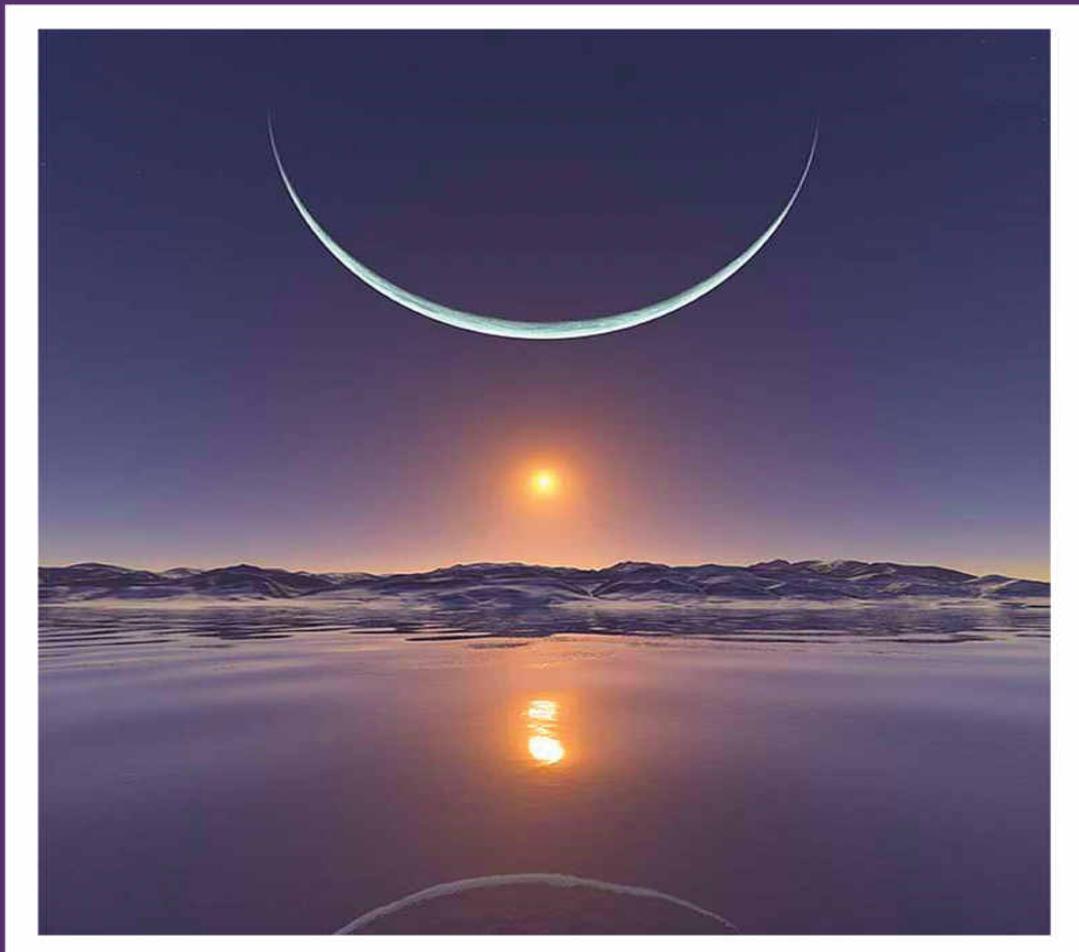


Nadabindu & Dhyanabindu Upanishads

Meditations on the Inner Sound

Swami Satyadharma Saraswati



Translated by Ruth Perini (Srimukti)



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Nādabindu Upaniṣad

Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad

Meditations on the Inner Sound

Original Sanskrit text with
Transliteration, Translation and Commentary
Commentary by

Swāmī Satyadharma Sarasvatī

Translation and Transliteration by

Śrimukti (Ruth Perini)

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Dedication

To all friends, practitioners and teachers of yoga,

and to all seekers of spiritual wisdom,

regardless of time or place, creed, gender, age or race

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Foreword

Swami Satyadharma Saraswati, 1946 - 2019

On 12th June 2019 on the Central Coast of New South Wales, Australia, our beloved Swami Satyadharma left her body. It was on the day of Ganga Dussehra, celebrating the descent to Earth of the goddess Ganga, Ganga the mother providing nourishment to all her children.

Dedications in the Yoga Upanishad books have been to all spiritual aspirants. Swami Satyadharma's life was dedicated for over forty years to providing spiritual nourishment and bringing the light of yoga to all those who attended her programs throughout the world.

Swami Satyadharma was born to a middle-class family in Connecticut, USA. She was the youngest of three and lived surrounded by nature and animals. She recognised the spiritual energy of nature, and was never attracted to big cities.

In search of purpose and spiritual guidance she travelled for years throughout Europe, Africa and Asia, where she met many enlightened masters. When taking part in a meditation program in Java, Indonesia in the mid 1970's, she was directed by the master to go to Munger, Bihar, India, where she would meet a great teacher, Swami Satyananda, a disciple of Swami Sivananda. There she stayed for thirty-five years.

At the age of 28, she was initiated by Swami Satyananda into *pūrṇa sannyasa* (full renunciation), a Dashnami order connected with the Advaita Vedanta tradition established by Adi Shankaracharya to protect, preserve and propagate spiritual knowledge. She absorbed the teachings and worked hard for the ashram for the first twenty years she spent there.

Then she edited books written by Swami Satyananda and, under his guidance, travelled the world teaching a range of different spiritual courses on the Yogic Scriptures. And teach she did in Australia, USA, Canada, India, Nepal, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Columbia, Greece, Germany, Hungary, France, Italy, Indonesia, New Zealand. In all those countries she was invited to come back time and time again. She had a great ability to teach. Her vast knowledge of the ancient scriptures was amazing. It just flowed from her. When she taught it was like she stepped into another zone, where she spoke with profound insight. That is why, if Swami Satyadharma was running a course, people would sign up regardless of the topic. Her deep understanding of yoga was reflected in the numerous topics she taught.

Her later years were devoted to writing commentaries on the Yoga Upanishads. She had completed her commentary on Nādabindu, and had written her commentary on only nine verses of Dhyānabindu. No-one else has completed this commentary, or been asked to do so, as her commentaries were original and unique.

Swami Satyadharma's

Programs, Retreats and Lectures

Programs

Awakening Kundalini, Meditations from the Tantras, Dancing with Divine, Atma Darshan, Intuition, Guru Tattwa, Shiva Sutras, Mantra Yantra and Mandala, Ashram Life, Sadhana, Chakra Meditation, Spiritual Life.

***Deepening Sadhana* Retreats**

Kriya Yoga, Tattwa Shuddhi, Chakra Shuddhi, Prana Vidya and Mahavidya Sadhana.

Lectures

During the years she lived in Australia, she gave many satsangs and lectures to students enrolled in Yogic Studies courses. Topics included Origins of Yoga, Samkhya Tantra & Vedanta, Yoga Sutras, Koshas, Chakras, Gunas, Bhagavad Gita, SWAN Theory, Raja Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Upanishads, Pranava, Shiva Shakti, Mantra & Nada, Mantra Yoga, Nada Yoga, Mudra & Bandha, Shatkarmas, Kundalini Yoga, Swara Yoga, Prana & Pranayama, Pratyahara, Theory & Practice of Antar Mouna, Yoga Psychology, Yoga Philosophy, Yoga in India, Yoga Ecology, Yoga History, Path of the Rishis, Yamas & Niyamas, Yoga & Religion, Meditation, Yoga Nidra, Addiction, Purpose in Life, Grief, Body-Mind Therapy, Opening the Heart, Perception, Models of Mind, Mind & Consciousness, Mind Management and Living Consciously.

We were privileged to have worked with Swami Satyadharma for many years. We know her unlimited love and teachings will live on well beyond our lifetimes.

Om Tat Sat

Introduction

Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘knowledge’. In the context of the Vedas, it means ‘revealed

knowledge which is *śruti*, ‘heard’ from within, not taught. These ancient spiritual texts or hymns, through which we can learn much of the perceptions and insights of the early vedic seers, are grouped into four *samhitas* or collections: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. They were revealed to enlightened beings 3,000 to 4,500 years ago or more (the Rig-Veda contains astronomical references describing occurrences in 5,000 to 3,000 BCE), and transmitted orally by the sages from generation to generation within brahmin families.

The four Vedas were considered to be divine revelations, and each word was carefully memorised. This was to ensure accurate transmission, but also because each syllable was considered to have spiritual power, its source being the supreme, eternal sound. This was a mammoth task, as there are 20,358 verses in the four Vedas, approximately two thousand printed pages. They were composed in fifteen different metres, which demanded perfect control of the breath. Georg Feuerstein describes them as ‘a composite of symbol, metaphor, allegory, myth and story, as well as paradox and riddle’ and their composers as ‘recipients and revealers of the invisible order of the cosmos [with] inspired insights or illumined visions’¹.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest spiritual text in the world and still regarded as sacred, containing 1,028 hymns or songs of 10,589 verses in praise of the divine (*rig* or *ric* meaning ‘praise’). Each hymn is recognised as a *mantra*, a sacred sound vibration, which releases energy from limited material awareness, thus expanding the consciousness. It is also the earliest surviving form of Sanskrit. The illumined seers composed the hymns while established in the highest consciousness, thus able to commune with luminous beings of the higher realms. There are about 250 hymns in praise of *Indra*, the divine force behind the ocean, heavens, thunder, lightning, rain and the light of the sun; 200 of *Agni*, born of the Sun, becoming the god of sacrificial fire, and over 100 of *Soma*, who gives immortality, and who is connected to the Sun, Moon, mountains, rivers and oceans. Others are dedicated to *Varuna*, who protects cosmic order; the *Ashvins*, supreme healers; *Ushas*, goddess of the dawn; *Aditi*, goddess of eternity; and *Saraswati*, goddess of the Vedas and of music and the arts.

Yajur Veda

The hymns of the Yajur-Veda, Veda of Sacrifice, consist of sacrificial formulas or prayers, including those of an internal or spiritual nature, which are chanted by the *adhvaryu* (priest), who performs the sacrifice. About a third of its 1,975 verses are taken from the Rig Veda. The rest are original and in prose form.

Sāma Veda

The Sāma Veda, Veda of Chants, gives instructions on the chanting of vedic hymns. The majority of its 1,875 verses are from the Rig Veda; only 75 verses are original. Many of the hymns were sung by special priests during sacrificial rites. Some are still sung today.

Atharva Veda

The Atharva Veda, named after the seer Atharvan, whose family were great seers in vedic times, contains 731 hymns of 5,977 verses, about one fifth of which are from the RigVeda. Much of the Atharva Veda consists of magical spells and charms for gaining health, love, peace and prosperity, or taking revenge on an enemy. Possibly for this reason, the Atharva Veda was either not accepted by the orthodox priesthood, or not given the same standing as the other Vedas.

The vedic people and their culture

The vedic people lived for over 2,500 years mainly along the banks of the Saraswati River, which was located in Northern India between the modern Ravi and Yamuna Rivers down to what is now the desert of Rajasthan. The Saraswati River dried up in about 1,900 BCE due to tectonic upheavals. Other areas of habitation included the Ganges River and its tributaries, rivers in Afghanistan (previously called Gandhara), the Himalayas and Mount Kailash in Tibet.

The vedic people had a complex multi-tiered view of the universe, in which humankind, nature and the divine are intertwined and interrelated. They had a deep knowledge of the oceans, mountains, deserts and forests of the physical world, as well as of the subtle worlds of deities and different levels of consciousness. People lived in cities or villages or were nomads, and were fully engaged in worldly life. They were an agrarian people, yet also had herds of cattle, horses and camels. Cities were constructed of stone, bricks and metal. They built chariots and ships. They were skilled workers in gold, metal, clay, stone, wood, leather and wool, and showed a very high standard in arts, crafts, astrology, medicine, music, dance and poetry.

After the Vedas

The Vedas were the foundation for the later revelations (*śruti*) in the *Brāhmaṇas* (ritual texts), the *Āranyakas* (texts on rituals and meditation for forest-dwelling ascetics) and the *Upaniṣads* (esoteric texts). Later still, the Vedas were the basis for numerous works of remembered or traditional knowledge, known as *smṛti*, including the epics: i.e. the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas*, and the *Sūtras*, or threads of knowledge, e.g. *Yoga Sūtras*. All these texts contain many concepts and practices, which come directly from the four Vedas.

Upaniṣads

The word *upaniṣad* is comprised of three roots: *upa* or ‘near’, *ni* or ‘attentively’, and *sad*, ‘to sit’. The term describes the situation in which these unique texts were transmitted. The students or disciples sat near the realized master and listened attentively, as he expounded his experiences and understanding of the ultimate reality. These teachings are said to destroy the ignorance or illusion of the spiritual aspirant in regard to what is self and non-self, what is real and unreal, in relation to the absolute and relative reality. Only disciples were chosen, who had persevered in *sādhana catuṣṭaya*, the four kinds of spiritual effort, viz. *viveka* (discrimination between the permanent and impermanent), *vairagya* (non-attachment), *sadsampatti* (six virtues of serenity, self-control, withdrawal of the senses, endurance, perfect concentration and strong faith) and *mumukṣutva* (intense desire for liberation).

The Upaniṣads are derived from the Āranyakas, because they were chanted in the forest (*āranya*) after the aspirant had retired from worldly life. They are recorded in the later form of Sanskrit used in the Brāhmaṇas, and considered the last phase of *śruti*, vedic revelation. The Upaniṣads are regarded as *vedānta*, the end of the Vedas, inferring that *vedānta* is the end or completion of all perceivable knowledge, as they guide the aspirant beyond the limited mind to the *ātman* (spiritual self) and thus to *mokṣa* (liberation). Each *upaniṣad* reflected the teachings and tradition of a realized master, and was connected with a specific Veda and vedic school. It is estimated that there are over 200 Upaniṣads, which have been divided into seven groups: *Major*, *Vedānta*, *Śaiva*, *Śakta*, *Vaiśnava*, *Sannyasa* and *Yoga*.

Yoga Upaniṣads

The twenty one Yoga Upaniṣads give an understanding of the hidden forces in nature and human

beings, and describe esoteric yogic practices by which these forces can be manipulated and controlled. They emphasise that the inner journey to the one permanent reality, the *ātman*, is the essential one. Journeys to external places, such as holy sites and temples, as well as rituals and ceremonies, are not given importance. Their teachings give important information on the subtle body (*cakras*, *kōśas*, *prāṇa*, *kundalini*, meditative states), and the tantric and yogic techniques, not given in the earlier *upaniṣads*, to attain them. Therefore, they are regarded as a significant integration of Vedanta and Tantra, which were previously considered incompatible. They are classified as ‘minor’ only because they postdate Ādi Śaṅkara.

Although their teachings actually predate Patañjali, the Yoga *Upaniṣads* were codified after the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, and form an important part of the classical yoga literature. However, they contain no references to Patañjali or his *Yoga Sūtras*. So, although the compilation of the Yoga *Upaniṣads* is post-Patañjali, the *vidyās*, or meditative disciplines, contained within them are pre-Patañjali. The Yoga *Upaniṣads* emerged at a time when the vedic and tantric cultures were coming together to share their knowledge. The wise thinkers from each culture sat down together and discussed how their insights and teachings could be combined in order to benefit humanity. Thus these *upanisads* combine the teachings of both tantra and yoga. It is evident in them that yoga leads to *vedānta*, and *vedānta* leads to yoga. However, they were written down by vedantic scholars and practitioners in order to show that these *vidyās* and related practices were not borrowed from Patañjali, but were known and practised from the ancient period.

Within the twenty-one Yoga *Upaniṣads* are six sub-groups which have their own main focus. The *Bindu Upaniṣads*, which include the *Amṛta-Bindu* (also known as the *Brahma-Bindu-Upaniṣad*), *Amṛta-Nada-Bindu*, *Nada-Bindu*, *Dhyāna-Bindu* and *Tejo-Bindu-Upaniṣads*, all concentrate on the bindu, the source or origin of all sound, and hence of creation. Bindu represents the transcendental sound manifested in the mantra *Aum*. The *Hamsa-Mantra*, *Soham*, is the main practice of the *Hamsa*, *Brahma-Vidya*, *Mahavakya* and *Paśupata-Brahma-Upaniṣads*. Concentration on *prāṇa*, the life force related to the process of inhalation and exhalation, brings the yogin to the knowledge of the transcendental self. The light of pure consciousness, which the enlightened irradiate is the theme of the *Advaya-Taraka* and *Maṇḍala-Brahmana-Upaniṣads*. The *Kṣurika-Upaniṣad* (*kṣurika* meaning ‘dagger’) emphasises non-attachment as a means to liberation. The sixth group, comprised of eight late Yoga *Upaniṣads* from 1200 to 1300 A.D., covers teachings related to hatha and kundalini yogas. They are the *Yoga-Kuṇḍalī*, *Yoga-Tattwa*, *Yoga-Śikhā*, *Varāha*, *Śāndilya*, *Tri-Śikhi-Brahmana*, *Yoga-Darśana* and *Yoga-Cūḍāmani Upaniṣads*.

The Dhyāna and Nādabindu Upaniṣads were probably composed between the ninth and fourteenth centuries CE. The bindu is a psychic centre located in the brain at the top back of the head. These *upaniṣads* focus on meditation on the bindu, the source point or origin of individual creation, where begins the primal sound or first vibration, the mantra Om. They define and describe in detail the mantra Om, the effects of meditating on it until one attains perfect liberation, merging with the Divine.

Nādabindu describes the components of Om, that is, its three and a half measures (*mātrā*) which are the sounds *a u m*, and the half measure, the echo of *m*. Always meditating on Om, the yogin is liberated from worldly life, unaffected by his/her karmas. The nāda is first heard through the right ear, and many other inner sounds are heard. Eventually the yogin hears no other sounds and transcends duality.

Dhyānabindu, an expansion of Nādabindu, confirms that meditation on Om can destroy all karmas. The yogin should meditate on the lotus of the heart, then at the eyebrow centre, then on the Sun, Moon and Agni, leading to the *ātman*. The six parts of yoga, the cakras, nādīs and prāṇas are described.

Kuṇḍalinī Śakti can be awakened by the repetition of the mantra *haṁsa*, *ham* spontaneously accompanying the inhalation, and *sa* the exhalation, as well as uddiyāna and jālandhara bandhas, khecarī mudrā and mahāmudrā. The ātman is described in detail. Finally, the teacher recommends meditating on the bija mantras of the five elements, the five prāṇas and the nāda. Swami Satyadharma completed her commentary on Nādabindu, and passed away while writing the commentary on Dhyānabindu.

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नादबिन्दूपनिषत्

nādabindūpaniṣat

Sound-Point Upaniṣad

Opening Invocation

वैराजात्मोपासानाया संजातज्ञानवह्निना ।

दाध्वा कर्मत्रयं योगी यत्पदं याति तद्भजे ॥

ॐ बाङ्मे मनसीति शान्तिः ॥

vairājātmopāsanaya samjātajñānavahninā

dagdhvā karma-trayam yogī yat padam yāti tad bhaje

om vānme manasīti śāntih

Anvay

dagdhvā: having burned; *karma-trayam*: three *karmas*; *vahninā*: through the fire; *jñāna*: knowledge; *saṃjāta*: born; *upāsanaya*: through devotion to; *ātma*: self; *vairājāt*: derived from Virāj (Brahma); *yogī*: yogin, adept in yoga; *yāti*: goes to; *yat padam*: that seat; *tat bhaje*: where he worships; *om*: Om, cosmic primal sound; *iti*: let there be; *śāntih*: peace; *manasi*: in mind; *vānme*: in speech.

Translation

Having burned the three *karmas* through the fire of knowledge, born through devotion to the self, [who is] derived from Virāj, the yogin goes to that seat where he worships.

Om, let there be peace in speech and mind.

Commentary

The three karmas referred to at the beginning of the text relate with our mental conditioning and nature, which are formed by the impressions stored in the memory from our actions. These include our current actions, as well as the past actions that accrue over many lifetimes. The impressions of all our actions, past and present, are stored in the subconscious field, or *citta*, and are known as *sancita karmas*. They form our individual associations and memories, which are a unique and indelible blue print of our person. The current actions, which we are in the process of performing from moment to moment, are called *kriyamana* or *agami* karmas. These karmas are likened to the arrow, which has been placed in the bow, aimed and drawn back, but is not yet released. So, there is still some element of self-determination, freewill or choice. One may yet decide whether or not to release the arrow, or to perform the action. The accumulated actions, which have ripened and are ready to be expressed, are called *prārabdha*, or destined, karmas. They are unchangeable, and must simply be enjoyed or endured, when their time comes.

Karma is the basis of human bondage. Every action we perform is stored in the consciousness in the form of an impression, or *samskara*. Hence the words *samskara* and *karma* are often used interchangeably. No action or karma is ever lost, disappears or goes away. All the karmas are there in their store, even though we may forget about them, or think they are gone. The ultimate goal of all yogas and all sādhanas is to attain liberation from the bondage of karma. Therefore, the yogin, who has burned through these three karmas by the fire of *brahma jñāna*, knowledge of the transcendental consciousness, born through devotion to the self, goes to the seat of worship. In this sense, worship is not a state of prayer or praise, but a deep and abiding affinity with the divine source of all existence. Keeping this aim in mind, the rishi, or revealer of the *upaniṣad* says, “Om, let there be peace in speech and mind,” for this is the condition necessary to confer this teaching on nāda bindu from master to student.

Verse 1: Symbol of Aum

ॐ अकारो दक्षिणः पक्ष उकारस्तूतरः समृतः ।

मकारं पुच्छमित्याहुरधमात्रा तु मस्तकम् ॥१॥

om akāro dakṣinah pakṣa ukārastūtarah smṛtaḥ

makāram pucchamityāhurardhamātrā tu mastakam (1)

Anvay

akārah: sound ‘a’; *smṛtaḥ*: is declared; *dakṣinah pakṣah*: right wing; *om*: AUM, sound of Brahma; *ukārah*: sound ‘u’; *uttarah*: left; *makāram*: sound ‘m’; *puccham*: tail; *ardhamātrā*: half-syllable; *āhuḥ*: is said; *mastakam*: head.

Translation

The sound ‘a’ is declared [to be] the right wing [of] AUM, ‘u’ the left, ‘m’ the tail, and the half-syllable is said [to be] the head.

Commentary

The teachings given herein on *nāda bindu* begin with a description of the symbol for the sound *Aum*. This is the primal *nāda*, or subtlest sound vibration, which ushers the pure consciousness that is unmanifest into the manifest dimension of creation. Meditation on this symbol represents the merging of *nāda* and *bindu*, the primal point from which all form evolves, at the source, or the beginning of evolution. *Nāda bindu* is the exact point of transition, when creation begins to unfold from its source, the pure consciousness, and then again, when the manifest creation dissolves back into the unmanifest source.

Therefore, in relation to *nāda bindu*, there are two ways to meditate upon *Aum*. The first way is through the path of *nāda*, hearing the sound or repeating the sound. The second way is the path of *bindu*, whereby the practitioner focuses on the form or symbol. In this verse the second way is given precedence. The symbol or form of *Aum* is described here in relation to its three letters: A, U and M, which form the symbol in the Sanskrit or Devanagari script.

Verse 2: Quality of *Aum*

पादादिकं गुणां सत्तासया शरीरं सत्त्वमुच्यते ।

धर्मोऽस्य दक्षिणं चक्षुरधर्मोऽथो परः समृतः ॥२॥

pādādikam guṇāstasya śarīram sattvamucyate

dharma 'sya dakṣinam cakṣuradharma 'tho parah smṛtaḥ (2)

Anvay

ucyate: it is said; *guṇāḥ*: *guṇas*, qualities of nature, *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattvam*; *ādikam*: start at; *pāda*: feet; *tasya śarīram*: its body; *dharmaḥ*: *dharma*, harmony; *smṛtaḥ*: it is declared; *asya dakṣinam cakṣuh*: its right eye; *athah*: and; *adharma*: *adharma*, disharmony; *parah*: other.

Translation

It is said the *guṇas* start at the feet, *sattvam* is its body; *dharma*, it is declared, is its right eye, and *adharma* its other [eye].

Commentary

The symbol of *Aum*, as described previously, represents the essence of the sound and, therefore, contains within it the potentiality of the entire creation, both manifest and unmanifest. So, it is said that the *guṇas*, or qualities of nature, start at its feet or base, where they remain in equilibrium. The three *guṇas* are *tamas*: stability, *rajas*: movement, and *sattwa*: balance. Creation begins when there is some slight movement, some slight interaction between the *guṇas*, causing one of them to become dominant. And so, *sattwa* becomes dominant as the body of *Aum*. This signifies that *Aum* comes into

being as a pure and balanced vibration. Whatever becomes manifest enters the dimension of duality. Hence, dharma is its right eye and adharma, its left eye. The eyes here represent the sense of perception. Dharma refers to right perception, which leads to connection and harmony with the divine. Adharma refers to wrong perception, leading to disconnection and disharmony.

Verses 3 and 4: Origin of the seven lokas

भूर्लोकः पादयोस्तस्य भूवर्लोकस्तु जानुनि ।

सुवर्लोकः कटीदेशे नाभिदेशे महर्जगत् ॥३॥

जनोलोकस्तु हृद्देशे कण्ठे लोकस्तपस्ततः ।

भ्रुवोर्ललाटमध्ये तु सत्यलोको व्यवस्थितः ॥४॥

bhūrlokah pādayostasya bhūvarlokastu jānuni

suvarlokah kaṭideśe nābhideśe maharjagat (3)

janolokastu hṛddeśe kanthe lokastapastataḥ

bhruvorlalātamadhye tu satyaloko vyavasthitāḥ (4)

Anvay

bhūrlokah: *bhūrloka*, first plane of consciousness; *tasya pādayoh*: in its feet; *bhūvarlokah*: *bhūvarloka*, second plane of consciousness; *jānuni*: in [its] knees; *suvarlokah*: *suvarloka*, third plane of consciousness; *deśe*: in the region; *kaṭī*: hips; *mahaḥ-jagat*: *maharjagat*, fourth plane of consciousness; *deśe*: in the region; *nābhi*: navel; *janāḥ-lokah*: *janoloka*, fifth plane of consciousness; *vyavasthitāḥ*: is located; *deśe*: in the region; *hṛd*: heart; *tataḥ*: from there; *lokaḥ-tapah*: *tapoloka*, sixth plane of consciousness; *tu*: and; *satya-lokah*: *satyaloka*, seventh plane of consciousness; *madhye*: in the centre; *lalāta*: forehead; *bhruvoh*: eyebrows.

Translation

The *bhūrloka* [is] in its feet, the *bhūvarloka* in its knees; *suvarloka* in the region [of] the hips; *maharjagat* in the region [of] the navel. *Janoloka* is located in the region [of] the heart; from there *tapoloka* in the throat, and *satyaloka* in the centre [of] the forehead [between] the eyebrows.

Commentary

Here *Aum*, being the first vibration of creation, is described as containing the *lokas*, or planes of existence, within it. Again, the form or symbol of *Aum* is used as a foundation to place the seven planes. The *bhūrloka*, or earth plane, lies at its feet, or base. *Bhūvarloka*, the intermediary or spacial plane, is in its knees. *Suvarloka*, the heavenly plane, is in the hip region. *Mahaloka*, the great plane beyond heaven, is in the navel region. *Janoloka*, the plane where pure-minded souls dwell, is located in the heart region. *Tapoloka*, the plane where great yogis and tapasvis dwell, is located in the throat. And *Satyaloka*, the plane of absolute truth, is at the centre of the forehead, in-between the eyebrows.

Verses 5 and 6a: Power of mantra

सहस्रार्णमतीवात्र मन्त्र एष प्रदर्शितः ।

एवमेतं समारूधो हंसयोगविचक्षणः ॥५॥

न भिद्यते कर्मचारैः पापकोटिशतैरपि ।६।

sahasrārṇamatīvātra mantra esa pradarśitah

evametam samārūdho haṁsayogavicakṣanah (5)

na bhidyate karmacāraih pāpakoṭisatairapi. (6a)

Anvay

esa: flowing; *pradarśitah*: is explained; *atra*: here; *iva*: as; *sahasra-arṇa*: thousand-waved; *mati*: intelligence; *vicakṣanah*: one who is proficient; *saṁrūdhah*: having mounted; *evam*: thus; *haṁsa*: *haṁsa*, able to distinguish between reality and impermanence; *na bhidyate*: is not affected; *karma-cāraih*: by the bonds of *karma*, fruits of action; *api*: or even; *śataih*: by a hundred; *koti*: crores; *pāpa*: sins.

Translation

The flowing *mantra* is explained here as a thousand-waved intelligence. One who is proficient [in] *yoga*, having thus mounted the *haṁsa*, is not affected by the bonds of *karma* or even by a hundred crores [of] sins.

Commentary

Mantra is an ancient science, which developed very early in human civilization. The word mantra comes from two roots: *manan*, meaning ‘mind’, and *trayati*, ‘liberates’. *Mananāt trayati iti mantra*: that which liberates the mind is mantra. When mantra is repeated or utilised for meditation on a regular basis, it creates a vibratory field that imbues the mind and consciousness with the power of that specific sound vibration, as well as harmony and clarity. Here mantra is described as a thousand waves of flowing intelligence. When you add that kind of dose to the ordinary mind, it becomes extraordinary.

Today, we consider an extraordinary mind to be one capable of regurgitating many facts and figures, or accomplish various feats in the external world. However, in the spiritual context, it means one who is able to access the higher plane of mind and consciousness. The major practice of meditation which is given in *yoga* is mantra. Hence, to be proficient in *yoga* means to be proficient in mantra. In this verse, the word *haṁsa* has a double meaning. First, *haṁsa* is a ‘swan’, which represents the quality of *viveka*, or ‘discrimination’, because it has the ability to sift milk from water through its beak. Discrimination is not a quality of the ordinary mind, and that is why so few people have it. It is a quality of the higher mind, and is therefore considered to be a yogic quality.

Secondly, *haṁsa* is one of the foremost mantras, along with Aum, contained in the upanishadic texts. These two mantras were practised assiduously by the yogis of old, who attained *saṁadhi* and self-realisation through them. The mantra *haṁsa* is also practised in reverse, as *Soham*. *Haṁsa* has two roots: *ham* or ‘I’, and *sah*, ‘that’; I am That. The verse states that one, who is proficient in *yoga*, has mounted the *haṁsa*, the swan of discrimination. It also refers to the yogi, who has mastered the *haṁsa*.

mantra, ‘I am That (supreme consciousness)’, and no longer limits or identifies himself with the individual roles and associations of worldly life. Such a yogi remains unaffected by the bondage of karma, and even by a hundred million sins.

Verses 6b and 7: Three letters of Aum

आग्नेयी प्रथमा मात्रा वायव्येषा तथापरा ॥६॥

भानुमण्डलसंकाशा भवेन्मात्रा तथोत्तरा ।

परमा चार्धमात्रा या वारुणीं तां विदुबूधाः ॥७॥

āgneyī prathamā mātrā vāyavyeṣā tathāparā (6b)

bhānumaṇḍalasaṃkāśā bhavenmātrā tathottarā

paramā cārdhamātrā yā vāruṇītām vidurbudhāḥ (7)

Anvay

prathamā mātrā: first *mātrā*, unit of sound; *āgneyī*: relates to Agni; *eṣā*: second (*lit that*); *vāyavī*: relates to Vāyu; *tathā*: then; *parā*: next; *bhavet*: is; *saṃkāśā*: bright; *maṇḍala*: orb; *bhānu*: sun; *ca*: and; *uttarā*: last; *paramā*: supreme; *ardhamātrā*: half syllable; *tām*: this; *yā viduh*: the wise; *budhāḥ*: know; *vāruṇītām*: relates to Vāruṇa.

Translation

The first *mātrā* relates to Agni, the second to Vāyu; then the next is bright [like] the orb [of] the sun, and the last [is] the supreme *ardhamātrā*; this the wise know relates to Vāruṇa.

Commentary

The mantra *Aum* is comprised of three *mātrās*, syllables or letters, plus a half *mātrā*. The first syllable is the sound ‘A’, which relates with *Agni*, lord of fire. The second relates with *Vāyu*, lord of the air or wind. The third relates with *Sūrya*, lord of the sun. The half syllable at the end relates with *Vāruṇa*, lord of the water, or the sea. In this way, the syllables of *Aum* produce the vibration of the elements necessary for creation: (i) fire, which brings forth transformation, (ii) air, which contains gaseous substance, (iii) sun, which gives light and heat, and water, the sustainer of life.

Verse 8: Omkāra

कालत्रये पि यस्येमा मात्रा नूनं प्रतिष्ठताः ।

एष ओंकार आख्यातो धारणाभिर्निबोधत ॥८॥

kālatraye ‘pi yasyemā mātrā nūnam pratiṣṭhatāḥ

esa omkāra ākhyāto dhāraṇābhīrbodhata (8)

Anvay

nūnam: now; *yasya*: of each; *api*: also; *pratiṣṭhatāḥ*: are formed of; *kālatrāye*: three parts; *eṣa ākhyātāḥ*: this is called; *omkāraḥ*: *omkāra*, sound of AUM; *nibodhata*: you can know; *dhāraṇābhīḥ*: through the *dhāraṇās*, concentration on each part.

Translation

Now the *mātrās* of each are also formed of three parts. This is called the *omkāra*. You can know [it] through the *dhāraṇās*.

Commentary

Each *mātrā* also consists of three parts, and altogether these are called *omkāra*. He who or That which names the symbol of Aum is known as *omkāra*. This term is often used as a reference to Shiva or Brahman, in relation to the supreme consciousness from which Aum has arisen. *Omkaṛā* can only be experienced through meditation. The *dhāraṇās* are practices of meditation, which involve one-pointed concentration. When performed on a regular basis, they strengthen the inner awareness, allowing the practitioner to transcend the mind. This takes the consciousness to a very high level. The *dhāraṇās* were developed by the yogis and rishis of old, who practised them in the solitude of mountains and forests. They are found in the different *upaniṣads*.

Verses 9 to 11: Twelve śaktis of Omkāra

घोषिणी प्रथमा मात्रा विद्या मात्रा तथापरा ।

पतङ्गिनी तृतीया स्याच्चतुर्थी वायुवेगिनी ॥९॥

पञ्चमी नामधेया तु षष्ठी चैन्द्रीयभिधीयते ।

सप्तमी वैष्णवी नाम अष्टमी शांकरीति च ॥१०॥

नवमी महती नाम धृतिस्तु दशमी मता ।

एकादशी भवेन्नारी ब्राह्मी तु द्वादशी परा ॥११॥

ghoṣinī prathamā mātrā vidyā mātrā tathāparā

pataṅginī trītyā syāccaturthī vāyuvegini (9)

pañcamī nāmadheyā tu ṣaṣṭī caindrīyabhidhīyate

saptamī vaiṣṇavī nāma aṣṭamī śāṃkarīti ca (10)

navamī mahatī nāma dhṛtistu daśamī matā

ekādaśī bhavennārī brāhmī tu dvādaśī parā (11)

Anvay

prathamā: first; *mātrā*: mātrā, metre; *syāt*: is; *ghoṣinī*: Ghoṣinī; *tathā*: then; *parā*: next; *vidyā*: Vidyā; *trītyā*: third; *pataṅginī*: Pataṅginī; *caturthī*: fourth; *vāyuvegīnī*: Vāyuvegīnī; *pañcamī*: fifth; *nāmadheyā*: Nāmadheyā; *ca*: and; *śaṣṭī*: sixth; *abhidhīyate*: is called; *aindrī*: Śiva (coming from Indra); *saptamī*: seventh; *vaiṣṇavī*: relates to Viṣṇu; *asṭamī*: eighth; *nāma*: name; *śāmkarī*: Śāmkarī, relates to Śiva; *navamī*: ninth; *mahatī*: Mahatī; *daśamī*: tenth; *matā*: is regarded as; *dhṛti*: Dhṛti; *ekādaśī*: eleventh; *bhavet*: is; *nārī*: Nārī; *tu*: then; *dvādaśī*: twelfth; *parā brāhmaṇī*: Supreme Reality.

Translation

The first is Ghoṣinī, then the next Vidyā, the third Patanginī, the fourth Vāyuvegīnī, the fifth Nāmadheyā; and the sixth is called Śiva, the seventh Vaiṣṇavī, the eighth's name is said [to be] Śāmkarī, the ninth Mahatī, the tenth is regarded as Dhṛti, the eleventh is Nārī, then the twelfth [is] the Supreme Reality.

Commentary

In ancient times people deified the forces of nature and experienced their presence behind all aspects of creation. We can say that the deities were the symbolic forms of the natural forces. They were considered to be luminous and divine, and to dwell on higher planes of consciousness. The people worshipped and made offerings to these deities, feeling them to be supporting and blessing their lives on earth. In order to develop a closer relationship and identity with these forces, they gave them names and anthropomorphic forms. Twelve of these divinities are represented here within the three and a half syllables of *Aum*. They are given feminine names and forms, as their role in creation is aligned with Śakti, the energy that brings forth and sustains all beings. Meditation on these forms and qualities is a form of omkāra dhāraṇa.

The first shakti is *Ghoṣinī*, who gives *prajña*, intuitive wisdom. The second is *Vidyā*, who secures entrance into the plane of the *yakṣas*, pre-vedic divinities, associated with wealth and fertility. The third is *Pataṅginī*, who confers the power to move through the air, like a bird. The fourth is *Vāyuvegīnī*, who gives the power of very rapid movement. The fifth is *Nāmadheyā*, who confers entry to *Pitrloka*, the plane of ancestors. The sixth is *Aindrī*, or *Indrani*, śakti of Indra, who represents the power of beauty and attraction. The seventh is *Vaiṣṇavī*, śakti of Viṣṇu, who protects and preserves. The eighth is *Śāmkarī*, śakti of Śankara, who is benevolent and auspicious. The ninth is *Mahatī*, who is highly esteemed, and bestows greatness and honour. The tenth is *Dhṛti*, who is steadfast and resolute, and bestows firmness, constancy and support. The eleventh is *Nārī*, who gives access to the plane of sādhus and munis. The twelfth is Parabrahmi, śakti of Parabrahman, who confers entry into the supreme reality.

Verse 12: Passing during the first mātrā

प्रथमायां तु मात्रायां यदि प्राणैर्वियुज्यते ।

भरते वर्षराजासौ सार्वभौमः प्रजायते ॥१२॥

*prathamāyām tu mātrāyām yadi prāṇairviyujyate
bharate varṣarājāsau sārvabhaumah prajāyate (12)*

Anvay

tu: now; yadi: if; prāṇaiḥ-viyujyate: one is separated from the prāṇas, dies; prathamāyām mātrāyām: in the first mātrā; jāsau prajāyate: he is reborn; sārvabhaumah: universal monarch; bharate varṣarā: in Bharatavarṣa, India.

Translation

Now, if he is separated from the *prāṇas* (i.e. dies) in the first *mātrā*, he is reborn [as] a universal monarch in *Bharatavarṣa* (India).

Commentary

Om̄kāra is a lifelong sādhana. In vedic times it was the main practice performed by yogis and rishis during meditation, as well as throughout the day, during any activity. When practised lifelong, in this way, the vibration of Aum permeates one's entire existence. The mantra continues on with every breath and heart beat, and even through the night in dream or deep sleep. *Prāṇa* is the life-force. When the *prāṇa* departs from the body, that person passes away. Death is imminent for all, who are born in this world. So, it is natural to wonder, where one will go, when the soul passes out of the body. Here and in the following verses, this question is answered for those who live in attunement with the Om̄kāra. If the *prāṇa* separates from the body, while the first *mātrā* is repeated, that yogi will be reborn as a universal monarch in *Bharatavarṣa*, which is the ancient name for subcontinent of India.

Verse 13: During the second, third or fourth

द्वितीयायां समुक्लान्तो भवेद्यक्षो महात्मवान् ।

विद्याधरस्तृतीयायां गान्धर्वस्तु चतुर्थिका ॥१३॥

dvitīyāyām samutkrānto bhavedyakṣo mahātmavān

vidyādharastrītyāyām gāndharvastu caturthikā (13)

Anvay

samutkrāntah: having passed away; *dvitīyāyām:* in the second; *bhavet:* he becomes; *mahātmavān:* great; *yakṣah:* *yakṣa*, supernatural being; *trītyāyām:* in the third; *vidyādharah:* *vidyādhara*, all-knowing supernatural being; *caturthikā:* fourth; *gāndharvah:* *gāndharva*, celestial musician.

Translation

Having passed away in the second, he becomes a great *yakṣa*; in the third a *vidyādhara*; and in the fourth a *gāndharva*.

Commentary

If the yogi passes away during the second syllable, he becomes a great *yakṣa*, with incomparable wealth. Yakṣas are the guardian spirits of hidden natural treasures, found in the earth, trees and pools. If he passes away in the third, he becomes a *vidyādhara*, spirit beings possessed of scientific and esoteric knowledge. If he passes during the fourth, he becomes a *gāndharva*, celestial musician.

Verse 14: During the fifth

पञ्चमस्थ मात्रायां यदि प्राणौर्वियुज्यते ।

उषितः सह देवत्वं सोमलोके महीयते ॥१४॥

pañcamyāmatha mātrāyām yadi prāṇairviyujyate

uṣitah saha devatvam somaloke mahīyate (14)

Anvay

atha: then; *yadi*: if; *prāṇaih-viyujyate*: he is separated from the *prāṇas*, dies; *pañcamyām*: in the fifth; *uṣitah*: he lives; *soma-loke*: in the world of the moon; *saha*: as; *mahīyate*: exalted; *devatvam*: as a *deva*, divine being.

Translation

Then, if he is separated from the *prāṇas* in the fifth, he lives in the world [of] the moon as exalted as a *deva*.

Commentary

If he passes during the fifth, he will live in the world of the moon, as exalted as a god. The moon was considered to be the storehouse of *soma*, the elixir of immortality. Soma elevates the consciousness, and only the gods could partake of it.

Verse 15: During the sixth, seventh or eighth

षष्ठ्यामिन्द्रस्य सायुज्यं सप्तम्यां वैष्णवं पदम् ।

अष्टम्यां व्रज्यते रुद्रं पशूनां च पतिं तथा ॥१५॥

saṣṭhyāmindrasya sāyujyam saptamyām vaiṣṇavam padam

aṣṭamyām vrajyate rudram paśūnām ca patim tathā (15)

Anvay

saṣṭhyām: in the sixth; *sāyujyam*: communion; *indrasya*: with Indra; *saptamyām*: in the seventh; *vrajyate*: he reaches; *padam*: seat; *vaiṣṇavam*: of Viṣṇu; *ca tathā*: and then; *aṣṭamyām*: in the eighth; *rudram*: Rudra; *patim*: lord; *paśūnām*: of creatures.

Translation

[If] in the sixth, [he is in] communion with Indra; in the seventh, he reaches the seat of Vishnu, and then, in the eighth, Rudra, lord of [all] creatures.

Commentary

If he passes in the sixth, he goes to the realm of *Indra*, which is *Swarga*, or heaven, where righteous souls dwell in paradise. If he passes in the seventh, he reaches the place of Viṣṇu, which is *Vaikuntha*,

the supreme abode, where liberated souls dwell in oneness. If he passes in the eighth, he goes to the world of *Rudra*, the lord of all, which is also known as *Śivaloka*. This is the highest and most subtle world of existence, pervaded by the absolute reality, which is beyond mind, timeless and eternal.

Verse 16: During the ninth, tenth, eleventh or twelfth

नवम्यां तु महर्लोकं दशम्यां तु जनं व्रजेत् ।

एकादश्यां तपोलोकं द्वादश्यां ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् ॥१६॥

navamyām tu maharlokam daśamyām tu janam vrajet

ekādaśyām tapolokam dvādashyām brahma śāśvatam (16)

Anvay

navamyām: in the ninth; *vrajet*: he reaches; *tu*: and; *daśamyām*: in the tenth; *ekādaśyām*: in the eleventh; *dvādashyām*: in the twelfth; *śāśvatam*: everlasting.

Translation

[If] in the ninth, he reaches, *mahaloka*; and in the tenth, *janoloka*; in the eleventh, *tapoloka*; in the twelfth, everlasting Brahma.

Commentary

If he passes in the ninth, he reaches *Mahaloka*, the sphere of great saints, sages and rishis. If he passes in the tenth, he goes to *Janoloka*, the plane of creativity, where pure-minded, liberated souls dwell. If he passes in the eleventh, he reaches *Tapoloka*, the place where yogis and ascetics, who have burned away all vestiges of attachment and illusion dwell. If he passes in the twelfth, he reaches brahma or *satyaloka*, the realm of absolute reality and truth.

Verse 17: Śiva and Aum

ततः परतरं शुद्धं व्यापकं निर्मलं शिवम् ।

सदोदितं परं ब्रह्म ज्योतिषामुदयो यतः ॥१७॥

tataḥ parataram śuddham vyāpakam nirmalam śivam

sadoditam param brahma jyotiṣāmudayo yataḥ (17)

Anvay

param brahma: Supreme Consciousness; *yataḥ*: which; *udayah*: rises; *jyotiṣām*: from light; *sadā*: always; *uditam*: declared; *śivam*: Śiva; *parataram tataḥ*: beyond these; *śuddham*: pure; *vyāpakam*: all-pervading; *nirmalam*: resplendent.

Translation

The supreme consciousness, which rises from light, is always declared [to be] Śiva [who is] beyond these [*mātrās*], pure, all-pervading [and] resplendent.

Commentary

Śiva, the *ādi* or first yogi, is equated with supreme consciousness, because he dwelled in this state continuously while living and also after leaving the body. The supreme consciousness is beyond all perception of mind, beyond name, form and idea, beyond time and space, and any kind of limitation or association. The only quality that remains at this level of consciousness is light, because it arises from light. This is not the light of the sun, moon or stars, but a spiritual, pure and resplendent light. The supreme consciousness, also known as Śiva, that arises from this light, is said to be beyond the vibration of *Aum* and its syllables, whether taken individually or collectively. The *pranāva* arises from Śiva, because pure consciousness is the source of all existence, and at the same time, beyond it.

Verse 18: Entry into Śiva consciousness

अतीन्द्रियं गुणातीतं मनो लीनं यदा भवेत् ।

अनूपमं शिवं शान्तं योगयुक्तं सदाविशेत् ॥१८॥

atīndriyam gunātītam mano līnam yadā bhavet

anūpamam śivam śāntam yogayuktam sadāviśet (18)

Anvay

yadā: when; *mano*: mind; *bhavet*: is; *līnam*: absorbed; *ati-indriyam*: beyond the *indriyas*, senses; *gunātītam*: beyond the *guṇas*, qualities; *sadā*: always; *yoga-yuktam*: immersed in *yoga*; *āviśet*: he should enter; *anūpamam*: incomparable; *śāntam*: auspicious; *śivam*: Śiva, cosmic consciousness.

Translation

When the mind is absorbed beyond the *indriyas* [and] the *guṇas*, [then], always immersed in *yoga*, he should enter the incomparable auspicious Śiva.

Commentary

It is interesting to note here that *yoga* refers to a high state of meditation, and not the practices of *āsana* and *pranāyāma*, as we find today. In the science of *yoga*, there are several stages or states of meditation, which begin with withdrawal of the senses from the outside world. The word *indriya*, means ‘sensory organs’ and *guṇa*, is the ‘nature’ or ‘quality’ of the objects in the world. In ordinary life, a person is constantly attracted by the mind and senses to the objects, people and places of the world. In this way, it becomes difficult to internalise and discover the consciousness that is behind the mind.

Hence, in order to realise one’s own true nature, it is necessary to withdraw the senses from the external objects, and focus the mind and awareness within. This is the first and most important stage of meditation, or *yoga*. When this stage is mastered, through control of the senses, then the following stages of meditation will arise effortlessly. Thus follows the teaching on *yoga*. When the mind is absorbed beyond the sensory organs and their attraction to the nature of worldly objects, one remains

immersed in yoga. Through this immersion, one should enter the subtle and incomparable state of pure consciousness, also known as the auspicious Śiva.

Verse 19: Important advice regarding meditation

तद्युक्तस्तन्मयो जन्तुः शनैर्मुच्चेकलेवरम् ।

संस्थितो योगचारेण सर्वसङ्घविवर्जितः ॥१९॥

tadyuktastanmaya jantuḥ śanairmuñcetkalevaram

samsthito yogacāreṇa sarvasaṅgavivarjitaḥ (19)

Anvay

jantuḥ: person; *yuktaḥ*: established; *tanmayah*: absorbed; *tat*: in it; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *muñcet*: should relinquish; *kalevaram*: support; *samsthitaḥ*: intent upon; *yoga-cāreṇa*: observance of *yoga*; *vivarjitaḥ*: avoiding; *sarva saṅga*: all company.

Translation

The person [who is] established [there and] absorbed in it, should slowly relinquish support, intent upon the observance of *yoga*, avoiding all company.

Commentary

When one has gained mastery of the senses, and is able to turn them inward at will, it becomes possible to enter the field of mind and consciousness directly. It may be that in ancient times the mind was less active than it is today. However, for a person living in the modern world, it will take some time to free the mind from the disturbing influence of all the outer expectations and associations. This is followed by a stage, where one must make friends with the mind, and allow it to express itself in a non-judgemental way. The awareness must get to know the mind with all of its foibles, weaknesses and strengths. By accepting the mind and allowing it freedom to respond and react to the patterns stored within, in its own time and way, the mental field gradually becomes calm and still by itself. This is the missing key for meditators in this day and age, when the mind is over-externalised, overdeveloped and overactive from a very early age.

The mind that is allowed to find its own peace and harmony within, slowly subsides, and gives way to the subtle field of consciousness, which lies just beyond it. In this way, the person who becomes established and absorbed in this field is said to be master of the mind. This is the yogic way of meditation, which very few have understood. For such a person, the following advice is given. Having entered the space of consciousness, one should gradually leave aside the craving for entertainment and support of external people, places and things. Intent upon the observance of *yoga*, which here refers to the meditative experience, he should avoid all company and distractions, which will disturb the mind and divert it from this state higher consciousness.

Verse 20: Freedom from worldly duties

ततो विलीनपाशोऽसौ विपलः कमलाप्रभुः ।

तेनैव ब्रह्मावेन परमानन्दमश्नुते ॥२०॥

tato vilīnapāśo ‘sau vipalah kamalāprabhuḥ

tenaiva brahmabhāvena paramānandamaśnute (20)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; *vipalah*: instant; *asau*: that person; *vilīna*: is freed from; *pāśah*: bonds; *kamalā*: riches; *prabhuḥ*: marriage; *tena eva*: thus; *aśnute*: he attains; *param-ānandam*: Supreme Bliss; *brahma-bhāvena*: by absorption in Brahma.

Translation

Then, the instant that person is freed from the bonds [of] riches [and] marriage, he thus attains supreme bliss by absorption in Brahma.

Commentary

In early times it was incumbent on young persons to marry and propagate. Even the young sons of rishis and yogis were compelled to fulfil this duty. Family life is very demanding and causes constant upheaval, both externally and internally. Further, it was necessary for the son to assume responsibility for the family estate, properties, and wealth. This would have involved a major commitment to ensure that all the assets were managed properly, with no damages or losses incurred. So, there would be plenty of worry and anxiety. A person in this situation may practice meditation from time to time, but it would be difficult to establish oneself in the higher states of consciousness, and still fulfil these obligations. Hence, the moment one is freed from the bonds of wealth and marriage, one should live as a yogi, avoiding associations and distractions, and devote oneself to the attainment of supreme bliss, by absorption in the pure consciousness.

Verse 21: Acceptance of prārabdha

आत्मानं सततं ज्ञात्वा कालं नय महामते ।

प्रारब्धमखिलं भुज्ञनोद्वेगं कर्तुमर्हसि ॥२१॥

ātmānam satatam jñātvā kālam naya mahāmate

prārabdhamakhilam bhujñjanodvegam kartumarhasi (21)

Anvay

mahāmate: o Intelligent One; *naya*: spend; *kālam*: time; *satatam*: continually; *jñātvā*: knowing; *ātmānam*: Self; *bhujñjan*: enjoying; *akhilam*: entire; *prārabdham*: unavoidable results of past actions; *na*: without; *arhasi*: trying; *udvegam kartum*: to resist.

Translation

O Intelligent One, spend your time continually knowing the self, enjoying [your] entire *prārabdha*, without trying to resist [it].

Commentary

When ignorant persons retire from the work force, and are freed from worldly duties, they do not know how to utilise their time. They waste this valuable opportunity to be unencumbered by employment and family obligations. Meeting friends, watching TV, playing games, arguing with relations, drinking and attending social events, they attempt to while away the time. The intelligent person is one who realises the importance of this last stage of life, when it is possible to achieve the spiritual goals, which could not be attained earlier. Therefore, he is exhorted here to utilise his freedom properly. Spend this time alone, live simply in a peaceful environment, study spiritual texts, turn the awareness within, and know the self.

When the mind and senses are introverted, many memories and *samskāras*, impressions of the past, arise. One should allow these memories to surface and enjoy reliving one's entire past, without trying to judge or resist it. Similarly, the past is also responsible for many situations, actions and events, which must play out in one's current lifetime. These are the *prārabdha*, destined karmas, which are unavoidable, and must be fulfilled in order to move on. So, one should accept these karmas, when they arise, and experience them without any regrets. In this way the negativity and attachments that obstruct the higher vision are removed, and one can easily sail into the elevated sphere of consciousness.

Verses 22 and 23a: Tattvajñāna and prārabdha

उत्पन्ने तत्त्वविज्ञाने प्रारब्धं नैव मुञ्चति ।

तत्त्वज्ञानोदयादूर्ध्वं प्रारब्धं नैव विद्यते ॥२२॥

देहादीनामसत्त्वात् यथा स्वप्ने विबोधतः ॥२३॥

utpanne tattvavijñāne prārabdham naiva muñcati

tattvajñānodayādūrdhvam prārabdham naiva vidyate (22)

dehādīnāmasattvāt् yathā svapne vibodhataḥ (23a)

Anvay

eva: even; *tattva-vijñāne*: when knowledge of the *tattvas*, true essence; *utpanne*: has emerged; *prārabdham*: unavoidable results of past actions; *na muñcati*: does not leave; *tu*: but; *na eva vidyate*: he is not affected by; *prārabdham*: unavoidable results of past actions; *udayāt-ūrdhvam*: rising up; *tattvajñāna*: *tattvajñāna*, knowledge of the elements or underlying truth; *asattvāt*: because of the unreal nature; *deha-ādīnām*: of the body and other [material things]; *yathā*: as if; *vibodhataḥ*: perceived; *svapne*: in a dream.

Translation

Even when knowledge of the *tattvas* has emerged, *prārabdha* does not leave [him], but he is not affected by *prārabdha* [after] the rising up [of] *tattvajñāna*, because of the unreal nature of the body and other [material things], as if perceived in a dream.

Commentary

The term *tattwajñāna* was used frequently in early times to denote the quality of a seer, or visionary: one who was capable of seeing into the essence of existence. The word *tattwa* refers to the five basic elements: earth, water, fire, air and ether, which comprise all beings in the material world. In this sense, the five elements are not things in themselves, but elemental energies. For example, the energy of earth is solid and heavy. The energy of water is fluid. The energy of fire is hot and volatile. The energy of air is gaseous and kinetic. The energy of ether is vacuous and still.

Normally, a person sees only the appearance of things, and understands them accordingly. But a *tattwajñāni* is able to see behind the appearances, and to know how these energies are actively combining and transforming everywhere and in everything from moment to moment. Even the yogi, who has attained this knowledge of the *tattwa*, must undergo the *prārabdha*, destined karmas, in order to eliminate them. However, they do not affect him after the state of *tattvajñāna* arises. He experiences the unreal nature and appearance of the body, objects and events in life, as ephemeral and unreal, like in a dream.

Verses 23b and 24a: Prārabdha and rebirth

कर्म जन्मान्तरीयं यत्प्रारब्धमिति कीर्तिंतम् ॥२३॥

ततु जन्मान्तराभावात्पुंसो नैवास्ति कर्हिचित ॥२४॥

karma janmāntarīyam yatprārabdhamiti kīrtitam (23b)

tattu janmāntarābhāvātpuṁso naivāsti karhicit (24a)

Anvay

yat karma: that *karma*, results of actions; *janmāntarīyam*: associated with former births; *iti kīrtitam*: is called; *prārabdham*: unavoidable results of past actions; *tu*: yet; *pumṣah*: person; *janmāntarābhāvāt*: who has no rebirth; *na . . . karhicit*: never; *asti*: experiences; *yat*: it.

Translation

That *karma* associated with former births is called *prārabdha*. Yet the person who has no rebirth never experiences it.

Commentary

Prārabdha are the destined karmas that were performed in the past during former births, but have come to fruition in the present birth. However, that person, who is free from rebirth, will never undergo them. This is freedom from the bondage of karma, which only the liberated soul can attain.

Verses 24b and 25a: What is the source of illusion?

स्वप्नदेहो यथाध्यस्तस्तथैवायं हि देहकः ॥२४॥

अध्यस्तस्य कुतो जन्म जन्माभावे कुतः स्थितिः ॥२५॥

svapnadeho yathādhyastastathaivāyam hi dehakah (24b)

ādhyastasya kuto janma janmābhāve kutah sthitih (25a)

Anvay

yathā: as; *svapna-dehah*: body in a dream; *adhyah*: illusory; *tathā*: so; *hi*: indeed; *ayam dehakah*: this body; *kutah*: where; *janma*: birth; *tasya*: of that; *adhyah*: illusory; *kutah*: where; *sthitiḥ*: does it exist; *janma-abhāve*: in the absence of rebirth.

Translation

As the body in a dream [is] illusory, so indeed [is] this body. Where [is] the birth of that [which is] illusory? Where does it exist in the absence of rebirth?

Commentary

At night, during dream, the body and the events that one experiences seem to be real. But, upon awakening and opening the eyes, one realises they were illusory. In the same way, for one who sees behind the appearances, this physical body is also illusory. What is the source of this illusion? From where does the unreal arise? Where does the body exist before rebirth, and where does it go after death?

Verses 25b and 26a: Where is the universe?

उपादानं प्रपञ्चस्य मृद्घाण्डस्येव पश्यति ॥२५॥

अज्ञानं चेति वेदान्तैस्तस्मिन्ष्टे क्व विश्वता ॥२६॥

upādānam prapañcasya mṛdbhāṇḍasyeva paśyati (25b)

ajñānam ceti vedāntaistasmīnaṣṭe kva viśvatā (26a)

Anvay

paśyati: he sees; *vedāntaiḥ*: in accordance with Vedānta, non-dualism; *ajñāna*: spiritual ignorance; *upādānam*: material cause; *prapañcasya*: of the form; *mṛdbhāṇḍasya*: of the clay-pot; *ca*: and; *iti*: asks; *naṣṭe*: if . . . is no more; *kva*: where; *tasmin*: then; *viśvatā*: universe.

Translation

He sees, in accordance with Vedānta, [that] *ajñāna* [is] the material cause of the form of the clay-pot, and asks, if *ajñāna* is no more, where then [is] the universe?

Commentary

Vedānta gives the analogy of *ajñāna*, ignorance in relation to the reality of consciousness, as the material cause of form; in the same way that clay is the material cause of the claypot. If *ajñāna* is no more than illusion, then where is the universe?

Verses 26b and 27: The snake and the rope

यथा रज्जुं परित्यज्य सर्पं गृह्णति वै भ्रमात् ॥२६॥

तद्वत्सत्यमविज्ञाय जगत्पश्यति मूढधीः ।

रज्जुखण्डे परिज्ञाते सर्परूपं न तिष्ठति ॥२७॥

yathā rajjuṁ parityajya sarpam grhṇati vai bhramāt (26)

tadvatsatyamavijñāya jagatpaśyati mūḍhadhīḥ

rajjukhanḍe pari�nāte sarparūpam na tiṣṭhati. (27)

Anvay

yathā: just as; *grhṇati*: he considers; *parityajya*: from a distance; *rajju*: rope; *sarpam*: snake; *tadvat*: in the same way; *avijñāya*: not knowing; *satyam*: truth; *mūḍhadhīḥ*: fool; *paśyati*: sees; *jagat*: world; *brahmāt*: separate from Brahma; *parijñāte*: when he recognises; *raju-khanḍe*: piece of rope; *sarpa-rūpam*: appearance [of] a snake; *na tiṣṭhati*: does not remain.

Translation

Just as he considers from a distance a rope [to be] a snake, in the same way, not knowing the truth, the fool sees the world [as] separate from Brahma. When he recognises [it] as a piece [of] rope, the appearance [of] a snake does not remain.

Commentary

While walking at night, gazing ahead into the distance, one becomes frightened to glimpse a snake, moving slowly across the road. However, as one continues to walk, the snake turns out to be a rope that was dropped by someone. In the same way, the ignorant person, whose perception is clouded by *ajnana*, sees the material world as a separate reality from consciousness. But when the light of consciousness dawns, one sees the world as part of consciousness, and consciousness as part of the world. Just as, when the length of rope is seen clearly, the illusion of a snake no longer remains; so the illusion of duality, the material world as separate from consciousness, is gone.

Verses 28 and 29a: Purpose of prārabdha

अधिष्ठाने तथा ज्ञाते प्रपञ्चे शून्यतां गते ।

देहस्यापि प्रपञ्चत्वात्प्रारब्धावस्थितिः कुतः ॥२८॥

अज्ञानजनबोधार्थं प्रारब्धमिति चोच्यते ।२९।

adhiṣṭhāne tathā jñātē prapañce śūnyatām gate

dehasyāpi prapañcatvātprārabdhāvasthitīḥ kutah (28)

ajñānajanabodhārtham prārabdhamiti cocyate (29a)

Anvay

tathā: thus; jñāte: when he knows; śūnyatām: emptiness; prapañce gate: when the material support has gone; kutaḥ: where; avasthitih: abode; prārabdha: prārabdha, unavoidable results of past actions; dehasya: body; api: also; prapañcatvāt: as . . is of the phenomenal world; ca: and; iti ucyate: so it is said; bodha-artham: for the purpose of teachings; jana: those born in; ajñāna: spiritual ignorance.

Translation

Thus, when he knows emptiness, when the material support has gone, where [is] the abode [of] prārabdha, as the body is also of the phenomenal world. And so it is said prārabdha [is] for the purpose of teaching those born in *ajñāna*.

Commentary

The field of consciousness exists everywhere, behind everything, in the dimension of space. The quality of space is all pervading emptiness or void. When the yogi is able to transcend the mind and body, and merge his awareness in consciousness, he experiences this emptiness directly. The material support for the consciousness is the mind and body, and the outside world experienced through the senses. When the awareness is merged in consciousness, however, this support is gone and there is nothing...no objective reality upon which to base the mind. Hence the question arises, where is the source or the abode of prārabdha, the destined karmas, as the body is part of the phenomenal world, and the prārabdha are expressed and fulfilled through the physical existence.

The prārabdha exist along with the other karmas in the karmic storehouse, which is a part of *citta*, the individual field of consciousness. Although the prārabdha must be expressed, the yogi who is established in consciousness, is freed from their influence or control. He thus creates and determines his own destiny from moment to moment, unhampered by limitations and conditioning from the past. And so, it is said that the prārabdha karmas exist for the purpose of teaching those, who are born in *ajñāna*, ignorance of the higher reality of consciousness, by generating the experiences of duality, such as pain and pleasure, success and failure, wealth and poverty, and so on, until these lessons are learned.

Verses 29b and 30: Self realisation

ततः कालवशादेव प्रारब्धे तु क्षयं गते ॥२९॥

ब्रह्मप्रणवसंधानो नादो ज्योतिर्मयः शिवः ।

स्वयमाविर्भवेदात्मा मेघापाये ऽशुमानिव ॥३०॥

tataḥ kālavaśādeva prārabdhe tu kṣayam gate (29b)

brahma praṇava saṁdhāno nādo jyotirmayah śivah

svayamāvirbhavedātmā meghāpāye ‘śumāniva (30)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; prārabdhe kṣayam gate: when prārabdha has come to an end; kālavaśāt: in the course of

time; *ātmā*: *ātman*, Self beyond mind and body; *sīvah*: auspicious; *nādah*: sound; *jyotirmayah*: consisting of light; *saṃdhānah*: uniting; *praṇava*: *praṇava*, primal sound vibration; *brahma*: *brahma*, source of existence; *āśumān*: quickly; *svayam-avih-bhavet*: reveals itself; *iva*: like; *megha-apāye*: when the clouds disperse.

Translation

Then, in the course of time, when *prārabdha* have come to an end, the *ātman*, [which is] the auspicious sound consisting of light [and] uniting *praṇava* [with] *brahma*, quickly reveals itself, like [the sun] when the clouds disperse.

Commentary

The yogi who is established in consciousness gradually frees himself from the cycle of karma by disengaging with unnecessary worldly involvement and cultivating non-attachment in all interactions. The *prārabdha*, destined karmas, will only come to an end if there is cessation of further karmas. This is the real reason for renunciation. In the absence of renunciation, the karmas will simply go on building, and the mature karmas will go on expressing, as *prārabdha*. In this sense, yoga is much more than a practice. It is a way of life, of living consciously, which ultimately leads to liberation from the bondage of karma.

So that, in the course of time, when the *prārabdha* have come to an end, the *atman*, or pure self, is revealed. Here, the *atman* is described as the auspicious sound vibration, *siva nāda*, consisting of light and light everywhere. It is that subtle point of transformation, where pure vibration enters the space of consciousness and fills it with luminosity. In this way, the *atman* unites *Praṇava*, the *Omkāra*, with *Brahma*, the source of existence, and quickly reveals itself, like the blazing sun, when the clouds are dispersed.

Verse 31: Nāda yoga

सिद्धासने स्थितो योगी मुद्रां संधाय वैष्णवीं ।

श्रुण्यादक्षिणे कर्णे नादमन्तर्गतं सदा ॥३१॥

siddhāsane sthito yogī mudrām saṃdhāya vaiṣṇavīm

śrṇuyāddakṣiṇe karṇe nādamantargataṁ sadā (31)

Anvay

yogī: *yogin*, yoga adept; *sthitah*: seated; *siddhāsane*: in *siddhāsana*, accomplished pose; *saṃdhāya*: having adopted; *vaiṣṇavīm mudrām*: posture of Viṣṇu; *śrṇuyāt*: hears; *nāda*: *nāda*, subtle sound vibration; *sadā*: always; *antar-gatam*: goes into; *dakṣiṇe karṇe*: right ear.

Translation

The yogin, seated in *siddhāsana*, having adopted the *vishnu mudrā*, hears the *nāda* [which] always goes into the right ear.

Commentary

Siddhāsana is the classical locked meditation asana in which the position of the heels places pressure on both the mūladhāra and swadhisthana cakras. This continuous pressure allows the reproductive energies from these centres to be redirected upward through the suṣumnā pathway to the brain for the purpose of higher meditation.

Viṣṇu mudrā, also known as *nasagra mudrā*, is the hand position commonly employed for controlling the nasal flows, during the practice of prāṇāyāma. In this practice, the index and middle fingers of the right hand are folded forward, so that the tips touch the palm at the base of the thumb. The thumb, ring finger and little finger remain stretched. The hand is then raised in front of the face, so that the nasal passages can be controlled by pressing the right nostril with the thumb, and the left nostril with the ring and little fingers.

The yogi should master the practice of prāṇāyāma, before engaging in nāda yoga, so that breath retention can be performed without any difficulty or strain.

Technique

Chose a quiet and clean environment to begin the practice of nada yoga. Sit in siddhāsana, or any comfortable meditation posture, and allow the body to become calm and still. Practise slow rhythmic breathing, gradually elongating the breath. Place the right hand in viṣṇu mudrā and raise it in front of the face.

Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils. Close both nostrils by pressing them gently with the thumb and ring fingers. Holding the breath inside for a comfortable period, focus on sound at the right ear. Whatever sound comes to your attention, focus on that sound, whether it is an outer sound or an inner sound. As you focus on the first sound, allow it to draw your attention to the next sound.

As soon as you begin to feel breathless, release the pressure on the nostrils and slowly exhale. Inhale again slowly through both nostrils, retain the breath, and focus the awareness on sound at the right ear. With practice, you will find that the sounds gradually become finer, so that each sound draws the awareness inward to a subtler and subtler sound.

Verse 32: Inner sound

अभ्यस्यमानो नादोऽयं बाह्यमावृणुते ध्वनिः ।

पक्षाद्विपक्षमखिलं जित्वा तुर्यपदं व्रजेत् ॥३२॥

abhyasyamāno nādo 'yam bāhyamāvṛṇute dhvanīḥ

pakṣādvipakṣamakhilam jitvā turyapadam vrajet. (32)

Anvay

ayam: this; *dhvanīḥ*: sound; *nādah*: inner tone; *mānah*: aim; *abhyasya*: of the practice; *āvṛṇute*: is hidden from; *bāhyam*: outer; *jitvā*: having conquered; *akhilam vipakṣam*: all obstacles; *vrajet*: he enters; *turya-padam*: fourth state, superconsciousness; *pakṣāt*: in fifteen days.

Translation

This sound, [whose] inner tone [is] the aim of the practice, is hidden from the outer. Having conquered all obstacles, he enters the fourth state in fifteen days.

Commentary

The aim of nāda yoga is to allow the vibration of sound to draw the awareness inward to subtler and subtler sounds. Normally, these inner sounds are not perceptible by the senses or even by the mind. So, the verse says that they are hidden from the outer senses. However, we are all born with inner senses, which connect the mind with the outer senses. The inner senses function at a psychic or subconscious level, and it is through these senses that we perceive the inner worlds of dream, vision and imagination. In fact, these inner senses are quite active in small children, although as adults, we are unable to perceive them directly, and so do not develop them.

An important aim of yoga and meditation is to develop and awaken these inner senses, because they are the stuff of real creativity and genius. So, it is in nāda yoga, we aim to develop the inner sense of hearing in order to perceive the subtle sound vibrations, which exist unheard within us and all around us, at all times. By developing the inner sense of hearing, the awareness is easily led into the subtler states of consciousness, where these sounds are hidden. In this way, the normal obstacles of the mind, such as thoughts, memories, restlessness, tiredness, are overcome, and the meditator easily enters the transcendental state of samadhi, which is the fourth state of consciousness, within fifteen days.

Verses 33 to 35: Sounds heard in nāda yoga

श्रूयते प्रथमाभ्यासे नादो नानाविधो महान् ।

वर्धमाने तथाभ्यासे श्रूयते सूक्ष्मसूक्ष्मतः ॥३३॥

आदौ जलधिजीमूतभेरीनिर्झरसंभवः ।

मध्ये मर्दलशब्दाभो घण्टाकाहलजस्तथा ॥३४॥

अन्ते तु किकिणीवंशवीणाप्रमरनिस्वनः ।

इति नानाविधा नादः श्रूयन्ते सूक्ष्मसूक्ष्मतः ॥३५॥

śrūyate prathamābh्यासे nādo nānāvidho mahān

vardhamāne tathābh्यासे śrūyate sūkṣmasūkṣmataḥ (33)

ādau jaladhijīmūtabherīnirjharasambhavaḥ

madhye mardalaśabdābho ghaṇṭākāhalajastathā (34)

ante tu kikiṇīvanśavīṇābhramaranisvanah

iti nānāvidhā nādāḥ śrūyante sūkṣmasūkṣmataḥ (35)

Anvay

prathama-abhyāse: at the beginning of his practice; *śrūyate*: he hears; *nānāvidhah*: many; *mahān*: loud; *nādah*: sounds; *tathā*: then; *abhyāse vardhamāne*: as his practice increases; *śrūyate*: he hears; *sūkṣma*: more subtle; *sūkṣmataḥ*: scarcely audible; *ādau*: at first; *sambhavaḥ*: source; *jaladhi*: ocean; *jīmūta*: clouds; *bherī*: kettle-drums; *nirjhara*: waterfalls; *tathā*: then; *madhye*: in the middle; *ābhāḥ*: like; *śabda*: sounds; *jah*: caused by; *mardala*: drums; *ghantā*: bells; *kāhala*: horns; *ante*: at the last stage; *nisvanah*: sounds; *kikiñīḥ*: small bells; *vamśah*: flutes; *vīṇāḥ*: Indian lutes; *bhramara*: *nānāvidhāḥ nādāḥ*: various sounds; *śrūyante*: are heard; *sūkṣmasūkṣmataḥ*: more and more subtle.

Translation

At the beginning of his practice he hears many loud sounds; then, as his practice increases, he hears [them as] more subtle, [until] scarcely audible. At first the source [of the sounds seems to be from] the ocean, clouds, kettle-drums [and] waterfalls; then, in the middle [stage], [they are] like sounds caused by drums, bells [and] horns. At the last stage [there are] sounds [of] small bells, flutes, lutes [and] bees. Thus various sounds are heard, [becoming] more and more subtle.

Commentary

Nāda yoga is an ancient form of meditation, which was developed by yogis, who lived and practised in natural environments, such as forests, mountains, river banks and nearby lakes and oceans. Hence, many of the sounds that they heard and related to in meditation were the external sounds of nature. At the beginning of the practice, loud sounds could be heard from outside, such as the blowing of the wind, the crack of thunder, the flow of rivers and waterfalls, the lap of waves on the shore, the singing of birds. But as the practice developed, the sounds became more subtle, until they were scarcely audible.

Then in the middle stage, they heard such sounds as the beating of drums, the ringing of bells, and the blowing of horns. Then in the last state, the sounds became very subtle, such as the tinkling of tiny bells, melodic notes played on flute, plucking of the lute, and buzzing of bees. These various sounds were heard at different times during the practice, and became more and more subtle, as the meditator delved deeply within. The important aspect of utilising sound as a method of meditation was that it gave a firm basis for the mind, which the awareness could follow inward, and which kept the attention from wandering away from the practice of meditation into unknown areas of the deep consciousness.

Verse 36: Sound of the drum

महति श्रूयमाणे तु महाभेर्यादिकध्वनौ ।

तत्र सूक्ष्मं सूक्ष्मतरं नादमेव परामृशेत् ॥३६॥

mahati śrūyamāne tu mahābheryādikadhvanau

tatra sūkṣmam sūkṣmatram nādameva parāmr̄set (36)

Anvay

ādika: at first; *mahati dhvanau*: when the lound sound; *mahābherī*: great drum; *śrūyamāne*: is heard; *tatra*: then; *eva parāmr̄set*: he should just concentrate on; *sūkṣmam sūkṣmataram*: most subtle; *nādam*: sounds.

Translation

When at first the loud sound [of] the great drum is heard, then he should just concentrate on its most subtle sounds.

Commentary

There are certain sounds that were heard frequently during the practice of nāda yoga. One of these is the sound of the drum. In ancient times the villagers and forest dwellers communicated with one another over long distances by playing certain rhythms on large drums. They also played drums during their rituals and get togethers. Sometimes the drumming would go on for many hours. When the loud sound of the great drum was heard during meditation, it would be very overpowering and disturb the practice. Hence, the advice is given here to ignore the loud beating sound, and focus on its most subtle derivative sounds.

Verses 37 and 38: Focusing on one sound

घनमुत्सृज्य वा सूक्ष्मे सूक्ष्ममुत्सृज्य वा घने ।

रममाणमपि क्षिप्तं मनो नान्यत्र चालयेत् ॥३७॥

यत्र कुत्रापि वा नादे लगति प्रथमं मनः ।

तत्र तत्र स्थिरीभूत्वा तेन सार्धं विलीयते ॥३८॥

ghanamutsrjya vā sūkṣme sūkṣmamutsrjya vā ghane

ramamāṇamapi kṣiptam mano nānyatra cālayet (37)

yatra kutrāpi vā nāde lagati prathamam manah

tatratatratra sthirībhūtvā tena sārdham vilīyate (38)

Anvay

vā . . vā: either . . or; *utsrjya:* leaving; *ghanam:* gross sound; *sūkṣme:* for the subtle; *sūkṣmam:* subtle sound; *ghane:* for the gross; *api:* even; *ramamāṇam:* while delighting; *manah:* mind; *kṣiptam:* distracted; *na cālayet:* should not be moved; *anyatra:* to other [sounds]; *vā api:* or even; *yatra kutra:* whichever; *nāde:* sound; *manah:* mind; *prathamam:* first; *lagati:* attaches itself to; *sārdham:* securely; *sthirībhūtvā:* fixed; *tatratatratra:* there; *vilīyate:* it becomes absorbed; *tena:* in it.

Translation

Either leaving the gross sound for the subtle, or leaving the subtle sound for the gross, even while delighting [in them], the mind [becomes] distracted, [and so] should not be moved to other [sounds]. Or whichever sound the mind first attaches itself to, securely fixed there, it becomes absorbed in it.

Commentary

Nāda yoga is primarily a practice of dhāraṇa, one pointed concentration. When the perception of inner

sound has been established, it is then necessary to focus on one sound to the exclusion of all the others, just as one would focus on one symbol or one mantra. Otherwise, if the attention leaves the one sound, whether for a more gross or subtle sound, or a pleasing sound, it becomes distracted. The best way to progress in the practice is to fix the mind on whatever sound it first becomes attached to, so that it becomes absorbed in it, and does not even hear any other sound.

Verse 39: Absorption into space

विसृत्य सकलं बाह्यं नादे दुग्धाम्बुवन्मनः ।

एकीभूयाथ सहसा चिदाकाशे विलीयते ॥३९॥

vismṛtya sakalam bāhyam nāde dugdhāmbuvanmanah

ekībhūyātha sahasā cidākāśe viltiyate (39)

Anvay

vismṛtya: having forgotten; *sakalam*: all; *bāhyam*: external; *manah*: mind; *ekībhūyātha*: uniting; *nāde*: with the sound; *dugdha*: milk; *āmbuvan*: water; *sahasā*: immediately; *viltiyate*: is absorbed; *cidākāśe*: in *cidākāśa*, inner space of consciousness.

Translation

Having forgotten all external [experiences], the mind, uniting with the sound [as] milk [with] water, is immediately absorbed in *cidākāśa*.

Commentary

This absorption of the awareness into sound, leads to the experience of *cidākāśa*, absorption of the mind into the dimension of space. In this state, the mind is merged with the sound, just as milk is merged with water, and all experiences of the external world are forgotten. There is just the spacial dimension, filled with the vibration of sound, and nothing else.

Verse 40: Sound meditation

उदासीनस्ततो भूत्वा सदाभ्यासेन सम्यमी ।

उन्मनीकारकं सद्यो नादमेवावधारयेत् ॥४०॥

udāstīnastato bhūtvā sadābhyaśena samyamī

unmanīkārakam sadyo nādamevāvadhārayet (40)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; *bhūtvā*: having become; *udāstīnah*: indifferent to; *unmanīkārakam*: passion; *sadā abhyaśena*: by the continual practice; *samyamī*: self-control; *sadyah*: at once; *eva avadhārayet*: he should give his full attention to; *nādam*: inner sound.

Translation

Then, having become indifferent to passion by the continual practice [of] self-control, he should at once give his full attention to the inner sound.

Commentary

The normal state of consciousness, whether waking or dreaming, is continually distracted by desires, whether unfulfilled or in the process of being fulfilled. For this reason, it is virtually impossible for the untrained mind to hold the attention steady on one object or sound. In order to succeed in meditation, it is necessary to undergo a period of preparation, whereby the lifestyle, ethics and mental patterns are cultivated, which will allow the practitioner to free the mind from its attraction to desire and attachment. Once indifference to desire has been achieved through the continual practice of self-control, one should immediately give his full attention to the meditation on inner sound.

Verse 41: Absorption in sound

सर्वचिन्तां समुत्सृज्य सर्वं चेष्टाविवर्जितः ।

नादमेवानुसंदध्यानादे चित्तं विलीयते ॥४१॥

sarvacintām samutsrjya sarva cestāvivarjitaḥ

nādamevānusamdadhyānnāde cittam viltiyate (41)

Anvay

samutsrjya: having abandoned; *sarva-cintām*: every thought; *ca*: and; *avivarjitaḥ*: renounced; *sarva iṣṭa*: every desire; *eva anusamdadhyāt*: he should place all his attention on; *nādam*: inner sound; *cittam viltiyate*: until his consciousness becomes absorbed; *nāde*: in the sound.

Translation

Having abandoned every thought and renounced every desire, he should place all his attention on the inner sound, until his consciousness becomes absorbed in it.

