the heart, cheerfulness of mind, the power of concentration, control of the passions, and fitness for the vision of the *Atman* (PYS, 3.41). With *Santosha* (contentment), one gains supreme happiness (PYS, 3.42). With *Tapas* (austerity), impurities are removed, and special powers come to the body and the sense organs (PYS, 3.43).

With *Swadhyaya* (self-study), one obtains the vision of that aspect of God that one has chosen to worship. With *Ishwarapranidhana* (devotion to God), one achieves *Samadhi*, the state of absorption, leading to the highest form of communication (PYS, 3.4).

Besides *yama-niyama*, *asana*, *pranayama*, and *pratyahara* have their own impact on maturation. With the perfection of *asanas* (postures), one is no longer troubled by the dualities of sense experience (PYS, 3.48). As a result of *pranayama*, the covering of the inner light is removed (PYS, 3.52). The mind gains the power of concentration (*dharna*) (PYS, 3.53). With *pratyahara* arises complete mastery over the senses (PYS, 3.55).

The above-said results of yogic interpersonal communication, even to some degree, prepare the practitioner for effective intrapersonal communication and higher self-awareness.

### **Yogic Intrapersonal Communication**

After achieving minimal mental stability and inner and outer harmony through yogic interpersonal communication, the aspirant is ready to delve deeper into the next steps of intrapersonal communication. The chief components of this process can be mentioned as follows:

1. *Swadhyaya*: Self-study prepares the aspirant for deeper self-exploration, analysis, and awareness.
2. *Tapas*: Its fire sublimates the *gunas* and further clears the psychological blockages at a deeper level.
3. *Ishwara Pranidhana*: It leads to self-transformation at the deepest level through the sublimation of the ego at the altar of the Supreme Self.
4. *Pratyahara*: Here, outward awareness is drawn to inner reality and can be considered the preparatory phase of the journey of inner exploration.

5. Dharna–Dhyana (Concentration–Meditation): The inner journey advances with concentration and meditation on the spiritual reality. "Patanjali's technique of meditation is the evolution in reverse. It is a process of devolution. With the beginning at the surface of life, the meditative mind goes inward, always seeking the path of reality" (Swami, 1991). It results in inner transformation through the state of *samadhi*.

With *samadhi*, the next level of communication—i.e., transpersonal communication—becomes a reality.

### **Yogic Transpersonal Communication**

Transpersonal communication dawns with the maturity of *Samadhi* and its ultimate fruits of *KaivalyaGyan*, *VivekaKhyati*, and *RitambharaPragya* (PYS, 1.48). The knowledge of the ultimate truth leads to a state of complete peace, freedom, and bliss.

Along the way, and after *Samadhi*, come the *vibhuties*, supernatural powers, and ESP (extrasensory perceptions) (PYS, 3.37). They are not miracles, but essential qualities associated with the evolving super-conscious state on the way to *Samadhi*. Though they are considered obstacles on the path to ultimate realization, from a communication point of view, some of these are worth mentioning.

When these three—(*dharna*) concentration, (*dhyana*) meditation, and (*samadhi*) absorption—are brought to bear upon one object, they are called *samyama*, and with mastery of *samyama* comes the light of knowledge (PYS, 3.4). *Samyama* on the three kinds of changes obtains knowledge of the past and the future (PYS, 3.16). By making *samyama* on the sound of a word, one's perception of its meaning, and one's reaction to it—these three things which are ordinarily confused—one obtains an understanding of all sounds

uttered by living beings (PYS, 3.17). By making *samyama* on previous thought waves, one gains knowledge of one's past lives (PYS, 3.18). By making *samyama* on the distinguishing marks of another man's body, one understands the nature of his mind (PYS, 3.20). By making *samyama* on the heart, one gains knowledge of the contents of the reason (PYS, 3.36).

One develops the powers of these qualities by making *samyama* on friendliness and compassion (PYS, 3.24). By making *samyama* on the inner light, one obtains knowledge of what is subtle, hidden, or distant (PYS, 3.26). One acquires supernatural powers of hearing by making *samyama* on the connections between the ear and the ether (PYS, 3.42). One can make *samyama* on the discrimination between the *sattva guna* and *Atman* to gain omnipotence and omniscience (PYS, 3.50). By making *samyama* on the independence of *Atman*, one gains knowledge of the *Atman* (PYS, 3.36). Hence, one achieves the ability due to spontaneous enlightenment and obtains supernatural powers of hearing, sight, taste, and smell (PYS, 3.37).

