

# SKM YOGA

## YOGA TEACHER TRAINING MANUAL

Series: Yoga Philosophy & Applied Science

# THE INNER ARCHITECTURE OF YOGA

*A Complete Study of*

**PANCH KLESHA**

*The Five Afflictions*

**PANCH  
MAHABHUTA**

*The Five Great Elements*

**SADHAK & BADHAK**

*Facilitating & Obstructing  
Factors*

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# PREFACE

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This manual represents the foundational philosophical core of the SKM Yoga Teacher Training Programme — a living document born from years of teaching, practice, and contemplation within the classical yoga tradition. The topics covered here — Panch Klesha, Panch Mahabhuta, and the Sadhak-Badhak Tattvas — form the philosophical bedrock upon which every genuine yoga practice must rest.

In our experience at SKM Yoga, the most common limitation among yoga teachers is not a lack of technical skill — it is a lack of philosophical depth. Teachers who have memorized hundreds of asanas but do not understand the five afflictions of the mind (Panch Klesha) cannot guide their students toward the true purpose of yoga. Teachers who can demonstrate advanced pranayama techniques but do not understand the Panch Mahabhuta — the five great elements from which the entire manifest universe is composed — miss the profoundly holistic dimension of what they are teaching.

Similarly, teachers who do not understand the Sadhak and Badhak Tattvas — the factors that facilitate and obstruct spiritual progress — cannot diagnose why their students are stuck, why their own practice plateaus, or what specific adjustments need to be made at each stage of the yogic journey.

This manual has been written to address these gaps with depth, clarity, and practical application. Each concept is presented in its classical context, then fully unpacked with explanation, commentary, and direct guidance for the yoga teacher and serious practitioner. The Sanskrit terminology has been carefully preserved because the words themselves carry vibrational and conceptual precision that no translation can fully replicate.

May every teacher who studies this text find within it a renewed sense of the profound responsibility and privilege of yoga teaching — and may every concept studied here find its ultimate verification not on the page but in the living laboratory of direct practice and inner experience.

*Om Tat Sat*

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## PART ONE

# PANCH KLESHA

### *The Five Afflictions of the Mind*

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*The kleshas are the roots of all suffering. To understand them is to understand the human condition. To dissolve them is the very purpose of yoga. — Patanjali, Yoga Sutras II.3*

The doctrine of Panch Klesha — the Five Afflictions — represents one of the most psychologically precise and spiritually illuminating frameworks ever developed for understanding the nature of human suffering. Presented by Maharishi Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras, the Panch Klesha theory constitutes the foundation of Yoga psychology: a complete diagnosis of why human beings suffer, how suffering perpetuates itself, and — crucially — how it can be systematically dissolved.

For the yoga teacher, knowledge of the Panch Klesha is not merely academic. Every student who walks through your door carries all five kleshas in varying degrees of activation and intensity. Your ability to recognize how each klesha manifests in your students' bodies, breath, practice, and behavior — and your ability to design a practice that systematically addresses these root afflictions — defines the depth and authenticity of your teaching.

# Chapter 1: Introduction to the Kleshas

## Understanding the Root of Suffering

### 1.1 What is a Klesha?

The Sanskrit word 'klesha' (क्लेश) derives from the root 'kliś' meaning 'to cause pain,' 'to afflict,' or 'to torment.' A klesha is thus a cause of affliction — not merely a temporary discomfort or situational unhappiness, but a deep-rooted, structurally embedded cause of suffering that operates at the level of the mind's fundamental orientation toward reality.

Patanjali defines the kleshas in Yoga Sutra II.3: 'Avidya asmita raga dvesha abhiniveshah kleshah' — Ignorance, ego-sense, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life are the five kleshas. These five afflictions are not independent problems but form a causally interconnected hierarchy in which each subsequent klesha grows from the preceding one, all rooted ultimately in the first: avidya (ignorance).

*avidyā asmitā rāga dveṣa abhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ — Patanjali, Yoga Sutras II.3*

### 1.2 The Four States of the Kleshas

Patanjali recognizes that the kleshas do not always manifest with equal intensity. In Yoga Sutra II.4, he describes four possible states in which the kleshas can exist — a remarkably nuanced psychological observation that remains highly relevant for modern yoga teaching:

State	Sanskrit	Description	Analogy	Teaching Implication
<b>Dormant</b>	Prasupta	Seeds of the klesha exist in the unconscious but are not currently active or manifesting	Like seeds beneath the soil in winter — present but inactive	Student may appear balanced but the klesha can be activated by the right trigger
<b>Attenuated</b>	Tanu	The klesha has been weakened through practice but not eliminated — still present in reduced form	Like embers that remain after a fire has been largely extinguished	Practice is working; klesha is weakening but vigilance is still required

<b>Alternating</b>	Vicchinna	The klesha is temporarily suppressed by an opposing force but returns when that force is removed	Like holding a beach ball underwater — it returns when you release it	Student appears to have overcome the klesha but has only suppressed it; deep work is still needed
<b>Fully Active</b>	Udara	The klesha is fully expressed and actively determining thoughts, emotions, and behavior	Like a wildfire actively burning	Direct intervention is needed; specific practices targeting this klesha are prescribed

### 1.3 Why the Kleshas Matter for Yoga Teachers

The practical value of klesha theory for the yoga teacher cannot be overstated. Consider these teaching scenarios:

- ◆ A student who consistently pushes beyond their body's limits in asana, refusing to rest or modify, is manifesting *asmita* (ego-klesha) and possibly *raga* (attachment to achievement).
- ◆ A student who avoids certain poses, practices, or experiences is manifesting *dvesha* (aversion-klesha).
- ◆ A student who is perpetually dissatisfied — always wanting more advanced practices, better experiences, different teachers — is manifesting *raga* at a deeper level.
- ◆ A student who practices with underlying anxiety about aging, illness, or death is experiencing *abhinivesha* (the survival-klesha).
- ◆ A student who fundamentally misidentifies with their body, emotions, and thoughts rather than their deeper nature is living in *avidya* (the root ignorance).

Each of these patterns requires a different kind of teaching response — and identifying the underlying klesha is the first step toward designing an appropriately therapeutic yoga practice.

## Chapter 2: Avidya – The Root Klesha Ignorance as the Primal Cause

### 2.1 The Nature of Avidya

Avidya (अविद्या) is literally 'non-knowledge' or 'non-seeing' — but its meaning in yoga philosophy is far more specific and profound than simple lack of information. Avidya is a fundamental misperception of reality — a systematic distortion at the very base of human cognition through which we mistake what is impermanent for permanent, what is impure for pure, what is painful for pleasurable, and what is not-Self for the Self.

Patanjali defines avidya with precision in Yoga Sutra II.5: 'Seeing the permanent in the impermanent, the pure in the impure, pleasure in pain, and the Self in the not-Self — this is avidya.' This is not a description of occasional mistakes or moments of confusion — it is a description of the default mode of human consciousness operating without yogic training.

