

8 Yogic Limbs To Growth & Transformation

By

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Contents

- Introduction
- Where Patanjali starts his 8-limbs
- Kleshas (like misperception)
- Overview of all 8 limbs
- Some detail on each limb
- Review of the 8 limbs

Patanjali “codified” an ancient practice

*... in the Yoga Sutras,
over 2,000 years ago*



His system is called
Classical Yoga,

OR

Ashtanga Yoga,

OR

“8 Limbs”



8 limbs


1. Yamas (moral code)
2. Niyama (observances)
3. Asana posture
4. Pranayama (energy via breath)
5. Pratyahara (sense withdrawal)
6. Dharana concentration
7. Dhyana meditative focus
8. Samadhi (integration)



A woman with short grey hair, wearing a teal wetsuit, is performing a yoga pose on a red mat. She is on a rocky beach with a large rock formation to her left and a sandy beach and ocean in the background. Her hands are on the mat, and her feet are raised and pointed towards the sky. The sky is overcast with grey clouds.

He saw it as recommendations for a
journey to refine mind, body, & spirit.

To help you be a better person.



It's a journey
from the
outer layer of
self, to your
inner realms



Yoga expert: TKV Desikachar

*“The goal of yoga
is to encourage us
to be a little better
than we were
before.”*



Patanjali said:

Yoga is about
stilling the
fluctuations in the
consciousness.



It's a very
practical,
experiential,
philosophy.

Based on doing!



So, Patanjali
gave us a road
map for the
self-discovery
journey.



He called his
roadmap the
“8 limbs”.



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—

We don't
always do
what's best
for
ourselves.



As a result,
Patanjali says
we cause our
own distress.



Every thought
& action has a
consequence.



Mind gets
quiet via
practising
the 8 limbs.



—

We use our
practise to
cleanse the
lenses of our
perception.



■

We're locked in
habits &
misperceptions.



Five Kleshas

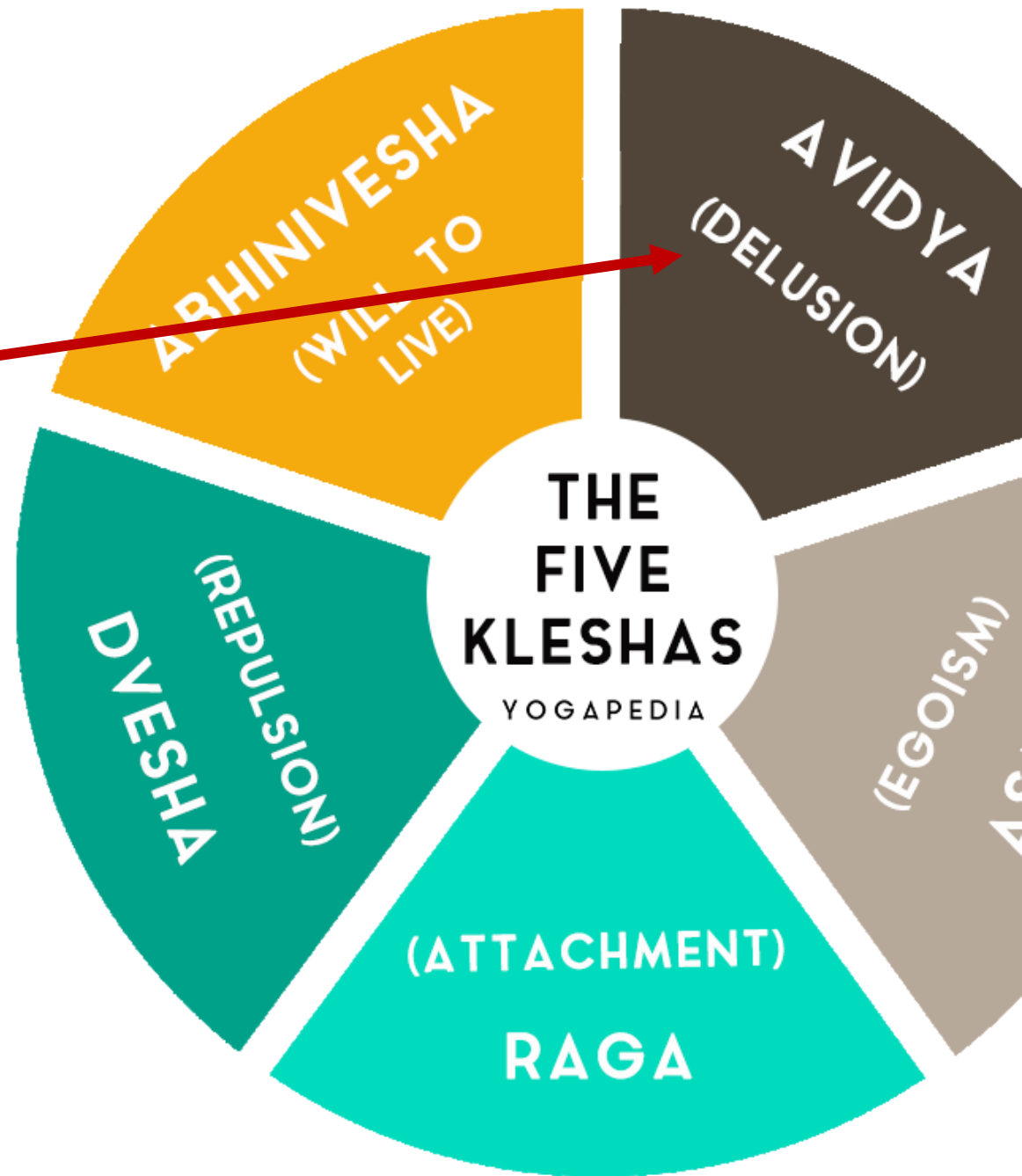
(See diagram):

