

The 4 Locks and 4 Keys, and 6 Oars: Sutras 1.32-1.40
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Covered in this article: Sutras 1.32-1.40. These describe methods to balance the mind and cultivate a healthier mindset to lead to Samadhi.

Sutra 1.32

तत्प्रतिषेधार्थमेकतत्त्वाभ्यासः

tatpratiṣedhartham eka tattva abhyāsaḥ

To counteract the previous (the 9 obstacles distracting us from Samadhi), the meditation on a single subject is to be practiced.

For the prevention (of distraction of the 9 obstacles previously listed), practice concentrating on one subject.

In reference to the previous Sutras outlining the 9 obstacles distracting us from Samadhi and the resulting 4 types of physical and mental afflictions, Patanjali now talks about methods to counteract those.

Multiple methods are listed below now. Patanjali advises experimenting and selecting the one(s) that work best for you. By focusing on these, your mind can be kept free of those 9 distractions and how they affect us.

Sutra 1.33

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्

maitrī karuṇā mudito-upekṣāṇāṃ sukha duḥkha puṇya apuṇya viṣayāṇāṃ bhāvanātaḥ citta prasādanam

The mind becomes purified by cultivating these attitudes: friendliness to those who are happy, compassion towards those who are suffering, joy and gladness to those who have virtue, indifference/equanimity to those who choose to live in vice.

1. “Friendliness to those who are happy.” This mindset will help you feel happier by extension of the happiness of someone else. But unfortunately, many people will choose to feel jealousy or resentment towards someone who is happy. This simple mindset shift will lighten your mood, and practiced consistently will make you a happier person, with contentment.

Often, the happiness of someone else reminds us of our own unhappiness or unfulfilled wishes, and can cause our mind to be filled with regret or envy. This is normal, the mind needs to be trained. If you instead focus on happiness and look for happiness in your own life, you will be more likely to find it. What our minds dwell on greatly influences our life experiences.

The Great person delights in the happiness of others.

2. “Compassion towards those who are suffering.” Some people instead scorn those who are suffering, and refuse to understand that hard times come to all. They do not think of helping to better humanity to ease suffering.

People also can become afraid and anxious when someone is suffering, worrying that they themselves will suffer, unnecessarily imagining scenarios that are not happening. Cultivating a healthy dose of compassion (not too much, remain steady in your own boundaries) will ease the mind and heart from hardness and from anxiety.

To help develop compassion, remember a time when you yourself were alienated, depressed, in pain, or lost while suffering. And remember a time when someone’s compassion helped you in any way.

3. “Joy and gladness to those who have virtue.” Similar to “friendliness to those who are happy”, this will help you cultivate a healthy attitude, and not live in resentment and spite towards anyone else who has a trait you desire, or who receives praise for their virtuous trait. If you admire someone’s virtuous traits, you will be more likely to cultivate those traits in yourself.

This mindset also helps for when you have to associate with someone you don’t like. Generally speaking, everyone has something good about them, so if you find what it is, this will make it easier for you to tolerate them. Perhaps someone has a toxic attitude but they are a hard worker. Perhaps someone is lazy and whiny, but they are generous. Perhaps someone can’t keep a secret and is a gossip, but they are a good cook.

This does not mean to think only the best of everyone and blindly ignore their faults. It isn’t about “either/or”. Just finding and acknowledging one good thing about someone can help you tolerate them easier, and appreciate them for just as they are.

4. “Indifference/equanimity to those who choose to live in vice.” How many times have people stressed over someone who refuses to better themselves? Patanjali indicates here that for your peace of mind, if someone willingly refuses to change, leave them be. Your mind will become free with the simplicity of release. It’s their life after all, you can instead place your focus on helping yourself, or helping someone who desires your help.

This last one understandably can be the most difficult to deal with. Some people abuse drugs, or have other vices that harm other people. If this is someone in your life, we have the knowledge in the Temple of Zeus for magick spells, or aura programming. If it is someone you don’t need in your life, such as a relative’s friend, someone not important to you in any way, then you can do a detachment ritual to remove them from your life, or a binding spell to prevent them from affecting you, and so on.

Important note: This advice is not about ignoring injustice, or being cold and uncaring to someone. *Upekṣā* is translated as indifference or equanimity, it means “to go near or toward” (*upa*) and “to look at or on” (*iksha*). Put together, it can mean to observe neutrally, without reacting from anger or frustration. Those who stay calm and collected win arguments over those who lose their temper. This Sutra is about altering your mindset for your benefit.

Cultivating these mindsets will help your mind become serene and pure.

For more information on this Sutra, it is often referred to as the “four locks and four keys” with much commentary by others. The four interactions described are “locks”, and the mindsets to cultivate are “keys” to manage the locks.