#### AVIDYA – अविद्या

***anityāśuci duḥkhānātmāsu nitya śuci sukha ātma khyātir avidyā***

*Seeing the permanent in the impermanent; the pure in the impure; pleasure in pain; the Self in the not-Self*

Avidya is the root of all other kleshas. It is not intellectual ignorance but a fundamental misidentification of the nature of reality, the self, and experience. All four errors described by Patanjali operate simultaneously in ordinary consciousness.

### 2.2 The Four Errors of Avidya

**Error 1 — Mistaking the Impermanent for the Permanent (anitye nitya-khyati):** We treat our bodies, relationships, possessions, and experiences as if they will last forever, building our security and identity around what is inherently transient. This is the basis of all anxiety about loss.

**Error 2 — Mistaking the Impure for the Pure (ashuchi shuchi-khyati):** We invest the body — which is composed of impermanent biological processes — with an imagined perfection and purity. This drives body obsession, self-image distortion, and the impossibility of genuine self-acceptance.

**Error 3 — Mistaking Pain for Pleasure (duhkhe sukha-khyati):** We pursue experiences that ultimately produce suffering as if they were reliable sources of happiness. This is the mechanism behind addiction, compulsive behavior, and the endless treadmill of sensory gratification.

**Error 4 — Mistaking Not-Self for Self (anatmani atma-khyati):** We identify our true nature with the body, mind, emotions, and roles — all of which belong to Prakriti (manifest nature) rather than Purusha (pure consciousness). This is the deepest and most consequential error.

## 2.3 Avidya in the Yoga Classroom

Avidya manifests in the yoga classroom in countless ways. The student who defines themselves entirely through their body's appearance and performance is living in avidya. The teacher who pursues recognition, social media followers, or professional status as ultimate sources of meaning is operating under avidya. The practice of yoga — at every level — is fundamentally a practice of dissolving avidya by directly revealing the true nature of consciousness.

## Chapter 3: Asmita — The Ego Klesha The Illusion of Separate Selfhood

### 3.1 Understanding Asmita

Asmita (अस्मिता) means 'I-am-ness' — the sense of being a separate, individual, bounded self. Patanjali defines it in Yoga Sutra II.6: 'Drastr-drshaktyor ekatmatevasmita' — Asmita is the identification of the power of the Seer (pure consciousness) with the power of seeing (the mind-body instrument). In other words, asmita arises when consciousness mistakes itself for the apparatus through which it functions.

The ego is not a fixed entity or a spiritual enemy to be destroyed. It is a case of mistaken identity — pure awareness (Purusha) appearing to identify with the operations of the mind-body complex (Prakriti). This misidentification is so thorough, so habitual, and so ancient that it feels completely natural — which is precisely what makes it so difficult to see through.

#### ASMITA — अस्मिता

#### *draṣṭṛ-dṛśaktyorekatmatevāsmitā*

*The identification of the power of the Seer with the power of seeing — I-am-ness, ego-sense*

Asmita arises from avidya. Once consciousness misidentifies with the mind-body complex, it constructs an ego — a narrative self with preferences, history, fears, and ambitions. This ego then becomes the lens through which all experience is filtered and judged.

### 3.2 How Asmita Manifests in Practice

In the yoga classroom, asmita reveals itself most visibly through the ego's investment in performance. The student who cannot accept a modification because it feels like failure is asmita-driven. The teacher who cannot receive correction or feedback without defensiveness is operating from asmita. The practitioner who identifies their spiritual progress with specific achievements — 'I can do headstand,' 'I meditate one hour every day' — has allowed asmita to colonize even their spiritual practice.

- ◆ Competitive comparison with other practitioners
- ◆ Inability to rest, modify, or practice yin yoga due to the ego's need for achievement
- ◆ Over-identification with one's role as 'yoga teacher' to the point of being unable to be a student
- ◆ Attachment to one's yoga lineage, tradition, or style as definitively superior

- ◆ Spiritual pride — the paradox of the ego taking credit for progress in ego-dissolution

# Chapter 4: Raga — The Klesha of Attachment

## The Chains of Desire

### 4.1 The Nature of Raga

Raga (राग) is typically translated as 'attachment' or 'desire,' but its yogic meaning is more specific: raga is the residue of pleasure. Patanjali defines it in Yoga Sutra II.7: 'Sukhanushayi ragah' — raga is that which follows upon pleasure, the habitual craving for the repetition of pleasant experience.

Raga is not the natural, immediate enjoyment of a pleasant experience — yoga does not advocate a joyless existence. Raga is the clinging that follows enjoyment — the compulsive, automatic, ego-driven need to re-experience what was pleasant, and the disturbance that arises when this re-experience is unavailable or delayed. This clinging is what converts natural enjoyment into suffering.

#### RAGA — राग

#### *sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ*

*That which follows upon pleasure — desire, craving, attachment*

Raga operates by creating a mental groove (samskara) in the mind that pulls consciousness back toward previously pleasurable experiences. Over time, these grooves deepen into compulsive patterns that drive behavior independently of conscious choice.

### 4.2 Raga in Spiritual Practice

The most subtle and dangerous form of raga for the serious practitioner is attachment to spiritual states. A meditator who becomes attached to experiences of bliss, peace, or expanded consciousness in meditation, and who practices primarily to recreate these experiences rather than for the liberation they point toward, has allowed raga to enter the innermost sanctum of the spiritual life. Patanjali specifically addresses this in the Samadhi Pada when discussing the obstacles of trance-like states that the yogi must ultimately transcend.

#### Gross Raga Manifestations

- Addiction to substances, behaviors, or relationships
- Compulsive seeking of pleasure and entertainment

#### Subtle Raga Manifestations

- Attachment to particular meditation states or experiences
- Clinging to the teacher-student relationship as a source of identity

- Inability to tolerate discomfort or boredom
- Hoarding of possessions, experiences, or relationships
- Consumer behavior driven by unfulfilled longing

- Preference for one's own tradition to the point of closing off to truth
- Attachment to recognition and validation from students
- Spiritual materialism — collecting teachings, practices, and credentials

# Chapter 5: Dvesha — The Klesha of Aversion

## The Poison of Rejection

### 5.1 The Nature of Dvesha

Dvesha (द्वेष) is the mirror image of raga — the residue of pain rather than pleasure. Patanjali defines it in Yoga Sutra II.8: 'Duhkhanushayi dveshah' — dvesha is that which follows upon suffering, the habitual aversion toward experiences that have previously caused pain.

Together, raga and dvesha constitute what might be called the twin engines of ordinary conditioned consciousness. The mind caught in raga and dvesha is like a boat with no rudder, driven alternately by attraction and repulsion, never at rest, never fully present, perpetually seeking and perpetually fleeing. This oscillation — this constant movement between 'I want more of this' and 'I want to be away from that' — is what Patanjali identifies as the fundamental mechanism of suffering (duhkha).

#### DVESHA — द्वेष

#### *duḥkhānuśayī dveṣaḥ*

*That which follows upon pain — aversion, repulsion, hatred*

Dvesha creates avoidance patterns that cut us off from significant dimensions of life experience. Just as raga drives compulsive seeking, dvesha drives compulsive avoidance. Both are equally binding, and both ultimately rob the practitioner of the equanimity (samatvam) that is the hallmark of the yogic state.