Commentary

When the mind is left to its own devices, thoughts and desires arise continually and distract the awareness. Nāda yoga is a practice of concentration, which requires the awareness to remain focused and free from every thought and desire. In order to achieve this state, practice is required. One must be able to observe and understand the patterns and the habits of the mind, before it can be brought into a steady, one-pointed focus. In order to achieve this state, it is helpful to follow the various sounds, as they manifest, outside and inside, from gross to subtle. However, once the mind is free from thought and desire, the practitioner should focus his entire attention on the one inner sound, until his consciousness becomes totally absorbed in it.

Verses 42 and 43a: Quality of absorption

मकरन्दं पिबन्मृगो गन्धानापेक्षते यथा ।

नादासक्तं सदा चित्तं विषयं न हि काङ्क्षति ॥४२॥

बद्धः सुनादगन्धेन सद्यः संत्यक्तचापलः ।४३।

makarandam pibanbhṛṅgo gandhānnāpekṣate yathā

nādāsaktam sadā cittam viśayam na hi kāṅkṣati (42)

baddhaḥ sunādagandhena sadyah saṃtyaktacāpalah (43a)

Anvay

yathā: just as; *bhṛṅgah*: bee; *piban*: drinking; *makarandam*: nectar; *na pekṣate*: is not concerned; *gandhāt*: with its fragrance; *hi*: so; *cittam*: consciousness; *sadā*: always; *nāda āsaktam*: intent on the *nāda*; *na kāṅkṣati*: does not crave; *viśayam*: sensual enjoyment; *baddhaḥ*: bound; *su-nāda-gandhena*: by the *nāda*'s own sweet fragrance; *cāpalah*: its fickle nature; *saṃtyakta*: relinquished.

Translation

Just as the bee drinking the nectar is not concerned with its fragrance, so the consciousness, always intent on the *nāda*, does not crave sensual enjoyment [as it is] bound by the *nāda*'s own sweet fragrance, its fickle nature relinquished.

Commentary

Sound has a very powerful effect on the consciousness. We can see the immediate effect that music has on the emotions and the mood. In the same way, inner sound unifies and harmonises the vibrational field and holds the consciousness steady and still. When the consciousness is fixed on *nāda*, it remains focused and at ease in itself.

Verses 43b and 44a: One-pointed concentration on *nāda*

नादग्रहणतश्चित्तमन्तरङ्गभुजङ्गमः ॥४३॥

विस्मृत्य विश्वमेकाग्रः कुत्रचिन्न हि धावति ।४४।

nādagrahanataścittamantaraṅgabhujaṅgamah (43b)

vismṛtya viśvamekāgrah kutracinna hi dhāvati (44a)

Anvay

antaraṅga bhujangamah: inner serpent; *cittam*: consciousness; *nāda grahanataḥ*: holds the *nāda*; *ekāgrah*: concentrating; *vismṛtya*: unaware of; *viśvam*: all; *na hi dhāvati*: does not rush; *kutracit*: here and there.

Translation

The inner serpent [of] consciousness [which] holds the *nāda*, concentrating [on it], unaware of all [else], does not rush here and there.

Commentary

The inner serpent of consciousness, is the awareness, which tends to pull the mind and senses here and there, when it is undisciplined and has no steady point of focus. When the awareness is held by the nāda, it remains concentrated with little effort, and ceases to rush from one attraction to another.

Verses 44b to 46a: Nāda restrains the mind

मनोमत्तगजेन्द्रस्य विषयोद्यानचारिनः ॥४४॥

नियामनसमर्थोऽयं निनादो मिशिताङ्कुशः ।

नादोऽन्तरङ्गसारङ्गबन्धने वागुरायते ॥४५॥

अन्तरङ्गसमुद्रस्य रोधे वेलायते ऽपि वा ॥४६॥

nanomattagajendrasya viṣayodyānacārinah (44b)

niyāmanasamartho 'yam ninādo niśitāṅkuśah

nādo 'ntaraṅgasāraṅgabandhane vāgurāyate (45)

antaraṅgasamudrasya rodhe velāyate 'pi vā (46a)

Anvay

ayam ninādah: this sound; *niśita aṅkuśah:* sharp hook; *samarthaḥ:* suitable for; *niyāmana:* restraining; *manah:* mind; *matta-gajendrasya:* like a mad elephant; *cārinah:* roaming; *udyāna:* pleasure garden; *viṣaya:* sensual enjoyment; *vāgurāyate:* ensnares; *bandhane:* as a fetter; *antarāṅga sāraṅga:* inner deer; *vā api:* or also; *velāyate:* is a shore; *rodhe:* which holds back; *antaraṅga-samudrasya:* inner ocean.

Translation

This sound [is] a sharp hook, suitable for restraining the mind [which is] like a mad elephant roaming the pleasure garden [of] sensual enjoyment. The nāda ensnares as a fetter [for] the inner deer, or is also a shore, which holds back the inner ocean.

Commentary

The nāda acts as a sharp hook to restrain the mind. Here the mind is described as a mad elephant, roaming the pleasure garden of the world, seeking one sensory enjoyment after another. The nāda holds the mind in the same way that a rope holds the deer, or the shore line holds back the ocean.

Verses 46b to 47a: Praṇava nāda

ब्रह्मप्रणवसंलाननादो ज्योतिर्मयात्मकः ॥४६॥

मनस्तत्र लयं याति तद्विष्णोः परं पदम् ॥४७॥

brahma pranavasam̄lagnanādo jyotirmayātmakah (46b)

manastatra layam yāti tadviṣṇoh param padam (47a)

Anvay

nādaḥ sam̄lagna: *nāda* arising from; *pranava*: *Praṇava*, Aum, primal sound vibration; *brahma*: *Brahma*, creative principle; *ātmakah*: has the nature of; *jyotirmaya*: light; *tatra*: there; *manah*: mind; *yāti layam*: becomes absorbed; *tat*: this; *param padam*: supreme seat; *viṣṇoh*: of Viṣṇu.

Translation

The *nāda*, arising from *Praṇava* [and] *Brahma*, has the nature of light. There the mind becomes absorbed. This [is] the supreme seat of Viṣṇu.

Commentary

Aum is the *nāda* arising from *Praṇava* and the pure consciousness of *Brahma*. *Aum* is the first vibration and has the quality of luminosity; therefore, the mind easily becomes absorbed in it. *Aum* is also the supreme seat of *Viṣṇu*, the divine consciousness, that sustains the creation.

Verses 47b to 48a: Space and sound

तावदाकाशसंकल्पो यावच्छब्दः प्रवर्तते ॥४७॥

निःशब्दं तत्परं ब्रह्म परमात्मा समीयते ॥४८॥

tāvadākāśasam̄kalpo yāvacchabdah pravartate (47b)

nihśabdam tatparam brahma paramātmā samīyate (48a)

Anvay

yāvat: as long as; *śabdaḥ*: sound; *pravartate*: is produced; *tāvat*: then; *ākāśa-sam̄kalpaḥ*: will of *ākāśa*, ether element whose property is sound; *tat*: then; *paramātmā*: supreme self; *amīyate*: is equal to; *nihśabdam*: soundless; *param brahma*: supreme *Brahma*, creator.

Translation

As long as sound is produced, then [there is] the will of *ākāśa*. Then the supreme self is equal to the soundless supreme *Brahma*.

Commentary

The basis of sound is vibration, and vibration is the basis of creation. *Ākāśa*, the infinite space, is the first element of creation. Being the first element of material existence, which will hold all the creation to come, *ākāśa* relates with *sankalpa*, the will to become. *Ākāśa* arises from the subtle essence of sound. In the manifest creation, sound travels through space. In the unmanifest dimension, *paramātmā*, the supreme self, is equal to *parambrahma*, the universal pure consciousness, which is the source of creation beyond sound.

Verses 48b to 51a: Beyond the mind

नादो यावन्मनस्तावनादान्ते ७पि मनोम्मनी ॥४८॥

सशब्दश्वाक्षरे क्षीणे निःशब्दं परमं पदं

सदा नादानुसंधानात्संक्षीणा वासना तु या ॥४९॥

निरञ्जने विलीयेते मनोवायू न संशयः

नादकोटिसहस्राणि बिन्दुकोटिशतानि च ॥५०॥

सर्वे तत्र लयं यान्ति ब्रह्मप्रवनादके ।५१।

nādo yāvanmastāvannādānte ‘pi manonmanī (48b)

saśabdaścākṣare kṣīṇe nihśabdam paramam padam

sadā nādānusaṁdhānātsaṁkṣīṇā vāsanā tu yā (49)

nirañjane vilt̄yete manovāyū na samśayah

nādakoṭisahasrāṇi bindukoṭiśatāni ca (50)

sarve tatra layam yānti brahmapravanādake (51a)

Anvay

yāvat: as long as; *manah*: mind; *tāvat*: then; *nāda-ante*: at the end of *nāda*; *manonmanī*: beyond the mind; *sa śabdaḥ*: that sound; *kṣīṇe*: when it disappears; *akṣare*: in the indestructible; *nihśabdam*: soundless; *paramam padam*: supreme seat; *yā*: when; *vāsanā*: mental conditioning; *saṁkṣīṇā*: destroyed; *sadā anusaṁdhānāt*: by continual concentration on; *vāyū*: *prāṇa*, vital energy; *manah*: mind; *na samśayah*: without doubt; *vilt̄yete*: becomes absorbed; *nirañjane*: in the pure being; *sahasrāṇi*: thousands; *ca*: and; *śatāni*: hundreds; *bindu*: *bindu*, psychic centre in brain; *koṭi*: points; *yānti layam*: become absorbed; *tatra*: there; *sarve nādake*: in the whole *nāda* belonging to; *brahma*: brahma, source of existence; *pranava*: *praṇava*, primal sound vibration.

Translation

As long as [there is] *nāda*, [there is] the mind; then, at the end of *nāda*, [there is] the state beyond the mind. That sound, when it disappears in the indestructible, [becomes] the soundless supreme seat. When mental conditioning [is] destroyed by continual concentration on the *nāda*, the *prāṇa* [of] the mind without doubt becomes absorbed in the pure being. Thousands of *nāda* and hundreds of *bindu* points become absorbed there in the whole *nāda*, belonging to Brahma and Praṇava.

Commentary

As long as there is *nāda*, there is the mind, because it is the mind that perceives the sound. At the end of *nāda*, there is the state beyond mind, because mind is no longer there to perceive the sound.

Nāda, the subtle vibration that becomes sound, disappears back into the unmanifest dimension, beyond time, space and object. Being beyond any material reality, this dimension is therefore described as indestructible, because there is no objective thing to be destroyed. When the nāda disappears back into the unmanifest, it becomes soundless, because there are no senses, no mind to perceive this subtlest vibration. It is called the supreme seat, because from this soundless vibration the entire creation will be born.

When all the mental conditioning is destroyed, the mind can be transcended. The mind is the link, the go-between the person and the outside world, perceiving and expressing itself in myriad ways, all of which relate with the world and its experiences. However, when the mind is transcended, the person enters the dimension of *brahman*, the pure, luminous and ever-expanding consciousness. The ancient yogis used continual concentration on the nāda as a method of meditation to achieve the elimination of mental conditioning. By this method the prāṇa, or life force, of the mind becomes absorbed in one's pure being, the cosmic consciousness. It is said that in the entire field of nāda there, thousands of nāda, subtle vibrations, and hundreds of bindu, points of light, belonging to brahman and praṇava, are absorbed there. It may be noted that praṇava, the cosmic sound of *Aum*, is the origin of all creation, and bindu, the point of light, the origin of all form.

Verses 51b to 53: Direct path to liberation

सर्वावस्थाविनिर्मुक्तः सर्वचिन्ताविवर्जितः ॥५१॥

मृतवत्तिष्ठते योगी स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ।

शङ्खदुन्दुभिनादं च न शृणोति कदाचन ॥५२॥

काष्ठवज्ञायते देह उम्न्यावस्थया ध्रवम् ।

न जानाति स शीतोष्णं न दुःखं न सुखं तथा ॥५३॥

sarvāvasthāvinirmuktaḥ sarvacintāvivarjitaḥ (51b)

mṛtavattiṣṭhate yogī sa mukto nātra samśayah

śaṅkhadundubhinādaṁ ca na śṛṇoti kadācana (52)

kāṣṭhavajñāyate deha unmānyāvasthayā dhruvam

na jānāti sa śītoṣṇam na duḥkham na sukham tathā (53)

Anvay

vivarjitaḥ: having given up; *saṛva cintā*: all thoughts; *vinirmuktaḥ*: freed from; *saṛva avasthā*: all states; *yogī*: yogin, adept in *yoga*; *tiṣṭhate*: stays still; *mṛtavat*: as if dead; *atra*: at this time; *sa*: he; *na samśayah*: without doubt; *muktaḥ*: liberated; *ca*: and; *na kadācana*: never; *śṛṇoti*: he hears; *nādaṁ*: sound; *dundubhi*: large kettle-drum; *śaṅkha*: conch; *dhruvam*: definitely; *unmani avasthayā*: in the state of *unmani*, mind turned inwards; *dehāḥ*: body; *jñāyate*: is felt; *kāṣṭhavat*: like a log; *tathā*: thus; *sa jānāti*: it experiences; *na . . . na*: neither . . . nor; *śīta-uṣṇam*: cold [nor] heat; *duḥkham*: pain; *sukham*: pleasure;

Translation

Having given up all thoughts, freed from all states, the *yogin* stays still as if dead. At this time he [is] without doubt liberated, and he never hears the sound [of] the large kettle-drum [or] conch. Definitely in the state of *unmani*, the body is felt like a log. Thus it experiences neither cold [nor] heat, pain [nor] pleasure.

Commentary

Here, the state of liberation is described. We, who live in modern times, may never experience this heightened state of consciousness, due to our constant involvement with the world and the people around us. We have been conditioned to remain busy all our lives with family, community and professional engagements. This is considered to be a good life, a useful life. Those persons who shun social and professional involvement are considered to be of little worth to themselves and also to others. Although yoga has become very popular around the world, the higher purpose and the path to reach it remains almost entirely unknown.

So now, the seer and teacher of this *upaniṣad* gives clear instruction on the state of liberation, which was the original aim of yoga from early times. First, the mind must become completely clear and free from all thoughts. Even if a thought arises, there should be no involvement, no response, no reaction, in the mind to that thought. This is the state known as *unmani*, beyond the mind, which can be attained through the practice of meditation, especially *nāda* yoga. This state of absolute stillness of mind must become established on a daily basis, until it becomes the prevailing mental state and nothing disturbs it.

When absolute stillness of the mind has been established over a long duration of time, the yogi becomes free from all mental states. In this heightened state of consciousness, he remains absolutely silent and unmoving, as if he were dead. At this time, he is liberated without a doubt. He never even hears the inner sounds, which arise as a result of *nāda* yoga, such as the conch or the large kettle drum. In the state of *unmani*, the body feels like a log, and it experiences neither heat nor cold, pain nor pleasure, as these are the sensory experiences of the mind.

Verses 54 to 56: Signs of liberation

न माननावमानं च संत्यक्त्वा तु समाधिना ।

अवस्थात्रयमन्वेति न चित्तं योगिनः सदा ॥५४॥

जाग्रन्निद्राविनिर्मुक्तः स्वरूपावस्थतामियात् ॥५५॥

दृष्टिः स्थिरा यस्य विनासदृश्यं वायुः स्थिरो यस्य विनाप्रयत्नम् ।

चित्तं स्थिरं यस्य विनावलम्बं स ब्रह्मतारान्तरनादरूप इत्युपनिषत् ॥५६॥

na mānam nāvamānam ca samtyaktvā tu samādhinā

avasthātrayamanveti na cittam yoginah sadā (54)

jagrannidrāvinirmuktaḥ svarūpāvasthatāmiyāt (55)

*dṛṣṭih sthirā yasya vināsadr̄śyam vāyuh sthiro yasya vināprayatnam
cittam sthiram yasya vināvalambam sa brahmatārāntaranādarūpa ityupaniṣat* (56)

Anvay

cittam: consciousness; *yoginah*: of the yogin; *na sadā*: never; *veti*: goes beyond; *trayaman*: third; *avasthā*: state; *samādhinā*: through *samādhi*, final state of meditation; *na . . . na*: without . . . and; *samtyaktvā*: giving up; *mānam*: pride; *avamānam*: dishonour; *vinirmuktah*: freed from; *jāgrat*: waking; *nidrā*: sleeping; *iyāt*: he reaches; *svarūpa-avasthatām*: his own natural state; *yasya*: when; *dṛṣṭih*: vision; *sthirā*: fixed; *vinā sadr̄śyam*: without that which is visible; *vāyuh*: *prāṇa*, vital energy; *sthirah*: still; *vinā prayatnam*: without effort; *cittam*: consciousness; *sthiram*: steady; *vinā avalambam*: without support; *sa*: he; *rūpa*: form; *antara nāda*: inner sound; *brahma*: *Brahma*, source of existence; *tāra*: *Tāra*, Aum; *iti*: declares; *upaniṣat*: Upaniṣad.

Translation

The consciousness of the *yogin* never goes beyond the third state through *samādhi* without giving up pride and dishonour. Freed from waking [and] sleeping, he reaches his own natural state. When the [inner] vision [becomes] fixed without that which is visible, when the *prāṇa* [becomes] still without effort, when consciousness {becomes} steady without support, [then] he [becomes] the form [of] the inner sound [of] *Brahma* [and] *Tāra*. Thus declares the Upaniṣad.

Commentary

The liberated yogi is free from all feeling and expression of pride and shame. Pride is said to be the last vestige of impurity to be overcome on the spiritual journey, and it is the most difficult to remove. The consciousness of the yogi can never go beyond the third level of *samādhi* until pride and shame have been completely eradicated. Samādhi is the highest stage of meditation. It encompasses the state of transcendence, where the individual consciousness merges with the soul, or *ātman*. Ten levels of samādhi have been described in the yoga texts. The first three levels are: 1. *savitarka* (with traces of reasoning or differentiation), *savicara* (with traces of thought in symbolic form) *ānanda* (with bliss).

The description continues that the liberated yogi is neither awake nor asleep to the outside world. This is noted because the body, senses and mind have been transcended in this state. It is as if the awareness has been completely withdrawn from them, and the yogi rests peacefully in the broad expanse of his own consciousness, which is his natural state. Further signs of this state are that the inner vision becomes fixed, without any visible object. The *prāṇa* becomes still without any effort, which causes the natural rhythm of the breath to cease. The consciousness remains steady and absolutely still, without any support.

When these signs appear, the liberated yogi becomes one with the form of the inner sound of *Brahma* and *Tara*.

ॐ वाऽमे मनसीति शान्तिः ॥

Om vānme manasīti śāntih

Anvay

iti: let there be; *śāntih*: peace; *manasi*: in mind; *vānme*: in speech.

Translation

Om, let there be peace in mind [and] speech.

इति नादबिन्दूपनिषत्समाप्ता ।

iti: thus; *samāptā:* ends; *upaniṣat:* Upaniṣad.

Thus ends the Upaniṣad.

Appendices

1. Pronunciation Guide

anút

āfáther

ibít

íknee

uhook

úsue

ṛhurt

enet

aitime

ogot

auhouse

mhum

ḥh + preceding vowel

kpaprika

khinkhorn

gago

ghbighut

ñanger

cchat

chmuchharm

jjog

jhrajhouse

ñengine

tborscht

tborscht home

dfresh dill

dhflushedheart

nrainy

ttarp

thscouthall

dmodern

dhmudhut

nbanal

ppapa

phtophalf

bmaybe

bhmobhall

mchroma

yyoung

rmerit

lalas

vlaya

śshin

ṣsunshine

hhut

2.Sanskrit Text

वैराजात्मोपासानाया संजातज्ञानवह्निना ।
दग्धा कर्मत्रयं योगी यत्पदं याति तद्वजे ॥

ॐ बाङ्मे मनसीति शान्तिः ॥

ॐ अकारो दक्षिणः पक्ष उकारस्तूत्तरः समृतः ।
मकारं पुच्छमित्याहुरर्धमात्रा तु मस्तकम् ॥१॥

पादादिकं गुणांसतासया शरीरं सत्त्वमुच्यते ।
धर्मोऽस्य दक्षिणं चक्षुरधर्मोऽथो परः समृतः ॥२॥

भूलोकः पादयोस्तस्य भूवलोकस्तु जानुनि ।
सुवलोकः कटीदेशो नाभिदेशो महर्जगत् ॥३॥

जनोलोकस्तु हृदेशो कण्ठे लोकस्तपस्ततः ।
भ्रुवोर्ललाटमध्ये तु सत्यलोको व्यवस्थितः ॥४॥

सहस्रार्णमतीवात्र मन्त्र एष प्रदर्शितः ।
एवमेतं समारुद्धो हंसयोगविचक्षणः ॥५॥

न भिद्यते कर्मचारैः पापकोटिशतैरपि ।६।
आग्नेयी प्रथमा मात्रा वायव्येषा तथापरा ॥६॥

भानुमण्डलसंकाशा भवेन्मात्रा तथोत्तरा ।
परमा चार्धमात्रा या वारुणीं तां विदुबुधाः ॥७॥

कालत्रये ऽपि यस्येमा मात्रा नूनं प्रतिष्ठताः ।
एष ओंकार आख्यातो धारणाभिन्निबोधत ॥८॥

घोषिणी प्रथमा मात्रा विद्या मात्रा तथापरा ।
पतङ्गिनी तृतीया स्याच्चतुर्थी वायुवेगिनी ॥९॥

पञ्चमी नामधेया तु षष्ठी चैन्द्रीयभिधीयते ।

सप्तमी वैष्णवी नाम अष्टमी शांकरीति च ॥१०॥

नवमी महती नाम धृतिस्तु दशमी मता ।

एकादशी भवेन्नारी ब्राह्मी तु द्वादशी परा ॥११॥

प्रथमायां तु मात्रायां यदि प्राणौर्वियुज्यते ।

भरते वर्षराजासौ सार्वभौमः प्रजायते ॥१२॥

द्वितीयायां समुत्क्रान्तो भवेद्यक्षो महात्मवान् ।

विद्याधरस्तृतीयायां गान्धर्वस्तु चतुर्थिका ॥१३॥

पञ्जम्यामथ मात्रायां यदि प्राणौर्वियुज्यते ।

उषितः सह देवत्वं सोमलोके महीयते ॥१४॥

षष्ठ्यामिन्द्रस्य सायुज्यं सप्तम्यां वैष्णवं पदम् ।

अष्टम्यां व्रज्यते रुद्रं पशूनां च पतिं तथा ॥१५॥

नवम्यां तु महर्लोकं दशम्यां तु जनं व्रजेत् ।

एकादश्यां तपोलोकं द्वादश्यां ब्रह्म शाश्वतम् ॥१६॥

ततः परतरं शुद्धं व्यापकं निर्मलं शिवम् ।

सदोदितं परं ब्रह्म ज्योतिषामुदयो यतः ॥१७॥

अतीन्द्रियं गुणातीतं मनो लीनं यदा भवेत् ।

अनूपमं शिवं शान्तं योगयुक्तं सदाविशेत् ॥१८॥

तद्युक्तस्तन्मयो जन्तुः शनैर्मुच्चेत्कलेवरम् ।

संस्थितो योगचारेण सर्वसङ्घविवर्जितः ॥१९॥

ततो विलीनपाशोऽसौ विपलः कमलाप्रभुः ।

तेनैव ब्रह्मावेन परमानन्दमश्नुते ॥२०॥

आत्मानं सततं ज्ञात्वा कालं नय महामते ।

प्रारब्धमखिलं भुञ्जनोद्देगं कर्तुर्मर्हसि ॥२१॥

उत्पन्ने तत्त्वविज्ञाने प्रारब्धं नैव मुच्चति ।

तत्त्वज्ञानोदयादूर्ध्वं प्रारब्धं नैव विद्यते ॥२२॥

देहादीनामसत्त्वात् यथा स्वज्ञे विबोधतः ॥२३॥

कर्म जन्मान्तरीयं यत्प्रारब्धमिति कीर्तितम् ॥२३॥

ततु जन्मान्तराभावात्पुंसो नैवास्ति कर्हिचित ॥२४॥

स्वप्नदेहो यथाध्यस्तस्तथैवायं हि देहकः ॥२४॥

अध्यस्तस्य कुतो जन्म जन्माभावे कुतः स्थितिः ॥२५॥

उपादानं प्रपञ्चस्य मृद्घाण्डस्येव पश्यति ॥२५॥

अज्ञानं चेति वेदान्तैस्तस्मिनष्टे क्व विश्वता ॥२६॥

यथा रज्जुं परित्यज्य सर्पं गृह्णति वै भ्रमात् ॥२६॥

तद्वत्सत्यमविज्ञाय जगत्पश्यति मूढधीः ।

रज्जुखण्डे परिज्ञाते सर्परूपं न तिष्ठति ॥२७॥

अधिष्ठाने तथा ज्ञाते प्रपञ्चे शून्यतां गते ।

देहस्यापि प्रपञ्चत्वात्प्रारब्धावस्थितिः कुतः ॥२८॥

अज्ञानजनबोधार्थं प्रारब्धमिति चोच्यते ॥२९॥

ततः कालवशादेव प्रारब्धे तु क्षयं गते ॥२९॥

ब्रह्मप्रणवसंधानो नादो ज्योतिर्मयः शिवः ।

स्वयमाविर्भवेदात्मा मेघापाये ऽशुमानिव ॥३०॥

सिद्धासने स्थितो योगी मुट्रां संधाय वैष्णवीं ।

शृणुयादक्षिणे कर्णे नादमन्तर्गतं सदा ॥३१॥

अभ्यस्यमानो नादो ऽयं बाह्यमावृणुते ध्वनिः ।

पक्षाद्विपक्षमखिलं जित्वा तुर्यपदं व्रजेत् ॥३२॥

श्रूयते प्रथमाभ्यासे नादो नानाविधो महान् ।

वर्धमाने तथाभ्यासे श्रूयते सूक्ष्मसूक्ष्मतः ॥३३॥

आदौ जलधिजीमूतभेरीनिर्झरसंभवः ।

मध्ये मर्दलशब्दाभो घण्टाकाहलजस्तथा ॥३४॥

अन्ते तु किकिणीवंशवीणाप्रमरनिस्वनः ।

इति नानाविधा नादाः श्रूयन्ते सूक्ष्मसूक्ष्मतः ॥३५॥

महति श्रूयमाणे तु महाभेर्यादिकध्यनौ ।

तत्र सूक्ष्मं सूक्ष्मतरं नादमेव परामृशेत् ॥३६॥

घनमुत्सृज्य वा सूक्ष्मे सूक्ष्ममुत्सृज्य वा घने ।

रममाणमपि क्षिप्तं मनो नान्यत्र चालयेत् ॥३७॥

यत्र कुत्रापि वा नादे लगति प्रथमं मनः ।

तत्र तत्र स्थिरीभूत्वा तेन सार्धं विलीयते ॥३८॥

विस्मृत्य सकलं बाह्यं नादे दुधाभ्युवन्मनः ।

एकीभूयाथ सहसा चिदाकाशे विलीयते ॥३९॥

उदासीनस्ततो भूत्वा सदाभ्यासेन सम्यमी ।

उन्मनीकारकं सद्यो नादमेवावधारयेत् ॥४०॥

सर्वचिन्तां समुत्सृज्य सर्वं चेष्टाविवर्जितः ।

नादमेवानुसंदध्यानादे चित्तं विलीयते ॥४१॥

मकरन्दं पिबन्तुङ्गे गन्धान्नापेक्षते यथा ।

नादासक्तं सदा चित्तं विषयं न हि काङ्क्षति ॥४२॥

बद्धः सुनादगन्धेन सद्यः संत्यक्तचापलः ॥४३॥

नादग्रहणतश्चित्तमन्तरङ्गभुजङ्गमः ॥४३॥

विस्मृत्य विश्वमेकाग्रः कुत्रचिन्ह हि धावति ॥४४॥

मनोमन्तगजेन्द्रस्य विषयोद्यानचारिनः ॥४५॥

नियामनसमर्थोऽयं निनादो मिशिताङ्कुशः ।

नादोऽन्तरङ्गसारङ्गबन्धने वागुरायते ॥४६॥

अन्तरङ्गसमुद्रस्य रोधे वेलायते ऽपि वा ॥४७॥

ब्रह्मप्रणवसंलग्नाननादो ज्योतिर्मयात्मकः ॥४८॥

मनस्तत्र लयं याति तद्विष्णोः परं पदम् ॥४९॥

तावदाकाशसंकल्पो यावच्छब्दः प्रवर्तते ॥४९॥

निःशब्दं तत्परं ब्रह्म परमात्मा समीयते ॥५०॥

नादो यावन्मनस्तावन्नादान्ते ऽपि मनोन्मनी ॥५०॥

सशब्दश्वाक्षरे क्षीणे निःशब्दं परमं पदं

सदा नादानुसंधानात्संक्षीणा वासना तु या ॥५१॥

निरञ्जने विलीयेते मनोवायू न संशयः

नादकोटिसहस्राणि बिन्दुकोटिशतानि च ॥५०॥

सर्वे तत्र लयं यान्ति ब्रह्मप्रवनादके ॥५१॥

सर्वावस्थाविनिर्मुक्तः सर्वचिन्ताविवर्जितः ॥५१॥

मृतवत्तिष्ठते योगी स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ।

शङ्खदुन्दुमिनादं च न शृणोति कदाचन ॥५२॥

काष्ठवज्ञायते देह उमन्यावस्थया ध्रवम् ।

न जानाति स शीतोष्णं न दुःखं न सुखं तथा ॥५३॥

न माननावमानं च संत्यक्त्वा तु समाधिना ।

अवस्थात्रयमन्वेति न चित्तं योगिनः सदा ॥५४॥

जाग्रनिद्राविनिर्मुक्तः स्वरूपावस्थतामियात् ॥५५॥

दृष्टिः स्थिरा यस्य विनासदृश्यं वायुः स्थिरो यस्य विनाप्रयत्नम् ।

चित्तं स्थिरं यस्य विनावलम्बं स ब्रह्मतारान्तरनादरूप इत्युपनिषत् ॥५६॥

ॐ वाङ्मे मनसीति शान्तिः ॥

इति नादबिन्दूपनिषत्समाप्ता

3. Continuous Translation

Opening Invocation

Having burned the three *karmas* through the fire of knowledge, born through devotion to the self, [who is] derived from Virāj, the yogin goes to that seat where he worships.

Om, let there be peace in speech and mind.

1.

The sound ‘a’ is declared [to be] the right wing [of] AUM, ‘u’ the left, ‘m’ the tail, and the half-syllable is said [to be] the head.

2.

It is said the *gunas* start at the feet, *sattvam* is its body; *dharma*, it is declared, is its right eye, and *adharma* its other [eye].

3 and 4.

The *bhūrloka* [is] in its feet, the *bhūvarloka* in its knees; *suvarloka* in the region [of] the hips; *maharjagat* in the region [of] the navel. *Janoloka* is located in the region [of] the heart; from there *tapoloka* in the throat, and *satyaloka* in the centre [of] the forehead [between] the eyebrows.

5 and 6a.

The flowing *mantra* is explained here as a thousand-waved intelligence. One who is proficient [in] *yoga*, having thus mounted the *hamsa*, is not affected by the bonds of *karma* or even by a hundred crores [of] sins.

6b and 7.

The first *mātrā* relates to Agni, the second to Vāyu; then the next is bright [like] the orb [of] the sun, and the last [is] the supreme *ardhamātrā*; this the wise know relates to Vāruna.

8.

Now the *mātrās* of each are also formed of three parts. This is called the *omkāra*. You can know [it] through the *dhāranās*.

9 to 11.

The first is *Ghoṣinī*, then the next *Vidyā*, the third *Pataṅginī*, the fourth *Vāyuveginī*, the fifth *Nāmadheyā*; and the sixth is called *Śiva*, the seventh *Vaiṣṇavī*, the eighth's name is said [to be] *Śāṃkarī*, the ninth *Mahatī*, the tenth is regarded as *Dhṛti*, the eleventh is *Nārī*, then the twelfth [is] the Supreme Reality.

12.

Now, if he is separated from the *prāṇas* (i.e. dies) in the first *mātrā*, he is reborn [as] a universal monarch in *Bharatavarṣa* (India).

13.

Having passed away in the second, he becomes a great *yakṣa*; in the third a *vidyādhara*; and in the fourth a *gāndharva*.

14.

Then, if he is separated from the *prāṇas* in the fifth, he lives in the world [of] the moon as exalted as a *deva*.

15.

[If] in the sixth, [he is in] communion with Indra; in the seventh, he reaches the seat of Vishnu, and then, in the eighth, Rudra, lord of [all] creatures.

16.

[If] in the ninth, he reaches, *mahaloka*; and in the tenth, *janoloka*; in the eleventh, *tapoloka*; in the twelfth, everlasting Brahma.

17.

The supreme consciousness, which rises from light, is always declared [to be] *Śiva* [who is] beyond these [*mātrās*], pure, all-pervading [and] resplendent.

18.

When the mind is absorbed beyond the *indriyas* [and] the *gunas*, [then], always immersed in yoga, he should enter the incomparable auspicious *Śiva*.

19.

The person [who is] established [there and] absorbed in it, should slowly relinquish support, intent upon the observance of yoga, avoiding all company.

20.

Then, the instant that person is freed from the bonds [of] riches [and] marriage, he thus attains supreme bliss by absorption in Brahma.

21.

O Intelligent One, spend your time continually knowing the self, enjoying [your] entire *prārabdha*, without trying to resist [it].

22 and 23a.

Even when knowledge of the *tattvas* has emerged, *prārabdha* does not leave [him], but he is not affected by *prārabdha* [after] the rising up [of] *tattvajñāna*, because of the unreal nature of the body and other [material things], as if perceived in a dream.

23b and 24a.

That *karma* associated with former births is called *prārabdha*. Yet the person who has no rebirth never experiences it.

24b and 25a.

As the body in a dream [is] illusory, so indeed [is] this body. Where [is] the birth of that [which is] illusory? Where does it exist in the absence of rebirth?

25b and 26a.

He sees, in accordance with Vedānta, [that] *ajñāna* [is] the material cause of the form of the clay-pot, and asks, if *ajñāna* is no more, where then [is] the universe?

26b and 27.

Just as he considers from a distance a rope [to be] a snake, in the same way, not knowing the truth, the fool sees the world [as] separate from Brahma. When he recognises [it] as a piece [of] rope, the appearance [of] a snake does not remain.

28 and 29a.

Thus, when he knows emptiness, when the material support has gone, where [is] the abode [of] *prārabdha*, as the body is also of the phenomenal world. And so it is said *prārabdha* [is] for the purpose of teaching those born in *ajñāna*.

29b and 30.

Then, in the course of time, when *prārabdha* have come to an end, the *ātman*, [which is] the auspicious sound consisting of light [and] uniting *praṇava* [with] *brahma*, quickly reveals itself, like [the sun] when the clouds disperse.

31.

The yogin, seated in *siddhāsana*, having adopted the *vishnu mudrā*, hears the *nāda* [which] always goes into the right ear.

32.

This sound, [whose] inner tone [is] the aim of the practice, is hidden from the outer. Having conquered all obstacles, he enters the fourth state in fifteen days.

33 to 35.

At the beginning of his practice he hears many loud sounds; then, as his practice increases, he hears [them as] more subtle, [until] scarcely audible. At first the source [of the sounds seems to be from] the ocean, clouds, kettle-drums [and] waterfalls; then, in the middle [stage], [they are] like sounds caused by drums, bells [and] horns. At the last stage [there are] sounds [of] small bells, flutes, lutes [and] bees. Thus various sounds are heard, [becoming] more and more subtle.

36.

When at first the loud sound [of] the great drum is heard, then he should just concentrate on its most subtle sounds.

37 and 38.

Either leaving the gross sound for the subtle, or leaving the subtle sound for the gross, even while delighting [in them], the mind [becomes] distracted, [and so] should not be moved to other [sounds]. Or whichever sound the mind first attaches itself to, securely fixed there, it becomes absorbed in it.

39.

Having forgotten all external [experiences], the mind, uniting with the sound [as] milk [with] water, is immediately absorbed in *cidaṅkāśa*.

40.

Then, having become indifferent to passion by the continual practice [of] self-control, he should at once give his full attention to the inner sound.

41.

Having abandoned every thought and renounced every desire, he should place all his attention on the inner sound, until his consciousness becomes absorbed in it.

42 and 43a.

Just as the bee drinking the nectar is not concerned with its fragrance, so the consciousness, always intent on the *nāda*, does not crave sensual enjoyment [as it is] bound by the *nāda*'s own sweet fragrance, its fickle nature relinquished.

43b and 44a.

The inner serpent [of] consciousness [which] holds the *nāda*, concentrating [on it], unaware of all [else], does not rush here and there.

44b to 46a.

This sound [is] a sharp hook, suitable for restraining the mind [which is] like a mad elephant roaming the pleasure garden [of] sensual enjoyment. The nāda ensnares as a fetter [for] the inner deer, or is also a shore, which holds back the inner ocean.

46b to 47a.

The nāda, arising from *Pranava* [and] *Brahma*, has the nature of light. There the mind becomes absorbed. This [is] the supreme seat of Viṣṇu.

47b to 48a.

As long as sound is produced, then [there is] the will of ākāśa. Then the supreme self is equal to the soundless supreme Brahma.

48b to 51a.

As long as [there is] nāda, [there is] the mind; then, at the end of nāda, [there is] the state beyond the mind. That sound, when it disappears in the indestructible, [becomes] the soundless supreme seat. When mental conditioning [is] destroyed by continual concentration on the nāda, the prāṇa [of] the mind without doubt becomes absorbed in the pure being. Thousands of nāda and hundreds of bindu points become absorbed there in the whole nāda, belonging to Brahma and Praṇava.

51b to 53.

Having given up all thoughts, freed from all states, the *yogin* stays still as if dead. At this time he [is] without doubt liberated, and he never hears the sound [of] the large kettle-drum [or] conch. Definitely in the state of *unmani*, the body is felt like a log. Thus it experiences neither cold [nor] heat, pain [nor] pleasure.

54 to 56.

The consciousness of the *yogin* never goes beyond the third state through *samādhi* without giving up pride and dishonour. Freed from waking [and] sleeping, he reaches his own natural state. When the [inner] vision [becomes] fixed without that which is visible, when the *prāṇa* [becomes] still without effort, when consciousness {becomes} steady without support, [then] he [becomes] the form [of] the inner sound [of] *Brahma* [and] *Tāra*. Thus declares the Upaniṣad.

Om, let there be peace in mind [and] speech.

Thus ends the Upaniṣad.

ध्यानबिन्दूपनिषत्

dhyānabindūpaniṣat

Meditation Point Upaniṣad

Opening Invocation

ध्यात्वा यद्व्यमात्रं ते स्वावशेषधिया ययुः ।

योगतत्त्वज्ञानफलं तत्स्वमात्रं विचिन्तये ॥

ॐ सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ॥

*dhyātvā yadbrahmamātram te svāvaśeṣadhiyā yayuh
yogatattvajñānaphalam tatsvamātram vicintaye
om saha nāvavatviti śāntih*

Anvay

dhyātvā: having meditated on; *brahma-mātram*: totality of Brahman; *sva-avaśeṣa*: own remainder; *dhiyā*: by thought, mentally; *yayuh*: swiftly; *vicintaye*: I reflect on; *sva-mātram*: own totality; *yoga-tattva-jñāna-phalam*: fruit of knowledge of the essence of yoga; *iti*: saying; *avavatu*: may this benefit; *nau*: both of us; *saha*: together; *śāntih*: peace.

Translation

Having meditated on the totality of Brahman, I reflect mentally on the remainder of my own totality, the fruit of knowledge, the essence of yoga, saying Om, may this [teaching] benefit both of us together. Peace.

Commentary

This invocation expresses the connection of the *Riṣi*, or seer, of this upaniṣad with the ever illumined state of consciousness, the totality of *Brahman*, through meditation. He has further contemplated on his own individual consciousness, and realised the essence of yoga, which is the fruit of knowledge. Thus, he says, ‘may this teaching benefit both of us together’, meaning may the disciple and the teacher both be uplifted through this knowledge.

Verse 1: Dhyāna yoga destroys sin

यदि शैलसं पापं विस्तीर्णं बहुयोजनम् ।

भिद्यते ध्यानयोगेन नान्यो भेदः कदाचन ॥१॥

yadi śailasam pāpam vistīrṇam bahuyojanam

bhidyate dhyānayogena nānyo bhedah kadācana (1)

Anvay

yadi: even if; *pāpam*: sin; *vistīrṇam*: extends; *śailasam*: mountain; *bahu-yojanam*: many *yojanas* (one *yojana* is approximately 9 miles); *bhidyate*: it is destroyed; *dhyāna-yoga*: *yoga* of meditation; *na kadācana*: never; *anyah bhedah*: another destroyer.

Translation

Even if sin extends [like] a mountain [for] many *yojanas*, it is destroyed by *dhyānayoga*; [there has]

never [been] another destroyer.

Commentary

The word ‘sin’ equates with negative action, which is wrong and which does harm to oneself and/or others. Another word for action is *karma*. Action is begotten from the mind and all actions are stored in the mind for further use and association. Not a single action that one does goes away. although certain actions may be forgotten, all remain in the deeper recesses of the subconscious mind lifelong. Even at the time of death, the actions are bundled into what is called a ‘karmic sheath’, which passes on together with the soul. In this sense, every person is bound by his or her actions. If the actions are positive and beneficial, the results will be auspicious and harmonious. If the actions are evil and harmful, the results will be painful and unpleasant.

All human beings are a mixed bag of good and bad karmas. Some carry more or less karmas than others. Some carry more good karmas and others carry more bad. We are born on Earth in order to fulfil and finish our karmas. The good karmas that one carries bear no stigma and do no harm. Therefore, they can be left until last. However, the bad karmas, especially those which are ripening and must be fulfilled in this lifetime, carry much pain, difficulty, and trauma. These bad karmas, or sins, must be removed from the mind and consciousness in a way that does not promote further pain and distress to oneself and to others. If one goes on reenacting them over and over, there will be great distress to others, as well as to oneself. One can see this in habitual bouts of anger or abusive behaviour.

If one does not vent the negativity one feels from inside, through harsh speech or action, then what is one to do with it? How is one to deal with it? Here, in the first verse of this teaching, it says that, even if one’s sin or negativity extends like a mountain that is many miles high, it can all be eliminated through the practice of *dhyāna yoga*, the yoga of meditation. And there has never been another way to destroy it.

Verse 2: Bindu nāda

बीजाक्षरं परं बिन्दुं नादं तस्योपरि स्थितम् ।

सशब्दं चाक्षरे क्षीणे निःशब्दं परं पदम् ॥२॥

bījakṣaram param bindum nādam tasyopari sthitam

saśabdam cākṣare kṣīne niḥśabdām param padam (2)

Anvay

nāda: inner most subtle sound; *sthitam*: is; *upari*: above; *bīja-akṣara*: seed letter containing latent power of sound; *param bindum*: supreme point; *sa śabdah*: that sound; *kṣīne*: when it disappears; *akṣare*: in the indestructible; *niḥśabdām*: soundless; *paramam padam*: supreme seat.

Translation

The *nāda* is above the *bīja akṣara*, the supreme point. That sound, when it disappears in the indestructible, [becomes] the soundless supreme seat.

Commentary

At bindu cakra, the energy centre located at the top back of the head, the *nāda* is located above the *bīja akṣara*, the seed letter of that centre, containing the latent power of sound. The word *bindu* means ‘point’. This is the point where the unmanifest reality enters the manifest. Hence, it is the source of all creation and manifestation. At bindu cakra the inner *nāda*, or subtle most sound, is born and it rests just above the *bīja akṣara*, at the supreme point. Similarly, at the time of dissolution, that subtle most sound disappears back into the unmanifest, the indestructible, where it becomes the soundless supreme seat.

Verse 3: Highest stage of *nāda* yoga

अनाहतं तु यच्छब्दं तस्य शब्दस्य यत्परं ।

तत्परं बिन्दते यस्तु स योगी छिन्संशयः ॥३॥

anāhatam tu yacchabdam tasya śabdasya yatparam

tatparam bindate yastu sa yogī chinnasamśayah (3)

Anvay

sa yogī: that yogin; *yah*: in whom; *param śabdam*: highest sound; *tasya śabdasya*: of that sound; *bindate*: is no more; *chinna*: has lost; *saṃśayah*: doubt; *anāhatam*: unstruck sound; *param*: highest.

Translation

That yogin, in whom the highest sound of that sound is no more, has lost [all] doubt [that] the soundless sound [is] the highest [stage of *nāda* yoga].

Commentary

Nāda yoga begins as a practice of concentration, where the yogi follows the various sounds, one by one, gradually refining his perception as the sounds become more and more subtle. In this way the awareness is led by sound itself from the external gross plane to the interior subtle plane. With mastery of the practice, the mind is transcended and the awareness is merged in the highest, supreme sound. Ultimately, even the highest sound is no more. That yogi, in whom the subtlest vibration of that supreme sound is heard no more, realises beyond a doubt that the soundless sound is the highest stage of *nāda* yoga.

Verse 4: Power of the supreme *nāda*

वालाग्रशतसाहस्रं तस्य भागस्य भागिनः ।

तस्य भागस्य भागार्धं तत्क्षये तु निरञ्जनम् ॥४॥

vālāgraśatasāhasram tasya bhāgasya bhāginaḥ

tasya bhāgasya bhāgārdham tatkṣaye tu nirañjanam (4)

Anvay

agra: point; *vāla*: hair; *bhāgasya*: if . . is divided into; *śata-sāhasram*: one hundred thousand; *bhāginah*: participant, i.e. *nāda*; *bhāgasya*: if . . is divided into; *ardham*: half; *bhāga*: division; *tu*: then; *tat kṣaye*: when this is absorbed; *nirāñjanam*: pure.

Translation

If the point [of] a hair is divided into one hundred thousand [parts], [and] if this *nāda* is divided into half of [each] division, then when this is absorbed, [the *yogin* attains] the pure [state].

Commentary

The supreme *nāda* is the source and the first cause of creation. The power of this vibration is so great that it is impossible to measure or describe. So, an analogy is given here that if the point of a hair were split into 100,000 parts, and if this supreme sound were divided into half of each part, then when it is absorbed, the *nāda* yogi attains the stainless, liberated state.

Verses 5 to 7: Knowledge of Brahman

पुष्पमध्ये यथा गन्धः पयोमध्ये यथा घृतम् ।

तिलमध्ये यथा तैलं पापाणेष्विव काञ्चनम् ॥५॥

एवं सर्वाणि भूतानि मणौ सूत्र इवात्मनि ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंसूढो ब्रह्मविद्व्याप्तिं स्थितः ॥६॥

तिलानां तु यथा तैलं पुष्पे गन्ध इवाश्रितः ।

पुरुषस्य शरीरे तु सबाह्याभ्यन्तरे स्थितः ॥७॥

puspamadhye yathā gandhah payomadhye yathā ghṛtam

tilamadhye yathā tailam pāpāṇeṣviva kāñcanam (5)

evam sarvāni bhūtāni manau sūtra iyātmani

sthirabuddhirasaṁsūdho brahmavidbrahmani sthitah (6)

tilānām tu yathā tailam puspe gandha ivāśritah

puruṣasya śarīre tu sabāhyābhyantere sthitah (7)

Anvay

yathā: just as; *gandhah*: fragrance; *puspa-madhye*: in flowers; *ghṛtam*: ghee; *payo-madhye*: in milk; *tailam*: oil; *tila-madhye*: in sesame; *kāñcanam*: gold; *pāpāṇeṣu*: in rocks; *evam*: thus; *brahmavid*: one who knows the Vedas; *sthitah*: is established; *brahmani*: in Brahman; *sūdhah*: having rejected; *rasam*:

sensual pleasure; *sthira buddhi*: stable mind; *sarvāni bhūtāni*: all creatures; *iva*: like; *sūtra*: string; *manau*: pearls; *ātmāni*: in the self; *tu*: so; *yathā*: just as; *tailam*: oil; *āśritah*: is dependent; *tilānām*: on the sesame; *iva*: and; *gandhaḥ*: fragrance; *puṣpe*: on the flower; *tu*: so; *puruṣasya*: *puruṣa*; *sthitaḥ*: does exist; *śarīre*: in the body; *sabāhya*: outside; *ābhyañtare*: inside.

Translation

Just as fragrance [is] in flowers, ghee in milk, oil in sesame, gold in rocks, thus one who knows the Vedas is established in Brahman, having rejected sensual pleasure [and being of] stable mind, [sees] all creatures, like a string [of] pearls, in the self. So just as the oil is dependent on the sesame and fragrance on the flower, so does *puruṣa* exist in the body, [both] outside [and] inside.

Commentary

The vedas are the ancient knowledge, which were revealed to the rishis and seers of the *Aryan* culture from early times. They are the bedrock of all the philosophies, teachings, sects and religions that have arisen on the Indian sub-continent over millennia, and have an important influence on the culture and way of life, even today. Just as the prominent religions of this time speak of God, Allah, Jehovah, the vedas speak of Brahman, the one universal, ever-luminous and expanding consciousness. The ultimate objective of yoga, and of all spiritual practice from early times, was to merge the individual, limited consciousness with the unlimited, universal consciousness of Brahman.

These verses explain the presence of Brahman, the One consciousness, which is everywhere and in everything, in a simple and beautiful way. Just as fragrance is inherent in flowers, as ghee (clarified butter) is processed from milk, as oil is a part of the sesame seed, as gold is found in rocks, in the same way, Brahman is established in the vedas. Therefore, one who knows the vedas is established in Brahman. We must consider that knowing the vedas was not achieved simply by reading them. This knowledge had to be studied under the tutelage of a master teacher, memorised, sung and finally meditated upon. So, it is said that one who knows the vedas becomes established in Brahman.

Being established in Brahman really means to realise one's highest conscious potential, and to remain in this elevated state for long durations of time. It is not simply a random experience that may or may not come and go. Brahman is a permanent and true reality, which permeates the perception of those who have studied the vedas, disciplined their senses and lead a meditative lifestyle. By rejecting sensual pleasure, the mind becomes steady and capable of penetrating the inner depths of consciousness. Such a person perceives the self and all of existence through the light of this alternate state. He sees that all beings are interconnected, like a string of pearls, in the light of consciousness. Hence, just as the oil is dependent on the sesame seed, and the fragrance on the flower, similarly, *puruṣa*, the consciousness, exists within the body and outside everywhere and in everything, as well.

Verse 8: Self is both manifest and unmanifest

वृक्षं तु सकलं विद्याच्छाया तस्यैव निष्कला ।

सकले निष्कले भावे सर्वत्रात्मा व्यवस्थितः ॥८॥

vrkṣam tu sakalam vidyācchāyā tasyaiva niṣkalā

sakale niṣkale bhāve sarvatrātmā vyavasthitah (8)

Anvay

tu: now; *vidyāt:* knows; *vṛkṣam:* tree; *sakalam:* with parts; *tasya chāyā:* its shadow; *niṣkalā:* without parts; *ātmā:* Self; *vyavasthitāḥ:* exists; *svavatra:* everywhere; *bhāve:* in the state; *sakale:* with parts; *niṣkale:* without parts.

Translation

Now [the *yogin*] knows the tree with parts [and] its shadow without parts [and that] the Self exists everywhere, in the state with parts [and] without parts.

Commentary

The tree with parts refers to the manifest dimension of existence; while its shadow, which is without parts, represents the unmanifest. Together the manifest and the unmanifest make up the entire existence. The manifest is an evolute of the unmanifest. In the absence of the unmanifest, the manifest cannot be born or evolve. The unmanifest supports and sustains the manifest at all times and in all aspects. The yogi is aware of this relationship between the manifest and the unmanifest,

and the purpose of his practice is to merge his manifest being with the unmanifest. In this sense, the body, mind, senses and ego all relate with the manifest being. The consciousness, the *ātman*, the self, the spirit relate with the unmanifest.

Although all beings are rooted in the unmanifest, most have forgotten their origin, and identify completely with the manifest. This becomes a major source of pain, anxiety, and stress, because everything in the material world is impermanent. Everyone who is born on the manifest plane lives in the body for only a designated number of years, and then passes back into the the unmanifest. In this way the souls come and go, entering bodies for a short lifetime, dropping the bodies and returning to their origin. The yogi is a person who strives to remember his origin, and to live his life on Earth with that awareness. Thus he knows that the self, the consciousness, exists everywhere on the manifest plane, in the state with division and parts, and on the unmanifest, which is undivided, without parts, as well.

Verse 9a: Meditation on Om

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म ध्येयं सर्वमुमुक्षुभिः ११

omityekākṣaram brahma dhyeyam sarvamumukṣubhiḥ (9a)

Anvay

iti: it is declared; *eka akṣaram om:* one imperishable sound *Om*; *dhyeyam:* should be contemplated on; *brahma:* as Brahman; *sarva-mumukṣubhiḥ:* by all who desire liberation.

Translation

It is declared the one imperishable sound *Om* should be contemplated on as Brahman by all who desire liberation.

Commentary

Om is said to be the one imperishable sound, because it is the first sound that ushered the manifest creation into existence from the unmanifest. *Om* should be meditated upon because it is the source of all manifest existence, and the way back to the unmanifest. Visualisation of the letter *Om*, or repetition of the sound in any manner, whether sung or chanted aloud, whispered, intoned mentally or repeated with the heartbeat or the breath, calms the mind and brings the awareness to the undivided space of consciousness. By continuous repetition or visualisation of *Om* over many years, the yogi is able to delve deeper and deeper into the unmanifest consciousness, and discover his eternal self. Therefore, the sound of *Om* should be meditated upon as Brahman, the one ever-expanding universal consciousness, by all those who desire liberation from the bondage of worldly existence.

Verses 9b to 13a: Three components of Om

पृथिव्यग्निश्च ऋग्वेदो भूरित्येव पितामहः ॥१॥

अकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते प्रथमे प्रणवांशके ।

अन्तरिक्षं यजुर्वायुभुवो विष्णुर्जनार्दनः ॥१०॥

उकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते द्वितीये प्रणवांशके ।

द्यौः सूर्यः सामवेदश्च स्वरित्येव महेश्वरः ॥११॥

मकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते तृतीये प्रणवांशके ।

अकारः पीतवर्णः स्याद्रजोगुण उदीरितः ॥१२॥

उकारः सात्त्विकः शुक्लो मकारः कृष्णतामसः ।१३।

prthivyagniśca rgvedo bhūrityeva pitāmahah (9b)

akāre tu layam prāpte prathame praṇavāṁśake

antarikṣam yajurvāyurbhuvo viṣṇurjanārdanah (10)

ukāre tu layam prāpte dvitīye praṇavāṁśake

dyauh sūryah sāmavedaśca svarityeva maheśvarah (11)

makāre tu layam prāpte trtīye praṇavāṁśake

akārah pītavarṇah syādrajoguṇa udīritah (12b)

ukārah sāttvikah śuklo makārah krṣnatāmasah (13a)

Anvay

prthivī: Pr̄thivī, earth element; *agni*: Agni, fire element; *rgveda*: Rigveda, ancient sacred Vedic text; *bhūḥ*: Bhūḥ, plane of earthly existence; *eva*: and; *pitāmahah*: Brahma, father of all; *layam*: are absorbed; *akāre*: when the sound ‘A’; *prathame amśake*: first part; *praṇava*: *praṇava*, AUM; *prāpte*:

is attained; *antarikṣam*: region between heaven and earth; *yajuh*: knowledge of sacrifice; *vāyuh*: air element; *bhuvaḥ*: astral plane; *viṣṇuh*: Viṣṇu; *janārdanah*: harasser of men; *layam*: are absorbed; *ukāre*: when the sound ‘U’; *dvitīye amśake*: second part; *praṇava*: *praṇava*, AUM; *prāpte*: is attained; *dyauḥ*: sky; *sūryaḥ*: sun; *svariti*: sounds; *sāmavedah*: Sāmaveda, Veda of Chants; *ca eva*: and even; *maheśvarah*: Great Lord Śiva; *layam*: are absorbed; *makāre*: when the sound ‘M’; *trtīye amśake*: third part; *pranava*: *praṇava*, AUM; *prāpte*: is attained; *akārah*: letter ‘A’; *pīta-varṇah*: yellow [in] colour; *udṛitah syāt*: is said to be; *rajoguṇa*: rajas; *ukārah*: letter ‘U’; *śuklah*: white; *sāttvikah*: sattvic; *makārah*: letter ‘M’; *kṛṣṇa*: black; *tāmasah*: tamasic.

Translation

Pr̥thivī, Agni, Rigveda, Bhūḥ and Brahma are absorbed when the sound ‘A’, the first part [of] *praṇava*, is attained. The region between heaven and earth, knowledge of sacrifice, air element, astral plane [and] Vishnu, harasser of men are [all] absorbed when the sound ‘U’, the second part [of] *praṇava*, is attained. The sky, sun, sounds [of] the Sāmaveda and even the Great Lord Śiva are [all] absorbed when the sound ‘M’, the third part [of] *praṇava*, is attained. The letter ‘A’ [is] yellow [in] colour [and] is said to be rajas. The letter ‘U’ [is] white [and] sattvic. The letter ‘M’ [is] black [and] tamasic.

Verses 13b to 15: Qualities of a Brahman

अष्टाङ्ग च चतुष्पादं त्रिस्थानं पञ्चदैवतम् ॥१३॥

ओंकार यो न जानाति ब्रह्मणो न भवेत् सः

प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ॥१४॥

अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ।

निवर्तन्ते क्रियाः सर्वास्तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥१५॥

aṣṭāṅga ca catuṣpādaṁ tristhānam pañcadaivatam (13b)

omkāra yo na jānāti brahmano na bhavettu saḥ

praṇavo dhanuḥ śaro hyātmā brahma tallakṣyamucyate (14b)

apramattena veddhavyam śaravattanmayo bhavet

nivartante kriyāḥ sarvāstasmindṛṣṭe parāvare (15)

Anvay

sah yah: he who; *na jānāti*: does not know; *omkāra*: Omkāra, sound of Om; *aṣṭa-aṅga*: eight parts; *catur-pādaṁ*: four feet; *tri-sthānam*: three states; *ca*: and; *pañca-daivatam*: five deities; *na bhavet*: is not; *brahmano*: Brahman; *ucyate*: it is said; *hi*: thus; *praṇava*: *praṇava*, Om; *ātmā*: *ātmā*, Self; *brahma*: Brahma, Highest Reality; *lakṣyam*: aim; *veddhavyam*: aiming; *apramattena*: carefully; *śaravat*: like the arrow; *bhavet*: becomes; *tat mayah*: one with it; *parāvare*: when the totality; *tasmin*: of this; *dṛṣṭe*: is seen; *nivartante*: it reverses; *sarvāḥ kriyāḥ*: all actions.

Translation

He who does not know *Omkāra* [as having] eight parts, four feet, three states and five deities is not a Brahman. It is said thus: *pranava* is the bow, *ātmā* the arrow, *brahma* the aim. Aiming carefully, he, like the arrow, becomes one with it. When the totality of this is seen, it reverses all actions.

Verses 16 to 19: The Power of Omkāra

ओंकारप्रभवा देवा ओंकारप्रभवाः स्वराः ।

ओंकारप्रभवं सर्वं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् ॥१६॥

ह्रस्वो दहति पापानि दीर्घः संपत्प्रदोऽव्ययः ।

अर्धमात्रासमा युक्तः प्रणवो मोक्षदातक्तः ॥१७॥

तैलधारामिवाच्छिन्नं दीर्घधण्टानिनादवत् ।

अवाच्यं प्रणवस्याग्रं यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥१८॥

हृत्पद्मकर्णिकामध्ये स्थिरदीपनिभाकृतिं ।

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रमचलं ध्यायेदोंकारमीश्वरम् ॥१९॥

omkāraprabhavā devā omkāraprabhavāḥ svarāḥ

omkāraprabhavam sarvam trailokyam sacarācaram (16)

hrasvo dahati pāpāni dīrghaḥ sampatprado ‘vyayah

ardhamātrāsamā yuktaḥ pranavo mokṣadāyaktaḥ (17)

tailadhārāmivācchinnam dīrghaghāṇṭānīnādavat

avācyam pranavasyāgram yastam vedā sa vedavit (18)

hrtpadbhakarṇikāmadhye sthiradīpanibhākṛtiṁ

aṅguṣṭhamātramacalam dhyāyedōmkaramīśvaram (19)

Anvay

devāḥ: deities; *omkāra-prabhavāḥ*: power of *Omkāra*, sound of Om; *svarāḥ*: sounds; *sarvam*: all; *trailokyam*: the three worlds; *carācaram*: animals [and] plants; *hrasvah*: short; *dahati*: burns; *pāpāni*: sins; *dīrghaḥ*: long one; *avyayah*: imperishable; *sampatpradah*: bestows good fortune; *yuktah*: united; *samā*: with; *ardha-mātrā*: half syllable; *pranavaḥ*: *praṇava*, OM; *dāyaktaḥ*: giver; *mokṣa*: liberation; *iva*: like; *acchinnam*: uninterrupted; *dhārām*: flow; *taila*: oil; *dīrgha nīnādavat*: like the long sound; *ghanṭā*: bell; *agram*: end; *pranavasya*: of *pranava*; *avācyam*: not to be uttered; *yah*: whoever; *veda*: knows; *tam*: this; *vedavit*: knows the true meaning of the Vedas; *dhyāyet*: one should

meditate on; *īśvaram*: *Īśvara*, Supreme Reality; *kṛtim*: is like; *sthira-dīpanibhā*: unwavering light; *aṅguṣṭha-mātram*: size of a thumb; *acalam*: motionless; *madhye*: in the centre; *padma-karnikā*: pericarp of the lotus; *hṛt*: heart.

Translation

Deities [have] the power of *Omkāra*. Sounds [have] the power of *Omkāra*. All the three worlds [including] animals [and] plants [have] the power of *Omkāra*. The short [accent of Om] burns sins; the long one [is] imperishable [and] bestows good fortune. United with the half-syllable, *pranava* [is] the giver [of] liberation. Like the uninterrupted flow [of] oil [or] like the long sound [of] a bell, the end of *pranava* [is] not to be uttered. Whoever knows this knows the true meaning of the Vedas. One should meditate on *Omkāra* [as] *Īśvara* [who] is like an unwavering light, the size of a thumb [and] motionless in the centre [of] the pericarp of the lotus [of] the heart.

Verses 20 to 25: Omkāra Meditation

इडया वायुमापूर्यं पूरयित्वोदरस्थितं ।

ओंकारं देहमध्यस्थं ध्यायेज्ज्वालावलीवृतम् ॥२०॥

ब्रह्मा पूरक इत्युक्तो विष्णुः कुम्भक उच्यते ।

रेचो रुद्र इति प्रोक्तः प्राणायामस्य देवताः ॥२१॥

आत्मानमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।

ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासादेव पश्येन्निगृह्वत् ॥२२॥

ओंकारधनिनादेन वायोः संहरणान्तिकम् ।

यावद्वलं समादध्यात्सम्यङ्नादलयावधि ॥२३॥

गमागमस्थं गमनादिशून्यमोकारमेकं रविकोटिदीप्तिम् ।

पश्यन्ति ये सर्वजनान्तरस्थं हंसात्मकं ते विरजा भवन्ति ॥२४॥

यन्मनस्त्रिजगात्सृष्टिस्थितिव्यसनकर्मकृत् ।

तन्मनो विलयं याति तद्विष्णोः परम पदम् ॥२५॥

iḍayā vāyumāpūryam pūrayitvadarasthitam

omkāram dehamadhyastham dhyāyejjvalāvalīvrtam (20)

brahmā pūraka ityukto viṣṇuh kumbhaka ucyate

reco rudra iti proktah prāṇāyāmasya devatāḥ (21)

ātmānamaranīm kṛtvā pranavam cottarāraṇīm

dhyānanirmathānābhyaśādeva paśyennigūḍhavat (22)

omkāradhvāniñādena vāyoḥ samharanāntikam

yāvadvalam samādadhyātsamyāññādalayāvadhi (23)

gamāgamastham gamanādiśūnyam oṃkārāmekam ravikoṭidīptim

paśyanti ye sarvajanāntarastham haṁsātmakam te virajā bhavanti (24)

yanmanastrijagātsrṣṭisthitivyasananakarmakrt

tanmano vilayam yāti tadviṣṇoh parama padam (25)

Anvay

āpūryam: inhaling; *vāyum*: *vāyu*, vital air; *idayā*: through the left nostril; *pūrayitva*: filling; *udarasthitam*: whole stomach; *dhyāyet*: one should meditate on; *sthām*: being; *deha-madhyā*: in the middle [of] the body; *avalī*: concealed; *vṛtam*: surrounded by; *jvāla*: flames; *brahmā*: *Brahmā*, Cosmic Creator; *iti uktaḥ*: is said to be; *pūrakah*: inhalation; *viṣṇuh*: Viṣṇu, Preserver of the Universe; *ucyate*: is said to be; *rudrah*: Rudra, Transformer; *iti proktah*: is said to be; *recaḥ*: exhalation; *devatāḥ*: deities; *prāṇāyāmasya*: of *prāṇāyāma*, expansion of vital energy; *paśyet*: one can see; *nigūḍhavat*: concealed; *abhyāsāt*: through the practice; *dhyāna*: *dhyāna*, contemplation; *kṛtvā*: by making; *ātmānam*: *ātman*, self; *aranīm*: *arani*, sacrificial wood; *ca*: and; *prāṇavam*: *prāṇava*, Aum; *uttara-aranīm*: more powerful *arani*; *ādena*: by hearing; *oṃkāra-dhvāni*: sound [of] *Oṃkāra*; *saṃharana*: restraining; *antikam*: as much as possible; *vāyoḥ*: both inhalation and exhalation; *saṃādadhyāt*: one should devote oneself to; *valam*: form; *avadhi*: until; *samyak laya*: one is completely absorbed in; *nāda*: inner sound; *ye paśyanti*: those who see; *ekam oṃkāram*: lone *oṃkāra*; *haṁsa-ātmakam*: form of *haṁsa*, sun, Supreme Existence; *sarva-janāntara-stham*: staying in all beings; *dīptim*: shining; *koti raviḥ*: ten million suns; *gamāgamastham*: ever going and coming; *śūnya*: devoid of; *gamanā*: movement; *te bhavanti*: they become; *virajāḥ*: free from dust; *tat manah*: that intelligence; *yat*: which; *karmakṛt*: originator; *srṣṭi*: creation; *sthiti*: preservation; *vyasana*: destruction; *yāti*: becomes; *vilayam*: absorbed; *tat*: that; *parama padam*: Supreme Seat; *viṣṇoh*: of Viṣṇu.

Translation

Inhaling *vāyu* through the left nostril, filling the whole stomach, one should meditate on *Oṃkāra* [as] being in the middle [of] the body, concealed [and] surrounded by flames. *Brahmā* is said to be inhalation; Viṣṇu is said to be breath retention; Rudra is said to be exhalation. [They are] the deities of *prāṇāyāma*. One can see [them], [although] concealed, through the practice of churning, [that is] *dhyāna*, by making the *ātman* the *arani* and *prāṇava* the more powerful *arani*. By hearing the sound [of] *Oṃkāra* [and] restraining as much as possible both inhalation and exhalation, one should devote oneself to its form until one is completely absorbed in the inner sound. Those who see the lone *oṃkāra* [as] the form [of] *haṁsa* staying in all beings, shining [like] ten million suns, ever going and coming, devoid of movement, they become free from dust. That intelligence, which [is] the originator [of] creation, preservation [and] destruction in the three worlds, becomes absorbed [in the *Oṃkāra*]. That [is] the Supreme Seat of Viṣṇu.

Verses 26 to 29: Lotus of the Heart

अष्टपत्रं तु हृत्पद्मं द्वात्रशत्केसरानिवितम् ।

तस्य मध्ये स्थितो भानुभानुमध्यगतः शशी ॥२६॥

शशिमध्यगतो वह्निर्हिमध्यगता प्रभा ।

प्रभामध्यगतं पीठं नानारन्तप्रवेष्टितम् ॥२७॥

तस्य पीठमध्यगतं वासुदेवं निरञ्जनम् ।

श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभोरस्कं मुक्तामणिविभूषितम् ॥२८॥

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं चन्द्रकोटिसमप्रभम् ।

एवं ध्यायेन्महाविष्णुमेवं वा विनयान्वितः ॥२९॥

aṣṭapatram tu hr̥tpadmaṁ dvātramśatkesarānivitam

tasya madhye sthito bhānurbhānumadhyagataḥ śāśī (26)

śāśimadhyagato vahnirvahnimadhyagatā prabhā

prabhāmadhyagataṁ pīṭham nānāratnapraveṣṭitam (27)

tasya pīṭhamadhyagataṁ vāsudevam nirañjanam

śrīvatsakaustubhoraskam muktāmaṇivibhūṣitam (28)

śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśam candrakoṭisamaprabham

evam dhyāyenmahāviṣṇum evam vā vinayānvitaḥ (29)

Anvay

itam: now; *hr̥t-padmam*: lotus of the heart; *aṣṭa-patram*: eight petals; *dvātramśat-kesarāni*: thirty-two staminae; *bhānuḥ*: sun; *tasya madhye*: in its centre; *śāśī*: moon; *gataḥ*: has gone to; *bhānu-madhya*: centre of the sun; *vahniḥ*: Agni, deity of fire; *gataḥ*: has gone to; *śāśi-madhya*: centre of the moon; *prabhā*: spiritual light; *vahni-madhya-gatā*: has gone to the centre of Agni; *pīṭham*: seat; *praveṣṭitam*: covered with; *nānā-ratna*: many gems; *prabhā-madhya-gatam*: is in the midst of the spiritual light; *nirañjanam vāsudevam*: stainless Vāsudeva, father of Krishna; *madhyagatam*: in the centre; *tasya pīṭha*: of this seat; *śrīvatsa-kaustubhoḥ-askam*: on [his] chest the black mark [and] celebrated jewel; *vibhūṣitam*: adorned with; *muktāmani*: gems and pearls; *samkāśam*: resembling; *śuddha sphatika*: pure crystal; *samaprabham*: as splendid as; *koti*: ten million; *candra*: moons; *evam*: thus; *dhyāyet*: one should meditate on; *vinayānvitaḥ*: humbly; *mahā-viṣṇum*: great Viṣṇu.

Translation

Now the lotus [of] the heart [has] eight petals [and] thirty-two staminae; the sun is in its centre; the moon has gone to the centre of the sun. Agni has gone to the centre of the moon; the spiritual light has

gone to the centre of *Agni*. The seat, covered with many gems, is in the midst of the spiritual light. [One should hold] the stainless Vāsudeva in the centre [of] this seat, on his chest the black mark [and] celebrated jewel, adorned with gems and pearls, resembling pure crystal [and] as splendid as ten million moons. Thus one should meditate humbly on the great Viṣṇu.

Verses 30 to 35: Meditating on Viṣṇu Brahma and Śiva

अतसीपुष्पसंकाशं नाभिस्थाने प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

चतुर्मुजं महाविष्णुं पूरकेण विचिन्तयेत् ॥३०॥

कुम्भकेन हृदि स्थाने चिन्तयेत्कमलासनम् ।

ब्रह्माणं रक्तगौराभं चतुर्वक्रं पितामहम् ॥३१॥

रेचकेन तु विद्यात्मा ललाटस्थं त्रिलोचनम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं निष्कलं पापनाशनम् ॥३२॥

अन्नपत्रमधःपुष्पमूर्धनालमधोमुखम् ।

कदलीपुष्पसंकाशं सर्ववेदमयं शिवम् ॥३३॥

शतारं शतपत्राढयं विकीर्णम्बुजकर्णिकम् ।

तत्रार्कचन्द्रवह्नीनामुपर्यु - परिचिन्तयेत् ॥३४॥

पद्मस्योद्घाटनं कृत्वा बोधचन्द्राग्निसूर्यकम् ।

तस्य हृद्वजमाहत्य आत्मानं चरते ध्रुवम् ॥३५॥

atasīpuṣpasaṁkāśam nābhisthāne pratiṣṭhitam

caturbhujam mahāviṣṇum pūrakena vicintayet (30)

kumbhakena hr̥di sthāne cintayet kamalāsanam

brahmāṇam raktagaurābham caturvakram pitāmaham (31)

recakena tu vidyātmā lalāṭasthaṁ trilocanam

śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśam niṣkalam pāpanāśanam (32)

annapatramadhadhahpuṣpamūrdhvānālamadhomukham

kadalīpuṣpasaṁkāśam sarvavedamayaṁ śivam (33)

śatāram śatapatrāḍhayam vikīrṇāmbujakarṇikam

tatrārkacandravahnīnāmuparyu - paricintayet (34)

padmasyoddhāṭanam kṛtvā bodhacandrāgnisūryakam

tasya hr̥dvījamāhṛtya ātmānam carate dhruvam (35)

Anvay

pūrakena: on inhalation; *vicintayet*: one should meditate on; *caturbhujam mahāviṣṇum*: four-armed Mahā Viṣṇu; *saṃkāśam*: resembling; *atasī-puṣpa*: *atasī* (flax) flower; *pratiṣṭhitam*: situated; *sthāne*: in the area; *nābhi*: navel; *kumbhakena*: on retention of breath; *cintayet*: one should meditate on; *sthāne*: in the area; *hr̥di*: of the heart; *pitāmaham brahmānam*: Grandfather Brahman; *caturvakram*: with four faces; *raktagauḥ-ābhām*: reddish-yellow lustre; *kamala-āsanam*: seated on a lotus; *tu*: then; *recakena*: on exhalation; *vidyā-ātmā*: knowledge of the Self; *lalātsthām*: eyebrow centre; *trilocanam*: three-eyed Śiva; *niṣkalam*: stainless; *pāpanāśanam*: destroying all sins; *saṃkāśam*: resembling; *śuddha-sphaṭika*: pure crystal; *śivam*: Śiva; *mayam*: form; *sarva-veda*: all the vedas; *saṃkāśam*: like; *puṣpam*: flower; *kadalī*: plantain tree; *mukham*: face; *adhaḥ*: down; *nālam*: stalk; *ūrdhvā*: above; *anna*: nourishing; *patram*: leaf; *puṣpam*: flower; *adhaḥ*: below; *karṇikam*: pericarp;

ambuja: lotus; *vikīrṇa*: filled with; *śatāram*: at a hundred angles; *śata-patra-āḍhayam*: hundred petals and others; *tatra*: there; *paricintayet*: one should meditate on; *ārka-candra-vahnīnām*: sun, moon [and] Vahni, deviate of Agni; *uparyu*: up high; *uddha-āṭanam kṛtvā*: having moved up; *padmasya*: through the lotus; *bodha*: consciousness; *sūryakam*: resembles the Sun; *agni*: power of fire; *candra*: Moon; *vījam āhṛtya*: moistening; *hr̥d*: heart; *tasya*: with it; *dhruvam*: definitely; *carate*: reaches; *ātmānam*: Self.

Translation

On inhalation one should meditate on the four-armed Mahā Viṣṇu resembling the *atasī* flower [and] situated in the area [of] the navel. On retention of breath, one should meditate in the area of the heart on the Grandfather Brahman with four faces [and] a reddish-yellow lustre, seated [on] a lotus. Then, on exhalation, for knowledge of the Self [one should meditate] at the eyebrow centre on the three-eyed Śiva, stainless, destroying all sins, resembling pure crystal; Śiva, the form of all the Vedas, like the flower of the plantain tree, its face down, stalk above, nourishing the leaf [and] the flower below, the pericarp [of the] lotus filled at a hundred angles with a hundred petals and others. There one should meditate upon the sun, the moon and Vahni up high. Having moved up through the lotus [whose] consciousness resembles the Sun, Agni [and] the Moon, [and] moistening [his] heart with it, he definitely reaches the Self.

Verses 36 and 37: Knowledge of the Vedas

त्रिस्थानं च त्रिमात्रं च त्रिब्रह्म च त्रयाक्षरम् ।

त्रिमात्रमर्धमात्रं वा यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥३६॥

तैलधारामिवाच्छिन्दीघघण्टानिनादवत् ।

बिन्दुनादकलातीतं यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् । ३७ ॥

tristhānam ca trimātram ca tribrahma ca trayākṣaram

trimātramardhamātram vā yastam vedā sa vedavit (36)

tailadhārāmivācchinnadīrgaghāṇṭānīnādavat

bindunādakalātītam yastam vedā sa vedavit (37)

Anvay

yah: whoever; *vedavit:* knows; *tristhānam:* three seats; *trimātram:* three mātras; *tribrahmaḥ:* three Brahma; *ca:* and; *trayākṣaram:* three akṣaras; *vā:* or; *trimātram:* three mātras; *ardha-mātram:* half mātra; *sa:* he; *tam vedah:* the knowledge of the Vedas; *yah:* whoever; *vedavit:* knows; *atītam:* has surpassed; *bindu:* Supreme Point; *nāda:* Inner Sound; *kalā:* elements; *acchinna:* uninterrupted; *iva:* like; *dhārām:* stream; *taila:* oil; *dīrgha ninādavat:* as long as the sound; *ghāṇṭā:* bell; *sa:* he; *tam vedah:* the knowledge of the Vedas.

Translation

Whoever knows the three seats, the three mātras, the three Brahma and the three akṣaras, or the three mātras [of] the half-mātra, he [has] the knowledge of the Vedas. Whoever knows [that that which] has surpassed *bindu*, *nāda* [and] *kalā* [is] uninterrupted like a stream [of] oil [and] as long as the sound [of] a bell, he [has] the knowledge of the Vedas.

Verses 38 to 40: Abode of the Supreme Spirit

यथैवोत्पलनालेन तोयमाकर्षयेन्नरः ।

तथैवोत्कर्षयेद्वायुं योगी योगपथे स्थितः ॥३८॥

अर्धमात्रात्पकं कृत्वा कोशीभूतं तु पङ्कजम् ।

कर्षयेनालमात्रेण भ्रुवोर्मध्ये लयं नयेत् ॥३९॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये ललाटे तु नासिकायास्तु मूलतः ।

जानीयादमृतं स्थानं तद्व्यायतनं महत् ॥४०॥

yathaivotpalanālena toyamākarṣayennaraḥ

tathaivokarṣayedvāyum yogī yogapathē sthitah (38)

ardhamātrātpakam kṛtvā kośībhūtam tu pañkajam

karṣayennālamātreṇa bhruvormadhye layam nayet (39)

bhruvormadhye lalāte tu nāsikāyāstu mūlataḥ

jāṇīyādāmṛtam sthānam tadbrahmāyatanaṁ mahat (40)

Anvay

yatha eva: just as; *narah*: man; *ākarṣayet*: draws up; *toyam*: water; *nālena*: through the hollow stalk; *utpalā*: lotus; *tatha eva*: so; *yogī*: yogin; *sthitaḥ*: established; *yoga-pathe*: on the path of yoga; *utkarsayet*: should draw in; *vāyum*: breath; *kṛtvā*: having made; *kośibhūtām*: seed vessel; *pañkajam*: lotus flower; *ardhamātrātpakam*: in the form of *ardhamātrā*; *karṣayet*: he should draw; *nālamātrena*: through the stalk of the *mātrā*; *layam nayet*: he should absorb; *bhruvormadhye*: at the eyebrow centre; *jāṇīyāt*: he should know; *sthānam*: seat; *amṛtam*: nectar; *mūlataḥ*: base; *nāsikāyāḥ*: of the nose; *tu . . . tu*: as well as; *bhruvormadhye*: at the eyebrow centre; *lalāte*: in the forehead; *tad*: this; *mahat āyatanaṁ*: great abode; *brahma*: Supreme Spirit.

Translation

Just as a man draws up water through the hollow stalk [of] a lotus, so should the yogin, established on the path of yoga, draw in the breath. Having made the seed vessel [of] the lotus flower in the form of *ardhamātrā*, he should draw [the breath] through the stalk of the *mātrā*, [and] absorb [it] at the eyebrow centre. He should know [that] the seat [of] nectar [is] the base of the nose as well as at the eyebrow centre in the forehead. This [is] the great abode [of] the Supreme Spirit.

Verse 41: Six Limbs of Yoga

आसनानि प्राणसंरोधः प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा ।

ध्यानं समाधिरेतानि योगाङ्गानि भवन्ति षट् ॥४१॥

āsanāni prāṇasamrodhah pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā

dhyānam samādhiretāni yogāṅgāni bhavanti ṣaṭ (41)

Anvay

āsanāni: postures; *prāṇa-samrodhah*: restraint of breath; *pratyāhārah*: withdrawal of the senses; *dhāraṇā*: concentration; *dhyānam*: meditation; *ca*: and; *samādhih*: self-realisation; *etāni*: these; *bhavanti*: are; *ṣaṭ* *yoga-āṅgāni*: six limbs of yoga.