Mental states causing us distress.



Avidya:

Delusion & misperception is common.



■

Misperception is
rooted in us.

Due to habits &
samskaras.



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Samskaras:

Every action or
thought
becomes a
memory that
sits in the body.



Samskaras

***...impressions and dispositions that develop
and accumulate deep inside a person...***

Samskaras

...impressions and dispositions that develop and accumulate deep inside a person...

from perception, inference, choices, preparation, practice, interaction with others, thoughts, intent, [and] willful actions....

Samskaras

...impressions and dispositions that develop and accumulate deep inside a person...

from perception, inference, choices, preparation, practice, interaction with others, thoughts, intent, [and] willful actions....

These manifest...as habits, behaviours, tendencies, psychological predisposition, and dispositions.

Samskaras are “like mounds at the bottom of a lake”.

They rise up,
periodically,
& cause us grief!



It's a journey
from
negative
samskaras to
positive.



Eventually, your
actions are not
leaving imprints.



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The Eight Limbs of Yoga

7. Dhyana
(Meditation)

8. Samadhi
(Total self-
collectedness)

1. Yamas

Yamas:
Ahimsa (Non-violence)
Satya (Truthfulness)
Asteya (Non-stealing)
Brahmacharya (Non-excess)
Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)

6. Dharana
(Concentration)

2. Niyamas

Niyamas:
Saucha (purity/cleansing)
Tapas (self-discipline)
Svadhyaya (self-study)
Ishvara pranidhana (surrender)
Santosha (contentment)

5. Pratyahara
(Inner awareness)

3. Asana
(Physical poses)

4.
Pranayama
(Breathing)





8 limbs are the path for self transformation.

Not a linear
progression.

Rather, work to
meet all limbs
simultaneously.



A path to vidya:

...“to see” yourself
more clearly.



Not
commandments.

Over time, just
chip away.