### 5.2 Dvesha in Yoga Practice

In the yoga classroom, dvesha is often highly visible. Students consistently avoid certain poses not because they are physically contraindicated but because those poses bring up uncomfortable emotions, memories, or sensations. Students avoid certain teachers, lineages, or practices because of past difficult experiences. Students avoid looking at certain aspects of their inner life in meditation.

The skilled yoga teacher recognizes dvesha as a significant indicator of where the deepest inner work needs to happen. The experiences a student most strongly avoids often contain precisely the insights and breakthroughs they most need. Offering a compassionate, non-coercive invitation to explore avoided territory — always in service of the student's genuine wellbeing rather than as an

exercise of the teacher's authority — is one of the most important skills in the yoga teacher's repertoire.

# Chapter 6: Abhinivesha – The Klesha of Clinging Fear of Death and the Will to Live

## 6.1 The Nature of Abhinivesha

Abhinivesha (अभिनिवेश) is the subtlest, most deeply rooted, and in many ways most astonishing of the five kleshas. Patanjali defines it in Yoga Sutra II.9: 'Svarasavahi vidushopi tatharudho bhiniveshah' — abhinivesha flows by its own force and is well established even in the wise.

The phrase 'even in the wise' is remarkable. It acknowledges that intellectual knowledge — even profound philosophical understanding of the nature of death and the immortality of the Self — is insufficient to dissolve abhinivesha. The fear of death and the will to live are embedded so deeply in the biological substrate of existence that they operate independently of what we consciously know or believe.

### ABHINIVESHA — अभिनिवेश

*svarasavāhī viduṣo'pi tathā rūḍho'bhiniveśaḥ*

*Clinging to life — flowing by its own force, established even in the wise*

Abhinivesha operates at a pre-conscious, instinctual level that overrides philosophical understanding. It is the survival instinct of consciousness itself — the deep and automatic resistance to dissolution, change, and death that underlies most human anxiety, defensiveness, and compulsive self-preservation behavior.

## 6.2 Abhinivesha Beyond Fear of Death

While abhinivesha is most directly the fear of physical death, it manifests in subtler forms throughout everyday life:

- ◆ Fear of change — any significant change threatens the ego's current structure and triggers abhinivesha
- ◆ Fear of failure — because failure threatens the ego's image and sense of secure selfhood
- ◆ Inability to let go — of relationships, roles, opinions, or past experiences
- ◆ Resistance to deep meditation — because genuine meditative absorption involves a temporary dissolution of ego-boundaries that triggers the survival instinct
- ◆ Difficulty in Savasana — the posture of 'corpse pose' that asks for the complete surrender of all doing and controlling

## 6.3 Working with Abhinivesha in Practice

The practices that most directly address abhinivesha are those that cultivate conscious surrender and non-attachment: Savasana practiced with genuine intention rather than as a casual rest; Yoga Nidra, which systematically guides the practitioner to the threshold of sleep while maintaining awareness; meditation on the nature of change and impermanence; the cultivation of Ishvara Pranidhana (surrender to the Divine) as described by Patanjali in the context of Kriya Yoga; and the study of Vedantic philosophy, particularly the teachings on the nature of the Atman as eternal, birthless, and deathless.

# Chapter 7: Practical Application of Klesha Theory Teaching the Kleshas in Modern Context

## 7.1 Klesha Assessment in the Classroom

A skilled yoga teacher learns to read the kleshas in their students through observation of posture, breath, habitual movement patterns, behavioral tendencies, and the quality of a student's relationship with challenge, rest, and practice. The following framework provides a practical tool for klesha assessment:

Klesha	Observable Sign	In Asana	In Pranayama	Teaching Response
<b>Avidya</b>	Misidentification with body/performance	Practices for external appearance not internal experience	Uses breath mechanically without awareness	Guidance toward witnessing awareness; philosophy education
<b>Asmita</b>	Ego investment, competitiveness	Cannot accept modifications; compares with others	Measures breath to achieve vs. to settle	Cultivate beginner's mind; assign restorative practice
<b>Raga</b>	Compulsive seeking, dissatisfaction	Always wants more advanced; cannot stay in yin postures	Addicted to energizing pranayamas; avoids calming ones	Prescribe santosha; assign practices of contentment
<b>Dvesha</b>	Avoidance patterns, resistance	Refuses certain poses without physical reason	Avoids retention; resists stillness	Gradual, compassionate exposure; explore avoided territory
<b>Abhinivesha</b>	Anxiety, control, resistance to surrender	Cannot relax in Savasana; tightens at surrendered poses	Controls breath; cannot allow natural pause	Yoga Nidra; Savasana with guidance; Ishvara Pranidhana practices

## 7.2 The Klesha-Free State

The ultimate aim of all yogic practice is the dissolution of the kleshas at their root. Patanjali describes two methods: for subtle, attenuated kleshas — pratiprasava (involution, tracing the klesha back to its source in avidya); for active kleshas — dhyana (meditation, the direct observation of the klesha's arising and dissolving without identification). Both methods ultimately require viveka khyati — the sustained discriminative discernment between pure consciousness (Purusha) and the conditioned mind-body complex (Prakriti) — which is the specific antidote to avidya and thus to all kleshas.

*The kleshas are not enemies to be destroyed but teachers to be understood. Each one, when seen clearly, reveals a dimension of the path and points toward the freedom that lies beyond it. — Dr. Shivam Mishra, SKM Yoga*

## PART TWO

# PANCH MAHABHUTA

### *The Five Great Elements*

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*From Akasha arose Vayu; from Vayu arose Agni; from Agni arose Jala; from Jala arose Prithvi. These five — space, air, fire, water, earth — are the Panch Mahabhuta, the building blocks of all manifest existence. — Taittiriya Upanishad*

The doctrine of Panch Mahabhuta — the Five Great Elements — is one of the most ancient, comprehensive, and practically relevant frameworks in all of Indian philosophical and scientific thought. Predating modern physics by thousands of years, the Mahabhuta theory offers a qualitative rather than quantitative understanding of the nature of matter, energy, and consciousness — a framework that remains as relevant to yoga practice and teaching today as it was when first articulated in the Upanishads.

For the yoga teacher, understanding the Panch Mahabhuta is not merely philosophical enrichment. The elements provide a complete framework for understanding the body, the breath, the mind, the emotions, and the environment — and for designing yoga practices that address specific elemental imbalances with targeted interventions. Ayurveda, yoga therapy, pranayama science, and the understanding of the chakra system all rest upon the foundation of the Panch Mahabhuta.