Translation

Postures, restraint of breath, withdrawal of the senses; concentration, meditation and self-realisation: these are the six limbs of yoga.

Verses 42 and 43a: Main Postures

आसनानि च तावन्ति यावन्त्यो जीवजातयः ।

एतेषामतुलाभेदा न्विजानाति महेश्वरः ॥४२॥

सिद्धं भद्रं तथा सिम्हं पद्मं चेति चतुष्टयम् ।४३।

āsanāni ca tāvanti yāvantyo jīvajātayah
eteśāmatulānbhedānvijānāti maheśvarah (42)

siddham bhadram tathā simham padmam ceti catuṣṭayam (43a)

Anvay

yāvantyah tāvanti: as many as; jīvajātayah: living creatures; āsanāni: postures; ca: and; maheśvarah: Great Lord; vijānāti: recognises; eteśām-atulān-bhedān: their incomparable differences; iti: it is said; siddham: siddha, perfected pose; bhadram: bhadra, gracious pose; tathā: as well as; simham: simha, lion pose; ca: and; padmam: padma, lotus pose; catuṣṭayam: four.

Translation

[There are] as many living creatures as [there are] postures, and the Great Lord recognises their incomparable differences. It is said [that] siddha, bhadra, as well as simha and padma [are] the four [main postures].

Verses 43b to 50a: First Three Cakras

आधारं प्रथमं चक्रं स्वाधिष्ठानं द्वितीयकम् ॥४३॥

योनिस्थानं तयोर्मध्ये कामरूप निगद्यते ।

आधाराख्ये गुदस्थाने पङ्कजं यच्चतुर्दलम् ॥४४॥

तन्मध्ये प्रोच्यते योनिः कामाख्या सिद्धवन्दिता ।

योनिमध्ये स्थितं लिङ्गं पश्चिमाभिमुखं तथा ॥४५॥

मस्तके मणिवन्दिनं यो जानाति स योगवित्

तप्तचामीकराकारं तडिल्लेखेव विस्फुरत् ॥४६॥

चतुरस्त्रमुपर्यानेरधो मेद्रात्रतिष्ठितम्

स्वशब्देन भवेत्प्राणः स्वाधिष्ठानं तदाश्रयम् ॥४७॥

स्वादिष्ठानं ततश्चक्रं मेद्रमेव निगद्यते

मणिवत्तनुना यत्र वायुना पूरितं वपुः ॥४८॥

तनाभिमण्डलं चक्रं प्रोच्यते मणिपूरकं ।

द्वादशारमहाचक्रे पुण्यपापनियन्त्रितः ॥४९॥

ādhāram prathamam cakram svādhiṣṭhānam dvitīyakam (43b)

yonisthānam tayormadhye kāmarūpa nigadyate

ādhārākhye gudasthāne pañkajam yaccaturdalam (44)

tanmadhye procyate yoniḥ kāmākhyā siddhavanditā

yonimadhye sthitam liṅgam paścimābhimukham tathā (45)

mastake maṇivabhdinnam yo jānāti sa yogavit

taptacāmīkarākāram taḍillekheva visphurat (46b)

caturasramuparyagneradho medhrātpratiṣṭhitam

svāśabdena bhavetprāṇah svādhiṣṭhānam tadāśrayam (47b)

svādhiṣṭhānam tataścakram medhrameva nigadyate

maṇivattantunā yatra vāyunā pūritam vapuh (48b)

tannābhimaṇḍalam cakram procyate maṇipūrakam

dvādaśāramahācakre puṇyapāpaniyantitah (49)

tāvajjīvo bhramatyevaṁ yāvattattvam na vindati (50a)

Anvay

prathamam cakram: first cakra; *ādhāram:* base; *dvitīyakam:* second; *svādhiṣṭhānam:* *svādhiṣṭhāna;* *tayoḥ-madhye:* between these two; *nigadyate:* is said; *yonī-sthānam:* site of yoni, perineum; *kāma-rūpa:* form of *Kāma*; *caturdalam:* four-petaled; *pañkajam:* lotus; *guda-sthāne:* in the site of the anus; *ādhāra-ākhye:* called the base; *tat-madhye:* in the middle of it; *procyan̄te:* is said; *kāma-ākhyā:* called *Kāma*; *siddha-vanditā:* extolled by the *siddhas*; *yonī-madhye:* in the centre of the yoni; *sthitam:* stands; *liṅgam:* *liṅgam*; *abhimukham:* facing; *paścima:* west; *abhdinnam:* split; *mastake:* at the top; *iva maṇi:* like a precious stone; *yah:* whoever; *jānāti:* knows; *yogavit:* knower of yoga; *caturasram:* quadrangular figure; *ākāram:* form; *tapta-cāmīkarākāra:* molten gold; *visphurat:* flashing; *iva:* like; *tadillekhāḥ:* streaks of lightning; *pratiṣṭhitam:* situated; *upari agni:* above agni; *adhāḥ:* below; *medhrāt:* genital organ; *prāṇam:* prāṇa; *Tat:* whose; *āśrayam:* seat; *svādhiṣṭhānam:* *Svādhiṣṭhāna*; *bhavet:* arises; *sva-śabdena:* with its own sound; *tataḥ:* thus; *cakram svādhiṣṭhānam:* cakra *Svādhiṣṭhāna*; *eva:* even; *nigadyate:* is referred to as; *medhrāt:* genital organ; *tat cakram:* that cakra; *nābhi-maṇḍalam:* within the orb of the navel; *yatra:* where; *vapuh:* body; *pūritam:* filled; *vāyunā:* with air; *maṇivat:* like jewels; *tantunā:* with a string; *procyan̄te:* is called; *maṇipūrakam:* *Maṇipūra*, city of jewels; *jīvah:* *jīva*; *niyantritah:* governed by; *punya-pāpa:* pure [and] sinful; *bhramati:* spins about; *mahā-cakre:* in [this] great cakra; *dvādaśāra:* twelve spokes; *yāvat . . tāvat:* as long . . as; *na vindati:* it does not experience; *tattvam:* true state.

Translation

[The site of] the first cakra [is] the base [and] the second [is] *svādhishṭhāna*. Between these two is said [to be] the site of *yoni* in the form of *Kāma*. [There is] a four-petalled lotus in the site of the anus, called the base [cakra]. In the middle of it is said [to be] the yoni called Kāma, extolled by the *siddhas*. In the centre of the yoni stands the *lingam*, facing west [and] split at the top like a precious stone. Whoever knows [this is] a knower of yoga. A quadrangular figure, [in] the form [of] molten gold [and] flashing like streaks of lightning, [is] situated above agni [and] below the genital organ. Prāṇa, whose seat is Svādhishṭhāna, arises with its own sound. Thus the cakra Svādhishṭhāna is even referred to as the genital organ. That cakra [within] the orb of the navel, where the body [is] filled with air like jewels with a string, is called *Maṇipūra*, city of jewels. The *jīva*, governed by [its] pure [and] sinful [actions], spins about in [this] great cakra [of] twelve spokes as long as it does not experience [its] true state.

Verses 50b to 53: Nādīs

ऊर्ध्वं मेद्रादधो नाभे: कन्दो यो इस्ति खगाण्डवत् ॥५०॥

तत्र नाड्यः समुत्पन्नाः सहस्राणि द्विसप्ततिः ।

तेषु नाडीसहस्रेषु द्विसप्ततिरुदाहृताः ॥५१॥

प्रधानाः प्राणवाहिन्यो भूयस्तत्र दश सृताः ।

इडा च पिङ्गला चैव सुषुम्ना च तृतीयका ॥५२॥

गाम्धारी हस्तिजिह्वा च पूषा चैव यशस्विनी ।

अलम्बुसा कुहूरत्र शङ्खिनी दशमी सृता ॥५३॥

ūrdhvam medhrādadho nābheḥ kando yo ‘sti khagāñdavat (50b)

tatra nādyah samutpannāḥ sahasrāṇi dvisaptatiḥ

teṣu nāḍīsaḥasreṣu dvisaptatirudāhṛtāḥ (51)

pradhānāḥ prāṇavāhinyo bhūyastatra daśa smṛtāḥ

idā ca piṅgalā caiva suṣumṇā ca trītyakā (52)

gāmdhārī hastijihvā ca pūṣā caiva yaśasvinī

alambusā kuhūratra śaṅkhinī daśamī smṛtā (53)

Anvay

ūrdhvam medhrāt: above the genital organ; *adhaḥ nābheḥ*: below the navel; *asti*: is; *kandah*:

knot; *khaga-āñdavat*: like a bird's egg; *tatra*: from there; *samutpannāḥ*: arise; *dvisaptatiḥ sahasrāṇi*: seventy-two thousand; *nādyah*: nādīs; *teṣu nāḍī-sahasreṣu*: of these thousands of nādīs; *dvisaptatiḥ*: seventy-two; *udāhṛtāḥ*: are recognised; *tatra*: of these; *smṛtāḥ*: it is declared; *daśa*: ten; *pradhānāḥ*: main ones; *prāṇa-vāhinyah*: carry the prāṇas; *daśamī*: ten; *smṛtā*: are said to be; *trītyakā*: triplicate;

idā: ida, left nādī; *piṅgalā*: piṅgalā, right nādī; *ca*: and; *suśumnā*: suśumnā, central nādī; *ca eva*: as well as.

Translation

Above the genital organ [and] below the navel is a knot like a bird's egg. From there arise seventy-two thousand nādīs. Of these thousands of nādīs, seventy-two are recognised. Of these it is declared [there are] ten main ones [which] carry the prāṇas. The ten are said to be the triplicate idā, piṅgalā and suśumnā, and gāndhārī, hastijihvā and pūṣā as well as yaśasvinī, alambusā, kuhūratra [and] śaṅkhinī.

Verses 54 to 58a: Nādīs and Prāṇa

एवं नाडीमयं चक्रं विज्ञेयं योगिना सदा ।

सततं प्राणवाहिन्यः सोमसूर्याग्निदेवताः ॥५४॥

इडापिङ्गलासुषुम्नास्तिस्रो नाड्यः प्रकीर्तिताः ।

इडा वामे स्थिता भागे पिङ्गला दक्षिणे स्थिता ॥५५॥

सुषुम्ना मध्यदेशे तु प्राणमार्गस्थयः स्मृताः ।

प्राणोऽपानः समानश्चोदानो व्यानस्तथैव च ॥५६॥

नागः कूर्मः कृकरको देवदत्तो धनंजयः ।

प्राणादाः पञ्च विख्याता नागाद्याः पञ्च वायवः ॥५७॥

एते नाडीसहस्रेषु वर्तन्ते जीवरूपिणः ।५८।

evam nādīmayam cakram vijñeyam yoginā sadā

satataṁ prāṇavāhinyah somasūryāgnidevatāḥ (54)

idāpiṅgalāsuśumnāstisro nādyah prakīrtitāḥ

idā vāme sthitā bhāge piṅgalā dakṣine sthitā (55)

suśumnā madhyadeśe tu prāṇamārgāsrayah smṛtāḥ

prāṇo ‘pānah samānaścodāno vyānastathaiva ca (56)

nāgah kūrmah krkarako devadatto dhananjayah

prāṇādāḥ pañca vikhyatā nāgādyah pañca vāyavah (57)

ete nādīsahasreṣu vartante jīvarūpiṇah (58a)

Anvay

evam: thus; cakram: cakra; nādī-mayam: containing the nādīs; sadā: always; vijñeyam: should be understood; yoginā: by the yogin; tisrah nādyah: three nādīs; idā: ida, left nadi; piṅgalā: piṅgalā, right nādī; suṣumnā: suṣumnā, central nādī; devatāḥ: deities; soma: Moon; sūrya: Sun; agni: Agni, deity of fire; prakīrtitāḥ: are said to; prāṇa-vāhinyah: carry the prāṇas; satatam: continuously; sthitāḥ: is; vāme bhāge: on the left side; dakṣine: on the right; tu: and; madhyadeśe: in the middle; smṛtāḥ: they are known to be; prāṇa-mārgāḥ-rayah: flowing paths of prāṇa; prāṇah: prāṇa; upānah: Upāna; samāna: Samāna; udānah: Udāna; ca tatha: and then; nāgah: Nāga; kūrmah: Kūrma; krkarakah: Krkaraka; devadattah: Devadatta; ca: and; dhanamjayah: Dhanamjaya; ādyāḥ pañca: first five; vikhyātāḥ: are called; pañca nāga-ādyāḥ: five beginning with Nāga; vāyavah: vāyavas, coming from the air; ete: these; jīva-rūpiṇah: forms of life; vartante: move along; nādī-sahasreṣu: thousands of nādīs.

Translation

Thus the cakra containing the nādīs should always be understood by the yogin. The three nādīs, idā, pingalā [and] suṣumnā, [whose] deities [are] the Moon, Sun [and] Agni, are said to carry the prāṇas continuously. Idā is on the left side, pingalā on the right and suṣumnā in the middle. They are known to be the flowing paths of prāṇa. Prāṇa, Upāna, Samāna, Udāna and then Nāga, Kūrma, Krkaraka, Devadatta and Dhanamjaya: the first five are called prāṇas, [and] the five beginning with Nāga [are called] vāyavas. These forms of life move along the thousands of nādīs.

Verses 58b to 61a: Jīva

प्राणापानवशो जीवो ह्यधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रधावति ॥५८॥

वामदक्षिणमार्गेण चन्चलत्वान् दृश्यते ।

आक्षिप्तो भुजदण्देन यथोच्चलति कन्दुका ॥५९॥

प्राणापानसमाक्षिप्तस्तद्वज्जीवो न विश्रमेत् ।

अपानात्कर्षति प्राणोऽपानः प्राणाच्च कर्षति ॥६०॥

खगरज्जुवदित्येतद्यो जानाति स योगवित् ।६१।

prāṇāpānavaśo jīvo hyadhaścordhvam̄ pradhāvati (58b)

vāmadakṣiṇamārgeṇa cancelatvānna drśyate

ākṣipto bhujadaṇdena yathoccalati kandukā (59)

prāṇāpānasamākṣiptastadvajjīvo na viśramet

apānātkarṣati prāṇo ‘pānah prāṇācca karṣati (60)

khagarajjuvadityetadyo jānāti sa yogavit (61a)

Anvay

jīvah: jīva, life; *vaśah*: dependent on; *prāṇa-apāna*: prāṇa and apāna, upward and downward energy; *pradhāvati*: spreads; *adhaḥ*: downwards; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *cancalatvāt*: because it fluctuates; *vāma-dakṣiṇa-mārgena*: between the left and right paths; *na dṛṣyate*: one cannot see; *yatha*: just as; *kandukah*: ball; *ut-calati*: bounces up; *ākṣiptah*: thrown down; *bhuja-dañdena*: with the stick in one's hand; *tadvat*: so; *samākṣiptah*: hurled about; *prāṇa-apāna*: prāṇa and apāna; *na viśramet*: cannot rest; *karṣati*: draws; *apānāt*: from apāna; *ca*: and; *prāṇaāt*: from prāṇa; *iti*: it is said; *khaga-raju-vat*: like a bird from a rope; *yah jānāti*: whoever knows; *etat*: this; *yogavit*: is a knower of yoga.

Translation

Jīva, [being] dependent on prāṇa and apāna, spreads downwards [and] upwards. Because it fluctuates between the left and right paths, one cannot see [it]. Just as a ball bounces up, [after] being thrown down with the stick in one's hand, so the jīva, hurled about [by] prāṇa and apāna, cannot rest. Prāṇa draws [itself] from apāna, and apāna draws [itself] from prāṇa, it is said like a bird from a rope. Whoever knows this is a knower of yoga.

Verses 61b to 65a: Mantra Hamṣa Hamṣa

हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेषुनः ॥६१॥

हंसहंसेत्यमुं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।

शतानि षट्टुदिवारात्रं सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ॥६२॥

एतत्संख्यान्वितं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।

अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदा सदा ॥६३॥

अस्याः संकल्पमात्रेण नरः पापैः प्रमुच्यते ।

अनया सदृशी विद्या अनया सदृशो जपः ॥६४॥

अनया सदृशं पुण्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति ।६५।

hakāreṇa bahiryāti sakāreṇa viśetpunah (61b)

hamṣahamṣetyamum mantram jīvo japati sarvadā

śatāni ṣaṭṭudivārātram sahasrāṇyekavimśatih (62)

etatsaṃkhyānvitam mantram jīvo japati sarvadā

ajapā nāma gāyatriti yoginām mokṣadā sadā (63)

asyāḥ samkalpamātreṇa narah pāpaiḥ pramucyate

anayā sadṛśī vidyā anayā sadṛśo japaḥ (64)

anayā sadṛśam punyam na bhūtam na bhaviṣyati (65a)

Anvay

jīvah: jīva; bahir-yāti: goes out; hakāreṇa: with the sound Ha; viśet: enters; punah: again; sakāreṇa: with the sound Sa; iti: thus; sarvadā: always; jāpati: repeating; amum mantram haṁsa-haṁsa: that mantra haṁsa haṁsa; jīvah jāpati sarvadā: jīva always repeats; etat mantram: this mantra; sahasrāṇi-eka-viṁśatiḥ: twenty-one thousand; ṣaṭū śatāni: six hundred; saṁkhyānvitam: times; divā-rātram: day and night; nāma: by name; sadā: forever; mokṣa-dā: giving liberation; yoginām: to the yogin; narah: man; pramucyate: is freed; pāpaiḥ: from sins; samkalpa-mātreṇa: simply by the thought; asyāḥ: of it; na bhūtam: neither in the past; na bhavisyati: nor in the future; vidyā: science; sadr̄śī: equal; anayā: to this; japaḥ: japa; sadr̄śah anayā: equivalent to this; puṇyam: virtuous act; sadr̄śam: level; anayā: with this.

Translation

Jīva goes out with the sound Ha, [and] enters again with the sound Sa, thus always repeating that mantra *Haṁsa Haṁsa*. Jīva always repeats this mantra twenty-one thousand six hundred times day and night, *ajapā gāyatrī* by name, forever giving liberation to the yogin. A man is freed from sins simply by the thought of it. Neither in the past nor in the future [is there] a science equal to this, a *japa* equivalent to this [or] a virtuous act level with this.

Verses 65b to 68: Parameśvarī

येन मार्गेण गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मस्थानं निरामयम् ॥६५॥

मुखेनाच्छाद्य तद्वारं प्रसुप्ता परमेश्वरी ।

प्रबुद्धा वह्नियोगेन मनसा मरुता सह ॥६६॥

सूचिवद्गुणमादाय व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं सुषुम्नया ।

उद्घाटयेत्कपाटं तु यथा कुञ्चिकया हठात् ॥६७॥

कुण्डलिन्या तया योगी मोक्षद्वारं विभेदयेत् ॥६८॥

yena mārgeṇa gantavyam brahmasthānam nirāmayam (65b)

mukhenācchādya taddvāraṁ prasuptā parameśvarī

prabuddhā vahnīyogena manasā marutā saha (66)

sūcivadguṇamādāya vrajatyūrdhvam suṣumnayā

udghāṭayेत्कपाटम् tu yathā kuñcikayā haṭhāt (67)

kunḍalinīyā tayā yogī mokṣadvāraṁ vibhedayet (68)

Anvay

parameśvarī: Parameśvarī, kuṇḍalini śakti; prasuptā: sleeps; ācchādya: having covered; mukhena:

with her mouth; *tat dvāram*: that door; *yena mārgeṇa*: through which way; *gantavyam*: leads to; *nirāmayam*: untainted; *brahma-sthānam*: place of Brahma; *prabuddhā*: awakened; *vahni-yogena*: by the union of agni; *saha manasā marutā*: with manas [and] prāṇa; *ādāya*: having taken; *sūcivat*: needle-like; *guṇam*: quality; *vrajati ūrdhvam*: she passes upwards; *suṣumnayā*: through suṣumnā; *yathā*: just as; *kuñcikayā*: with a key; *yogī*: yogin; *udghāṭayet*: should open; *kapātam*: door; *hathāt*: with full force; *vibhedayet*: should split; *mokṣa-dvāram*: door to liberation; *tayā kuṇḍalinyā*: by means of the kuṇḍalinī.

Translation

Parameśvarī sleeps, having covered with her mouth that door through which way leads to the untainted place of Brahma. [Then] awakened by the union of agni with manas [and] prāṇa, having taken a needle-like quality, she passes upwards through suṣumnā. Just as with a key, the yogin should open [this] door with full force [and] split the door to liberation by means of the kuṇḍalinī.

Verse 69: Raising Prāṇa

कृत्वा संपुटितौ करौ दृढतरं बद्धाथ पद्मासनं गाढं वक्षसि सन्निधाय चुबुकं ध्यानं च तच्चेतसि ।

वारंवारमपातमूर्ध्मनिलं प्रोच्चारयन्पूरितं मुञ्चन्नाणमुपैति बोधमतुलं शक्तिप्रभावान्नरः ॥६९॥

kṛtvā sampuṭitau karau dṛḍhataram baddhātha padmāsanam gāḍham vakṣasi sannidhāya cubukam dhyānam ca taccetasī

vāraṇvāramapātamūrdhvamanilam proccārayanpūritam muñcanprāṇamupaiti bodhamatulam śaktiprabhāvānnarah (69)

Anvay

kṛtvā sampuṭitau: folding; *karau*: hands; *dṛḍhataram*: firmly; *atha*: then; *baddhā*: fixed in; *padmāsanam*: *padmāsana*; *sannidhāya*: placing; *cubukam*: chin; *gāḍham*: firmly; *vakṣasi*: on the chest; *ca*: and; *dhyānam*: *dhyāna*; *cetasi*: on the mind; *vāraṇvāram*: repeatedly; *apātam*: raise; *anilam*: vital air; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *pūritam*: inhale; *proccārayan*: forcefully; *upaiti*: and then; *muñcat*: release; *prāṇam*: prāṇa; *narah*: man; *atulam*: unequalled; *bodham*: wisdom; *prabhāvāt śakti*: through [this] splendid śakti.

Translation

Folding the hands firmly, then fixed in *padmāsana*, placing the chin firmly on the chest and *dhyāna* on the mind, [one should] repeatedly raise the vital air upwards, inhale forcefully, and then release the prāṇa. A man [obtains] unequalled wisdom through [this] splendid śakti.

Verse 70: Doors of the Nādīs

पद्मासनस्थितो योगी नाडीद्वारेषु पूरयन् ।

मास्तं कुम्भयन्यस्तु स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ॥७०॥

padmāsanasthito yogī nādīdvāreṣu pūrayan

mārutanām kumbhayanyastu sa mukto nātra samśayah (70)

Anvay

yogīyah: yogin who; *padmāsana-sthitah:* seated in padmāsana; *pūrayan:* inhales; *kumbhayān:* restrains; *mārutanām:* breath; *nādī-dvāreṣu:* at the doors of the nādīs; *na samśayah:* without doubt; *muktaḥ:* liberated; *atra:* here.

Translation

The yogin who, seated in padmāsana, inhales [and] restrains the breath at the doors of the nādīs, is without doubt liberated here.

Verses 71 to 73: Awakening kūḍalinī

अङ्गानां मर्दनं कृत्वा श्रमजातेन वारिणा ।

कद्मललवणत्यागी क्षीरपानरतः सुखी ॥७१॥

ब्रह्मचारी मिताहारी योगी योगपरायणः ।

अब्दादूर्ध्वं भवेत्सिद्धो नात्र कार्या विचारणा ॥७२॥

कन्दोर्धकुण्डली शक्तिः स योगी सिद्धिभाजनम् ।

अपानप्राणयोरैक्यं क्षयान्मूत्रपुरीषयोः ॥७३॥

aṅgānām mardanām kṛtvā śramajātena vāriṇā

kaṭvamlalavaṇatyāgī kṣīrapānarataḥ sukhī (71)

brahmacārī mitāhārī yogī yogaparāyanah

abdādūrdhvam bhavetsiddho nātra kāryā vicāraṇā (72)

kandordhvakuṇḍalī śaktih sa yogī siddhibhājanam

apānaprāṇayoraikyam kṣayānmūtrapurīṣayoh (73)

Anvay

kṛtvā mardanām: having wiped; *aṅgānām:* from the limbs; *vāriṇā:* sweat; *śrama-jātena:* produced by fatigue; *yāgī:* forgoing; *kaṭvam:* pungent; *lalavanat:* causes one to salivate; *yogī:* yogin; *yoga-parāyanah:* wholly devoted to yoga; *S sukhī pānarataḥ:* loves to drink; *kṣīra:* milk; *brahmacārī:* celibate; *mitāhārī:* eats moderately; *bhavet-siddhah:* becomes a siddha; *ūrdhvam abdāt:* in just over a year; *na vicāraṇā:* no investigation; *kāryā:* needs to be done; *atra:* in this respect; *kūḍalī śaktih:* kūḍalinī śakti; *ūrdhva kanda:* up in the throat; *apāna-prāṇayoh-aikyam:* apāna [and] prāṇa are united; *kṣayāt:* ending; *mūtra-purīṣayoh:* urine [and] faeces; *yogī:* yogin; *siddhi-bhājanam:* receives siddhis.

Translation

Having wiped from the limbs the sweat produced by fatigue, forgoing [food which is] pungent [and] causes one to salivate, the yogin [who is] wholly devoted to yoga, loves to drink milk, [is] celibate [and] eats moderately, becomes a *siddha* in just over a year. No investigation needs to be done in this respect. [When] kuṇḍalinī śakti [is] up in the throat, [then] apāna [and] prāṇa are united, ending [the production of] urine [and] faeces, [and] the yogin receives siddhis.

Verses 74 and 75a: Mūlabandha

युवा भवति वृद्धोऽपि सततं मूलबन्धनात् ।

पार्षिभागेन संपीद्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेदृदम् ॥७४॥

अपानमूर्ध्वमुत्कृश्य मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते ॥७५॥

yuvā bhavati vṛdhdo ‘pi satataṁ mūlabandhanāt

pārṣṇibhāgena sampīdya yonimākuñcayedgudam (74)

apānamūrdhvamutkṛṣya mūlabandho ‘yamucyate. (75a)

Anvay

api: even; *vṛdhdaḥ:* old person; *bhavati:* becomes; *yuvā:* young; *satataṁ mūlabandhanāt:* through constant mūlādhāra; *sampīdya:* pressing; *yonim:* yoni; *bhāgena:* with part; *pārṣṇi:* heel; *ākuñcayet:* one should contract; *gudam:* anus; *utkṛṣya:* while raising; *apānam:* apāna; *ūrdhvam:* upwards; *ayam ucyclate:* this is called; *mūlabandhaḥ:* mūlabandha.

Translation

Even an old person becomes young through constant mūlabandha. Pressing the yoni with part [of] the heel, one should contract the anus, while raising the apāna upwards: this is called mūlabandha.

Verses 75b to 77: Uddiyāna Bandha

उड्यानं कुरुते यस्मादविश्रान्तमहाखगः ॥७५॥

उड्हियानं तदेव स्यात्तत्र बन्धो विधीयते ।

उदरे पश्चिमं ताणं नामेरुर्ध्वं तु कारयेत् ॥७६॥

उड्हियानोऽप्ययं बन्धो मृत्युमतङ्गकेसरी ।

बध्नाति हि शिरोजातमधोगामिनभोजलम् ॥७७॥

udyānam kurute yasmādaviśrāntamahākhagah (75b)

uddiyānam tadeva syāttatra bandho vidhīyate

udare paścimam tāṇam nābherurdhvam tu kārayet (76)

uddiyāno ‘pyayam bandho mr̄tyumataṅgakesarī

badhnāti hi śirojātamadhogāminabhojalam (77)

Anvay

yasmāt: just like; mahākhagah: great bird; uddiyānam kurute: flies upwards; aviśrānta: unwearied; eva: such; syāt: is; uddiyānam: uddiyāna; tatra: therefore; vidhīyate: it is considered; bandhah: bandha; kārayet: one should put; paścimam tāṇam: western area; udare: of the stomach; urdhvam: above; nābheḥ: navel; ayam: this; uddiyānah bandhah: uddiyāna bandha; kesarī: lion; mataṅga: elephant; mr̄tyu: death; Hi: since; badhnāti: it binds; jalam: water; śiro-jātam: produced in the head; adhogāmin: flows down.

Translation

Just like the great bird [which] flies upwards unwearied, such is *uddiyāna*. Therefore it is considered a *bandha*. One should put the western area of the stomach above the navel. This *uddiyāna bandha* [is] a lion [to] the elephant [of] death, since it binds the water [which], produced in the head, flows down.

Verses 78 and 79a: Jālandhara bandha

ततो जालन्धरो बन्धः कर्मदुःखौघनाशनः ।

जालन्धरे कृते बन्धो कण्ठकोचलक्षणे ॥७८॥

न पीयूषं पतत्यग्नौ न च वायुः प्रधावति ॥७९॥

tato jālandharo bandhaḥ karmaduḥkhaughanāśanaḥ

jālandharo kṛte bandho kaṇṭhasaṃkocalakṣaṇe (78)

na pīyūṣam patatyagnau na ca vāyuh pradhāvati (79a)

Anvay

tataḥ: in that way; jālandharah bandhaḥ: jālandhara bandha; nāśanah: destroys; duḥkha: suffering; ogaha: multitude; karma: karmas; jālandhare bandhaḥ kṛte: when jālandhara bandha is performed; lakṣaṇe: indicated by; saṃkoca: contraction; kaṇṭha: throat; pīyūṣam: nectar; na patati: does not fall; agnau: in the fire; na ca: nor; vāyuh: vāyu, vital air; pradhāvati: does spread.

Translation

In that way *jālandhara bandha* destroys the suffering of a multitude of karmas. When *jālandhara bandha* is performed, indicated by contraction of the throat, nectar does not fall in the fire, nor does the *vāyu* spread.

Verses 79b to 82a: Results of Khecarī Mudrā

कपालकुहरे जिह्वा प्रविष्टा विपरीतगा ॥७९॥

भ्रुवोरन्तर्गता दृष्टिमुद्रा भवति खेचरी ।

न रोगो मरणं तस्य न निद्रा न क्षुधा तृष्णा ॥८०॥

न च मूर्छा भरेतस्य यो मुद्रां वेत्ति खेचरीम् ।

पीड्यते न च रोगेण लिप्यते न च कर्मणा ॥८१॥

बध्यते न च कालेन यस्य मुद्रास्ति खेचरी ॥८२॥

kapālakuhare jihvā praviṣṭā viparītagā (79b)

bhruvorantargatā dr̥ṣṭirmudrā bhavati khecarī

na rogo maraṇam tasya na nidrā na kṣudhā tr̥ṣā (80)

na ca mūrcchā bharettasya yo mudrām vetti khecarīm

pīḍyate na ca rogeṇa lipyate na ca karmaṇā (81)

badhyate na ca kālena yasya mudrāsti khecarī (82a)

Anvay

jihvā: tongue; *viparītagā*: inverted; *praviṣṭā*: enters; *kapāla-kuhare*: cave of the skull; *khecarī*: *khecarī*, ‘moving in space’; *bhavati*: is; *dr̥ṣṭih-mudrā*: mudrā of sight; *antargatā*: concealed; *bhruvoh*: in the eyebrow(s); *yah*: whoever; *vetti*: knows; *tasya khecarīm mudrām*: about this khecarī mudrā; *bharet*: has; *na . . . na . . . ca*: neither . . . nor; *rogaḥ*: sickness; *maraṇam*: death; *nidrā*: sleep; *kṣudhā*: hunger; *tr̥ṣā*: thirst; *mūrcchā*: fainting; *yasya asti khecarī mudrā*: whoever does khecarī mudrā; *na . . . ca*: neither . . . nor; *pīḍyate*: is afflicted; *rogeṇa*: by disease; *lipyate*: bound; *karmaṇā*: to karma; *badhyate*: constrained; *kālena*: by time.

Translation

When the tongue, inverted, enters the cave of the skull, there is *khecarī*, the mudrā of sight concealed in the eyebrow [centre]. Whoever knows about this khecarī mudrā has neither sickness, nor death, nor sleep, nor hunger [or] thirst, nor fainting. Whoever does khecarī mudrā is neither afflicted by disease nor bound to karma, nor constrained by time.

Verses 82b to 86a: Khecarī Mudrā

चित्तं चरति खे यस्माज्जिह्वा भवति खेगता ॥८२॥

तेनैषा खेचरी नाम मुद्रा सिद्धनमस्कृता

खेचर्या मुद्रया यस्य लम्बिकोर्धतः ॥८३॥

बिन्दुः क्षरति नो यस्य कामिन्यालिङ्गितस्य च ।

यावद्विन्दुः स्थितो देहे तावन्मृत्युभयं कुतः ॥८४॥

यावद्वद्धा नभोमुद्रा तावद्विन्दुर्गच्छति ।

गलितोऽपि यदा बिन्दुः संप्राप्तो योनिमण्डले ॥८५॥

व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं हठाच्छक्त्या निबद्धो योनिमुद्रया ॥८६॥

cittam carati khe yasmājjihvā bhavati khegatā (82b)

tenaiṣā khecarī nāma mudrā siddhanamaskṛtā

khecaryā mudrayā yasya lambikordhvataḥ (83b)

binduh kṣarati no yasya kāminyāliṅgitasya ca

yāvadbindhuh sthito dehe tāvanmrtyubhayam kutah (84)

yāvadbaddhā nabhomudrā tāvadbindurna gacchati

galito ‘pi yadā binduh samprāpto yonimandale (85)

vrajatyūrdhvam haṭhācchaktyā nibaddho yonimudrayā (86a)

Anvay

yasmāt: because; *cittam*: mind; *carati*: moves; *khe*: in space; *jihvā*: tongue; *bhavati khe-gatā*: has entered [this] space; *tena*: therefore; *eṣā mudrā*: this mudrā; *nāma khecarī*: of the name khecarī; *namaskṛtā*: is worshipped by; *siddha*: seers; *yasya*: when; *lambikā*: uvula; *ūrdhvataḥ*: upwards; *khecaryā mudrayā*: by khecarī mudrā; *binduh*: bindu; *no kṣarati*: does not flow down; *tasya*: even when; *āliṅgi*: in the embrace; *kāminī*: lovely woman; *kutah*: where; *bhayam*: fear; *mrtyu*: death; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: as long as; *binduh*: bindu; *sthitah*: stays; *dehe*: in the body; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: as long as . . . then; *nabhomudrā*: khecarī mudrā; *baddhā*: is held; *binduh na gacchati*: bindu does not leave; *api yadā*: even when; *binduh samprāptah*: bindu arrives; *yoni-mandale*: at the ring of the yoni; *nibaddhah*: contained there; *vrajati*: it travels; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *haṭhāt-śaktyā*: through the forceful effort; *yonimudrayā*: of yoni mudrā.

Translation

Because the mind moves in space [and] the tongue has entered [this] space, therefore this mudrā of the name khecarī is worshipped by the seers. When the uvula [is pushed] upwards by khecarī mudrā, the bindu does not flow down, even when in the embrace [of] a lovely woman. Where is the fear [of] death, as long as the bindu stays in the body? As long as khecarī mudrā is held, then the bindu does not leave. Even when the bindu arrives at the ring of the yoni, contained there, it travels upwards through the forceful effort of yoni mudrā.

Verses 86b to 91a: Two kinds of bindu

स एव द्विविधो बिन्दुः पाण्डरो लोहितस्तथा ॥८६॥

पाण्डरं शुक्रमित्याहुलोहिताख्यं महारजः ।

विदुमद्वूमसंकाशं योनिस्थाना स्थितं रजः ॥८७॥

शशिस्थाने वसेद्विन्दुस्तयोरैक्यं सुदुर्लभम् ।

बिन्दुः शिवो रजः शक्तिर्बिन्दुरिन्दु रजो रविः ॥८८॥

उभयोः संगमादेव प्राप्यते परमं वपुः ।

वायुना शक्तिचालेन प्रेरितं खे यथा रजः ॥८९॥

रविणैकत्वमायाति भवेद्विव्यं वपुस्तदा ।

शुक्लं चन्द्रेण संयुक्तं रजः सूर्यसमन्वितं ॥९०॥

द्वयोः समरसीभावं यो जानाति स योगवित् ॥९१॥

sa eva dvividho binduh pāṇḍaro lohitastathā (86b)

pāṇḍaram śukramityāhurlohitākhyam mahārajah

vidrumadrumasamkāśam yonisthāne sthitam rajah (87)

śaśisthāne vasedvindustayoraikyam sudurlabham

binduh śivo rajah śaktirbindurindu rajo raviḥ (88)

ubhayoh samgamādeva prāpyate paramam vapuh

vāyunā śakticālena preritaṁ khe yathā rajah (89)

raviṇaikatvamāyāti bhaveddivyam vapustadā

śuklam candreṇa samyuktam rajah sūryasamanvitam (90)

dvayoh samarasībhāvam yo jānāti sa yogavit (91a)

Anvay

tathā: so; *sa binduh:* this bindu; *dvividhah:* of two kinds; *pāṇḍarah:* white; *lohitah:* red; *pāṇḍaram:* white one; *iti āhuḥ:* is thus called; *śukram:* śukra, white, pure; *lohitah:* red; *ākhyam:* is said; *mahārajah:* much *rajas*, dynamism; *rajah:* rajas; *sthitam:* located; *yonī- sthāne:* in the area of the yoni; *saṃkāśam:* looks like; *vidruma-druma:* column of coral; *vinduh vase:* bindu remains; *śaśi-sthāne:* in

the seat of the moon; *aikyam*: union; *tayoh*: of these two; *sudurlabham*: very rare; *paramam vapuh*: highest form; *prāpyate*: can be reached; *samgamāt*: through the coming together; *ubhayoh*: of these two; *binduh ūrah rajaḥ*: ūra energy [of] bindu; *ravih*: sun; *śaktih-binduh-indu*: ūkti energy of bindu [which is] the moon; *yathā*: when; *rajaḥ preritam*: rajas is directed; *khe*: heavenwards; *vāyunā śakti-cālēna*: by the movement of the power of vāyu; *tadā*: then; *vapuh*: body; *āyati*: approaching; *ekatvam*: unity; *raviṇa*: sun's eclipse; *bhavet*: becomes; *divyam*: divine; *śuklam*: śukla; *samyuktam*: is united; *candrena*: with the moon; *rajaḥ samanvitam*: rajas is connected with; *sūrya*: sun; *yah jānāti*: whoever understands; *samarastbhāvam*: merging; *dvayoh*: of the two; *sa yogavit*: that person is a knower of yoga.

Translation

So this bindu [is] of two kinds, white [and] red. The white one is thus called *śukra* [and] the red is said [to have] much *rajas*. The rajas located in the area of the yoni looks like a column of coral. The bindu remains in the seat of the moon. The union of these two [is] very rare. The highest form can be reached through the coming together of these two: the ūra energy [of] bindu [which is] the sun [and] the ūkti energy of bindu [which is] the moon. When rajas is directed heavenwards by the movement of the power of vāyu, then the body, approaching the unity [of] the sun's eclipse, becomes divine. *Śukla* is united with the moon; rajas is connected with the sun: whoever understands the merging of the two, that person is a knower of yoga.

Verses 91b to 93: Mahā Mudrā

शोधनं मलजालानं घटनं चन्द्रसूर्ययोः ॥९१॥

रसानं शोषणं सम्यङ्महामुद्राभिधीयते ॥९२॥

वक्षस्यस्तहनुर्निपीड्य सुषिरं योनेश्व वामाङ्ग्रिणा हस्ताभ्यामनुधारयन्विततं पादं तथा दक्षिणम् ।

आपूर्य श्वसनेन कुक्षियुगलं बध्वा शनै रेचयेदेषा पातकनाशिनी ननु महामुद्रा नृणां प्रोच्यते ॥९३॥

śodhanam malajālānām ghaṭanam candra-sūryayoh (91b)

rasānām śoṣanām samyañmahāmudrābhidhīyate (92)

vakṣasyastahanurnipīḍya suṣiram yoneśca vāmañghrinā

hastābhyañmanudhārayanpravitatam pādam tathā dakṣinam

āpūrya śvasanena kukṣiyugalam badhvā śanai recayedeṣā

pātakanāśint nanu mahāmudrā nṛṇām procyate (93)

Anvay

śodhanam: cleansing; *mala-jālānām*: of waste matter; *ghaṭanam candra-sūryayoh*: union of the moon with the sun; *śoṣanam*: drying; *rasānām*: of fluids; *abhidhīyate*: is called; *samyak mahā-mudrā*: true mahā mudrā; *nipīḍya*: pressing down; *hanuh*: jaw; *vakṣasi*: on the chest; *ca*: and; *suṣiram*: hollow; *yoneh*: of the yoni; *vāma-aṅghrinā*: with the left foot; *tathā*: then; *anudhārayan*: holding; *hastābhyañ*: with both hands; *pravitatam*: stretched out; *dakṣinam*: right; *pādam*: leg; *āpūrya*: having filled; *kukṣi-*

yugalam: whole abdomen; *śvasanena*: with the breath; *śanai*: slowly; *recayet*: one should exhale; *eṣā*: this; *nanu*: indeed; *mahā-mudrā*: mahā mudrā; *procaye*: said; *nāśinī*: to destroy; *pātaka*: sins; *nṛṇām*: of men.

Translation

The cleansing of waste matter, the union of the moon with the sun, the drying of fluids, [this] is called the true mahā mudrā. Pressing the jaw down on the chest, and the hollow of the yoni with the left foot, then holding with both hands the stretched out right leg, having filled the whole abdomen with the breath, one should slowly exhale. This [is] indeed the mahā mudrā, said to destroy the sins of men.

Verse 94: The Ātman

अथात्मनिर्णयं व्याख्यास्ये ॥

हृदिस्थाने अष्टदलपद्मं वर्तते तन्मध्ये रेखावलयं कृत्वा जीवात्मरूपं ज्योतीरूपमणुमात्रं वर्तते तस्मिन्सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं भवति सर्वं जानाति सर्वं करोति सर्वमेतच्चरितमहं कर्ता । हं भोक्ता सुखी दुःखी काणः खञ्जो बधिरो मूकः कृशः स्थूलो । नेन प्रकारेण स्वतन्त्रवादेन वर्तते ॥

पूर्वदले विश्रमते पूर्वं दलं श्वेतवर्णं तदा भक्तिपुरः सरं धर्मे मतिर्भवति ॥

यदाऽग्नेयदले विश्रमते तदाग्नेयदलं रक्तवर्णं तदा निद्रालस्यमतिर्भवति ॥

यदा दक्षिणदले विश्रमते तदक्षिणदलं कृष्णवर्णं तदा द्वेषकोपमतिर्भवति ॥

यदा नैऋतदले विश्रमति तनैऋतदलं नीलवर्णं तदा पापकर्महिंसामतिर्भवति ॥

यदा पश्चिमदले विश्रमते तत्पश्चिमदलं स्फटिकवर्णं तदा क्रीडाविनोदे मतिर्भवति ॥

यदा वायव्यदले विश्रमते वायव्यदलं माणिक्यवर्णं तदा गमनचलनवैराग्यमतिर्भवति ॥

यदुत्तरदले विश्रमते तदुत्तरदलं पीतवर्णं तदा सुखशृङ्खारमतिर्भवति ॥

यदेशानदले विश्रमते तदीशनदलं वैदूर्यवर्णं तदा दानादिकृपामतिर्भवति ॥

यदा संधिसंधिषु मतिर्भवति तदा वातपित्तश्लेष्ममहाव्याधिप्रकोपो भवति ॥

यदा मध्ये तिष्ठति तदा सर्वं जानाति गायति नृत्यति पठत्यानन्दं करोति ॥

यदा नेत्रश्रमो भवति श्रमनिर्भरणार्थं प्रथमरेखाबन्धूकपुष्पवर्णं तदा निद्रावस्था भवति ॥

निद्रावस्थामध्ये स्वजावस्था भवति ॥

स्वजावस्थामध्ये दृष्टं श्रुतमनुमानसंभववार्ता इत्यादिकल्पनां करोति तदादिश्रमो भवति ॥

श्रमनिर्हरणार्थं द्वितीये खावलयं कृत्वा मध्ये निमज्जनं कुरुते द्वितीये खा इन्द्रकोपवर्णं तदा सुषुप्त्यवस्था भवति सुषुप्तौ
केवलपरमेश्वरसंबन्धिनी बुद्धिर्भवति नित्यबोधस्वरूपा भवति पश्चात्परमेश्वरस्वरूपेण प्राप्तिर्भवति ॥

तृतीये खावलयं कृत्वा मध्ये निमज्जनं कुरुते तृतीये खा पञ्चरागवर्णं तदा तुरीयावस्था भवति तुरीये केवलपरमात्मसंबन्धिनी भवति
नित्यबोधस्वरूपा भवति तदा शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बृद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतयात्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत्तदा प्राणापानयोरैक्यं
कृत्वा सर्वं विश्वमात्मस्वरूपेण लक्ष्यं धारयति ।

यदा तुरीयातीतावस्था तदा सर्वेषामानन्दस्वरूपो भवति द्वन्द्वातीतो भवति यावदेहधारणा वर्तते तावत्तिष्ठति पश्चात्परमात्मस्वरूपेण
प्राप्तिर्भवति इत्यनेन प्रकारेण मोक्षो भवतीदमेवात्मदर्शनोपाया भवन्ति ॥

चतुर्ष्यथसमायुक्तमहाद्वारकवायुना ।

सहस्थितत्रिकोणार्धगमने दृश्यते ८च्युतः ॥९४॥

athātmaṇīrnayam vyākhyāsyē.

*hṛdisthāne aṣṭadalapadmaṇaṁ vartate tanmadhye rekhaḥvalayaṁ kṛtvā jīvātmarūpaṁ
jyotiḥrūpamanumātraṇaṁ vartate tasminsarvaṁ pratiṣṭhitam bhavati sarvaṁ jānāti sarvaṁ karoti
sarvaṁ etaccaritamaham kartā ‘haṁ bhoktā sukhi duḥkhī kānah khañjo badhiro mūkah kṛśah sthūlo
'nena prakāreṇa svatantravādena vartate.*

pūrvadale viśramate pūrvam̄ dalam̄ śvetavarṇam̄ tadā bhaktipuraḥsaram dharme matirbhavati.

yadā 'gneyyadale viśramate tadā gneyadalaṁ raktavarṇam̄ tadā nindrālasyamatirbhavati.

yadā dakṣinadale viśramate taddakṣinadalaṁ kṛṣṇavarṇam̄ tadā dveśakopamatirbhavati.

yadā nairritadale viśramati tannairritadalaṁ nīlavaranam̄ tadā pāpakarmahiṁsā - matirbhavati

yadā paścimadale viśramate tatpaścimadalaṁ sphatikavarṇam̄ tadā krīdāvinode matirbhavati

yadā vāyavyadale viśramate vāyavyadalaṁ māṇikyavarṇam̄ tadā gamanacalanavairagya

matirbhavati

yaduttaradale viśramate taduttaradalaṁ pītavarṇam̄ tadā sukhaśringāramatirbhavati

yadeśānadale viśramate tadīśānadalaṁ vaidūryavarṇam̄ tadā dānādikṛpāmatirbhavati

yadā samdhisaṁdhiṣu matirbhavati tadā vātapiṭṭaśleṣmamahāvyādhiprakopo bhavati

yadā madhye tiṣṭhati tadā sarvaṁ jānāti gāyati nrityati paṭhatyānandaṁ karoti

*yadā netraśramo bhavati śrāmanirbharaṇārthaṁ prathamarekhābandhūkapuṣpavarṇam̄ tadā
nidrāvasthā bhavati*

nindrāvasthāmadhye svapnāvasthā bhavati

svapnāvasthāmadhye drṣṭam̄ śrutamanumānasambhavavārtā ityādikalpanāṁ karoti tadādiśramo

bhavati

*śrāmanirharanārthaṁ dvitīyarekhāvalayam kṛtvā madhye nimajjanam kurute dvitīyarekhā
indrakopavarṇam tadā susuptyavasthā bhavati susuptau kevalaparameścarasam̄bandhinī
buddhirbhavati nityabodhasvarūpā bhavati paścātparameśvarasvarūpeṇa prāptirbhavati*

*trītyarekhāvalayam kṛtvā madhye nimajjanam kurute trītyarekhā padmarāgavarṇam tadā
turīyāvasthā bhavati turīye kevalaparamātmasaṁbandhinī bhavati nityabodhasvarūpā bhavati tadā
śanaiḥ śanairuparamedbuddhyā dhṛtigrhītayātmasaṁsthām manah kṛtvā na kiṁcidapi cintayettadā
prāṇāpānayoraikyam kṛtvā sarvam viśvamātmasvarūpeṇa lakṣyaṇī dhārayati;*

*yadā turīyātītāvasthā tadā sarveśāmānandasvarūpo bhavati dvandvātīto bhavati yāvaddehadhāranā
vartate tāvattiṣṭhati paścātparamātmasvarūpeṇa prāptirbhavati ityanena prakāreṇa mokṣo
bhavatīdamevātmadarśāṇopāyā bhavanti.*

catuṣpathasamāyuktamahādvārakavāyunā;

sahasthitatrikonārdhagamane drsyate ‘cyutah (94)

Anvay

atha: now; vyākhyāsyे nirṇayam: I shall describe in detail; ātma: atman, Real Self; hṛdi-sthāne: in the seat of the heart; vartate: is; padmam: lotus; aṣṭa-dala: eight petals; tat-madhye: in its centre; vartate: abides; jīvātmarūpam: jīvātman, individual soul; jyotiṣ-rūpam: in the form of a bright light; anu-mātram: atomic in size; rekhāvalayam kṛtvā: shaped as a circle; tasmin: in it; bhavati pratiṣṭhitam: is placed; sarvam: everything; jānāti sarvam: it knows everything; karoti sarvam: it does everything; caritam etat: it behaves thus; aham kartā: I am the doer; aham bhoktā: I am the enjoyer; sukha: happy; duḥkhī: sad; kānāḥ: one-eyed; khañjāḥ: lame; badhirah: deaf; mūkah: mute; krśah: thin; sthūlah: stout; anena prakāreṇa: in this way; vartate: it exists; svatantravādena: independently; viśramate: it rests; pūrva-dale: on the eastern petal; śveta-varṇam: white colour; tadā: then; matirbhavati: it is inclined; dharme: to righteousness; bhakti-puraḥsaram: together with devotion; yadā: when; agneya-dale: on the south-eastern petal; rakta: red; nidrā: sleep; ālasya: sloth; dakṣina-dale: on the southern petal; krṣna-varṇam: black colour; matirbhavati: it is prone to; dveṣa: hatred; kopa: anger; nairrita-dale: on the south-western petal; nīla-varṇam: blue colour; pāpa-karma-hiṁsā: sinful [and] violent actions; paścima-dale: on the western petal; sphuṭika-varṇam: crystal colour; matirbhavati: it is inclined to; krīḍā-vinode: play [and] entertainment; vāyavya-dale: on the north-western petal; māṇikya-varṇam: ruby colour; gamana: walking; calana: wandering; vairagya: detachment; yad . . . tad: whenever . . . then; uttara-dale: on the northern petal; pīta-varṇam: yellow colour; matirbhavati: its mind is; sukha: happy; śrīṅgāra: loving; īśāna-dale: on the north-eastern petal; vaidūrya-varṇam: lapis lazuli, deep celestial blue; kṛpā: compassion; dāna-ādi: donations etc; matirbhavati: it settles; samdhisamdhīṣu: on the junctures; bhavati: there is; mahāvyādhi: severe disease; vāta: wind; pittaśleṣma: bile phlegm; tiṣṭhati: it stays; madhye: in the middle; jānāti: it knows; sarvam: everything; gāyati: sings; nrtyati: dances; paṭhati: recites; karoti ānandam: is blissful; netra: eye; bhavati: is; śramah: in pain; śrama-nirbharaṇa-ar�am: in order to remove the pain; prathama: first; rekhā: outline; bandhūka-puspa-varṇam: colour [of] the bandhuka flower (bright red); bhavati nidrā-avasthā: goes into the state of sleep; svapnā-avasthā-madhye: in the midst of the dreaming state; karoti: it creates; kalpanām: ideas; vārtā: relating to; drṣṭam: perception; śrutam: memory; anumāna: possibility; iti: words; ādi: and so on; tadā bhavati: then there is; śramah ādi: pain etc; śrama-nirbharaṇa-ar�am: in order to have the pain removed; kṛtvā: having made; dvitīya-rekhā-valayam: second circular line; kurute nimajjanam: it sinks; madhye: in the middle; dvitīya-rekhā: second circle; indrakopa-varṇam: colour of the insect Indragopa; tadā bhavati: then there is; susupti-avasthaa: state

of deep sleep.

susuptau: in deep sleep; *bhavati buddhiḥ*: there is one thought; *sambandhīnī*: relates to; *parameśvara kevala*: Supreme Being alone; *bhavati svarūpā*: has the quality; *nitya-bodha*: eternal wisdom; *prāptīḥ bhavati*: it attains; *paścāt*: later; *svarūpeṇa*: through the nature; *parameśvara*: Supreme Being; *kṛtvā*: having made; *trītya-rekhā-valayam*: third circular line; *kurute nimajjanam*: it sinks; *madhye*: in the middle; *trītya-rekhā*: third circle; *padmarāga-varṇam*: ruby colour; *tadā bhavati*: then comes; *turyāvasthā*: fourth state; *turye*: in the fourth; *bhavati*: there is; *sambandhīnī*: connection with; *paramātma*: Supreme Spirit; *kevala*: alone; *bhavati*: becoming; *nityabodha-svarūpā*: nature of eternal wisdom; *tadā*: then; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ*: gradually; *uparamet*: one should await; *buddhyā*: of *buddhi*; *dṛṣti-grhītayā*: with constancy and resolution; *kṛtvā samsthām*: having contained; *manah*: mind; *cintayet*: one should think of; *na kiṃcidapi*: nothing else; *prāṇa-apānayoh-aikyam kṛtvā*: having united *prāṇa* and *apāna*; *dhārayati*: one focuses on; *lakṣyam*: aim; *sarvam viśvam*: whole universe; *ātmasvarūpena*: through the nature of the atman; *yadā*: when; *turya-attīta-avasthā*: state beyond the fourth; *tadā*: then; *bhavati svarūpah*: one experiences; *sarveśām*: everything; *ānanda*: bliss; *bhavati*: is; *dvandvātītah*: beyond duality; *tiṣṭhati*: one stays; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: as long as; *vartate*: there is; *deha-dhāraṇā*: wearing of the body; *paścāt*: next; *prāptīḥ bhavati*: one attains; *svarūpeṇa*: nature; *paramātma*: Supreme Spirit; *anena prakāreṇa*: through this means; *bhavati mokṣah*: there is liberation; *upāyāḥ*: approaches; *darśana*: knowing; *ātma*: atman, Supreme Self; *bhavanti*: are; *eva*: surely; *idam*: this.

acyutah: Imperishable One; *drśyate*: is seen; *vāyunā*: through the breath; *gamane*: entering; *mahādvāraka*: great hole; *catus-patha*: four paths; *saṃyukta*: meet; *ardha trikona*: half triangle; *sahasthita*: abide together.

Translation

Now I shall describe in detail the atman. In the seat of the heart is a lotus [with] eight petals. In its centre abides the *jīvātman* in the form of a bright light, atomic in size [and] shaped as a circle. In it is placed everything. It knows everything. It does everything. It behaves thus: I am the doer. I am the enjoyer. [I am] happy, sad, one-eyed, lame, deaf, mute, thin, stout. In this way it exists independently.

[When] it rests on the eastern petal [which is] white [in] colour, then it is inclined to righteousness together with devotion. When it rests on the south-eastern petal [which is] red [in] colour, then it is inclined to sleep [and] sloth. When it rests on the southern petal [which is] black [in] colour, then it is prone to hatred [and] anger. When it rests on the south-western petal [which is] blue [in] colour, then it is prone to sinful [and] violent actions. When it rests on the western petal [which is of] a crystal colour, then it is inclined to play [and] entertainment. When it rests on the north-western petal [which is of] a ruby colour, then it is inclined to walking, wandering [and] detachment. Whenever it rests on the northern petal [which is] yellow [in] colour, then its mind is happy [and] loving. When it rests on the north-eastern petal [which is] a deep, celestial blue, then it is inclined to compassion [and] donations etc. When it settles on the junctures [of the petals], then there is severe disease [due to] an excess of wind, bile [or] phlegm. When it stays in the middle, then it knows everything, sings, dances, recites [and] is blissful. When the eye is in pain, in order to remove the pain [it makes] first an outline the colour [of] the bandhuka flower, then goes into the state of sleep. In the middle of the sleeping state is the dreaming state. In the midst of the dreaming state it creates the ideas relating to perception, memory, possibility, words and so on. Then there is pain etc. In order to have the pain removed, having made a second circular line, it sinks in the middle. The second circle is the colour of the insect Indragopa.

In deep sleep there is one thought [which] relates to the Supreme Being alone. [This state] has the

quality [of] eternal wisdom, [which] it attains later through the nature [of] the Supreme Being. Having made a third circular line, it sinks in the middle. The third circle [is] a ruby colour. Then comes the fourth state. In the fourth state there is connection with the Supreme Spirit alone, becoming the nature of eternal wisdom. Then one should gradually await [the intuition] of *buddhi* with constancy and resolution. Having contained the mind [in] the ātman, one should think of nothing else. Having united prāṇa and apāna, one focuses one's aim on the whole universe through the nature of the atman. When [one is in] the state beyond the fourth, then one experiences everything [as] bliss [and] is beyond duality. One stays there as long as there is wearing of the body. Next one attains the nature [of] the Supreme Spirit. Through this means there is liberation. The approaches to knowing the ātman are surely this.

The Imperishable One is seen through the breath, entering the great hole [where] four paths meet, [and] the half triangle [which] abide together.

Verses 95 to 97a: Meditating on the bīja mantras of the five elements

पूर्वोक्तत्रिकोणस्थानादुपरि पृथिव्यादिपञ्चवर्णकं ध्येयम् ।

प्राणादिपञ्चवायुश्च बीजं वर्णं च स्थानकम् ।

यकारं प्राणबीजं च नीलजीमूतसन्निभम् ।

रखारमग्निबीजं च अपानादित्यसन्निभम् ॥९५॥

लकारं पृथिवीरूपं व्यानं बन्धूकसन्निभम् ।

वकारं जीवबीजं च उदानं शङ्खवर्णकम् ॥९६॥

हकारं वियत्स्वरूपं च समानं स्फटिकप्रभम् ॥९७॥

pūrvoktatrikonasthānādupari prthivyādipañcavarnakam dhyeyam

prāṇādipañcavāyuśca bījam varṇam ca sthānakam

yakāram prāṇabījam ca nīlajīmūtasannibham

rakhāramagnibījam ca apānādityasamnibham (95)

lakāram prthivīrūpaṁ vyānam bandhūkasamnibham

vakāram jīvabījam ca udānam śaṅkhavarṇakam (96)

hakāram viyatsvarūpaṁ ca samānam sphatikaprabhām (97a)

Anvay

upari sthānāt: above the area; *pūrvokta-trikona*: aforesaid triangle; *dhyeyam*: one should meditate on; *pañca-varṇakam*: five letters; *prthivī*: earth; *ādi*: and the other(s); *pañca-vāyuḥ*: five vital airs; *prāṇa-*

ādi: prāṇa etc; *ca*: and; *varṇam*: colour; *sthānakam*: position; *bījam*: seeds; *yakāram*: letter य ya; *prāṇa-bījam*: seed of prāṇa; *ca sannibham*: and resembles; *nīla-jīmūta*: blue cloud; *rakhāram*: letter र ra; *agni-bījam*: seed of agni; *ca saṃnibham*: and resembles; *āditya*: sun; *lakāram*: letter ल la; *prthivī-rūpam*: form of *prthivī*; *vyānam*: vyāna; *bandhūka-saṃnibham*: resembling the bandhuka flower; *vakāram*: letter व va; *jīva-bījam*: seed of jīva; *udānam*: udāna; *ca*: and; *śāṅkha-varṇakam*: colour of a conch; *hakāram*: letter ह ha; *viyat-svarūpam*: form of *ākāśa*; *samānam*: samāna; *sphaṭika-prabham*: radiance of crystal.

Translation

Above the area [of] the aforesaid triangle, one should meditate on the five letters [of] earth and the other [elements], the five vital airs [of] prāṇa etc, and the colour and position [of their] seeds. The letter य ya [is] the seed of prāṇa, and resembles a blue cloud. The letter र ra [is] the seed of agni, [is of the vital air] apāna, and resembles the sun. The letter ल la, the form of *prthivi*, [is of] vyāna, resembling the bandhuka flower. The letter व va [is] the seed of jīva [of] udāna, and the colour of a conch. The letter ह ha [is] the form of *ākāśa*, [of] samāna, and [has] the radiance of crystal.

Verses 97b to 99a: One jīva

हन्नाभिनासाकर्णं च पादाङ्गुष्ठादिसंस्थितम् ॥१७॥

द्विसप्ततिसहस्राणि नाडीमार्गेषु वर्तते ।

अष्टाविंशतिकोटीषु रोमकूपेषु संस्थिताः ॥१८॥

समानप्राण एकस्तु जीवः स एक एव हि ॥१९॥

hṛnnābhīnāsākarṇam ca pādāṅguṣṭhādisaṃsthitam (97b)

dvisaptatisahasrāṇi nāḍīmārgeṣu vartate

aṣṭāvimiṣatikoṭīṣu romakūpeṣu saṃsthitāḥ (98)

samānaprāṇa ekastu jīvah sa eka eva hi (99a)

Anvay

saṃsthitam: located in; *hṛt*: heart; *nābhi*: navel; *nāsā*: nose; *karṇam*: ears; *pāda*: feet; *ca*: and; *āṅguṣṭha*: fingers; *ādi*: etc; *vartate*: flow; *dvisaptatisahasrāṇi nāḍī-mārgeṣu*: in the seventy-two thousand nāḍīs; *saṃsthitāḥ*: are; *aṣṭāvimiṣatikoṭīṣu roma-kūpeṣu*: in the two hundred and eighty million hair-pores; *tu*: yet; *ekaḥ samāna-prāṇa*: one and the same energy; *sa*: this; *eva hi*: indeed; *eka jīvah*: one jīva.

Translation

[The vital energies] located in the heart, navel, nose, ears, feet and fingers etc flow in the seventy-two

thousand nādīs, are in the two hundred and eighty million hair-pores, [and] yet [is] one and the same energy. This [is] indeed the one jīva.

Verses 99b to 105: Praṇava

रेचकादि त्रयं कुर्याद्वृद्धितः समाहितः ॥९९॥

शनैः समस्तमाकृष्टं हृत्सरोरुहकोटे ।

प्राणापानौ च बद्ध्वा तु प्रणवेन समुच्चरेत् ॥१००॥

कर्णसंकोचनं कृत्वा लिङ्गसंकोचनं तथा

मूलाधारात्सुषुम्ना च पद्मतन्तुनिमा सुभा ॥१०१॥

अमूर्तो वर्तते नादो वीणादण्डसमुत्थितः ।

शङ्खनादादिभिश्चैव मध्यमेव धनिर्यथा ॥१०२॥

व्योमरन्धगतो नादो मायूरं नादमेव च ।

कपालकुहरे मध्ये चर्तुद्वारस्य मध्यमे ॥१०३॥

तदात्मा राजते तत्र यथा व्योम्नि दिवाकरः ।

कोदण्डद्वयमध्ये तु ब्रह्मरन्धेशकत्या च ॥१०४॥

स्वात्मानं पुरुषं पश्येन्मनस्तत्र लयं गतम् ।

रत्नानि ज्योत्स्निनादं तु बिन्दुमाहेश्वरं पदम् ।

य एवं वेद पुरुषः स कैवल्यं समश्नुत इत्युपनिषत् ॥१०५॥

recakādi trayam kuryāddṛḍhacittah samāhitah (99b)

śanaiḥ samastamākṛṣya hṛtsaroruhakoṭare

prāṇāpānau ca baddhvā tu praṇavena samuccaret (100)

karṇasaṁkocanam kṛtvā liṅgasamkocanam tathā

mūlādhārātśuṣumnā ca padmatantunibhā subhā (101)

amūrto vartate nādo vīṇādañḍasamutthitah

śaṅkhanādādibhiścaiva madhyameva dhvaniryathā (102)

vyomarandhragato nādo māyūram nādameva ca

kapālakuhare madhye caturdvārasya madhyame (103)

tadātmā rājate tatre yathā vyomni divākarah

kodandadvayamadhye tu brahmarandhreśaktyā ca (104)

svātmānam puruṣam paśyenmanastatra layam gatam

ratnāni jyotsninādam tu bindumāheśvaram padam

ya evam veda puruṣah sa kaivalyam samaśnuta ityupaniṣat (105)

Anvay

dṛḍha: strong; *samāhitah*: concentrated; *cittah*: mind; *kuryāt*: one should do; *trayam*: three; *recaka-ādi*: exhalation etc; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *ākṛṣya*: drawing in; *samastam*: whole; *ca*: and; *kṛtvā saṃkocanam*: contracting; *karṇa*: throat; *liṅga*: genital organ; *baddhvā*: joining together; *prāṇa-apānau*: prāṇa and apāna; *koṭare*: in the cave; *saroruha*: lotus; *hṛt*: heart; *saṃuccaret*: one should chant; *praṇavena*: prāṇava. *mūlādhārāt*: from mūlādhāra; *vartate*: is; *suṣumnā*: suṣumnā; *nibhā*: resembling; *subhā tantu*: radiant thread; *padma*: lotus; *amūrtah nādah*: subtle nāda; *saṃutthitah*: rises up; *vīṇādaṇḍa*: spinal column; *ca*: and; *yathā dhvaniḥ*: its sound; *madhyam*: middle; *iva*: like; *śaṅkhanāt-ādibhiḥ*: of a conch etc; *gataḥ*: it enters; *randhra*: opening; *vyoma*: ether; *nādam*: sound; *eva*: that of; *māyūram*: peacock; *madhye*: in the middle; *kuhare*: cavity; *kapāla*: skull; *madhyame*: between; *catuh-dvārasya*: four doors; *rājate*: shines; *tat ātmā*: the ātman; *tatra yathā*: just like; *divākarah*: sun; *vyomni*: in the sky; *tu*: then; *madhye*: between; *dvaya kodanḍa*: two bows; *brahmarandhre*: in the fontanelle; *paśyet*: one sees; *puruṣam śakti*: puruṣa with shakti; *sva-ātmānam*: one's own ātman; *tatra*: there; *manah*: individual mind; *gatam layam*: becomes absorbed; *sa puruṣah*: that person; *samaśnuta*: attains; *kaivalyam*: final liberation; *yah*: who; *veda*: understands; *ratnāni*: gems; *jyotsni*: moonlight; *nādam*: nāda; *bindu*: bindu; *padam māheśvaram*: seat of Maheśvara; *iti upaniṣat*: thus speaks the Upaniṣad.

Translation

[With] a strong [and] concentrated mind, one should do the three: exhalation etc. Slowly drawing in the whole [breath] and contracting the throat [and] genital organ, joining together prāṇa and apāna in the cave [of] the lotus [of] the heart, one should chant the prāṇava. From mūlādhāra is suṣumnā, resembling the radiant thread [of] the lotus. The subtle nāda rises up the spinal column, and its sound [from] the middle [is] like [that] of a conch etc. [When] it enters the opening [of] the ether, the sound is that of a peacock. In the middle [of] the cavity [of] the skull between the four doors, shines the ātman, just like the sun in the sky. Then between the two bows in the fontanelle, one sees puruṣa with śakti [as] one's own ātman. There the individual mind becomes absorbed. That person attains final liberation who understands gems, moonlight, nāda, bindu [and] the seat of Maheśvara. Thus speaks the Upaniṣad.

इति ध्यानबिन्दुपनिषत्समाप्ता ॥

iti dhyānabindūpaniṣatsamāptā

Anvay

iti samāptā: thus concludes; *dhyānabindu-upaniṣat*: Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad.

Translation

Thus concludes the Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad.

Appendices

1.Sanskrit

ध्यात्वा यद्व्यमात्रं ते स्वावशेषधिया ययुः ।

योगतत्त्वज्ञानफलं तत्स्वमात्रं विचिन्तये ॥

ॐ सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ॥

यदि शैलसं पापं विस्तीर्ण बहुयोजनम् ।

भिद्यते ध्यानयोगेन नान्यो भेदः कदाचन ॥१॥

बीजाक्षरं परं बिन्दुं नादं तस्योपरि स्थितम् ।

सशब्दं चाक्षरे क्षीणे निःशब्दं परं पदम् ॥२॥

अनाहतं तु यच्छब्दं तस्य शब्दस्य यत्परं ।

तत्परं बिन्दते यस्तु स योगी छिन्नसंशयः ॥३॥

वालाग्रशतसाहस्रं तस्य भागस्य भागिनः ।

तस्य भागस्य भागार्धं तत्क्षये तु निरञ्जनम् ॥४॥

पुष्पमध्ये यथा गन्धः पयोमध्ये यथा घृतम् ।

तिलमध्ये यथा तैलं पापाणेष्विव काञ्चनम् ॥५॥

एवं सर्वाणि भूतानि मणौ सूत्र इवात्मनि ।

स्थिरबुद्धिरसंसूढो ब्रह्मविद्व्याणि स्थितः ॥६॥

तिलानां तु यथा तैलं पुष्पे गन्ध इवाश्रितः ।

पुरुषस्य शरीरे तु सबाह्याभ्यन्तरे स्थितः ॥७॥

वृक्षं तु सकलं विद्याच्छाया तस्यैव निष्कला ।

सकले निष्कले भावे सर्वत्रात्मा व्यवस्थितः ॥८॥

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्म ध्येयं सर्वमुक्षुभिः ॥९॥

पृथिव्यग्निश्च ऋग्वेदो भूरित्येव पितामहः ॥१०॥

अकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते प्रथमे प्रणवांशके ।

अन्तरिक्षं यजुर्वायुमुवो विष्णुर्जनार्दनः ॥११॥

उकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते द्वितीये प्रणवांशके ।

द्यौः सूर्यः सामवेदश्च स्वरित्येव महेश्वरः ॥१२॥

मकारे तु लयं प्राप्ते तृतीये प्रणवांशके ।

अकारः पीतवर्णः स्याद्रजोगुण उदीरितः ॥१३॥

उकारः सात्त्विकः शुक्लो मकारः कृष्णतामसः ॥१४॥

अष्टाङ्ग च चतुष्पादं त्रिस्थानं पञ्चदैवतम् ॥१५॥

ओंकार यो न जानाति ब्रह्मणो न भवेत् सः

प्रणवो धनुः शरो ह्यात्मा ब्रह्म तल्लक्ष्यमुच्यते ॥१६॥

अप्रमत्तेन वेद्धव्यं शरवत्तन्मयो भवेत् ।

निवर्त्तन्ते क्रियाः सर्वास्तस्मिन्दृष्टे परावरे ॥१७॥

ओंकारप्रभवा देवा ओंकारप्रभवाः स्वराः ।

ओंकारप्रभवं सर्वं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम् ॥१८॥

हस्वो दहति पापानि दीर्घः संपत्त्रदोऽव्ययः ।

अर्धमात्रासमा युक्तः प्रणवो मोक्षदातक्तः ॥१९॥

तैलधारामिवाच्छिन्नं दीर्घघण्टानिनादवत् ।

अवाच्यं प्रणवस्याग्रं यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥२०॥

हृत्पद्मकर्णिकामध्ये स्थिरदीपनिभाकृतिं ।

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रमचलं ध्यायेदोकारमीश्वरम् ॥१९॥

इडया वायुमापूर्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितं ।

ओंकारं देहमध्यस्थं ध्यायेज्ज्वालावलीवृतम् ॥२०॥

ब्रह्मा पूरक इत्युक्तो विष्णुः कुम्भक उच्यते ।

रेचो रुद्र इति प्रोक्तः प्राणायामस्य देवताः ॥२१॥

आत्मानमरणिं कृत्वा प्रणवं चोत्तरारणिम् ।

ध्याननिर्मथनाभ्यासादेव पश्येन्निगूढवत् ॥२२॥

ओंकारध्यनिनादेन वायोः संहरणान्तिकम् ।

यावद्वलं समादध्यात्सम्यङ्गादलयावधि ॥२३॥

गमागमस्थं गमनादिशून्यमोकारमेकं रविकोटिर्दीप्तिम् ।

पश्यन्ति ये सर्वजनान्तरस्थं हंसात्मकं ते विरजा भवन्ति ॥२४॥

यन्मनस्त्रिजगात्सृष्टिस्थितिव्यसनकर्मकृत् ।

तन्मनो विलयं याति तद्विष्णोः परम पदम् ॥२५॥

अष्टपत्रं तु हृत्यन्बं द्वात्रंशत्केसरानिवितम् ।

तस्य मध्ये स्थितो भानुर्भानुमध्यगतः शशी ॥२६॥

शशिमध्यगतो वह्निर्वह्निमध्यगता प्रभा ।

प्रभामध्यगतं पीठं नानारत्नप्रवेष्टिम् ॥२७॥

तस्य पीठमध्यगतं वासुदेवं निरञ्जनम् ।

श्रीवत्सकौस्तुमोरस्कं मुक्तामणिविभूषितम् ॥२८॥

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं चन्द्रकोटिसमप्रभम् ।

एवं ध्यायेन्महाविष्णुमेवं वा विनयान्वितः ॥२९॥

अतसीपुष्पसंकाशं नाभिस्थाने प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

चतुर्भुजं महाविष्णुं पूरकेण विचिन्तयेत् ॥३०॥

कुम्भकेन हृदि स्थाने चिन्तयेत्कमलासनम् ।

ब्रह्माणं रक्तगौरामं चतुर्वर्कं पितामहम् ॥३१॥

रेचकेन तु विद्यात्मा ललाटस्थं त्रिलोचनम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं निष्कलं पापनाशनम् ॥३२॥

अन्नपत्रमधः पुष्पमूर्ध्वनालमधोमुखम् ।

कदलीपुष्पसंकाशं सर्ववेदमयं शिवम् ॥३३॥

शतारं शतपत्राढयं विकीर्णाम्बुजकर्णिकम् ।

तत्रार्कचन्द्रवह्नीनामुपर्यु - परिचिन्तयेत् ॥३४॥

पद्मस्योद्घाटनं कृत्वा बोधचन्द्राग्निसूर्यकम् ।

तस्य हृद्वीजमाहत्य आत्मानं चरते ध्रुवम् ॥३५॥

त्रिस्थानं च त्रिमात्रं च त्रिब्रह्म च त्रयाक्षरम् ।

त्रिमात्रमर्धमात्रं वा यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥३६॥

तैलधारामिवाच्छिन्दीर्घघण्टानिनादवत् ।

बिन्दुनादकलातीतं यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥३७॥

यथैवोत्पलनालेन तोयमाकर्षयेन्नरः ।

तथैवोत्कर्षयेद्वायुं योगी योगपथे स्थितः ॥३८॥

अर्धमात्रात्पकं कृत्वा कोशीभूतं तु पङ्कजम् ।

कर्षयेन्नालमात्रेण भ्रुवोर्मध्ये लयं नयेत् ॥३९॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्ये ललाटे तु नासिकायास्तु मूलतः ।

जानीयादमृतं स्थानं तद्व्यायतनं महत् ॥४०॥

आसनानि प्राणसंरोधः प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा ।

ध्यानं समाधिरेतानि योगाङ्गानि भवन्ति षट् ॥४१॥

आसनानि च तावन्ति यावन्त्यो जीवजातयः ।

एतेषामतुलाभेदा न्विजानाति महेश्वरः ॥४२॥

सिद्धं भद्रं तथा सिफ्हं पद्मं चेति चतुष्टयम् ॥४३॥

आधारं प्रथमं चक्रं स्वाधिष्ठानं द्वितीयकम् ॥४३॥

योनिस्थानं तयोर्मध्ये कामरूप निगद्यते ।

आधाराख्ये गुदस्थाने पङ्कजं यच्चतुर्दलम् ॥४४॥

तन्मध्ये प्रोच्यते योनिः कामाख्या सिद्धवन्दिता ।

योनिमध्ये स्थितं लिङ्गं पश्चिमाभिमुखं तथा ॥४५॥

मस्तके मणिवम्बिद्नं यो जानाति स योगवित्

तप्तचामीकराकारं तडिल्लेखेव विस्फुरत् ॥४६॥

चतुरस्त्रमुपर्यग्नेरधो मेद्रात्रतिष्ठितम्

स्वशब्देन भवेत्प्राणः स्वाधिष्ठानं तदाश्रयम् ॥४७॥

स्वादिष्ठानं ततश्चक्रं मेद्रमेव निगद्यते

मणिवत्तन्तुना यत्र वायुना पूरितं वपुः ॥४८॥

तनाभिमण्डलं चक्रं प्रोच्यते मणिपूरकं ।

द्वादशारमहाचक्रे पुण्यपापनियन्त्रितः ॥४९॥

तावज्जीवो भ्रमत्येवं यावत्तत्त्वं न विन्दति ॥५०॥

ऊर्ध्वं मेद्रादधो नाभेः कन्दो यो ऽस्ति खगाण्डवत् ॥५०॥

तत्र नाड्यः समुत्पन्नाः सहस्राणि द्विसप्ततिः ।

तेषु नाडीसहस्रेषु द्विसप्ततिरुदाहताः ॥५१॥

प्रधानाः प्राणवाहिन्यो भूयस्तत्र दश सृताः ।

इडा च पिङ्गला चैव सुषुम्ना च तृतीयका ॥५२॥

गाम्धारी हस्तिजिह्वा च पूषा चैव यशस्विनी ।

अलम्बुसा कुहूरत्र शङ्खिनी दशमी स्मृता ॥५३॥

एवं नाडीमयं चक्रं विज्ञेयं योगिना सदा ।

सततं प्राणवाहिन्यः सोमसूर्याग्निदेवताः ॥५४॥

इडापिङ्गलासुषुम्नास्तिस्रो नाड्यः प्रकीर्तिः ।

इडा वामे स्थिता भागे पिङ्गला दक्षिणे स्थिता ॥५५॥

सुषुम्ना मध्यदेशे तु प्राणमार्गस्त्रयः स्मृताः ।

प्राणोऽपानः समानश्वोदानो व्यानस्तथैव च ॥५६॥

नागः कूर्मः कृकरको देवदत्तो धनंजयः ।

प्राणादाः पञ्च विष्वाता नागाद्याः पञ्च वायवः ॥५७॥

एते नाडीसहस्रेषु वर्तन्ते जीवरूपिणः ॥५८॥

प्राणापानवशो जीवो ह्यधश्वोर्ध्वं प्रधावति ॥५९॥

वामदक्षिणमार्गेण चन्वलत्वान् दृश्यते ।

आक्षिप्तो भुजदण्देन यथोच्चलति कन्दुका ॥६०॥

प्राणापानसमाक्षिप्तस्तद्वज्जीवो न विश्रमेत् ।

अपानात्कर्षति प्राणोऽपानः प्राणाच्च कर्षति ॥६०॥

खगरज्जुवदित्येतद्यो जानाति स योगवित् ॥६१॥

हकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेषुनः ॥६१॥

हंसहंसेत्यमुं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।

शतानि षट्टुदिवारात्रं सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ॥६२॥

एतत्संख्यान्वितं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ।

अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदा सदा ॥६३॥

अस्याः संकल्पमात्रेण नरः पापैः प्रमुच्यते ।

अनया सदृशी विद्या अनया सदृशो जपः ॥६४॥

अनया सदृशं पुण्यं न भूतं न भविष्यति ।६५।

येन मार्गेण गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मस्थानं निरामयम् ॥६५॥

मुखेनाच्छाद्य तद्वारं प्रसुप्ता परमेश्वरी ।

प्रबुद्धा वह्नियोगेन मनसा मरुता सह ॥६६॥

सूचिवद्गुणमादाय व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं सुषुम्नया ।

उद्घाटयेत्कपाटं तु यथा कुञ्चिकया हठात् ॥६७॥

कुण्डलिन्या तया योगी मोक्षद्वारं विभेदयेत् ॥६८॥

कृत्वा संपुटितौ करौ दृढतरं बद्धाथ पद्मासनं गाढं वक्षसि सन्निधाय चुबुकं ध्यानं च तच्चेतसि ।

वारंवारमपातमूर्ध्वमनिलं प्रोच्चारयन्पूरितं मुञ्चन्नाणमुपैति बोधमतुलं शक्तिप्रभावान्नरः ॥६९॥

पद्मासनस्थितो योगी नाडीद्वारेषु पूरयन् ।

मारुतं कुम्भयन्यस्तु स मुक्तो नात्र संशयः ॥७०॥

अङ्गानां मर्दनं कृत्वा श्रमजातेन वारिणा ।

कद्मललवणत्यागी क्षीरपानरतः सुखी ॥७१॥

ब्रह्मचारी मिताहारी योगी योगपरायणः ।

अब्दादूर्ध्वं भवेत्सिद्धो नात्र कार्या विचारणा ॥७२॥

कन्दोर्ध्वकुण्डली शक्तिः स योगी सिद्धिभाजनम् ।

अपानप्राणयोरैक्यं क्षयान्मूत्रपुरीषयोः ॥७३॥

युवा भवति वृध्दोऽपि सततं मूलबन्धनात् ।

पार्ष्णिभागेन संपीद्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेद्गुदम् ॥७४॥

अपानमूर्ध्वमुत्कृश्य मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते । ७५ ।

उक्यानं कुरुते यस्मादविश्रान्तमहाखगः ॥ ७५ ॥

उद्गुयानं तदेव स्यात्तत्र बन्धो विधीयते ।

उदरे पश्चिमं ताणं नामेरुर्ध्वं तु कारयेत् ॥ ७६ ॥

उद्गुयानोऽप्ययं बन्धो मृत्युमतङ्गकेसरी ।

बध्नाति हि शिरोजातमधोगामिनभोजलम् ॥ ७७ ॥

ततो जालन्धरो बन्धः कर्मदुःखौघनाशनः ।

जालन्धरे कृते बन्धो कण्ठकोचलक्षणे ॥ ७८ ॥

न पीयूषं पतत्यानौ न च वायुः प्रधावति ॥ ७९ ॥

कपालकुहरे जिह्वा प्रविष्टा विपरीतगा ॥ ७९ ॥

भ्रुवोरन्तर्गता दृष्टिर्मुद्रा भवति खेचरी ।

न रोगो मरणं तस्य न निद्रा न क्षुधा तृषा ॥ ८० ॥

न च मूर्छा भरेत्तस्य यो मुद्रां वेत्ति खेचरीम् ।

पीड्यते न च रोगेण लिप्यते न च कर्मणा ॥ ८१ ॥

बध्यते न च कालेन यस्य मुद्रास्ति खेचरी ॥ ८२ ॥

चित्तं चरति खे यस्माज्जिह्वा भवति खेगता ॥ ८२ ॥

तेनैषा खेचरी नाम मुद्रा सिद्धनमस्कृता

खेचर्या मुद्रया यस्य लम्बिकोर्ध्वतः ॥ ८३ ॥

बिन्दुः क्षरति नो यस्य कामिन्यालिङ्गितस्य च ।

यावद्विन्दुः स्थितो देहे तावन्मृत्युभयं कुतः ॥ ८४ ॥

यावद्वद्वा नभोमुद्रा तावद्विन्दुर्गच्छति ।

गलितोऽपि यदा बिन्दुः संप्राप्तो योनिमण्डले ॥ ८५ ॥

व्रजत्यूर्ध्वं हठाच्छक्त्या निबद्धो योनिमुद्रया ॥८६॥

स एव द्विविधो बिन्दुः पाण्डरो लोहितस्तथा ॥८६॥

पाण्डरं शुक्रमित्याहुलोहिताख्यं महारजः ।

विद्वमद्वमसंकाशं योनिस्थाना स्थितं रजः ॥८७॥

शशिस्थाने वसेद्विन्दुस्तयौरैक्यं सुदुर्लभम् ।

बिन्दुः शिवो रजः शक्तिर्बिन्दुरिन्दु रजो रविः ॥८८॥

उभयोः संगमादेव प्राप्यते परमं वपुः ।

वायुना शक्तिचालेन प्रेरितं खे यथा रजः ॥८९॥

रविणैकत्वमायाति भवेद्विव्यं वपुस्तदा ।

शुक्लं चन्द्रेण संयुक्तं रजः सूर्यसमन्वितं ॥९०॥

द्वयोः समरसीभावं यो जानाति स योगवित् ॥९१॥

शोधनं मलजालानां घटनं चन्द्रसूर्ययोः ॥९२॥

रसानां शोषणं सम्यङ्गमहामुद्राभिधीयते ॥९३॥

वक्षस्यस्तहनुर्निपीड्य सुषिरं योनेश्व वामाङ्गिणा हस्ताभ्यामनुधारयन्नवितं पादं तथा दक्षिणम् ।

आपूर्य श्वसनेन कुक्षियुगलं बध्वा शनै रेचयेदेषा पातकनाशिनी ननु महामुद्रा नृणां प्रोच्यते ॥९४॥

अथात्मनिर्णयं व्याख्यास्ये ॥

हृदिस्थाने अष्टदलपद्मं वर्तते तन्मध्ये रेखावलयं कृत्वा जीवात्मरूपं ज्योतीरूपमणुमात्रं वर्तते तस्मिन्सर्वं प्रतिष्ठितं भवति सर्वं जानाति सर्वं करोति सर्वमेतच्चरितमहं कर्ता ऽहं भोक्ता सुखी दुःखी काणः खञ्जो बधिरो मूकः कृशः स्थूलो ऽनेन प्रकारेण स्वतन्त्रवादेन वर्तते ॥

पूर्वदले विश्रमते पूर्वं दलं श्वेतवर्णं तदा भक्तिपुरःसरं धर्मे मतिर्भवति ॥

यदा ऽग्नेयदले विश्रमते तदाग्नेयदलं रक्तवर्णं तदा निद्रालस्यमतिर्भवति ॥

यदा दक्षिणदले विश्रमते तद्वदक्षिणदलं कृष्णवर्णं तदा द्वेषकोपमतिर्भवति ॥

यदा नैऋतदले विश्रमति तन्नैऋतदलं नीलवर्णं तदा पापकर्महिंसामतिर्भवति ॥

यदा पश्चिमदले विश्रमते तत्पश्चिमदलं स्फटिकवर्णं तदा क्रीडाविनोदे मतिर्भवति ॥

यदा वायव्यदले विश्रमते वायव्यदलं माणिक्यवर्णं तदा गमनचलनवैरायमतिर्भवति ॥

यदुत्तरदले विश्रमते तदुत्तरदलं पीतवर्णं तदा सुखशृङ्खारमतिर्भवति ॥

यदेशानदले विश्रमते तदीशनदलं वैदूर्यवर्णं तदा दानादिकृपामतिर्भवति ॥

यदा संधिसंधिषु मतिर्भवति तदा वातपित्तश्लेष्ममहाव्याधिप्रकोपो भवति ॥

यदा मध्ये तिष्ठति तदा सर्वं जानाति गायति नृत्यति पठत्यानन्दं करोति ॥

यदा नेत्रश्रमो भवति श्रमनिर्भरणार्थं प्रथमरेखाबन्धूकपुष्पवर्णं तदा निद्रावस्था भवति ॥

निद्रावस्थामध्ये स्वज्ञावस्था भवति ॥

स्वज्ञावस्थामध्ये दृष्टं श्रुतमनुमानसंभववार्ता इत्यादिकल्पनां करोति तदादिश्रमो भवति ॥

श्रमनिर्हरणार्थं द्वितीयरेखावलयं कृत्वा मध्ये निमज्जनं कुरुते द्वितीयरेखा इन्द्रकोपवर्णं तदा सुषुप्त्यवस्था भवति सुषुप्तो
केवलपरमेश्वरसंबन्धिनी बुद्धिर्भवति नित्यबोधस्वरूपा भवति पश्चात्परमेश्वरस्वरूपेण प्राप्तिर्भवति ॥

तृतीयरेखावलयं कृत्वा मध्ये निमज्जनं कुरुते तृतीयरेखा पद्मरागवर्णं तदा तुरीयावस्था भवति तुरीये केवलपरमात्मसंबन्धिनी भवति
नित्यबोधस्वरूपा भवति तदा शनैः शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतयात्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत्तदा प्राणापानयोरैक्यं
कृत्वा सर्वं विश्वमात्मस्वरूपेण लक्ष्यं धारयति ।

यदा तुरीयातीतावस्था तदा सर्वेषामानन्दस्वरूपो भवति द्वन्द्वातीतो भवति यावद्देहधारणा वर्तते तावत्तिष्ठति पश्चात्परमात्मस्वरूपेण
प्राप्तिर्भवति इत्यनेन प्रकारेण मोक्षो भवतीदमेवात्मदर्शनोपाया भवन्ति ॥

चतुष्पथसमायुक्तमहाद्वारकवायुना ।

सहस्थितत्रिकोणार्धगमने दृश्यते ऽच्युतः ॥१४॥

पूर्वोक्तत्रिकोणस्थानादुपरि पृथिव्यादिपञ्चवर्णकं ध्येयम् ।

प्राणादिपञ्चवायुश्च बीजं वर्णं च स्थानकम् ।

यकारं प्राणबीजं च नीलजीमूतसन्निभम् ।

रखारमग्निबीजं च अपानादित्यसंनिभम् ॥१५॥

लकारं पृथिवीरूपं व्यानं बन्धूकसन्निभम् ।

वकारं जीवबीजं च उदानं शङ्खवर्णकम् ॥१६॥

हकारं वियत्स्वरूपं च समानं स्फटिकप्रभम् । १७।

हनामिनासाकर्णं च पादाङ्गुष्ठादिसंस्थितम् ॥ १७॥

द्विसप्ततिसहस्राणि नाडीमार्गेषु वर्तते ।

अष्टाविंशतिकोटीषु रोमकूपेषु संस्थिताः ॥ १८॥

समानप्राण एकस्तु जीवः स एक एव हि । १९।

रेचकादि त्रयं कुर्याद्बृद्धचित्तः समाहितः ॥ १९॥

शनैः समस्तमाकृष्य हृत्सरोरुहकोटे ।

प्राणापानौ च बद्ध्वा तु प्रणवेन समुच्चरेत् ॥ १००॥

कर्णसंकोचनं कृत्वा लिङ्गसंकोचनं तथा

मूलाधारात्सुषुम्ना च पद्मतन्तुनिमा सुभा ॥ १०१॥

अमूर्तो वर्तते नादो वीणादण्डसमुत्थितः ।

शङ्खनादादिभिश्चैव मध्यमेव ध्वनिर्यथा ॥ १०२॥

व्योमरन्ध्रगतो नादो मायूरं नादमेव च ।

कपालकुहरे मध्ये चर्तुद्वारस्य मध्यमे ॥ १०३॥

तदात्मा राजते तत्र यथा व्योमि दिवाकरः ।

कोदण्डद्वयमध्ये तु ब्रह्मरन्ध्रेशकत्या च ॥ १०४॥

स्वात्मानं पुरुषं पश्येन्मनस्तत्र लयं गतम् ।

रत्नानि ज्योत्स्निनां तु बिन्दुमाहेश्वरं पदम् ।

य एवं वेद पुरुषः स कैवल्यं समश्नुत इत्युपनिषत् ॥ १०५॥

इति ध्यानबिन्दुपनिषत्समाप्ता ॥

2. Continuous Translation

Having meditated on the totality of Brahman, I reflect mentally on the remainder of my own totality, the fruit of knowledge, the essence of yoga, saying Om, may this [teaching] benefit both of us

together. Peace.