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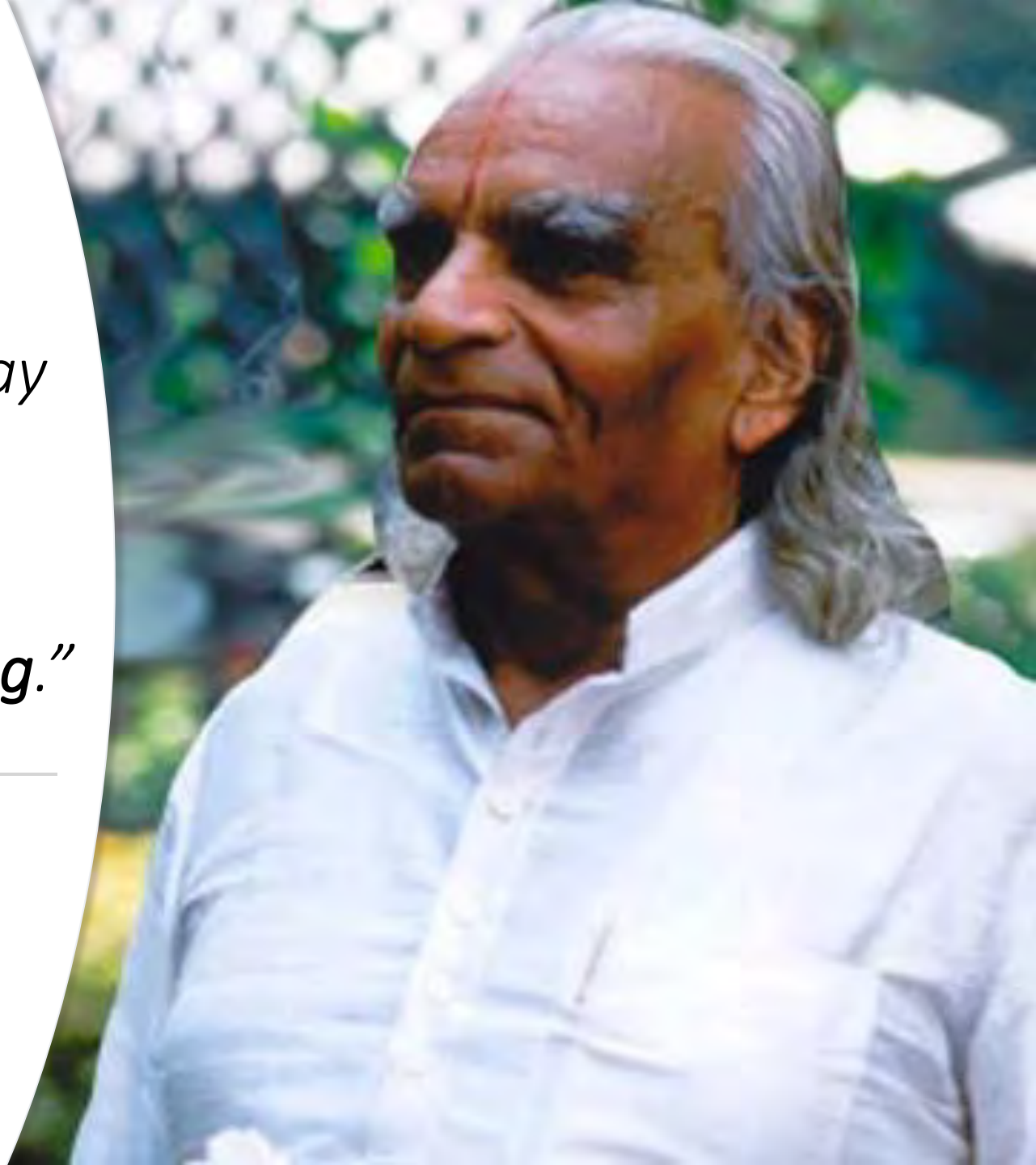
1. Yamas (five of them)

1. Ahimsa (non-violence)
2. Satya (truthfulness)
3. Asteya (not stealing)
4. Brahmacharya (moderation)
5. Aparigraha (non greediness)



—
BKS Iyengar view:

*“Ethics is not a way
of just thinking,
... but a way of
doing with thinking.”*



BKS Iyengar view:

*“You
cannot separate ethics
from physical or mental
discipline...”*



2. Niyamas

Niyamas. Attitudes we adopt towards ourselves.

Niyamas:

Saucha (purity/cleansing)

Tapas (self-discipline)

Svadhyaya (self-study)

Ishvara pranidhana (surrender)

Santosha (contentment)

“We become better by making an effort and by practising....”

Leads to self-knowledge



3. Asana yoga postures

- In asana, or yoga postures, Patanjali saw the body and mind as moving in harmony.



Some benefits of asanas (postures)

Asanas **increase physical capabilities**, promote attentiveness, and open us up to new experiences.



Asanas:

*“train &
discipline the
mind”.*

BKS Iyengar



4.

Pranayama breath meditation

Pranayama meditation is the process of breathing so as to influence the mind.



Note that some pranayama techniques also involve sound... such as Bumble Bee Breathing



5.

Pratyahara:

Withdrawal of
the senses

Helps you to
focus.



TKV Desikachar
view:

*“...We become
masters, rather
than servants of
the senses”*



6.

Dharana:

**Uninterrupted
concentration**

Dharana is fixing the mind in one place, or concentration on a point or object.



7. Dhyana:

“An uninterrupted state of mental concentration upon a single object: higher contemplation.”
(Mirriam Webster Dictionary)





Dhyana is retaining one's tranquil state of mind in any circumstance, unfavorable as well as favorable, and not being disturbed or frustrated even when adverse conditions present themselves one after another.

— *D.T. Suzuki* —

AZ QUOTES

A person with short brown hair, seen from behind, is sitting in a meditative lotus position on a large, reddish-brown rock. They are wearing a blue sleeveless top with a pink crisscross back and colorful striped leggings. In the background, a waterfall cascades over rocks into a pool of water. The scene is outdoors with some greenery on the left.

7. Dhyana: Meditation

The mind flows onto an object without interruption.

7. Dhyana:

Fully engaged, without the mind wandering.