# Chapter 8: Introduction to the Panchamahabhutas The Elemental Constitution of Reality

## 8.1 The Cosmological Context

In the Samkhya-Yoga cosmology that underlies the philosophy of the Yoga Sutras, the manifest universe unfolds from the interaction of Purusha (pure consciousness) and Prakriti (primordial nature). The first emanation of Prakriti is Mahat (cosmic intelligence), followed by Ahankara (the cosmic ego-principle), from which arise the Tanmatras — five subtle essences of sound (shabda), touch (sparsha), form (rupa), taste (rasa), and smell (gandha). From these five Tanmatras, the five Mahabhutas manifest in the familiar order of decreasing subtlety: Akasha (Space) → Vayu (Air) → Agni (Fire) → Jala (Water) → Prithvi (Earth).

Mahabhuta	Tanmatra	Sense Organ	Action Organ	Quality (Guna)
<b>Prithvi (Earth)</b>	Gandha (Smell)	Nose (Ghrana)	Feet (Pada)	Heaviness, solidity, stability
<b>Jala (Water)</b>	Rasa (Taste)	Tongue (Jihva)	Hands (Pani)	Fluidity, cohesion, softness
<b>Agni (Fire)</b>	Rupa (Form/Sight)	Eyes (Chakshu)	Anus (Payu)	Heat, transformation, luminosity
<b>Vayu (Air)</b>	Sparsha (Touch)	Skin (Tvak)	Genitals (Upastha)	Movement, lightness, dryness
<b>Akasha (Space)</b>	Shabda (Sound)	Ears (Karna)	Mouth/Speech (Vak)	Expansiveness, subtlety, pervasiveness

## 8.2 The Cumulative Nature of the Elements

A crucial principle for understanding the Mahabhutas is that each element contains all the elements that preceded it in the sequence of manifestation. This means: Earth contains qualities of all five elements; Water contains qualities of four (all except Earth's unique gross solidity); Fire contains qualities of three; Air contains qualities of two; Space contains only its own quality. This

cumulative principle explains why the Earth element is the densest and most multi-sensory (you can smell, taste, see, touch, and hear Earth), while Space is the most subtle and elusive.

# Chapter 9: Prithvi — The Earth Element

## Stability, Density, and Form

### PRITHVI — पृथ्वी

#### *Gandha Tanmatra | Ghrana Indriya | Pada Karmendriya*

*The Earth Element — Stability, Structure, Foundation, Solidity*

Prithvi embodies the principle of solidity and form. It is the element of material manifestation in its densest, most tangible state. In the body, Prithvi governs the solid structures: bones, teeth, muscles, organs, nails, and hair. In the mind, it governs the capacity for stability, patience, endurance, and groundedness. The sense associated with Prithvi is smell, and the organ of action is the feet — our literal point of contact with the Earth.

### 9.1 Prithvi in the Body

The Earth element in the physical body manifests as all solid, dense, and structural tissues. The skeletal system is the purest expression of Prithvi — the bones give the body its form, its capacity to bear weight, its structural integrity. The muscles, too, have a significant Earth component — their mass, density, and capacity for sustained effort reflect the Earth element's qualities of endurance and stability.

### 9.2 Prithvi in Yoga Practice

Yoga practices that cultivate and balance the Earth element emphasize grounding, stability, and structural alignment. Standing poses — particularly Tadasana (Mountain Pose), Virabhadrasana (Warrior series), and Utkatasana (Chair Pose) — directly invoke the Earth element by requiring the practitioner to feel their connection to the ground, to develop stability and strength in the lower body, and to experience the quality of solidity within movement.

#### **Prithvi Excess (Kapha Imbalance)**

- Heaviness, lethargy, sluggishness
- Difficulty initiating action or change
- Over-attachment to routine and stability
- Physical density: weight gain, congestion
- Emotional: stubbornness, possessiveness

#### **Prithvi Deficiency (Vata Imbalance)**

- Lack of grounding, instability, anxiety
- Difficulty maintaining routine or structure
- Physical lightness: low body weight, fragility
- Emotional: fear, insecurity, scattered attention
- Spiritual bypassing — avoiding embodiment



# Chapter 10: Jala — The Water Element Flow, Cohesion, and Adaptability

## JALA — जल

### *Rasa Tanmatra | Jihva Indriya | Pani Karmendriya*

#### *The Water Element — Flow, Cohesion, Emotion, Adaptability*

Jala (also called Ap or Aap) represents the principle of fluidity, cohesion, and adaptability. Water gives form without being rigid — it takes the shape of whatever container it occupies while maintaining its essential nature. In the body, the Water element governs all fluids: blood, lymph, saliva, synovial fluid, cerebrospinal fluid, tears, and reproductive fluids. In the mind, it governs emotional flow, empathy, creativity, and the capacity for intimacy.

## 10.1 Jala and the Emotional Body

The deep connection between the Water element and the emotional body is recognized across cultures and traditions. In yoga and Ayurveda, the emotions are understood as a kind of fluid energy that flows through specific channels (nadis) in the subtle body. When this emotional fluid flows freely — neither dammed up nor flooding — the person experiences emotional health and vitality. When it stagnates (Water excess) or dries up (Water deficiency), emotional imbalance follows.

## 10.2 Jala in Yoga Practice

Yoga practices that work with the Water element emphasize fluidity, graceful transitions, emotional release, and the quality of flow. Vinyasa-based practices — in which the breath and movement are unified in a continuous, wave-like sequence — are intrinsically Water-element practices. The practice of Yin Yoga, which works with the deep fascial tissues of the body (which have a high water content), is profoundly Water-element in its orientation.

- ◆ Hip-opening practices release stored emotional tension (emotion-Water connection)
- ◆ Forward folds cultivate the Water quality of yielding and letting go
- ◆ Spinal waves and undulating movements directly embody Water element qualities
- ◆ Nadi Shodhana (Alternate Nostril Breathing) balances the Ida and Pingala nadis — associated with Water and Fire elements respectively

# Chapter 11: Agni – The Fire Element Transformation, Heat, and Radiance

## AGNI – अग्नि

### *Rupa Tanmatra | Chakshu Indriya | Payu Karmendriya*

*The Fire Element – Transformation, Digestion, Perception, Clarity*

Agni is the element of transformation — the cosmic principle of change, metabolism, and purification. Nothing is transformed without fire: food becomes energy through digestive fire, raw experience becomes wisdom through the fire of discrimination, the obstacles of the mind are burnt away by the fire of yogic practice (tapas). Agni governs sight — we see only because light (which is fire) makes forms visible. In the body, Agni governs all digestive and metabolic processes.

### 11.1 Agni as Tapas

The concept of tapas (अग्नि) — one of the three components of Kriya Yoga described by Patanjali — is intimately related to the Fire element. Tapas literally means 'heat' or 'the act of burning,' and refers to the purifying discipline and sustained effort of yoga practice. Just as physical fire transforms raw materials into light and heat, the inner fire of tapas transforms the raw materials of ego, desire, and ignorance into the light of wisdom and the warmth of compassion.

### 11.2 Agni in Yoga Practice

Fire-element yoga practices are those that generate heat, build intensity, activate the digestive organs, and cultivate the quality of focused, penetrating attention. Kapalabhati (Skull-Shining Breath) is the par excellence Fire-element pranayama — its rapid, forceful exhalations kindle the digestive fire and clear the airways of accumulated congestion. Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) is a complete Fire-element asana sequence that systematically activates every major muscle group and generates significant metabolic heat.