From the spiritual point of view, these powers are obstacles, as the aspirant may get stuck in them or be tempted to misuse them for selfish ends. According to *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, they are powers in the worldly state but obstacles to *Samadhi* (PYS, 3.38). The seed of evil is destroyed by giving up even these powers, and liberation follows (PYS, 3.51). However, the liberated or illumined soul possesses these powers as a master. They do not make a show of them and use them most discriminately in selfless ways. From a transpersonal communication point of view, these powers explain the phenomenon of thought reading and communicating without words at *para* and *pashyanti* levels.



These *vibhuties* explain the wonder of spiritual communication we see in the lives of great spiritual masters like Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Telanga Swami, Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Raman, Sri Aurobindo, Pt. Sri Ram Sharma Acharya, and many more.

Thus, communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* point of view is a process of conscious self-evolution and inner growth, involving the transformation of lower nature into higher nature and ultimately becoming established in our fundamental nature as the witnessing self (*Purusha*).

According to Richard Garbe (1897), "The ultimate goal of human aspiration according to *Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali is not the union with or absorption in God; instead, it is absolute isolation (*Kaivalya*) of the soul from matter" (p. 15). The methodical performance of yogic practice not only helps humans acquire supernatural powers but is also the most effective means of attaining knowledge of the self. With the help of yogic practices, the mind is purified and begins to merge into *Prakriti*, from which it has emerged. *Purusha* also realizes its relationship with the reason—it was due to ignorance. In this way, *Purusha* dissociates from *Prakriti* and recognizes its true nature. It now ceases to identify with *Prakriti* and her evolutes and comes to know that it was isolated from *Prakriti* for eternity.

Thus, communication in *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* is not merely the transmission of a message to others but a process of conscious self-evolution, self-growth, and self-transformation, leading to peace, freedom, harmony, and bliss—both inner and outer. It is a state of blessedness and of living as a blessing to the world. It is the ideal of human excellence and perfection. All saints, sages, and illumined masters represent this lofty height of human evolution. The obstructions to this state are also minutely dealt with in *PYS*.

### **Obstructions on the Way to Human Evolution**

- Nine obstacles mentioned by Patanjali include disease (*Vyadhi*), lack of interest (*Styana*), doubt (*Samshya*), delusion (*Pramada*), lethargy (*Alasya*), reluctance to give up sensual pleasure (*Avirati*), erroneous conception (*Bhranti-darshana*), non-attainment of any level of concentration (*Alabdha-bhumikatwa*), and inability to retain a level of attention once attained (*Anavasthitatwa*) (PYS, 1.30).
- Four physical and mental disturbances caused by an un-concentrated mind are grief (*Dukha*), despair (*Daurmanasya*), involuntary nervous trembling of the body (*Anga-mejayatwa*), and irregular breathing (*Shwasa-prashwasa-vikshepa*) (PYS, 1.31).
- Five more subtle obstructions recognized by Patanjali are ignorance of one's inherent divine nature (*Avidya*), egoism (*Asmita*), attachment (*Raga*), aversion (*Dwesh*), and clinging to life (*Abhinivesha*) (PYS, 2.3).

### **Helping Aids to Counter the Obstructions**

To counter these obstructions, in addition to the eightfold practice of Yoga and yogic communication, some specific techniques have been prescribed in the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*. These are listed below:

- The practice of concentration upon a single truth (PYS, 1.32).
- Expulsion and retention of the breath (PYS, 1.34).
- Four golden principles of behavior or communication: friendliness (*Maitry*) towards the happy, compassion (*Karuna*) towards the unhappy, delight (*Mudita*) in the virtuous, and indifference (*Upeksha*) towards the wicked (PYS, 1.33).

- Cultivating thoughts of an opposite kind when distracting thoughts arise in the mind (PYS, 1.33).
- Cultivating virtues such as faith, willpower, recollectedness, absorption, and the power of discrimination (PYS, 2.20).
- Fixing the mind upon the inner light, which is beyond sorrow (PYS, 1.36).
- Meditating on the heart of an illumined soul free from passion (PYS, 1.37).
- Fixing the mind upon a dream experience or the experience of deep sleep (PYS, 1.38).
- Fixing the mind upon any divine form or symbol that appeals to one as good (PYS, 1.39).
- Energetic effort: The speed of the yoga aspirant's progress depends on the intensity of their action. The rate can be mild, medium, or intense. The improvement is remarkable for the intensely energetic (PYS, 1.22).

