

40 Haikus for 40 Days: The Yoga Sutras for Transformation



A full cycle of our psyche is 40 days.

It is the amount of time it takes to form a new habit because, says yoga, it takes 40 days of a given practice to embody the new experiences and increased capacities it creates.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali form the heart of perennial yogic wisdom on lucid living. The 196 aphorisms offer advice ranging from the practical to the esoteric to elevate the human spirit.

As part of my self-initiation as a teacher of Kundalini Yoga, I endeavored to integrate the profound (and at times mysterious) wisdom of the Yoga Sutras by combining a close study of the text with a 40-day cycle of the Meditation for Transformation and allowing poetry to emerge from the encounter. What better form than the haiku to translate an experience freed from the tyranny of the literal yet grounded, embodied in the everyday?

To read the 196 Sutras over 40 days, I needed to cover an average of four or five aphorisms each day, grouping them in a rather intuitive way. So each day, for 40 days, I sat on my pillow and read three different translations of a few Sutras, then spent 31 minutes in meditation. Finally, I wrote a haiku. The result is this: The Yoga Sutras, distilled into 40 haikus that can be enjoyed for reading and/or used as support and inspiration for daily meditation.

Day 1 (Sutras I.1-I.4)	Day 2 (Sutras I.5-I.10)
Yoga reveals soul's	Mind's machinations

capacities for Being. Robot-mind be gone!	will misconstrue ropes for snakes. Calm fears: See what's real.
Day 3 (Sutras I.11-I.15) By fervent practice desire becomes empire: True self-unattached.	Day 4 (Sutras I.16-I.19) Samadhi burns through flesh, bones, reasons, past: I am that I am!
Day 5 (Sutras I.20-I.26) Energized practice or surrender to the Source free up boundlessness.	Day 6 (Sutras I.27-I.29) Sacred syllables vibrate God's revelation: Repeat Om, Om, Om!
Day 7 (Sutras I.30-I.34) Scattered mind brings stress. Befriend your breath: Stabilize! Befriend all: Harmonize!	Day 8 (Sutras I.35-I.39) Means to steady mind, many-faced like a diamond, merge in meditation.
Day 9 (Sutras I.40-I.46) Samadhi's ladder climbs over stuff, names, the subtle: Fuses with the most simple.	Day 10 (Sutras I.47-I.51) At the top waits grace: Higher order, pure knowing of peace undisturbed.
Day 11 (Sutras II.1-II.5) Yoga in action offers itself up to Source. Know this: Melt obstacles!	Day 12 (Sutras II.6 - II.9) Memories of death, pleasure and pain blur Being. To doing ego clings.
Day 13 (Sutras II.10-II.16) But let it go now. Though karmic seeds of grief stay, future throes take leave.	Day 14 (Sutras II.17-II.25) Be love, not lover, sight freed from the seen: The world refracts this.
Day 15 (Sutras II.26-II.28) Mind transcends the mind like ladder transcends ladder to break ties with pain.	Day 16 (Sutras II.29-II.35) Yoga's eight limbs, all rooted in non-violence, are rungs of rightness.
Day 17 (Sutras II.36-II.39) To greed-less seekers appears the meaning of life: Life-force is the one gem!	Day 18 (Sutras II.40-II.45) Divine devotion to a chosen beloved engenders pure joy.

<p>Day 19 (Sutras II.46-II.49)</p> <p>Body's happy space abandons dualities. Sit with grace</p>	<p>Day 20 (Sutras II.50-II.55)</p> <p>Consciously hold breath in mind's arms to see the light of inner knowing.</p>
<p>Day 21 (Sutras III.1-III.4)</p> <p>Mind-focus relates. Meditation penetrates. Absorption fuses.</p>	<p>Day 22 (Sutras III.5-III.11)</p> <p>Spiritual life requires learning to swim without making waves.</p>
<p>Day 23 (Sutras III.12-III.15)</p> <p>One-pointed focus rides the crest of increments. Equal waves a tide make.</p>	<p>Day 24 (Sutras III.16-III.22)</p> <p>One-pointed focus grants sensational powers over all senses.</p>
<p>Day 25 (Sutras III.23-III.29)</p> <p>Such focus gives strength of elephants to sages: Know death, love, stars!</p>	<p>Day 26 (Sutras III.30-III.36)</p> <p>Such subtle knowing stabilizes, elevates: Self shines through heart's grace.</p>
<p>Day 27 (Sutras III.37-III.39)</p> <p>But hug your center to inspire, not acquire. Be wise, not wizard!</p>	<p>Day 28 (Sutras III.40-III.44)</p> <p>Breath lifts you from swamps. Master it and light the way, weightless, a snowflake.</p>
<p>Day 29 (Sutras III.45-III.50)</p> <p>Dwell on the Between essence and the elements: Senses release sense.</p>	<p>Day 30 (Sutras III.51-III.56)</p> <p>Detached from powers dismiss Having for Being. This is pure freedom.</p>
<p>Day 31 (Sutras IV.1-IV.3)</p> <p>Best path to rebirth in this or another life is to blast the blocks!</p>	<p>Day 32 (Sutras IV.4-IV.6)</p> <p>Ego builds the chains that keep your mind prisoner. Break them! Meditate!</p>
<p>Day 33 (Sutras IV.7-IV.9)</p> <p>Neither good nor bad yogi's karmic seeds live on, so planting right soil!</p>	<p>Day 34 (Sutras IV.10-IV.13)</p> <p>Manifestation, existence's changeless thrust, changes in real time.</p>
<p>Day 35 (Sutras IV.14-IV.16)</p> <p>Things are real sans "I"</p>	<p>Day 36 (Sutras IV.17-IV.20)</p> <p>Either seer or seen,</p>

and reality is One despite countless eyes.	mind, like the moon, reflects light. But sun always shines.
Day 37 (Sutras IV.21-IV.23) Mind may not be known through objects or intellect. Self alone sees through.	Day 38 (Sutras IV.24-IV.28) Though when mind discerns, it may unite with the Self and doubt falls away.
Day 39 (Sutras IV.29-IV.31) Release insight, too to release the seeds of grief and be free for Truth.	Day 40 (Sutras IV.32-IV.34) Once baseless, thought waves return to primal ocean: Pure conscious power!