1.

Even if sin extends [like] a mountain [for] many *yojanas*, it is destroyed by *dhyānayoga*; [there has] never [been] another destroyer.

2.

The *nāda* is above the *bīja akṣara*, the supreme point. That sound, when it disappears in the indestructible, [becomes] the soundless supreme seat.

3.

That yogin, in whom the highest sound of that sound is no more, has lost [all] doubt [that] the soundless sound [is] the highest [stage of *nāda yoga*].

4.

If the point [of] a hair is divided into one hundred thousand [parts], [and] if this *nāda* is divided into half of [each] division, then when this is absorbed, [the yogin attains] the pure [state].

5 to 7.

Just as fragrance [is] in flowers, ghee in milk, oil in sesame, gold in rocks, thus one who knows the Vedas is established in Brahman, having rejected sensual pleasure [and being of] stable mind, [sees] all creatures, like a string [of] pearls, in the self. So just as the oil is dependent on the sesame and fragrance on the flower, so does *puruṣa* exist in the body, [both] outside [and] inside.

8.

Now [the yogin] knows the tree with parts [and] its shadow without parts [and that] the Self exists everywhere, in the state with parts [and] without parts.

9a.

It is declared the one imperishable sound *Om* should be contemplated on as Brahman by all who desire liberation.

9b to 13a.

Prthivī, Agni, Rigveda, Bhūḥ and Brahma are absorbed when the sound ‘A’, the first part [of] *pranava*, is attained. The region between heaven and earth, knowledge of sacrifice, air element, astral plane [and] Vishnu, harasser of men are [all] absorbed when the sound ‘U’, the second part [of] *pranava*, is attained. The sky, sun, sounds [of] the Sāmaveda and even the Great Lord Śiva are [all] absorbed when the sound ‘M’, the third part [of] *pranava*, is attained. The letter ‘A’ [is] yellow [in] colour [and] is said to be rajasic. The letter ‘U’ [is] white [and] sattvic. The letter ‘M’ [is] black [and] tamasic.

13b to 15.

He who does not know *Omkāra* [as having] eight parts, four feet, three states and five deities is not a

Brahman. It is said thus: *pranava* is the bow, *ātmā* the arrow, *brahma* the aim. Aiming carefully, he, like the arrow, becomes one with it. When the totality of this is seen, it reverses all actions.

16 to 19.

Deities [have] the power of *Omkāra*. Sounds [have] the power of *Omkāra*. All the three worlds [including] animals [and] plants [have] the power of *Omkāra*. The short [accent of Om] burns sins; the long one [is] imperishable [and] bestows good fortune. United with the half-syllable, *pranava* [is] the giver [of] liberation. Like the uninterrupted flow [of] oil [or] like the long sound [of] a bell, the end of *pranava* [is] not to be uttered. Whoever knows this knows the true meaning of the Vedas. One should meditate on *Omkāra* [as] *Īśvara* [who] is like an unwavering light, the size of a thumb [and] motionless in the centre [of] the pericarp of the lotus [of] the heart.

20 to 25.

Inhaling *vāyu* through the left nostril, filling the whole stomach, one should meditate on *Omkāra* [as] being in the middle [of] the body, concealed [and] surrounded by flames. Brahmā is said to be inhalation; Viṣṇu is said to be breath retention; Rudra is said to be exhalation. [They are] the deities of *prāṇāyāma*. One can see [them], [although] concealed, through the practice of churning, [that is] *dhyāna*, by making the *ātman* the *arani* and *pranava* the more powerful *arani*. By hearing the sound [of] *Omkāra* [and] restraining as much as possible both inhalation and exhalation, one should devote oneself to its form until one is completely absorbed in the inner sound. Those who see the lone *omkāra* [as] the form [of] *hamsa* staying in all beings, shining [like] ten million suns, ever going and coming, devoid of movement, they become free from dust. That intelligence, which [is] the originator [of] creation, preservation [and] destruction in the three worlds, becomes absorbed [in the *Omkāra*]. That [is] the Supreme Seat of Viṣṇu.

26 to 29.

Now the lotus [of] the heart [has] eight petals [and] thirty-two staminae; the sun is in its centre; the moon has gone to the centre of the sun. *Agni* has gone to the centre of the moon; the spiritual light has gone to the centre of *Agni*. The seat, covered with many gems, is in the midst of the spiritual light. [One should hold] the stainless Vāsudeva in the centre [of] this seat, on his chest the black mark [and] celebrated jewel, adorned with gems and pearls, resembling pure crystal [and] as splendid as ten million moons. Thus one should meditate humbly on the great Viṣṇu.

30 to 35.

On inhalation one should meditate on the four-armed Mahā Viṣṇu resembling the *atasī* flower [and] situated in the area [of] the navel. On retention of breath, one should meditate in the area of the heart on the Grandfather Brahman with four faces [and] a reddish-yellow lustre, seated [on] a lotus. Then, on exhalation, for knowledge of the Self [one should meditate] at the eyebrow centre on the three-eyed Śiva, stainless, destroying all sins, resembling pure crystal; Śiva, the form of all the Vedas, like the flower of the plantain tree, its face down, stalk above, nourishing the leaf [and] the flower below, the pericarp [of the] lotus filled at a hundred angles with a hundred petals and others. There one should meditate upon the sun, the moon and Vahni up high. Having moved up through the lotus [whose] consciousness resembles the Sun, Agni [and] the Moon, [and] moistening [his] heart with it, he definitely reaches the Self.

36 and 37.

Whoever knows the three seats, the three mātras, the three Brahma and the three akṣaras, or the three mātras [of] the half-mātra, he [has] the knowledge of the Vedas. Whoever knows [that that which] has surpassed *bindu*, nāda [and] *kalā* [is] uninterrupted like a stream [of] oil [and] as long as the sound [of] a bell, he [has] the knowledge of the Vedas.

38 to 40.

Just as a man draws up water through the hollow stalk [of] a lotus, so should the yogin, established on the path of yoga, draw in the breath. Having made the seed vessel [of] the lotus flower in the form of *ardhamātrā*, he should draw [the breath] through the stalk of the *mātrā*, [and] absorb [it] at the eyebrow centre. He should know [that] the seat [of] nectar [is] the base of the nose as well as at the eyebrow centre in the forehead. This [is] the great abode [of] the Supreme Spirit.

41.

Postures, restraint of breath, withdrawal of the senses; concentration, meditation and self-realisation: these are the six limbs of yoga.

42 and 43a.

[There are] as many living creatures as [there are] postures, and the Great Lord recognises their incomparable differences. It is said [that] *siddha*, *bhadra*, as well as *simha* and *padma* [are] the four [main postures].

43b to 50a.

[The site of] the first cakra [is] the base [and] the second [is] *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Between these two is said [to be] the site of *yoni* in the form of *Kāma*. [There is] a four-petalled lotus in the site of the anus, called the base [cakra]. In the middle of it is said [to be] the yoni called Kāma, extolled by the *siddhas*. In the centre of the yoni stands the *lingam*, facing west [and] split at the top like a precious stone. Whoever knows [this is] a knower of yoga. A quadrangular figure, [in] the form [of] molten gold [and] flashing like streaks of lightning, [is] situated above agni [and] below the genital organ. Prāṇa, whose seat is *Svādhiṣṭhāna*, arises with its own sound. Thus the cakra *Svādhiṣṭhāna* is even referred to as the genital organ. That cakra [within] the orb of the navel, where the body [is] filled with air like jewels with a string, is called *Maṇipūra*, city of jewels. The *jīva*, governed by [its] pure [and] sinful [actions], spins about in [this] great cakra [of] twelve spokes as long as it does not experience [its] true state.

50b to 53.

Above the genital organ [and] below the navel is a knot like a bird's egg. From there arise seventy-two thousand nāḍīs. Of these thousands of nāḍīs, seventy-two are recognised. Of these it is declared [there are] ten main ones [which] carry the prāṇas. The ten are said to be the triplicate idā, piṅgalā and suṣumnā, and gāndhārī, hastijihvā and pūṣā as well as yaśasvinī, alambusā, kuhūratra [and] śāṅkhinī.

54 to 58a.

Thus the cakra containing the nāḍīs should always be understood by the yogin. The three nāḍīs, idā, piṅgalā [and] suṣumnā, [whose] deities [are] the Moon, Sun [and] Agni, are said to carry the prāṇas continuously. Idā is on the left side, pingalā on the right and suṣumnā in the middle. They are known to be the flowing paths of prāṇa. *Prāṇa*, *Upāna*, *Samāna*, *Udāna* and then *Nāga*, *Kūrma*, *Kṛkaraka*, *Devadatta* and *Dhananjaya*: the first five are called prāṇas, [and] the five beginning with Nāga [are]

called] *vāyavas*. These forms of life move along the thousands of nādīs.

58b to 61a.

Jīva, [being] dependent on prāṇa and apāna, spreads downwards [and] upwards. Because it fluctuates between the left and right paths, one cannot see [it]. Just as a ball bounces up, [after] being thrown down with the stick in one's hand, so the jīva, hurled about [by] prāṇa and apāna, cannot rest. Prāṇa draws [itself] from apāna, and apāna draws [itself] from prāṇa, it is said like a bird from a rope. Whoever knows this is a knower of yoga.

61b to 65a.

Jīva goes out with the sound Ha, [and] enters again with the sound Sa, thus always repeating that mantra *Hamsa Hamsa*. Jīva always repeats this mantra twenty-one thousand six hundred times day and night, *ajapā gāyatrī* by name, forever giving liberation to the yogin. A man is freed from sins simply by the thought of it. Neither in the past nor in the future [is there] a science equal to this, a *japa* equivalent to this [or] a virtuous act level with this.

65b to 68.

Parameśvarī sleeps, having covered with her mouth that door through which way leads to the untainted place of Brahma. [Then] awakened by the union of agni with manas [and] prāṇa, having taken a needle-like quality, she passes upwards through suṣumnā. Just as with a key, the yogin should open [this] door with full force [and] split the door to liberation by means of the kuṇḍalinī.

69.

Folding the hands firmly, then fixed in *padmāsana*, placing the chin firmly on the chest and *dhyāna* on the mind, [one should] repeatedly raise the vital air upwards, inhale forcefully, and then release the prāṇa. A man [obtains] unequalled wisdom through [this] splendid śakti.

70.

The yogin who, seated in padmāsana, inhales [and] restrains the breath at the doors of the nādīs, is without doubt liberated here.

71 to 73.

Having wiped from the limbs the sweat produced by fatigue, forgoing [food which is] pungent [and] causes one to salivate, the yogin [who is] wholly devoted to yoga, loves to drink milk, [is] celibate [and] eats moderately, becomes a *siddha* in just over a year. No investigation needs to be done in this respect. [When] kuṇḍalinī śakti [is] up in the throat, [then] apāna [and] prāṇa are united, ending [the production of] urine [and] faeces, [and] the yogin receives siddhis.

74 and 75a.

Even an old person becomes young through constant mūlabandha. Pressing the yoni with part [of] the heel, one should contract the anus, while raising the apāna upwards: this is called mūlabandha.

75b to 77.

Just like the great bird [which] flies upwards unwearied, such is *uddiyāna*. Therefore it is considered a

bandha. One should put the western area of the stomach above the navel. This *uddiyāna bandha* [is] a lion [to] the elephant [of] death, since it binds the water [which], produced in the head, flows down.

78 and 79a.

In that way *jālandhara bandha* destroys the suffering of a multitude of karmas. When *jālandhara bandha* is performed, indicated by contraction of the throat, nectar does not fall in the fire, nor does the *vāyu* spread.

79b to 82a.

When the tongue, inverted, enters the cave of the skull, there is *khecarī*, the mudrā of sight concealed in the eyebrow [centre]. Whoever knows about this *khecarī* mudrā has neither sickness, nor death, nor sleep, nor hunger [or] thirst, nor fainting. Whoever does *khecarī* mudrā is neither afflicted by disease nor bound to *karma*, nor constrained by time.

82b to 86a.

Because the mind moves in space [and] the tongue has entered [this] space, therefore this mudrā of the name *khecarī* is worshipped by the seers. When the uvula [is pushed] upwards by *khecarī* mudrā, the bindu does not flow down, even when in the embrace [of] a lovely woman. Where is the fear [of] death, as long as the bindu stays in the body? As long as *khecarī* mudrā is held, then the bindu does not leave. Even when the bindu arrives at the ring of the yoni, contained there, it travels upwards through the forceful effort of *yoni mudrā*.

86b to 91a.

So this bindu [is] of two kinds, white [and] red. The white one is thus called *śukra* [and] the red is said [to have] much *rajas*. The *rajas* located in the area of the yoni looks like a column of coral. The bindu remains in the seat of the moon. The union of these two [is] very rare. The highest form can be reached through the coming together of these two: the Śiva energy [of] bindu [which is] the sun [and] the Śakti energy of bindu [which is] the moon. When *rajas* is directed heavenwards by the movement of the power of *vāyu*, then the body, approaching the unity [of] the sun's eclipse, becomes divine. *Śukla* is united with the moon; *rajas* is connected with the sun: whoever understands the merging of the two, that person is a knower of yoga.

91b to 93.

The cleansing of waste matter, the union of the moon with the sun, the drying of fluids, [this] is called the true *mahā mudrā*. Pressing the jaw down on the chest, and the hollow of the yoni with the left foot, then holding with both hands the stretched out right leg, having filled the whole abdomen with the breath, one should slowly exhale. This [is] indeed the *mahā mudrā*, said to destroy the sins of men.

94.

Now I shall describe in detail the *atman*. In the seat of the heart is a lotus [with] eight petals. In its centre abides the *jīvātman* in the form of a bright light, atomic in size [and] shaped as a circle. In it is placed everything. It knows everything. It does everything. It behaves thus: I am the doer. I am the enjoyer. [I am] happy, sad, one-eyed, lame, deaf, mute, thin, stout. In this way it exists independently.

[When] it rests on the eastern petal [which is] white [in] colour, then it is inclined to righteousness

together with devotion. When it rests on the south-eastern petal [which is] red [in] colour, then it is inclined to sleep [and] sloth. When it rests on the southern petal [which is] black [in] colour, then it is prone to hatred [and] anger. When it rests on the south-western petal [which is] blue [in] colour, then it is prone to sinful [and] violent actions. When it rests on the western petal [which is of] a crystal colour, then it is inclined to play [and] entertainment. When it rests on the north-western petal [which is of] a ruby colour, then it is inclined to walking, wandering [and] detachment. Whenever it rests on the northern petal [which is] yellow [in] colour, then its mind is happy [and] loving. When it rests on the north-eastern petal [which is] a deep, celestial blue, then it is inclined to compassion [and] donations etc. When it settles on the junctures [of the petals], then there is severe

disease [due to] an excess of wind, bile [or] phlegm. When it stays in the middle, then it knows everything, sings, dances, recites [and] is blissful. When the eye is in pain, in order to remove the pain [it makes] first an outline the colour [of] the bandhuka flower, then goes into the state of sleep. In the middle of the sleeping state is the dreaming state. In the midst of the dreaming state it creates the ideas relating to perception, memory, possibility, words and so on. Then there is pain etc. In order to have the pain removed, having made a second circular line, it sinks in the middle. The second circle is the colour of the insect Indragopa.

In deep sleep there is one thought [which] relates to the Supreme Being alone. [This state] has the quality [of] eternal wisdom, [which] it attains later through the nature [of] the Supreme Being. Having made a third circular line, it sinks in the middle. The third circle [is] a ruby colour. Then comes the fourth state. In the fourth state there is connection with the Supreme Spirit alone, becoming the nature of eternal wisdom. Then one should gradually await [the intuition] of *buddhi* with constancy and resolution. Having contained the mind [in] the ātman, one should think of nothing else. Having united prāṇa and apāṇa, one focuses one's aim on the whole universe through the nature of the atman. When [one is in] the state beyond the fourth, then one experiences everything [as] bliss [and] is beyond duality. One stays there as long as there is wearing of the body. Next one attains the nature [of] the Supreme Spirit. Through this means there is liberation. The approaches to knowing the ātman are surely this.

The Imperishable One is seen through the breath, entering the great hole [where] four paths meet, [and] the half triangle [which] abide together.

95 to 97a.

Above the area [of] the aforesaid triangle, one should meditate on the five letters [of] earth and the other [elements], the five vital airs [of] prāṇa etc, and the colour and position [of their] seeds. The letter य ya [is] the seed of prāṇa, and resembles a blue cloud. The letter र ra [is] the seed of agni, [is of the vital air] apāṇa, and resembles the sun. The letter ल la, the form of *prthivi*, [is of] vyāṇa, resembling the bandhuka flower. The letter व va [is] the seed of jīva [of] udāna, and the colour of a conch. The letter ह ha [is] the form of *ākāśa*, [of] samāna, and [has] the radiance of crystal.

97b to 99a.

[The vital energies] located in the heart, navel, nose, ears, feet and fingers etc flow in the seventy-two thousand nāḍīs, are in the two hundred and eighty million hair-pores, [and] yet [is] one and the same energy. This [is] indeed the one jīva.

99b to 105.

[With] a strong [and] concentrated mind, one should do the three: exhalation etc. Slowly drawing in the whole [breath] and contracting the throat [and] genital organ, joining together prāṇa and apāna in the cave [of] the lotus [of] the heart, one should chant the praṇava. From mūlādhāra is suṣumnā, resembling the radiant thread [of] the lotus. The subtle nāda rises up the spinal column, and its sound [from] the middle [is] like [that] of a conch etc. [When] it enters the opening [of] the ether, the sound is that of a peacock. In the middle [of] the cavity [of] the skull between the four doors, shines the ātman, just like the sun in the sky. Then between the two bows in the fontanelle, one sees puruṣa with śakti [as] one's own ātman. There the individual mind becomes absorbed. That person attains final liberation who understands gems, moonlight, nāda, bindu [and] the seat of Maheśvara. Thus speaks the Upaniṣad.

Thus concludes the Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Swami Satyadharma was a senior sannyasin, a yoga acharya, and a versatile teacher of yogic meditation and allied philosophies, having a Master of Arts in Yoga Philosophy with First Class Honors from Bihar Yoga Bharati, India. She wrote the commentary on the *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad*, while living in India, which was published by Yoga Publications Trust in 2003. In 2015 she published her commentary on *Yoga Tattwa Upanishad*, in 2018 her commentary on *Yoga Darshan Upanishad*, and in March 2019 her commentary on *Yoga Kundali Upanishad*.

Born in Connecticut USA, she lived in India for over 35 years under the direct tutelage of her yoga master, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, where she imbibed the traditional yogic teachings, and became Director of the Department of Undergraduate Studies at Bihar Yoga Bharati. She has compiled and edited many major yoga publications, such as *Yoga Darshan*, *Sannyasa Darshan*, *Dharana Darshan* and the *Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. Her final years were spent in Australia, where she brought to light the ancient teachings of yoga in the form of the Yoga Upanishads.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR



Srimukti (Ruth Perini) was for many years a teacher of yoga and meditation. Already a linguist, having graduated in French, Italian and Japanese from the Universities of Sydney and Queensland, Australia, she undertook four years of studies in Sanskrit at the Australian National University (ANU) with Dr McComas Taylor. She was invited to join the Golden Key International Society for outstanding academic achievement, as she was awarded High Distinctions throughout her Sanskrit studies. She is the translator of *Yoga Tattwa Upanishad*, *Yoga Darshana Upanishad*, and *Yoga Kundali Upanishad*, commentaries by Swami Satyadharma.

Ruth (Srimukti) may be contacted on yoga.upanishads@yahoo.com.

Yoga Darshana Upanishad

Ancient Insight into the System of Ashtanga Yoga

Swami Satyadharma Saraswati



Translated by Ruth Perini (Srimukti)

Yoga Upanishad Series

Volume 3

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Yoga Upaniṣad Series

Volume 3

Yoga Darśana Upaniṣad

Ancient Insight into the System of Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

Original Sanskrit text with
Transliteration, Translation and Commentary

Swāmī Satyadharma Saraswatī

Sannyāsī Śrimukti (Ruth Perini)

Dedication

**To all friends, practitioners and teachers of yoga,
and to all seekers of spiritual wisdom,
regardless of time or place, creed, gender, age or race**

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Ahimsā, non-violence

Satyam, truth

Asteya, honesty

Brahmacarya, abstinence

Dayā, kindness

Arjavam, straight-forwardness

Kṣamā, patience

Dhṛti, equanimity

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Introduction

Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘knowledge’. In the context of the Vedas, it means ‘revealed knowledge which is *śruti*, ‘heard’ from within, not taught. These ancient spiritual texts or hymns, through which we can learn much of the perceptions and insights of the early vedic seers, are grouped into four *samhitas* or collections: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. They were revealed to enlightened beings 3,000 to 4,500 years ago or more (the Rig-Veda contains astronomical references describing occurrences in 5,000 to 3,000 BCE), and transmitted orally by the sages from generation to generation within brahmin families.

The four Vedas were considered to be divine revelations, and each word was carefully memorised. This was to ensure accurate transmission, but also because each syllable was considered to have spiritual power, its source being the supreme, eternal sound. This was a mammoth task, as there are 20,358 verses in the four Vedas, approximately two thousand printed pages. They were composed in fifteen different metres, which demanded perfect control of the breath. Georg Feuerstein describes them as ‘a composite of symbol, metaphor, allegory, myth and story, as well as paradox and riddle’ and their composers as ‘recipients and revealers of the invisible order of the cosmos [with] inspired insights or illumined visions’¹.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest spiritual text in the world and still regarded as sacred, containing 1,028 hymns or songs of 10,589 verses in praise of the divine (*rig* or *ric* meaning ‘praise’). Each hymn is recognised as a *mantra*, a sacred sound vibration, which releases energy from limited material awareness, thus expanding the consciousness. It is also the earliest surviving form of Sanskrit. The illumined seers composed the hymns while established in the highest consciousness, thus able to commune with luminous beings of the higher realms. There are about 250 hymns in praise of *Indra*, the divine force behind the ocean, heavens, thunder, lightning, rain and the light of the sun; 200 of *Agni*, born of the Sun, becoming the god of sacrificial fire, and over 100 of *Soma*, who gives immortality, and who is connected to the Sun, Moon, mountains, rivers and oceans. Others are dedicated to *Varuna*, who protects cosmic order; the *Ashvins*, supreme

healers; *Ushas*, goddess of the dawn; *Aditi*, goddess of eternity; and *Saraswati*, goddess of the Vedas and of music and the arts.

Yajur Veda

The hymns of the Yajur-Veda, Veda of Sacrifice, consist of sacrificial formulas or prayers, including those of an internal or spiritual nature, which are chanted by the *adhvaryu* (priest), who performs the sacrifice. About a third of its 1,975 verses are taken from the Rig Veda. The rest are original and in prose form.

Sāma Veda

The Sāma Veda, Veda of Chants, gives instructions on the chanting of vedic hymns. The majority of its 1,875 verses are from the Rig Veda; only 75 verses are original. Many of the hymns were sung by special priests during sacrificial rites. Some are still sung today.

Atharva Veda

The Atharva Veda, named after the seer Atharvan, whose family were great seers in vedic times, contains 731 hymns of 5,977 verses, about one fifth of which are from the RigVeda. Much of the Atharva Veda consists of magical spells and charms for gaining health, love, peace and prosperity, or taking revenge on an enemy. Possibly for this reason, the Atharva Veda was either not accepted by the orthodox priesthood, or not given the same standing as the other Vedas.

The vedic people and their culture

The vedic people lived for over 2,500 years mainly along the banks of the Saraswati River, which was located in Northern India between the modern Ravi and Yamuna Rivers down to what is now the desert of Rajasthan. The Saraswati River dried up in about 1,900 BCE due to tectonic upheavals. Other areas of habitation included the Ganges River and its tributaries, rivers in Afghanistan (previously called Gandhara), the Himalayas and Mount Kailash in Tibet.

The vedic people had a complex multi-tiered view of the universe, in which humankind, nature and the divine are intertwined and interrelated. They had a deep knowledge of the oceans, mountains, deserts and forests of the physical world, as well as of the subtle worlds of deities and different levels of consciousness. People lived in cities or villages or were nomads,

and were fully engaged in worldly life. They were an agrarian people, yet also had herds of cattle, horses and camels. Cities were constructed of stone, bricks and metal. They built chariots and ships. They were skilled workers in gold, metal, clay, stone, wood, leather and wool, and showed a very high standard in arts, crafts, astrology, medicine, music, dance and poetry.

After the Vedas

The Vedas were the foundation for the later revelations (*śruti*) in the *Brāhmaṇas* (ritual texts), the *Āranyakas* (texts on rituals and meditation for forest-dwelling ascetics) and the *Upaniṣads* (esoteric texts). Later still, the Vedas were the basis for numerous works of remembered or traditional knowledge, known as *smṛti*, including the epics: i.e. the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas*, and the *Sūtras*, or threads of knowledge, e.g. *Yoga Sūtras*. All these texts contain many concepts and practices, which come directly from the four Vedas.

Upaniṣads

The word *upaniṣad* is comprised of three roots: *upa* or ‘near’, *ni* or ‘attentively’, and *sad*, ‘to sit’. The term describes the situation in which these unique texts were transmitted. The students or disciples sat near the realized master and listened attentively, as he expounded his experiences and understanding of the ultimate reality. These teachings are said to destroy the ignorance or illusion of the spiritual aspirant in regard to what is self and non-self, what is real and unreal, in relation to the absolute and relative reality. Only disciples were chosen, who had persevered in *sādhana catuṣṭaya*, the four kinds of spiritual effort, viz. *viveka* (discrimination between the permanent and impermanent), *vairagya* (non-attachment), *sadsampatti* (six virtues of serenity, self-control, withdrawal of the senses, endurance, perfect concentration and strong faith) and *mumukṣutva* (intense desire for liberation).

The Upaniṣads are derived from the Āranyakas, because they were chanted in the forest (*āranya*) after the aspirant had retired from worldly life. They are recorded in the later form of Sanskrit used in the Brāhmaṇas, and considered the last phase of *śruti*, vedic revelation. The Upaniṣads are regarded as *vedānta*, the end of the Vedas, inferring that *vedānta* is the end

or completion of all perceivable knowledge, as they guide the aspirant beyond the limited mind to the *ātman* (spiritual self) and thus to *mokṣa* (liberation). Each *upaniṣad* reflected the teachings and tradition of a realized master, and was connected with a specific *Veda* and vedic school. It is estimated that there are over 200 *Upaniṣads*, which have been divided into seven groups: *Major*, *Vedānta*, *Śaiva*, *Śakta*, *Vaiśnava*, *Sannyasa* and *Yoga*.

Yoga Upaniṣads

The twenty one *Yoga Upaniṣads* give an understanding of the hidden forces in nature and human beings, and describe esoteric yogic practices by which these forces can be manipulated and controlled. They emphasise that the inner journey to the one permanent reality, the *ātman*, is the essential one. Journeys to external places, such as holy sites and temples, as well as rituals and ceremonies, are not given importance. Their teachings give important information on the subtle body (*cakras*, *koṣas*, *prāṇa*, *kuṇḍalinī*, meditative states), and the tantric and yogic techniques, not given in the earlier *upaniṣads*, to attain them. Therefore, they are regarded as a significant integration of *Vedanta* and *Tantra*, which were previously considered incompatible. They are classified as ‘minor’ only because they postdate Adi Shankara.

Although their teachings actually predate Patañjali, the *Yoga Upaniṣads* were codified after the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, and form an important part of the classical yoga literature. However, they contain no references to Patañjali or his *Yoga Sūtras*. So, although the compilation of the *Yoga Upaniṣads* is post-Patañjali, the *vidyās*, or meditative disciplines, contained within them are pre-Patañjali. The *Yoga Upaniṣads* emerged at a time when the vedic and tantric cultures were coming together to share their knowledge. The wise thinkers from each culture sat down together and discussed how their insights and teachings could be combined in order to benefit humanity. Thus these *upanisads* combine the teachings of both tantra and yoga. It is evident in them that yoga leads to *vedānta*, and *vedānta* leads to yoga. However, they were written down by vedantic scholars and practitioners in order to show that these *vidyās* and related practices were not borrowed from Patañjali, but were known and practised from the ancient period.

Within the twenty-one Yoga Upaniṣads are six sub-groups which have their own main focus. The *Bindu Upaniṣads*, which include the *Amṛta-Bindu* (also known as the *Brahma-Bindu-Upaniṣad*), *Amṛta-Nada-Bindu*, *Nada-Bindu*, *Dhyāna-Bindu* and *Tejo-Bindu-Upaniṣads*, all concentrate on the bindu, the source or origin of all sound, and hence of creation. Bindu represents the transcendental sound manifested in the mantra *Aum*. The *Hamsa-Mantra*, *Soham*, is the main practice of the *Hamsa*, *Brahma-Vidya*, *Mahavakya* and *Paśupata-Brahma-Upaniṣads*. Concentration on *prāṇa*, the life force related to the process of inhalation and exhalation, brings the yogin to the knowledge of the transcendental self. The light of pure consciousness, which the enlightened irradiate is the theme of the *Advaya-Taraka* and *Mañḍala-Brahmana-Upaniṣads*. The *Kṣurika-Upaniṣad* (*kṣurika* meaning ‘dagger’) emphasises non-attachment as a means to liberation. The sixth group, comprised of eight late Yoga Upaniṣads from 1200 to 1300 A.D., covers teachings related to hatha and kundalini yogas. They are the *Yoga-Kuṇḍalī*, *Yoga-Tattwa*, *Yoga-Śikhā*, *Varāha*, *Śāndilya*, *Tri-Śikhi-Brahmana*, *Yoga-Darśana* and *Yoga-Chūḍāmani Upaniṣads*.

Yoga Darśana Upaniṣad

This concise and complete text on *aṣṭāṅga* yoga consists of the teachings given to the sage Sāṃkṛti by his guru, Lord Dattātreya. The word *darśana* comes from the word *drś* ‘to see’. *Yoga darśana* means an understanding or insight into the system of yoga. Sāṃkṛti asks Dattātreya to describe the eight-limbed path of yoga, so that he can become a *jivanmukta*, liberated while still living. Dattātreya is regarded as an *avatāra*, a human manifestation of the divine, embodying the qualities of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

There are ten sections in this upaniṣad, comprising 220 verses in total. In the first and second sections, Dattātreya describes the ethical foundation of yoga: *yama*, the rules of behaviour with others, and *niyama*, rules of personal discipline. The third section deals with the nine major *āsanas* and their benefits. They are *swastikāsana*, *gomukhāsana*, *padmāsana*, *vīrāsana*, *simhāsana*, *bhadrāsana*, *muktāsana*, *mayurāsana* and *sukhāsana*. The fourth section gives a description of the subtle body, also known as the pranic body, which gives energy and life to the physical body and all of its organs and systems. It includes the *nādīs*, *kuṇḍalinī*, the ten *prāṇas*, the

inner pilgrimage sites, the vision of the inner Śiva, and absorption into the supreme consciousness through insight into Brahma. It also relates the circulation of the life force in the body to the course of the sun through the zodiac.

The fifth section is on *prāṇāyāma*, how to purify the *nādīs* through the practice of *nādī śodhana*, the signs of *nādī* purification, and finally knowledge of the true self. In the sixth section Dattātreya continues explaining the system of *prāṇāyāma* and combines the practice with the three components of *Aum*, or the *pranava*. He outlines the effects and benefits of this practice, and further recommends *sanmukhi mudra* as a way to control *prāna*. The seventh section concerns *pratyāhāra*, the first stage of meditation, withdrawal of the senses. It gives techniques for inducing *pratyāhāra*, explains their benefits, and the effect of *pratyāhāra*, according to *vedānta*. The eighth section deals with the second stage of meditation, *dhāranā*, concentration. It begins with the practice of concentrating on the five elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth, and concludes with concentration on the self. These tantric teachings on *pratyāhāra* and *dhāranā* are unique, and will not be found in other texts on yoga or meditation.

The topic of the ninth section is *dhyāna*, spontaneous meditation, which arises only after *pratyāhāra* and *dhāranā* have been mastered. Here Dattātreya describes *dhyāna* on Brahma, both with attributes and without attributes, and then the results of this meditation. In section ten Dattātreya explains the nature of *samādhi*, the eighth limb of raja yoga, the realisation of the identity of the individual self with the supreme self.

In the current time, yoga has become a common household word, and the practices of yoga have proliferated around the world. Many kinds of yoga teacher training courses are offered in different countries and languages. Some are intensive and include the philosophy and psychology of yoga in the context of human experience. Others are short and give a very superficial explanation and experience of basic yoga postures. This translation and commentary on the Yoga Darśana Upaniṣad offers an essential key to the origin and background of yoga, which will give the modern student, practitioner and scholar a deeper understanding of the vast

scope of yoga, and how the system and practices have evolved from ancient times.

It is our hope that by the sincere study of this and other classical texts on yoga, the modern practitioners and teachers will be able to connect with the roots of yoga, which go back in time to the very dawn of human civilization. By connecting with the antiquity of yoga, a new vision emerges in which one begins to see the highest aspirations that the yogis of old cherished in their hearts, not only for the peace and wellbeing of all, but for enlightenment and immortality.

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दर्शनोपनिषत्
Darśanopaniṣat

आप्यायन्तु । इति शान्तिः
āpyāyantu iti śāntih

Let these verses bring fulfilment.
Thus [there will be] peace.

प्रथमः खण्डः
prathamah khaṇḍah

First Section

जीवन्मुक्तिसाधनं अष्टाङ्गयोगः
jīvanmuktisādhanam aṣṭāṅgayogaḥ
Aṣṭāṅga yoga is the sādhana of the jivanmukta.

Verse 1: Dattātreya, avatar and illumined teacher

दत्तात्रेयो महायोगी भगवान्भूतभावनः ।
चतुर्भुजो महाविष्णुर्यागसाभ्राज्यदीक्षितिः ॥१॥
dattātreyo mahāyogī bhagavānbhūtabhāvanah
caturbhujō mahāviṣṇuryāgasābhrājyadīkṣitih (1)

Anvay

mahāyogī: great yogin; *dattātreyah*: *bhagavān*: blessed one; *bhāvanah*: promotes the welfare of; *bhūta*: all living beings; *caturbujah*: four-armed; *mahā-viṣnuh*: Great Viṣṇu; *dīkṣitih*: initiated; *yoga-sā-bhrājya*: brilliance of *yoga*.

Translation

The great yogin, Dattātreya, [is] the blessed one [who] promotes the welfare of all living beings. The four-armed great Viṣṇu initiated [him] into the brilliance of *yoga*.

Commentary

Lord Dattātreya is referred to here in the first verse of this *upaniṣad*, because he is the seer, the teacher of this *yoga*, and also a great luminary in his own right. The verse describes him as the blessed one, who promotes the welfare of all living beings. Dattātreya is considered to be an *avatara*, or direct incarnation of the *Trimurti*, combining all the divine qualities of *Brahma* (lord of creation), *Viṣṇu* (lord of sustenance), and *Śiva* (lord of dissolution) in one divine or supreme being. The name Dattatreya is a combination of two words: *datta*, meaning ‘that which is given’ and *atreya*, referring to Rishi Atri, who was his physical father.

Dattātreya is still worshipped today in South India as a divine manifestation and many legends confirm his spiritual origin. Being a human vessel for the qualities of the three gods, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva, he is said to be the blessed one, who promotes the welfare of all living beings. An ordinary person lives only for him or herself, and is incapable of blessing and promoting the welfare of all beings. Only a divine person, who is born with such an exalted aim, can live for the welfare of all others. Dattātreya is further described as a great yogi, because he was born in yoga, as a child of the great rishi and seer Atri and his wife Anasūya.

Dattātreya's mother, Anasūya, was considered to possess all the powers and knowledge of yoga that had been earned by her husband, due to her flawless character and moral excellence. She obtained Dattātreya as her third child due to a boon, which she received from the three deities, Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva, who had paid her a visit one day in her husband's absence just to check out her perfect moral reputation. When the three deities came to her door in the form of debonair young men, she invited them inside. As soon as they were seated, she immediately transformed them into tiny infants, took them on her lap, and suckled them at her breasts. After the three infant gods were nourished, she carried them outside, and transformed them back into their male forms. The three gods were so pleased by this experience that they offered Anasūya a boon, and she chose that all three of them should incarnate together as her third son, Dattātreya, who was born to her a year later.

The verse further states that Dattātreya was initiated into the highest, or illumined, yoga by Lord Viṣṇu himself. This implies that even a divine manifestation requires initiation into yoga, and Dattātreya received his initiation from the supreme godhead. Thus, as the seer of this *upaniṣad*, he is perfectly qualified to guide the yogic aspirants of all times into this comprehensive teaching on the system of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*.

Verse 2: The worthy disciple

तस्य शिष्यो मुनिवरः सांकृतिर्नाम भक्तिमान् ।
पप्रच्छ गुरुमेकान्ते प्राज्जलिर्विनयान्वितः ॥२॥

*tasya śisyo munivaraḥ sāmkṛtirnāma bhaktimān
papraccha gurumekānte prāñjalirvinayānvitah* (2)

Anvay

tasya: his; *bhaktimān*: devoted; *śisyah*: disciple; *sāmkṛtiḥ*: Sāmkriti; *nāma*: by name; *munivaraḥ*: best of ascetics; *papraccha*: asked; *guru*: spiritual teacher; *ekānte*: in solitude; *vinayānvitah*: respectfully; *prāñjalih*: his hands folded together in humility.

Translation

His devoted disciple, Sāmkṛti by name, who is the best of ascetics, asked his guru, in solitude, respectfully, his hands folded together in humility.

Commentary

This verse sets the background for the teaching given in this upanishad. The worthy disciple, Sāmkṛti, approaches the illumined master of yoga. The qualities that determine the worthiness of a disciple are herein enumerated: (i) he is devoted, (ii) he is ascetic, (iii) he approaches in solitude, (iv) he is respectful, and (v) he is humble. These are the necessary qualities for the spiritual seeker, who wishes to receive the highest teachings in yoga.

The first requisite is devotion, which is very difficult to find in most students of yoga today. Devotion means firm faith in, dedication to and love of higher consciousness. People may love the relations, things and places of the world, but they do not love the transcendent and luminous existence. Secondly, the ideal student should be ascetic by nature. This means that he or she is able to live simply, able to endure hardships, and does not have many requirements. The need for many things disturbs the mind and makes it unsuited to receive the higher teachings.

Thirdly, solitude is the main requisite for sādhana. This means that the worthy disciple approaches the master alone. He or she does not need to be

surrounded and supported by a bevy of friends and relations. Fourthly, respect is an essential spiritual quality. In the absence of respect the subtle channel, which connects the teacher and the student, remains firmly closed. If this is the case, there can be no true teaching and no worthy recipient. Fifthly, humility is a necessary requisite, because it is the sign of one who has some mastery over the all powerful ego. When ego is dominant, the teachings will fall on deaf ears.

Verse 3: The disciple's request

भगवन्ब्रूहि मे योगं साष्टाङ्गं सप्रपञ्चकम् ।
येन विज्ञानमात्रेण जीवन्मुक्तो भवाम्यहम् ॥३॥

*bhagavanbrūhi me yogam sāṣṭāṅgam saprapancakam
yena vijñānamātrena jīvanmukto bhavāmyaham (3)*

Anvay

bhagavan: o Lord; *brūhi*: describe; *me*: me; *prapancakam*: in detail; *aṣṭāṅgam yogam*: eight-limbed *yoga*; *yena vijñānamātrena*: with this knowledge; *aham bhavāmi*: I shall become; *jīvanmuktaḥ*: *jīvanmukta*, liberated while living and embodied.

Translation

O Lord, describe to me in detail the eight-limbed *yoga*. With this knowledge, I shall become a *jīvanmukta*.

Commentary

The ideal disciple approaches Lord Dattātreya, the illumined master, and asks him for the gift of *yoga*. Sāmkṛti, being a worthy aspirant, as the previous verse ascertains, requests a complete description of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, the kingly *yoga*, also known as *rāja yoga*. This *yoga* is an integral and total science in itself, which includes eight limbs, encompassing all the stages and states of *yoga*. In times of old, this *yoga* was held in highest regard. Most aspirants were considered to be unfit for this teaching, and so it was kept secret. It could only be given to an aspirant, who showed signs of unusual intelligence and merit. Sāmkṛti, being a such a disciple, requests this knowledge, so that he may become a *jīvanmukta*, one who is liberated, even while living.

Verses 4 and 5: The eight limbs of yoga

सांकृते शृणु वक्ष्यामि योगं साष्टाङ्गदर्शनम् ।

अष्टङ्गोद्देशः

यमश्च नियमश्चैव तथैवासनमेव च ॥४॥

प्राणायामस्तथा ब्रह्मन्प्रत्याहारस्ततः ।

धारणा च तथा ध्यानं समाधिश्चाष्टमं मुने ॥५॥

sāmkṛte śr̥ṇu vaksyāmi yogam sāṣṭāṅgadarśanam

aṣṭāṅgoddeśah

yamaśca niyamaścaiva tathaivāsanameva ca (4)

prāṇāyāmastathā brahmanpratyāhārastataḥ param

dhāraṇā ca tathā dhyānam samādhiścāṣṭamam mune (5)

Anvay

śr̥ṇu: listen; *sāmkṛte*: Sāmkriti; *vaksyāmi*: I will explain; *darśanam*: system; *aṣṭa-aṅga yogam*: eight-limbed yoga; *aṣṭaṅga-uddeśah*: Account of the Eight-Limbs; *yama*: self-restraints, rules of conduct; *ca*: and; *niyama*: personal discipline; *tathā*: then; *āsana*: steady meditative posture; *prāṇāyāma*: expansion of vital energy by means of the breath; *brahman pratyāhāra*: withdrawal of the senses; *param dhāraṇā*: complete *dhāraṇā*, concentration; *dhyānam*: meditation; *samādhi*: union with pure consciousness; *aṣṭamam*: eighth; *mune*: o Sage.

Translation

Listen, Sāmkriti, I will explain the system of the eight-limbed yoga. (Here follows) the account of the eight limbs: *Yama* and *niyama* and then *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, then *pratyāhāra*, then complete *dhāraṇā*, and then *dhyānam*, and *samādhi* is the eighth, oh Sage.

Commentary

Lord Dattatreya acknowledges Sāmkriti, who is also a sage in his own right, and begins by enumerating the eight limbs of yoga: (i) *yama*, external observances, (ii) *niyama*, internal disciplines, (iii) *āsana*, postures, (iv) *prāṇāyāma*, breath control, (v) *pratyāhāra*, introversion of the senses, (vi) *dhāraṇā*, concentration, (vii) *dhyāna*, meditation, and (viii) *samādhi*, transcendental consciousness.

Verse 6: The ten yamas, or yogic disciplines

दशविद्यमः

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं दयार्जवम् ।
क्षमा धृतिर्मिताहारः शौचं वेति यमा दश ॥६॥

daśavidyamah

*ahimsā satyamasteyam brahmacharyam dayārjavam
kṣamā dhṛtirmitāhāraḥ śaucam veti yamā daśa* (6)

Anvay

vid: knowledge of; *daśa yamaḥ*: ten yamas; *ahimsā*: non-violence in thought and action; *satyam*: truth; *asteyam*: honesty; *brahmacaryam*: continence, diversion of energy from the senses to the higher consciousness; *dayā*: compassion; *arjavam*: straightforwardness; *kṣamā*: patience; *dhṛti*: equanimity; *mitāhāra*: balanced moderate diet; *śaucam*: cleanliness of body and mind; *veti*: are; *daśa*: ten; *yamāḥ*: yamas.

Translation

Knowledge of the ten yamas; *ahimsā, satyam, asteyam, brahmacaryam, dayā, arjavam, kṣamā, dhṛti, mitāhāra, śauca* are the ten yamas.

Commentary

This verse enumerates the ten yamas, or external disciplines, which formed the first limb of ashtanga yoga, at the time when this teaching was given. Other yoga systems and classical texts may advocate a different number of yamas. For example, the *Raja Yoga Sutras* of Patanjali, describe five yamas: (i) *ahimsā*, non-violence, (ii) *satya*, truthfulness in speech, (iii) *asteya*, honesty in action, (iv) *brahmacarya*, abstinence or moderation in sexual conduct, and (v) *aparigraha*, non-possessiveness.

The practice of yama is considered to be an important requisite for the higher stages of meditation, because it removes mental disturbance and dissipation, caused by negative interactions within the world. In order to progress in meditation, the mind must be free from these impurities and at peace within itself. The ten yamas recommended here are: (i) *ahimsā*, non-violence, (ii) *satya*, truthfulness in speech, (iii) *asteya*, honesty in action, (iv) *brahmacarya*, abstinence or moderation in sexual conduct, (v) *daya*,

kindness or compassion, (vi) *arjava*, straightforwardness, (vii) *ksamā*, patience, (viii) *dhṛti*, equanimity, (ix) *mitāhāra*, moderate and balanced diet, and (x) *śauca*, cleanliness of body and mind.

Verses 7 and 8: Ahimsā, non-violence

अहिंसा

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण विना सत्यं तपोधन ।
कायेन मनसा वाचा हिंसा न चान्यथा ॥७॥
आत्मा सर्वगतोऽच्छेद्यो न ग्राह्य इति या मतिः ।
मा चाहिंसा वरा प्रोक्ता मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥८॥

ahimsā

*vedoktena prakāreṇa vinā satyam tapodhana
kāyena manasā vācā himsā himsā na cānyathā (7)
ātmā sarvagato ‘cchedyo na grāhya iti yā matih
mā cāhimsā varā proktā mune vedāntavedibhiḥ (8)*

Anvay

vinā: except; *prakāreṇa*: in the manner; *uktena*: declared; *veda*: in the Vedas; *tapodhana*: o austere one; *satyam*: truly; *na himsā himsā*: no violence at all; *kāyena*: in the body; *manasā*: in the mind; *vācā*: in speech; *ca*: and; *anyathā*: any other way; *ātmā*: *ātmā*, supreme spirit; *sarvagataḥ*: all-pervading; *acchedyah*: indivisible; *na grāhya*: imperceptible; *mune*: o Sage; *yā matih*: this authority; *proktā*: is stated; *vedānta-vedibhiḥ*: by those who know *vedānta*; *varā mā*: best authority; *ahimsā*: on *ahimsā*, non-violence.

Translation

Non-violence: Except in the manner declared in the Vedas, oh austere one, [there should] truly [be] no violence at all in body, speech and mind, or any other way. The *ātma* [is] all-pervading, indivisible [and] imperceptible. O Sage, this understanding is stated by those who know *vedānta*, [which is] the best authority on *ahimsā*.

Commentary

Ahimsā, non-violence, is given as the first of the ten yamas, which shows its significance. All religious and spiritual teachings uphold the importance of non-violence. Violence of any kind is to be eschewed by a sincere aspirant, whether in thought, speech or action, because it disturbs the mind and makes any practice of yoga or meditation impossible. Violence relates and gives rise to many negative emotions, such as anger,

fear, hatred and revenge. These emotions are so powerful that they may even outlive a person, and be carried on through the family line. Violence is a very powerful karma, which is very difficult to eradicate. One act of violence gives rise to another and another, and then the same act returns to harm the doer, sparking off further acts of violence.

For these reasons, ahimsā, or non-violence, is the first yama, upon which all the other yamas are based. As long as there is violence in a person's nature, the other yamas will not be established. In the absence of yama, the higher stages of astāṅga yoga cannot be attained. This verse states that there should 'truly' be no acts of violence at all, whether through body, speech or mind, or in any other way. For example, one may justify acts of violence, considering them to be necessary or right for the overall good. Or one may perpetrate violence through the agency of another, thinking one's own slate to be clean. In whatever way violence is committed, the karma of such acts will surround one like a haze of black smoke.

This haze is very difficult to purify and remove. We have all read the story of Milarepa, the great yogi from Tibet. His guru, Marpa, put him through long years of suffering and humiliation just to purify him of the violence he had done in his earlier life. Because, as long as that negative karma remained, Milarepa could neither receive nor practice the higher teachings, which related with the pure nature of consciousness. Milarepa was fortunate to have had such a great guru as Marpa, who patiently, year after year, caused him such suffering that his negative karma was completely expunged. When Milarepa was finally freed from the karma of violence, he entered *samādhi*, the transcendental state, and remained established in this state for the rest of his life.

The above verse also states that the *ātma*, the pure self, soul or spirit, residing within each person, is all-pervading, imperceptible and indivisible. The ultimate purpose of yoga is to unite with the *ātma*, even while living in the physical body. The word *yoga* itself is actually defined as this 'union'. Ahimsā, non-violence, is therefore, the first prerequisite of yoga. This is stated by those who know *vedanta*, the highest philosophy of the vedas, which is considered to be the best authority on ahimsa.

Verses 9 and 10: Satyam, truth

सत्यम्
चक्षुरादीन्द्रियैदृष्टं श्रुतं ध्रातं मुनीश्वर ।
तस्यैवोक्तिर्भवेत्सत्यं विप्र तन्नान्यथा भवेत् ॥९॥
सर्वं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म न चान्यदिति या मतिः ।
तज्ज सत्यं परं प्रोक्तं वेदान्तज्ञानपारगैः ॥१०॥

satyam
cakṣurādīndriyairdr̥ṣṭam śrutam ghrātam muniśvara
tasyaivoktirbhavetsatyam vipra tannānyathā bhavet (9)
sarvam satyam param brahma na cānyaditi yā matih
tanca satyam param proktam vedāntajñānapāragaiḥ (10)

Anvay

muniśvara: o great Sage; *dr̥ṣṭam*: [that which is] seen; *śrutam*: heard; *ghrātam*: smelt; *indriyaiḥ*: through the sense organs; *cakṣuh*: of the eyes; *ādi*: etc; *uktih bhavet*: is said to be; *satyam*: *satyam*, truth; *vipra*: *Brahman*; *bhavet*: is; *na anyathā*: no different from; *tat*: that; *param satyam*: highest truth; *brahma*: *Brahman*, omnipresent principle of existence; *sarvam*: everywhere; *ca*: and; *na anyat*: not elsewhere; *yā matih*: this understanding; *tanca*: leads to; *param satyam*: highest truth; *proktam*: as declared; *vedāntajñāna-pāragaiḥ*: by those who have absorbed the wisdom of *Vedānta*.

Translation

Truth: O great Sage, that which is seen, heard and smelt through the sense organs of the eyes etc is said to be *satyam*, as *Brahman* is no different from that. The highest truth is that *Brahman* is everywhere and not elsewhere. This understanding leads to the highest truth as declared by those who have absorbed the wisdom of *Vedānta*.

Commentary

Satyam, truth, is the second yama, described here to the sage, Sāmkṛti. That which is perceived by the senses, i.e., seen through the eyes, heard through the ears, tasted by the tongue, and so on, is said to be true. One can know that it is true by one's own cognition. In the same way, *Brahman*, the ever-expanding and luminous consciousness, is the ultimate truth, and this can be known through experience by one's inner awareness. The ultimate

truth is that Brahman, the universal consciousness, is all-pervading; it is the substratum of existence, which pervades everything everywhere. Because Brahman is everywhere, it cannot be elsewhere; it cannot be in one place, but not in another. The understanding of the nature of Brahman leads to the highest truth, satyam. This has been declared by those learned ones, who have imbibed the wisdom of vedanta, the highest knowledge of the vedas.

Verses 11 and 12: Asteya, honesty

अस्तेयम्

अन्यदीये तृणे रत्ने कानज्जने मौक्किके ४पि च ।
मनसा विनिवृत्तिर्या तदस्तेयं विदुर्बुधाः ॥११॥
आत्मन्यनात्मभावेन व्यवहारविवर्जितम् ।
यत्तदस्तेयमित्युक्तमात्मविद्धिर्महा मुने ॥१२॥

asteyam

*anyadīye trṇe ratne kāñcane mauktike ‘pi ca
manasā vinivṛttiryā tadasteyam vidurbudhāḥ (11)
ātmanyanātmabhāvena vyavahāravivarjitam
yattadasteyamityuktamātmavidbhirmahā mune (12)*

Anvay

manasā: mind; *vinivṛttih*: is free of thoughts of; *ratne*: wealth; *anyadīye*: belonging to others; *trṇe*: sacrificial grass; *kāñcane*: gold; *ca*: and; *api*: also; *Mauktike*: pearls; *yā budhāḥ*: these wise ones; *viduh*: know; *tad*: this; *asteyam*: *asteyam*, honesty; *mahā mune*: o Great Sage; *yat*: those; *vidbhiḥ*: who know; *ātma*: *ātma*, supreme spirit; *iti*: say; *bhavena*: by being; *ātmani*: in the *ātma*; *vivarjitam*: avoiding; *Vyavahāra*: action; *anātma*: egoic self; *tad uktam*: this is said; *asteyam*: honesty.

Translation

Honesty: [When] the mind is free of thoughts of wealth, belonging to others, [such as] sacrificial grass, gold and pearls, the wise ones know this to be *asteyam*. O Great Sage, those who know the *ātma*, say that by being in the *ātma* [and] avoiding action, which arises from the ego, or lower self, this is said to be *asteyam*.

Commentary

Asteya, meaning honesty in ourself, in our life, and in our dealings with others, is the third yama. It is easy to be honest, when the mind is free from desire for wealth and objects, which others may enjoy. But this is not the case for most people, including yoga aspirants. Generally, we are happy until we see that others possess more money or better things, than we do. Upon considering this lack, the mind becomes dissatisfied, and begins to plan, scheme and dream about how to acquire the desirable objects. In this verse, the objects that were valued by the people of old are enumerated,

such as: sacrificial grass, gold and pearls. Sacrificial grass was valuable, because it was often used in vedic rituals. Gold and pearls were the main form of wealth in the early days, when coin and paper currency were unavailable.

A wise person would understand that desire for wealth and possessions has a very disturbing effect on the mind. In order to keep such thoughts at bay, he would therefore restrain the mind, and practice honesty in all dealings. This honesty was called asteya, and it is an essential quality for an aspirant of ashtanga yoga. The Bible also states that it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a dishonest man to pass through the gates of heaven.

In the above verse it further states that those who have realised the *ātma*, the higher self, which is pure consciousness, have said that asteya is achieved by establishing oneself in the *ātma*, and avoiding all thoughts and actions, which relate with the lower or ego self, which is known as *anātma*.

Verses 13 and 14a: Brahmacharya, abstinence

ब्रह्मचर्यम्
कायेन वाचा मनसा स्त्रीणं परिविवर्जनम् ।
ऋतौ भार्या तदा स्वस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं तदुच्यते ॥१३॥
ब्रह्मभावे मनश्चागं ब्रह्मचर्यं परंतप ॥१४॥

brahmacharyam
kāyena vācā manasā strīṇam parivivarjanam
r̥tau bhāryām tadā svasya brahmacharyam taducyate (13)
brahmabhāve manaścāgam brahmacharyam paramtapa (14a)

Anvay

parivivarjanam: avoiding; *strīnam*: women; *kāyena vācā manasā*: in body, speech [and] mind; *svasya*: his own; *bhāryām*: wife; *r̥tau*: during her periods; *tadā*: then; *tad*: this; *ucyate*: is called; *brahmacharyam*: continence; *paramtapa*: o Supreme Ascetic; *manah*: mind; *āgam*: attains; *brahmacharyam*: continence; *brahma-bhāve*: when absorbed in the Absolute.

Translation

Abstinence: Avoiding women in body, speech [and] mind, [and] his own wife during her periods, then this is called *brahmacharya*. O Supreme Ascetic, the mind attains *brahmacharya*, when absorbed in the Absolute.

Commentary

Brahmacarya, abstaining from improper sexual conduct, is the fourth yama. This is an important restraint for yogis, and was often understood as total abstinence of sexual interaction. This verse recommends that one should avoid contact with women in general, whether through body, speech or mind. However, one's own wife should only be avoided, when she is in her monthly courses. So, brahmacharya relates with moderate and ethical sexual behavior, rather than total abstinence. In times of old, sexual relations and producing of progeny were duties incumbent on every husband and wife. And nearly every man and woman was obliged to marry from an early age. Total restraint was only considered appropriate for a renunciate, or *sannyasi*, who would have no wife.

The word brahmacharya has two roots: *brahma*, 'the ever-expanding luminous consciousness', and *acara-* 'to roam'. Hence, the term brahmacharya implies one who roams freely in the absolute consciousness. The verse also states that the mind achieves brahmacharya, when it is absorbed in the absolute consciousness. We generally associate the highest consciousness with the crown of the head; whereas the sexual act is triggered by the nether regions between the legs. Thus, the yogi who practices moderation and restraint in regard to sexual conduct is able to remain absorbed in the absolute consciousness. Otherwise, the awareness is drawn to the lower regions by involvement with the opposite sex.

Verses 14b and 15a: Dayā, kindness

दया

स्वात्मवत्सर्वभूतेषु कायेन मनसा गिरा ॥१४॥

अनुज्ञा या दया सैव प्रोक्ता वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥१५॥

dayā

svātmavatsarvabhūtesu kāyena manasā girā (14b)

anujñā yā dayā saiva proktā vedāntavedibhiḥ (15a)

Anvay

anujñā: kindness; *sarva-bhūtesu*: towards all creatures; *kāyena manasā girā*: in body, thought [and] speech; *svātmavat*: towards oneself; *yā*: this; *eva*: indeed; *proktā*: is called; *dayā*: *dayā*, compassion; *sah*: the one; *vedānta-vedibhiḥ*: who knows *vedānta*.

Translation

Kindness towards all creatures in body, thought and speech, [as if] towards oneself, this is indeed called compassion by the one who knows *vedānta*.

Commentary

Dayā, compassion, is the fifth yama. In a world of escalating greed and contention, acts of kindness become more and more rare. Here, however, kindness is not just an isolated action, but a quality or nature, which can be developed through yogic practice and purification. Kindness is an attribute of *sattwa guṇa*, the balanced or pure quality of nature. Until we develop this quality in our life, acts of kindness will always alternate with acts of selfishness and subversion, which are the expressions of rajas and tamas gunas.

It is normal for the three gunas to express themselves in life. This is why the forces of darkness often overcome the force of light. The yogi is a person who strives to live in the light, as far as possible. One method for achieving this is to be kind and merciful to all beings. In this sense, kindness becomes a way of life, a way of thinking, speaking, and acting with awareness and sensitivity towards oneself and others. We should always treat others, as we ourselves would wish to be treated. Such

kindness is called dayā, or compassion, by the saints and teachers of all spiritual traditions and religions, including vedānta.

Verses 15b and 16a: ārjavam, straight-forwardness

आर्जवम्

पुत्रे मित्रे कलत्रे च रिपौ स्वात्मनि संततम् ॥१५॥

एकरूपं मुने यत्तदार्जवं प्रोच्यते मया ।१६।

ārjavam

putre mitre kalatre ca ripau svātmani samtatam (15b)

ekarūpam mune yattadārjavam procyate mayā (16a)

Anvay

ārjavam: straight-forwardness; mune: o Sage; samtatam: continuously; ekarūpam: one form; yattad: whatsoever; svātmani: in oneself; putre: son; mitre: friend; kalatre: wife; ca: and; ripau: enemy; procyate: is proclaimed; ārjavam: straight-forwardness; mayā: by me.

Translation

Straight-forwardness: O Sage, continuously [viewing] the one form whatsoever in oneself, (in one's) son, friend, wife and enemy, is proclaimed by me as ārjavam.

Commentary

Arjavam means to be straight forward with oneself, and with all of one's associations and dealings in life. A straight person is able to see and accept things as they are, rather than as they could or should be. In thinking about how things could be, the mind becomes overworked and bent. There is often a very thin line between cleverness and crookedness. To be straight forward is an important requisite for the higher practices of yoga, because it enables one to remain in alignment with truth. Ultimately, truth relates with the one underlying substratum of existence, which we are all a part of. One who makes a habit of cleverness and deceit, will be unable to recognise this truth, whether in the relative or absolute sense.

The clever mind can never accept or rest in one view or one truth. It seeks to explore and adjust all the possible paths in order to find the best for its own purposes. In this pursuit, the mind deviates from the one and becomes lost in the many. For a person, who is not straight forward by nature, it is necessary to develop this quality by recognising the one truth

and the tendency of the mind to deviate from it in thought, speech and behavior. The above verse describes straight forwardness as the ability to perceive the one underlying form continuously in oneself, as well as in all of one's associations, ie, one's children, friends, husband or wife, and even in one's enemies. In the absence of this quality, the mind becomes bent, and is not qualified to attain the highest yoga.

Verses 16b and 17a: Kṣamā, patience

क्षमा

कायेन मनसा वाचा शत्रुभिः परिपीडिते ॥१६॥

बुद्धिक्षोभनिवृत्तिर्या क्षमा सा मुनिपुङ्गव ।१७।

kṣamā

kāyena manasā vācā śatrubhiḥ paripīḍite (16b)

buddhikṣobhanivṛttiryā kṣamā sā munipuṅgava (17a)

Anvay

kṣamā: patience; *paripīḍite*: one is tormented; *kāyena*: in body; *manasā*: thought; *vācā*: speech; *śatrubhiḥ*: by enemies; *nivṛttaḥ*: is free from; *kṣoba*: agitation; *buddhi*: in the mind; *sā*: that; *kṣamā*: patience; *munipungava*: o Eminent Sage.

Translation

Patience: [When] one is tormented in body, thought and speech by enemies, and is free from agitation in the mind, that [is] *kṣamā*, o Eminent Sage.

Commentary

Patience is a quality which was reflected more often in people of earlier times. Nowadays, we rarely find this quality in ourselves or in others around us. The fast pace, expectations and choices available in our modern lifestyle cause over-stimulation, stress and tension from an early age. Patience weakens under this constant onslaught. When we are constantly hurried and worried about the next meeting, activity or acquisition, impatience becomes our natural and immediate response. We cannot wait calmly for the outcome of one action before beginning the next.

Patience can only develop in a person, who is able to wait and remain calm, even in the midst of difficult and demanding situations. A person who is able to remain calm and accept how things unfold, without losing patience, is in control of the mind and senses. As soon as one becomes impatient, irritation sets in. At this moment, one loses control over the speech and mind, and begins to react in ways, which are often detrimental to oneself, and to others as well. Patience is the ability to maintain a calm,

cool approach, regardless of what one may hope or expect. In this sense, patience is a yogic quality, which allows one to live in harmony with the present moment, and to deal with what may arise in the best and most appropriate manner.

The above verse refers to the degree of patience required in an intense situation, where one may be faced with enemies or imminent danger. At such moments, there will be an immediate response or reaction, which may be inappropriate or even harmful. We often react before thinking or realising what we are saying or doing, and whether or not it will be beneficial. A person who is able to remain patient, even in extreme situations, has understood this reactive nature, and learned to manage it physically, mentally and verbally. Such a person becomes fit for the higher practices of yoga, because he or she is able to live yoga and apply the attitude of yoga in daily life.

Patience is also very necessary for the serious practitioner, who undertakes a regular yoga practice, or sadhana. A person who is impatient in daily life, will definitely become impatient with his or her sadhana, and begin to doubt its efficacy. This is a great block in one's progress, because yoga unfolds in its own time. The practitioner, who becomes impatient, will be unable to continue the practice with a calm and steady mind. Hence the efforts made will ultimately yield no result. In this sense, the quality of patience is like a rock in the midst of a vast and fast flowing river. It allows the practitioner to take hold and remain steady and still, even though the water of life is flowing past all around at a very rapid rate.

Verses 17b and 18: Dhṛti, equanimity

धृतिः

वेदादेव विनिर्मोक्षः संसारस्य न चान्यथा ॥१७॥
इति विज्ञाननिष्पत्तिर्धृतिः प्रोक्ता हि वैदिकैः ।
अहमात्मा न चान्योऽमीत्येवमप्रच्युता मतिः ॥१८॥

dhṛtih

*vedādeva vinirmokṣah samsārasya na cānyathā
iti vijñānanispattirdhṛtih proktā hi vaidikaiḥ (17b)
ahamātmā na cānyo ‘smītyevamapracyutā matiḥ (18)*

Anvay

iti: it is said; *vinirmokṣah*: total liberation; *samsārasya*: from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth; *eva*: indeed; *vedāt*: through the Vedas; *ca na anyathā*: and not otherwise; *dhṛti*: equanimity; *proktā*: is said to be; *nispattiḥ*: outcome; *vijñāna*: understanding; *vaidikaiḥ*: by those versed in the Vedas; *aham . . . asmi*: I am; *ātmā*: Self; *ca na anyah*: and nothing else; *iti*: says he; *matiḥ*: whose faith; *apracyutā*: steadfast.

Translation

Equanimity: It is said that total liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth comes indeed through the vedas, and not otherwise. Equanimity is said to be the outcome of this understanding, by those versed in the vedas. ‘I am *ātman* and nothing else’, says he, whose faith [is] steadfast.

Commentary

Mokṣa, or liberation, is the ultimate goal of human evolution and it is spoken of in all the classical texts of yoga, as well as the upanishads, vedas and tantras. Liberation means total freedom from all worldly associations and identifications, which form bondage, and prevent us from remembering and realising our absolute inner nature, which is pure consciousness, *ātman* or the self. As soon as we are born, our awareness shifts from a totality of consciousness to an individual consciousness that is limited by body, mind and world. This shift of awareness from unlimited to limited, from truth to untruth, is the basic cause of bondage. Henceforth, we strengthen these bonds that limit us by continual identification and involvement in a limited

world of name and form, and by believing in the permanent nature of its transient existence.

Those who study the philosophy of the vedas and upaniṣads, understand that the nature of pure consciousness is unbound and unlimited, because it is free from all worldly associations. It has no name or form. It is vast and vacuous, like the sky, without any beginning or end. The ancients experienced this pure consciousness and called it atman, the self. In relation to the universe and all existence, whether manifest or unmanifest, they called this *Brahman*, the ever expanding and illuminated consciousness. According to the teachings of yoga and the philosophy of the vedas, “I am ātma/brahma”; this is the ultimate truth. When this truth is realised, we are liberated from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth, because the bonds, which hold us into this cycle, are rent asunder.

In the absence of this teaching and realisation, liberation cannot take place. The vedas and upaniṣads provide us with the teaching, but the practices of yoga are essential to give us the actual realisation or experience of this state, called mokṣa, or liberation.

Equanimity, the ability to maintain a calm and balanced state of mind, even in the midst of turbulence all around, is said here to be the outcome of this understanding, which is attained by those who study the vedas, and who also practise yoga. Intellectual understanding must be augmented by experiential realisation for total liberation to occur. A momentary liberation may take place at different times in our lives. But total liberation requires steadfast faith in the existence of the absolute consciousness. This faith is not born of intellect, but of experience. A person may hear about a foreign land, and read all about that land. But he will only know that place by going there himself and living there for some time. In the same way, study of the vedas must also be combined with the practice of yoga in order to have the experience of “I am ātman and nothing else.”

Verse 19: Mitāhāra, moderate diet

मिताहारः

अल्पभृष्टाशनाभ्यां च चतुर्थशा वशेषकम् ।
तस्माद्योगानुगुण्येन भोजनं मितभोजनम् ॥१९॥

mitāhārah

*alpa-bhrṣṭa-aśanām ca caturthāṁśāvaśeṣakam
tasmādyogānugunyena bhojanam mitabhojanam (19)*

Anvay

mitāhārah: balanced, moderate diet; *alpa-bhrṣṭa-aśanām*: little, fried food; *ca*: and; *caturāṁśa*: one fourth; *aśakam*: relatively; *avaśa*: empty; *tasmāt*: thus; *anugunyena*: suitable; *yoga*: yogic; *mitabhojanam*: diet.

Translation

Moderate diet: A balanced, moderate diet has little fried food and one fourth [of the stomach] relatively empty. [This is] thus a suitable yogic diet.

Commentary

Moderation in food is an important requisite of yoga. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna states that the yogi should neither eat too much or too little. In yoga, balanced diet and practices are like the two wings of a bird. Just as a bird cannot fly on one wing only, a yogic practitioner cannot progress to spiritual heights by performing the practices alone. While the yoga practices may benefit those, who are unable to observe moderation in diet, their subtle effects will only be experienced by those, who follow a balanced diet regularly. The types of food recommended for yogic practitioners belong to the sattvic category, which includes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts and legumes. Dairy products were also recommended for yogis, because in ancient times the people kept their own cows and tended them with great care. The milk products produced by these cows were pure and free from harmful chemicals and residues.

The main criteria for yogic diet is that the food consumed should be easily and quickly digested. This is because a yogi needs more time for practice, and the stomach needs to be empty during these periods for optimum results. This verse, therefore, mentions that a yogic diet should

have very little fried food, because food fried at high temperatures becomes dry, denatured and difficult to digest. The verse also mentions that the stomach should only be three fourths full after a meal, leaving one fourth empty, so that the digestion process is facilitated.

Mitāhāra, moderate diet, is a great discipline that requires vigilance and discrimination. The yogi who observes mitahara on a regular basis, over years, will be free from disease and discomfort. He or she will be able to delve deeply into the practices of yoga without experiencing imbalance, obstruction or negative effects.