8.

**Samadhi:
absorption,
or a sense of
“oneness”**

...the mind is fully
absorbed in the
object of
meditation

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Another summary of the 8 limbs

Limbs 1-4

yama

external discipline



ethical rules

niyama

internal discipline



habits and
observances

asana

yoga postures



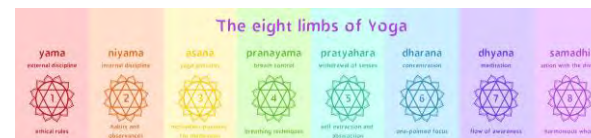
motionless postures
for meditation

pranayama

breath control



breathing techniques



Another summary of the 8 limbs

Limbs 5-8

pratyahara

withdrawal of senses



self extraction and
abstraction

dharana

concentration



one-pointed focus

dhyana

meditation



flow of awareness

samadhi

union with the divine

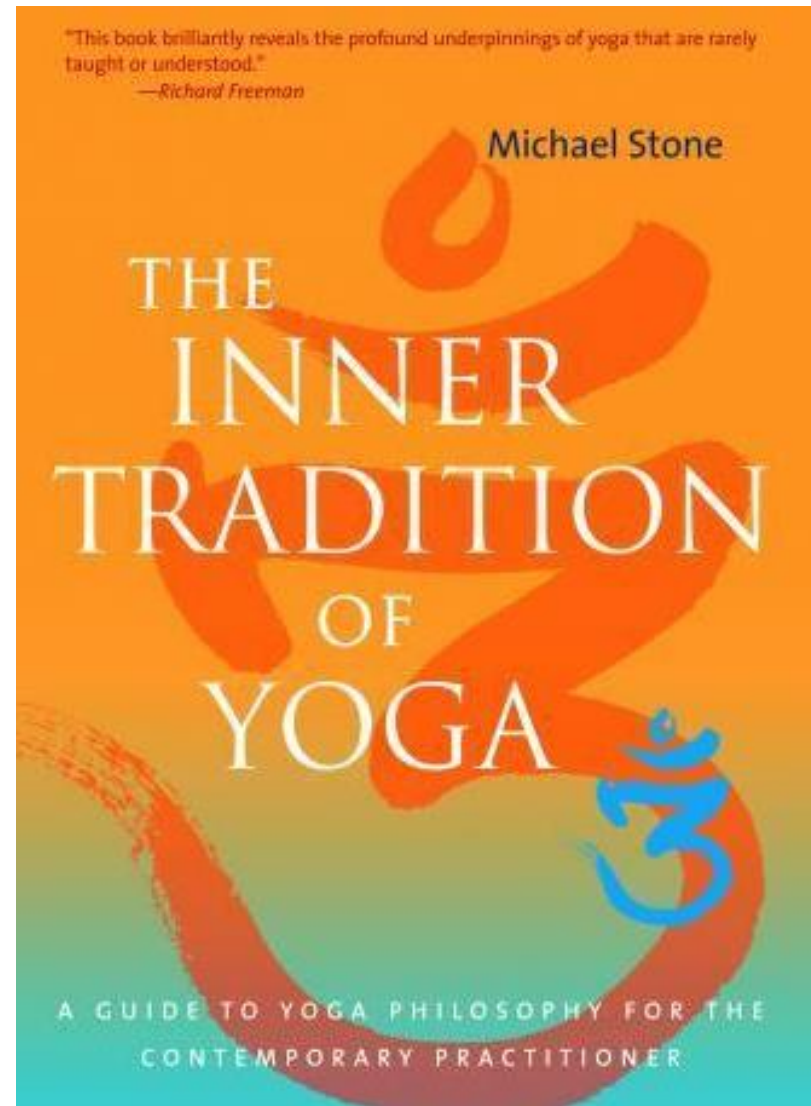


harmonious whole

Negatives are sources of wisdom:

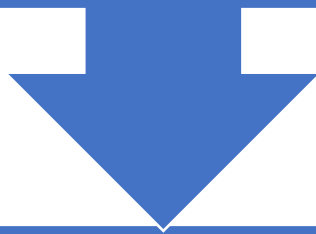
*“...sometimes the most negative characteristics of one's personality are **more prominent sources of wisdom** than positive aspects”*

Michael Stone



Overtime, you slowly absorb the ethics of yoga.

...the yogic ethics in the 8 limbs tend to **just creep up on you**



...as you steadily practise yoga and pranayama.

Practising yoga
& pranayama is
a journey of self-
exploration &
ongoing
transformation.





Both physical &
mental
improvement
& change

The 8-limb path is available to all who practise yoga or pranayama, or both.





Namaste