## Chapter 12: Vayu – The Air Element Movement, Breath, and Lightness

### VAYU – वायु

#### *Sparsha Tanmatra | Tvak Indriya | Upastha Karmendriya*

*The Air Element — Movement, Breath, Prana, Lightness, Expansion*

Vayu is the element of movement — both gross movement in the physical world and the subtler movement of prana (life-force) through the body's energy channels (nadis). Air is the mediator between the dense elements below it (Earth, Water, Fire) and the subtle element above it (Space). It gives the body its capacity for movement, gives the mind its capacity for thought and ideation, and gives the subtle body its capacity for pranic flow.

### 12.1 The Five Prana Vayus

In yoga physiology, the single life-force (prana) differentiates into five sub-pranas or prana-vayus, each governing a specific region and function of the body. Understanding the five vayus is essential for advanced pranayama teaching and for yoga therapy applications:

Vayu	Location	Direction	Function	Yoga Practice
<b>Prana Vayu</b>	Chest/Heart	Inward & Upward	Governs inhalation, reception, intake of nourishment	Chest openers; inhalation-focused pranayama; Ujjayi
<b>Apana Vayu</b>	Pelvis/Lower abdomen	Downward & Outward	Governs elimination, exhalation, grounding, reproduction	Mulabandha; exhalation-focused pranayama; seated forward folds
<b>Samana Vayu</b>	Navel/Solar plexus	Centripetal/Equalizing	Governs digestion and assimilation of food, experience	Nauli; Kapalabhati; twists; core work
<b>Udana Vayu</b>	Throat/Head	Upward	Governs speech, expression, upward growth, spiritual aspiration	Jalandhara Bandha; chanting; inversions
<b>Vyana Vayu</b>	Entire body	Outward/Pervasive	Governs circulation, distribution of energy,	Vinyasa; full-body movement; Nadi Shodhana

			coordination	
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# Chapter 13: Akasha — The Space Element Consciousness, Expansion, and Sound

## AKASHA — आकाश

### *Shabda Tanmatra | Karna Indriya | Vak Karmendriya*

*The Space Element — Consciousness, Expansion, Emptiness, Receptivity*

Akasha is the subtlest of all the five elements — the vast, formless, all-pervading space within which all other elements exist and in which all phenomena arise and dissolve. Akasha is the canvas of existence itself. Unlike the other elements, which have positive material qualities, Akasha is defined primarily by what it is not: it is not dense, not fluid, not hot, not moving — it is pure openness, pure receptivity, pure potential.

## 13.1 Akasha and Pure Consciousness

Of all the five elements, Akasha most directly corresponds to the nature of pure consciousness (Purusha/Chit/Brahman) in yoga philosophy. Just as Akasha provides the unlimited space within which all physical phenomena exist, pure consciousness provides the unlimited awareness within which all mental and experiential phenomena arise. The practice of meditation — particularly open-awareness or Shikantaza-style practices — directly cultivates the Akasha quality within the mind: the ability to be present as pure, spacious, open awareness without contracting into the activity of any particular thought, sensation, or experience.

## 13.2 Akasha in Yoga Practice

Practices that cultivate the Akasha element are those that generate spaciousness — both physically within the body and experientially within the mind. Inversions (particularly Sirsasana and Sarvangasana) create unusual spatial orientations that directly shift the practitioner's felt sense of physical and psychological space. Backbends open the front of the body — particularly the heart and throat — creating a felt sense of expansion and openness. Meditation practices that use mantra (sound is the Tanmatra of Akasha) or that cultivate open-sky awareness directly engage the Space element at its most subtle level.

# Chapter 14: Tanmatras, Indriyas, and the Elements The Sense-Element Connection

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## 14.1 The Five Tanmatras

The Tanmatras (literally 'that measure only' or 'subtle essences') are the five subtle sense-essences from which the five Mahabhutas arise. They are: Shabda (sound essence → Akasha), Sparsha (touch essence → Vayu), Rupa (form/light essence → Agni), Rasa (taste essence → Jala), and Gandha (smell essence → Prithvi). The Tanmatras are subtler than the elements they give rise to but grosser than the pure mental categories from which they arise.

The practical significance of the Tanmatras is enormous: they explain why sense experience and element-work in yoga are so intimately connected. Working with sound (kirtan, mantra, singing bowls) affects the Akasha element. Working with touch (assisting, self-massage, tactile awareness in asana) affects the Vayu element. Working with visual forms and light (trataka, yantra meditation) affects the Agni element. Working with taste (Ayurvedic dietary practices) affects the Jala element. Working with smell (aromatherapy, camphor, incense) affects the Prithvi element.

## 14.2 The Jnanendriyas — Five Sense Organs of Knowledge

Each Mahabhuta is associated with a specific organ of knowledge (Jnanendriya): Ears (Karna) for Akasha; Skin (Tvak) for Vayu; Eyes (Chakshu) for Agni; Tongue (Jihva) for Jala; Nose (Ghrana) for Prithvi. This explains why specific sensory practices are used in yoga therapy to address elemental imbalances — working through the sense organ directly affects the associated element.

# Chapter 15: Panchamahabhutas in Yoga Practice Applying Elemental Wisdom

## 15.1 The Elements in Asana Design

Every yoga asana can be understood through the lens of the five elements. A comprehensive asana practice will ideally address and balance all five elements — cultivating Earth's stability, Water's fluidity, Fire's transformation, Air's movement, and Space's expansiveness. When designing a class or a personal practice sequence, the yoga teacher trained in elemental theory has a powerful organizing principle that goes far beyond the mechanical sequencing of poses.

Element	Asana Category	Key Poses	Qualities Cultivated	When to Emphasize
<b>Earth (Prithvi)</b>	Standing, grounding poses	Tadasana, Virabhadrasana I/II, Malasana	Stability, strength, endurance, groundedness	For vata imbalance, anxiety, instability, scattered energy
<b>Water (Jala)</b>	Hip openers, forward folds, flowing sequences	Baddha Konasana, Janu Sirsasana, Vinyasa flows	Fluidity, surrender, emotional release, adaptability	For pitta imbalance, rigidity, emotional restriction, dryness
<b>Fire (Agni)</b>	Core work, twists, backbends, dynamic sequences	Navasana, Marichyasana, Dhanurasana, Surya Namaskar	Transformation, metabolism, willpower, clarity	For kapha imbalance, lethargy, digestive weakness, lack of motivation
<b>Air (Vayu)</b>	Balancing, breath-focused, expansive poses	Vrikshasana, Garudasana, Pranayama practices	Breath awareness, movement, prana cultivation, lightness	For pranayama work, lightness cultivation, expanding awareness
<b>Space (Akasha)</b>	Inversions, restorative, meditation postures	Sirsasana, Savasana, Meditation seat, open backbends	Spaciousness, emptiness, pure awareness, receptivity	For deepening meditation, cultivating witness consciousness, release of all doing

*The body is a microcosm of the universe. The same five elements that compose the galaxies compose the cells of our bodies. When we understand this, yoga practice becomes a cosmic act of conscious participation in the great elemental dance of existence. — Dr. Shivam Mishra, SKM Yoga*



## PART THREE

# SADHAK AND BADHAK TATTVA

### *Factors that Facilitate and Obstruct the Yogic Path*

*To the one who desires liberation, the obstacles are his greatest teachers. For it is only by understanding what holds us back that we can understand what sets us free. — Swami Vivekananda*

The terms Sadhak Tattva and Badhak Tattva translate respectively as 'facilitating factors' and 'obstructing factors' — the conditions, qualities, attitudes, and circumstances that either accelerate or impede progress on the yogic path. This framework represents one of the most practically useful tools available to the yoga teacher because it provides a comprehensive diagnostic framework for understanding why some students progress rapidly while others plateau, and what specific interventions can facilitate breakthroughs.