Verses 20, 21, 22 and 23a: Śauca, cleanliness

शौचम्
 स्वदेहमलनिर्मोक्षो मृज्जलाभ्यां महामुने ।
 यत्तच्छौचं भवेद्वाह्यं मानसं मनं विदुः ॥२०॥
 अहं शुद्ध इति ज्ञानं शौचबाहुर्मनीषिणः ।
 अत्यन्तमलिनो देहो देही चात्यन्तनिर्मलः ॥२१॥
 उभयोरन्तरं ज्ञात्वा कस्य शौचं विधीयते ।
 ज्ञानशौचं परित्यज्य बाह्ये यो रमते नारः ॥२२॥
 स मुढः काञ्चनं त्यक्त्वा लोष्टं गृह्णाति सुव्रत ॥२३॥

śaucam
svadehamalanirmokṣo mrjjalābhyaṁ mahāmune
yattacchaucam bhavedbāhyam mānasam mananam viduh (20)
aham śuddha iti jñānam śaucabāhurmanīśinah
atyantamalino deho dehī cātyantanirmalah (21)
ubhayorantaramjñātvā kasya śaucam vidhīyate
jñānaśaucam parityajya bāhye yo ramate narah (22)
sa mudhah kāñcanam tyaktvā loṣṭam gr̥hnāti suvrata (23a)

Anvay

mahāmune: o Great Sage; *nirmokshah*: removing; *mala*: dirt; *svadeha*: from one's body; *mrj*: cleaning; *jalābhyaṁ*: with water; *bāhyam*: external; *śaucam*: cleanliness; *viduh*: knowing; *mānasam*: mind; *mananam*: through reflection; *aham*: I am; *śuddha*: pure; *jñānam*: wisdom; *śauca*: *śaucam*, purity; *bāhuḥ-manīśinah*: of the very wise; *dehah*: body; *atyanta*: completely; *malinah*: impure; *ca*: and; *dehī*: embodied Self; *atyanta*: completely; *nirmalah*: pure; *jñātvā*: to one who knows; *ubhayorantaram*: difference; *kasya śaucam*: which *śaucam*; *vidhīyate*: is prescribed; *suvrata*: o Virtuous One; *parityajya*: having abandoned; *jñāna-śaucam*: purification through meditation; *narah*: man; *yah*: who; *ramate*: delights; *bāhye*: in the external; *mudhah*: fool; *sah gr̥hnāti*: who picks up; *loṣṭam*: lump of earth; *tyaktvā*: ignoring; *kāñcanam*: gold.

Translation

Cleanliness: O Great Sage, removing dirt from one's body and cleaning it with water is external cleanliness. Knowing the mind through reflection:

‘I am pure’, this wisdom is *śaucam* of the very wise. The body is completely impure, and the embodied Self [is] completely pure. To one who knows the difference, which *śaucam* is prescribed? O Virtuous One, having abandoned purification through meditation, the man who delights in the external [is] a fool, who picks up a lump of earth, ignoring the gold.

Commentary

Cleanliness is an important requisite of yoga. In fact, it is the first of the *niyamas*, or internal disciplines, recommended in rāja yoga by the sage Patanjali. It is also said that cleanliness is close to godliness. This verse clarifies that cleanliness may be external or internal. Most people bathe the physical body daily with water, which achieves external cleanliness. However, the yogi who regularly reflects on the mind, realises the inner purity of the self. The understanding that my inner self, my consciousness, is inherently pure results in internal cleanliness. This realisation that I am innately pure is the cleanliness of the wise yogis.

The nature of the physical body will always be impure, because of its elemental constitution and associations with the world, but the inner self, the consciousness, remains absolutely pristine and pure. So, the question is asked in regard to the yogi, who is able to discriminate between the outer body and the inner self, which form of cleanliness should be practised? The reply given here is the yogi, who takes pleasure in the external body and its experiences, abandoning meditation on the internal purity of the self, is a fool, who picks up a lump of earth and ignores the gold.

Verses 23b, 24 and 25: The way to know supreme consciousness

ब्रह्मात्मवेदनविधिः

ज्ञानामृतेन तृप्तस्य कृतकृत्यस्य योगिनः ॥२३॥
न चास्ति किंचित्कर्तव्यमस्ति वेन्न स तत्त्ववित् ।
लोकत्रये ऽपि कर्तव्यं किंचिन्नास्त्यात्मवेदिनाम् ॥२४॥
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन मुने ऽहिंसादिसाधनैः ।
आत्मानमक्षरं ब्रह्म विद्धि ज्ञानात् वेदनात् ॥२५॥

brahmātmavedanavidhiḥ

jñānāmr̥tena trptasya kṛtakṛtyasya yoginah (23b)

na cāsti kiṁcitkartavyamasti venna sa tattvavit

lokatraye 'pi kartavyam kiṁcinnāstyātmavedinām (24)

tasmātsarvaprayatnena mune 'himsādisādhanaiḥ

ātmānamakṣaram brahma viddhi jñānāttu vedanāt (25)

Anvay

brahmātmavedanavidhiḥ: way to know the Supreme Consciousness; *triptasya*: satisfied; *amṛtena*: with the nectar; *jñāna*: of meditation; *ca*: and; *kṛta-kṛtyasya*: having fulfilled his duties; *yoginah*: *yogin*, spiritual aspirant; *asti*: has; *na . . . kiṁcit*: nothing more; *kartavyam*: to be done; *ven*: longing for; *sa*: he; *na . . . asti*: is not; *tattvavit*: knower of *Brahma*; *ātmavedinām*: one who knows the Supreme Spirit; *asti*: there is; *na . . . kiṁcit . . . api*: nothing more; *kartavyam*: to be done; *lokatraye*: in the three worlds; *tasmāt*: therefore; *mune*: o Sage; *sarva-prayatnena*: with every effort; *ahimsā-ādi-sādhanaiḥ*: with *ahimsā* and other practices; *viddhi brahma*: know *Brahma*; *ātmānam-akṣaram*: as the imperishable Self; *jñānāt*: through meditation; *vedanāt*: through higher knowledge.

Translation

The way to know the supreme consciousness: Satisfied with the nectar of meditation and having fulfilled his duties, the yogin has nothing more to be done. Longing for something to do, he is not a knower of *Brahma*. For one who knows the supreme spirit, there is nothing more to be done in the three worlds. Therefore, o Sage, with every effort, with *ahimsā* and other

practices, know *Brahma* as the imperishable self through meditation and higher knowledge.

Commentary

The last requisite given here in this teaching is the understanding of the way to *brahmātma vedana vidhi*, which means ‘knowledge of the supreme consciousness’. This knowledge is both individual, atman, and cosmic, brahma. The supreme consciousness is not realised through work or practices, which relate with the mundane world. It is attained through deep meditation. Therefore, the practitioner, who aspires for the highest yoga, should work in the world to fulfil his or her duties and obligations in life, whether pertaining to family, society, or profession. Having achieved this, the yogi can then set aside more time for solitude to enter into the depths of meditation.

By the regular practice of meditation, the mind gradually settles and becomes quiet, in the same way that particles will settle in a glass of water, if the glass is left undisturbed. As the mind quietens, the awareness goes into deeper states of consciousness, where it becomes inundated with nectar, or bliss. Drinking this nectar of meditation, the yogi becomes satisfied, and does not feel the compulsion to go outside and do other things, which cause the senses to externalise and mingle in the affairs of the world. So, it is said that the yogi, who drinks the nectar of meditation, is satisfied and has nothing else to do.

This verse reiterates that the yogi, who still longs for somewhere to go and something to do, has not perfected meditation; he or she is not a knower of brahman, the ever-expanding consciousness. There is nothing more to be done in the three worlds for one who knows the supreme consciousness. Thus, the accomplished sadhaka is advised to make every effort to observe all the requisites of yoga, such as non-violence, truth, honesty, moderation in sexual life and diet, in order to smooth the path for immersion in deep meditation. In this way, the yogi will come to understand and to realise that the cosmic consciousness, brahma, is no different to one’s own imperishable self, ātma. I am ātma-brahma.

इति प्रथमः

खण्डः

iti prathamah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the first section.

द्वितीयः खण्डः
dvitīyah khaṇḍah

Second Section

दशविधनियमः
daśavidhanyamah

Knowledge of The Ten Niyamas, inner disciplines

Verses 1 and 2a: Ten niyamas

तपः सन्तोषमास्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम् ।
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं चैव ह्रीर्मतिश्च जपो व्रतम् ॥१॥
एते च नियमाः प्रोक्तास्तान्वक्ष्यामि क्रमाच्छृणु ।२।
*tapah samtoṣamāstikyam dānamīśvarapūjanam
siddhāntaśravaṇam caiva hrīrmatisca japo vratam (1)
ete ca niyamāḥ proktāstānvaksyāmi kramācchrṇu (2a)*

Anvay

ete: these; *proktāḥ*: are called; *niyamāḥ*: *niyamas*, inner qualities; *śṛṇu*: listen; *vaksyāmi*: I will describe; *tān*: these; *kramāt*: in order; *tapah*: endurance; *samtosa*: contentment; *āstikyam*: devotion; *dānam*: giving freely; *īśvara-pūjanam*: worship of a Supreme Reality; *siddhāntaśravaṇam*: listening to the scriptures; *ca eva*: and also; *hrīḥ*: shame, remorse; *matih*: desire for humility; *japah*: repetition of *mantra*; *ca*: and; *vratam*: commitment.

Translation

These are called the *niyamas*. Listen, I will describe these in order: (i) self-discipline, (ii) contentment, (iii) devotion, (iv) giving freely, (v) worship of a supreme reality, (vi) listening to the scriptures, (vii) remorse, and also (viii) desire for humility, (ix) repetition of *mantra*, and (x) commitment.

Commentary

The ten *yamas*, or disciplines of yoga, described in section one of this teaching, comprise the first limb of raja yoga. These disciplines are necessary to manage and curb the outgoing tendencies of the mind and senses, and protect the practitioner from negative associations, which influence and disturb the mind. The ten niyamas, as outlined here in section two, are more internal disciplines, which allow the practitioner to gain control over the senses and manage the mind at a deeper level. These ten qualities are given in the following order: (i) *tapas*, austerity, endurance; (ii) *santosha*, contentment; (iii) *astika*, faith in the highest consciousness; (iv) *dana*, charity, giving to others; (v) *ishwara pooja*, worship of the highest consciousness; (vi) *siddhanta shravana*, listening to the scriptures; (vii) *hree*, remorse or shame; (viii) *mati*, desire for humility; (ix) *japa*, repetition of *mantra*, syllables or words of power; and (x) *vrata*, vow or commitment.

Verses 2b, 3 and 4a: Tapas, austerity

तपः:

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः ॥२॥
शरिरशोषणं यत्तत्प इत्युच्यते बुधैः ।
को वा मोक्षः कथं केन संसारं प्रतिपन्नवान् ॥३॥
इत्यालोचनमर्थज्ञास्तपः शंसन्ति पण्डिताः ॥४॥

tapah
vedoktena prakāreṇa kṛcchracāndrāyañādibhīḥ (2b)
śarīraśoṣanam yattattapa ityucyate budhaiḥ
ko vā moksah katham kena samsāram pratipannavān (3)
ityālocanamarthajñāstapah śamsanti paṇḍitāḥ (4a)

Anvay

śarīra-śoṣanam: emaciating the body; *prakāreṇa*: in the manner; *vedoktena*: taught in the Vedas; *kṛcchra-cāndrāyana-adibhīḥ*: such as the penances performed according to the moon's course; *iti ucyate*: is called; *tapah*: *tapas*, austerity; *budhaiḥ*: by the wise; *kah moksah*: what is *moksha*, liberation; *katham*: how; *kena*: from where; *paṇḍitāḥ*: learned ones; *śamsanti*: declare; *arthajñāh-tapah*: understanding the sense of *tapas*; *pratipannavān*: is obtained; *ālocanam*: by reflecting on; *samsāram*: cycle of birth and death.

Translation

Austerity: Emaciating the body in the manner taught in the vedas, such as the penances performed, according to the moon's course, is called *tapas*, austerity, by the wise. What is *mokṣa*, liberation? How [and] from where [does it come]? The learned ones declare [that] understanding the sense of *tapas* is obtained by reflecting on the cycle of birth and death.

Commentary

Tapas is the practice of self-induced hardship, austerity or penance. The word *tapas* relates with heat, fire and the process of burning. All impurities are removed by fire. Tapas is performed in order to heat and temper the body and mind, so that they may be purified and capable of withstanding

the high powered energy, which arises at the time of spiritual awakening. When wood is burned, it slowly changes into ash, a pure residue. Similarly, when the body of the sadhaka is burned, it becomes thin, emaciated, light and pure.

The verse above mentions emaciating the body in the manner that was taught in the vedas. In vedic times, as in early Christian times, the practice of tapas, penance, was often undertaken in order to remove impurity and weakness, and bring one closer to the light. Different forms of tapas were prescribed in the vedas, but one of the most common methods was fasting. Here, the practice of fasting, according to the phases of the moon, is mentioned as an example. On the full moon day, the yogi would eat and drink no more than 14 mouthfuls. As the moon waned, this amount was reduced by one mouthful per day. So that, by the dark moon day, no food or drink would be taken. Then as the moon waxed, one mouthful would be added each day, until the full moon day was reached. Such practices were called tapas by the wise, and were considered essential to free one from the bondage of worldly attachment.

Freedom from worldly bondage is called *moksha*, liberation. In this verse the question is asked: what is moksha; how and where does it come from? Because most people, living in the world, do not realise that they are in bondage. So they do not understand liberation, or imagine that they could experience such a state. Therefore, the learned ones, who have realised the impermanent nature of life in this world and the futility of attachment to it, have declared that understanding the aim of tapas is obtained by reflection on the cycle of birth and death. Every being that is born and exists in this world will ultimately pass away.

Verses 4b, 5 and 6a: Santoṣa, contentment

सन्तोषः

यदिच्छालाभतो नित्यं प्रीतिर्या जायते नृणाम् ॥४॥

तत्सन्तोषं विदुः प्राजजाः परिज्ञानैकतत्पराः ।

ब्रह्मावलोकपर्यन्ताद्विरक्त्या यल्लभेत्प्रियम् ॥५॥

सर्वत्र विगतस्नेहः सन्तोषं परं विदुः ॥६॥

santosah

yaddicchālābhato nityam prītiryā jāyate nr̥ṇām (4b)

tatsamtoṣam viduh prājñāḥ parijñānaikatatparāḥ

brahmāvalokaparyantādviraktyā yallabhetpriyam (5)

sarvatra vigatasnehaḥ samtoṣam param viduh (6a)

Anvay

yā prītiḥ: when the joy; *jāyate*: arises; *nr̥ṇām*: in men; *lābhataḥ*: from obtaining; *yad icchā*: any desire; *nityam*: constant; *tat . . viduh*: this is known as; *santosah*: contentment; *prājñāḥ*: wise; *ekatatparāḥ*: solely intent on; *parijñāna*: true insight; *viraktyā*: becoming indifferent to; *labhet*: obtaining; *yat priyam*: one's desire; *vigata-snehaḥ*: free from attachment; *sarvatra*: everywhere; *paryantāt*: until; *avaloka*: one has realised; *brahma*: Supreme Consciousness; *viduh*: is known as; *param santosam*: supreme *santosa*.

Translation

Contentment: When the joy [which] arises in men from obtaining any desire [is] constant, this is known as *santosha* by the wise [who are] solely intent on true insight. Becoming indifferent to obtaining one's desire, and free from attachment everywhere, until one has realised brahma, is known as the supreme *santosha*.

Commentary

Santosa means that inner contentment or satisfaction, which is not influenced by hankering for or obtaining external things. Normally people, living in the world, are constantly influenced by their desires. They see or hear about some person, place or thing, and they want that for themselves. They feel happy when their desires are obtained, and unhappy when their desires remain unfulfilled. Therefore, when the same happiness that is

experienced from the fulfilment of desire becomes constant, irrespective of whether one's desire is obtained or not, this is known as santosha, by the wise. Such a wise person, having understood the nature of desire and its influence on the mind, aims only to attain insight into truth.

In the early stages of yogic practice, the aspirant must practice santosha, and try to develop this state of constant contentment, even when the mind may be swamped with desire and dissatisfaction. Later on, as the mind becomes calm and less affected by the influence of desire, the state of santosha comes and goes. The aspirant is able to understand and witness the state of mind while it is beleaguered by desire, and also when the mind is able to remain calm, regardless of the desire and its attainment. With the perfection of yoga, one gradually becomes indifferent to desires, and whether or not they are obtained. Such a yogi enjoys freedom from attraction and attachment in all situations in this world, until the highest state of consciousness is realised. This is the ultimate state of santosa.

Verse 6b: Āstikya, faith in the higher reality

आस्तिक्यम्
श्रौते स्मार्ते च विश्वासो यत्तदास्तिक्यमुच्यते ॥६॥
āstikyam
śraute smārte ca viśvāso yattadāstikyamucyate (6b)

Anvay

viśvāsaḥ: faith, trust; *śraute*: in the *śrutis*, revealed knowledge; *ca*: and; *smārte*: in the *smṛtis*, knowledge transmitted by memory; *ucyate*: is called; *āstikyam*: devotion, faith.

Translation

Faith in the higher reality: Faith in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* is called *āstikyam*.

Commentary

The vedic tradition is based on two types of knowledge: (i) *śruti*, knowledge that is heard or revealed directly from the source, and (ii) *smṛti*, knowledge based on what has been remembered and passed down. Through these two channels, knowledge of the higher reality has been passed down from age to age. The *śrutis* are comprised of teachings that were heard directly from sages and yogis, who experienced them in their own sadhana and meditation. When the teachings were remembered or written and then passed down from generation to generation, they were known as *smṛti*, which also means memory. Because *śruti* and *smṛti* comprise the body of vedic knowledge, which relates with the existence of a higher reality, the yogic aspirant must have faith in them. By listening to and studying these texts, one develops an understanding of the higher reality, which leads to *āstikya*, or faith. In the absence of this faith, the worldly tendencies remain dominant, and the higher stages of yoga are difficult to attain.

Verse 7: Dāna, giving freely

दानम्
न्यायार्जितधनं श्रान्ते श्रद्धया वैदिके जने ।
अन्यद्वा यत्प्रदीयते तदानं प्रोच्यते मया ॥७॥
*dānam
nyāyārjitaṁ dhanam śrānte śraddhayā vaidike jane
anyadvā yatpradīyate taddānam procyate mayā (7)*

Anvay

yat: when; *dhanam:* money; *arjita:* acquired; *nyāyā:* ethically; *pradīyate:* is given away; *śraddhayā:* with reverence; *anyat jane:* to another person; *śrānte:* distressed; *vā:* or; *vaidike:* versed in the Vedas; *tat:* this; *procyate:* is declared; *dānam:* *dānam*, giving freely; *mayā:* by me.

Translation

Giving freely: When money acquired ethically is given away with reverence to another person [who is] distressed or versed in the vedas, this is declared *dānam* by me.

Commentary

In order to progress in yoga and attain expansion of consciousness, one must be able to jump over the sense of I-ness or mine-ness. Ego is what confines the mind and consciousness within a limited, individual field. The consciousness can never expand, as long as it is confined by the limited barrier of ego. In the absence of ego, there is no I and other, just one ever-expanding existence. Therefore, *dāna*, giving freely for the sake of giving, is an important practice of yoga. Giving freely allows one to expand the boundaries of consciousness, which are held tightly in place by the ego. These are the boundaries of my life, my house, my job, my family, my friends, my assets, my expectations.

When there is a strong sense of I and mine, it becomes difficult to give anything freely to anybody, without wanting or expecting something in return. Giving with any form of expectation is not dana, because it further gratifies and expands the ego. The practice of yoga may have many outcomes, but ultimately it will lead to finer states of consciousness, which

are not accessible to mind and ego. Thus, it is necessary to practice giving freely in order to release the sense of ego and pride that arise from attaining wealth and position.

The yoga aspirant, who is able to acquire wealth through honest and fair dealings, should also be able to give it away freely to another person, who may be in distress or need. It is further recommended to give to learned persons, i.e., those who are well versed in the vedas, because they are of a spiritual nature and often have no work or substantial income. One's attitude while bestowing wealth or gifts upon another is of supreme importance. The Bible speaks of giving in such a way that the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. Similarly, the yoga aspirant should give without pride or expectation of recognition. Giving freely in order to help others is also a way to balance the karmas, and remove negativity and greed, which obstruct the access to higher yoga.

Verse 8: Worship of Īśwara

ईश्वरपूजनम्
रागाद्यपेतं हृदयं वागदुष्टा ऽनृतादिना ।
हिंसादिरहितं कर्म यत्तदीश्वरपूजनम् ॥८॥
īśvarapūjanam
rāgādyapetam hr̥dayam vācaduṣṭā ‘nṛtādinā
himsādirahitam karma yattadīśvarapūjanam (8)

Anvay

yat: when; *hr̥dayam*: heart; *apetam*: free from; *rāga*: desire; *ādi*: etc; *vāc*: speech; *aduṣṭā*: not guilty; *anṛtādinā*: lying; *karma*: action; *rahitam*: devoid of; *himsā*: violence; *ādi*: etc; *tat*: this; *īśvara-pūjanam*: *īśvarapūjanam*, worship of a Supreme Reality.

Translation

Worship of *Īśvara*: When the heart is free from desire etc, the speech is not guilty of lying [and the] action is devoid of violence etc, this is *īśvara pūja*, worship of *Īśvara*.

Commentary

In *rāja* yoga there is no mention of God, apart from the term *Īśvara*, which means the indestructible reality. *Īśvara* is indestructible, because it is unmanifest. It is the subtle reality behind the manifestation of all existence. Whatever is manifest is destructible, but being unmanifest, Ishwara is indestructible. How then does one worship the unmanifest reality, without giving it some manifest form or association, which is then destructible? The verse mentions three ways.

First, the yogic aspirant must have a pure heart, which is unruffled by desire and yearning for all the relations and objects of the world. *Raga*, or desire, gives birth to attraction. We become attracted to those things which we desire. The thought that “I want”, becomes the predominant influence and takes precedence over all other ideas. From desire, *dvesha*, or aversion, is born. I want this, but I definitely do not want that. From these two, desire and aversion, the whole mental play unfolds and the mind is never at peace. And then, fear arises, because I may not get what I want, and I may instead

get what I do not want. Therefore, the stalwart devotee of Īśvara stands guard patiently at the doors of his or her heart to ensure that worldly desires do not gain entry. When the heart is filled with desire and passion, it becomes agitated and stressed. In this state, Īśvara cannot be worshipped.

Second, speech is an important means by which one can worship Īśvara. The devotee of Īśvara strives to purify this channel by speaking the truth, because Īśvara, the unmanifest reality, is the absolute truth. In order to worship truth, one must be ever truthful. Therefore, the speech must be constantly guarded, and not allowed to utter lies or any kind of untruth, which would turn one away from Ishwara.

Third, the devotee of Īśvara should embody the principle of non-violence in thought, word and deed. Violence of any kind begets violence, and this negative karma disturbs the mind deeply. The person of violent tendency is unfit for the worship of Īśvara, which is the fulfilment of yoga.

Verse 9: Vedānta śravana, hearing the knowledge of truth

सिद्धन्तश्रवणम्
सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं च परानन्दं परं ध्रुवम् ।
प्रत्यगित्यवगन्तव्यं वेदान्तश्रवणं बुधः ॥९॥
siddhantaśravaṇam
satyam jñānam-anantam ca parānandam param dhruvam
pratyagityavagantavyam vedāntaśravaṇam budhah (9)

Anvay

iti: thus; *budhah*: knowing; *param dhruvam*: ultimate permanence; *satyam*: truth; *jñānam-anantam*: infinite wisdom; *ca*: and; *para-ānandam*: supreme bliss; *avagantavyam*: to be perceived; *pratyak*: inwardly; *vedāntaśravaṇam*: hearing and internalising the wisdom of *vedānta*.

Translation

Hearing the knowledge of truth: Thus, knowing that the ultimate permanence of truth, infinite wisdom and supreme bliss is to be perceived inwardly is *vedānta śravaṇam*.

Commentary

Nowadays, there are many texts and commentaries available on the philosophy and teachings of *vedānta*. In ancient times, however, these teachings were not readily available in written form. They were accessed directly from the learned teacher or yogi, who spoke about them to their worthy students and disciples. The *upaniṣads*, which form the main body of *vedānta*, were all originally transmitted in this way. The word *upaniṣad* refers to those teachings, which were heard, while sitting in close proximity to the seer or teacher. So, *vedānta śravaṇa* means hearing the teaching of *vedānta*. The essence of these teachings is summed up here in three parts.

The first teaching relates to inner knowledge of the ultimate permanence of truth. Most people are materialists, because they believe in the knowledge and permanence of the external world. For them, this is truth. *Vedānta* speaks of two realities: the outer experience, which is relative truth, and the inner experience, which is absolute truth. Whatever can be known in this world is said to be relative truth, because it is impermanent.

The entire manifest creation is impermanent, because it is subject to decay and destruction. Vedānta speaks of an ultimate reality, which is permanent, constant and indestructible. This permanent reality is the substratum that supports and sustains the manifest creation. Being uncreated, it is not experienced in the dimension of time, space and object. It can only be experienced and known from within, when the consciousness has transcended the body and mind, and all of the associations of the world.

The second teaching pertains to infinite knowledge. A person, who is born in the world today, is subjected to many long and arduous years of education, whereby knowledge is fed into the mind from outside and slowly ingested. This is empirical knowledge about the world; it is not wisdom, because it is neither experiential nor does it relate to the permanent truth. Vedānta is an esoteric philosophy, which is based on inner knowledge of the eternal truth of the ever-expanding consciousness. This knowledge is said to be infinite, while all other knowledge is relative and limited to time, space and object.

The third teaching is about supreme bliss. In the course of life in this world, a person is constantly subjected to varying states of happiness and sorrow, success and failure, praise and blame. Like a pendulum, one sways uncontrollably from one extreme to the other. That is because one depends on the outer world and relations for meaning and experience in life. Vedānta speaks of another happiness, which is permanent and enduring, because it is not of this world. *Paramānanda*, supreme bliss, is the quality of experience in the highest consciousness, when the awareness has completely transcended the world of name, form, and ideation. This happiness is absolute; it has no beginning and no end.

Verse 10: Hrīḥ, remorse or shame

ह्रीः

देवलौकिकमार्गेषु कुत्सितं कर्म यद्भवेत् ।
तस्मिन्भवति या लज्जा ह्रीः सैवेति प्रकीर्तिं ॥१०॥

hrīḥ

*devalaukikamārgesu kutsitam karma yadbhavet
tasminbhavati yā lajjā hrīḥ saiveti prakīrtitā (10)*

Anvay

yad: when; *karma*: action; *kutsitam*: blameworthy; *deva-laukika-mārgesu*: according to the ways of the worlds of the gods; *tasmin*: then; *bhavati*: there is; *lajjā*: shame; *sā*: this; *prakīrtitā*: is called; *hrīḥ*: *hrī*.

Translation

Remorse: When action is blameworthy, according to the ways of the worlds of the gods, then there is remorse, and this [remorse] is called *hrīḥ*.

Commentary

Many people pride themselves on doing wrong things and getting away with them. They think they are very clever, until they are caught. However, doing the wrong thing requires one to think in the wrong way. This wrong thinking and wrong action make a person crooked, and a crooked person is not a suitable candidate for the higher practices of yoga. Of course, everybody makes mistakes and sometimes one does something very bad, which is really blameworthy. Actions of a destructive and harmful nature are against the humanitarian laws and are unacceptable, even in the worlds of the gods, or luminous beings. One who commits a crooked or shameful act, should be aware of the consequences and feel remorse or repentance. If a person is sincerely sorry and seeks forgiveness for his or her wrong actions, then it is understood that such actions should not happen again. In this case, it will still be possible to progress on the path of higher yoga.

Verse 11: Mati, faith in the vedic teaching

मतिः

वैदिकेषु च सर्वेषु श्रद्धा या सा मतिर्भवेत् ।
गुरुणा चोपदिष्टोऽपि तन्त्र संबन्धवर्जितः ॥११॥

matih

*vaidikeṣu ca sarveṣu śraddhā yā sā matirbhavet
gurunā copadistō ‘pi tantra sambandhavarjitaḥ (11)*

Anvay

sā śraddhā: that faith; *sarveṣu vaidikeṣu:* in all those versed in the Vedas; *bhavet:* is; *matih:* *mati;* *ca api:* and if; *tantra:* system; *upadistah:* is advised; *gurunā:* by the *guru;* *sambandha:* connection; *varjitaḥ:* terminated.

Translation

Faith in the vedic teaching: That faith in all those teachings versed in the Vedas is *mati*. And if [another] system is advised by the guru, the connection [with him should be] terminated.

Commentary

The two main cultures and systems of spiritual teaching from early times were tantra and veda. Tantra was the earliest system, which developed during the time of *Gondwana*, before the great cataclysms of nature destroyed and reduced this enormous, equatorial continent to a tiny land mass in the south of the Indian subcontinent. The people of this culture were an ancient race known as the *Dravidians*. Later on, the *Aryan* people, who were a different race, developed the vedic system in the northern part of India. The Aryan people and way of life was guided by wise rishis, or seers, who were infused with *dharmaic* ethics and principles. The Dravidian people were a psychic race and their culture was guided by kings, who revered power and were considered to be *adharmaic*, not adhering to the ethical and universal principles of spiritual life,

During the early vedic period, these two peoples met and fought many battles for supremacy. However, the Aryan peoples were ultimately victorious, and forced the Dravidian culture into submission. Afterwards the Aryan thinkers and leaders studied the tantric system and held many

discussions with the kings and teachers of the tantric traditions. The outcome of some of these discussions can be found in the teachings of the yoga upanishads, because yoga was originally a part of the tantric body of spiritual practices. Finally, those tantric teachings which were considered beneficial for the welfare and evolution of humanity were placed under the vedic umbrella, and became a part of *Sanatan Dharma*, the eternal principles of the vedic tradition. Those teachings which were considered to be unworthy were excluded.

In the above verse, the rishi of this upanishad says that the aspirant must have *mati*, faith in the teachings of the vedas only. If the guru expounds teachings from a non-vedic system, the connection with him or her should be terminated. What is meant here by ‘another system’ is tantra, and its many sub-divisions. The body of tantra, which had existed from ancient times was very vast, and included many unsavoury aspects, which were not considered to be honourable or acceptable by the vedic teachers and leaders, although there were also many positive and profound teachings and practices to be found within tantra as well.

Thus, as often happens in the absence of discrimination, the aspirant may be mislead by the negative components, not having developed a refined sense of judgement and understanding. Therefore, the yoga which was incorporated into the upanishads and henceforth taught as a vedic science was acceptable, while the rest of the system and culture of tantra was to be avoided. This explains why today we often find texts and teachers, who refer to yoga as a vedic science.

But there are also those, who speak of yoga as a part of tantra, and we can also see the direct relationship that yogas, such as hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, japa yoga, have with tantra.

Verses 12 to 16: Japa, repetition of the mantra

जपः

वेदोक्तेनैव मार्गेण मन्त्राभ्यासो जपः स्मृतः ।
कल्पसूत्रे यथा वेदे धर्मशास्त्रे पुराणके ॥१२॥
इतिहासे च वृत्तिर्या स जपः प्रोच्यते मया ।
जपस्तु द्विविधः प्रोक्तो वाचिको मानसस्तथा ॥१३॥
वाचिकोपांशुरुच्यैश्च द्विविधः परिकीर्तिः ।
मानसो मननध्यानभेदाद्वैविध्यमाश्रितः ॥१४॥
उच्चैर्जपादुपांशुश्च सहस्रगुणमुच्यते ।
मानसश्च तथोपांशोः सहस्रगुणमुच्यते ॥१५॥
उच्चैर्जपश्च सर्वेषां यथोक्तफलदो भवेत् ।
निचैः श्रोत्रेण चेन्मन्त्रः श्रुतश्चेन्निष्फलं भवेत् ॥१६॥

japah

*vedoktenaiva mārgenā mantrābhyaśo japah smṛtaḥ
kalpasūtre yathā vede dharmasāstre purāṇake (12)
itihāse ca vṛttiryā sa japah procyate mayā
japastu dvividhah prokto vāciko mānasastathā (13)
vācikopāṁśuruccaiśca dvividhah parikīrtitah
mānaso mananadhyānabhedāddvaividhyamāśritah (14)
uccairjapādūpāṁśuśca sahasraguṇamucyate
mānasaśca tathopāṁśoh sahasraguṇamucyate (15)
uccairjapaśca sarvesāṁ yathoktaphalado bhavet
nīcāḥ śrotriṇā cenmantrah śrutaścennispalam bhavet (16)*

Anvay

mantra-abhyāsaḥ: practice of *mantra*, divine sound vibrations; *vedoktena mārgenā*: in the correct way of the *Vedas*; *smṛtaḥ*: is named; *japah*: *japa*; *yathā*: according to; *kalpa sūtre*: manuals on sacrificial rites; *vede*: ancient knowledge revealed by the divine; *dharma śāstre*: teachings on worldly duties; *purāṇake*: vedic mythology; *ca*: and; *itihāse*: great epics; *yā vrittih*: this method; *procyate*: is called; *japah*: *japa*; *mayā*: by me; *tathā*: then; *proktah*: it is said; *dvividhah* *japah*: two kinds of *japa*; *vācikah*: vocal; *mānasah*: mental; *vācikah*: vocal; *parikīrtitah*: is divided; *dvividhah*: two kinds; *upāṁśuh*: whispered; *ca*: and; *uccaih*: aloud; *mānasah*: mental; *āśritah*: uses; *dvaividhyam*: two kind; *bhedāt*: differentiating between;

manana: reflection; *dhyāna*: deep meditation; *upāmśuh*: whispered; *ucyate*: is said; *sahasra-guṇam*: a thousand times better; *uccaiḥ-japāt*: than *japa* [said] aloud; *tathā*: likewise; *mānasah*: mental; *upāmśoh*: than whispered; *yathā*: whereas; *ukta*: it is said; *bhavet*: is; *phaladah*: rewarding; *sarvesām*: in all [instances]; *nīcāih*: in a low voice; *śrutah*: heard; *śrotreṇā*: by ear; *ca*: and; *bhavet*: it has; *nispalam*: no results.

Translation

Japa: The practice of *mantra* in the correct way of the vedas is known as *japa*. According to the *Kalpa Sūtras*, *Vedas*, *Dharma Śāstras*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*, this method is called japa by me. Then it is said there are two kinds of japa, vocal [and] mental. Vocal is divided into two kinds, whispered and aloud. Mental uses two kinds, differentiating between reflection [and] deep meditation. Whispered japa is said to be a thousand times better than japa [said] aloud. Likewise mental [japa] is said to be a thousand times better than whispered. Whereas it is said *uccaiḥ japa* (uttered aloud) is rewarding in all [instances], *nīcāih* japa (uttered in a low voice) is heard by the ear, and it has no results.

Commentary

The final verse in part two of this upanishad, which describes the ten niyamas, or inner disciplines of yoga, is a discussion on the practice of japa. The purpose of the niyama is to purify the aspirant from within, so that the further stages of *āṣṭāṅga* yoga may be effective. Japa yoga is a powerful practice, which utilises sound vibration to raise the quality of the internal resonance and thus bring about a profound purification of the entire inner being. However, mantra is also a universal science, which has been known and utilised down through the ages by all traditions, starting with tantra.

From ancient times, mantras have been invoked for a variety of reasons, such as acquisition of wealth, power and position, love and progeny, protection, cure for disease, etc. Therefore, the rishi has stipulated here that only the practice performed in the correct way, according to the vedas, should be used for japa by the practitioner of ashtanga yoga. He recommends only the method of japa, which is in accord with the *Kalpa Sūtras*, sacrificial texts, vedic texts, comprising the revealed knowledge,

Dharma Śāstras, books containing knowledge of vedic rituals, *Purāṇas*, ancient texts, and *Itihāsas*, epics from early vedic times.

The rishi then proceeds to discuss the types of japa to be undertaken by the yogic aspirant. There are two types of japa: one is uttered aloud vocally and the other is silent or mental. Of the vocal type, there are also two types: one is repeated verbally aloud and the other is whispered softly in a kind of murmur that is audible within oneself alone. Of the mental japa, there are also two types: one is repeated silently during mental reflection, and the other is heard within during deep meditation.

Of the japa repeated aloud, whispered japa is said to be a thousand times better than the verbal japa. Similarly, mental or silent japa is a thousand times better than whispered japa. Furthermore, it is said that japa uttered aloud is beneficial at all times, but japa repeated in a low voice that is heard by the ears of others has no results.

इति द्वितीयः खण्डः:

iti dvitīyah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the second section.

तृतीयः खण्डः
tr̥tīyah khaṇḍah
Third Section
आसनानि नव
āsanāni nava
Nine Āsanas

Verses 1 and 2a: Nine major āsanas

स्वास्तिकं गोमुखं पद्मं वीरसिंहासने तथा ।
भद्रं मुक्तासनं चैव मयूरासनमेव च ॥१॥
सुखाससनार्थं च नवमं मुनिपुङ्गवं ॥२॥

*svāstikam gomukham padmam vīrasimhāsane tathā
bhadram muktāsanam caiva mayūrāsanameva ca (1)
sukhāsanasamākhyam ca navamam munipuṅgava (2a)*

Anvay

munipuṅgava: o Eminent Sage; *tathā*: thus; *svastikam*: auspicious; *gomukham*: cow-face; *padmam*: lotus; *vīra*: hero; *simhāsane*: lion pose; *bhadram*: gracious; *muktāsanam*: liberated pose; *ca . . eva*: and indeed; *mayūrāsanam*: peacock pose; *ca*: and; *sukhāsana*: easy pose; *samākhyam*: is counted; *navamam*: ninth.

Translation

O Eminent Sage, thus [these nine āsanas are]: *swastikāsana*, the auspicious pose, *gomukhāsana*, the cow-face pose, *padmāsana*, the lotus pose, *vīrāsana*, the hero pose, *simhāsana*, the lion pose, *bhadrāsana*, the gracious pose, *muktāsana*, the liberated pose, and indeed the *mayurāsana*, the peacock pose, and *sukhāsana*, the easy pose, is counted as the ninth.

Commentary

It is interesting to note that, while āsana has become the main focus of yoga today, in early times, āsana was utilised for sitting. All the asanas listed here are postures used for meditation, with the exception of simhasana, gomukhasana and mayurasana. Simhasana was important to alleviate problems of the throat, gomukhasana to release tension in the

shoulders, and mayurasana to maintain the digestion. The concept of *asṭaṅga* yoga was that the āsana must be firm, steady and comfortable, to enable deeper meditation to unfold. Modern day yogic aspirants are realising the importance of meditation, but they are unable to sit steadily in one posture without shifting the body every few minutes.

This inability to sit comfortably for extended periods of time impedes the practice of meditation and is considered to be an obstacle in yoga. For this reason, the whole progression of yoga āsana developed, including āsanas, for every possible type of bodily movement: forward, backward, sideways, upward, inverted, and balancing. When the progression of āsana is properly mastered, the aspirant should be able to remove the toxins, tensions and stiffness from the body, so that sitting in one posture for a long period of time becomes possible for the purpose of meditation.

Verses 2b and 3a: Swastikāsana, the auspicious pose

स्वस्तिकम्
जानूर्वारन्तरे कृत्वा सम्यक् पादतले उभे ॥२॥
समग्रीवशिरः कायः स्वस्तिकं नित्यमभ्यसेत् ।३।

svastikam
jānūrvārantare kṛtvā samyak pādatale ubhe (2b)
samagrīvaśirah kāyah svastikam nityamabhyaset (3a)

Anvay

abhyaset: one should practise; *nityam*: always; *svastikam*: auspicious pose; *kṛtvā*: placing; *grīva*: neck; *śirah*: head; *kāyah*: body; *sama*: in alignment; *vāh*: trying to put; *jānū*: knees; *samyak*: exactly; *antare ubhe pādatale*: at both feet

Translation

One should always practise the auspicious pose, placing the neck, head [and] body in alignment, trying to put the knees exactly parallel with both feet.

Commentary

Swastikāsana is considered to be an unlocked meditation asana. It is very similar to *siddhasana* (or *muktasana*) but the heels do not apply pressure to the perineum. For this reason, it may be more comfortable to maintain, but it will not raise the energy from the lower centres to the brain, as in *siddhasana*. The word *swastika* means ‘auspicious’ or ‘favorable’. The swastika is a universal symbol, which has been used by many religions and traditions from ancient times. A common analogy of the swastika is that its four limbs represent the four directions of the world, which have one common center, consciousness. Therefore, this pose can be considered as the one most auspicious for realising the unity of all existence.

Technique

Sit on the floor with both legs stretched forward. Bend the left knee and place the left foot near the right inner thigh. Bend the right knee and place the right toes in the space between the left thigh and calf. Grasp the toes of

the left foot and pull them upward between the right calf and thigh. Adjust the body so that the head, neck and shoulders are in alignment with the spine. The knees should be parallel with the feet. Relax the whole body in the position.

Verses 3b and 4a: Gomukhāsana, the cow face pose

गोमुखम्
सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु पृष्ठपश्चा नियोजयेत् ॥३॥
दक्षिणे ऽपि तथा सव्यं गोमुखं तत्प्रचक्षते ॥४॥
gomukham
savye dakṣīṇagulpham tu pr̥ṣṭhapāścā niyojayet (3b)
dakṣīṇe ‘pi tathā savyam gomukham tatpracaksate (4a)

Anvay

niyojayet: one should place; *dakṣīṇa-gulpham*: right ankle; *savye*: on the left; *paścā*: behind; *pr̥ṣṭha*: back; *api tathā*: and then; *savyam*: left; *dakṣīṇe*: on the right; *tat pracaksate*: this is called; *gomukham*: cow face pose.

Translation

One should place the right ankle on the left behind the back, and then the left on the right; this is called the cow face pose.

Commentary

In early times, most families possessed cows, and cow's milk was a main staple in the diet. Cow urine and manure were also considered to be pure and utilised in the home for promoting health and sanitation. So, it is not surprising that the yogis of old saw the cow's face in this posture. This posture removes stiffness and tension from the shoulders, neck and spine, and improves the breathing. For these reasons it was considered very useful as an adjunct to meditation.

Technique

Sit with both legs outstretched. Bend the left knee and bring the left foot under the right leg, towards the back, placing it beside the right buttock. Bend the right knee and bring the right foot over the top of the left leg, placing it beside the left buttock. The knees should be positioned so that the right knee is above the left. Hold the back straight.

Raise the right arm, so that the elbow is beside the head. The right hand should reach down over the right shoulder with the palm towards the spine.

Stretch the left arm behind the back. Reach upward and grasp the left hand with the right. The back of the left hand should be in contact with the spine. Join the fingers of the two hands. Hold the spine erect with the head facing forward.

The asana should be repeated to the other side, holding the final pose for the same length of time.

Verses 4b and 5: Padmāsana, the lotus pose

पद्मम्

अङ्गुष्ठावधि गृहीयाधस्ताभ्यां व्युत्क्रमेण तु ॥४॥

ऊर्ध्वोरुपरि विप्रेन्द्र कृत्वा पादतलद्वयम् ।

पद्मासनं भवेत्प्राज्ञ सर्वरोगभयापहम् ॥५॥

padmam

aṅgusthāavadhi gr̥hīyādhastābhyām vyutkramena tu (4b)

ūrdhvōrūpari viprendra kṛtvā pādatala-dvayam

padmāsanam bhavetprājña sarvarogabhaya-paham (5)

Anvay

viprendra: o Distinguished Brahman; *kṛtvā*: placing; *pādatala-dvayam*: both feet; *ūrdhva*: upwards; *ūrupari*: on the thighs; *gr̥hīyat*: one should hold; *aṅgusta-avadhi*: ends of the big toes; *hastābhyām*: with the hands; *vyutkramena*: turned up; *bhavet*: this is; *padmāsanam*: lotus pose; *hayāpaham*: which wards off; *sarva-roga*: all disease.

Translation

O Distinguished Brahman, placing (the soles of) both feet upwards on the thighs, one should hold the ends of the big toes with the hands turned up. This is the lotus pose, O Wise One, which wards off all disease.

Commentary

Padmāsana is considered to be the best meditative āsana, because it holds the body in a locked, upright position, even when the practitioner enters deep states of meditation, where the consciousness soars beyond the body. This is a perfectly balanced position, which is conducive to equanimity and stillness, and also facilitates the opening of *suṣumnā nādi*, the spiritual pathway at the center of the spinal column. In the description given here, the big toes of both feet are held with the hands turned upward. This refers to the practice of *baddha padmāsana*, the locked lotus pose, which is an advanced practice. Most practitioners will find this asana too difficult to achieve today. Therefore, it was traditionally reserved for the few wise ones.

The verse further states that this practice wards off all disease. This is because of the prānic balance, which is maintained in the posture during prolonged meditation. According to yoga, disease arises due to imbalance in the pranas and nadis, energy channels. By sitting in this posture regularly, these imbalances are corrected and the resulting diseases resolved. Crossing the arms behind the back further opens and extends the shoulders and chest cavity, activating the energies in this region. While grasping the big toes with the fingers creates a completely closed energy circuit, containing the energy within the body, so that there is no dissipation.

Technique

Sit with the legs stretched forward. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on top of the left thigh. The sole of the right foot should be turned upward and the heel in contact with the lower abdomen. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on top of the right thigh in the same way. Both knees should be in contact with the floor.

Stretch both arms behind the back and cross them, one over the other. Grasp the right big toe with the index finger and thumb of the right hand. Grasp the left big toe with the index finger and thumb of the left hand. The hands should rest with the palms turned upward.

Verse 6: Vīrāsana, the hero pose

वीरासनम्
दक्षिणेतरपादं तु दक्षिणोरुणि विन्यसेत् ।
ऋजुकायः समासीनो वीरासनमुदाहृतम् ॥६॥
vīrāsana
dakṣinētarapādam tu dakṣinorunī vinyaset
rijukāyah samāśīno vīrāsanamudāhṛtam (6)

Anvay

vinyaset: one should put; *dakṣinētara-pādam*: left foot; *dakṣina-ūrunī*: on the right thigh; *rijukāyah*: straight body; *samāśīnah*: comfortable; *udāhṛtam*: this is called; *vīrāsana*: hero pose.

Translation

One should put the left foot on the right thigh, the body straight and comfortable. This is called the hero pose.

Commentary

Vīrāsana, the hero pose, is an unlocked position. For this reason, it is not generally used for meditation, although it is an easy and comfortable pose, compared to the locked positions. The word *vīra* means ‘valiant’ or ‘powerful’, the ‘power to subdue’. *Vīrāsana* is actually an abbreviation for *mahāvīrāsana*. The word *mahā* means ‘great’, and *Mahāvīra* is one of the names of Hanuman, the monkey god, who was a great hero in the ancient Indian epic, *Ramāyana*. *Vīrāsana* stabilises the energy in the lower enters and enables control over the sexual energy. It also increases the willpower and strengthens the body.

Technique

Sit with both legs outstretched. Bend the right knee and bring the right foot towards the back. Place the right foot beside the right buttock, with the right big toe tucked under the buttock. Bend the left knee and place the left foot on top of the right thigh, with the sole facing upward.. The knees should be separated. Rest the hands on the knees in chin or jnana mudra. Hold the spine erect and the head and neck straight.

Verses 6i, ii and iii: Simhāsana, the lion pose

सिंहासनम्

गुल्फौ च वृषणस्याधः सीविन्यः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।
दक्षिणं सव्यगुल्फेन दक्षिणेन तथेतरत् ॥६-१॥
हस्तौ जानौ समास्थाप्य स्वाङ्गुलींरिप्रसर्य च ।
व्यक्तवक्त्रो निरीक्षेत नासाग्रं सुसमाहितः ॥६-२॥
सिंहासनं भवेदेतत् पूजितं योगिभिः सदा ॥६-३॥

simhāsanam

*gulphau ca vr̄ṣaṇasyādhah sīvinyah pārśvayoh kṣipet
dakṣiṇam savyagulphena dakṣinena tathetarat (6.i)
hastau jānau samāsthāpya svāṅgulīmripurasarya ca
vyaktavaktro nirīkṣeta nāsāgram susamāhitah (6.ii)
simhāsanam bhavedetat pūjitat̄ yogibhiḥ sadā (6.iii)*

Anvay

kṣipet: one should put; *gulphau*: ankles; *adhah*: under; *vr̄ṣaṇasya*: testes; *ca*: and; *pārśvayoh*: beside; *sīvinyah*: perineum; *dakṣiṇam*: right one; *savya-gulphena*: with the left ankle; *tathetarat*: vice versa; *hastau*: hands; *samāsthāpya*: well-placed on; *jānau*: knees; *ca*: and; *ripurasarya*: spreading; *sva-aṅgulīm*: one's fingers; *vyakta-vaktro*: with open mouth; *nirīkṣeta*: one should gaze at; *susamāhitah*: intently; *nāsāgram*: tip of the nose; *etat*: this; *bhavet*: is; *simhāsanam*: lion pose; *pūjitat̄*: honoured; *sadā*: always; *yogibhiḥ*: by the yogins.

Translation

One should place the ankles under the testes and beside the perineum, the right one with the left ankle, [and] vice versa, hands well-placed on the knees and spreading one's fingers. With open mouth, one should gaze intently at the tip of the nose. This is the lion pose, honoured always by the yogins.

Commentary

There are two techniques for performing this pose. One is simhāsana, the lion pose, as described here, which is considered to be the main practice in the classical yoga texts. The other is *simhagarjanāsana*, the roaring lion pose, which is given as the variation. In simhāsana, the lion sits silently,

waiting. This is the meditative attitude, which the yogi develops in order to enter deep states of consciousness. So, in this sense, simhasana is also a major meditation asana.

Simhāsana is a powerful posture, just as its namesake, the lion, is a powerful creature. The position of the feet in this posture creates a natural *mūla bandha* by placing maximum pressure on the perineum. The head is bent forward, inducing *jālandhara bandha*, the throat lock. The eyes are open with the gaze focused at the nose tip, further stimulating *mūla dhāra cakra*. The mouth is open wide, with the tongue extended outside, stimulating the throat and the *viśuddhi cakra*.

Technique

Kneel on the floor with both knees apart. Cross both feet at the ankles. Lower the buttock onto the crossed feet, so that the right ankle is under the left testes, and beside the perineum. The left ankle is under the right testes, beside the perineum. In women, the crossed ankles will press the right and left side of the vagina. The feet and ankles must be very flexible to achieve this position.

Place the palms of the hands on the knees and spread the fingers wide apart. Bend the head forward and focus the gaze on the nose tip, as in *nasikagra mudra*. Open the mouth wide and extend the tongue as far outside as possible.

Verses 7 and 8a: Bhadrāsana, the gracious pose

भद्रासनम्

गुल्फौ तु वृषणस्याधः सीविन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।
पार्श्वपादौ च पाणिभ्यां दृधं बद्धवा सुनिर्लिम् ॥७॥
भद्रासनं भवेदेतद्विषरोगविनाशनम् ॥८॥

bhadrāsanam

*gulphau ca vṛṣaṇasyādhah sīvinyah pārśvayoh kṣipet
pārśvapādau ca pānibhyām dr̥dham baddhavā sunirlim (7)
bhadrāsanam bhavedetadviṣarogavināśanam (8a)*

Anvay

tu: conjunction; *kṣipet*: one should put; *gulphau*: ankles; *adhah*: under; *vṛṣaṇasya*: testes; *ca*: and; *pārśvayoh*: beside; *sīvinyah*: perineum; *pādau*: legs; *pārśva*: out to the sides; *baddhavā*: holding; *dr̥dham*: firmly; *ca*: and; *sunirlim*: still; *pānibhyām*: with the hands; *etat bhavet*: this is; *bhadrāsanam*: gracious pose; *vināśanam*: which removes; *viṣa*: poison; *roga*: disease.

Translation

One should put the ankles under the testes and beside the perineum, knees out to the sides, holding [them] firmly and still with the hands. This is the gracious pose, which removes poison [and] disease.

Commentary

The word *bhadra* means ‘gentle’, ‘gracious’ or ‘blessed’. This asana automatically induces *mūla bandha*, the perineal lock, and is used for the awakening of *mūladhāra cakra*, the root psychic center. For this reason, it is also called *mūlabandhāsana* in some of the classical texts. It is an important posture for the conservation of sexual energy, and helps to tone the reproductive and eliminatory organs. For these reasons, it keeps the body free from toxic buildup in the lower regions and helps to avert disease. Bhadrāsana is an excellent meditation pose for the advanced practitioner, whose knees, ankles and feet are very flexible.

Technique

Sit with the legs outstretched. Bend the knees and bring the soles of the feet together. Draw the heels towards the body, so that the outside of the feet remain in contact with the floor. Place the palms of the hands on the floor beside the buttocks and press down, raising the buttocks onto the ankles. The ankles should be under the testes and beside the perineum, so that the heels press the perineum. The legs should be positioned out to the sides, with the knees in contact with the floor. Hold the knees firmly and still with the hands.

Verses 8b, 9 and 10a: Muktāsana, liberated pose

मुक्तासनम्
निपीड्य सीविनीं मूक्षमा दक्षिणेतरगुल्फतः ॥८॥
वामं याम्येन गुल्फेन मुक्तासनमिदं भवेत् ।
मेद्रादुपरि मिक्षिष्य सव्यं गुल्फं ततोपरि ॥९॥
गुल्फान्तरं च संक्षिष्य मुक्तासनमिदं मुने ॥१०॥

muktāsanam

nipīdya sīvinīm mūkṣmā dakṣinētaragulphataḥ (8b)
vāmam yāmyena gulphena muktāsanamidam bhavet
medhrāduparinikṣipyā savyam gulpham tatopari (9)
gulphāntaram ca samkṣipyā muktāsanamidam mune (10a)

Anvay

nipīdya: pressing; *yām sīvinīm*: this perineum; *mūkṣmā*: gently; *dakṣinētara-gulphataḥ*: with the right ankle; *vāmam*: left; *yena gulphena*: with that ankle; *idam bhavet*: this is; *muktāsanam*: pose of liberation; *nikṣipyā*: placing; *ca*: and; *savyam gulpham*: left ankle; *upari . . . tata-upari*: one above the other; *medhrāt*: penis; *samkṣipyā*: placed; *gulphāntaram*: between the ankles; *idam*: this; *muktāsanam*: pose of liberation; *mune*: o Sage.

Translation

Pressing the perineum gently with the right ankle, [and the pubis] with the left ankle, this is the pose of liberation. Placing [the right ankle] and the left ankle one above the other, with the penis placed between the ankles, this [is] the pose of liberation, O Sage.

Commentary

Muktāsana, the liberated pose, is another name for *siddhāsana*. The word *siddha* means ‘accomplished’ or ‘perfected’. It refers to one, who is accomplished in yoga through the mastery of this pose. *Siddhāsana* and *padmāsana* are the two most important meditative poses. The other meditation poses are modifications, some of which may be practised more easily and others that are even more difficult. While *padmāsana* aims at achieving total balance of the prāṇas for the awakening of suṣumnā,

siddhāsana activates the lower centers and redirects the reproductive energy upward to the brain to be used for higher meditation.

Siddhāsana also awakens *ajna cakra*, the psychic center at the mid-brain, due to the connection between mooladhara and ajna. When ajna cakra is awakened, the higher dimension of consciousness is experienced. For these reasons, sitting in siddhasana for prolonged periods is considered to bring about the meditative state in itself. Thus, siddhāsana can be called muktāsana, the pose of liberation.

Although *padmāsana* is considered by adepts to be the ultimate meditative posture, siddhāsana is easier to practise and to hold for long periods. The body is firmly locked in this posture and the feet are less likely to become numb. Siddhāsana prevents the blood pressure from falling too low, and keep nervous depression from occurring during meditation. It regulates the production of sexual hormones and is essential for those who wish to practice celibacy for spiritual enhancement.

Technique

Sit on the floor with both legs extended. Bend the right knee and place the sole of the right foot against the inner left thigh. Draw the right heel under the body, placing it beneath the genitals, so that it gently presses the perineum. Bend the left knee and place the left ankle on top of the right, so that both ankles are touching. Push the toes and the outer edge of the left foot into the space between the right calf and thigh. The left heel should press the center of the pubic bone, directly above the genitals. The genitals should lie in-between the two heels. Grasp the right toes and pull them up into the space between the left calf and thigh. Adjust the body in the posture, so that it is comfortable and the pressure of the heels is firmly applied. The legs are now locked, with the knees touching the floor.

Verses 10b, 11 and 12a: Mayurāsana, the peacock pose

मयूरासनम्
कूर्परागे मुनिश्रेष्ठ निक्षिपेन्नाभिपार्ष्ययोः ॥१०॥
भूम्यां पाणितलद्वन्द्वं निक्षिप्यैकाग्रमानसः ।
समुन्नतशिरःपादो दण्डवत् व्योम्नि संस्थितः ॥११॥
मयूरासनमेतत् स्यात् सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥१२॥

mayurāsanam
kūrparāgre munisreṣṭha nikṣipennābhīpārśvayoh (10b)
bhūmyām pāṇitaladvandvam nikṣipyāikāgramānasah
samunnataśirahpādo dandavat vyomni samsthitah (11)
mayūrāsanam etat syāt sarvapāpapraṇāśanam (12a)

Anvay

muniśreṣṭha: o Esteemed Sage; *nikṣipet*: one should put; *kūrpara-agre*: elbows in front; *nābhi-pārśvayoh*: against the sides of the navel; *nikṣipyā*: placing; *pāṇitala-dvandvam*: both hands; *bhūmyām*: on the ground; *ekāgramānasah*: mind one-pointed; *śirah*: head; *samunnata*: raised; *pādah*: legs; *dandavat*: straight; *samsthitah*: placed; *vyomni*: in the air; *etat syāt*: this is; *mayūrāsanam*: peacock pose; *prāṇāśanam*: remover of; *sarva-pāpa*: all negativity.

Translation

O Esteemed Sage, one should put the elbows in front against the sides of the navel, placing both hands on the ground, mind one-pointed, head raised, legs straight, placed in the air. This is the peacock pose, remover of all negativity.

Commentary

Mayurāsana, the peacock pose, is mentioned in this upanishad and in many classical texts on yoga, due to its powerful influence on the *manipura chakra* and the digestive system. The other postures mentioned in this section are all sitting postures, which reaffirms the verse given in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, that ‘hatha yoga leads to raja yoga’. The purpose of including this major asana here may have been for health reasons. The Indian subcontinent is hot and humid for many months of the year.

Continuous heat and humidity affect the metabolism, causing toxins and bacteria to proliferate.

In these conditions the digestive system may become a problem, especially for a yogi, who performs sitting practices for the greater part of the day. The verse describes the practice, and then states that it will remove all obstructions. Digestive and metabolic ailments are considered to be the mother of all disease. For the yogi they are a great impediment, because the core energy becomes weak and unbalanced, making it very difficult to continue or progress in sadhana. Mayurāsana massages the abdominal organs and stimulates the intestinal peristalsis. It removes toxins and develops mental and physical balance.

Technique

Kneel on the floor with the knees apart and the feet together. Lean forward and place the palms of the hands on the floor, in-between the knees, so that the fingers point backward. Bring the elbows and forearms together. Lean further forward, so that the abdomen rests on the elbows and the chest on the upper arms. Stretch both legs backward, so that they are together and straight. Slowly elevate the trunk and legs, until they are horizontal with the floor. Hold the head up, facing forward. In the final pose, the whole body is balanced only on the palms of both hands. The weight of the body is supported by the muscles of the abdomen, and not by the chest.

Verses 12b and 13a: Sukāsana, the easy pose

सुखासनम्
येन केन प्रकारेण सुखं धैर्यं च जायते ॥१२॥
तत् सुखासनमित्युक्तमशक्तस्तत् समाश्रयेत् ।१३।
sukhāsanam
yena kena prakāreṇa sukham dhairyam ca jāyate
tat sukhāsanamityuktamaśaktastat samāśrayet (13a)

Anvay

yena kena prakāreṇa: by whatever way; *jāyate*: one becomes; *sukham ca dhairyam*: comfortable and steady; *tat iti uktam*: this is called; *sukhāsanam*: easy pose; *aśaktah*: one who is weak; *saṁāśrayet*: should resort to; *tat*: this.

Translation

By whatever way one becomes comfortable and steady, this is called the easy pose. One who is weak should resort to this.

Commentary

Sukhāsana, the easy pose, is the most basic cross-legged posture. Although it is the easiest and most relaxing meditation position for beginners and elderly practitioners, it is difficult to sustain for long periods. In sukhasana the legs may be crossed in any comfortable manner. Hence, it is not a locked posture, as were the other poses mentioned earlier, and it does not hold the body upright and still for long periods. Furthermore, the knees and thighs may not be directly on the floor, which is an important attribute of the classical meditation postures. When the knees and thighs remain above the floor, the whole body weight is supported by the buttocks, which causes backache to develop. When the knees and thighs rest firmly on the floor, there is a larger and steadier area of support.

Technique

Sit with both legs outstretched. Bend the right knee and place the right foot beneath the left thigh. Bend the left knee and place the left foot beneath the right thigh. Relax the arms by the sides and place the hands on the knees. Hold the head, neck, shoulders and back upright and straight.

Verses 13b and 14: Benefits of mastering āsana

आसनजयफलम्
आसनं विजितं येन जितं तेन जगत्रयं ॥१३॥
अनेन विधिना युक्तः प्राणायामं सदा कुरु ॥१४॥
āsanajayaphalam
āsanam vijitam yena jitam tena jagattrayam (13b)
anena vidhinā yuktaḥ prāṇāyāmam sadā kuru (14)

Anvay

phalam: result; *āsana-jaya*: mastery of *āsana*; *yena*: whoever; *āsanam vijitam*: victorious in *āsana*, meditative posture; (*yena*: that person;) *jitam*: victory; *jagat-trayam*: three worlds; *anena vidhinaa*: according to this principle; *yuktaḥ*: one who is intent; *kuru*: should do; *sadā*: always; *prāṇāyāmam*: *prāṇāyāma*, breathing practices.

Translation

Result of mastery of *āsana*: Whoever is victorious in *āsana* attains victory over the three worlds. According to this principle, one who is intent [on *āsana*] should always do *prāṇāyāma*.

Commentary

According to this verse, the mastery of *āsana* gives one victory over the three worlds. For us, the three worlds can also be analogous with the body, energy and mind. Mastery of *āsana* gives flexibility, sensitivity and control over the physical body. It activates and rebalances the pranas, energies sustaining the body, and purifies, steadies and focuses the mind. *Āsana* should always be practiced before *prāṇāyāma*. When *āsana* is mastered, *prāṇāyāma* becomes very successful.

इति तृतीयः खण्डः:
iti tr̥tīyah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the third section.

चतुर्थः खण्डः
caturthaḥ khaṇḍaḥ

Fourth Section

देहप्रमाणम्
dehapramāṇam

The Subtle Body

Verses 1 & 2: Center of fire and triangle of śakti

शरीरं तावदेव स्यात् षण्णवत्यङ्गुलात्मकम् ।
देहमध्ये शिखिस्थानं तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रभम् ॥१॥
त्रिकोणं मनुजानां तु सत्यमुक्तं हि सांकृते ।
गुदात्तु द्व्यङ्गुलादूर्ध्वं मेद्रात्तु द्व्यङ्गुलादधः ॥२॥

*sarīram tāvadeva syāt śannavatyaṅgulātmakam
dehamadhye śikhisthānam taptajāmbūnadaprabham (1)
trikonam manujānām tu satyamuktam hi sāṃkṛte
gudāttu dvyaṅgulādūrdhvam medhrāttu dvyaṅgulādadhadhah (2)*

Anvay

sarīram: body; *syāt*: is; *eva*: emphatic; *tāvat*: of a size; *ātmakam*: consisting of; *śannavati-aṅgula*: ninety-six *aṅgulas*, width of one finger; *dehamadhye*: in the centre of the body; *śikhisthānam*: site of Agni; *prabham*: whose light; *tapta*: glows; *jāmbū-nada*: like gold from the Jāmbū river; *tu*: conjunction; *sāṃkṛte*: o Sāṃkṛti; *uktam*: there is; *satyam*: truly; *trikonam*: triangle; *hi*: here; *manujānām*: in men; *dvyangulāt*: two *angulas*; *ūrdhvam*: above; *gudāt*: anus; *tu*: and; *adhah*: below; *medhrāt*: penis.

Translation

The body is of a size consisting of ninety-six *aṅgulas*. In the centre of the body [is] the site of *Agni*, whose light glows like gold from the Jāmbū river. O Sāṃkṛti, there is truly a triangle here in men. It is two *aṅgulas* above the anus and two *aṅgulas* below the penis.

Commentary

Here begins the description of the subtle body, which in yoga is said to be anterior to the physical body. The subtle body is also known as the pranic body, and gives energy, life and movement to the physical body with its multitude of organs and systems. The subtle body is described as 96 *āṅgulas*, or finger widths, which may be around 7 to 8 feet high. Although the subtle body is contained within the physical, it often extends beyond it. In yoga, the subtle, or pranic, body is considered to be very important, as all the practices work on it in various ways to rebalance and awaken it. At the center of this field is the *śikhistana*, the center of fire. In yoga, we also refer to this center as the *agni mandala*, and it too plays an important role in the awakening of the subtle energies. This center is described here as glowing like gold, which may be compared to the reflection of the sun, while rising or setting over the Jamboo river.

Next, a triangle is described, which is located midway between the anal sphincter and the urinary organ, two finger widths in front of the anus and two finger widths behind the organ. The seer further emphasises that this triangle is ‘truly’ there although, as a part of the subtle body, it is invisible to the physical eye. This triangle is the symbol of *śakti*, creative potential, within the *mūladhara cakra*, the root psychic center, which is located two centimetres inside, just above this point. The *kundalinī śakti* is depicted as a tiny serpent within this triangle, coiled three and a half times around the smokey *śiva lingam*, symbol of consciousness. The triangle is also the symbol for the fire element, which is responsible for transformation. Originally, the sages had seen these symbols during deep meditation, and later passed them down to their disciples. *Sāmkṛti* is the name of the worthy disciple or student, who receives these teachings directly from his master, the seer of this upanishad.

Verses 3, 4 and 5a: Root of the nādīs

देहमध्यं विजानीहि मानुजानां तु सांकृते ।
कन्दस्थानं मुनिश्रेष्ठ मूलाधारान्नवाङ्गुलम् ॥३॥
चतुरङ्गुलमायामविस्तारं मुनिपुङ्गव ।
कुक्कुटाङ्गडवदाकारं भूषितं तु त्वगादिभिः ॥४॥
तन्मध्ये नाभिरित्युक्तं योगज्ञैर्मुनिपुङ्गव ॥५॥

*dehamadhyam vijānīhi manujānām tu sāmkṛte
kandasthānam muniśreṣṭha mūlādhārānnavāṅgulam (3)
caturaṅgulamāyāma-vistāram munipuṅgava
kukkutāṅgavat-ākāram bhūṣitam tu tvagādibhiḥ (4)
tanmadhye nābhirityuktam yogajñair-munipuṅgava (5a)*

Anvay

sāmkṛte muniśreṣṭha: o Sāmkṛti, best of sages; *deha-madhyam vijānīhi manujānām*: in the centre of the human body; *kanda-sthānam*: site of the root of the *nādīs*; *nava-aṅgulam*: nine *angulas*, width of nine fingers; *mūlādhārāt*: from *mūlādhāra cakra*, pranic centre just below base of spine; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage; *catur-aṅgulam-āyāma-vistāram*: four *aṅgulas* in length; *kukkuta-aṅgavat-ākāram*: like the shape of a chicken egg; *bhūṣitam*: covered; *tvagādibhiḥ*: with skin etc; *iti-uktam*: it is said; *yoga-jñaiḥ*: wise ones; *nābhīḥ*: navel; *tan-madhye*: inside it.

Translation

O Sāmkṛti, best of sages, in the centre of the human body [is] the location of the root of the *nādīs*, nine *aṅgulas* from *mūlādhāra cakra*. O Esteemed Sage, it is four *aṅgulas* in length, like the shape of a chicken egg, covered with skin etc. O Esteemed Sage, it is said by the wise that the navel [is] inside it.

Commentary

In this verse the location of *kanda*, the root of the *nādīs*, or energy channels, is described as nine finger widths above *mūlādhāra cakra*. This would place it just below the *manipura cakra* in the center of the body. The *kanda* is said to be four finger widths long and oval shaped, like an egg. It is covered with a subtle membrane. The wise, who are able to see this

phenomenon with their inner vision, have said that the navel lies within it. The navel is also the center of the solar plexus and many nerves and nādīs are connected with it.

Verses 5b to 8: Enumeration of the nādīs

नाडीपरिगणनम्
कन्दमध्यस्थिता नाडी सुषुम्नेति प्रकीर्तिता ॥५॥
तिष्ठन्ति परितस्तस्य नाडयो मुनिपुङ्गव ।
द्विसप्ततिसहस्राङ्गी तासां मुख्याश्चतुर्दश ॥६॥
सुषुम्ना पिङ्गला तद्वदिङ्गा चैव सरस्वती ।
पूषा च वरुणा चैव हस्तिजिह्वा यशस्विनी ॥७॥
अलम्बुसा कुहूश्चैव विश्वोदारा पयस्विनी ।
शन्खिनी चैव गान्धारा इति मुख्याश्चतुर्दश ॥८॥

nādīparigāṇanam
kandamadhyasthitā nādī suṣumneti prakīrtitā (5b)
tiṣṭhanti paritastasya nāḍayo munipuṅgava
dvisaptatisahasrāṇi tāsāṁ mukhyāścaturdaśa (6)
suṣumnā piṅgalā tadvadidā caiva sarasvatī
pūṣā ca varuṇā caiva hastijihvā yaśasvinī (7)
alambusā kuhūścaiva viśvadārā payasvinī
śaṅkhinī caiva gāndhārā iti mukhyāścaturdaśa (8)

Anvay

parigāṇanam: enumeration of; *nādī*: pranic channels; *sthitā*: situated in; *kanda-madhyā*: centre of the *kanda*; *prakīrtitā*: is called; *suṣumnā*: *suṣumnā*; *paritas-tasya*: around it; *dvisaptati-sahasrāṇi*: seventy two thousand; *tāsām*: among which; *tiṣṭhanti*: are; *caturdaśa*: fourteen; *mukhyāḥ*: principal ones; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage.

Translation

Enumeration of the nādīs: The nādī that is situated in the centre of the kanda is called suṣumnā. Around it are seventy two thousand nādīs, among which are the fourteen principal ones, o Esteemed Sage. The fourteen principal nādīs are called: *suṣumnā*, *piṅgalā*, also *idā*, and *sarasvatī*, *pūṣā* and *varuṇā*, as well as *hastijihvā*, *yaśasvinī*, *alambusā*, *kuhū* and also *viśvadārā*, *payasvinī*, *śaṅkhinī* and *gāndhārā*.

Commentary

This verse begins the description of the major nāḍīs, which originate at the kanda. Of the 72,000 nāḍīs, there are fourteen principal nāḍīs: *suṣumnā*, *idā* and *piṅgalā*, *sarasvatī*, *pūṣā*, *varuṇā*, *hastijihvā*, *yaśasvinī*, *alambusā*, *kuhū*, *viśvodārā*, *payasvinī*, *śaṅkhinī* and *gāndhārā*.

Verses 9 and 10: Brahma and suṣumnā nādīs

आसां मुख्यतमास्तिस्तिसृष्टेकोत्तमोत्तमा ।
ब्रह्मनाडीति सा प्रोक्ता मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥९॥

पृष्ठमध्यस्थितेनास्था वीणादण्डेन सुव्रत ।
सह मस्तकपर्यन्तं सुषुम्ना सुप्रतिष्ठिता ॥१०॥

*āsām mukhyatamāstisrastisṛṣvekottamottamā
brahmanādīti sā proktā mune vedāntavedibhīḥ (9)
prṣṭhamadhyasthitenāsthā vīñādandena suvrata
saha mastakaparyantam suṣumnā supratisthitā (10)*

Anvay

mukhyatamās: first of all; *āsām*: among them; *tisrah*: three; *uttama*: main ones; *tisṛṣu*: among the three; *ekā*: one; *uttamā*: main; *sā proktā*: this is called; *Brahmanaadee*: *brahma nādī*, main *nādī* through which *kundalinī* ascends; *vedānta-vedibhīḥ*: by those who know *vedānta*; *mune*: o Sage; *prṣṭha-madhya*: at the centre of the back; *supratisthitā*: straight; *vīñā-dandena*: as a *vīñā* shaft; *asthā*: like a bone; *paryantam*: going right up to; *mastaka*: head.

Translation

First of all, among them, three [are] the main ones; among the three [there is] one main [nadi]. This is called *brahma nādī*, by those who know *vedānta*, o Sage. Suṣumna is at the centre of the back, straight as a *vīñā* shaft, like a bone going right up to the head.

Commentary

Amongst the fourteen principal nādīs, three are major: *suṣumnā*, *idā* and *piṅgalā*. Of these three, *brahma nādī* is the most important. Interior to *suṣumnā*, are *citrini* and *brahma nādīs*. Together, these three nādīs: *brahma*, *citrini* and *suṣumnā*, connect the physical being with the psychic and spiritual dimensions. Brahma nādī is considered most important of the three, by those who know *vedānta*, because it is the pathway of the *kundalinī*. In the early times, when these teachings were passed down, only those who studied *vedānta* had knowledge of the subtle phenomena, and understood the significance of the nādīs and the *kundalinī* in relation to spiritual awakening.

In the majority of people, even today, the *susumnā* remains dormant. This ensures that the energy remains focused on the outer world, rather than awakening the inner potential. Of these three *nāḍīs*, *brahma* is the subtlest and the innermost. Brahma *nāḍī* is enveloped by *citrini*, alongside of which the *cakras* are located. *Suṣumnā* forms a sheath around *citrini*, and rises straight up the center of the spinal column to the crown of the head.

Verses 11, 12 and 13a: Kuṇḍalinī

कुण्डल्या: स्थानं स्वरूपं च
नाभिकन्दादधः स्थानं कुण्डल्या द्व्यङ्गुलं मुने ।
अष्टप्रकृतिरूपा सा कुण्डली मुनिसत्तम ॥११॥
यथावद्वायुचेष्टां च जलन्नादिनि नित्यशः ।
परितः कन्दपार्श्वेषु निरुद्धैव सदा स्थिता ॥१२॥
स्वमुखेन संवेष्टय ब्रह्मरन्ध मुखं मुने ॥१३॥

*kundalyāḥ sthānam svarūpam ca
nābhikandādadahah sthānam kundalyā dvyaṅgulam mune
aṣṭaprakṛtirūpā sā kundalī munisattama (11)
yathāvadvāyuceṣṭām ca jalannādini nityaśah
paritah kandapārścesu nirudhyaiva sadā sthitā (12)
svamukhena samveṣṭaya brahmarandhra mukham mune (13a)*

Anvay

sthānam: location; *ca*: and; *svarūpam*: qualities; *kundalyāḥ*: of the *kundalī*; *dvi-aṅgulam*: two *aṅgulas*; *adhah*: below; *nābhi-kandāt*: root of the navel; *rūpā*: form; *aṣṭa-prakṛti*: eight elements of nature; *munisattama*: Most Venerable Sage; *nityaśah*: constantly; *ādini*: one is consuming; *jalanna*: water and food; *ca*: and; *ceṣṭām*: movement; *vāyu*: air; *yathāvat*: just like; *sadā*: always; *sthitā*: located; *paritah*: around; *kanda-pārścesu*: sides of the *kanda*; *eva*: emphatic; *nirudhya*: blocks; *brahmarandhra*: fontanelle; *mukham*: mouth; *saṃveṣṭaya*: surrounding; *svamukhena*: with her own mouth; *mune*: o Sage.

Translation

Location and qualities of the *kundalī*: The location of the *kundalī* is two *aṅgulas* below the root of the navel, o Sage. The *kundalī* [has] the form of the eight elements of nature, most venerable Sage. [When] one is constantly consuming water and food and the movement of air, just like [the *kundalī*] always located around the sides of the *kanda*, blocks the fontanelle mouth, surrounding [it] with her own mouth, o Sage.

Commentary

The location of the *kundalinī* is given here as two finger widths below the navel, where the *kanda* is located. Other texts on *kundalinī* yoga

locate the kundalinī at the mūlādhāra cakra, just above the perineum. The location of kundalinī at mūlādhāra is her unconscious abode, where she rests in her most primal state. Here the inner awareness remains grounded in the material world. Whereas, the kundalinī energy residing at the kanda is in a more dynamic state, ready to awaken and ascend. This is why some traditions recognise the navel or manipura cakra as the center for awakening, while others speak of kundalinī, residing at the mūlādhāra cakra.

The kundalinī has the form of the eight elements of nature. These are represented by the cakra, which she deposits on her descent down through the suṣumnā. First she deposits the three elements of mind: *buddhi* (intellect), *citta* (memory) and *ahamkāra* (ego), at *ājñā cakra*, at the top of the spinal column. Next she descends to *viśuddhi cakra*, behind the throat, and deposits the element of space. Then she descends to *anāhata cakra*, behind the heart, and deposits the element of air. Next she descends to *manipura cakra*, behind the navel, and deposits the element of fire. She continues on her journey down to *swādhiṣṭhāna cakra*, behind the pubis, and deposits the energy of water, and finally she descends to *mūlādhāra cakra*, above the perineum, and deposits the energy of earth.

These five elements: earth, water, fire, air and space, along with the three elements of mind: buddhi, citta and ahamkāra, make eight elements of nature, which all human beings are comprised of. These eight elements represent the evolution of the kundalinī energy from divine to material, which is the cause of creation. Having assumed the earthly form through the combination and permutation of these elements, one must constantly consume food and water, and breathe air. The continuous intake of these earthly elements blocks the *brahmarandhra*, the opening of the brahma nādī at the fontanelle, holding the spirit in the body, in the same way that the kundalinī blocks the opening of suṣumnā at the lower centers with her own mouth at the kanda.

Verses 13b to 17: Location of the major nādīs

नाडीस्थानानि

सुषुम्नाया इडा सव्ये दक्षिणे पिङ्गला स्थिता ॥१३॥
 सरस्वती कुहूश्वैव सुषुम्नापार्श्वयोः स्थिते ।
 गान्धारा हस्तिजिह्वा च इडायाः पृष्ठपूर्वयोः ॥१४॥
 पूषा यशस्विनी चैव पिङ्गलापृष्ठपूर्वयोः ।
 कुहाश्व हस्तिजिह्वाया मध्ये विश्वोदरा स्थिता ॥१५॥
 यशस्विन्याः कुहार्मध्ये वरुणा सुप्रतिष्ठिता ।
 पूषायाश्व सरस्वत्या मध्ये प्रोक्ता यशस्विनी ॥१६॥
 गान्धारायाः सरस्वत्या मध्ये प्रोक्ता च शङ्खिनी ।
 अलम्बुसा स्थिता पायुपर्यन्तं कन्दमध्यगा ॥१७॥

nādīsthānāni

suṣumnāyā idā savye daksinē piṅgalā sthitā (13b)
sarasvatī kuhūścaiva suṣumnāpārśvayoh sthite
gāndhārā hastijihvā ca idāyāḥ prṣṭhapūrvayoh (14)
pūṣā yaśasvinī caiva piṅgalāprṣṭhapūrvayoh
kuhāśca hastijihvāyā madhye viśvadarā sthitā (15)
yaśasvinyāḥ kuhārmadhye varuṇā supratisthitā
pūṣāyāśca sarasvatyā madhye proktā yaśasvinī (16)
gāndhārāyāḥ sarasvatyā madhye proktā ca śaṅkhinī
alambusā sthitā pāyuparyantam kandamadhyagā (17)

Anvay

nādī-sthānāni: locations of the *nādīs*, psychic currents; *idā*: *idā*, current of energy between the left nostril and base of spine, influencing left side of body and right side of brain; *savye*: on the left; *suṣumnāyā*: of *suṣumnā*, central energy flow; *piṅgalā*: *piṅgalā*, current of energy between the right nostril and base of spine, influencing right side of body and left side of brain; *daksinē*: on the right; *sarasvatī kuhūh-ca-eva*: *sarasvatī* and also *kuhū* (new moon); *sthite*: are; *suṣumnā-pārśvayoh*: on both sides of *suṣumnā*; *gāndhārā prṣṭha*: *gāndhārā* [is] at the back; *ca hastijihvā pūrvayoh*: and *hastijihvā* at the front; *idāyāḥ*: of *idā*; *pūṣā yaśasvinī ca eva*: *pūṣā* and also *yaśasvinī*; *piṅgalā-prṣṭha-pūrvayoh*: are at the back and front of *piṅgalā*; *ca*: and; *viśvadarā sthitā*: *viśvadarā* is located; *madhye*: between; *hastijihvāyā kuhoh*: *hastijihvā* and *kuhū*; *varuṇā supratisthitā*:

varuṇā is fixed; *madhye*: between; *yaśasvinyāḥ kuhāḥ*: *yaśasvinī* and *kuhū*; *yaśasvinī proktā*: *yaśasvinī* is said; *madhye pūṣāyāḥ ca sarasvatyāḥ*: between *pūṣā* and *sarasvatī*; *śaṅkhinī proktā*: *śaṅkhinī* is said; *madhye gāndhārāyāḥ ca sarasvatyāḥ*: between *gāndhārā* and *sarasvatī*; *alambusā gā paryantam*: *alambusā* goes right up to; *pāyu*: anus; *kanda-madhya*: from the centre of the *kanda*.