The next 6 Sutras give techniques and meditations to calm the mind. These are commonly referred to as “the oars that row us to the shores (or island) of peace”, because they all start with the word “or”, meaning another method than those outlined in the previous Sutra.

Sutra 1.34

प्रच्छर्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य
pracchardana vidhāraṇābhyāṃ vā prāṇasya

Or, having a longer exhalation of the breath, and softly applying a retention of the breath at the end of the exhale.

Here, Patanjali give a pranayama method to help balance the mind: having a longer exhale than your inhale, and gently retaining the breath at the end of the exhale.

So for example:

- inhale for a count of 2
- exhale for a count of 4
- hold for a count of 1

For those with more experience with breath work or a naturally longer breathing rhythm you can try:

- inhale for a count of 4
- exhale for a count of 6 or 8
- hold for a count of 4

And repeat as many times as necessary. There is no hold at the top of the breath, and do not attempt this if you struggle with holding your breath on the exhale as it can induce panic. If at any time you find yourself messing up the pattern, release this pattern, breathe normally for a few moments, and then softly attempt again.

This can be performed to any count number you want, whatever works best for you. Just keep the exhale longer than the inhale and have at least a momentary pause at the end of the exhalation.

You don’t even need to count, you can simply breathe, having the exhale longer than the inhale, and hold the breath out for as long as is comfortable.

Sutra 1.35

विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना मनसः स्थितिनिबन्धिनी
viṣayavatī vā pravṛttir utpannā manasaḥ sthiti nibandhinī

Or, by fixing (binding) the mind on an object that helps to maintain a steady state of the mind.

Or, it can happen by focusing the mind on inner sensory perceptions.

This method relates to Void and Awareness meditation: focusing your mind on one thing. A candle flame, the Dot meditation, a Sigil of a God, a color, an empty sky, or an inner sensation, for example. Put your concentration fully on the object to stabilize your mind, and to build your concentration ability.

Sutra 1.36

विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती
viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī

Or, it can happen when your mind is free of sorrow and focusing on the inner light of transformation.

Or, by focusing on your own inner light which is beyond all pain/sorrow.

The inner light of transformation, this is the soul, the grace of Zeus. You can visualize this at first, after time when you have advanced you will be aware of this and see and feel it with no need to visualize.

Jyotiṣmatī means luminous, filled with light, a mind full of purity, the illuminated inner self. *Viśokā* means the absence of sorrow.

Sutra 1.37

वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम्
vītarāga viṣayam vā cittam

Or, by concentrating upon a great soul's mind or an object they represent.

If you cannot see or feel your own inner light, or you have much sorrow and cannot easily set it aside yet, then meditate upon a great sage, a beneficial role model, or someone you admire and have faith in. Perhaps have an object or image that represent them (*viṣayam*) to help you focus.

Vītarāga refers to a person who has achieved tranquility and is unaffected by pain or distress. It does not solely mean a sage of an ancient time, it can also be a parent, grandparent, a teacher or coach, someone who can keep a calm demeanor through stressful situations. Remembering this person when you are stressed can help you remain calm as well.

Sutra 1.38

स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा
svapna nidrā jñāna ālambanam vā

Or, by meditation upon the wisdom gained during dream and sleep.

Remembering and meditating upon the wisdom or a sign you were given in a dream while sleeping, or if you heard music or felt a sensation in a dream. Perhaps you had a dream with a spiritual meaning, remember this and meditate upon it when you need guidance or inspiration.

This Sutra can also mean contemplating the experience of a dream state (*svapna*), or a deep dreamless sleep state (*nidrā*), to help steady the mind.

Sutra 1.39

यथाभिमतध्यानाद्वा
yathābhimata dhyānād vā

Or, by meditating upon something that is pleasing to you.

Here, Patanjali recognizes that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and he suggests to meditate upon anything that you enjoy, whatever works for you.

Find something that makes you feel happy or inspired, or whatever sensation you wish to experience, and meditate upon it. Perhaps an image or the sigil of your Guardian Daemon, a beautiful piece of artwork, a musical composition, attractive clothing, a decoration or symbol, or tranquil scenery; something that is pleasing to your own personal taste. Something that makes you feel uplifted, whatever it is.

Sutra 1.40

परमाणु परममहत्त्वान्तोऽस्य वशीकार
paramāṇu paramamahattvantah 'sya vaśīkārah

Through mastery of these practices, you can perceive everything from the smallest atom to things of extreme magnitude.

When you have gained mastery of your mind and these meditation practices, your consciousness can understand matters from the smallest particles to the great mysteries of the cosmos. The mind is no longer ordinary. *Paramamahattvantah* means supreme greatness, highest importance, absolute truth.

Covered in the next article: Sutras 1.41-1.46, the stages of Samadhi.