The Sadhak-Badhak framework draws from multiple classical sources: Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (which enumerate the nine classical obstacles or antargha), the Hatha Yoga Pradipika (which lists the conditions that make Hatha Yoga succeed or fail), and the Bhagavad Gita (which extensively discusses the inner qualities that support or undermine spiritual development). Together, these sources give us a remarkably complete picture of what it takes to walk the yogic path with success.

# Chapter 16: Understanding Sadhak Tattva

## Factors that Facilitate Progress

### 16.1 What are the Sadhak Tattvas?

The Sadhak Tattvas are the inner and outer conditions that create the optimal environment for yogic progress. Just as a seed requires the right combination of soil, water, sunlight, and temperature to germinate and grow, the spiritual aspiration of the yoga practitioner requires a specific set of conditions to flower into genuine transformation. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika (1.16) lists several key Sadhak Tattvas: utsaha (enthusiasm), sahasa (courage), dhairya (patience/perseverance), tattva-jnana (knowledge of truth), nishchaya (determination), and jana-sanga-parityaga (avoidance of bad company).

#### UTSAHA — उत्साह

##### ***The First Sadhak Tattva***

*Enthusiasm, Zeal, Energy for Practice*

Utsaha is the quality of genuine enthusiasm — the intrinsic motivation that drives practice not out of obligation, fear, or external pressure but from a deep inner desire for growth and freedom. The practitioner with utsaha does not need to be reminded to practice; they are drawn to the mat, the meditation cushion, and the study of philosophy by an inner pull that is as natural as hunger.

#### SAHASA — साहस

##### ***The Second Sadhak Tattva***

*Courage, Boldness, Willingness to face the Unknown*

Sahasas is the courage to continue when the path becomes difficult, when the inner obstacles of the kleshas assert themselves with full force, when the familiar ego-structures are challenged by deeper self-knowledge, and when the social environment does not support the practitioner's yogic aspirations. The path of yoga inevitably leads the sincere practitioner into unfamiliar inner territory — sahasa is what makes it possible to walk into the unknown.

**DHAIRYA – धैर्य****The Third Sadhak Tattva***Patience, Perseverance, Steadiness*

Dhairya is the quality of patience — the ability to maintain consistent practice over time without demanding immediate results. The modern culture of instant gratification is profoundly antithetical to yogic progress, which unfolds at its own organic pace in accordance with the depth of each practitioner's accumulated samskaras and the sincerity of their practice. Dhairya is what allows the practitioner to show up day after day, month after month, year after year, trusting in the process even when no dramatic results are apparent.

**16.2 Additional Sadhak Tattvas**

Sadhak Tattva	Sanskrit	Meaning	How it Facilitates Progress	How the Teacher Cultivates It
<b>Tattva Jnana</b>	तत्त्वज्ञान	Knowledge of Truth	Correct philosophical understanding guides practice in the right direction and prevents misapplication	Integrate philosophy into every class; recommend classical texts; explain the 'why' behind practices
<b>Nishchaya</b>	निश्चय	Determination, Firm Resolution	Strong intention provides the motivational fuel that sustains practice through obstacles	Help students clarify their deepest intention (sankalpa); revisit it regularly
<b>Jana Sanga Parityaga</b>	जनसङ्गपरित्याग	Right Companionship / Avoiding Harmful Company	The people we spend time with profoundly influence our mental states, values, and priorities	Build community (sangha); create environments of mutual support and philosophical alignment
<b>Mita Ahara</b>	मिताहार	Moderate Eating	Dietary habits directly affect the quality of the mind, prana, and the progress of practice	Introduce Ayurvedic dietary principles; teach the connection between food, prana, and meditation
<b>Shraddha</b>	श्रद्धा	Faith, Trust, Confidence in the	Faith bridges the gap between	Share authentic personal

		Path	current experience and the state the practice is pointing toward	experience; connect students to the lineage and tradition
<b>Viveka</b>	विवेक	Discriminative Wisdom	The ability to distinguish between the real and unreal, the permanent and impermanent, the Self and not-Self	Consistent philosophical education; Svadhyaya assignments; reflection practices

# Chapter 17: Understanding Badhak Tattva Obstacles on the Yogic Path

## 17.1 The Nature of Badhak Tattvas

If the Sadhak Tattvas are the wind in the sails of the yoga practitioner, the Badhak Tattvas are the storms, hidden reefs, and becalmed stretches that test and challenge the journey. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika (1.15) lists several primary Badhak Tattvas: atyahara (overeating/over-acquisition), prayasa (excessive effort or strain), prajalpa (idle chatter/gossip), niyamagraha (rigidity in rules), jana sanga (bad company), and laulya (fickleness of mind).

Badhak Tattva	Sanskrit	Meaning	How it Obstructs	Antidote (Sadhak)
<b>Atyahara</b>	अत्याहार	Over-acquisition: excess food, possessions, stimulation	Overloads the system; dulls the mind; generates lethargy and the tamasic state	Mita Ahara (moderation) and Aparigraha (non-possessiveness)
<b>Prayasa</b>	प्रयास	Excessive, strained, ego-driven effort	Generates injury, burnout, exhaustion; drives from ego rather than wisdom	Prayatna Shaithilya (relaxation of effort); working with the natural capacity of the body
<b>Prajalpa</b>	प्रजल्प	Idle, meaningless, negative speech and gossip	Scatters mental energy; reinforces negativity; depletes prana; disturbs the mind	Mauna (silence practices); mindful, purposeful speech; study of truth
<b>Niyamagraha</b>	नियमग्रह	Rigid, mechanical adherence to rules without understanding their spirit	Creates spiritual rigidity; shuts off genuine inquiry; makes practice joyless and compulsive	Viveka (discriminative wisdom); understanding the purpose behind the forms
<b>Jana Sanga</b>	जनसङ्ग	Association with negative, spiritually obstructive company	Gradually erodes spiritual values; introduces doubt, cynicism, and distraction	Satsang (good company); choosing environments that support practice
<b>Laulya</b>	लौल्य	Fickleness, inconstancy, jumping from	Prevents the depth that only comes from	Dhairya (patience) and Nishchaya

		practice practice	to	sustained practice; creates spiritual superficiality	(determination); depth over breadth
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## 17.2 Recognizing Badhak Tattvas in Students