Translation

Locations of the nāḍīs: *idā* is on the left of *suṣumnā*; *piṅgalā* is on the right. *Sarasvatī* and also *kuhū* are on both sides of *suṣumnā*. *Gāndhārā* is at the back and *hastijihvā* at the front of *idā*. *Pūṣā* is at the back and *yaśasvinī* at the front of *piṅgalā*. *Viśvadarā* is located between *kuhū* and *hastijihvā*. *Varuṇā* is fixed between *yaśasvinī* and *kuhū*. *Yaśasvinī* is said to be between *pūṣā* and *sarasvatī*. *Śaṅkhinī* is said to be between *gāndhārā* and *sarasvatī*. *Alambusā* goes right up to the anus from the *kanda*.

Commentary

This verse contains a very clear description of the location of the fourteen major nāḍīs in relation to *suṣumnā*, *idā* and *piṅgalā*. *Suṣumnā* rises straight up through the center of the spinal passage from a point just above the *mūlādhāra* cakra. *Idā* originates to the left of *suṣumnā* and *piṅgalā* to the right. *Saraswatī* and *kuhū* are also located to the left and right of *suṣumnā*. *Gāndhārā* is at the back of *idā* and *hastijihvā* is at the front. *Pūṣā* is at the back of *piṅgalā* and *yaśasvinī* is at the front. *Viśvadarā* is located in-between *kuhū* and *hastijihvā*. *Varuṇā* is in-between *yaśasvinī* and *kuhū*. *Yaśasvinī* is in-between *pūṣā* and *sarasvatī*. *Śaṅkhinī* is in-between *gāndhārā* and *sarasvatī*. *Alambusā* goes from the *kanda* to the anus.

Verses 18 to 23a: Termination of the major nādīs

पूर्वभागे सुषुम्नाया राकायाः संस्थिताः कुहूः ।
 अधश्चोर्ध्वं स्थिता नाडी याम्यनासान्तमिष्यते ॥१८॥
 इडा तु सव्यनासान्तं संस्थिता मुनिपुङ्गव ।
 यशस्विनी च वामस्य पादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ॥१९॥
 पूषा वामाक्षिपर्यन्ता पिङ्गलायास्तु पृष्ठतः ।
 पयस्विनी च याम्यस्य कर्णान्तं प्रोच्यते बुधैः ॥२०॥
 सरस्वती तथा चोर्ध्वं गता जिह्वा तथा मुने ।
 हस्तिजिह्वा तथा सव्यपादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ॥२१॥
 शङ्खिनी नाम या नाडी सव्यकर्णान्तमिष्यते ।
 गान्धारा सव्यनेत्रान्ता प्रोक्ता वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥२२॥
 विष्वोदराभिधा नाडी कन्दमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ॥२३॥

*pūrvabhāge suṣumnāyā rākāyāḥ samsthitā kuhūḥ
 adhaścordhvam̄ sthitā nādī yāmyanāsāntamisyatē (18)
 idā tu savyanāsāntam̄ samsthitā munipuṅgava
 yaśasvinī ca vāmasya pādāṅguṣṭhāntamisyatē (19)
 pūṣā vāma-akṣiparyantā piṅgalāyāstu prṣṭhataḥ
 payasvinī ca yāmyasya karnāntam̄ procyate budhaiḥ (20)
 sarasvatī tathā cordhvam̄ gatā jihvā tathā mune
 hastijihvā tathā savyapādāṅguṣṭhāntamisyatē (21)
 śaṅkhinī nāma yā nādī savyakarnāntamisyatē
 gāndhārā savyanetrāntā proktā vedāntavedibhiḥ (22)
 viṣvodarābhidhā nādī kandamadhye vyavasthitā (23a)*

Anvay

kuhūḥ samsthitāḥ: *kuhū* is located; *pūrvabhāge suṣumnāyā*: in the upper part of *suṣumnā*; *rākāyāḥ*: full moon; *nādī sthitā ūrdhvam ca adhah*: *nādī* goes up and down; *yāmya-nāsāntam*: southern nostril; *tu*: now; *idā samsthitā*: *idā* is located at; *savya-nāsāntam*: left nostril; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage; *ca yaśasvinī isyatē*: and *yaśasvinī* goes to; *vāmasya pāda-aṅguṣṭhāntam*: toes of the left leg; *pūṣā paryantā*: *pūṣā* [goes] right up to; *vāma-akṣi*: left eye; *tu prṣṭhataḥ piṅgalāyāḥ*: and is behind *piṅgalā*; *ca payasvinī procyate*: and *payasvinī* is said; *budhaiḥ*: by the wise; *yāmyasya karnāntam*: to the left ear; *tathā*: then; *sarasvatī gatā*: *sarasvatī* goes;

ūrdhvam jihvā: up to the tongue; *mune*: o Sage; *ca hastijihvā*: and *hastijihvā*; *isyate*: goes; *aṅguṣṭha-antam*: up to the toes; *savya-pāda*: left leg; *nādī nāma śaṅkhinī*: *nādī* called *śaṅkhinī*; *isyate*: goes; *savya-karna-antam*: up to the left ear; *gāndhārā proktā*: *gāndhārā* is said; *vedānta-vedibhiḥ*: by those versed in the Vedas; *savya-netra-antā*: up to the left eye; *nādī viśvadarā-ābhidhā*: *nādī* named *viśvadarā*; *vyavasthitā*: is situated; *kanda-madhye*: at the centre of the *kanda*.

Translation

Kuhū is located at the upper part of suṣumnā, the full moon. [This] *nādī* goes up and down the southern nostril. Now idā is located at the left nostril, o esteemed Sage, and yaśasvinī goes to the toes of the left leg. Pūṣā [goes] right up to the left eye and is behind piṅgalā, and payasvinī is said by the wise [to go] to the left ear. Then sarasvatī goes up to the tongue, o Sage, and hastijihvā goes up to the toes [of] the left leg. The *nādī* called *śaṅkhinī* goes up to the left ear; *gāndhārā* is said by those versed in the Vedas [to go] up to the left eye. The *nādī* named *viśvadarā* is situated at the centre of the kanda.

Commentary

Kuhū rises to the upper part of suṣumnā, which glows like the full moon. Kuhū goes up and down the back of the throat, behind the nostrils. Idā terminates at the left nostril and piṅgalā at the right. Suṣumnā represents the balanced flow of both nostrils together. Yaśasvinī flows downward to the left toes. Pūṣā flows up the right side behind piṅgalā and crosses over to the left eye. Payasvinī goes up to the left ear. Sarasvatī goes to the tongue. Hastijihvā goes to the toes of the left foot. Śaṅkhinī goes to the left ear, and gāndhārā goes to the left eye. Viśvadarā is at the center of the kanda.

The description of the ten major *nādīs* is found in several *upaniṣads* and classical texts, such as the *Śiva Swarodaya*. The yogis and rishis of old had originally seen these channels during their meditation, and later described what they had seen to their devotees and disciples. In the early times such instruction had to be remembered, as there were very few capable scribes. Hence, we find similarities as well as differences in regard to the names and placements of these subtle channels.

In the *Śiva Swarodaya*, for example, kuhū is located in the reproductive organs, so we can assume that it rises through the body to the upper part of suṣumnā. Again, yaśasvinī is said to flow down to the left toes in this text, while the *Śiva Swarodaya* describes it flowing up to the left ear. Pūṣā is said to terminate at the left eye in this text, while in *Śiva Swarodaya* it is the right ear. Hastijihvā goes to the left toes in this text, while *Śiva Swarodaya* states the right eye. Śaṅkhinī goes to the anal region, according to *Śiva Swarodaya*, and to the left ear, according to this text. Both texts mention that gāndhārā goes to the left eye.

Verses 23b to 30a: Ten prāṇas

नाडीषु वायुसञ्चरः
प्राणोऽपानस्तथा व्यानः समानोदान एव च ॥२३॥
नागः कूर्मश्च कृकरो देवदत्तो धनंजयः ।
एते नाडीषु सर्वासु चरन्ति दश वायवः ॥२४॥
तेषु प्राणादयः पञ्च सुख्याः पञ्चसु सुव्रत ।
प्राणसंज्ञस्तथा ऽपानः पूज्यः प्राणस्तयोर्मुने ॥२५॥
आस्यनासिकयोर्मध्ये नाभिमध्ये तथा हृदि ।
प्राणसंज्ञोऽनिलो नित्यं वर्तते मुनिसत्तम ॥२६॥
अपानो वर्तते नित्यं गुदमध्योरुजानुषु ।
उदरे सकले कठ्यां नाभौ जड्घे च सुव्रत ॥२७॥
व्यानः श्रोत्राक्षिमध्ये च कुकुदभ्यां गुल्फयोरपि ।
प्राणस्थाने गले चैव वर्तते मुनिपुङ्गव ॥२८॥
उदानसंज्ञो विज्ञेयः पादयोर्हस्तयोरपि ।
समानः सर्वदेहेषु व्याप्य तिष्ठत्यसंशयः ॥२९॥
नागादिवायवः पञ्च त्वगस्थ्यादिषु संस्थिताः ॥३०॥

nādīṣu vāyusañcarah

prāṇo 'pānastathā vyānah samānodāna eva ca (23b)
nāgah kūrmaśca krkaro devadatto dhanamjayah
ete nādīṣu sarvāsu caranti daśa vāyavah (24)
teṣu prāṇādayah pañca sukhyāḥ pañcasu suvrata
prāṇasamjñastathā 'pānah pūjyah prāṇastayormune (25)
āsyanāsikayormadhye nābhimadhye tathā hr̥di
prāṇasamjñō 'nilo nityam vartate munisattama (26)
apāno vartate nityam gudamadhyorujānuṣu
udare sakale katyām nābhau jaṅghe ca suvrata (27)
vyānah śrotrākṣimadhye ca kakudbhyaṁ gulphayorapi
prāṇasthāne gale caiva vartate munipuṅgava (28)
udānasamjñō vijñeyah pādayorhastayormapi
samānah sarvadeheṣu vyāpya tiṣṭhatyasyaṁsayaḥ (29)
nāgādivāyavah pañca tvagasthyādiṣu samsthitāḥ (30a)

Anvay

sañcaraḥ: movement; *vāyu*: *prāṇa*, vital air; *prāṇa*: vital energy; *apāna*: downward energy; *vyāna*: energy pervading the whole body; *samāna*: sideways energy between navel and diaphragm; *udāna*: energy in arms, legs and head; *nāga*: energy for burping and hiccuping; *kūrma*: energy for movement of eyelids; *krkara*: energy for sneezing, coughing, hunger and thirst; *devadatta*: energy for yawning; *dhanamjaya*: energy for decomposition of dead body; *ete daśa vāyavah*: those ten *prāṇas*; *caranti*: are circulating; *nādīṣu sarvāsu*: in all the *nādīs*; *teṣu*: of these; *pañca prāṇādayah*: five *prāṇic* bodies; *sukhyāḥ*: most beneficial; *svvrata*: o Virtuous One; *pañcasu*: among [these] five; *saṃjñāḥ*: called; *tathā*: and; *pūjyah*: is to be worshipped; *mune*: o Sage; *tathā*: thus; *anilah*: vital air; *prāṇa-saṃjñāḥ*: called *prāṇa*; *vartate*: exists; *nityam*: continuously; *madhye*: within; *āsyā*: face; *nāsikayoh*: nostrils; *nābhi*: navel; *hrdi*: heart; *munisattama*: o Excellent Sage; *guda*: anus; *udare*: stomach; *nābhau*: navel; *sakale katyām ca jaṅghe*: each hip and thigh; *ujānuṣu*: up to the knees; *svvrata*: o Virtuous One; *śrotra-aksi-madhye*: within the ears [and] eyes; *kukudbhyaṁ*: from the shoulders; *ca ... api*: and ... also; *gulphayoh*: in the ankles; *ca . . . eva*: and even; *prāṇa-sthāne*: in the *prāṇic* area; *gale*: in the neck; *munipuṇigava*: o Esteemed Sage; *vijñeyah*: is known; *pādayoh*: in the feet; *api*: also; *hastayoh*: in the hands; *asamśayah*: without doubt; *tiṣṭhati vyāpya*: is contained; *sarva-deheṣu*: in the whole body; *pañca vāyavah*: five *prāṇas*; *ādi*: beginning with; *saṃsthitāḥ*: are located; *tvag-asthi-ādiṣu*: in the skin, bones, etc.

Translation

The movement of *prāṇa* in the *nādīs*: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and also *nāga*, *kūrma*, *krkara*, *devadatta* and *dhanamjaya* are the ten *prāṇas*, circulating in all the *nādīs*. Of these, five *prāṇas* are the most beneficial, o Virtuous One. Among [these] five *prāṇas*, called *prāṇa* and *apāna*, *prāṇa* is to be worshipped, o Sage. Thus the vital air called *prāṇa* exists continuously within the face, the nostrils, the navel [and] the heart, o excellent Sage. *Apāna* is continuously in the anus, stomach, navel, and each hip and thigh up to the knees, o Virtuous One. *Vyāna* is within the ears, eyes, from the shoulders and also in the ankles, and even in the *prāṇic* area in the neck, o esteemed Sage. *Udāna* is known in the feet [and] also the hands. *Samāna* is without doubt contained in the whole body. The five (minor) *prāṇas*, beginning with *nāga* are located in the skin, bones etc.

Commentary

These verses name the five major and five minor prāṇas. The locations given here may differ to those given in other classical texts. The five major prāṇas are: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna*, and *udāna*. These five prāṇas continuously sustain the physical body with vitality and life. Of these five, *prāṇa* is considered to be the most important. It flows upward from the navel to the heart and in the nostrils. It supports the lungs and heart. *Apāna* flows downward from the navel to the anus, hips, thighs and knees. It sustains the reproductive and excretory organs. *Vyāna* flows in the region of the shoulders, neck and head, sustaining the sensory organs, such as ears, eyes, nose, tongue, as well as the nervous system and the brain. *Udāna* flows in the hands and feet. *Samāna* flows throughout the whole body. The five minor prāṇas, beginning with *nāga*, are said to be located in the skin and bones, etc.

Again, the location of the prāṇas is different, as per the *Śiva Swarodaya*, which says that *prāṇa* is at the heart, *apāna* in the excretory organs, *samāna* at the navel region, *udāna* at the throat, and *vyāna* pervades the whole body.

Verses 30b to 34: Functions of the prāṇas

वायुव्यापारा:

निःश्वासोच्छवासकासाश्च प्राणक्रम हि सांकृते ॥३०॥

अपानाख्यस्य वायोस्तु विष्मूत्रादिविसर्जनम् ।

समानः सर्वसामीप्यं करोति मुनिपुङ्गव ॥३१॥

उदान ऊर्ध्वगमनं करोत्येव न संशयः ।

व्यानो विवादकृत् प्रोक्तो मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥३२॥

उद्धारादिगुणः प्रोक्तो नागाख्यस्य महामुने ।

धनंजयस्य शोभादि कर्म प्रोक्तं हि सांकृते ॥३३॥

निमीलनादि कूर्मस्य क्षुधा तु कृकरस्य च ।

देवदत्तस्य विप्रेन्द्र तन्द्रीकर्म प्रकीर्तितम् ॥३४॥

vāyuvyāpārāḥ

nihśvāsocchvāsakāsāśca prāṇakarma hi sāṃkrte (30b)

apānākhyasya vāyostu viṣmūtrādivisarjanam

samānah sarvasāmīpyam karoti munipuṅgava (31)

udāna ūrdhvagamanam karotyeva na samśayah

vyāno vivādakṛt proktō mune vedāntavedibhiḥ (32)

udgārādigunah proktō nāgākhyasya mahāmune

dhanamjayasya śobhādi karma proktam hi sāṃkrte (33)

nimīlanādi kūrmasya kṣudhā tu krkarasya ca

devadattasya viprendra tandrīkarma prakīrtitam (34)

Anvay

vāyu-vyāpārāḥ: functions of the vital airs; *nihśvāsa*: sighing; *ucchvāsa*: exhalation; *ca*: and; *kāsāḥ*: coughing; *prāṇa-karma*: activity of *prāṇa*; *hi*: emphatic; *sāṃkrte*: o Sāṃkr̄ti; *tu*: now; *viṣmūtrādi*: feces and urine etc; *visarjanam*: are evacuated; *vāyoḥ*: by the vital air; *apāna-ākhyasya*: called *apāna*; *samānah*: *samāna*; *karoti*: acts; *sarva-sāmīpyam*: in this whole region; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage; *eva na samśayah*: for sure; *udānah*: *udāna*; *karoti*: performs; *ūrdhvagamanam*: upward movement; *vyānah*: *vyāna*; *proktah*: is said; *vedānta-vedibhiḥ*: by those who know *vedānta*; *kṛt*: to cause; *vivāda*: conflict; *mune*: o Sage; *nāgākhyasya*: the one called *nāga*; *proktah*: is said; *guṇah*: attributes; *udgāra*: belching; *ādi*: etc; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *proktam*: it is said; *dhanamjayasya*: dhanamjaya; *karma*: effect; *śobhādi*: lustre; *Hi*: emphatic; *Tu*: now; *kūrmasya*: *kūrma*;

nimīlana: shutting the eyes; *ādi*: etc; *ca*: and; *krikarasya*: *krkara*; *ksudhā*: hunger; *prakīrtitam*: it is stated; *devadattasya*: *devadatta*; *karma*: cause; *tandrī*: sleep; *viprendra*: o distinguished Brahman.

Translation

Functions of the *prāṇas*: Sighing, exhalation and coughing are the activity of *prāṇa*, o Samkriti. Now, feces and urine etc are evacuated by the vital air called *apāna*. *Samāna* acts in this whole region, o esteemed Sage. For sure *udāna* performs the upward movement. *Vyāna* is said by those who know *vedānta* to cause conflict [between them], o Sage. The one called *nāga* is said [to have] the attributes of belching etc, o great Sage. *Dhananjaya* is said [to have] the effect [of] lustre, o *Sāṃkṛti*. Now *kūrma* [causes] shutting the eyes etc, and *krkara* [causes] hunger. It is stated that *devadatta* [is] the cause [of] sleep, o distinguished Brahman.

Commentary

Here the functions of the ten *prāṇas* are enumerated. Of the five major energies, *prāṇa* is the energy responsible for sighing, coughing and exhalation. *Apāna* is responsible for evacuation of faeces, urine, gas and wind, and the foetus at the time of birth. *Samāna* vitalises the entire body. *Udāna* flows upward and mobilises the hands and feet. *Vyāna* flows in the region of the shoulders, neck and head, and vitalises the senses and brain, causing conflict.

Of the five minor *prāṇas*, *nāga* is responsible for belching and hiccuping. *Dhananjaya* gives lustre to the skin. *Kūrma* causes blinking and shutting of the eyes. *Krkara* causes hunger and *devadatta* is the cause of sleep.

Verses 35 to 39a: Deities relating with the nādīs

नाडीदेवता:

सुषुम्नायाः शिवो देव इडाया देवताहरिः ।
 पिङ्गलाया विरिञ्चः स्यात् सरस्वत्या विराण्मुने ॥३५॥
 पूषा उधिदेवता प्रोक्तो वरुणा वायुदेवता ।
 हस्तिजिह्वाभिधायास्तु वरुणो देवता भवेत् ॥३६॥
 यशस्विन्या मुनिश्रेष्ठ भगवान् भास्करस्तथा ।
 अलम्बुसाया अबात्मा वरुणः परिकीर्तिः ॥३७॥
 कुहोः क्षुद्रेवता प्रोक्ता गान्धारी चन्द्रदेवता ।
 शङ्खिन्याश्वन्द्रमास्तद्वत् पयस्विन्याः प्रजापतिः ॥३८॥
 विश्वोदराभिधायास्तु भगवान् पावकः पतिः ॥३९॥

nādīdevatāḥ

*suṣumnāyāḥ śivo deva idāyā devatā hariḥ
 piṅgalāyā viriñcaḥ syāt sarasvatyā virāṇmune* (35)
*pūṣā ‘dhidevatā prokto varuṇā vāyudevatā
 hastijihvābhidhāyāstu varuno devatā bhavet* (36)
*yaśasvinyā muniśreṣṭha bhagavān bhāskarastathā
 alambusāyā abātmā varuṇāḥ parikīrtitah* (37)
*kuhoh kṣudrdevatā proktā gāndhārī candra devatā
 śaṅkhinyāścandramāstadvat payasvinyāḥ prajāpatiḥ* (38)
viśvodarābhidhāyāstu bhagavān pāvakah patiḥ (39a)

Anvay

nādī-devataḥ: *nādī* deities; *śivah*: Śiva; *syāt*: is; *deva*: god; *suṣumnāyāḥ*: of *suṣumna*; *hariḥ*: Hari; *devatā*: deity; *idāyāḥ*: of *idā*; *viriñcaḥ*: Virinca; *piṅgalāyāḥ*: of *piṅgalā*; *virāt*: Virat; *sarasvatyāḥ*: of *sarasvatī*; *mune*: o Sage; *adhidevatā*: Adhidevatā, Supreme Deity; *proktah*: is said; *pūṣā*: *pūṣā*; *varuṇā*: Varuṇā; *vāyu-devatā*: deity of *vāyu*; *varuṇā bhavet*: Varuṇā is; *devatā*: deity; *Hastijihvā-abhidhāyāḥ*: of the one named Hastijihvā; *parikīrtitah*: it is declared; *muniśreṣṭha*: o distinguished Sage; *bhagavān bhāskarah*: Bhagavān Bhāskara; *yaśasvinyāḥ*: of *yaśasvinī*; *tathā*: and; *varuṇāḥ abātmā*: Varuṇā [has] the nature; *alambusāyāḥ*: of *alambusā*; *devatā kuhoh*: deity of *kuhū*; *kṣut*: Hunger; *candra*: Moon; *proktā*: is called; *devatā gāndhārī*: deity of *gāndhārī*; *tadvat*: likewise; *śaṅkhinyāḥ candra*: *śaṅkhinī* has the Moon; *payasvinyāḥ prajāpatiḥ*: *payasvinī* Prajapati; *tu*:

and; *viśvodara-abhidhāyāḥ*: the one named *viśvodara* has; *patih*: lord; *bhagavān pāvakah*: Bhagavān Pāvaka.

Translation

The nādī deities: Śiva is the deity of *suṣumnā*. Hari is the deity of *idā*, Virinca of *piṅgalā* and Virat of *sarasvatī*, o Sage. Adhidevata, the Supreme Deity, is said [to be for] *pūṣā* [and] Varuṇā, the deity of *vāyu*, is the deity of the one named *hastijihvā*. It is declared, o distinguished Sage, that Bhagavān Bhaskara [is the deity] of *yaśasvinī*, and Varuṇā [has] the nature of *alambusā*. The deity of *kuhū* is Hunger; the Moon is called the deity of *gāndhārī*. Likewise, *śaṅkhinī* has the Moon, *payasvinī* Prajapati and the one named *viśvodara* has the lord Bhagavan Pavaka.

Commentary

Śiva, the lord of transcendental consciousness, is the deity of *suṣumnā*. Hari, or Vishnu, the lord who maintains the creation, is the deity of *idā*. Virinca, or Brahma, the lord of creation, is the deity of *piṅgalā*. Virat, the brilliant lord of all manifest creation, is the deity of *sarasvatī*. Adhidevata, the supreme *deva*, is the deity of *pūṣā*. Varuṇā, lord of waters, is the deity of *hastijihvā*. Bhaskara, lord of light, is the deity of *yaśasvinī*. Varuṇā relates to *alambusā*. The deity of *kuhū* is Hunger. The Moon is the deity of *gāndhārī*, as well as *śaṅkhinī*, Prajapati, lord of creation, is the deity of *payasvinī*, and Pavaka, or *Agni*, lord of fire, is the deity of *viśvodara*.

Verses 39b and 40a: Lunar and solar movement in the nādīs

नाडीषु चन्द्रसुर्यसज्जारः
इडायां चन्द्रमा नित्यं चरत्येव महामुने ॥३९॥
पिङ्गलायां रविस्तद्वन्मुने वेदविदां वर ॥४०॥
*nādīṣu candraśūryasañcārah
idāyām candramā nityam caratyeva mahāmune (39b)
piṅgalāyām ravistadvanmune vedavidām vara (40a)*

Anvay

sañcārah: movement of; *candra*: Moon; *sūrya*: Sun; *nādīṣu*: in the *nādīs*; *candramā*: lunar energy; *eva*: emphatic; *nityam*: always; *carati*: does flow; *idāyām*: in *idā*; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *tadvat*: likewise; *ravih*: solar energy; *piṅgalāyām*: in *piṅgalā*; *vara mune*: o Excellent Sage; *vedavidām*: of those who know the Vedas.

Translation

The movement of the moon and sun in the *nādīs*: The lunar energy does always flow in *idā*, o Great Sage. Likewise, the solar energy [flows] in *piṅgalā*, o excellent Sage of those who know the Vedas.

Commentary

Idā *nādī* carries the mental energy and hence it is said to relate with the moon, or lunar flow of prana. *Idā* is predominant in the left side of the body and the right side of the brain. *Piṅgalā* *nādī* is responsible for the energy of life and movement. Hence it is said to relate with the sun, or the solar flow. *Piṅgalā* is predominant in the right side of the body and the left brain.

Verses 40b to 43a: Uttarāyan and dakṣināyan

नाडीषु संवत्सरात्मकप्राणसूर्यसञ्चारः
पिङ्गलाया इडायां तु वायोः संक्रमणं तु यत् ॥४०॥
तदुत्तरायणं प्रोक्तं मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।
इडायाः पिङ्गलायां तु प्राणसंक्रमणं मुने ॥४१॥
दक्षिणायनमित्युक्तं पिङ्गलायामिति श्रुतिः ।
इडापिङ्गलयोः संधि यदा प्राणः समागतः ॥४२॥
अमावास्या तदा प्रोक्ता देहे देहभृतां वर ॥४३॥

*nādīṣu samvatsarātmakaprāṇasūryasañcāraḥ
piṅgalāyāḥ idāyām tu vāyoh samkramanam tu yat (40b)
taduttarāyanam proktam mune vedāntavedibhiḥ
idāyāḥ piṅgalāyām tu prāṇasamkramanam mune (41)
dakṣināyanamityuktam piṅgalāyāmiti śrutiḥ
idāpiṅgalayoh samdhī yadā prāṇah samāgataḥ (42)
amāvāsyā tadā proktā dehe dehabhṛtām vara (43a)*

Anvay

samvatsarātmaka: yearly; *sañcārah*: flow; *sūrya*: solar; *prāṇa*: energy; *nādīṣu*: in the *nādīs*; *tu*: now; *yat*: when; *vāyoh*: vital airs; *samkramanam*: move; *piṅgalāyāḥ*: from *piṅgalā*, right major pranic channel; *idāyām*: into *idā*, left major pranic channel; *tat*: that; *proktam*: is called; *uttarāyanam*: *uttarāyanam*, northern path; *vedāntavedibhiḥ*: by those who know *vedānta*; *mune*: o Sage; *tu*: however; *prāṇa*: *prāṇa*, vital energy; *samkramanam*: moving; *idāyām*: from *idā*; *piṅgalāyām*: into *piṅgalā*; *iti uktam*: is said to be; *dakṣināyanam*: southern path; *iti śrutiḥ*: as it is stated in the Vedas; *piṅgalāyām*: about *piṅgalā*; *yadā*: when; *prāṇah*: *prāṇas*, energies; *idāpiṅgalayoh*: of *idā* and *piṅgalā*; *samdhī samāgataḥ*: join; *tadā*: then; *amāvāsyā*: time of no moon, preceding the new moon; *proktā*: is said; *dehe*: in the body; *dehabhṛtām*: of living creatures; *vara*: o Eminent One.

Translation

The yearly flow of the solar (and lunar) energy in the *nādīs*: Now, when the vital airs move from *piṅgalā* into *idā*, that is called *uttarāyanam*, the northern path, by those who know *vedānta*, o Sage. However, the *prāṇa* moving from *idā* into *piṅgalā* is said to be *dakṣināyanam*, the southern path,

o Sage, as it is stated in the Vedas about piṅgalā. When the prāṇas of idā and piṅgalā join, then *amavasya* is said [to be] in the body of living creatures, o eminent One.

Commentary

Uttarāyaṇa is also known as the summer solstice. This path is active for six months of the year, from mid January to mid-July. *Dakṣināyana* is the winter solstice, which is active from mid-July to mid January. The above verses explain that when the prāṇas move from piṅgalā into idā, that is *uttarāyaṇa*. When the prāṇas move from idā into piṅgalā, that is *dakṣināyana*, as stated in the Vedas.

Uttarāyaṇa is also called the northern path, because the sun moves north for these six months. This is considered to be the path of illumination that leads towards liberation. *Dakṣināyana* is called the southern path, because here the sun moves on its course towards the south. This path leads towards darkness and further association with the ancestors and relations.

The time of death is considered to be very relevant here, because the departing soul will journey on one of these two paths, depending on the time of year of passing. In the *Mahabharata*, it is described how Bhīṣma Pitama waited for many long months, lying on a bed of arrows, so that he could pass on the northern path, during the time of *uttarāyaṇa*.

When the prāṇas of idā and piṅgalā merge, this is said to be *amavasya*, the time of the dark moon or no moon. During amavasya, suṣumnā becomes active. During this period there is no light from the sun or the moon. Amavasya occurs every month just before the new moon. However, the darkest night of the year is celebrated as *Śivarātri*, the night of Śiva, or transcendental consciousness, which falls in February/March. During the period of amavasya, suṣumnā is activated due to the merging of idā and piṅgalā. This is a powerful time for meditation, but will not be conducive for any other works.

Verses 43b to 47: Equinox and eclipse

मूलाधारं यदा प्राणः प्रविष्टः पण्डितोत्तम ॥४३॥
 तदाद्यं विषुवं प्रोक्तं तापसैस्तापसोत्तम ।
 प्राणासंज्ञो मुनिश्रेष्ठं मूर्धनं प्राविशेद्यदा ॥४४॥
 तदन्त्यं विषुवं प्रोक्तं तापसैस्तत्त्वचिन्तकैः ।
 निःश्वासोच्छवासनं सर्वं मासानां संक्रमो भवेत् ॥४५॥
 इडया कुण्डलीस्थानं यदा प्राणः समागतः ।
 सोमग्रहणमित्युक्तं तदा तत्त्वविदां वर ॥४६॥
 यदा पिङ्गलया प्राणः कुण्डलीस्थानमागतः ।
 तदातदा भवेत् सूर्यग्रहणं मुनिपुण्णव ॥४७॥

mūlādhāram yadā prāṇah pravīṣṭah paṇḍitottama (43b)
tadādyam viṣuvam proktam tāpasaistāpasottama
prāṇāsamjñō muniśreṣṭha mūrdhānam pravīṣedyadā (44)
tadantyam viṣuvam proktam tāpasaistattvacintakaiḥ
niḥsvāsocchvāsanam sarvam māsānām samkramo bhavet (45)
idayā kundalīsthānam yadā prāṇah samāgataḥ
somagrahanamityuktam tadā tattvavidām vara (46)
yadā piṅgalāyā prāṇah kundalīsthānamāgataḥ
tadātadā bhavet sūryagrahanam munipuṅgava (47)

Anvay

pravīṣṭah: enters; *mūlādhāram*: *mūlādhāra*, base *cakra*, seat of *kundalī*; *paṇḍitottama*: o Wise Pandit; *tat*: this; *proktam*: is called; *ādyam*: beginning; *viṣuvam*: equinox; *tāpasaīḥ*: by ascetics; *tāpasa-uttama*: o Excellent Ascetic; *yadā*: when; *prāṇāsamjñāḥ*: this *prāṇa*; *pravīṣet*: enters; *mūrdhānam*: crown of the head; *muniśreṣṭha*: o Esteemed Sage; *tat*: this; *proktam*: is called; *antyam*: end; *viṣuvam*: of the equinox; *tāpasaīḥ*: by ascetics; *tattva-cintakaiḥ*: who are conscious of the true reality; *sarvam māsānām*: every month; *bhavet*: there is; *samkramah*: coming together; *niḥsvāsa-ucchvāsanam*: of the exhalation and inhalation; *yadā*: when; *prāṇah*: *prāṇa*, vital energy; *samāgataḥ*: reaches; *kundalī-sthānam*: site of the *kundalī*; *idayā*: through *idā*; *tadā*: then; *iti uktam*: it is said; *somagrahanam*: eclipse of the moon; *tattva-vidām*: by the knowers of the true reality; *vara*: o Excellent One; *yadā*: when; *prāṇah*: *prāṇa*, vital energy; *agataḥ*: enters; *kundalī-sthānam*: site of the *kundalī*; *piṅgalāyā*:

through *piṅgalā*; *tadātadā*: then; *bhavet*: it is; *sūryagrahanam*: solar eclipse; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage.

Translation

When the prāṇa enters mūlādhāra, o wise Pandit, this is called the beginning of the equinox by ascetics, o excellent Ascetic. When this prāṇa enters the crown of the head, o esteemed Sage, this is called the end of the equinox by ascetics who are conscious of the True Reality. Every month there is the coming together of the exhalation and inhalation. When the prāṇa reaches the site of the kundalini through idā, then it is said [to be] the eclipse of the moon by the knowers of the true reality, o excellent One. When the prāṇa enters the site of the kundalini through piṅgalā, then it is the solar eclipse, o esteemed Sage.

Commentary

The equinox represents a time of equal day and night. In the practice of yoga, equal day and night correspond to the balance of piṅgalā and idā nādīs. This balance of idā and piṅgalā at mūlādhāra sparks off the awakening of kuṇḍalinī. Symbolically, it relates with the beginning of the equinox. When the kuṇḍalinī rises up suṣumnā and enters *sahasrara cakra*, at the crown of the head, this is compared to the end of the equinox, by those who have experienced the true reality.

Every month, the exhalation and the inhalation merge, which externally represents the time of dawn and dusk, when there is no sun and no moon. Internally this time symbolises the awakening of suṣumnā, where the body and mind are transcended. This is why dawn and dusk are considered to be most auspicious for sādhana and meditation. When the prāṇa reaches kuṇḍalinī through idā nādī, there is a lunar eclipse. When the prāṇa reaches kuṇḍalinī through piṅgalā, there is a solar eclipse.

Verses 48 to 56: Inner pilgrimage places

अन्तस्तीर्थप्राशस्त्यम्
श्रीपर्वतं शिरःस्थाने केदारं तु ललाटके ।
वाराणसीं महाप्राज्ञं भ्रुवोग्राणिस्य मध्यमे ॥४८॥
कुरुक्षेत्रं कुचस्थाने प्रयागं हृत्सरोरुहे ।
चिदम्बरं तु हृन्मध्ये आधारे कमलालयम् ॥४९॥
आत्मतीर्थसमुत्सृज्य बहिस्तीर्थानि यो व्रजेत् ।
करस्थं स महारत्नं त्यक्त्वा काचं विमार्गते ॥५०॥
भावतीर्थं परं तीर्थं प्रमाणं सर्वकर्मसु ।
अन्यथा डलिङ्गयते कान्ता अन्यथा डलिङ्गयते सुता ॥५१॥
तीर्थानि तोयपूर्णानि देवान् काषादिनिर्मितान् ।
योगिनो न प्रपद्यन्ते स्वात्मप्रत्ययकारणात् ॥५२॥
बहिस्तीर्थात् परं तीर्थमन्तस्तीर्थं महामुने ।
आत्मतीर्थं महातीर्थमन्यतीर्थं निरर्थकम् ॥५३॥
चित्तमन्तर्गतं दुष्टं तीर्थस्नानैर्न शुद्ध्यति ।
शतशो ऽपि जलैर्धौतं सुराभाण्डमिवाशुचि ॥५४॥
विशुवायनकालेषु ग्रहणे चान्तरे सदा ।
वाराणस्यादिके स्थाने स्नात्वा शुद्धं भवेन्नरः ॥५५॥
ज्ञानयोगपराणां तु पादप्रक्षालितं जलम् ।
भवशुद्ध्यर्थं मज्जानां तत्तीर्थं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥५६॥

antastīrthaprāśastyam

*śrīparvatam śirahsthāne kedāram tu lalātake
vārāṇasīm mahāprājña bhruvorghrāṇasya madhyame* (48)
*kurukṣetram kucasthāne prayāgam hr̄tsaroruhe
cidambaram tu hr̄nmadhye ādhāre kamalālayam* (49)
*ātmatīrthamsamutsrjya bahistīrthāni yo vrajet
karastham sa mahāratnam tyaktvā kācam vimārgate* (50)
*bhāvatīrthamparam tīrtham pramāṇam sarvakarmasu
anyathā ‘liṅgyate kāntā anyathā ‘liṅgyate sutā* (51)
*tīrthāni toyapūrṇāni devān kāṣṭhādinirmitān
yogino na prapadyante svātmapratyayakāraṇāt* (52)
*bahistīrthāt param tīrthamantastīrtham mahāmune
ātmatīrtham mahātīrthamanyattīrtham nirarthakam* (53)
cittamantargatam duṣṭam tīrthasnānairna śudhyati

śataśo ‘pi jalairdhautam surābhāṇḍamivāśuci (54)

viśuvāyanakāleṣu grahaṇe cāntare sadā

vārāṇasyādike sthāne snātvā śuddho bhavennarah (55)

jñānayogaparāṇām tu pādaprakṣālitam jalam

bhāvaśuddhyarthamajñānām tattīrtham munipuṇgava (56)

Anvay

prāśastyam: praise; *antaḥ-tīrtha*: inner *tīrthas*, sacred places; *śrīparvatam*: Mt. Kailash; *śirahsthāne*: within the head; *tu*: conjunction; *kedāram*: Kedāra; *lalātakē*: in the forehead; *vārāṇasīm*: Vārāṇasī; *Madhyame*: between; *bhruvoh*: eyebrows; *ghrāṇasya*: nose; *mahāprājñā*: o Wise One; *kuruksētram*: field of Kuru; *hr̥ṇmadhye*: in the heart centre; *kamalālayam*: Kamalālaya; *ādhāre*: in the base; *bhāvatīrtham*: *bhāvatīrtha*, true nature of *tīrtha*; *param tīrtham*: highest *tīrtha*; *pramānam*: proof; *sarva-karmasu*: of all actions; *anyathā . . . anyathā*: either . . . or; *kāntā*: wife; *sutā*: daughter; *alingyate*: may be embraced; *yoginah*: yogins; *kāranāt*: because of; *pratyaya*: understanding; *svātma*: Self; *na prapadyante*: do not need; *toyapūrnāni tīrthāni*: water *tīrthas*; *devān*: gods; *nirmitān*: made of; *kāṣṭha*: wood; *ādi*: or other; *antaḥ tīrtham*: inner *tīrtha*; *param tīrtham*: supreme *tīrtha*; *bahih-tīrthāt*: than the external *tīrtha*; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *ātmatīrtham*: *tīrtha* of the soul; *mahātīrtham*: greatest *tīrtha*; *anyattīrtham*: another *tīrtha*; *nirarthakam*: useless; *duṣṭam*: dirt; *antargatam*: concealed in; *cittam*: mind; *na śudhyati*: cannot be cleansed; *snānaiḥ*: by baths; *tīrtha*: in *tīrthas*; *iva*: just as; *bhāndam*: container; *surā*: for alcohol; *aśuci*: impure; *api*: even though; *jalaiḥ-dhautam*: it has been washed; *śataśah*: 100 times; *sadā*: always; *snātvā*: bathing; *vārāṇasī-ādike sthāne*: in Vārāṇasī and such places; *viśuvāyanakāleṣu*: during all the solstices; *ca antare grahaṇe*: and other eclipses; *narah*: a man; *bhavet*: becomes; *śuddhah*: pure; *tu*: yet; *pāda-prakṣālitam jalam*: having his feet washed; *bhāva-śuddhi-artham*: for purity of mind; *tat-tīrtham*: that is the *tīrtha*; *ajñānām*: of the ignorant; *munipuṇgava*: o Esteemed Sage.

Translation

Praise of the inner *tīrthas*: Mt. Kailash [is] within the head, *Kedāra* [is] in the forehead, *Vārāṇasī* [is] between the eyebrows and the nose, o wise One. *Kuruksētra* [is] within the chest. *Prayāga* moves up in the heart. Now,

Cidambara [is] in the heart centre. *Kamalālaya* [is] in the base. Whoever goes to external tīrthas, abandoning the inner tīrtha, seeks a piece of glass, while disregarding the precious jewel lying in his hand. *Bhāvatīrtha* is the highest tīrtha [and] proof of all actions. Either the wife or the daughter may be embraced. Yogins, because of understanding the self, do not need water tīrthas [or] gods made of wood or other [materials]. The inner tīrtha [is] the supreme tīrtha, [higher] than the external tīrtha, o great Sage; the tīrtha of the soul is the greatest tīrtha; another tīrtha [is] useless. Dirt concealed in the mind cannot be cleansed by baths in tīrthas, just as a container for alcohol [is] impure, even though it has been washed a hundred times. Always bathing in Vārāṇasī and such places, during all the solstices and other eclipses, a man becomes pure. Yet, having his feet washed for purity of mind by masters of *jñāna yoga*, that is the tīrtha of the ignorant, o esteemed Sage.

Commentary

Tīrthas are holy places, where saints, yogis or divine manifestations have lived or stayed, and performed sādhana, meditation, or perhaps some miracle. Some ancient texts, containing spiritual wisdom may be buried there. A field of energy and/or higher consciousness may also be stored there for the benefit of mankind in ages to come. In India, up to the present day, there are thousands of tīrthas, some of which are known, but many of which are secret or unknown. Those tīrthas which are known have become the major pilgrimage sites, where tourists and pilgrims go to connect with the higher self. However, these verses are not referring to these external tīrthas, but to the internal tīrthas, which the yogi may manifest through his or her sādhana and attainment.

Mount Kailash, the abode of Śiva, is located internally at the crown of the head, where Śiva, the pure, transcendent consciousness resides. Kedāra is located at the forehead, where *soma cakra* is situated. Vārāṇasī is at *bhrukuṭi*, the trigger point of *ajña*, in-between the eyebrows and the nose. Kurukṣetra is located in the chest, at the heart, where *anahata cakra* is located. Prayāga, is the center of confluence at the manipura cakra, and it moves up into the heart. Cidambara is also at the heart center. Kamālalaya is at the base, where *mūlādhāra cakra* is located at the pelvic floor.

The above verse states that whoever visits the external tīrthas, disregarding the internal tīrthas, seeks pieces of glass, while precious jewels are lying in the hand.

Bhāvatīrtha, the seat of the soul, is the highest tīrtha, and the highest truth. Therefore, it is the proof of all actions. At this level, either the wife or the daughter may be embraced without any sense of guilt. Yogis, who have understood the self, do not require the blessing of water tīrthas, sacred ponds, rivers, lakes, or images of the gods made from wood or other materials. The inner tīrtha is supreme, and higher than the external tīrthas. The tīrtha of the soul is the greatest tīrtha, and all others are useless for the yogi. The dirt concealed in the mind cannot be cleansed by bathing in water tīrthas, just as a container for alcohol is impure, even if it is washed a hundred times.

The man who bathes in Vārāṇasī, and such tīrthas, during all the solstices and eclipses, becomes pure, because these places are steeped in spiritual energy. Yet, the man who has his feet washed for purity of mind by masters of jñāna yoga worships at the tīrtha of the ignorant.

Verses 57 to 59: Vision of Śiva within oneself

आत्मनि शिवदृष्टिः

तीर्थे दाने जपे यज्ञे काष्ठे पाषाणके सदा ।
शिवं पश्यति मूढात्मा शिवे देहे प्रतिष्ठिते ॥५७॥

अन्तःस्थं मां परित्यज्य बहिष्ठं यस्तु सेवते ।
हस्तस्थं पिण्डमुत्सृज्य लिहेत् कूर्परमात्मनः ॥५८॥

शिवमात्मनि पश्यन्ति प्रतिमासु न योगिनः ।
अज्ञानां भावनार्थाय प्रतिमाः परिकल्पिताः ॥५९॥

ātmani śivadr̥ṣṭih

*tīrthe dāne jape yajñe kāṣṭhe pāṣāṇake sadā
śivam paśyati mūḍhātmā śive dehe pratiṣṭhite* (57)

*antahstham mām parityajya bahiṣṭham yastu sevate
hastastham piṇḍamutsrjya lihet kūrparamātmanah* (58)

*śivamātmani paśyanti pratimāsu na yoginah
ajñānām bhāvanārthāya pratimāḥ parikalpitāḥ* (59)

Anvay

śiva-dr̥ṣṭih: vision of Śiva; *ātmani*: in oneself; *mūḍhātmā*: unconscious self; *sadā*: always; *paśyati*: sees; *Śivam*: Śiva; *tīrtha*: in *tīrtha*; *dāne*: in charitable gifts; *jape*: in *japa*, repetition of *mantra*; *yajñe*: in *yajna*, sacrificial fire; *kāṣṭhe*: in movement of wind and cloud; *pāṣāṇake*: in stone [idols]; *Śive*: whereas Śiva; *pratiṣṭhite*: is established; *dehe*: in the body; *tu*: thus; *yah*: whoever; *sevate*: worships; *bahiṣṭham*: external; *parityajya*: forsaking; *mām*: me; *antahstham*: internal; *lihet*: he licks; *ātmanah*: his own; *kūrparam*: elbow; *utsrjya*: having cast away; *piṇḍam*: food; *hastastham*: in his hand; *yoginah*: yogins; *paśyanti*: see; *śivam-ātmani*: Śiva inside themselves; *na*: not; *pratimāsu*: in idols; *pratimāḥ*: idols; *parikalpitāḥ*: are designed; *arthāya*: for the benefit of; *ajñānām bhāvana*: ignorant people.

Translation

Vision of Śiva in oneself. The unconscious self always sees Śiva in *tīrtha*, charitable gifts, *japa*, *yajña*, movement of wind and cloud, stone [idols], whereas Śiva is established in the body. Thus, whoever worships the external, forsaking me, the internal, [is as if] he licks his own elbow, having

cast away the food in this hand. The yogins see Śiva inside themselves, not in idols. Idols are designed for the benefit of ignorant people.

Commentary

Śiva is the essence of light, pure consciousness. This consciousness is within each of us, and is accessible to each of us. The unconscious self is the person, who does not know this, even in theory, and seeks Śiva in places and actions deemed holy, in the natural environment, and in temples and idols. Śiva is known as the destroyer, because he is established in the transcendental state, beyond ego and duality. Only when they are destroyed, can we connect with Śiva, the cosmic consciousness. Ādi Śankara, the great vedantist of the 8th century C.E., realized this in his poem *Nirvāna-Śatka*, where he says he is not the senses, nor the mind nor the elements; he says *śivo 'ham*, identifying only with Śiva, *sat-cit-ānanda*, the bliss of living in the supreme consciousness. This is true liberation, not to be sought or attained in the external world.

Verses 60 to 63: Absorption in Brahma

ब्रह्मदर्शनेन ब्रह्मभावः
अपूर्वमपरं ब्रह्म स्वात्मानं सत्यमद्वयम् ।
प्रज्ञानघनमानन्दं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥६०॥
नाडीपुञ्जं सदासारं नरभावं महामुने ।
समुत्सृज्यात्मनात्मानमहमित्यवधारय ॥६१॥
अशरीरं शरीरेषु महान्तं विभुमीश्वरम् ।
आनन्दमक्षरं साक्षान्मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥६२॥
विभेदजनके ज्ञाने नष्टे ज्ञानबलान्मुने ।
आत्मनो ब्रह्मणो भेदमसन्तं किं करिष्यति ॥६३॥

*brahmadarśanena brahmabhāvah
apūrvamaparam brahma svātmānam satyamadvayam
prajñānaghanamānandam yah paśyati sa paśyati (60)
nādīpuñjam sadā ‘sāram narabhāvam mahāmune
samutsrjyātmanā ‘tmānamahamityavadhāraya (61)
aśarīram śarīresu mahāntam vibhumiśvaram
ānandamakṣaram sāksānmatvā dhīro na śocati (62)
vibhedajanake jñāne naṣṭe jñānabalānmune
ātmano brahmaṇo bhedamasantam kim karisyati (63)*

Anvay

brahma-bhāvah: absorption in Brahma; *brahma-darśanena*: through insight into Brahma; *yah*: whoever; *paśyati*: sees; *Brahma*: Brahma; *apūrvam*: incomparable; *aparam*: unexcelled; *satyam*: true; *advayam*: non-dual; *ghanam*: full of; *prajñāna*: knowledge; *ānandam*: bliss; *sah*: he; *paśyati*: sees; *sva-ātmānam*: his own Self; *iti*: thus; *avadhāraya*: affirming; *ātmanā*: through the Self; *aham ātmānam*: I am the Self; *samutsrjya*: having renounced; *nādī-puñjam*: mass of *nādīs*; *sadā*: ever; *asāram*: unimportant; *nara-bhāvam*: spirit of man; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *matvā*: having rejoiced in; *sāksān*: with one's own eyes; *aśarīram*: bodiless; *śarīresu*: within the body; *aksaram*: imperishable; *ānandam*: bliss; *mahāntam*: great; *vibhum-īshvaram*: all-pervading *Īśvara*; *dhīrah*: wise one; *na śocati*: does not grieve; *jñāne*: knowledge; *janake*: which has generated; *vibheda*: distinctions; *naṣṭe*: is destroyed; *jñānabalān*: by the forces of wisdom;

mune: o Sage; *asantam:* being no; *bhedam:* difference; *ātmanah* *brahmanah:* between the Self and Brahman; *kim:* what; *karisyati:* can it do.

Translation

Absorption in Brahman through insight into Brahma: Whoever sees Brahma [as] incomparable, unexcelled, true, non-dual, full of knowledge [and] bliss, he sees his own Self. Thus affirming ‘Through the Self, I am the Self’, having renounced the mass of nādīs [as] ever unimportant to the spirit of man, o great Sage, [and] having rejoiced with one’s own eyes in the bodiless within the body [and] the imperishable bliss of the great all-pervading Īśvara, the wise one does not grieve. [When] the knowledge which has generated distinctions is destroyed by the forces of wisdom, o Sage, [there] being no difference between the Self and Brahman, what can it do?

Commentary

These verses refer to Brahma and Brahman. Brahman is the pure, ever-expanding totality of consciousness. Brahma is the lord and creator of all, whose being is the essence of Brahman. When we worship Brahma, who is one of Īśvara’s trinity of Brahma, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara (Śiva), we activate and connect with the vibration of Brahman, the supreme consciousness, the source of all. Our true Self and Brahma have the same qualities. The wise person identifies with these qualities only, and not the gross body. He/she remains in the state of bliss of Īśvara, and, unaffected by external circumstances, affirms *aham brahmāsmi*, I am Brahman.

इति चतुर्थः खण्डः:

iti caturthah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the fourth section.

पञ्चमः खण्डः
pañcamah khaṇḍah

Fifth Section

Prāṇāyāma

Verses 1 to 4: Purification of the nādīs

नाडीशोधनम्
सम्यक्कथय मे ब्रह्मन् नाडीशुद्धिं समासतः ।
यया शुद्धया सदा ध्यायन् जीवन्मुक्तो भवाम्यहम् ॥१॥
साम्कृते शृणु वक्ष्यामि नाडीशुद्धिं समासतः ।
विध्युक्तकर्मसंयुक्तः कामसंकल्पवर्जितः ॥२॥
यमाद्यष्टाङ्गसंयुक्तः शान्तः सत्यपरायणः ।
स्वात्मन्यवस्थितः सम्यक् ज्ञानिभिश्च सुशिक्षितः ॥३॥
पर्वताग्रे नदीतीरे बिल्वमूले वने ऽथवा ।
मनोरमे शुचौ देशे मठं कृत्वा समाहितः ॥४॥

nādīśodhanam
samyakkathaya me brahman nādīśuddhim samāsataḥ
yayā śuddhayā sadā dhyāyan jīvanmukto bhavāmyaham (1)
sāmkṛte śṛṇu vaksyāmi nādīśuddhim samāsataḥ
vidhyuktakarmasamyuktah kāmasaṁkalpavarjitaḥ (2)
yamādyastāṅgasamayuktah śāntah satyaparāyanah
svātmanyavasthitah samyak jñānibhiśca suśikṣitah (3)
parvatāgre nadītire bilvamūle vane ‘thavā
manorame śucau deśe maṭham kṛtvā samāhitah (4)

Anvay

nādī-śodhanam: purification of the *nādīs*; *brahman*: o Brahman; *kathaya*: describe; *me*: to me; *samyak*: exactly; *samāsataḥ*: succinctly; *nādī-śuddhim*: purification of the *nādīs*; *sadā*: always; *dhyāyan*: contemplating; *yayā śuddhayā*: through this purity; *aham bhavāmi*: I become; *jīvanmuktaḥ*: liberated while in this body; *sāmkṛte*: o Sāmkṛti; *śṛṇu*: listen; *vaksyāmi*: I will tell; *samāsataḥ*: concisely; *vidhyukta*: according to the ritual; *śāntah*:

serene; *samyuktah*: merged with; *astāṅga*: eightfold path; *ādi*: beginning with; *yama*: *yamas*, self-restraints; *parāyanāḥ*: highest aim; *satya*: truth; *ca*: and; *avasthitah*: fixed; *sva-ātmani*: on their true self; *jñānibhīḥ*: the wise; *suśikṣitah*: practise; *samyak*: correctly; *kṛtvā*: having made; *matham*: hut; *manorame*: in a pleasant; *śucau*: clean; *deśe*: place; *parvatāgre*: on a mountain peak; *nadītire*: on the bank of a river; *bilvamūle*: at the base of a Bilva tree; *athavā*: or else; *vane*: in a forest; *samāhitah*: one can withdraw the mind.

Translation

Purification of the nādīs: O Brahman, describe to me exactly [and] succinctly the purification of the nādīs, [so that] always contemplating through this purity, I become liberated while in this body. O Sāmkṛti, listen! I will tell you concisely of the purification of the nādīs, according to ritual and set actions [and] devoid of personal desires and wishes. Serene, merged with the eightfold path, beginning with the yamas, [their] highest aim truth, and fixed on their true self, the wise practise correctly. Having made a hut in a pleasant, clean place, on a mountain peak, on the bank of a river, at the base of a *bilva* tree, or else in a forest, one can withdraw the mind.

Commentary

Sāmkṛti asks the Rishi how to purify the nādīs, so that he can achieve liberation, while still living in the body, by always contemplating and perceiving life through this purity. Impurities in the nādīs are low pranic energies, which are the effects of mental cravings and exhausting tamasic and rajasic lifestyles. The Rishi replies that in order to purify the nādīs, one must remain serene, devoid of personal desires, and perfect the eightfold path, beginning with the yamas and niyamas, as described in sections one and two. The wise practise correctly, who are strongly motivated and concentrated on the true self, the inner Śiva or Brahma.

In order to purify the nādīs and achieve liberation, the sadhaka should construct a small hut in a clean, pleasant and tranquil place, where he/she can practise intensively without any distraction or disturbance. In times of old, such sites as a mountain peak, river bank, forest or the base of a bilva tree (sacred to Śiva) were deemed auspicious and favourable for this

purpose. Practising in the home, town or city affects the intensity and ultimate outcome of the sādhana.

Verses 5 to 10: Nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma

आरभ्य चासनं पश्चात् प्राङ्गुखोदङ्गुखोऽपि वा ।
 समग्रीवशिरःकायः संवृतास्यः सुनिश्चलः ॥५॥
 नासाग्रे शशभृद्धिम्बे बिन्दुमध्ये तुरीयकम् ।
 स्रवन्तममृतं पश्येन्नेत्राभ्यां सुसमाहितः ॥६॥
 इडया प्राणमाकृष्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
 ततोऽग्निं देहमध्यस्थं ध्यायन् ज्वालावलीयुतम् ॥७॥
 बिन्दुनादसमायुक्तमग्निबीजं विचिन्तयेत् ।
 पश्चाद्विरेचयेत् सम्यक् प्राणं पिङ्गलया बुधः ॥८॥
 पुनः पिङ्गलया ऽपूर्य वहिबीजमनुस्मरेत् ।
 पुनर्विरचयेद्धीमानिडयैव शनैः शनैः ॥९॥
 त्रिचतुर्वासिरं वा ऽथ त्रिचतुर्वारमेव च ।
 षट्कृत्वो विचरेन्नित्यं रहस्येवं त्रिसंधिषु ॥१०॥

ārabhya cāsanam paścāt prāñmukhodañmukho ‘pi vā samagrīvaśirahkāyah samvṛtāsyah suniścalah (5) nāsāgre śaśabhr̥dvimbe bindumadhye turīyakam sravantamamṛtam paśyennetrābhyām susamāhitah (6) idayā prāñamākṛṣya pūrayitvodarasthitam tato ‘gnim dehamadhyastham dhyāyan jvālāvalīyutam (7) bindunādasamāyuktamagnibījam vicintayet paścādvirecayet samyak prāñam piṅgalayā budhah (8) punah piṅgalayā ‘pūrya vahibījamanusmaret punarvrecayeddhīmāniñdayaiva śanaiḥ śanaiḥ (9) tricaturvāsaram vā ‘tha tricaturvārameva ca satkrtvo vicarennityam rahasyevam trisamdhisu (10)

Anvay

ca: and; *ārabhya:* having begun; *āsanam:* posture; *paścāt:* from the west; *prāñmukhah:* facing east; *api vā:* or even; *danmukhah:* facing north; *grīva:* neck; *śirah:* head; *kāyah:* body; *sama:* aligned; *saṃvṛtāsyah:* covered; *suniścalah:* immobile; *susamāhitah:* with well-focussed mind; *nāsāgre:* on the nosetip; *paśyet:* one should see; *netrābhyām:* with one's own eyes; *turīyakam:* *turiya*, fourth state of consciousness; *sravantamamṛtam:* flow of nectar; *śaśabhr̥dvimbe:* in the crescent moon;

bindumadhye: at *bindu*, psychic centre in the top back of the head; *ākṛṣya*: drawing in; *prāṇam*: vital energy; *īdayā*: through *ida*; *pūrayitva . . . sthitam*: filling; *udara*: belly; *tataḥ*: then; *dhyāyan*: meditating on; *agnim*: fire; *avalīyutam*: arising from; *jvāla*: flames; *dehamadhyastham*: in the centre of the body; *vicintayet*: one should reflect upon; *bījam*: *bīja*, source; *agni*: *agni*, fire; *samāyuktam*: together with; *nāda*: *nāda*, subtle sound vibration; *bindu*: *bindu*; *paścāt*: next; *budhah*: sage; *virecayet*: emits; *prāṇam*: *prāṇa*; *samyak*: completely; *piṅgalayā*: through *piṅgalā*, right nasal passage; *punah*: then; *āpūrya*: inhaling; *piṅgalayā*: through *piṅgalā*; *anusmaret*: one should reflect upon; *vahi-bījam*: *bīja* of *agni*, seed sound of fire element; *punah*: then; *dhīmān . . . eva*: with full awareness; *virecayet*: one should exhale; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ*: very slowly; *īdayā*: through *īdā*; *vicaret*: one should practise; *ṣatkṛtvah*: six times; *tricaturvāsaram*: three or four days; *vā atha*: or else; *tricaturvāram*: three or four times; *ca*: and; *nityam*: always; *rahasya*: in secret; *trisamdhīṣu*: at sunrise, noon and sunset.

Translation

And having begun āsana from the west, facing east or even facing north, neck, head [and] body aligned, [the body] covered [and] immobile, with well-focused mind on the nose tip, one should see with one's own eyes *turiya*, the flow of nectar in the crescent moon at *bindu*. Drawing the *prāṇa* in through *īdā*, filling the belly, then meditating on the fire arising from the flames in the centre of the body, one should reflect upon the *bīja* of *agni*, together with the *nāda* of *bindu*. Next the sage emits the *prāṇa* completely through *piṅgalā*. Then, inhaling through *piṅgalā*, one should reflect upon the *bīja* of *agni*. Then, with full awareness, one should exhale very slowly through *īdā*. One should practise six times for three or four days or else three or four times, and always in secret at sunrise, noon and sunset.

Commentary

In this verse, the practice of *nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma* is described. The purpose of *nādī śodhana* is to balance and purify the *nādīs*. Therefore, *prāṇāyāma* should always be preceded by āsana, which regulates and releases the pranic flows, preparing the system for *prāṇāyāma*. The verse says, having begun the practice with āsana, facing west, one should sit for *prāṇāyāma*. The posture for the *prāṇāyāma* practice should be perfectly aligned, as in the classical meditation postures, so that the neck, head and

body are straight and facing either east or north. The body should be covered to avoid physical disturbance.

Technique

One should begin the practice by sitting quietly until the body becomes steady and still. At this point one should focus the mind on the breathing at the nose tip. As the breathing becomes slow and rhythmic, one should simultaneously direct the inner gaze towards *bindu visarga*, the psychic centre at the top back of the head. Here one should perceive the flow of *amṛta*, ‘the nectar of life’, falling from the crescent moon at *bindu*, with one’s own inner eye. The flow of nectar from the crescent moon has also been termed *turiya* here. *Turiya* means the ‘transcendental consciousness’, which is the source of the nectar, which flows down into the body from the crescent moon at *bindu*.

Focusing on the nosetip to stimulate *mūlādhāra cakra*, one should perceive *turiya*, the fourth state of consciousness, beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. *Bindu* is located above *ajña cakra*, at the top back of the head, where some brahmins leave a tuft of hair, tightened to maintain awareness of this point. It is said that *bindu* is in *ānandamaya koṣa* and that it is the source, where everything manifests and dissolves back into. According to tantra there is a minute secretion in a dip in the higher centres of the upper cortex of the brain. In this secretion is a point, which is the *bindu visarga*, ‘falling of the drop’.

Bindu is represented by a crescent moon and a white drop, which symbolises the nectar that drips down from *bindu* to *viśuddhi cakra*. The crescent moon symbolises its relationship with the phases of the moon, just as the human mind and emotions are influenced by the phases of the moon. When *bindu* is activated, the secretion of nectar that it produces is enough to nourish and maintain the whole body.

Having completed the preparation, one should perform *nādī śodhana prāṇayāma* for the purification of the *nādīs*. Slowly inhale through the left nostril and draw the *prāṇa* down through the *iḍā nādī*, filling the belly. Retaining the breath inside, one should meditate on the fire, arising from the flames at the center of *manipura cakra*, the navel center. At the same

time one should reflect on the *bīja* mantra of fire, which is the sound *Ram*, along with the *bīja* mantra of *bindu*, which is the sound *Aum*.

Next the *prāṇa* should be exhaled slowly and completely from the right nostril through *piṅgalā nāḍī*. At the end of exhalation, one should inhale from the right nostril through the *piṅgalā nāḍī*, filling the belly, and again reflecting on the fire at *manipura*, and the *bīja* mantras *Ram* and *Aum*. Then one should exhale very slowly with awareness from the left nostril, through the *idā nāḍī*. This completes one round of *nāḍī śodhana prāṇāyāma*.

One should perform six rounds of the practice for three or four days, or else three or four rounds. The practice should always be done at the time of sunrise, midday and sunset, when *suṣumnā nāḍī* is active. At sunrise the mind is still in the dreaming state; at noon *idā* and *piṅgalā* flow equally, and the mind is tranquil; and at sunset, *idā* and *piṅgalā* come together in *suṣumnā* at *ajña cakra*. One should always perform higher practices of yoga in secret, so as not to be disturbed by the thoughts and energies of others.

Verses 11 and 12: Signs of nādī purification

नाडीशुद्धिचिह्नानि
नाडीशुद्धिमवाप्नोति पृथक्विच्छ्रोपलक्षितः ।
शरिरलघुता दीप्तिर्वहेर्जाठरवर्तिनः ॥११॥
नादाभिव्यक्तिरित्येतच्छ्रिं तत्सिद्धिसूचकम् ।
यावदेतानि सम्पश्येत्तावदेवं समाचरेत् ॥१२॥

nādīśuddhicihnāni
nādīśuddhimavāpnoti prthakcihnopalaksitah
śarīralaghutā diptivaherjāṭharavartinah (11)
nādābhivyaktirityetacihnam tatsiddhisūcakam
yāvadetāni sampasyettāvadevam samācaret (12)

Anvay

cihnāni: indications; *nādīśuddhi*: *nādī* purification; *avāpnoti*: one obtains; *nādī-śuddhim*: purification of the *nādīs*; *prthak*: different; *cihnāni*: signs; *upalakṣitah*: are perceived; *laghutā*: lightness; *śarīra*: of the body; *diptih*: radiance; *vaheḥ*: of fire; *vartinah*: moving in; *jāṭhara*: digestive system; *iti*: it is said; *nāda-abhivyaktih*: manifestation of *nāda*, primal subtle sound vibration; *etat cihnam*: the sign; *sūcakam*: indicating; *tat siddhi*: this *siddhi*, psychic power; *samācaret*: one should do the practices; *evam*: emphatic; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: until; *sampaśyet*: one recognises; *etāni*: these.

Translation

Indications of nādī purification: One obtains purification of the nādīs [when] different signs are perceived: lightness of the body, radiance of fire, moving in the digestive system. It is said the manifestation of *nāda* is the sign, indicating this *siddhi*. One should do the practices until one recognises these [signs].

Commentary

The practice of nādī śodhana purifies the idā and piṅgalā nādīs by the process of alternate nostril breathing. Idā and piṅgalā are the two major nādīs in the body, which influence and control all the others. Once the nādīs are purified, the prāṇas become regulated and balanced throughout the body. This results in the state of *prāṇottana*, the awakening of the prāṇas,

and gives rise to the feeling of lightness in the body, the first sign of nādī purification.

In the above technique the inhalation is directed down to the belly, where maṇipura cakra, the center of fire, is located. The breath is then retained, while meditating on the fire arising from the flames at the center of manipura. At the same time one should reflect on the bīja mantra of fire, which is the sound *Ram*. With the purification of the nādīs and awakening of the prāṇas, the pranic storehouse, which is located at *manipura cakra*, begins to expand with vital energy and light. This radiance becomes more effusive, and can be felt moving in the digestive system, the second sign of nādī purification.

The manifestation of *nāda*, the subtle psychic or internal sounds, is the third sign that arises with the purification of the nādīs. These sounds may be heard at any time, but they are not caused by any external objects. They arise from the subtle field of consciousness, which is not in contact with the outside world. Such sounds as bells, conch, flute, vīna, thunder or rain may be heard. One may also hear the sounds of different bīja and mantra, such as Aum, *Aim*, *Hrīm*, etc. The ability to hear the inner nādas is a sign that the yogi has perfected the practice. One should continue to perform the practice until these signs appear.

Verses 13 and 14: Purification of the Self

स्वात्मशुद्धिः

अथवैतत् परित्यज्य स्वात्मशुद्धिं समाचरेत् ।
आत्मा शुद्धिः सदा नित्यः सुखरूपः स्वयंप्रभः ॥१३॥
अज्ञानमलपङ्कं यः क्षालयेज्ज्ञानतोयतः ।
स एव सर्वदा शुद्धो नान्यः कर्मरतो हि सः ॥१४॥

svātmaśuddhiḥ

*athavaitat parityajya svātmaśuddhim samācaret
ātmā śuddhiḥ sadā nityah sukharūpah svayamprabhah* (13)
ajñānamalapañkam yah kṣālayejjñānatoyataḥ
sa eva sarvadā śuddho nānyah karmarato hi saḥ (14)

Anvay

sva-ātma-śuddhiḥ: purification of one's own self; *athavā*: or; *parityajya*: having ceased; *etat*: this; *samācaret*: one should practise; *ātmā*: *ātman*, True Self; *sadā*: always; *śuddhiḥ*: pure; *nityah*: ever; *sukharūpah*: delightful; *svayamprabhah*: self-illuminated; *yah*: whoever; *kṣālayet*: is cleansed; *malapañkam*: of the dirt; *ajñāna*: of ignorance; *toyataḥ*: by the water; *jñāna*: of knowledge; *sah*: he; *eva*: indeed; *sarvadā*: completely; *śuddhah*: pure; *na*: not; *rataḥ*: bound; *hi*: emphatic; *anyah karma*: to other action.

Translation

Purification of one's own self: Or, having ceased this [practice], one should practise purification of one's own self. The *ātman* [is] always pure, ever delightful, and self-illuminated. Whoever is cleansed of the dirt of ignorance by the water of knowledge, he is indeed completely pure and is not bound to other action.

Commentary

Once the *nādīs* have been purified, one should attain knowledge of the *ātman*, the true self, through inner experience and meditation, and thus be released from the bondage of *karma*. Knowledge of the true self is *vidyā*. In the absence of this knowledge, one lives under the influence of *avidyā*, ignorance. Those who live in ignorance believe in the physical and material reality, and become blind to the subtle, inner truth. The verse states that

whoever is cleansed of the dirt of ignorance by the water of knowledge, is pure and never bound by karma, action.

इति पञ्चमः खण्डः:

iti pañcamah khandah

Thus [ends] the fifth section.

षष्ठः खण्डः
ṣaṣṭha khaṇḍaḥ

Sixth Section

Aspects of Prāṇāyāma

Verses 1 and 2: Description of prāṇāyāma

प्राणायामलक्षणम्
प्राणायामक्रमं वक्ष्ये सांकृते शृणु सादरम् ।
प्राणायाम इति प्रोक्तो रेचपूरककुम्भकैः ॥१॥
वर्णत्रयात्मकाः प्रोक्ता रेचपूरककुम्भकाः ।
स एष प्रणवः प्रोक्तः प्राणायामश्च तन्मयः ॥२॥

prāṇāyāmalakṣaṇam

*prāṇāyāmakramam vaksye sāṃkṛte śṛṇu sādaram
prāṇāyāma iti proktō recapūrakakumbhakaiḥ (1)
varṇatrayātmakāḥ proktā recapūrakakumbhakāḥ
sa esa pranavah proktah prāṇāyāmaśca tanmayah (2)*

Anvay

prāṇāyāma-lakṣaṇam: description of *prāṇāyāma*; *sādaram*: respectfully; *sāṃkṛte*: Sāṃkṛti; *vaksye*: I will speak of; *prāṇāyāma-kramam*: system of *prāṇāyāma*; *iti proktah*: it is declared; *reca-pūraka-kumbhakaiḥ*: by means of exhalation, inhalation and breath retention; *proktāḥ*: are said; *ātmakāḥ*: to consist of; *varṇa-traya*: the three sounds; *esa proktah*: this is called; *pranavah*: *pranava*, AUM; *ca*: and; *mayah*: is formed of; *tat*: this.

Translation

Description of *prāṇāyāma*: Listen respectfully, Sāṃkṛti. I will speak of the system of *prāṇāyāma*. It is declared [that] *prāṇāyāma* [is] by means of exhalation, inhalation and breath retention. Exhalation, inhalation and breath retention are said to consist of the three sounds; this is called *pranava*, and *prāṇāyāma* is formed of this.

Commentary

Here the teacher asks the student, Sāmkṛti, to listen respectfully to his description of prāṇāyāma. The word respect is used here to emphasise the importance of understanding the practice. When there is respect, one listens more carefully, and is able to grasp even the subtle nuances. Prāṇāyāma consists of three parts: inhalation, retention and exhalation. These three components are said to resonate with three sounds: inhalation—‘A’, retention—‘U’ and exhalation ‘M’. These three sounds form the *pranava*, *Aum*. Therefore, prāṇāyāma is formed by pranava.

Verses 3 to 9: Prāṇāyāma with prāṇava

इडया वायुमाकृष्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
 शनैः षोडशभिर्मत्रैरकारं तत्र संस्मरेत् ॥३॥
 पूरितं धारयेत् पश्चाच्चतुःषष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ।
 उकारमूर्तिमत्रापि संस्मरन् प्रणवं जपेत् ॥४॥
 यावद्वा शक्यते तावद्वारयेज्जपतत्परः ।
 पूरितं रेचयेत् पश्चान्मकारेणानिलं बुधः ॥५॥
 शनैः पिङ्गलया तत्र द्वात्रिंशन्मात्रया पुनः ।
 प्राणायामो भवेदेषः ततश्चैवं समभ्यसेत् ॥६॥
 पुनः पिङ्गलया पूर्य मात्रैः षोडशभिस्तथा ।
 अकारमूर्तिमत्रापि स्मरेदेकाग्रमानसः ॥७॥
 धारयेत् पूरितं विद्वाण प्रणवं संजपन् वशी ।
 उकारमूर्तिं स ध्यायन् चतुःषष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ॥८॥
 मकारं तु स्मरन् पश्चाद्रेचयेदिडयानिलम् ।
 एवमेव पुनः कुर्यादिडया पूर्य बुद्धिमान् ॥९॥

*iḍayā vāyumākṛṣya pūrayitvodaṛasthitam
 śanaiḥ ṣoḍaśabhirṁatrātra kāraṁ tatra samsmaret (3)
 pūritam dhārayet paścāccatuḥṣaṣṭyā tu mātrayā
 ukāramūrtimatrāpi samsmaran praṇavam jape (4)
 yāvadvā śakyate tāvaddhārayejjapataṭparah
 pūritam recayet paścānmakārenānilam budhah (5)
 śanaiḥ piṅgalayā tatra dvātrimśanmātrayā punah
 prāṇāyāmo bhavedeṣa tataścaivam samabhyaset (6)
 punah piṅgalayā pūrya mātraiḥ śoḍaśabhistathā
 akāramūrtimatrāpi smaredekaṁgramānasah (7)
 dhārayet pūritam vidvān praṇavam samjapan vaśī
 ukāramūrtim sa dhyāyan catuhṣaṣṭyā tu mātrayā (8)
 makāraṁ tu smaran paścādrecayedidayānilam
 evameva punah kuryādiḍayā pūrya buddhimān (9)*

Anvay

ākr̄ṣya: drawing in; *vāyum*: *vāyu*, vital air; *iḍayā*: through *iḍā*; *pūrayitva* . . . *sthitam*: filling; *udara*: abdomen; *tatra samsmaret*: one should bring to

mind; *akāram*: sound ‘A’; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *sodaśabhiḥ-mātraiḥ*: for sixteen *mātras*, units of time; *paścāt*: then; *dhārayet*: holding; *pūritam*: inhalation; *ccatuḥṣaṣṭyā mātrayā*: for sixty four *mātrās*; *api*: also; *samsmaran*: contemplating; *atra*: here; *ukāra-mūrtim*: form of ‘U’; *japet*: one should repeat; *budhah*: sage; *dhārayet*: should hold; *pūritam*: inhalation; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: as long . . . as; *śakyate*: he can; *tatparah*: following; *japa*: repetition; *recayet*: he should expel; *paścāt*: then; *anilam*: vital air; *makārena*: with the sound ‘M’; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *dvātrimśat-mātrayā*: for thirty-two *mātrās*; *piṅgalayā*: through *piṅgalā*; *punah*: again; *esa*: this; *bhavet*: is; *prāṇāyāmaḥ*: *prāṇāyāma*; *ca*: and; *tataḥ*: therefore; *samabhyaṣet*: one should practise; *evam*: correctly; *punah*: again; *pūrya*: inhaling; *piṅgalayā*: through *piṅgalā*; *sodaśabhiḥ mātraiḥ*: for sixteen *mātrās*; *smaret*: one should concentrate on; *api*: also; *atra*: here; *akāra-mūrtim*: form of ‘A’; *ekāgramānasah*: with one-pointed attention; *vidvān*: knowledgeable one; *dhārayet*: should hold; *pūritam*: inhalation; *catuḥṣaṣṭyā mātrayā*: for sixty-four *mātrās*; *samjapan*: repeating; *vaśī*: powerfully; *prāṇavam*: *prāṇava*, AUM; *tu*: while; *dhyāyan*: meditating on; *ukāra-mūrtim*: form of ‘U’; *paścāt*: then; *smaran*: concentrating on; *makāram*: M; *recayet*: he should expel; *anilam*: vital air; *iḍayā*: through *iḍā*; *pūrya*: inhaling; *buddhimān*: wise one; *punah kuryāt*: one should repeat; *evameva*: in this way.

Translation

Drawing the breath in through *iḍā*, and filling the abdomen, one should bring to mind the sound ‘A’, [counting] slowly for sixteen *mātrās*. Then, holding the inhalation for sixty four *mātrās*, [and] also contemplating here the form of ‘U’, one should repeat the *prāṇava*. The sage should hold the inhalation as long as he can; following the repetition [of the *prāṇava*], he should then expel the vital air with the sound ‘M’ slowly for thirty-two *mātrās* through *piṅgalā* again. This is *prāṇāyāma*, and therefore, one should practise correctly. Again, inhaling through *piṅgalā* for sixteen *mātrās*, one should also concentrate here on the form of ‘A’ with one-pointed attention. The knowledgeable one should hold the inhalation for sixty-four *mātrās*, repeating powerfully the *prāṇava*, while meditating on the form of ‘U’. Then, concentrating on ‘M’, he should expel the vital air through *iḍā*. Inhaling through *iḍā*, the wise one should repeat [the process] in this way.

Commentary

The yoga upanisads recommend that nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma be combined with repetition of the pranaya, *Aum*, as well as the ratio of 16:64:32. This version of nādī śodhana should not be undertaken until one has mastered the basic practice, and slowly increased the ratio.

Technique

Slowly inhale through the left nostril, filling the abdomen, for 16 counts. Simultaneously repeat the first syllable of the prāṇava, ‘A’, sixteen times mentally. Then hold the breath inside at the abdomen for 64 counts, mentally repeating the second sound of the prāṇava, ‘U’, for 64 counts. If it is not possible to retain the breath inside for the full 64 counts, one should hold it for as long as possible, without incurring stress or discomfort. Then exhale the breath through the right nostril for 32 counts, mentally repeating the third syllable of prāṇava, ‘M’. It is very important that this prāṇāyāma practice should be performed correctly.

Now the first half of the round is complete. To perform the second half, inhale slowly down to the abdomen through the right nostril for the count of 16, with mental repetition of the sound ‘A’. Hold the breath inside at the abdomen for the count of 64, mentally repeating the sound ‘U’, Finally exhale slowly through the left nostril for the count of 32, with repetition of the sound ‘M’. This completes one round of the practice. To begin the next round, one should inhale through the left nostril and follow the same procedure.

Verses 10 to 12a: Benefits of the practice

एवं समभ्यसेन्नित्यं प्राणायामं मुनीश्वर ।
एवमभ्यासतो नित्यं षण्मासाद् ज्ञानवान् भवेत् ॥१०॥
वत्सराद्ब्रह्मविद्वान् स्यात् तस्मान्नित्यं समभ्यसेत् ।
योगाभ्यासरतो नित्यं स्वधर्मनिरतश्च यः ॥११॥
प्राणसंयमनेनैव ज्ञानान्मुक्तो भविष्यति ॥१२॥

*evam samabhyasennityam prāṇāyāmam muniśvara
evamabhyāsato nityam ṣaṇmāsād jñānavān bhavet 10)
vatsarādbrahmavidvān syāt tasmānnityam samabhyaset
yogābhyaśarato nityam svadharmanirataśca yah (11)
prāṇasamyamanenaiva jñānānmukto bhavisyati (12a)*

Anvay

muniśvara: o Excellent Sage; *samabhyaset*: one should practise; *nityam*: regularly; *evam*: correctly; *abhyāsataḥ*: having practised; *bhavet*: one becomes; *jñānavān*: *jñāni*, endowed with wisdom; *ṣat-māsāt*: in six months; *syāt*: one will be; *brahmavidvān*: *brahmavit*, one who has reached the fourth of the seven stages of wisdom; *vatsarāt*: in a year; *tasmāt*: thus; *samabhyaset*: one should practise; *nityam*: continually; *yah*: whoever; *nityam*: always; *rataḥ*: is engaged in; *yoga-abhyāsa*: practice of *yoga*; *ca*: and; *nirataḥ*: devoted to; *svadharma*: one's own true nature; *prāṇasamyamanena*: by control of the *prāṇa*; *eva*: indeed; *bhavisyati*: will become; *muktah*: liberated; *jñānāt*: through higher wisdom.