## **Conclusion**

Thus, communication from the *Patanjali Yoga Sutra* perspective is a process of self-exploration, self-realization, and conscious self-evolution. Intrapersonal communication plays a vital role through tools such as contemplation and meditation on spiritual reality. Yogic interpersonal communication lays the foundation through the *bahirang* aspect of Yoga, including *Yama* and *Niyama*. This entire process of eightfold Yoga, when practiced with consistent and prolonged effort, leads to the state of *Samadhi*, transforming consciousness and realizing the oneness of existence—where transpersonal communication becomes a reality. It is the blessed state of human existence in which a person becomes a blessing to the world. All saints, sages, and enlightened souls represent this lofty state of human potential.

[Dr. Aditya Kumar Shukla is an Associate Professor at Amity School of Communication, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, India.

Professor Dr. Sukhnandan Singh is a Professor and Dean at Dev Sanskriti University, Haridwar, Uttarakhand, India.

Dr. Nirmala Mani Adhikary is an Associate Professor at the Department of Languages and Mass Communication, School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Nepal.]

### **References**

- Acharya, P. S. (2011). *Sankhya evam yog darshan*. Yug Nirman Yojna Vistar Trust.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2007). *Sancharyoga: Verbal communication as a means for attaining moksha* (Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation). Pokhara University.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2009). An introduction to sadharanikaran model of communication. *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 3(1), 69-91.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010a). Communication and moksha-in-life. *Ritambhara*, 14, 183–195.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2010b). Sancharyoga: Approaching communication as a vidya in Hindu orthodoxy. *China Media Research*, 6(3), 76-84.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2014). *Theory and practice of communication – Bharata Muni*. Makhanlal Chaturvedi National University of Journalism and Communication.
- Adhikary, N. M. (2024). Is communication a vidya or an avidya according to Hinduism? *Bodhi: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 10(3), 106-125.
- Aurobindo, S. (1999). *The complete works of Sri Aurobindo* (Vols. 12 & 23). Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.
- Bartley, C. (2011). *An introduction to Indian philosophy*. Bloomsbury Academic.

- Dasgupta, S. (2018). *History of Indian philosophy* (Vol. 2). Rupa Publications.
- Dissanayake, W. (1987). The guiding image in Indian culture and its implications for communication. In D. L. Kincaid (Ed.), *Communication theory: Eastern and Western perspectives* (pp. 151–160). Academic Press.
- Garbe, R. (1897). *Philosophy of ancient India*. The Open Court Publishing Company.
- Kirkwood, W. G. (1994). Studying communication about spirituality and the spiritual consequences of communication. *Journal of Communication & Religion*, 17(1), [Page range not provided].
- Kirkwood, W. G. (1997). Indian thought and the intrapersonal consequences of speaking: Implications for ethics in communication. In J. A. Daly & J. M. Wiemann (Eds.), *Intrapersonal communication processes* (pp. 220–226). Sage.
- Kumar, K. (2005a). *Mass communication in India*. Jaico.
- Kumar, K. (2005b). Indian/Hindu theories of communication. *Journal of the Asian Research Center for Religion and Social Communication*, 3(2), 90–104.
- Radhakrishnan, S. (2004). *Indian philosophy* (Vol. 1). Oxford University Press.
- Rama, S. (2019). Darshana and seeing reality. *Swami Rama Teachings*.  
<https://sites.google.com/site/swamiraamateachings/swami-rama-darshana-seeing>
- Saral, T. B. (1983). Hindu philosophy of communication. *Communication—East and West*, 8(1), 47–58.
- Shastri, M. (1976). *Outlines of Hindu philosophy*. Bhartiya Book Corporation.

- Singh, S. (2014). *Bhagavad Geeta—a manual of spiritual communication: The way to excellence & perfection*. *China Media Research*, 10(2), 29–34.
- Singh, S. (2017). Communication from Indian perspective—with special reference to Vedic spiritual tradition. *Dev Sanskriti: Interdisciplinary International Journal*, 10, 35–41.
- Sitaram, K. S. (2004). South Asian theories of speech communication: Origins and applications in ancient, modern, and postmodern times. *Human Communication: A Journal of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association*, 7(1), 83–101.
- Stroud, S. (2009). Hindu communication theory. In S. L. Foss (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of communication theory* (pp. 476–477). Sage.
- Swami Prabhavananda. (1991). *Patanjali yoga sutra*. Sri Ramakrishna Math.
- Vidyaranya, S. (1996). *Jivan mukti viveka*. Advaita Ashrama.
- Vivekananda, S. (1947). *Complete works* (Vol. 1). Ramakrishna Math.