The skilled yoga teacher learns to recognize the signs of Badhak Tattvas operating in their students — not to judge or criticize, but to compassionately offer the practices and perspectives that address the specific obstruction at work. Some patterns to watch for:

- ◆ The student who is always trying the most advanced version of every pose (Prayasa — excessive ego-driven effort)
- ◆ The student who talks excessively before, during, and after class, disrupting the internal focus of the practice (Prajalpa)
- ◆ The student who jumps from teacher to teacher, tradition to tradition, seeking the 'perfect' system without committing to any (Laulya)
- ◆ The student whose diet and lifestyle outside class are so far from yogic principles that every week's practice is essentially undone by the weekend (Atyahara in multiple domains)
- ◆ The student who has become so rigid in their practice — always the same sequence, always the same time — that they have lost the quality of exploration and inquiry that gives practice life (Niyamagraha)

# Chapter 18: The Nine Classical Obstacles Patanjali's Antargha

## 18.1 Patanjali's Comprehensive Obstacle Map

In Yoga Sutras I.30-31, Patanjali provides the most comprehensive and analytically precise map of obstacles to yoga practice available in any classical text. He names nine primary obstacles (antargha) and five secondary manifestations that accompany them. This passage is foundational for any serious yoga teacher because it provides a diagnostic framework of extraordinary depth and precision.

*Vyadhi styana samsaya pramada alasya avirati bhranti darshana alabdha bhumikatva anavasthitatvani chitta vikshepa te antarayah — Yoga Sutras I.30*

'Disease, mental dullness, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, craving, deluded vision, failure to attain any stage of concentration, and instability in any stage attained — these are the nine distractions of the mind and they are the obstacles.' — Patanjali, YS I.30

Obstacle	Sanskrit	Description	Root Cause	Yogic Remedy
<b>Disease</b>	Vyadhi	Physical illness that prevents regular practice and disturbs bodily stability	Improper diet, lifestyle, or past karmic accumulation	Mita ahara; Yoga therapy; Ayurvedic lifestyle; appropriate restorative practice
<b>Mental Dullness</b>	Styana	Heaviness, sluggishness, lack of mental clarity and motivation	Tamas (the quality of inertia); overeating; lack of sleep regulation	Kapalabhati; dynamic asana; Surya Namaskar; sattva-promoting diet
<b>Doubt</b>	Samsaya	Persistent questioning of the path, teacher, or one's own ability to progress	Lack of direct experience; insufficient philosophical study; unresolved intellectual questions	Svadyaya; satsang; consistent practice leading to direct experience; authentic teacher guidance
<b>Heedlessness</b>	Pramada	Carelessness; not	Weak intention;	Cultivating viveka

		taking the practice seriously; lack of application	inadequate understanding of what is at stake	and vairagya; clarifying sankalpa; studying the consequences of heedlessness
<b>Laziness</b>	Alasya	Physical and mental inertia; inability to initiate or sustain effort	Tamasic lifestyle; lack of utsaha; depleted prana	Dynamic practice; accountability structures; community; cold water bathing; early rising
<b>Craving</b>	Avirati	The pull of sensory indulgence that draws attention away from practice	Raga-klesha operating at the level of the senses; insufficient pratyahara	Pratyahara practices; mita ahara; brahmacharya; study of the kleshas
<b>Deluded Vision</b>	Bhranti Darshana	Holding wrong views about the nature of progress, practice, or the self	Avidya-klesha; insufficient philosophical study; misguided teaching received	Correct philosophical education; direct experience; guidance from authentic teacher
<b>Failure to Attain</b>	Alabdha Bhumikatva	Inability to reach any stable stage of concentration or meditation	Insufficient pratyahara; scattered prana; klesha-activity in the mind	Systematic pranayama; pratyahara practices; dharana training; lifestyle purification
<b>Instability</b>	Anavasthitatvani	Reaching a stage of practice but being unable to maintain it consistently	Insufficient integration; lack of nishchaya; lifestyle inconsistency	Consistent daily practice; consolidating gains before advancing; avoiding spiritual bypassing

## 18.2 The Five Accompanying Disturbances

In Yoga Sutra I.31, Patanjali names five secondary manifestations that accompany the nine obstacles: Duhkha (pain/suffering), Daurmanasya (despair/discouragement), Angamejayatva (shakiness of the body), Shvasa (irregular inhalation), and Prashvasa (irregular exhalation). These five signs indicate that one or more of the nine obstacles is active, and they provide a practical, observable diagnostic tool for the yoga teacher.

**Diagnostic Questions for Teachers**

- Is the student experiencing physical symptoms that prevent practice?
- Does the student come to class with mental heaviness or dullness?
- Does the student express doubt about the practice or their ability to progress?
- Is the student's practice inconsistent, skipped when inconvenient?
- Is there visible laziness in the quality of effort within practice?

**Observable Signs of Obstacles**

- Irregular or labored breathing during what should be resting poses
- Visible shaking or trembling in the body during sustained practice
- Expressions of discouragement or hopelessness about progress
- Pain that is not injury-related but anxiety or tension-sourced
- Inability to maintain stillness in Savasana or meditation

# Chapter 19: Sadhak Tattvas in Practice

## Cultivating the Conditions for Progress

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### 19.1 Creating the Sadhak Environment

One of the most important responsibilities of the yoga teacher is not merely to teach practices but to create the conditions — inner and outer — in which practice can bear its deepest fruit. This is what is meant by 'holding space' at its most sophisticated level: the teacher who understands Sadhak Tattva knows that the quality of the environment they create — in the studio, in the classroom, and in the relationship between teacher and student — either facilitates or obstructs the student's progress.

### 19.2 The Role of Shraddha (Faith)

Perhaps the most subtle and significant of all the Sadhak Tattvas is shraddha — often translated as 'faith' but more precisely meaning 'that which is placed in the heart.' Shraddha is not blind belief but a confident, experientially-grounded trust in the path, the practice, and the possibility of genuine transformation. Patanjali specifically names shraddha as the first positive quality of the advanced practitioner in Yoga Sutra I.20: 'Shraddha virya smriti samadhi prajna purvaka itaresam.'

For the yoga teacher, cultivating shraddha in students means: sharing one's own authentic experience of transformation (not as boasting but as testimony); connecting students to the depth and breadth of a tradition that has produced profound transformation in countless practitioners over thousands of years; creating experiences of genuine insight and breakthrough within the practice itself; and being honest about one's own limitations and ongoing practice, which builds trust and demonstrates that the path continues to deepen indefinitely.

### 19.3 The Practice of Satsang

Satsang — literally 'association with the good' or 'association with truth' — is one of the most powerful and underutilized Sadhak Tattvas available to the yoga teacher. The quality of community that surrounds a yoga practitioner has a profound influence on the depth and consistency of their practice. A community of sincere practitioners who support each other's growth, discuss philosophy seriously, hold each other accountable to their practice, and celebrate each other's breakthroughs is one of the most powerful accelerators of yogic progress available.