Translation

O excellent Sage, one should practise *prāṇāyāma* regularly [and] correctly. Having practised regularly [and] correctly, one becomes a *jñāni* in six months. One will be a *brahmavit* in a year. Thus one should practise continually. Whoever is always engaged in the practice of *yoga* and devoted to his *svadharma*, by control of the *prāṇa*, will indeed become liberated through higher wisdom.

Commentary

Prāṇayāma is a very subtle and powerful method.. Therefore, one should practise it regularly and correctly. By doing so, the yogic aspirant becomes a *jñāni* within six months, A *jñāni* is able to discriminate between the mind and the consciousness, the permanent and the impermanent, the inner truth and the outer experience. One who continues to practise for one year will become a *brahmavit*, knower of Brahman, the superconsciousness. Therefore, one should practise continuously. Whoever remains engaged in the practice of yoga and dedicated to his own inner path, will gain control over the prāṇa, vital force, and will become liberated through higher wisdom.

Verses 12b and 13: Components of prāṇayāma

पूरकादिलक्षणम्
बाह्यादापूरणं वायोरुदरे पूरको हि सः ॥१२॥
संपूर्णकुम्भवद्वायोधरिणं कुम्भको भवेत् ।
बहिर्विरेचनं वायोरुदराद्रेचकः स्मृतः ॥१३॥

pūrakādilakṣaṇam
bāhyādāpūraṇam vāyorudare pūrako hi saḥ (12b)
sampūrṇakumbhavadvāyordhāraṇam kumbhako bhavet
bahirvirecanam vāyorudarādrecakah smṛtah (13)

Anvay

pūraka-ādi-lakṣaṇam: description of *pūraka* etc; *hi*: so; *āpūraṇam*: filling; *udare*: abdomen; *vāyoh*: with vital air; *bāhyāt*: from outside; *pūrakah*: inhalation; *dhāraṇam*: holding; *vāyoh*: vital air; *vat*: as if; *sampūrṇa-kumbha*: in a full pot; *bhavet*: is; *kumbhaka*: retention; *bahirvirecanam*: expelling; *udarāt*: from the abdomen; *smṛtah*: is called; *recakah*: exhalation.

Translation

Description of *pūraka*: So, filling the abdomen with vital air from outside [is] *pūraka*. Holding the vital air as if in a full pot is *kumbhaka*. Expelling the vital air from the abdomen is called *recaka*.

Commentary

The three components of prāṇayāma are the three stages of the breathing process. *Pūraka* is inhalation. *Kumbhaka* is breath retention, as if holding the breath inside a pot. *Recaka* is exhalation. In normal breathing these three stages of breath go on automatically, day and night, throughout life. The main difference between prāṇayāma and normal breathing is the awareness of the breath and the ratios or counts. It is said that our lives, from birth to death, are measured by breaths. Every automatic or normal breath is counted in the duration of life. However, when we switch over to breathing with awareness and ratio, as in prāṇayāma, this type of breath is

not counted. Therefore, yogis who mastered the three components of *prāṇayāma*, were often very long lived, while others were not.

Verses 14 to 20: Perfection of prāṇāyāma

प्राणायामसिद्धयः

प्रस्वेदजनको यस्तु प्राणायामेषु सो ऽधमः ।
कम्पनं मध्यमं विद्यादुत्थानं चोत्तमं विदुः ॥१४॥
पूर्वपूर्वं प्रकुर्वित यावदुत्थानसंभवः ।
संभवत्युक्तमे प्राज्ञः प्राणायामे सुखी भवेत् ॥१५॥
प्राणायामेन चित्तं तु शुद्धिं भवति सुव्रत ।
चित्ते शुद्धे शुचिः साक्षात् प्रत्यग्ज्योतिर्व्यस्थितः ॥१६॥
प्राणाश्चित्तेन संयुक्तः परमात्मनि तिष्ठति ।
प्राणायामपरस्यास्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ॥१७॥
देहश्वेत्तिष्ठते तेन किंचिज्ज्ञानाद्विमुक्तता ।
रेचकं पूरकं मुक्त्वा कुम्भकं नित्यमभ्यसेत् ॥१८॥
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तः सम्यग्ज्ञानमवाप्नुयात् ।
मनोजवत्वमाप्नोति पलितादि च नश्यति ॥१९॥
प्राणायामैकनिष्ठस्य न किंचिदपि दुर्लभम् ।
तस्मात् सर्वप्रयत्नेन प्राणायामान् समभ्यसेत् ॥२०॥

prāṇāyāmasiddhayah

*prasvedajanako yastu prāṇāyāmeṣu so ‘dhamah
kampanam madhyamam vidyādutthānam cottamam viduh* (14)
*pūrvapūrvam prakurvita yāvadutthānasambhavah
sambhavatyuktame prājñah prāṇāyāme sukhī bhavet* (15)
*prāṇāyāmena cittam tu śuddhim bhavati suvrata
citte śuddhe śuciḥ sāksāt pratyagjyotiryasthitah* (16)
*prāṇāścittena samyuktaḥ paramātmani tiṣṭhati
prāṇāyāmaparasyāya puruṣasya mahātmanah* (17)
*dehaścottiṣṭhate tena kiṃcijjñānādvimuktatā
recakam pūrakam muktvā kumbhakam nityamabhyaset* (18)
*sarvapāpavinirmuktaḥ samyagjñānamavāpnuyāt
manojavatvamāpnoti palitādi ca naśyati* (19)
*prāṇāyāmaikaniṣṭhasya na kiṃcidapi durlabham
tasmat sarvaprayatnena prāṇāyāmān samabhyaset* (20)

Anvay

$prāṇāyāma$ -siddhayah: perfection of $prāṇāyāma$; tu: now; sah . . . yah: he who; janakah: produces; prasveda: perspiration; vidyāt: is; adhamah: lowest; kampanam: trembling; madhyamam: middle; ca: and; viduh: most accomplished one; utthānam: levitates; uttamam: highest; yāvat: when; prakurvita: this is done; pūrvapūrvam: repeatedly; utthāna-sambhavah: highest stage; sambhavati: is attained; prājñah: wise one; bhavet: becomes; sukhī: joyful; $prāṇāyāme$: in $prāṇāyāma$; suvrata: o virtuous one; $prāṇāyāmena$: through $prāṇāyāma$; bhavati: there is; śuddhim: purification of; cittam: mind; citte śuddhe: when the mind is purified; śucih: bright; pratyagjyotiḥ: inward light; sākṣāt: clearly; vyasthitah: established; samyuktah: having united; $prāṇāḥ$: $prāṇāś$; cittena: with the mind; tisṭhati: he rests; paramātmani: in the Supreme Spirit; asya: this; $prāṇāyāma$ -parasya: supreme $prāṇāyāma$; purusasya: spirit; mahātmanah: of the Great Soul; dehah: body; uttiṣṭhate: rises; ca . . . tena: and thus; vimuktatā: loss of; kimcit-jñānāt: any knowledge; muktvā: leaving; recakam: exhalation; pūrakam: inhalation; abhyaset: he should practise; kumbhakam: breath retention; nityam: regularly; vinirmuktaḥ: released from; sarva-pāpa: all sins; avāpnuyāt: he obtains; samyak-jñānam: correct knowledge; āpnoti: he gains; manojavatvam: swiftness of thought; ca: and; palita: grey hair; ādi: etc; naśyati: disappears; na kimcidapi: nothing; durlabham: hard to obtain; eka-niṣṭhasya: for one singularly intent on; tasmāt: thus; samabhyaset: one should practise; $prāṇāyāma$ an: $prāṇāyāmas$; sarvaprayatnena: with total effort.

Translation

Siddhis of $prāṇāyāma$: He who produces perspiration is at the lowest [level] of $prāṇāyāma$. Trembling is the middle [stage], and the most accomplished one [who] levitates is the highest. When this is done repeatedly, the highest stage is attained, [and] the wise one becomes joyful in $prāṇāyāma$. O virtuous One, through $prāṇāyāma$ there is purification of the mind. When the mind is purified, the bright inward light is clearly established. Having united the $prāṇāś$ with the mind, he rests in the supreme spirit. This supreme $prāṇāyāma$ [is] the spirit of the great soul. The body rises and thus [there is] loss of any [mundane] knowledge. Leaving exhalation and inhalation, he should practise breath retention regularly. Released from all sins, he obtains correct knowledge. He gains swiftness of thought and grey hair etc disappears. Nothing [is] hard to obtain for one

who is singularly intent on prāṇāyāma. Thus, one should practise prāṇāyāma with total effort.

Commentary

Prāṇāyāma is a very important practice in yoga. It rebalances the prāṇās and the nervous system and prepares the body and mind for higher yogas. Here the results or perfections of prāṇāyāma are enumerated. The first result that arises from prāṇāyāma is perspiration. The practice causes the body to become heated. This perspiration is different to ordinary perspiration, and should not be washed off directly, but rather wiped off with a soft, clean cloth.

In the next stage of prāṇāyāma, trembling arises due to activation of the prāṇās, nādīs and nerves. In the third stage, when the practice is mastered, the prāṇās expand throughout the body and there is the experience of lightness. In this stage the body may levitate easily. When these three stages are practised repeatedly, the highest stage is attained. The accomplished one becomes joyful during prāṇāyāma practice.

Through correct mastery of prāṇāyāma, the mind is purified. When the mind is purified, a bright internal light becomes established. This light is a symbol of the pure consciousness, the light of the soul. Having united the prāṇās with the mind through the practice of prāṇāyāma, the yogi rests in the supreme spirit. This level of prāṇāyāma is not a physical practice, but an expression of the consciousness of the highest soul. When the body rises, all mundane knowledge disappears. At this point, leaving inhalation and exhalation, one should focus on kumbhaka, breath retention, regularly.

By the mastery of prāṇāyāma, one is released from all negative karmas, or actions. One attains correct knowledge and swiftness of thought. Grey hair and other signs of old age disappear. Nothing is difficult to acquire for one who is able to focus one pointedly on prāṇāyāma. Therefore, one should practise prāṇāyāma with total dedication and effort.

Verses 21 to 32a: Prāṇāyāma eradicates disease

रोगनिवर्तकप्राणायामभेदा:

विनियोगान् प्रवक्ष्यामि प्राणायामस्य सुव्रत ।
 संध्ययोर्ब्रह्मकाले ४पि मध्याह्ने वाथवा सदा ॥२१॥
 बाह्यं प्राणं समाकृष्य पूरयित्वोदरेण च ।
 नासाग्रे नाभिमध्ये च पादाङ्गुष्ठे च धारणात् ॥२२॥
 सर्वरोगनिर्मुक्तो जीवेद्वर्षशतं नरः ।
 नासाग्रधारणाद्वापि जितो भवति सुव्रत ॥२३॥
 सर्वरोगनिवृत्तिः स्यान्नाभिमध्ये तु धारणात् ।
 शरीरलघुता विप्र पादाङ्गुष्ठनिरोधनात् ॥२४॥
 जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्य यः पिबेत् सततं नरः ।
 श्रमदाहविनिर्मुक्तो योगी नीरोगतामियात् ॥२५॥
 जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्य जिह्वामूले निरोधयेत् ।
 पिबेदमृतमव्यग्रं सकलं सुखमाप्नुयात् ॥२६॥
 इडया वायुमाकृष्य भूवोर्मध्ये निरोधयेत् ।
 यः पिबेदमृतं शुद्धं व्याधिभिर्मुच्यते हि सः ॥२७॥
 इडया वेदतत्त्वज्ञ तथा पिङ्गलयैव च ।
 नाभौ निरोधयेत्तेन व्याधिभिर्मुच्यते नरः ॥२८॥
 मासमात्रं त्रिसन्ध्यायां जिह्वयारोप्य मरुतम् ।
 अमृतं च पिबेन्नाभौ मन्दमन्दं निरोधयेत् ॥२९॥
 वातजाः पित्तजा दोषा नश्यन्त्येव न संशयः ।
 नासाभ्यां वायुमाकृष्य नेत्रद्वन्द्वे निरोधयेत् ॥३०॥
 नेत्ररोगा विनश्यन्ति तथा श्रोत्रनिरधनात् ।
 तथा वायुं समारोप्य धारयेच्छिरस्थितम् ॥३१॥
 शिरोरोगा विनश्यन्ति सत्यमुक्तं हि सांकृते ॥३२॥

*roganivartakaprāṇāyāmabhedāḥ
 viniyogān pravaksyāmi prāṇāyāmasya suvrata
 samdhyayorbrahmakāle ‘pi madhyāhne vāthavā sadā (21)
 bāhyam prāṇam samākṛṣya pūrayitvodareṇa ca
 nāsāgre nābhimadhye ca pādāṅguṣṭhe ca dhāraṇāt (22)
 sarvaroganirmukto jīvedvarsāśatam naraḥ
 nāsāgradhāraṇādvā ‘pi jito bhavati suvrata (23)
 sarvaroganivṛttiḥ syānnābhimadhye tu dhāraṇāt*

śarīralaghutā vipra pādāṅguṣṭhanirohanāt (24)
 jihvayā vāyumākṛṣya yah pibet satatam narah
 śramadāhavinirmukto yogī nīrogatāmiyāt (25)
 jihvayā vāyumākṛṣya jihvāmūle nirodhayet
 pibedamṛtamavyagram sakalam sukhamāpnuyāt (26)
 idayā vāyumākṛṣya bhrūvāmadhye nirodhayet
 yah pibedamṛtam śuddham vyādhibhirmucyate hi sah (27)
 idayā vedatattvajña tathā piṅgalayaiva ca
 nābhau nirodhayettena vyādhibhirmucyate narah (28)
 māsamātram trisandhyāyām jihvayāropya marutam
 amṛtam ca pibennābhau mandammandam nirodhayet (29)
 vātajāḥ pittajā dosā naśyantyeva na samśayah
 nāsābhyām vāyumākṛṣya netravandve nirodhayet (30)
 netrarogā vinaśyanti tathā śrotranirohanāt
 tathā vāyum samāropya dhārayecchirasthitam (31)
 śirorogā vinaśyanti satyamuktam hi sāmkṛte (32a)

Anvay

bhedāḥ: various; *nivartaka*: eradicate; *roga*: disease; *svvrata*: o Virtuous One; *pravakṣyāmi*: I will explain; *viniyogaṁ*: uses; *prāṇāyāmasya*: of *prāṇāyāma*; *sandhyayoh*: at dawn and dusk; *brahmakāle*: before sunrise; *madhyāhne*: at noon; *vāthavā*: or else; *sadā*: at all times; *saṁākṛṣya*: inhaling; *bāhyam prāṇam*: external *prāṇa*; *udarena*: abdomen; *pūrayitva*: full; *ca*: and; *dhāraṇāt*: by concentrating; *nāsāgre*: on the nose tip; *nābhimadhye*: navel; *pādāṅguṣṭhe*: big toe; *nirmuktah*: released; *sarva-roga*: from all disease; *narah*: man; *jīvet*: can live; *varsāśatam*: hundred years; *bhavati*: can be; *jitah*: conquered; *dhāraṇāt*: by holding; *nāsāgra*: at the nose tip; *sarva-roga*: all diseases; *nivṛttih syāt*: disappear; *tu*: when; *dhāraṇāt*: it is held; *nābhimadhye*: at the navel; *nirohanāt*: if it is confined to; *pādāṅguṣṭha*: big toe; *vipra*: o Wise One; *śarīra*: body; *laghutā*: light; *narah*: man; *yah*: who; *satatam*: continuously; *pibet*: drinks; *vāyum*: vital air; *ākṛṣya*: having drawn in; *jihvayā*: through the tongue; *yogī*: yogin; *iyāt*: attains; *nīrogatām*: good health; *nirmuktah*: free of; *śrama*: fatigue; *havi*: heat; *ākṛṣya*: drawing in; *vāyum*: vital air; *jihvayā*: through the tongue; *nirodhayet*: holding; *jihvāmūle*: at its (the tongue's) root; *pibet*: one should drink; *amṛtam*: nectar; *avyagram*: steadily; *āpnuyāt*: obtaining; *sakalam*: total; *sukham*: happiness; *ākṛṣya*: drawing in; *vāyum*: vital air; *idayā*:

through *idā*; *nirodhayet*: holding; *bhrūvormadhye*: at the eyebrow centre; *yah*: whoever; *pibet*: drinks; *śuddham*: pure; *amṛtam*: nectar; *hi*: surely; *mucyate*: will be freed; *vyādhibhīḥ*: from sickness; *vedatattvaṇa*: O you, who understands the essence of the Veda; *piṅgalayā eva*: or even through *piṅgalā*; *nirodhayet*: holding; *nābhau*: at the navel; *tena*: then; *narah*: man; *mucyate*: will be freed; *vyādhibhīḥ*: from sickness; *aropya*: inhaling; *marutam*: air; *jihvayā*: through the tongue; *trisandhyāyām*: at these three points; *pibet*: he should drink; *amṛtam*: nectar; *ca*: and; *nirodhayet*: hold; *mandammandam*: very gradually; *nābhau*: at the navel; *eva na samśayah*: without doubt; *doṣāḥ*: disorders; *vātajāḥ pittajāḥ*: caused by *vāta* (wind) and *pitta* (bile); *naśyanti*: disappear; *ākr̥ṣya*: after drawing in; *vāyum*: *vāyu*; *nirodhayet*: retaining; *netradvandve*: in both eyes; *tathā . . . tathā*: the more . . . the more; *dhārayet*: he holds; *vāyum*: breath; *cirasthitam*: for a long time; *samāropya*: having placed; *netra-rogāḥ*: diseases of the eyes; *vinaśyanti*: be annihilated; *śrotra*: ears; *nirodhanāt*: destroyed; *śiro-rogāḥ*: diseases of the head; *uktam hi*: I declare this; *satyam*: truth; *sāmkṛte*: o Sāmkṛti.

Translation

The various *prāṇāyāmas* [which] eradicate disease: O virtuous One, I will explain the uses of *prāṇāyāma* at dawn and dusk, before sunrise, at noon, or else at all times. Inhaling the external *prāṇa* [until] the abdomen [is] full, and by concentrating on the nose tip, navel or the big toe, released from all disease, a man can live a hundred years. [*Prāṇa*] can be conquered by holding it at the nose tip, o virtuous One. All diseases disappear, when it is held at the navel. If it is confined to the big toe, o wise One, the body [becomes] light. The man who continuously drinks the vital air, having drawn it in through the tongue, is a yogin [who] attains good health, free of fatigue and heat. Drawing the vital air in through the tongue [and] holding [it] at its root, one should drink the nectar steadily, [thus] obtaining total happiness.

Drawing the vital air in through *idā* [and] holding it at the eyebrow centre, whoever drinks pure nectar will surely be freed from sickness. O you, who understands the essence of the Veda, [drawing the breath in] through *idā*, or even through *piṅgalā*, and holding it at the navel, then a man will be freed from sickness. Inhaling the air through the tongue at [these]

three points for a whole month, he should drink the nectar and hold it very gradually at the navel. Without doubt the disorders caused by *vāta* and *pitta* disappear, after drawing in the *vāyu* [and] retaining [it] in both eyes. The more he holds the breath for a long time, having placed [it there], the more will diseases of the eyes be annihilated, [and diseases of] the ears destroyed. Diseases of the head will be annihilated. I declare this the truth, o Sāmkṛti!

Commentary

Prāṇāyāma is a means to extend the internal fields of *prāṇa*, and in this way many diseases can be resolved. Most disease is due to excess or deficiency of *prāṇa*. The best times to practice *prāṇāyāma* are before sunrise, at dawn, at noon, and at dusk. If this is not possible or practical, it can also be performed at any other time. The method of *prāṇāyāma* described here is very basic. One should inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils, drawing the breath downward into the abdomen until it is full. Holding the breath inside, one should concentrate on either the nose tip, the navel or the big toe. By this practice a person may be freed from all disease and live for 100 years.

By focusing the awareness at the nose tip, while holding the breath inside, one can control the *prāṇa*. The nose tip forms a bridge, connecting the three major *nāḍīs*, *idā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumnā*. Therefore, by concentrating at this point, while holding the breath inside, the *prāṇas* can be controlled. By focusing at the navel, all diseases disappear. The navel is related with *manipura cakra*, where the pranic storehouse is located. When the awareness is focused at this center, the *prāṇas* expand and disease disappears. When the awareness is focused at the big toe, the body becomes very light, and is capable of moving easily and quickly, because the energy is held in the proximity of the feet.

Next, the cooling methods of *prāṇāyāma*, performed with the mouth open, are described. By continuously drawing the breath in through the open mouth, over the tongue, the yogi is freed from heat and fatigue, and attains good health. The second cooling method involves drawing the breath in through the tongue, which is curled around to form a tube. At the end of inhalation, the breath should be held at the root of the tongue. In this way one should drink the nectar steadily, obtaining total happiness. *Lalana*

cakra, a minor center, which holds the nectar, is located at the root of the tongue. When this practice is mastered, the nectar becomes profuse and the experience of bliss is ongoing.

Verses 32b to 43a: Ḡaṇmukhi mudrā controls prāṇa

षण्मुखीमुद्राभ्यासादिना वायुजयः
 स्वसतिकासनमास्थाय समाहितमनास्तथा ॥३२॥
 अपानमूर्ध्वमुत्थाप्य प्रणवेन शनैः शनैः ।
 हस्ताभ्यां धारयेत्सम्यक् कर्णादिकरणानि च ॥३३॥
 अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां मुने श्रोत्रे तर्जनीभ्यां तु चक्षुसि ।
 नासापुटावथान्याभ्यां प्रच्छाद्या कारणानि वै ॥३४॥
 आनन्दाविर्भवो यावत् तावन्मूर्धनि धारयेत् ।
 प्राणः प्रयत्यनेनैव ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं महामुने ॥३५॥
 ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं गते वायौ नादश्वोत्पद्यते ऽनघ ।
 शङ्खध्वनिनिभश्वादौ मध्ये मेघध्वनिर्यथा ॥३६॥
 शिरोमध्यगते वायौ गिरिप्रसवणं यथा ।
 पश्चात् प्रीतो महाप्रज्ञ साक्षादात्मन्मुखो भवेत् ॥३७॥
 पुनस्तज्ज्ञाननिष्पत्तिर्योगात् संसारनिहृतिः ।
 दक्षिणोत्तरगुलफेन सेवनं पीड्येत् स्थिरम् ॥३८॥
 सव्येतरेण गुलफेन पीड्येट्बुद्धिमान् नरः ।
 जान्वोरधः स्थितां सन्धिं स्मृत्वा देवं त्रियम्बकम् ॥३९॥
 विनायकं च संस्मृत्य तथा वागीश्वरीं पुनः ।
 लिङ्गनालात् समाकृष्य वायुमप्यग्रतो मुने ॥४०॥
 प्रणवेन नियुक्तेन बिन्दुयुक्तेन बुद्धिमान् ।
 मूलाधारस्य विप्रेन्द्र मध्ये तं तु निरोधयेत् ॥४१॥
 निरुद्ध्य वायुना दीप्तो वहिरुहति कुण्डलीम् ।
 पुनः सुषुम्नया वायुर्वह्निना सह गच्छति ॥४२॥
 एवमभ्यसतसतस्य जितो वायुर्भवेद्दृशम् ॥४३॥

ḡaṇmukhīmudrābhyaśādinā vāyujayaḥ
 svastikāsanamāsthāya samāhitamanāstathā (32b)
 apānamūrdhvamut्थāpya pranavena śanaiḥ śanaiḥ
 hastābhyaṁ dhārayetsamyak karnādikaranāni ca (33)
 aṅguṣṭhābhyaṁ mune śrotre tarjanībhyaṁ tu caksuṣi
 nāsāputṭāvathānyābhyaṁ pracchādya kāraṇāni vai (34)
 ānandāvirbhavo yāvat tāvanmūrdhani dhārayet
 prāṇah prayatyanenaiva brahmarandhram mahāmune (35)

brahmarandhram gate vāyau nādaścotpadyate ‘nagha
 śaṅkhadvaninibhaścādau madhye meghadhvanyathā (36)
 śiromadhyagate vāyau giriprasravanam yathā
 paścāt prīto mahāprājña sāksādātmanmukho bhavet (37)
 punastajjñānanispattiryogāt samsāranihnutih
 dakṣinottaragulphena sevanam pīdyet sthiram (38)
 savyetareṇa gulphena pīdyet buddhimān narah
 jānvoradhaḥ sthitām sandhim smṛtvā devam triyambakam (39)
 vināyakam ca samsmrtya tathā vāgiśvarīm punah
 liṅganālāt samākṛṣya vāyumapyagrato mune (40)
 pranavena niyuktena binduyuktena buddhimān
 mūlādhārasya viprendra madhye tam tu nirodhayet (41)
 nirudhya vāyunā dīpto vahnirūhati kuṇḍalīm
 punah suṣumnayā vāyurvahninā saha gacchati (42)
 evamabhyasatastasya jito vāyurbhavetbhrśam (43a)

Anvay

vāyu-jayah: control of *vāyu*; *ābhyaśādināḥ*: through the practice of; *sañmukhī-mudrā*: attitude where apertures of head are closed to facilitate internalising; *āsthāya*: seated in; *svastikāsanam*: auspicious pose; *manāḥ*: mind; *samāhita*: steady; *tathā*: then; *utthāpya*: raising; *apānam*: *apāna*, downward energy; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ*: very slowly; *pranavena*: with *pranava*, sacred sound *Aum*; *dhārayet*: he should cover; *samyak*: completely; *karna*: ears; *ca*: and; *ādi-karaṇāni*: other sense organs; *hastābhyaṁ*: with his hands; *vai pracchādyā*: having well-covered; *karaṇāni*: sense organs; *mune*: o Sage; *aṅgusthābhyaṁ*: with the thumbs; *śrotre*: on the ears; *tarjanībhyaṁ*: with the index fingers; *caksuṣi*: on the eyes; *atha*: then; *anyābhyaṁ*: with two others; *nāsāputrāu*: on the nostrils; *dhārayet*: he should hold; *prayatyanena eva*: with effort; *mūrdhani*: at the roof of the palate; *tāvat*: until; *āvirbhavah*: he experiences; *ānanda*: bliss; *brahmarandhram*: *brahmarandhra*, opening in the crown of the head; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *Gate Vāyau*: when the *vāyu* reaches; *nādah*: *nāda*, subtle sound of *Aum*; *utpadyate*: comes forth; *anagha*: o Faultless One; *ca*: and; *adau*: that; *nibhāḥ*: is like; *dhvani*: sound; *śaṅkha*: of a conch; *madhye*: inside; *yathā*: like; *meghadhvaniḥ*: thunder; *vāyu śiro-madhyā-gate*: when the *vāyu* goes inside the head; *yathā*: like; *prasravanam*: waterfall; *giri*: coming down from the mountains; *paścāt*: afterwards; *bhavet*: there is; *prītah*: delight;

$sāksāt$: in the sight of; $mukhā$: appearance of; $mahāprājñā$: o Great Wise One; $yogāt$: when he is in possession of; $punah$: again; $tat jñāna$: that knowledge; $nispattiḥ$: which has come forth; $nihnutiḥ$: [there is] repudiation of; $samsāra$: the material world; $pīdyet$: he should press; $sevanam$: suture; $sthiram$: firmly; $daksiṇa-uttara-gulphena$: with right and left ankles; $buddhimān narah$: wise man; $pīdyet$: should press; $savyetareṇa gulphena$: with right ankle; $smṛtvā$: contemplating; $sthitam$: its site; $sandhim$: at the junction; $adhah$: above; $jānvoh$: knees; $ca tathā$: and then; $punah$: also; $samsmr̤tya$: meditating on; $devam$: deities; *Triyambakam*: Triyambaka (Śiva); *vināyakam*: Vināyaka (remover of obstacles; Ganeśa); $vāgīśvarīm$: Vāgīśvarī (deity of speech; Sarasvatī); $apya grataḥ$: drawing from the front; $vāyum$: vital air; $mune$: o Sage; $saṁakr̤ṣya$: having contracted; $liṅganālāt$: urethra; $niyuktena$: united with; $pranavena$: *pranava*, Aum; $bindu$: *bindu*, source of Aum; $buddhimān$: wise one; $nirodhayet$: should hold; tam : it; $madhye$: in the centre; $mūlādhārasya$: of *mūlādhāra*, base cakra, seat of $kuṇḍalinī$; *viprendra*: o Chief of Brahmins; *nirudhya*: having been restrained; $vāyunā$: by the *vāyu*; $dīptah vahnīḥ$: brilliant fire; $rūhati$: ascends; $kuṇḍalīm$: *kuṇḍalī*; $punah$: then; $saha$: together with; $vāyuḥ-vahninā$: fire of *vaayu*; *gacchati*: it goes; $suṣumnayā$: through *suṣumnā*, central current of energy; *evam*: thus; *tasya abhyasataḥ*: with his regular practice; *bhavet*: he becomes; *bhr̤sam*: definitely; *jītaḥ vāyuh*: conqueror of *vāyu*.

Translation

Control of *vāyu* through the practice of *ṣaṇmukhī mudrā*: Seated in *swastikāsana*, the mind steady, then, raising the *apāna* upwards very slowly with *pranava*, he should completely cover the ears and other sense organs with his hands. Having covered the sense organs well, o Sage, with the thumbs on the ears, the index fingers on the eyes [and] then two others on the nostrils, he should hold the *prāṇa* with effort at the roof of the palate until he experiences the bliss of the *brahmarandhra*, o Great Sage. When the *vāyu* reaches the *brahmarandhra*, the *nāda* comes forth, o Faultless One, and that is like the sound of a conch, inside like thunder. When the *vāyu* goes inside the head, [it is] like a waterfall coming down from the mountains. Afterwards there is delight in the sight of the appearance of the *ātman*, o Great Wise One. When he is again in possession of that knowledge, which has come forth, there is repudiation of the material

world. He should press the suture firmly, with the right and left ankles. The wise man should press with the right ankle, contemplating its site at the junction above the knees, and then also meditating on the deities Triyambaka, Vināyaka and Vāgīśvarī. Drawing vāyu from the front, o Sage, having contracted the urethra, united with prāṇava and bindu, the wise one should hold it in the centre of *mūlādhāra*, o Chief of Brahmins. Having been restrained by the vāyu, the brilliant fire ascends the *kuṇḍalī*; then, together with the fire of vāyu, it goes through *sūṣumnā*. Thus, with his regular practice, he definitely becomes the conqueror of vāyu.

Commentary

Ṣaṇmukhī mudrā is an important practice for raising the *prāṇa* and awaking the *kuṇḍalinī*. The word *ṣaṇmukhī* has two roots: *ṣan* or *sat* means ‘six’, and *mukhī* means ‘gates’. Here the sitting āsana is *swastikāsana*, which is an unlocked meditation pose. The word *swastika* means ‘auspicious’.

Technique

Sit with both legs stretched in front of the body. Bend the left knee and place the sole against the inside of the right thigh, so there is no contact between the heel and the perineum. Then bend the right knee and place the right foot between the left thigh and calf muscle, so that there is no contact between the heel and the pubic bone. Seated in *swastikāsana*, allow the body to become still, and the mind to become steady.

Then inhale slowly, reversing the flow of the *apāna* energy (which normally flows downward from the waist to the pelvic floor). Raise the energy of *apāna* together with the breath and the flow of *Pranava*, or the *Aum* sound, from the *mūlādhāra cakra*, at the perineum, to the *viśuddhi cakra*, behind the throatpit. Holding the breath inside, one should raise the arms, so that the hands are in front of the face and the elbows are pointing sideways. Close the six gates, using the five fingers of the hands. The inner flap of the ears can be pressed closed with the two thumbs. The two eyes can be closed with the index fingers. The two nostrils can be closed with the middle fingers. The mouth can be closed with the ring fingers above the upper lip and the little fingers below the lower lip.

Having closed the sensory organs well with the fingers of both hands, the prāṇa should be held with effort at the roof of the palate, until the bliss of *brahmarandhra*, or *suṣumnā*, is experienced. When the prāṇa enters the brahmarandhra, then the *nāda*, subtle sound, comes forth. First, that sound may be like the conch, then like thunder. When the prāṇa enters the head region, it sounds like a waterfall, coming down from the mountains. Afterwards, there is delight in the appearance of the ātman, pure consciousness, or pure self. When the yogi is again in possession of that inner knowledge, which has come forth from the experience of nāda, subtle sound, and ātma, pure self, there is rejection of the material world with all of its identifications and roles.

At this time he should pull up on the urethra and the anal sphincter, performing *vajroli* and *aświni* mudras, and press the pubis firmly with the right and left ankles. He should press the right ankle, contemplating the junction just above the right knee, and meditate on the deities: *Triyambaka* (*Mrityunjaya*), *Vināyaka* (*Ganeśa*) and *Vāgeśvarī* (*Saraswati*). Drawing *vāyu* from the front, having contracted the urethra, united with *pranava* and *bindu*, the wise one should hold the energy at the centre of *mūlādhāra*. Having been restrained by the *vāyu*, the kuṇḍalīni ascends the *suṣumnā* together with the fire of *vāyu*. Thus, by regular practice of *ṣaṇmukhī* mudrā, the yogi definitely conquers the *vāyu*.

Verses 43b and 44a: Signs of the conquest of vāyu

वायुजयचिह्नानि

प्रस्वेदः प्रथमः पश्चात् कम्पनं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥४३॥

उत्थानं च शरीरस्य चिह्नमेतज्जिते ऽनिले ॥४४॥

vāyujayacihnāni

prasvedah prathamah paścāt kampanam munipuṅgava (43b)

utthānam ca śarīrasya cihnametajjite 'nile (44a)

Anvay

prathamah: at first; *prasvedah*: excessive perspiration; *paścāt*: then; *kampanam*: trembling; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage; *ca*: and; *utthanam*: raising; *śarīrasya*: of the body; *etat cihnam*: this sign; *jite*: vanquishes; *anile*: air.

Translation

Signs of the conquest of vāyu: At first [there is] excessive perspiration, then trembling, o esteemed Sage, and raising of the body, this sign vanquishes the air [element].

Commentary

This verse gives the signs, which can be recognised as the awakening of *prāṇa* and the mastery of *prāṇāyāma*. The first sign is excessive perspiration. Initially, *prāṇāyāma* purifies the nervous system and speeds up the metabolism. This causes the body to become heated and to perspire copiously, even in cool weather. The excess perspiration may be rubbed back into the body with a soft clean cloth, but a shower should not be taken at this time to wash it off. *Prāṇāyāma* purifies the body, so the perspiration that arises from the practice has no toxic substance or unpleasant odor. When this perspiration is reabsorbed, it helps to maintain the metabolic balance and tones the muscles and nerves.

The second sign is tremor, shaking or trembling of the muscles and nerves, especially in the spinal region, although this may also be experienced in the hands, feet, face, and various other parts. In this stage, the flow of *prāṇa* becomes intensified, causing the peripheral parts of the body to vibrate. Various impulses travel through the nervous system and

cause itching, tingling or pulsating sensations. As prāṇa accumulates in different regions, it may cause sensations in the chest, abdomen, intestines or excretory organs. The third sign is levitation, when the body rises effortlessly on its own. These three signs indicate that the air element is purified and awakened.

Verses 44b to 51: Dawning of vairagya and removal of disease and sin

वायुजयेन रोगपापविनाश्वैराग्यपूर्विका ज्ञानोत्पत्तिः
 एवमभ्यसतस्तस्य मूलरोगो विनश्यति ॥४४॥
 भगन्धरं च नष्टं स्यात् सर्वरोगाश्च सांकृते ।
 पातकानि विनश्यन्ति क्षुद्राणि च महान्ति च ॥४५॥
 नष्टे पापे विशुद्धं स्याञ्चितदर्पणमद्भूतम् ।
 पुनर्ब्रह्मादिभोगेभ्यो वैरग्यं जायते हृदि ॥४६॥
 विरक्तस्य तु संसाराज्ञानं कैवल्यसाधनम् ।
 तेन पाशापहानिः स्यात् ज्ञात्वा देवं सदाशिवम् ॥४७॥
 ज्ञानामृतरसो येन सकृदास्वादितो भवेत् ।
 स सर्वकार्यमुत्सृज्य तत्रैव परिधावति ॥४८॥
 ज्ञानस्वरूपमेवाहुर्जगदेतद्वि चक्षणाः ।
 अर्थस्वरूपमज्ञानात् पश्यन्त्यन्ये कुद्धष्टयः ॥४९॥
 आत्मस्वरूपविज्ञानादज्ञानस्य परिक्षयः ।
 क्षीणे ज्ञाने महाप्राज्ञ रागादीनां परिक्षयः ॥५०॥
 रागाद्यसंभवे प्राज्ञ पुण्यपापवि मर्शनम् ।
 योनर्शे शरीरेण न पुनः संप्रयुज्यते ॥५१॥

*vāyujayena rogapāpavināśvairāgyapūrvikā jñānotpattih
 evamabhyasatastasya mūlarogo vinaśyati (44b)
 bhagandharam ca naṣṭam syāt sarvarogāśca sāṃkrte
 pātakāni vinaśyanti kṣudrāṇi ca mahānти ca (45)
 naṣṭe pāpe viśuddham syāñcittadarpaṇamadbhutam
 punarbrahmādibhogebhyo vairagyam jāyate hr̥di (46)
 viraktasya tu samsārājjñānam kaivalyasādhanam
 tena pāśāpahāniḥ syāt jñātvā devam sadāśivam (47)
 jñānāmṛtaraso yena sakrdāsvādito bhavet
 sa sarvakāryamutsrjya tatraiva paridhāvati (48)
 jñānasvarūpamevāhrurjagadetadvi cakṣaṇāḥ
 arthatasvarūpamajñānāt paśyantyanye kuddhastayah (49)
 ātmasvarūpavijñānādajñānasya parikṣayāḥ
 kṣīṇe ‘jñāne mahāprājña rāgādīnām parikṣayāḥ (50)
 rāgādyasambhave prājña punyapāpavi marśanam
 tayornāśe śarīreṇa na punah samprayujyate (51)*

Anvay

vāyu-jayena: through the conquest of *vāyu*; *pūrvikā*: former; *utpattiḥ*: gives rise to; *jñāna*: knowledge; *vairagya*: non-attachment; *vināḥ*: removal of; *roga-pāpa*: disease and sins; *evam*: thus; *abhyasataḥ tasya*: with his constant practice; *mūla-rogaḥ*: root cause of disease; *vinaśyati*: is eradicated; *bhagandharam*: fistula; *syāt*: can be; *nāṣṭam*: destroyed; *sarva-rogāḥ*: all diseases; *ca*: and; *pātakāni*: sins; *ca kṣudrāṇi*: both small; *ca mahānti*: and large; *vinaśyanti*: disappear; *sāṃkrte*: o Sāṃkṛti; *nāṣṭe pāpe*: with the removal of sin; *citta*: mind; *syāt*: becomes; *viśuddham*: pure; *adbhutam*: wondrous; *darpanam*: mirror; *punah*: then; *bhogebhyah*: because of delight in; *brahma-ādi*: Brahma and other [gods]; *vairagyam*: *vairagya*; *jāyate*: is produced; *hr̥di*: in the heart; *viraktasya*: indifferent to; *samsārāt*: material world; *jñānam*: [this] knowledge; *sādhanam*: means for; *kaivalya*: liberation; *tena*: through it; *devam sadāśivam*: god Sadāśiva; *jñātvā*: now known; *pāśa*: snare; *apahāniḥ*: is removed; *yena*: thus; *sa bhavet āsvāditah*: he who has tasted; *rasah*: nectar; *jñāna-amṛta*: of immortality of *jñāna*; *sakṛt*: once; *utsṛjya*: having renounced; *sarvakāryam*: all actions; *paridhāvati*: hastens; *eva tatra*: straight there; *ajñānāt*: because of ignorance of; *artha*: purpose of; *svarūpam*: their own true nature; *anye*: others; *paśyanti*: see; *kuddhastayah*: with defective eyesight; *cakṣaṇāḥ*: appearances; *etat āhruḥ jagat*: of this crooked world; *vi*: not; *svarūpam jñāna*: true form of *jñāna*; *vijñānāt*: when there is realisation of; *svarūpa*: true nature; *ātma*: *ātman*; *parikṣayāḥ*: that is the end; *ajñānasya*: of ignorance; *ajñāne kṣīṇe*: [when] ignorance is eroded; *mahāprājña*: o Great Wise One; *parikṣayāḥ*: that is the end; *rāga-ādīnām*: of desires and other [afflictions]; *rāga-ādi-asambhave*: [when] desires and other [afflictions] are absent; *prājña*: o Wise One; *vi marśanam*: [there is] no inquiring into; *punya-pāpa*: virtue [and] vice; *nāśe*: with the destruction; *tayoh*: of these; *na punah*: no longer; *samprayujyate*: one is attached; *śarīreṇa*: to the body.

Translation

The conquest of *vāyu* gives rise to the knowledge of *vairagya*, non-attachment, and removal of disease and sins: Thus, with constant practice, the root cause of disease is eradicated. [Even] a fistula can be destroyed. All diseases and sins, both small and large, disappear, o Sāṃkṛti. With the removal of sin, the mind becomes pure [and] wondrous [like] a mirror.

Then, because of delight in Brahma and other [gods], vairagya is produced in the heart. Indifferent to the material world, [this] knowledge is the means for liberation. Through it, when one has known the god *Sadaśiva*, the snare is removed. Thus, he who has tasted the nectar of immortality, of *jñāna* once, having renounced all actions, hastens straight there. Because of ignorance of the purpose of their own true nature, others see with defective eyesight the appearances of this crooked world, not the true form of *jñāna*. When there is realisation of the true nature of the atman, that is the end of ignorance. When ignorance is eroded, great wise One, that is the end of desires and other [afflictions]. When desires and other [afflictions] are absent, o wise One, [there] is no inquiry into virtue and vice. With the destruction of these, one is no longer attached to the body.

Commentary

The practice of *prāṇāyāma* helps one to establish the state of equanimity, and leads to the awakening of *prāṇa* and the mastery of *vāyu*. The conquest of *vāyu* gives rise to the realisation of *vairagya*, non-attachment, and the removal of disease and sin. As long as there is attachment to the world and its relations and objects, there will be stress, anxiety and frustration. Interaction motivated by attraction causes a kind of pendulum effect, and leads one towards states of negativity, imbalance and disease. Hence, by regular and constant practice of *prāṇāyāma*, the root cause of disease is removed; even fistula can be eliminated. All disease and sin, whether large or small, are resolved.

With the removal of negativity and sin, the mind of the yogi becomes pure and reflective, like a mirror. In this state one takes great delight in worshipping and contemplating the gods, such as Brahma and others. This dedication to the divine leads to a kind of higher *vairagya*, which is experienced in the heart. With the dawning of this higher *vairagya*, the yogi becomes indifferent to the material world, which becomes the means to liberation. In this way, when the supreme Lord *Sadaśiva* is known, the worldly snare is totally removed. So, it is said that one who has tasted the nectar of immortality, of *jñāna*, even once, renounces all karma and hastens straight there.

Due to ignorance, or *avidya*, of one's true nature, most people see the appearances of this world with defective vision. They are unable to perceive the true form of knowledge. When there is realisation of the true nature of the *ātman*, or self, that is the end of ignorance. When ignorance is eroded, that is the end of desire and all other afflictions. When desire and affliction are absent, there is no further inquiry into good and bad, right and wrong. With the destruction of duality, one is no longer attached to the body.

इति षष्ठः खण्डः:

iti ṣaṣṭhaḥ khandah

Thus [ends] the sixth section.

सप्तमः खण्डः
saptamah khaṇḍah

Seventh Section

Pratyāhāra

Verses 1 to 4a: Description of pratyāhāra

प्रत्याहारलक्षनं तद्देदाश्च
अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि प्रत्याहारं महामुने ।
इन्द्रियाणां विचरतां विषयेषु स्वभावतः ॥१॥
बलादाहरणं तेषां प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।
यत्पश्यति तु तत्सर्वं ब्रह्म पश्यन्समाहितः ॥२॥
प्रत्याहारो भवेदेष ब्रह्मविद्धिः पुरोदितः ।
यद्यच्छुद्धमशुद्धं वा करोत्यामरणान्तिकम् ॥३॥
तत्सर्वं ब्रह्मणे कुर्यात् प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ॥४॥

*pratyāhāralakṣanam tadbhedāśca
athātah sampravakṣyāmi pratyāhāram mahāmune
indriyāñām vicaratām viṣayesu svabhāvataḥ (1)
balādāharanām teṣām pratyāhārah sa ucyate
yatpaśyati tu tatsarvam brahma paśyansamāhitah (2)
pratyāhāro bhavedeṣa brahmavidbhīḥ puroditah
yadyacchuddhamāśuddham vā karotyāmarañāntikam (3)
tatsarvam brahmaṇe kuryāt pratyāhārah sa ucyate (4a)*

Anvay

pratyāhāra-lakṣanam: description of *pratyāhāra*; *ca:* and; *tat bhedāḥ:* its modifications; *athātah:* now; *sampravakṣyāmi:* I will explain; *pratyāhāram:* sensory withdrawal; *mahāmune:* o Great Sage; *indriyāñām:* senses; *vicaratām:* move about; *svabhāvataḥ:* naturally; *viṣayesu:* in the sense organs; *balāt:* wilfully; *āharanām:* nourishing; *teṣām:* from them; *sa ucyate:* this is called; *pratyāhārah:* sensory withdrawal; *paśyan:* seeing; *saṁāhitah:* in this withdrawn state; *yat:* whatever; *paśyati:* one sees; *tat sarvam:* all that; *brahma:* creator, ultimate reality; *eṣa bhavet:* this is; *pura uditah:* as formerly declared; *brahmavidbhīḥ:* by knowers of Brahma;

yadyat: whatever; *karoti*: one does; *śuddham vā aśuddham*: pure or impure; *āmarañāntikam*: until the end of this life; *tatsarvam*: all this; *kuryāt*: one should do; *brahmane*: in Brahma; *sa ucyate*: this is called; *pratyāhārah*: sensory withdrawal.

Translation

Description of *pratyāhāra* and its modifications: Now I will explain *pratyāhāra*, o great Sage. The senses move about naturally in the sense objects. Wilfully withdrawing [the senses] from them is called *pratyāhāra*. Seeing in this withdrawn state, whatever one sees, all that [is] Brahma. This is *pratyāhāra*, as formerly declared by knowers of Brahma. Whatever one does, [be it] pure or impure, until the end of this life, all this one should do in [the awareness of] Brahma; this is called *pratyāhāra*. Or one should perform regular and desired actions, knowing [that they are] homage to Brahma; this is called *pratyāhāra*.

Commentary

Here begins the description of the inner path of meditation. In the path of *astāṅga* yoga, the eightfold yoga, the first four limbs are known as *bahiraṅga*, or outer branches. The last four are called *antaraṅga*, the inner branches. *Pratyāhāra* is the fifth limb of *astāṅga* yoga, and the first limb on the inner path, which leads to the following levels of *dhāraṇa*, one pointed concentration, *dhyāna*, spontaneous meditation, and finally *samādhi*, transcendental consciousness.

Thus, *pratyāhāra* is the first stage of meditation, and it means ‘sensory withdrawal’. The word *pratyāhāra* is comprised of two roots: *pratyaya*, which means ‘inner or subtle impressions’, and *āhāra*, meaning ‘to nourish’. So, *pratyāhāra* means to wilfully withdraw the senses back inside the mind, allowing them to be nourished by the subtle impressions or mental patterns. Otherwise, the mind and awareness are drawn outside by the five senses, and are nourished by the outer impressions, formed and sustained by the sensory objects.

The five senses: eyes, ears, tongue, skin, and nose, are naturally attracted to those objects, which can be seen, heard, tasted, touched and smelled. Through the practice of yama, niyama, āsana and *prāṇāyāma*, the

practitioner gradually learns to direct the awareness back towards his or her own behavior, discipline, bodily postures and breath. In this way, he or she prepares for the stage of pratyahara. By withdrawal of the senses from the external world, and focusing them within the mind, the inner journey towards the true self can unfold.

The verse states that whatever one sees in the withdrawn state of *pratyāhāra* is *Brahma*, the lord or the inner cause of creation. When the senses are withdrawn, along with the awareness, back inside the mind, one no longer perceives the external world. Rather, the thoughts, memories and stored impressions, which are the subtle cause of the external experiences of the world, are revealed. These mental patterns, being the causal factors, are referred to here as *Brahma*. So, all that is seen in the inner dimension of mind, in the state of *pratyāhāra*, is known as *Brahma*. These are the seeds of creation, or all that can be experienced, in the external world.

When the stage of *pratyāhāra* has been mastered through regular meditative practice, this inner awareness can also be experienced, even while carrying out one's daily activities in the world. Once the practitioner is fully established in the state of sensory withdrawal, then, whatever actions one may do throughout one's life, whether good or bad, all these can be done with full awareness of *Brahma*, the causal dimension, or mind. Or else, one should perform one's duties or actions as worship of or devotion to *Brahma*. This outer and inner awareness of mind and senses in action was also called *pratyāhāra* by the sages of old.

Verses 4b to 8: Pratyāhāra by focusing on prāṇa

अथवा वित्यकर्माणि ब्रह्माराधनबुद्धितः ॥४॥
 काम्यानि च तथा कुर्यात् प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।
 अथवा वायुमाकृष्य स्थानात् स्थानं निरोधयेत् ॥५॥
 दन्तमूलात्तथा कण्ठादुरसि मारुतम् ।
 उरोदेशात् समाकृष्य नाभिदेशो निरोधयेत् ॥६॥
 नाभिदेशात् समाकृष्य कुण्डल्यां तु निरोधयेत् ।
 कुण्डलीदेशतो विद्वान् मूलाधारे निरोधयेत् ॥७॥
 अथापानात् कटिद्वन्द्वे तथोरौ च सुमध्यमे ।
 तस्माज्जानुद्घये जड्घे पादाङ्गुष्ठे निरोधयेत् ॥८॥

athavā nityakarmāṇi brahmārādhanabuddhitah (4b)
kāmyāni ca tathā kuryāt pratyāhārah sa ucyate
athavā vāyumākr̄ṣya sthānāt sthānam nirodhayet (5)
dantamūlāttathā kan̄the kan̄thādurasi mārutam
urodeśāt samākr̄ṣya nābhideše nirodhayet (6)
nābhideśāt samākr̄ṣya kundalyām tu nirodhayet
kundalīdeśato vidvān mūlādhāre nirodhayet (7)
athāpānāt katidvandve tathorau ca sumadhyame
tasmājjānudvaye jaṅghe pādāṅgusṭhe nirodhayet (8)

Anvay

athavā: or; *kuryāt*: one should perform; *nitya-karmāṇi*: regular actions; *ca*: and; *kāmyāni*: desired; *buddhitah*: knowing; *brahma-ārādhana*: homage to Brahma; *sa ucyate*: this is called; *pratyāhārah*: sensory withdrawal; *athavā*: or; *ākr̄ṣya*: having inhaled; *nirodhayet*: one should hold; *sthānāt sthānam*: from place to place; *tathā*: thus; *samākr̄ṣya*: having drawn in; *mārutam*: vital air; *nirodhayet*: one should retain; *dantamūlāt*: from the root of the teeth; *kan̄the*: to the throat; *kan̄thāt*: from the throat; *urasi*: to the chest; *urodeśāt*: from the chest; *nābhideše*: to the navel; *samākr̄ṣya*: drawing in; *nābhideśāt*: from the navel; *vidvān*: wise one; *nirodhayet*: should retain; *kundalyām*: in the *kundalī*; *tu*: and; *kundalīdeśataḥ*: from the place of the *kundalī*; *mūlādhāre*: in the root center; *atha*: thereupon; *nirodhayet*: one should retain; *apānāt*: downward moving energy; *sumadhyame*: in the waist; *ca tathā*: and then; *katidvandve*: in the hips;

ūrau: in the thighs; *tasmāt*: from there; *jānudvaye*: in both knees; *jaṅghe*: in the lower legs; *pādāṅguṣṭhe*: in the toes.

Translation

One should perform daily actions and desired (actions) while knowing Brahma and (paying) homage to Brahma. This is called *pratyāhāra*. Or, having inhaled the *vāyu*, one should hold [it] from place to place. Thus, having drawn in the vital air, one should retain [it] from the root of the teeth to the throat, from the throat to the chest, [and] from the chest to the navel. Drawing [it] in from the navel, the wise one should retain [it] in the *kundalī*, from the place of the *kundalī* in *mūlādhāra*. Thereupon, one should retain the *apāna* in the waist, and then in the hips and thighs, from there in the knees, lower legs [and] toes.

Commentary

Pratyāhāra is the first stage of meditation, whereby one develops awareness of and mastery over the senses. The senses are what connect the mind with the world outside. Through regular practice of sensory withdrawal, one becomes aware of the mind, the inner world, and its multitude of patterns and expressions. After attaining a degree of mastery in this practice, one should then extend this practice of awareness into daily life and actions, be they actions performed out of duty or desire. In this way, one can live a meditative life, even while working through one's various roles in the world. The mind is the seed of all action, so, as the verse says, one can act in the world, even while knowing Brahma, the causal mind, the creator of the worlds, and paying homage or respect to Brahma. This is called *pratyāhāra*.

Or, there is another way to practise *pratyāhāra*, withdrawal of the senses, which does not involve the mind. In this method, there is no need to observe the mental thoughts and patterns. This practice is performed by retention of *prāṇa* at the different centers in the body. This is a very different practice to the first one described in the previous verses and the technique is given as follows:

Technique

Sit quietly for a few moments and allow the breath to become slow and rhythmic. Next inhale deeply and retain the breath, while moving the

awareness from place to place. First, hold the breath in the region between the root of the teeth and the throat (*viśuddhi cakra*) for a comfortable duration. Then exhale slowly.

Again inhale and draw the breath down to the region between the throat and the chest (*anahata cakra*). Hold the breath here for a comfortable duration, and then exhale slowly.

Next inhale and draw the breath down to the region between the chest and the navel (*manipura cakra*). Hold the breath here for a comfortable duration, and then exhale slowly.

Now, draw the breath inward from the navel and then downward to the mooladhara chakra, at the perineum. Retain the breath there, and merge it with the kundalini force. Then exhale slowly.

Next inhale and retain the breath in the region of *apāna*, the downward flowing energy, in between the waist and the pelvic floor. Following the same process, Inhale and focus the apana energy first at the waist, then the hips and thighs, and from there, the knees, calves, feet and toes.

This is an alternative method by which *pratyāhāra* can be achieved. In the first method *pratyāhāra* is to be practised by focusing the mind on the mind, and ultimately allowing this mental awareness to expand outside into one's daily life. In this method, however, *pratyāhāra* is attained by focusing the mind on the movement of energy, because breath and energy are closely aligned. When the mind is focused in the mind, the process may become difficult and tedious., because the thoughts and mental patterns seem to be never ending. Whereas, when the mind is focused on the movement of breath or energy, the process of awareness becomes fluid and effortless. The mind is subdued, so to speak, by the movement of breath and prana. In this way, *pratyāhāra* takes place very quickly and easily.

Verses 9 to 10a: Benefits of *pratyāhāra*

प्रत्याहारो ऽयमुक्तस्तु प्रत्याहारपरैः पुरा

प्रत्याहारफलम्

एवमभ्यासयुक्तस्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ॥९॥

सर्वपापानि नश्यन्ति भवरोगश्च सुव्रत ।१०।

pratyāhāro 'yamuktastu pratyāhāraparaiḥ purā

pratyāhāraphalam

evamabhyāsayuktasya puruṣasya mahātmanah (9)

sarvapāpāni naśyanti bhavarogaśca suvrata (10a)

Anvay

ayam uktah: this is said; *pratyāhāraparaiḥ*: by those accomplished in *pratyāhāra*; *purā*: in ancient times; *evam*: thus; *mahātmanah puruṣasya*: great being; *yuktasya*: engaged in; *abhyāsa*: regular practice; *sarva-pāpāni*: all sins; *ca*: and; *bhavarogah*: worldly disease; *naśyanti*: vanish; *suvrata*: o virtuous One.

Translation

This is said [to be] *pratyāhāra* by those accomplished in *pratyāhāra* in ancient times. Thus, [whenever] a great being [is] engaged in regular practice, all sins and worldly disease vanish, o virtuous One.

Commentary

Both of these methods described above were said to produce the state of *pratyāhāra* by those yogis of old, who had mastered meditation. Even today, in most meditative traditions, these two basic approaches to meditation are found: one focusing on the mind by the mind, as in *antar mouna* or mindfulness, and the other on the movement of the breath or *prāṇa*.

Pratyāhāra is the first stage of meditation, but its significance should never be underestimated or disregarded. In fact, for modern practitioners, it is probably the most difficult stage to master, due to the over-activation and stimulation of the mind, from an early age, in the world today. This stage may take years to master, while the higher stages of meditation that come afterwards, will be attained more easily and spontaneously. Thus, the

mastery of *pratyāhāra* is an important attainment on the spiritual path for any aspirant.

The yogi, who has mastered *pratyāhāra* through regular practice, is considered to be a great being. Having attained mastery over the mind and senses, all of his or her sins, negative karmas, and diseases are resolved. This follows the yogic premise that all disease and negativity are ultimately stored in the subconscious mind of the individual. By witnessing the mental patterns and allowing the thoughts and memories to bubble up, the yogi is gradually able to eliminate them. In this way, he or she becomes free from the source of all guilt, negativity and disease.

Verses 10b to 12: Pratyāhāra by focusing on prāṇa (method 2)

वायुधारणात्मकप्रत्याहारः
नासाभ्याम् वायुमाकृष्य निश्चलः स्वस्तिकासनः ॥१०॥
पूरयेदनिलं विद्वानापादतलमस्तकम् ।
पश्चात पादद्वये तद्वत् मूलाधारे तथैव च ॥११॥
नाभिकन्दे च हृद्गच्छे कण्ठमूले च तालुके ।
भ्रूवोर्मध्ये ललाटे च तथा मूर्धनि धारयेत् ॥१२॥

*vāyudhāraṇātma kaprtyāhārah
nāsābhyaṁ vāyumākṛṣya niścalah svastikāsanah (10b)
pūrayedanilam vidvānāpādatalamastakam
paścāt pādadadvaye tadvat mūlādhāre tathaiva ca (11)
nābhikande ca hr̥dmadhye kanṭhamūle ca tāluke
bhrūvormadhye lalāṭe ca tathā mūrdhani dhārayet (12)*

Anvay

ākṛṣya: inhaling; *nāsābhyaṁ*: through the nostrils; *niścalah*: steady; *svastikāsanah*: *svastikāsana*, auspicious pose; *vidvān*: wise one; *pūrayet*: should fill; *āpāda*: from; *tala*: soles of the feet; *mastakam*: to the top of the head; *paścāt*: next; *dhārayet*: it is held; *tadvat*: also; *pādadadvaye*: in both legs; *ca tathā*: and then; *mūlādhāre*: at the root center; *nābhikande*: at the knot of the navel; *hr̥dmadhye*: at the heart centre; *kanṭhamūle*: at the throat pit; *tāluke*: at the palate; *bhrūvormadhye*: at the eyebrow centre; *lalāṭe*: at the forehead; *ca tathā*: and then; *mūrdhani*: at the top of the head.

Translation

Pratyāhāra by holding the prāṇa within: Inhaling through the nostrils [while sitting] steadily in *svastikāsana*, the wise one should fill [the body] from the soles of the feet to the top of the head. Next it is held also in both legs, then at *mūlādhāra*, at the knot of the navel, the heart centre, throat pit, palate, eyebrow centre, forehead and then the top of the head.

Commentary

These verses describe a variation of the *pratyāhāra* practice given previously. This method activates the cakra, *cakra kṣetrams*, or trigger-points, in the front of the body, and the regions surrounding them. The technique is explained below step by step in order to avoid confusion. Please bear in mind that this is an original technique, which modern techniques may have been drawn from, modified, and then given different names.

Technique

Sit in the position of *svastikāsana*, and allow the body to become steady and still. Begin to follow the movement of the breath with your awareness. Gradually feel the breath becoming slow and rhythmic.

Inhale slowly and evenly through both nostrils, and feel the awareness and breath flowing upward, filling the entire body with prana or energy from the soles of the feet to the top of the head. Retain the breath inside for a comfortable duration, feeling the *prāṇa* within the entire body, and then exhale slowly.

Next, inhaling slowly through both nostrils, fill the region within both legs, from the hips to the toes, with energy or *prāṇa*. Hold the breath for a comfortable duration, feeling the *prāṇa* in this region, and then exhale slowly.

Inhaling slowly with awareness through both nostrils, fill the region of *mūlādhāra* cakra, at the pelvic floor, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding into the entire pelvic region. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of the *manipura* cakra trigger-point, at the navel, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding into the entire abdominal region. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of *anahata* chakra, the heart center, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding into the entire region of the chest. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of *viśuddhi cakra* triggerpoint, at the throat pit, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the prana expanding into the entire region of the throat. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of *lalānā cakra*, at back of the throat, where it meets the palate, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the prana expanding into the entire region at the back of the throat. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of the *ajña cakra* triggerpoint, at the eyebrow center, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding into the mid region of the brain. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of *bindu cakra* triggerpoint, at the forehead, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding into the entire frontal brain region. Exhale slowly.

Inhale slowly with awareness through both nostrils, and fill the region of *sahasrāra cakra*, at the crown of the head, with energy. Retain the breath for a comfortable duration, and feel the *prāṇa* expanding in all directions from sahasrara. Exhale slowly.

Sit quietly for a few moments and experience the effects of this practice. Slowly begin to externalise your awareness. Become aware of the physical body, of the posture, and of stillness. Gradually, begin to follow the external sounds, the external breath. Then slowly release the posture and open the eyes.

Verses 13 and 14: Pratyāhāra according to vedānta

वेदान्तसंमतप्रत्याहारः:

देहे त्स्वात्मभुतिं विद्वान् समाकृष्य समाहितः ।
आत्मनात्मनि निर्द्वन्द्वे निर्विकल्पे निरोधयेत् ॥१३॥
प्रत्याहारः समाख्यातः साक्षाद्वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।
एवमभ्यसतस्तस्य न किंचिदपि दुर्लभम् ॥१४॥

vedāntasam̄matapratyāhārah

*dehe svātmabhutim vidvān samākr̄syā samāhitah
ātmanātmani nirdvandve nirvikalpe nirodhayet (13)
pratyāhārah samākhyātah sāksādvedāntavedibhiḥ
evamabhyasatastasya na kiṁcidapi durlabham (14)*

Anvay

saṁmata: according to; *vedānta*: end of the Vedas; *saṁākr̄syā*: withdrawing; *dehe sva ātmabhutim*: attachment to his body; *vidvān*: wise one; *nirodhayet*: is withdrawn; *ātmanātmani*: true self; *nirdvandve*: non-dual; *nirvikalpe*: thoughtless; *sāksāt*: clearly; *saṁākhyātah*: called; *vedāntavedibhiḥ*: by knowers of vedānta; *tasya abhyasatah*: for one who practises; *evam*: thus; *na kiṁcidapi*: nothing; *durlabham*: difficult to attain.

Translation

Pratyāhara, according to vedānta: Withdrawing the attachment to his body, the wise one is withdrawn into the true self, non-dual [and] thoughtless. [This is] clearly called pratyāhāra by knowers of vedānta. For one who practises thus, nothing [is] difficult to attain.

Commentary

According to vedānta, there is only the one reality, one truth, which is non-dual and the core of all existence. The world, and all of our experiences relating with it, are part of the relative reality, which is dualistic. The practice of pratyāhara enables one to withdraw the senses and awareness from the world, and identify with that one reality, which is beyond thought, instead of with the body and mind. Thus, it is said here that, nothing is difficult to attain for one who practices pratyāhāra.

इति सप्तमः खण्डः

iti saptamah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the seventh section.

अष्टमः खण्डः
aṣṭamah khaṇḍah

Eighth Section

Dhāraṇā

Verses 1 to 6: Pañca bhūta dhāraṇā, concentration on the five elements

पञ्चभूतेषु धारणा
अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि धारणाः पञ्च सुव्रत ।
देहमध्यगते व्योम्नि बाह्याकाशं तु धारयेत् ॥१॥
प्राणे बाह्यानिलं तद्वत् ज्वलने चाग्निमौदरे ।
तोयं तोयम्शके भूमिं भूमिभागे महामुने ॥२॥
हयरावलकाराख्यं मन्त्रमुज्चारयेत् क्रमात् ।
धारणैषा परा प्रोक्ता सर्वपापविशोधिनी ॥३॥
जान्वन्तं पृथिवी ह्यशो हयपां पात्वन्तमुच्यते ।
हृदयांशस्तथागन्यंशो भूमध्यान्तो ऽनिलांशकः ॥४॥
आकाशाम्शस्तथा प्राज्ञ मुर्धोशः परिकीर्तिः ।
ब्रह्माणं पृथिवीभागे विष्णुं तोयंशके तथा ॥५॥
आग्न्यंशो च महेशानमीश्वरं चानिलांशके ।
आकाशांशो महाप्राज्ञ धारयेत्तु सदाशिवम् ॥६॥

pañcabhūtesu dhāraṇā
athātah sampravakṣyāmi dhāraṇāḥ pañca suvrata
dehamadhyagate vyomni bāhyākāśam tu dhārayet (1)
prāṇe bāhyānilam tadvat jvalane cāgnimaudare
toyam toyamśake bhūmīm bhūmibhāge mahāmune (2)
hayaravalakārākhyam mantramuñcārayet kramāt
dhāraṇaiṣā parā proktā sarvapāpaviśodhinī (3)
jānvantam prthivī hyamśo hyapām pātvantamucyate
hrdayāmśastathāgnyamśo bhrūmadhyānto ‘nilāmśakah (4)
ākāśāmśastathā prājña murdhośah parikīrtitah
brahmānam prthivībhāge viṣṇum toyamśake tathā (5)
agnyamśe ca maheśānamīśvaram cānilāmśake

ākāśāmśe mahāprājña dhārayetu sadāśivam (6)

Anvay

dhāraṇā: concentration; *pañca-bhūtesu*: on the five elements; *athātah*: thus; *sampravakṣyāmi*: I shall describe; *pañca*: five; *dhāraṇāḥ*: concentrations; *suvrata*: o Virtuous One; *tu*: now; *dhārayet*: one should concentrate on; *bāhya-ākāśam*: external ether; *vyomni*: in the atmosphere; *gate*: contained in; *dehamadhyā*: centre of the body; *tadvat*: also; *bāhya-ānilam*: external air; *prāṇe*: in the *prāṇa*; *ca*: and; *agnim*: fire; *jvalane*: burning; *audare*: in the belly; *toyam*: water; *toyamśake*: in the watery part; *bhūmīm*: earth; *bhūmi-bhāge*: in the earthy place; *mahāmune*: o Great Sage; *muñcārayet*: one should utter; *kramāt*: in sequence; *kāra*: sounds; *ākhyam*: names; *eṣā*: this; *proktā*: declared; *parā dhāraṇā*: supreme concentration; *viśodhīnī*: purifying; *sarva pāpa*: all sins; *hi*: for; *ucyate*: it is said; *pr̥thivī amśah*: earth section; *pātvantam*: down from; *jānvantam*: knees; *apām*: water; *tathā*: then; *agni-amśah*: fire section; *hrdaya-amśah*: heart centre; *anila-amśakah*: air section; *bhrūmadhyāntah*: eyebrow centre; *ākāśa-amśah*: ether section; *murdhośah*: at the top of the head; *tathā*: thus; *parikīrtitah*: it is proclaimed; *prājña*: o Wise One; *tathā*: then; *dhārayet*: one should concentrate on; *brahmānam*: Brahma; *pr̥thivī-bhāge*: in the earth place; *viśnum*: Viṣṇu; *toyam-śake*: in the water area; *maheśānam*: Maheśa; *agni-amśe*: in the fire section; *īśvaram*: Īśvara; *anilām-śake*: in the air portion; *ca*: and; *sadāśivam*: Sadāśiva; *ākāśa-amśe*: ether section; *mahāprājña*: o Great Wise One.

Translation

Dhāraṇā, or concentration, on the five elements: Thus I shall describe the five forms of concentration, o virtuous One. Now, one should concentrate on the external ether in the atmosphere, contained in the centre of the body; also on the external air in the *prāṇa*, and on the fire burning in the belly, water in the watery part [and] earth in the earthy place, o great Sage. One should utter in sequence the sounds [of the] names [of the] mantras: *Ham*, *Yam*, *Ram*, *Vam*, *Lam*. This [is] declared the supreme concentration, purifying all sins. For it is said the earth section is down from the knees, water [is up from the knees], then fire section in the area the heart centre, air section at the eyebrow centre [and] ether section is at the top of the head; thus it is proclaimed, o wise One. Then one should

concentrate on Brahma in the earth place, Viṣṇu in the water area, Maheśa in the fire section, Īśvara in the air portion and Sadāśiva in the ether section, o great wise One.

Commentary

Dhāraṇā is the second stage of *antaraṅga*, the inner practices of rāja yoga. The word *dhāraṇā* means ‘one pointed focus’ or ‘concentration’. The ability to focus the mind and hold the focus at will is difficult for most people to achieve without prior mastery of *pratyāhāra*, which was described in the previous section. These verses describe the practice of *pañcabhūta dhāraṇā*, the five forms of concentration on the elements, which were the traditional form of dharana in the upanishadic times. The word *pañca* means ‘five’ and *bhūta* means ‘elements’.

The five elements are the same components in all beings, whether sentient or insentient, in this world. The only difference between one being and another, or one species and another, is the proportion of the elemental composition in their makeup. In astrology, for example, we can see how the different elements are influenced in various individuals, making each person unique, and also creating opportunities and obstructions at different times.

Therefore, concentration on the elements is also a way to connect with the basic elemental energies within oneself and in all beings of creation. The five elements are: ether, air, fire, water, and earth. The method for this practice of concentration is described below:

Technique

Sit quietly in a steady meditative posture and close the eyes. Relax the whole body systematically, from head to toe. Develop the feeling of stillness within. Become aware of the natural rhythm of the breath. Focus the awareness at the nose-tip, and feel each inhalation and exhalation flowing in and out through the nostrils.

Now, leave the awareness of the breath and become aware of the element of space or ether, which surrounds you in all directions. Space is all pervasive. Feel that your entire body is also pervaded by space. The quality of space is stillness. See space wherever you look; inside of you and outside

of you, there is nothing but space. Everything in creation exists in this same space. Draw your awareness deep within and focus on the space contained at the center, or core, of your being.

Allow this perception of space to fade, and become aware of the element of air. While space is all pervasive and still, air is a gaseous substance in constant movement. Air moves all through the space and fills it with kinetic energy, like the movement of the wind or prāṇa. We can feel the movement of air on our skin and in the flow of our breath. Air is the breath of life, and it travels all through us, enlivening every cell, organ and part. Our whole body breathes in the air from the atmosphere, and expels the air, which has been utilised by the cellular structures, from moment to moment. Focus on the element of air.

The movement of air produces friction, and heat or fire is produced. Fire has two qualities, heat and light. Become aware of the fire burning in your belly. Fire is a dynamic force, which has form and is visible. The heat produced by fire is responsible for the digestive and metabolic processes. The light enables us to see and thus to differentiate myself from another. Become aware of the fire burning within you.

When the heat of fire cools, water is produced. Water has the quality of fluidity and movement. Our bodies are more than 75% water, and the water is in constant flow and movement. Fluids are continually flowing to and from every cell, organ and part. Focus on the element of water, below the navel, in the pelvic region.

When water ceases its movement, it becomes still and solidifies into earth. Become aware of the earth element, which is dense, heavy and unmoving. Feel the quality of earth within you and all around you. Feel the weight of the body, the bones, the muscle, the skin, the hair, the teeth, the nails. The body is supported by earth, nourished by earth, walks upon earth. Focus on the earth element at the pelvic floor. Feel the connection between the pelvic floor and the earth beneath you.

Concentration on the five sound forms of the elements: Now, leave the awareness of the earth element. Bring your attention back up to the region between the crown of the head and the eyebrows. Become aware of the

space element in this region and repeat the sound *Ham* 12 times. Next, move the awareness to the region between the eyebrows and the heart. Become aware of the air element in this space. Repeat the sound *Yam* 12 times. Move the awareness to the region between the heart and the navel. Become aware of the fire element in this space. Repeat the sound *Ram* 12 times. Bring the awareness to the region between the navel and the knees. Become aware of the water element in this space. Repeat the mantra *Vam* 12 times. Bring the awareness to the region between the knees and the toes. Become aware of the earth element in this space. Repeat the sound *Lam* 12 times.

Concentration on the deities of the five elements: one should concentrate on the form of Brahma, the creator, in the earth region, between the toes and the knees. Then focus on Viṣṇu, the sustainer, in the region of water, between the knees and the navel. Next, see Maheśa in the region of fire, between the navel and the heart. Concentrate on Īśvara in the region of air, between the heart and the eyebrows. Finally, focus on Sadāśiva in the region of space, between the eyebrows and the crown of the head.

Ending the practice: Now, leave the awareness of the deities and the elements. Bring your attention back to the body. Become aware of the position of the body, the weight of the body. Be aware of the breath. Listen to the sounds that you can hear from outside. Slowly release the body posture and open the eyes.

This is the original practice of pañcabhūta dhāraṇā, concentration on the five elements, and it is very powerful. Regular practice purifies and rebalances the elemental energies within the body, and helps to bring about a deep state of meditation. It should ideally be practiced in the early morning at dawn, or in the early evening at dusk. Even today, pañcabhūta dhāraṇā is still practised in similar and modified versions, for example, in the practice of *tattva śuddhi*, purification of the tattwas. The words *tattwa* and *bhūta* have the same meaning. Although the five elements and their related sounds, ie. *Lam*, *Vam*, *Ram*, and so on, are also found within the symbols of the cakras, it is important to note that the *tattwa* system of meditation, and the location of the tattwas, is completely separate from the cakra system.

The Rishi of this upanisad declared this practice of pañcabhūta dhāraṇā to be the supreme or highest form of concentration, which will purify and remove the effects of all sins and negativity, that obstruct the practitioner in life and on the spiritual path.

Verses 7 to 9: Dhāraṇā on the Self

आत्मनि धारणा

अथ वा तव वक्षामि धारणां मुनिपुङ्गव ।
पुरुषे सर्वशास्तारं बोधानन्दमयं शिवम् ॥७॥
धारयेद्बुद्धिमान् नित्यं सर्वपापविशुद्धये ।
ब्रह्मादिकर्यरूपाणि स्वेस्वे संहृत्य कारणे ॥८॥
र्वकारणमव्यक्तमनिरूप्यमचेतनम् ।
साक्षादात्मनि संपूर्णं धारयेत् प्रणवे मनः ।
इन्द्रियाणि समहृत्य मनसात्मनि योजयेत् ॥९॥

ātmani dhāraṇā

*atha vā tava vakṣyāmi dhāraṇām munipuṅgava
puruṣe sarvaśāstāram bodhānandamayam śivam (7)
dhārayed buddhimān nityam sarvapāpaviśuddhaye
brahmādikāryarūpāṇi svesve samṝtya kāraṇe (8)
sarvakāraṇamavyaktamanirūpyamacetanam
sākṣādātmani sampūrṇe dhārayet prāṇave manah
indriyāṇi samāhṛtya manasātmani yojayet (9)*

Anvay

dhāraṇā: concentration; *ātmani*: on the self; *atha*: now; *vakṣyāmi*: shall I describe; *vā*: interrogative; *tava*: to you; *dhāraṇām*: concentration; *munipuṅgava*: o esteemed Sage; *ayam*: this; *puruṣe*: in the *puruṣa*, soul; *śivam*: Śiva; *sarva-śāstāram*: ruler of all; *ānandam*: blissful; *bodha*: all-knowing; *buddhimān*: wise one; *viśuddhaye*: for the purification of; *sarvapāpa*: all sins; *dhārayet*: should concentrate on; *nityam*: always; *rūpāṇi*: forms; *kārya*: deeds; *brahma-ādi*: Brahma and other [gods]; *samṝtya*: absorbing; *svesve kāraṇe*: into one's own cause; *avyaktaman*: unmanifest; *nirūpyam*: without form; *acetanam*: indefinable; *kāraṇa*: cause of; *sarva*: everything; *dhārayet*: one should fix; *manah*: mind; *sākṣāt*: clearly; *sampūrṇe*: completely; *prāṇave*: on the *prāṇava*, Aum; *ātmani*: in the *ātman*, self; *samāhṛtya*: having withdrawn; *indriyāṇi*: senses; *yojayet*: one should merge; *manas-ātmani*: mind with the self.

Translation

Concentration on the self: Now shall I describe to you [this] concentration, o esteemed Sage? This [is] in the *puruṣa*, (who is) Śiva, the ruler of all, blissful [and] all-knowing. The wise one, for the purification of all sins, should always concentrate on the forms [and] deeds of Brahma and other [gods], absorbing [them] into one's own cause, [concentrating on] the unmanifest, without form [and] indefinable [which is] the cause of everything. One should fix the mind clearly [and] completely on the *pranava* in the *ātman*; having withdrawn the senses, one should merge the mind with the self.

Commentary

Concentration on the self is considered to be the highest dhāraṇā, and also the most difficult, because the self has no form or material existence. The self is known by different terms, such as atman, spirit or soul. We are familiar with these words, but we do not know or understand what is the self, where does it come from, and how does it live within us. This is the great difficulty of this meditation. There is no visible or manifest form that we can hold onto, identify with or relate with, as we are used to doing in the world around us. Perhaps, this is why the Rishi has asked, shall I describe this concentration to you now, or not?

The Rishi continues to explain that this meditation takes place in the *puruṣa*, the soul, who is the pure self, the pure consciousness. The *puruṣa* is also known as Śiva, the ruler of all, who is ever blissful and all knowing. In order to prepare oneself for this meditation, the wise aspirant should begin by studying or listening to the scriptures and stories about Brahma and the other gods, gradually absorbing them into his or her mind and consciousness. With this understanding, the aspirant may then practice concentration on the forms and deeds of the gods, for the purification of all accumulated sins and negative karmas.

Finally, the aspirant should concentrate on the unmanifest, the essence of all being, which is formless and indefinable, and the cause of everything that exists. While practising this concentration, which is beyond thought, one should focus the mind clearly and completely on the *pranava*, the pure sound of *Aum*. The *Aum* sound is the first resonance or vibration of creation, and it is heard within the depths of the pure consciousness, the

atman or the soul. In this way, having withdrawn the senses back into the mind, one should merge the mind with the Self, even while living in this world. This is the highest attainment of yoga.

इत्यष्टमः खण्डः:

iti astamah khandah

Thus [ends] the eighth section.

नवमः खण्डः
navamah khaṇḍah

Ninth Section

Dhyāna

Verses 1 and 2: Meditation on Brahma with attributes

सविशेषब्रह्मध्यानम्
अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि ध्यानं संसारनाशनम् ।
ऋतं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म सर्वसंसारभेषजम् ॥१॥
ऊर्ध्वरितं विरूपाक्षं विश्वरूपं महेश्वरम् ।
सोऽहमित्यादरेणैव ध्यायेद्योगीश्वरेश्वरम् ॥२॥
saviśeṣabrahmadhyānam
athātah sampravakṣyāmi dhyānam samsāranāśanam
r̥tam satyam param brahma sarvasamsārabheṣajam (1)
ūrdhvaretam virūpākṣam viśvarūpam maheśvaram
so 'hamityādareṇaiva dhyāyedyogīśvareśvaram (2)

Anvay

dhyānam: meditation; *saviśeṣa brahma*: attributes of Brahma; *thātah*: now; *sampravakṣyāmi*: I shall describe; *nāśanam*: destroys; *samsāra*: illusory world; *r̥tam*: divine harmony; *satyam*: truth; *param brahma*: supreme Brahma; *bheṣajam*: remedy for; *sarva samsāra*: all delusions; *iti*: saying; *ādareṇa*: reverently; *soham*: I am that; *yogī*: yogin; *dhyāyet*: should meditate on; *īśvara-īśvaram*: Lord of Lords; *ūrdhvaretam*: [whose] seed [is] contained; *virūpākṣam*: Śiva, many forms; *viśvarūpam*: cosmic form; *maheśvaram*: Maheśvara, highest reality.