- ◆ Create opportunities for philosophical discussion beyond the asana class

- ◆ Encourage students to practice together outside of class
- ◆ Organize retreats that allow deeper community formation
- ◆ Model the qualities of genuine satsang in your own relationship with your teacher and peers
- ◆ Introduce students to classical texts and encourage group study

# Chapter 20: Overcoming Badhak Tattvas

## Practical Tools for the Teacher

### 20.1 The Teacher's Diagnostic Role

The yoga teacher who understands Badhak Tattva becomes, in a real sense, a physician of the soul — not in the sense of arrogating clinical authority, but in the sense of developing the capacity to observe, diagnose, and respond skillfully to the specific obstacles that prevent each student's growth. This capacity is what distinguishes a technician (someone who delivers a sequence of poses) from a genuine yoga teacher (someone who guides the student toward liberation from suffering).

### 20.2 Pratipaksha Bhavana — The Universal Antidote

Patanjali offers one of the most practically useful tools for working with obstacles in Yoga Sutra II.33: 'Vitarka badhane pratipaksha bhavanam' — when disturbed by negative thoughts or obstacles, cultivate the opposite. This practice of Pratipaksha Bhavana — literally 'cultivating the opposite' — is the universal antidote to Badhak Tattvas.

The application of Pratipaksha Bhavana to Badhak Tattvas is beautifully systematic: for every Badhak Tattva there exists a corresponding Sadhak Tattva that is its opposite and its antidote. The teacher's task is to identify which Badhak is most active and prescribe the corresponding Sadhak with specificity and compassion.

Badhak Tattva	Manifestation in Student	Corresponding Sadhak	Specific Prescription	Timeline
<b>Alasya (Laziness)</b>	Inconsistent attendance; low energy in practice; reluctance to engage	Utsaha (Enthusiasm)	Dynamic vinyasa in morning; breathing practices; clear sankalpa; accountability partner	2-4 weeks of consistent morning practice to establish momentum
<b>Prayasa (Excessive Effort)</b>	Injury-prone; ego-driven; cannot rest or modify; compares with others	Prayatna Shaithilya (Relaxation of Effort)	Prescribe yin and restorative practice; assign Yoga Nidra; teach ahimsa in practice	1-3 months of softened practice to reset the nervous system

<b>Samsaya (Doubt)</b>	Questions everything; uncommitted; jumping between teachers	Shraddha (Faith) and Tattva Jnana	Philosophy education; share authentic testimonials; assign Svadhyaya; encourage direct experience	Ongoing — doubt dissolves through accumulation of direct experience
<b>Laulya (Fickleness)</b>	Constantly changing practices, teachers, styles; no depth	Nishchaya (Determination)	Commit to one practice for 40 days; keep practice journal; accountability structure	40-day sadhana to demonstrate the power of sustained practice
<b>Vyadhi (Disease/Imbalance)</b>	Physical symptoms preventing practice; chronic tension or pain	Mita Ahara and Appropriate Practice	Yoga therapy approach; Ayurvedic lifestyle recommendations; restorative and therapeutic practice	Varies by individual — work with healthcare practitioners as appropriate

### 20.3 The Role of Daily Practice (Nityakriya)

The single most powerful antidote to virtually all Badhak Tattvas is the establishment of a consistent daily practice — what the tradition calls Nityakriya (daily action) or Nitya Sadhana (daily spiritual practice). Patanjali emphasizes in Yoga Sutra I.14 that practice must be uninterrupted (nairantarya), long-lasting (dirgha kala), and approached with devotion (satkara asevitah) to establish itself as a genuine foundation. A daily practice — however brief — that is maintained without interruption over time builds a momentum (samskar) that progressively overcomes the inertia of the Badhak Tattvas.

*The Badhak Tattvas are not your enemies. They are your curriculum. Every obstacle on the path of yoga is precisely the practice you most need. The path does not go around the obstacles — it goes through them. — Dr. Shivam Mishra, SKM Yoga*

# Appendix: Integrated Application Framework Bringing All Three Together

The three frameworks presented in this manual — Panch Klesha, Panch Mahabhuta, and Sadhak-Badhak Tattva — are not separate and unrelated systems. They are three different lenses through which to view the same fundamental reality: the human being as a multi-dimensional being engaged in the project of growth, purification, and liberation.

## The Integrated Diagnostic Framework

When a student approaches the yoga teacher with a plateau, difficulty, or challenge in their practice, the integrated application of all three frameworks provides a remarkably comprehensive diagnostic tool:

### Step 1: Elemental Assessment (Mahabhuta)

What is the student's elemental constitution and current imbalance?

- Which elements appear deficient or in excess?
- Which sensory channels are most and least developed?
- Which types of practice does the student gravitate toward and which do they avoid?

Design elemental balancing practices targeting the specific imbalance identified.

### Step 2: Klesha Assessment (Panch Klesha)

Which kleshas are most active in this student's practice and life?

- Is there visible avidya (misidentification with body/performance)?
- Is asmita (ego) driving the practice toward achievement?
- What patterns of raga (craving) and dvesha (aversion) are visible?

Design klesha-specific practices that address the identified affliction.

### Step 3: Obstacle Assessment (Badhak Tattva)

Which specific obstacles are most active?

- What is preventing consistent, sincere, progressive practice?
- Are inner obstacles (doubt, laziness, fickleness) dominant?
- Are outer obstacles (lifestyle, company, diet) dominant?

Prescribe the corresponding Sadhak Tattva

### Step 4: Integration & Monitoring

Create an integrated practice prescription that addresses:

- Elemental imbalance through specific asana, pranayama, and diet
- Active kleshas through targeted meditation and philosophy study
- Active obstacles through specific lifestyle, community, and practice prescriptions

Review progress at regular intervals; adjust

with specific practices and timelines.

the prescription as the student evolves.

## Final Reflection

The philosophical frameworks presented in this manual are not intellectual constructs to be admired from a safe distance. They are living maps to be walked. The yoga teacher who studies Panch Klesha should be actively investigating their own kleshas in their daily practice and inner life. The teacher who studies Panch Mahabhuta should be feeling the five elements in their own body — the earth of their bones, the water of their blood, the fire of their metabolism, the air of their breath, the space of their awareness — with increasing subtlety and wonder. The teacher who studies Sadhak-Badhak Tattva should be honestly assessing which Badhak Tattvas most limit their own practice, and which Sadhak Tattvas they need most to cultivate.

It is only when the teacher has genuinely applied these frameworks to their own inner life that they become authentic guides for their students. The highest teaching is always the teacher's own being — their quality of presence, their degree of genuine inner freedom, their manifest embodiment of the yogic principles they teach. May this manual serve that embodiment.

*Yoga is not a technique. It is a transformation. Not something you do — it is something you become. May every page of this study bring you closer to that becoming. — Dr. Shivam Mishra, SKM Yoga*

## Om Shanti Shanti Shanti

*sarve bhavantu sukhinah | sarve santu niramayah*  
*May all beings be happy | May all beings be free from disease*

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