Translation

Meditation on the attributes of Brahma: Now I shall describe *dhyāna*, [which] destroys the illusory world, [which is] divine harmony, truth, the supreme Brahma, the remedy for all delusions. Saying reverently ‘I Am That’, the yogin should meditate on the Lord of Lords, [whose] seed [is] contained, [who is] Śiva of many forms, of the cosmic form, [and] Maheśvara, the highest reality.

Commentary

Dhyāna is the third limb of *antaraṅga* in rāja yoga. *Pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā*, the first and second limbs, require regular and vigilant practice. *Dhyāna* is the outcome of their mastery, when the awareness flows steadily upon one object or ideal, without any dissipation or break, just as oil is poured from one container into another in one steady stream. From the stage of *dhyāna* onward, meditation takes place spontaneously and effortlessly. It is no longer considered to be a practice, which needs constant application of will and direction.

In *pratyāhāra*, the awareness is focused within the conscious and subconscious mind on the immediate and latent mental impressions and patterns. In *dhāraṇā*, the awareness is focused on one object or ideal within the conscious and subconscious mind, but there are breaks. The mind wanders and the practitioner brings it back again and again to the object of focus. In *dhyāna*, the awareness flows smoothly and steadily towards the object or ideal in the deep levels of the subconscious mind, without any break.

In the above verses, the Rishi describes *dhyāna* on the attributes of Brahma. The state of *dhyāna* is one of divine harmony. In this state the absolute truth, which is the remedy for all delusions, relating with time, space and object, is known. The yogi who becomes established in *dhyāna* has the direct experience of the supreme Brahma, the Lord of creation, and is no longer affected by the illusory appearances and experiences of the external world.

Repeating the mantra *Soham*, ‘I am That’, with faith and reverence, the yogi should meditate on Īśvara, the Lord of all the worlds. Being the universal Lord of Lords, he has no desire or inclination to procreate further, so his seed or creative potential is contained. He is Śiva in his cosmic form, and also in his many manifest forms. He is Maheśvara, the great Īśvara, the highest reality.

Verses 3 to 5: Meditation on Brahma without attributes

निर्विशेषब्रह्मध्यानम्
अथ वा सत्रमीशानं ज्ञानमानन्दमद्वयम् ।
अत्यर्थम् अमलं नित्यमादिमध्यान्तवर्जितम् ॥३॥
तथास्थूलमनाकाशमसंस्पृश्यमचाक्षुषम् ।
न रसं न च गन्धाख्यमप्रमेयमनुपमम् ॥४॥
आत्मानं सञ्चिदानन्दमनन्तं ब्रह्म सुव्रत ।
अहमस्मीत्यभिध्यायेद्देहातीतं विमुक्तये ॥५॥

*nirviśeṣabrahmadhyānam
atha vā satyamīśānam jñānamānandamadvayam
atyarthamalam nityamādimadhyāntavarjitam (3)
tathāsthūlamanākāśamasamsprśyamacākṣuṣam
na rasam na ca gandhākhyamaprameyamanupamam (4)
ātmānam sañcidānandamanantam brahma suvrata
ahamasmītyabhidhyāyeddehātītam vimuktaye (5)*

Anvay

dhyānam: meditation; *nirviśeṣa brahma*: Brahma without attributes; *atha*: now; *īśānam satyam*: Śiva, possessor of truth; *jñāna*: knowledge; *ānanda*: bliss; *advayam*: non-dual; *ati-artham*: beyond meaning; *amalam*: pure; *nityam*: eternal; *varjitam*: without; *ādi madhya anta*: beginning, middle, end; *tathā*: thus; *asthūlam*: without matter; *anākāśam*: without space; *asamsprśyam*: without touch; *acākṣuṣam*: without sight; *na rasam*: without taste; *ca*: and; *na gandha-ākhyam*: without any smell; *aprameyam*: immeasurable; *anupamam*: incomparable; *ātmānam*: soul; *anantam*: infinite; *sat-cit-ānandam*: existence-consciousness-bliss; *suvrata*: o virtuous One; *abhidhyāyet*: being absorbed in; *iti aham asmi*: Thus I Am; *dehātītam*: one transcends the body; *vimuktaye*: is liberated.

Translation

Meditation on Brahma without attributes: Now [this is] Śiva, the possessor of truth, [whose] knowledge [and] bliss [are] non-dual, [who is] beyond meaning, pure, eternal, without beginning, middle [and] end. Thus, [being] without matter, space, touch, sight, taste and smell, [he is] immeasurable [and] incomparable. Brahma [is] the soul, infinite existence-

consciousness-bliss, o Virtuous One. Being absorbed in the mantra *iti aham asmi*, 'Thus I Am', one transcends the body [and] is liberated.

Commentary

There are basically two kinds of meditation, one with form and the other without form. The previous verses described meditation with form, and now a brief description of meditation without form is given. Meditation on a form provides the mind with a base, upon which it can steady itself, and always know where it is in the vast domains of consciousness. Meditation without any form is more difficult in the sense that the mind has nothing to hold onto and may drift in the abstract space of consciousness, which is beyond time and object. Down through the ages, these two kinds of meditation have been debated, as to which one is superior or inferior. Ultimately, it comes down to the personal preference of the meditator.

Meditation is a journey through the inner dimensions of consciousness. Śiva, the primordial yogi, is also a symbol of this journey, as he is usually depicted sitting in *padmāsana*, deep in meditation. So, Śiva also represents the state of absolute consciousness, wherein there are no boundaries or limitations. Therefore, Śiva is described here as that state of consciousness, where truth, knowledge and bliss exist throughout in the non-dual state. In the world we have the experience of duality: relative truth, relative knowledge, and relative happiness. Everything we experience is always related with I and another, and this is called duality. Whereas, Śiva represents the experience of consciousness in the non-dual state, the state of oneness.

Śiva represents the state of consciousness, which is beyond mind and any kind of meaning. This state is absolutely pure, permanent and eternal. As such, it has no beginning, middle or end. Thus, having transcended the world of matter and the sensorial impressions, ie: sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, he is immeasurable and incomparable. As Śiva represents the absolute consciousness, Brahma represents the soul, the *ātman*, the self of the consciousness, and is experienced as infinite *sat-cit-ānandam*, truth, existence and bliss. This state is said to be attained by total absorption into the mantra: *iti aham asmi*, Thus I am. In this way, the yogi transcends the body and mind, and is liberated.

Verse 6: Fruits of meditation

ध्यानफलम्

एवमभ्यासयुक्तस्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ।
क्रमाद्वेदान्तविज्ञानं विजायेत न संशयः ॥६॥

dhyānaphalam

*evamabhyāsayuktasya puruṣasya mahātmanah
kramādvedāntavijñānam vijāyeta na samśayah* (6)

Anvay

dhyāna-phalam: fruits of dhyāna; *na samśayah*: without doubt; *kramāt*: gradually; *vijāyeta*: there should bring forth; *mahātmanah puruṣasya*: in a great soul; *abhyāsa*: [who] engages; *evam*: thus; *abhyāsa*: in regular practice; *vedānta-vijñānam*: knowledge of *vedānta*.

Translation

Fruits of dhyāna: Without doubt there should gradually bring forth in a great soul, [who] engages thus in regular practice, knowledge of *vedānta*.

Commentary

Vedānta is the philosophy, which was given at the end of the vedas, concerning the pure consciousness and the oneness of being. This knowledge was attained through the direct experience of yogis and rishis, who had meditated deeply and discovered the entire field of consciousness for themselves. This verse states that the great person, who practises dhyāna regularly, will undoubtedly attain the knowledge of *vedānta*. This also attests to the fact that rāja yoga leads to *vedānta*, and that the two systems ultimately bring the aspirant to the same point.

इति नवमः खण्डः:

iti navamah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the ninth section.

दशमः खण्डः
daśamah khaṇḍah

Tenth Section

Samādhi

Verses 1 to 5: Nature of samādhi

समाधस्वरूपम्

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि समाधिं भवनाशनम् ।
समाधिः संविदुत्पत्तिः परजीवैकतां प्रति ॥१॥
नित्यः सर्वगते ह्यात्मा कूटस्थो दोषवर्जितः ।
एकः सन् भिद्यते भ्रान्त्या मायया न स्वरूपतः ॥२॥
तस्मादद्वैतमेवास्ति न प्रपञ्चे न संसृतिः ।
यथा इकाशो घटाकाशो मठाकाश इतीरितः ॥३॥
तथा भ्रान्तैर्द्विधा प्रोतो ह्यात्मा जीवेश्वरात्मना ।
नाहं देहो न च प्राणो नेन्द्रियाणि मनो न हि ॥४॥
सदा साक्षिस्वरूपत्वाच्छिव एवास्मि केवलः ।
इति धीर्या मुनिश्रेष्ठ सा समाधिरहितोच्यते ॥५॥

samādhisvarūpam

*athātah sampravakṣyāmi samādhim bhavaṇāśanam
samādhiḥ samvidutpattiḥ parajīvaikatām prati (1)
nityah sarvagato hyātmā kūṭastho doṣavarjitaḥ
ekah san bhidyate bhrāntyā māyayā na svarūpataḥ (2)
tasmatadvaitamevāsti na prapañce na samsṛtiḥ
yathā ‘kāśo ghaṭākāśo maṭhākāśa itīritah (3)
tathā bhrāntairdvihā prokto hyātmā jīveśvarātmanā
nāham deho na ca prāṇo nendriyāṇi mano na hi (4)
sadā sākṣisvarūpatvācchiva evāsmi kevalah
iti dhīryā muniśreṣṭha sā samādhiriḥocaye (5)*

Anvay

svarūpa: nature; *athātah*: now; *sampravakṣyāmi*: I shall describe; *nāśanam*: destroyer; *bhava*: worldly existence; *utpattiḥ*: gives rise to; *samvid*: knowledge; *prati*: hence; *ekatām*: oneness; *parajīva*: other beings;

ātmā: self; *hi*: for sure; *nityah*: eternal; *sarvagataḥ*: everywhere; *kūtasthah*: unchangeable; *doṣavarjitah*: devoid of faults; *san*: being; *ekah*: one; *bhidyatē*: it differs; *bhrāntyā māyayā*: from the mistaken illusion; *na svarūpataḥ*: not in its own form; *tasmāt*: therefore; *asti*: there is; *evam*: really; *advaitam*: no duality; *na prapañce*: no phenomenal world; *na samsṛtiḥ*: no transmigration; *yathā*: just as; *iti*: it is said; *ghaṭa-ākāśah*: space in a pot; *maṭha-ākāśah*: space in a hermitage; *īritah*: is obtained from; *ākāśah*: ether element; *tathā*: so; *bhrāntaiḥ*: because of false notions; *dvidhā*: duality; *proktah*: is called; *jīva*: individual consciousness; *īśvara*: *Īśvara*, higher consciousness; *hi*: indeed; *na aham*: I am not; *dehah*: body; *na*: nor; *prāṇah*: vital energy; *indriyāni*: senses; *manah*: mind; *asmi*: I am; *śivah*: Śiva; *kevalah*: alone; *sadā*: ever; *sākṣi*: witness; *svarūpa*: true form; *sā dhīryā*: this wisdom; *ucyate*: is said; *iha*: in this life; *muniśrestha*: o excellent Sage.

Translation

Nature of samādhi: Now I shall describe *samādhi*, the destroyer of worldly existence. Samādhi gives rise to knowledge [and] hence oneness with other beings. The ātman is, for sure, eternal, everywhere, unchangeable [and] devoid of faults. Being one, it differs from the mistaken illusion, [but] not in its own form. Therefore, there is really no duality, no phenomenal world, no transmigration, just as, it is said, the space in a pot or hermitage is obtained from the ether element. So, because of false notions [of] duality, the ātman is called *jīva* [and] *Īśvara*. Indeed I am not the body, nor the prāṇa, nor the senses, nor the mind. I am Śiva alone, ever the witness [of my] true form. This wisdom is said [to be] samādhi in this life, o excellent Sage.

Commentary

Here the Rishi explains the nature of *samādhi*, the eighth limb of rāja yoga. Samādhi is not a practice or even the outcome of any practice. It is the transcendental state of consciousness, in which all barriers and limitations of the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious are removed. In samādhi the consciousness is one indivisible field, total and complete. Within this totality of consciousness, all knowledge exists; so the Rishi says that samādhi gives rise to knowledge. And because this state of

consciousness is complete within itself, it is therefore the same everywhere and in all beings. Hence, there is the experience of oneness with all beings.

The Sanskrit term for this totality of consciousness in the individual is *ātman*, the soul or the self. The Rishi describes the *ātman* as eternal, which means it is the one permanent reality, unaffected by change, by time and space, or by birth and death. This *ātman*, this pure consciousness, within each individual, is the same as the pure consciousness everywhere, on all the planes of existence, whether manifest or unmanifest. Being the basis or the substratum of all beings and all existence, the *ātman* is in itself unchangeable and devoid of any faults or imperfections.

Being the state of perfect oneness, the *ātman* differs from the limited states of consciousness, by which the relative worlds of duality, dreams and illusions are perceived. But there is no differentiation within its own transcendental state. Therefore, *samādhi* is the complete union of the mind and psyche, which are capable of differentiation, with the *ātman*, the pure individual consciousness, which is undifferentiated. In *samādhi* there is no experience of duality, no experience of the mind and senses or the phenomenal world, no further experience of transmigration, or birth and death.

In the scriptures, we find the analogy of the space in the pot or the space in the dwelling, being the same space as that which exists all around the pot, or all around the dwelling. Although, our mind perceives the space in the pot or in the dwelling as different from the space all around. This is an example of the false notion of duality. Similarly, due to this same false notion, the *ātman*, the unlimited, unborn reality, is called *jīva*, the consciousness that is born and lives in the body, and is considered to be limited in this sense, like the space that exists inside the pot, or the dwelling. And again, in the universal sense, the pure cosmic consciousness, which sustains the manifest order of existence, is called *Īśvara*.

So, the Rishi, who has established his awareness in *samādhi* says to his disciples: Indeed I am not the body, nor am I the *prāṇa*, nor am I the senses, nor am I the mind. I am Śiva, pure consciousness alone, ever the witness of my true self. This wisdom is said to be *samādhi* in this life.

Verses 6 to 12: Only Brahma remains

ब्रह्मात्रावशेषः

सो ऽहं ब्रह्म न संसारी न मत्तोऽन्यः कदाचन ।
यथा फेनतरङ्गादि समुद्रादुत्थितं पुनः ॥६॥
समुद्रे लीयते तद्वत् जगन्मय्यनुलीयते ।
तस्मान्मनः पृथङ् नास्ति जगन्माया च नास्ति हि ॥७॥
यस्यैवं परमात्मायं प्रत्यग्भूतः प्रकाशितः ।
स तु याति च पुंभावं स्वयं साक्षात् परामृतम् ॥८॥
यदा मनसि चैतन्यं भाति सर्वत्रगं सदा ।
योगिनोऽव्यवधानेन तदा सम्पद्यते स्वयम् ॥९॥
यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि स्वात्मन्येव हि पश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥१०॥
यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि समाधिस्थो न पश्यति ।
एकीभूतः परेणासौ तदा भवति केवलः ॥११॥
यदा पश्यति चात्मानं केवलं परमार्थतः ।
मायामात्रं जगत् कृत्स्नं तदा भवति निर्वृतिः ॥१२॥

brahmātrāvaśeṣah

*so 'ham brahma na samsārī na matto 'nyah kadācana
yathā phenataraṅgādi samudrādutthitam punah* (6)
*samudre liyate tadvat jaganmayyanulīyate
tasmānmanah pr̥thaṇ nāsti jaganmāyā ca nāsti hi* (7)
*yasyaivam paramātmāyam pratyagbhūtaḥ prakāśitaḥ
sa tu yāti ca pumbhāvam svayam sākṣāt parāmr̥tam* (8)
*yadā manasi caitanyam bhāti sarvatragam sadā
yogino 'vyavadhānena tadā sampadyate svayam* (9)
*yadā sarvāṇi bhūtāni svātmanyeva hi paśyati
sarvabhūteṣu cātmānam brahma sampadyate tadā* (10)
*yadā sarvāṇi bhūtāni samādhishtho na paśyati
ekībhūtaḥ pareṇāsau tadā bhavati kevalaḥ* (11)
*yadā paśyati cātmānam kevalam paramārthataḥ
māyāmātram jagat kṛtsnam tadā bhavati nirvṛtiḥ* (12)

Anvay

atra: here; *avaśesah:* remains; *aham:* I am; *sah brahma:* this Brahma; *na:* not; *samsārī:* worldly being; *na kadācana:* nothing; *anyah:* other; *mattah:* than me; *yathā:* just as; *phena:* foam; *taraṅga:* waves; *utthitam:* arising; *samudrāt:* from the ocean; *līyate:* is absorbed; *punah:* back; *samudre:* into the ocean; *tadvat:* in the same way; *jagat:* world; *anulīyate:* is absorbed; *mayi:* in me; *tasmāt:* thus; *manah:* mind; *na asti:* is not; *prthañ:* separate; *na asti:* nor is; *jaganmāyā:* material world; *sa:* he; *yasya:* whose; *paramātmā:* supreme self; *bhūtah:* has been purified; *pratyak:* within; *prakāśitah:* illumined; *sāksāt:* immediately; *yāti:* reaches; *pumbhāvam:* maturity; *ca:* and; *svayam:* his own; *parāmr̥tam:* immortality; *yadā:* when; *sarvatragam:* all-pervading; *caitanyam:* consciousness; *bhāti:* shines; *sadā:* continually; *avyadhānena:* without interruption; *manasi:* in the mind; *tadā:* then; *yoginah:* yogin; *sampadyate:* becomes absorbed in; *svayam:* himself; *yadā eva hi:* when indeed; *paśyati:* he sees; *sarvāni bhūtāni:* all creatures; *svātmani:* in himself; *ca:* and; *ātmānam:* himself; *sarvabhūtesu:* in all creatures; *tadā:* then; *brahma sampadyate:* he merges with Brahma; *yadā:* when; *samādhishthah:* absorbed in *samādhi*; *na paśyati:* he does not see; *sarvāni bhūtāni:* all creatures; *pareṇa:* but; *ekibhūtah:* as one; *tadā:* then; *asau kevalah:* that pure consciousness; *bhavati:* is attained; *ca:* and; *yadā:* when; *paśyati:* he sees; *ātmānam kevalam:* self alone; *paramārthataḥ:* true reality; *tadā:* then; *bhavati:* he is; *nirvṛtiḥ:* set free from; *krtsnam jagat:* whole world; *mātram:* merely; *māyā:* illusion.

Translation

Here Brahma Remains: I am this Brahma, not the worldly being. [There is] nothing other than me. Just as the foam [of the] waves, arising from the ocean, is absorbed back into the ocean, in the same way the world is absorbed in me. Thus, the mind is not separate, nor is the material world. He, whose supreme self has been purified within [and] illumined, immediately reaches maturity and his own immortality. When the all-pervading consciousness shines continually [and] without interruption in the mind, then the yogin becomes absorbed in himself. When indeed he sees all creatures in himself and himself in all creatures, then he merges with Brahma. When, absorbed in *samādhi*, he does not see all creatures [as many], but [as] one, then that pure consciousness is attained. And when he sees the self alone [as] the true reality, then he is set free from the whole world, [which is] merely an illusion.

Commentary

In samādhi, only Brahma remains. In this sense, we can equate Brahma with the super-conscious state, from which all existence is born and to which all returns. In this state, therefore, 'I am Brahma'; I am the absolute, and there is nothing other than me. I am not this limited physical being with name and form, who dwells in a place, works at a profession, and is part of a family with a circle of friends. There is no other reality in this state, except Brahma, the super-conscious field, which is ever luminous, vast and expansive.

Just as the foam, riding on the waves, which arise from the ocean, is absorbed back into the ocean, similarly, the entire perception of myself in the world is absorbed back into me. Thus, the mind is not separate from me, nor is the world, because, like the foam on the waves, they too have merged back into the infinite sea of consciousness. The yogi, who has purified the karmas and samskaras that reside in the individual consciousness, and illumined the supreme self within, attains the goal of spiritual evolution. With this attainment, the self immediately reaches the state of fullness, or maturity, and realises its own immortality. When the yogi remains absorbed in this state, the all-pervading, ever effusive, consciousness shines continually, without interruption, in the mind.

When the consciousness of the yogi, who has established the awareness in the superconscious state, returns once again to the external world, he sees life and all beings within himself, and himself in all beings. There is no separation or differentiation. The experience of 'I am in you', and 'You are in me' arises wherever and with whomever he may be. This is the quality of oneness, which expresses itself outside as pure love. We may also call it the love of God, that sees and knows all beings as one and the same. In this state of love and oneness with all existence, the yogi merges with Brahma, the superconsciousness, even in the external world.

Hence, absorbed in samādhi in every situation, with the mind ever directed towards the self, he does not see all beings as diverse or many, but as one continuum of creation, ever unfolding from and returning back to the source of Brahma. In this way, pure consciousness is attained, which is unaffected or dissipated by any worldly relations or situations. When the

yogi sees the self alone as the one true reality, then he is liberated from the entire world, which after all, is merely an illusion.

Verse 13: Epilogue

उपसंहारः

एवमुक्त्वा स भगवान् दत्तात्रेयो महामुनिः ।
सांकृतिः स्वस्वरूपेण सुखमास्थ तिनिर्भयः ॥१३॥

upasamhārah

*evamuktvā sa bhagavān dattātreyo mahāmuniḥ
sāmkṛtiḥ svasvarūpena sukhamāstha ‘tinirbhayah* (13)

Anvay

upasamhārah: epilogue; *mahāmuniḥ*: great sage; *bhagavān*: Lord; *Dattātreyah*: Dattātreya; *uktvā*: having spoken; *evam*: thus; *sāmkṛtiḥ*: Sāṃkṛti; *sukham*: joyfully; *atinirbhayah*: fearlessly; *āsthah*: established; *svasvariūpena*: in his own true nature.

Translation

Epilogue: The great sage Lord Dattātreya having spoken thus, Sāṃkṛti [is] joyfully [and] fearlessly established in his own true nature.

Commentary

Thus ends the original teaching on *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, the eightfold path of yoga, given by the great yogi and *avatāra*, or divine incarnation, Dattātreya to his worthy disciple, Sāṃkṛti. From this text and the nature of the teaching, we can see how the ancient masters passed on their knowledge and experience, with great diligence, patience and skill. The teachings were not expounded in large assemblies or practice halls, but rather passed down from master to student in a very close, symbiotic relationship.

As the student mastered one level or area of practice, the master would then carefully introduce him to the next. The eightfold path of yoga, which is also known as *rāja yoga*, was originally a step by step path which led the worthy aspirant from a life of worldly perception and involvement to the fullness of enlightenment. We can further assume that in such a profound relationship as this, there would have been a high degree of transmission, between the fully illumined master and the disciple, who must have been purified, receptive and fully prepared to imbibe this higher teaching on yoga. Hence, under the watchful eye of the master, the disciple gradually

attained mastery of yoga and was joyfully and fearlessly established in his own true nature.

इति दशमः खण्डः

iti daśamah khaṇḍah

Thus [ends] the Tenth Section

Appendices

1.Sanskrit text

आप्यायन्तु । इति शान्तिः

प्रथमः खण्डः

जीवन्मुक्तिसाधनं अष्टाङ्गयोगः

दत्तात्रेयो महायोगी भगवान्भूतभावनः ।
चतुर्भुजो महाविष्णुर्यागसाभ्राज्यदीक्षितिः ॥१॥

तस्य शिष्यो मुनिवरः सांकृतिर्नाम भक्तिमान् ।
पप्रच्छ गुरुमेकान्ते प्राज्जलिर्विनयान्वितः ॥२॥

भगवन्बूहि मे योगं साष्टाङ्गं सप्रपञ्चकम् ।
येन विज्ञानमात्रेण जीवन्मुक्तो भवाम्यहम् ॥३॥

सांकृते शृणु वक्ष्यामि योगं साष्टाङ्गदर्शनम् ।
अष्टाङ्गोद्देशः
यमश्च नियमश्चैव तथैवासनमेव च ॥४॥
प्राणायामस्तथा ब्रह्मन्प्रत्याहारस्ततः ।
धारणा च तथा ध्यानं समाधिश्वाष्टमं मुने ॥५॥

दशविद्यमः

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं दयार्जवम् ।
क्षमा धृतिर्मिताहारः शौचं वेति यमा दश ॥६॥

अहिंसा

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण विना सत्यं तपोधन ।
कायेन मनसा वाचा हिंसा हिंसा न चान्यथा ॥७॥
आत्मा सर्वगतोऽच्छेद्यो न ग्राह्य इति या मतिः ।
मा चाहिंसा वरा प्रोक्ता मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥८॥

सत्यम्

चक्षुरादीन्द्रियैर्दृष्टं श्रुतं ध्रातं मुनीश्वर ।

तस्यैवोक्तिर्भवेत्सत्यं विप्र तन्नान्यथा भवेत् ॥१९॥
सर्वं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म न चान्यदिति या मतिः ।
तज्च सत्यं परं प्रोक्तं वेदान्तज्ञानपारगैः ॥२०॥

अस्तेयम्
अन्यदीये तृणे रत्ने कानञ्चने मौक्किके ऽपि च ।
मनसा विनिवृत्तिर्या तदस्तेयं विदुर्बुधाः ॥२१॥
आत्मन्यनात्मभावेन व्यवहारविवर्जितम् ।
यत्तदस्तेयमित्युक्तमात्मविद्धिर्महा मुने ॥२२॥

ब्रह्मचर्यम्
कायेन वाचा मनसा स्त्रीणं परिविवर्जनम् ।
ऋतौ भार्या तदा स्वस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं तदुच्यते ॥२३॥
ब्रह्मभावे मनश्चागं ब्रह्मचर्यं परंतप ॥२४॥

दया
स्वात्मवत्सर्वभूतेषु कायेन मनसा गिरा ॥२५॥
अनुज्ञा या दया सैव प्रोक्ता वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥२६॥

आर्जवम्
पुत्रे मित्रे कलत्रे च रिपौ स्वात्मनि संततम् ॥२७॥
एकरूपं मुने यत्तदार्जवं प्रोच्यते मया ॥२८॥

क्षमा
कायेन मनसा वाचा शत्रुभिः परिपीडिते ॥२९॥
बुद्धिक्षोभनिवृत्तिर्या क्षमा सा मुनिपुङ्गव ॥३०॥

धृतिः
वेदादेव विनिर्मोक्षः संसारस्य न चान्यथा ॥३१॥
इति विज्ञाननिष्पत्तिर्धृतिः प्रोकता हि वैदिकैः ।
अहमात्मा न चान्योऽमीत्येवमप्रच्युता मतिः ॥३२॥

मिताहारः
अल्पभृष्टाशनाभ्यां च चतुर्थांशा वशेषकम् ।

तस्माद्योगानुगुण्येन भोजनं मितभोजनम् ॥१९॥

शौचम्

स्वदेहमलनिर्मोक्षो मृज्जलाभ्यां महामुने ।
यत्तच्छौचं भवेद्वाह्यं मानसं मनं विदुः ॥२०॥
अहं शुद्ध इति ज्ञानं शौचबाहुर्मनीषिणः ।
अत्यन्तमलिनो देहो देही चात्यन्तनिर्मलः ॥२१॥
उभयोरन्तरं ज्ञात्वा कस्य शौचं विधीयते ।
ज्ञानशौचं परित्यज्य बाह्ये यो रमते नारः ॥२२॥
स मुढः काज्चनं त्यक्त्वा लोष्टं गृह्णाति सुव्रत ॥२३॥

ब्रह्मात्मवेदनविधिः

ज्ञानामृतेन तृप्तस्य कृतकृत्यस्य योगिनः ॥२३॥
न चास्ति किंचित्कर्तव्यमस्ति वेन्न स तत्त्ववित् ।
लोकत्रये ऽपि कर्तव्यं किंचिन्नास्त्यात्मवेदिनाम् ॥२४॥
तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन मुने ऽहिंसादिसाधनैः ।
आत्मानमक्षरं ब्रह्म विद्धि ज्ञानात्तु वेदनात् ॥२५॥

द्वितीयः खण्डः

दशविधनियमः

तपः सन्तोषमास्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम् ।
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं चैव हीर्मतिश्व जपो व्रतम् ॥१॥
एते च नियमाः प्रोक्तास्तान्वक्ष्यामि क्रमाच्छृणु ॥२॥

तपः

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः ॥२॥
शरिरशोषणं यत्तत्प इत्युच्यते बुधैः ।
को वा मोक्षः कथं केन संसारं प्रतिपन्नवान् ॥३॥
इत्यालोचनमर्थज्ञास्तपः शंसन्ति पण्डिताः ॥४॥

सन्तोषः

यदिच्छालाभतो नित्यं प्रीतिर्या जायते नृणाम् ॥५॥
तत्सन्तोषं विदुः प्राजजाः परिज्ञानैकतत्पराः ।

ब्रह्मावलोकपर्यन्ताद्विरक्त्या यल्लभेत्रियम् ॥५॥
सर्वत्र विगतस्नेहः सन्तोषं परं विदुः ।६।

आस्तिक्यम्
श्रौते स्मार्ते च विश्वासो यत्तदास्तिक्यमुच्यते ॥६॥

दानम्
न्यायार्जितधनं श्रान्ते श्रद्धया वैदिके जने ।
अन्यद्वा यत्प्रदीयते तदानं प्रोच्यते मया ॥७॥

ईश्वरपूजनम्
रागाद्यपेतं हृदयं वागदुष्टा ऽनृतादिना ।
हिंसादिरहितं कर्म यत्तदीश्वरपूजनम् ॥८॥

दिद्धन्तश्रवणम्
सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं च परानन्दं परं ध्रुवम् ।
प्रत्यगित्यवगन्तव्यं वेदान्तश्रवणं बुधः ॥९॥

ह्रीः
देवलौकिकमार्गेषु कुत्सितं कर्म यद्ववेत् ।
तस्मिन्भवति या लज्जा ह्रीः सैवेति प्रकीर्तिता ॥१०॥

मतिः
वैदिकेषु च सर्वेषु श्रद्धा या सा मतिर्भवेत् ।
गुरुणा चोपदिष्टोऽपि तन्त्र संबन्धवर्जितः ॥११॥

जपः
वेदोक्तेनैव मार्गेण मन्त्राभ्यासो जपः स्मृतः ।
कल्पसूत्रे यथा वेदे धर्मशास्त्रे पुराणके ॥१२॥
इतिहासे च वृत्तिर्या स जपः प्रोच्यते मया ।
जपस्तु द्विविधः प्रोक्तो वाचिको मानसस्तथा ॥१३॥
वाचिकोपांशुरुच्चैश्च द्विविधः परिकीर्तिः ।
मानसो मननध्यानभेदाद्वैविध्यमाश्रितः ॥१४॥
उच्चैर्जपादुपांशुश्च सहस्रगुणमुच्यते ।

मानसश्च तथोपांशोः सहस्रगुणमुच्यते ॥१५॥
उच्चैर्जपश्च सर्वेषां यथोक्तफलदो भवेत् ।
निचैः श्रोत्रेण चेन्मन्त्रः श्रुतश्चेन्निष्फलं भवेत् ॥१६॥

तृतीयः खण्डः
आसनानि नव
स्वास्तिकं गोमुखं पद्मं वीरसिंहासने तथा ।
भद्रं मुक्तासनं चैव मयूरासनमेव च ॥१॥
सुखाससनाख्यं च नवमं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥२।

स्वस्तिकम्
जानूर्वारन्तरे कृत्वा सम्यक् पादतले उभे ॥२॥
समग्रीवशिरः कायः स्वस्तिकं नित्यमभ्यसेत् ॥३।

गोमुखम्
सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु पृष्ठपश्चा नियोजयेत् ॥३॥
दक्षिणे ऽपि तथा सव्यं गोमुखं तत्रचक्षते ॥४।

वीरासनम्
दक्षिणेतरपादं तु दक्षिणोरुणि विन्यसेत् ।
ऋजुकायः समासीनो वीरासनमुदाहृतम् ॥६॥

सिंहासनम्
गुल्फौ च वृष्णस्याधः सीविन्यः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।
दक्षिणं सव्यगुल्फेन दक्षिणेन तथेतरत् ॥६-१॥
हस्तौ जानौ समास्थाप्य स्वाङ्गुलींरिप्रसर्य च ।
व्यक्तवक्त्रो निरीक्षेत नासाग्रं सुसमाहितः ॥६-२॥
सिंहासनं भवेदेतत् पूजितं योगिभिः सदा ॥६-३॥

भद्रासनम्
गुल्फौ तु वृष्णस्याधः सीविन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।
पार्श्वपादौ च पाणिभ्यां दृधं बद्धवा सुनिर्लिम् ॥७॥
भद्रासनं भवेदेतद्विषरोगविनाशनम् ॥८।

मुक्तासनम्
निपीङ्ग्य सीविनीं मूक्षमा दक्षिणेतरगुल्फतः ॥८॥
वामं याम्येन गुल्फेन मुक्तासनमिदं भवेत् ।
मेढ्रादुपरि मिक्षिप्य सव्यं गुल्फं ततोपरि ॥९॥
गुल्फान्तरं च संक्षिप्य मुक्तासनमिदं मुने ॥१०॥

मयूरासनम्
कूर्परागे मुनिश्रेष्ठ निक्षिपेन्नाभिपार्ष्योः ॥१०॥
भूम्यां पाणितलद्वन्द्वं निक्षिप्यैकाग्रमानसः ।
समुन्नतशिरःपादो दण्डवत् व्योम्नि संस्थितः ॥११॥
मयूरासनमेतत् स्यात् सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥१२॥

सुखासनम्
येन केन प्रकारेण सुखं धैर्यं च जायते ॥१२॥
तत् सुखासनमित्युक्तमशक्तस्तत् समाश्रयेत् ॥१३॥

आसनजयफलम्
आसनं विजितं येन जितं तेन जगत्रयं ॥१३॥
अनेन विधिना युक्तः प्राणायामं सदा कुरु ॥१४॥

चतुर्थः खण्डः

देहप्रमाणम्
शरीरं तावदेव स्यात् षण्णवत्यङ्गुलात्मकम् ।
देहमध्ये शिखिस्थानं तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रभम् ॥१॥
त्रिकोणं मनुजानां तु सत्यमुक्तं हि सांकृते ।
गुदात्तु द्व्यङ्गुलादूर्ध्वं मेढ्रात्तु द्व्यङ्गुलादधः ॥२॥

देहमध्यं विजानीहि मानुजानां तु सांकृते ।
कन्दस्थानं मुनिश्रेष्ठ मूलाधारान्नवाङ्गुलम् ॥३॥
चतुरङ्गुलमायामविस्तारं मुनिपुङ्गव ।
कुक्कुटाङ्गडवदाकारं भूषितं तु त्वगादिभिः ॥४॥
तन्मध्ये नाभिरित्युक्तं योगज्ञैर्मुनिपुङ्गव ॥५॥

नाडीपरिगणनम्

कन्दमध्यस्थिता नाडी सुषुम्नेति प्रकीर्तिता ॥५॥
तिष्ठन्ति परितस्तस्य नाडयो मुनिपुङ्गव ।
द्विसप्ततिसहस्राङ्गि तासां मुख्याश्वतुर्दश ॥६॥
सुषुम्ना पिङ्गला तद्वदिङ्गा चैव सरस्वती ।
पूषा च वरुणा चैव हस्तिजिह्वा यशस्विनी ॥७॥
अलम्बुसा कुहूश्वैव विश्वोदारा पयस्विनी ।
शन्खिनी चैव गान्धारा इति मुख्याश्वतुर्दश ॥८॥

आसां मुख्यतमास्तिस्तिसृष्टेकोत्तमोत्तमा ।
ब्रह्मनाडीति सा प्रोक्ता मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥९॥
पृष्ठमध्यस्थितेनास्था वीणादण्डेन सुव्रत ।
सह मस्तकपर्यन्तं सुषुम्ना सुप्रतिष्ठिता ॥१०॥

कुण्डल्याः स्थानं स्वरूपं च
नाभिकन्दादधः स्थानं कुण्डल्या द्व्यज्ञुलं मुने ।
अष्टप्रकृतिरूपा सा कुण्डली मुनिसत्तम ॥११॥
यथावद्वायुचेष्टां च जलन्नादिनि नित्यशः ।
परितः कन्दपार्श्वेषु निरुध्यैव सदा स्थिता ॥१२॥
स्वमुखेन संवेष्ट्य ब्रह्मरन्ध्र मुखं मुने ॥१३॥

नाडीस्थानानि

सुषुम्नाया इडा सव्ये दक्षिणे पिङ्गला स्थिता ॥१३॥
सरस्वती कुहूश्वैव सुषुम्नापार्श्वयोः स्थिते ।
गान्धारा हस्तिजिह्वा च इडायाः पृष्ठपूर्वयोः ॥१४॥
पूषा यशस्विनी चैव पिङ्गलापृष्ठपूर्वयोः ।
कुहाश्व हस्तिजिह्वाया मध्ये विश्वोदरा स्थिता ॥१५॥
यशस्विन्याः कुहार्मध्ये वरुणा सुप्रतिष्ठिता ।
पूषायाश्व सरस्वत्या मध्ये प्रोक्ता यशस्विनी ॥१६॥
गान्धारायाः सरस्वत्या मध्ये प्रोक्ता च शङ्खिनी ।
अलम्बुसा स्थिता पायुपर्यन्तं कन्दमध्यगा ॥१७॥

पूर्वभागे सुषुम्नाया राकायाः संस्थिताः कुहूः ।
अधश्वोर्ध्वं स्थिता नाडी याम्यनासान्तमिष्यते ॥१८॥

इडा तु सव्यनासान्तं संस्थिता मुनिपुङ्गव ।
 यशस्विनी च वामस्य पादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ॥१९॥
 पूषा वामाक्षिपर्यन्ता पिङ्गलायास्तु पृष्ठतः ।
 पयस्विनी च याम्यस्य कर्णान्तं प्रोच्यते बुधैः ॥२०॥
 सरस्वती तथा ऊर्ध्वं गता जिह्वा तथा मुने ।
 हस्तिजिह्वा तथा सव्यपादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ॥२१॥
 शङ्खिनी नाम या नाडी सव्यकर्णान्तमिष्यते ।
 गान्धारा सव्यनेत्रान्ता प्रोक्ता वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥२२॥
 विष्वोदराभिधा नाडी कन्दमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ॥२३॥

नाडीषु वायुसञ्चरः
 प्राणोऽपानस्तथा व्यानः समानोदान एव च ॥२३॥
 नागः कूर्मश्च कृकरो देवदत्तो धनंजयः ।
 एते नाडीषु सर्वासु चरन्ति दश वायवः ॥२४॥
 तेषु प्राणादयः पञ्च सुख्याः पञ्चसु सुव्रत ।
 प्राणसंज्ञस्तथा ऽपानः पूज्यः प्राणस्तयोर्मुने ॥२५॥
 आस्यनासिकयोर्मध्ये नाभिमध्ये तथा हृदि ।
 प्राणसंज्ञोऽनिलो नित्यं वर्तते मुनिसत्तम ॥२६॥
 अपानो वर्तते नित्यं गुदमध्योरुजानुषु ।
 उदरे सकले कठ्यां नाभौ जड्घे च सुव्रत ॥२७॥
 व्यानः श्रोत्राक्षिमध्ये च कुकुदभ्यां गुल्फयोरपि ।
 प्राणस्थाने गले चैव वर्तते मुनिपुङ्गव ॥२८॥
 उदानसंज्ञो विज्ञेयः पादयोर्हस्तयोरपि ।
 समानः सर्वदेहेषु व्याप्य तिष्ठत्यसंशयः ॥२९॥
 नागादिवायवः पञ्च त्वगस्थ्यादिषु संस्थिताः ॥३०॥

वायुव्यापाराः
 निःश्वासोच्छवासकासाश्च प्राणक्रम हि सांकृते ॥३०॥
 अपानाख्यस्य वायोस्तु विष्मूत्रादिविसर्जनम् ।
 समानः सर्वसामीप्यं करोति मुनिपुङ्गव ॥३१॥
 उदान ऊर्ध्वगमनं करोत्येव न संशयः ।
 व्यानो विवादकृत् प्रोक्तो मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ॥३२॥
 उद्गारादिगुणः प्रोक्तो नागाख्यस्य महामुने ।

धनंजयस्य शोभादि कर्म प्रोक्तं हि सांकृते ॥३३॥
निमीलनादि कूर्मस्य क्षुधा तु कृकरस्य च ।
देवदत्तस्य विप्रेन्द्र तन्द्रीकर्म प्रकीर्तितम् ॥३४॥

नाडीदेवताः

सुषुम्नायाः शिवो देव इडाया देवताहरिः ।
पिङ्गलाया विरिज्चः स्यात् सरस्वत्या विराण्मुने ॥३५॥
पूषा उधिदेवता प्रोक्तो वरुणा वायुदेवता ।
हस्तिजिह्वाभिधायास्तु वरुणो देवता भवेत् ॥३६॥
यशस्विन्या मुनिश्रेष्ठ भगवान् भास्करस्तथा ।
अलम्बुसाया अबात्मा वरुणः परिकीर्तिः ॥३७॥
कुहोः क्षुद्रेवता प्रोक्ता गान्धारी चन्द्रदेवता ।
शङ्खिन्याश्वन्द्रमास्तद्वत् पयस्विन्याः प्रजापतिः ॥३८॥
विश्वोदराभिधायास्तु भगवान् पावकः पतिः ॥३९॥

नाडीषु चन्द्रसुर्यसज्चारः

इडायां चन्द्रमा नित्यं चरत्येव महामुने ॥३९॥
पिङ्गलायां रविस्तद्वन्मुने वेदविदां वर ॥४०॥

नाडीषु संवत्सरात्मकप्राणसूर्यसज्चारः

पिङ्गलाया इडायां तु वायोः संक्रमणं तु यत् ॥४०॥
तदुत्तरायणं प्रोक्तं मुने वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।
इडायाः पिङ्गलायां तु प्राणसंक्रमणं मुने ॥४१॥
दक्षिणायनमित्युक्तं पिङ्गलायामिति श्रुतिः ।
इडापिङ्गलयोः संधि यदा प्राणः समागतः ॥४२॥
अमावास्या तदा प्रोक्ता देहे देहभृतां वर ॥४३॥

मूलाधारं यदा प्राणः प्रविष्टः पण्डितोत्तम ॥४३॥
तदाद्यं विषुवं प्रोक्तं तापसैस्तापसोत्तम ।
प्राणासंज्ञो मुनिश्रेष्ठ मूर्धानं प्राविशेद्यदा ॥४४॥
तदन्त्यं विषुवं प्रोक्तं तापसैस्तत्त्वचिन्तकैः ।
निःश्वासोच्छ्वासनं सर्व मासानां संक्रमो भवेत् ॥४५॥
इडया कुण्डलीस्थानं यदा प्राणः समागतः ।
सोमग्रहणमित्युक्तं तदा तत्त्वविदां वर ॥४६॥

यदा पिङ्गलया प्राणः कुण्डलीस्थानमागतः ।
तदातदा भवेत् सूर्यग्रहणं मुनिपुण्णव ॥४७॥

अन्तस्तीर्थप्राशस्त्यम्
श्रीपर्वतं शिरःस्थाने केदारं तु ललाटके ।
वाराणसीं महाप्राज्ञ भ्रुवोघ्राणस्य मध्यमे ॥४८॥
कुरुक्षेत्रं कुचस्थाने प्रयागं हृत्सरोलुहे ।
चिदम्बरं तु हृन्मध्ये आधारे कमलालयम् ॥४९॥
आत्मतीर्थसमुत्सृज्य बहिस्तीर्थानि यो व्रजेत् ।
करस्थं स महारत्नं त्यक्त्वा काचं विमार्गते ॥५०॥
भावतीर्थं परं तीर्थं प्रमाणं सर्वकर्मसु ।
अन्यथा इलिङ्गयते कान्ता अन्यथा इलिङ्गयते सुता ॥५१॥
तीर्थानि तोयपूर्णानि देवान् काषादिनिर्मितान् ।
योगिनो न प्रपद्यन्ते स्वात्मप्रत्ययकारणात् ॥५२॥
बहिस्तीर्थात् परं तीर्थमन्तस्तीर्थं महामुने ।
आत्मतीर्थं महातीर्थमन्यतीर्थं निरर्थकम् ॥५३॥
चित्तमन्तर्गतं दुष्टं तीर्थस्नानैर्न शुद्ध्यति ।
शतशो इपि जलैर्धौतं सुराभाण्डमिवाशुचि ॥५४॥
विशुवायनकालेषु ग्रहणे चान्तरे सदा ।
वाराणस्यादिके स्थाने स्नात्वा शुद्ध भवेन्नरः ॥५५॥
ज्ञानयोगपराणां तु पादप्रक्षालितं जलम् ।
भवशुद्ध्यर्थं मज्जानां तत्तीर्थं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥५६॥

आत्मनि शिवदृष्टिः
तीर्थं दाने जपे यज्ञे काषे पाषाणके सदा ।
शिवं पश्यति मूढात्मा शिवे देहे प्रतिष्ठिते ॥५७॥
अन्तःस्थं मां परित्यज्य बहिष्टं यस्तु सेवते ।
हस्तस्थं पिण्डमुत्सृज्य लिहेत् कूर्परमात्मनः ॥५८॥
शिवमात्मनि पश्यन्ति प्रतिमासु न योगिनः ।
अज्ञानां भावनार्थाय प्रतिमाः परिकल्पिताः ॥५९॥

ब्रह्मदर्शनेन ब्रह्मभावः
अपूर्वमपरं ब्रह्म स्वात्मानं सत्यमद्वयम् ।

प्रज्ञानघनमानन्दं यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥६०॥
 नाडीपुञ्जं सदासारं नरभावं महामुने ।
 समुत्सृज्यात्मनात्मानमहमित्यवधारय ॥६१॥
 अशरीरं शरीरेषु महान्तं विभुमीश्वरम् ।
 आनन्दमक्षरं साक्षान्मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥६२॥
 विभेदजनके ज्ञाने नष्टे ज्ञानबलान्मुने ।
 आत्मनो ब्रह्मणो भेदमसन्तं किं करिष्यति ॥६३॥

पञ्चमः खण्डः:

नाडीशोधनम्
 सम्यक्कथय मे ब्रह्मन् नाडीशुद्धिं समासतः ।
 यया शुद्ध्या सदा ध्यायन् जीवन्मुक्तो भवाम्यहम् ॥१॥
 साम्कृते शृणु वक्ष्यामि नाडीशुद्धिं समासतः ।
 विध्युक्तकर्मसंयुक्तः कामसंकल्पवर्जितः ॥२॥
 यमाद्यष्टाङ्गसंयुक्तः शान्तः सत्यपरायणः ।
 स्वात्मन्यवस्थितः सम्यक् ज्ञानिभिश्च सुशिक्षितः ॥३॥
 पर्वताग्रे नदीतीरे बिल्वमूले वने ऽथवा ।
 मनोरमे शुचौ देशे मठं कृत्वा समाहितः ॥४॥

आरभ्य चासनं पश्चात् प्राङ्गुखोदङ्गुखोऽपि वा ।
 समग्रीवशिरःकायः संवृतास्यः सुनिश्चलः ॥५॥
 नासाग्रे शशभृद्धिम्बे बिन्दुमध्ये तुरीयकम् ।
 सवन्तममृतं पश्येन्नेत्राभ्यां सुसमाहितः ॥६॥
 इडया प्राणमाकृष्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
 ततोऽग्निं देहमध्यस्थं ध्यायन् ज्वालावलीयुतम् ॥७॥
 बिन्दुनादसमायुक्तमग्निबीजं विचिन्तयेत् ।
 पश्चाद्विरेचयेत् सम्यक् प्राणं पिङ्गलया बुधः ॥८॥
 पुनः पिङ्गलया ऽपूर्य वहिबीजमनुस्मरेत् ।
 पुनर्विरेचयेद्वीमानिडयैव शनैः शनैः ॥९॥
 त्रिचतुर्वासिरं वा ऽथ त्रिचतुर्वारमेव च ।
 षट्कृत्वो विचरेन्नित्यं रहस्येवं त्रिसंधिषु ॥१०॥

नाडीशुद्धिचिह्नानि

नाडीशुद्धिमवाप्रोति पृथक्विहोपलक्षितः ।
 शरिरलघुता दीप्तिर्वहेजाठरवर्तिनः ॥११॥
 नादाभिव्यक्तिरित्येतच्चिह्नं तत्सिद्धिसूचकम् ।
 यावदेतानि सम्पश्येत्तावदेवं समाचरेत् ॥१२॥
 स्वात्मशुद्धिः
 अथवैतत् परित्यज्य स्वात्मशुद्धिं समाचरेत् ।
 आत्मा शुद्धिः सदा नित्यः सुखरूपः स्वयंप्रभः ॥१३॥
 अज्ञानमलपड्कं यः क्षालयेज्ज्ञानतोयतः ।
 स एव सर्वदा शुद्धो नान्यः कर्मरतो हि सः ॥१४॥

षष्ठः खण्डः

प्राणायामलक्षणम्
 प्राणायामक्रमं वक्ष्ये सांकृते शृणु सादरम् ।
 प्राणायाम इति प्रोक्तो रेचपूरककुम्भकैः ॥१॥
 वर्णत्रयात्मकाः प्रोक्ता रेचपूरककुम्भकाः ।
 स एष प्रणवः प्रोक्तः प्राणायामश्च तन्मयः ॥२॥

इडया वायुमाकृष्टं पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
 शनैः षोडशभिर्मत्रैरकारं तत्र संस्मरेत् ॥३॥
 पूरितं धारयेत् पश्चाच्चतुःषष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ।
 उकारमूर्तिमत्रापि संस्मरन् प्रणवं जपेत् ॥४॥
 यावद्वा शक्यते तावद्वारयेज्जपतत्परः ।
 पूरितं रेचयेत् पश्चान्मकारेणानिलं बुधः ॥५॥
 शनैः पिङ्गलया तत्र द्वात्रिंशन्मात्रया पुनः ।
 प्राणायामो भवेदेषः ततश्चैवं समभ्यसेत् ॥६॥
 पुनः पिङ्गलया पूर्य मात्रैः षोडशभिस्तथा ।
 अकारमूर्तिमत्रापि स्मरेदेकाग्रमानसः ॥७॥
 धारयेत् पूरितं विद्वाण प्रणवं संजपन् वशी ।
 उकारमूर्तिं स ध्यायन् चतुःषष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ॥८॥
 मकारं तु स्मरन् पश्चाद्रेचयेदिडयानिलम् ।
 एवमेव पुनः कुर्यादिडया पूर्य बुद्धिमान् ॥९॥

एवं समभ्यसेन्नित्यं प्राणायामं मुनीश्वर ।

एवमभ्यासतो नित्यं षण्मासाद् ज्ञानवान् भवेत् ॥१०॥
 वत्सराद्ब्रह्मविद्वान् स्यात् तस्मान्नित्यं समभ्यसेत् ।
 योगाभ्यासरतो नित्यं स्वधर्मनिरतश्च यः ॥११॥
 प्राणसंयमनेनैव ज्ञानान्मुक्तो भविष्यति ॥१२॥

पूरकादिलक्षणम्
 बाह्यादापूरणं वायोरुदरे पूरको हि सः ॥१२॥
 संपूर्णकुम्भवद्वायोर्धरणं कुम्भको भवेत् ।
 बहिविरेचनं वायोरुदराद्रेचकः स्मृतः ॥१३॥

प्राणायामसिद्धयः
 प्रस्वेदजनको यस्तु प्राणायामेषु सोऽधमः ।
 कम्पनं मध्यमं विद्यादुत्थानं चोत्तमं विदुः ॥१४॥
 पूर्वपूर्वं प्रकुर्वित यावदुत्थानसंभवः ।
 संभवत्युक्तमे प्राज्ञः प्राणायामे सुखी भवेत् ॥१५॥
 प्राणायामेन चित्तं तु शुद्धिं भवति सुव्रत ।
 चित्ते शुद्धे शुचिः साक्षात् प्रत्यग्ज्योतिर्व्यस्थितः ॥१६॥
 प्राणाश्चित्तेन संयुक्तः परमात्मनि तिष्ठति ।
 प्राणायामपरस्यास्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ॥१७॥
 देहश्चोत्तिष्ठते तेन किंचिज्ज्ञानाद्विमुक्तता ।
 रेचकं पूरकं मुक्त्वा कुम्भकं नित्यमभ्यसेत् ॥१८॥
 सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तः सम्यग्ज्ञानमवाप्नुयात् ।
 मनोजवत्वमाप्नोति पलितादि च नश्यति ॥१९॥
 प्राणायामैकनिष्ठस्य न किंचिदपि दुर्लभम् ।
 तस्मात् सर्वप्रयत्नेन प्राणायामान् समभ्यसेत् ॥२०॥

रोगनिवर्तकप्राणायामभेदाः
 विनियोगान् प्रवक्ष्यामि प्राणायामस्य सुव्रत ।
 संध्ययोर्ब्रह्मकाले ऽपि मध्याह्ने वाथवा सदा ॥२१॥
 बाह्यं प्राणं समाकृष्टं पूरयित्वोदरेण च ।
 नासाग्रे नाभिमध्ये च पादाङ्गुष्ठे च धारणात् ॥२२॥
 सर्वरोगनिर्मुक्तो जीवेद्वर्षशतं नरः ।
 नासाग्रधारणाद्वापि जितो भवति सुव्रत ॥२३॥

सर्वरोगनिवृत्तिः स्यान्नाभिमध्ये तु धारणात् ।
 शरीरलघुता विप्र पादाङ्गुष्ठनिरोधनात् ॥२४॥
 जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्य यः पिबेत् सततं नरः ।
 श्रमदाहविनिर्मुक्तो योगी नीरोगतामियात् ॥२५॥
 जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्य जिह्वामूले निरोदहयेत् ।
 पिबेदमृतमव्यग्रं सकलं सुखमाप्नुयात् ॥२६॥
 इडया वायुमाकृष्य भूवोर्मध्ये निरोधयेत् ।
 यः पिबेदमृतं शुद्धं व्याधिभिर्मुच्यते हि सः ॥२७॥
 इडया वेदतत्त्वज्ञ तथा पिङ्गलयैव च ।
 नाभौ निरोधयेत्तेन व्याधिभिर्मुच्यते नरः ॥२८॥
 मासमात्रं त्रिसन्ध्यायां जिह्वयारोप्य मरुतम् ।
 अमृतं च पिबेन्नाभौ मन्दमन्दं निरोधयेत् ॥२९॥
 वातजाः पित्तजा दोषा नश्यन्त्येव न संशयः ।
 नासाभ्यां वायुमाकृष्य नेत्रद्वन्द्वे निरोधयेत् ॥३०॥
 नेत्ररोगा विनश्यन्ति तथा श्रोत्रनिरधनात् ।
 तथा वायुं समारोप्य धारयेच्छिरस्थितम् ॥३१॥
 शिरोरोगा विनश्यन्ति सत्यमुक्तं हि सांकृते ॥३२॥

षष्ठ्यमुखीमुद्राभ्यासादिना वायुजयः
 स्वसतिकासनमास्थाय समाहितमनास्तथा ॥३२॥
 अपानमूर्ध्वमुत्थाप्य प्रणवेन शनैः शनैः ।
 हस्ताभ्यां धारयेत्सम्यक् कर्णादिकरणानि च ॥३३॥
 अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां मुने श्रोत्रे तर्जनीभ्यां तु चक्षुसि ।
 नासापुटावथान्याभ्यां प्रच्छाद्या कारणानि वै ॥३४॥
 आनन्दाविर्भवो यावत् तावन्मूर्धनि धारयेत् ।
 प्राणः प्रयत्यनेनैव ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं महामुने ॥३५॥
 ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं गते वायौ नादश्वोत्पद्यते ऽनघ ।
 शङ्खध्वनिनिभश्वादौ मध्ये मेघध्वनिर्यथा ॥३६॥
 शिरोमध्यगते वायौ गिरिप्रसवणं यथा ।
 पश्चात् प्रीतो महाप्रज्ञ साक्षादात्मन्मुखो भवेत् ॥३७॥
 पुनस्तज्ज्ञाननिष्पत्तिर्योगात् संसारनिहृतिः ।
 दक्षिणोत्तरगुलफेन सेवनं पीड्येत् स्थिरम् ॥३८॥
 सव्येतरेण गुलफेन पीड्येट्बुद्धिमान् नरः ।

जान्वोरधः स्थितां सन्धिं स्मृत्वा देवं त्रियम्बकम् ॥३९॥
 विनायकं च संस्मृत्य तथा वागीश्वरीं पुनः ।
 लिङ्गनालात् समाकृष्ण वायुमप्यग्रतो मुने ॥४०॥
 प्रणवेन नियुक्तेन बिन्दुयुक्तेन बुद्धिमान् ।
 मूलाधारस्य विप्रेन्द्र मध्ये तं तु निरोधयेत् ॥४१॥
 निरुध्य वायुना दीप्तो वहिरुहति कुण्डलीम् ।
 पुनः सुषुम्नया वायुर्वह्निना सह गच्छति ॥४२॥
 एवमभ्यसतसतस्य जितो वायुर्भवेद्दृशम् ॥४३॥

वायुजयचिह्नानि
 प्रस्वेदः प्रथमः पश्चात् कम्पनं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥४३॥
 उत्थानं च शरीरस्य चिह्नमेतज्जिते ॥निले ॥४४॥

वायुजयेन रोगपापविनाशैराग्यपूर्विका ज्ञानोत्पत्तिः
 एवमभ्यसतस्तस्य मूलरोगो विनश्यति ॥४४॥
 भगन्धरं च नष्टं स्यात् सर्वरोगाश्च सांकृते ।
 पातकानि विनश्यन्ति क्षुद्राणि च महान्ति च ॥४५॥
 नष्टे पापे विशुद्धं स्याज्यितदर्पणमद्दुतम् ।
 पुनर्ब्रह्मादिभोगेभ्यो वैरग्यं जायते हृदि ॥४६॥
 विरक्तस्य तु संसाराज्ज्ञानं कैवल्यसाधनम् ।
 तेन पाशापहानिः स्यात् ज्ञात्वा देवं सदाशिवम् ॥४७॥
 ज्ञानामृतरसो येन सकृदास्वादितो भवेत् ।
 स सर्वकार्यमुत्सृज्य तत्रैव परिधावति ॥४८॥
 ज्ञानस्वरूपमेवाहुर्जगदेतद्वि चक्षणाः ।
 अर्थस्वरूपमज्ञानात् पश्यन्त्यन्ये कुद्धष्टयः ॥४९॥
 आत्मस्वरूपविज्ञानादज्ञानस्य परिक्षयः ।
 क्षीणे ॥ज्ञाने महाप्राज्ञ रागादीनां परिक्षयः ॥५०॥
 रागाद्यसंभवे प्राज्ञ पुण्यपापवि मर्शनम् ।
 योर्नाशे शरीरेण न पुनः संप्रयुज्यते ॥५१॥

सप्तमः खण्डः

प्रत्याहारलक्षनं तद्देदाश्च
 अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि प्रत्याहारं महामुने ।

इन्द्रियाणां विचरतां विषयेषु स्वभावतः ॥१॥
बलादाहरणं तेषां प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।
यत्पश्यति तु तत्सर्वं ब्रह्म पश्यन्समाहितः ॥२॥
प्रत्याहारो भवेदेष ब्रह्मविद्धिः पुरोदितः ।
यद्यच्छुद्धमशुद्धं वा करोत्यामरणान्तिकम् ॥३॥
तत्सर्वं ब्रह्मणे कुर्यात् प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ॥४॥

अथवा वित्यकर्माणि ब्रह्माराधनबुद्धितः ॥५॥
काम्यानि च तथा कुर्यात् प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।
अथवा वायुमाकृष्य स्थानात् स्थानं निरोधयेत् ॥६॥
दन्तमूलात्तथा कण्ठादुरसि मारुतम् ।
उरोदेशात् समाकृष्य नाभिदेशो निरोधयेत् ॥७॥
नाभिदेशात् समाकृष्य कुण्डल्यां तु निरोधयेत् ।
कुण्डलीदेशतो विद्वान् मूलाधारे निरोधयेत् ॥८॥
अथापानात् कटिद्वच्छे तथोरौ च सुमध्यमे ।
तस्माज्जानुद्घये जड्घे पादाङ्गुष्ठे निरोधयेत् ॥९॥

प्रत्याहारोऽयमुक्तस्तु प्रत्याहारपरैः पुरा
प्रत्याहारफलम्
एवमभ्यासयुक्तस्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ॥१०॥
सर्वपापानि नश्यन्ति भवरोगश्च सुव्रत ॥११॥

वायुधारणात्मकप्रत्याहारः
नासाभ्याम् वायुमाकृष्य निश्चलः स्वस्तिकासनः ॥१२॥
पूरयेदनिलं विद्वानापादतलमस्तकम् ।
पश्चात पादद्घये तद्घत् मूलाधारे तथैव च ॥१३॥
नाभिकन्दे च हृद्गच्छे कण्ठमूले च तालुके ।
भूरोर्मध्ये ललाटे च तथा मूर्धनि धारयेत् ॥१४॥

वेदान्तसंमतप्रत्याहारः
देहे त्स्वात्मभुतिं विद्वान् समाकृष्य समाहितः ।
आत्मनात्मनि निर्द्वच्छे निर्विकल्पे निरोधयेत् ॥१५॥
प्रत्याहारः समाख्यातः साक्षाद्वेदान्तवेदिभिः ।
एवमभ्यसतस्तस्य न किंचिदपि दुर्लभम् ॥१६॥

अष्टमः खण्डः

पञ्चभूतेषु धारणा
अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि धारणाः पञ्च सुव्रत ।
देहमध्यगते व्योम्नि बाह्याकाशं तु धारयेत् ॥१॥
प्राणे बाह्यानिलं तद्वत् ज्वलने चाग्निमौदरे ।
तोयं तोयम्शके भूमिं भूमिभागे महामुने ॥२॥
हयरावलकाराख्यं मन्त्रमुज्चारयेत् क्रमात् ।
धारणैषा परा प्रोक्ता सर्वपापविशोधिनी ॥३॥
जान्वन्तं पृथिवी ह्यंशो हयपां पात्वन्तमुच्यते ।
हृदयांशस्तथागन्यंशो भूमध्यान्तोऽनिलांशकः ॥४॥
आकाशाम्शस्तथा प्राज्ञ मुर्धोशः परिकीर्तिः ।
ब्रह्माणं पृथिवीभागे विष्णुं तोयंशके तथा ॥५॥
आग्न्यंशो च महेशानमीश्वरं चानिलांशके ।
आकाशांशो महाप्राज्ञ धारयेत्तु सदाशिवम् ॥६॥

आत्मनि धारणा

अथ वा तव वक्षामि धारणां मुनिपुङ्गव ।
पुरुषे सर्वशास्तारं बोधानन्दमयं शिवम् ॥७॥
धारयेद्बुद्धिमान् नित्यं सर्वपापविशुद्धये ।
ब्रह्मादिकर्यरूपाणि स्वेस्वे संहृत्य कारणे ॥८॥
र्वकारणमव्यक्तमनिरूप्यमचेतनम् ।
साक्षादात्मनि संपूर्णे धारयेत् प्रणवे मनः ।
इन्द्रियाणि समहृत्य मनसात्मनि योजयेत् ॥९॥

नवमः खण्डः

सविशेषब्रह्मध्यानम्
अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि ध्यानं संसारनाशनम् ।
ऋतं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म सर्वसंसारभेषजम् ॥१॥
ऊर्ध्वरितं विरूपाक्षं विश्वरूपं महेश्वरम् ।
सोऽहमित्यादरेणैव ध्यायेद्योगीश्वरेश्वरम् ॥२॥

निर्विशेषब्रह्मध्यानम्

अथ वा सत्रमीशानं ज्ञानमानन्दमद्युयम् ।
 अत्यर्थम् अमलं नित्यमादिमध्यान्तवर्जितम् ॥३॥
 तथास्थूलमनाकाशमसंस्पृश्यमचाक्षुषम् ।
 न रसं न च गन्धाख्यमप्रमेयमनुपमम् ॥४॥
 आत्मानं सञ्चिदानन्दमनन्तं ब्रह्म सुव्रत ।
 अहमस्मीत्यभिध्यायेदेहातीतं विमुक्तये ॥५॥

ध्यानफलम्
 एवमभ्यासयुक्तस्य पुरुषस्य महात्मनः ।
 क्रमादेदान्तविज्ञानं विजायेत न संशयः ॥६॥

दशमः खण्डः

समाधस्वरूपम्
 अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि समाधिं भवनाशनम् ।
 समाधिः संविदुत्पत्तिः परजीवैकतां प्रति ॥१॥
 नित्यः सर्वगतो ह्यात्मा कूटस्थो दोषवर्जितः ।
 एकः सन् भिद्यते भ्रान्त्या मायया न स्वरूपतः ॥२॥
 तस्मादद्वैतमेवास्ति न प्रपञ्चे न संसृतिः ।
 यथा ऽकाशो घटाकाशो मठाकाश इतीरितः ॥३॥
 तथा भ्रान्तैर्द्विधा प्रोतो ह्यात्मा जीवेश्वरात्मना ।
 नाहं देहो न च प्राणो नेन्द्रियाणि मनो न हि ॥४॥
 सदा साक्षिस्वरूपत्वाच्छिव एवास्मि केवलः ।
 इति धीर्या मुनिश्रेष्ठ सा समाधिरिहोच्यते ॥५॥

ब्रह्मात्रावशेषः
 सो ऽहं ब्रह्म न संसारी न मत्तो ऽन्यः कदाचन ।
 यथा फेनतरङ्गादि समुद्रादुत्थितं पुनः ॥६॥
 समुद्रे लीयते तद्वत् जगन्मय्यनुलीयते ।
 तस्मान्मनः पृथङ् नास्ति जगन्माया च नास्ति हि ॥७॥
 यस्यैवं परमात्मायं प्रत्यग्भूतः प्रकाशितः ।
 स तु याति च पुंभावं स्वयं साक्षात् परामृतम् ॥८॥
 यदा मनसि चैतन्यं भाति सर्वत्रगं सदा ।
 योगिनो ऽव्यवधानेन तदा सम्पद्यते स्वयम् ॥९॥

यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि स्वात्मन्येव हि पश्यति ।
सर्वभूतेषु चात्मानं ब्रह्म संपद्यते तदा ॥१०॥
यदा सर्वाणि भूतानि समाधिस्थो न पश्यति ।
एकीभूतः परेणासौ तदा भवति केवलः ॥११॥
यदा पश्यति चात्मानं केवलं परमार्थतः ।
मायामात्रं जगत् कृत्स्नं तदा भवति निर्वृतिः ॥१२॥

उपसंहारः

एवमुक्त्वा स भगवान् दत्तात्रेयो महामुनिः ।
सांकृतिः स्वस्वरूपेण सुखमास्थ तिनिर्भयः ॥१३॥

2.Pronunciation Guide

an <u>ut</u>	
āf <u>ather</u>	
i <u>bit</u>	
īknee	
u <u>hook</u>	
ūsue	
r <u>hurt</u>	
e <u>net</u>	
a <u>itime</u>	
o <u>got</u>	
au <u>house</u>	
m <u>hum</u>	
h <u>h</u> + preceding vowel	
k <u>paprika</u>	
kh <u>ink</u> <u>horn</u>	
gago	
g big <u>hut</u>	
ñ <u>anger</u>	
c <u>chat</u>	
chm <u>uch</u> <u>harm</u>	
j jog	
jh raj <u>house</u>	
ñ <u>engine</u>	
t borscht	
thborscht <u>home</u>	
d fresh <u>dill</u>	
dh <u>flushed</u> <u>heart</u>	
ñ <u>rainy</u>	
t <u>tarp</u>	
thscout <u>hall</u>	
dmodern	
dh <u>mud</u> <u>hut</u>	
n <u>banal</u>	
p <u>papa</u>	
ph <u>top</u> <u>half</u>	

bmaybe

bh mobhall

m chroma

yyoung

rmerit

lalas

vlaya

sshin

ssunshine

hhut

3. Continuous Translation

Invocation

Let these verses bring fulfilment. Thus [there will be] peace.

First Section

Aṣṭāṅga yoga is the sādhana of the jivanmukta.

1.

The great yogin, Dattātreya, [is] the blessed one [who] promotes the welfare of all living beings. The four-armed great Viṣṇu initiated [him] into the brilliance of yoga.

2.

His devoted disciple, Sāmkṛti by name, who is the best of ascetics, asked his guru, in solitude, respectfully, his hands folded together in humility.

3.

O Lord, describe to me in detail the eight-limbed yoga. With this knowledge, I shall become a *jivanmukta*.

4, 5.

Listen, Samkriti, I will explain the system of the eight-limbed yoga. (Here follows) the account of the eight limbs: *Yama* and *niyama* and then *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma*, then *pratyāhāra*, then complete *dharana*, and then *dhyanam*, and *samadhi* is the eighth, oh Sage.

6.

Knowledge of the ten yamas; *ahimsā*, *satyam*, *asteyam*, *brahmaccaryam*, *daya*, *arjavam*, *kṣamā*, *dhṛti*, *mitāhāra*, *śauca* are the ten yamas.

7, 8.

Non-violence: Except in the manner declared in the Vedas, oh austere one, [there should] truly [be] no violence at all in body, speech and mind, or

any other way. The *ātma* [is] all-pervading, indivisible [and] imperceptible. O Sage, this understanding is stated by those who know *vedānta*, [which is] the best authority on *ahimsā*.

9, 10.

Truth: O great Sage, that which is seen, heard and smelt through the sense organs of the eyes etc is said to be *satyam*, as *Brahman* is no different from that. The highest truth is that *Brahman* is everywhere and not elsewhere. This understanding leads to the highest truth as declared by those who have absorbed the wisdom of *Vedānta*.

11, 12.

Honesty: [When] the mind is free of thoughts of wealth, belonging to others, [such as] sacrificial grass, gold and pearls, the wise ones know this to be *asteyam*. O Great Sage, those who know the *ātma*, say that by being in the *ātma* [and] avoiding action, which arises from the ego, or lower self, this is said to be *asteyam*.

13, 14a.

Abstinence: Avoiding women in body, speech [and] mind, [and] his own wife during her periods, then this is called *brahmacharya*. O Supreme Ascetic, the mind attains *brahmacharya*, when absorbed in the Absolute.

14b, 15a.

Kindness towards all creatures in body, thought and speech, [as if] towards oneself, this is indeed called compassion by the one who knows *vedānta*.

15b, 16a.

Straight-forwardness: O Sage, continuously [viewing] the one form whatsoever in oneself, (in one's) son, friend, wife and enemy, is proclaimed by me as *arjavam*.

16b, 17a.

Patience: [When] one is tormented in body, thought and speech by enemies, and is free from agitation in the mind, that [is] *kṣamā*, o Eminent Sage.

17b, 18.

Equanimity: It is said that total liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth comes indeed through the vedas, and not otherwise. Equanimity is said to be the outcome of this understanding, by those versed in the vedas. ‘I am *ātman* and nothing else’, says he, whose faith [is] steadfast.

19.

Moderate diet: A balanced, moderate diet has little fried food and one fourth [of the stomach] relatively empty. [This is] thus a suitable yogic diet.

20 to 23a.

Cleanliness: O Great Sage, removing dirt from one’s body and cleaning it with water is external cleanliness. Knowing the mind through reflection: ‘I am pure’, this wisdom is *śaucam* of the very wise. The body is completely impure, and the embodied Self [is] completely pure. To one who knows the difference, which *śaucam* is prescribed? O Virtuous One, having abandoned purification through meditation, the man who delights in the external [is] a fool, who picks up a lump of earth, ignoring the gold.

23b to 25.

The way to know the supreme consciousness: Satisfied with the nectar of meditation and having fulfilled his duties, the yogin has nothing more to be done. Longing for something to do, he is not a knower of *Brahma*. For one who knows the supreme spirit, there is nothing more to be done in the three worlds. Therefore, o Sage, with every effort, with *ahimsā* and other practices, know *Brahma* as the imperishable self through meditation and higher knowledge.

Second Section

Knowledge of The Ten Niyamas, inner disciplines

1, 2a.

These are called the *niyamas*. Listen, I will describe these in order: (i) self-discipline, (ii) contentment, (iii) devotion, (iv) giving freely, (v) worship of a supreme reality, (vi) listening to the scriptures, (vii) remorse, and also (viii) desire for humility, (ix) repetition of *mantra*, and (x) commitment.

2b to 4a.

Austerity: Emaciating the body in the manner taught in the vedas, such as the penances performed, according to the moon's course, is called *tapas*, austerity, by the wise. What is *mokṣa*, liberation? How [and] from where [does it come]? The learned ones declare [that] understanding the sense of *tapas* is obtained by reflecting on the cycle of birth and death.

4b to 6a.

Contentment: When the joy [which] arises in men from obtaining any desire [is] constant, this is known as *santoṣa* by the wise [who are] solely intent on true insight. Becoming indifferent to obtaining one's desire, and free from attachment everywhere, until one has realised brahma, is known as the supreme *santoṣa*.

6b.

Faith in the higher reality: Faith in the *śrutis* and *smṛtis* is called *āstikyam*.

7.

Giving freely: When money acquired ethically is given away with reverence to another person [who is] distressed or versed in the vedas, this is declared *dānam* by me.

8.

Worship of *Īśvara*: When the heart is free from desire etc, the speech is not guilty of lying [and the] action is devoid of violence etc, this is *īśvara pūja*, worship of *Īśvara*.

9.

Hearing the knowledge of truth: Thus, knowing that the ultimate permanence of truth, infinite wisdom and supreme bliss is to be perceived inwardly is *vedānta śravaṇam*.

10.

Remorse: When action is blameworthy, according to the ways of the worlds of the gods, then there is remorse, and this [remorse] is called *hriḥ*.

11.

Faith in the vedic teaching: That faith in all those teachings versed in the Vedas is *mati*. And if [another] system is advised by the guru, the connection [with him should be] terminated.

12 to 16.

Japa: The practice of *mantra* in the correct way of the vedas is known as *japa*. According to the *Kalpa Sūtras*, *Vedas*, *Dharma Śāstras*, *Purāṇas* and *Itihāsas*, this method is called japa by me. Then it is said there are two kinds of japa, vocal [and] mental. Vocal is divided into two kinds, whispered and aloud. Mental uses two kinds, differentiating between reflection [and] deep meditation. Whispered japa is said to be a thousand times better than japa [said] aloud. Likewise mental [japa] is said to be a thousand times better than whispered. Whereas it is said *ucchaiḥ japa* (uttered aloud) is rewarding in all [instances], *nīcaiḥ japa* (uttered in a low voice) is heard by the ear, and it has no results.

Third Section

Nine Āsanas

1, 2a.

O Eminent Sage, thus [these nine āsanas are]: *swastikāsana*, the auspicious pose, *gomukhāsana*, the cow-face pose, *padmāsana*, the lotus pose, *vīrāsana*, the hero pose, *simhāsana*, the lion pose, *bhadrāsana*, the gracious pose, *muktāsana*, the liberated pose, and indeed the *mayurāsana*, the peacock pose, and *sukhāsana*, the easy pose, is counted as the ninth.

2b, 3a.

One should always practise the auspicious pose, placing the neck, head [and] body in alignment, trying to put the knees exactly parallel with both feet.

3b, 4a.

One should place the right ankle on the left behind the back, and then the left on the right; this is called the cow face pose.

4b, 5.

O Distinguished Brahman, placing (the soles of) both feet upwards on the thighs, one should hold the ends of the big toes with the hands turned

up. This is the lotus pose, O Wise One, which wards off all disease.

6.

One should put the left foot on the right thigh, the body straight and comfortable. This is called the hero pose.

6i, ii and iii.

One should place the ankles under the testes and beside the perineum, the right one with the left ankle, [and] vice versa, hands well-placed on the knees and spreading one's fingers. With open mouth, one should gaze intently at the tip of the nose. This is the lion pose, honoured always by the yogins.

7, 8a.

One should put the ankles under the testes and beside the perineum, knees out to the sides, holding [them] firmly and still with the hands. This is the gracious pose, which removes poison [and] disease.

8b to 10a.

Pressing the perineum gently with the right ankle, [and the pubis] with the left ankle, this is the pose of liberation. Placing [the right ankle] and the left ankle one above the other, with the penis placed between the ankles, this [is] the pose of liberation, O Sage.

10b to 12a.

O Esteemed Sage, one should put the elbows in front against the sides of the navel, placing both hands on the ground, mind one-pointed, head raised, legs straight, placed in the air. This is the peacock pose, remover of all negativity.

12b to 13a.

By whatever way one becomes comfortable and steady, this is called the easy pose. One who is weak should resort to this.

13b, 14.

Result of mastery of āsana: Whoever is victorious in āsana attains victory over the three worlds. According to this principle, one who is intent [on āsana] should always do *prāṇāyāma*.

Fourth Section

The Subtle Body

1, 2.

The body is of a size consisting of ninety-six *aṅgulas*. In the centre of the body [is] the site of *Agni*, whose light glows like gold from the Jambū river. O Sāmkṛti, there is truly a triangle here in men. It is two *aṅgulas* above the anus and two *aṅgulas* below the penis.

3 to 5a.

O Sāmkṛti, best of sages, in the centre of the human body [is] the location of the root of the *nādīs*, nine *aṅgulas* from *mūlādhāra cakra*. O Esteemed Sage, it is four *aṅgulas* in length, like the shape of a chicken egg, covered with skin etc. O Esteemed Sage, it is said by the wise that the navel [is] inside it.

5b to 8.

Enumeration of the *nādīs*: The *nādī* that is situated in the centre of the kanda is called *suṣumnā*. Around it are seventy two thousand *nādīs*, among which are the fourteen principal ones, o Esteemed Sage. The fourteen principal *nādīs* are called: *suṣumnā*, *piṅgalā*, also *idā*, and *sarasvatī*, *pūṣā* and *varuṇā*, as well as *hastijihvā*, *yaśasvinī*, *alambusā*, *kuhū* and also *viśvodārā*, *payasvinī*, *śaṅkhini* and *gāndhārā*.

9, 10.

First of all, among them, three [are] the main ones; among the three [there is] one main [nadi]. This is called *brahma nādī*, by those who know *vedānta*, o Sage. *Suṣumnā* is at the centre of the back, straight as a *vīṇā* shaft, like a bone going right up to the head.

11 to 13a.

Location and qualities of the *kundalī*: The location of the *kundalī* is two *aṅgulas* below the root of the navel, o Sage. The *kundalī* [has] the form of the eight elements of nature, most venerable Sage. [When] one is constantly consuming water and food and the movement of air, just like [the *kundalī*] always located around the sides of the kanda, blocks the fontanelle mouth, surrounding [it] with her own mouth, o Sage.

13b to 17.

Locations of the nādīs: idā is on the left of suṣumnā; piṅgalā is on the right. Sarasvatī and also kuhū are on both sides of suṣumnā. Gāndhārā is at the back and hastijihvā at the front of idā. Pūṣā is at the back and yaśasvinī at the front of piṅgalā. Viśvadarā is located between kuhū and hastijihvā. Varuṇā is fixed between yaśasvinī and kuhū. Yaśasvinī is said to be between pūṣā and sarasvatī. Śaṅkhinī is said to be between gāndhārā and sarasvatī. Alambusā goes right up to the anus from the kanda.

18 to 23a.

Kuhū is located at the upper part of suṣumnā, the full moon. [This] nādī goes up and down the southern nostril. Now idā is located at the left nostril, o esteemed Sage, and yaśasvinī goes to the toes of the left leg. Pūṣā [goes] right up to the left eye and is behind piṅgalā, and payasvinī is said by the wise [to go] to the left ear. Then sarasvatī goes up to the tongue, o Sage, and hastijihvā goes up to the toes [of] the left leg. The nādī called śaṅkhinī goes up to the left ear; gāndhārā is said by those versed in the Vedas [to go] up to the left eye. The nādī named viśvadarā is situated at the centre of the kanda.

23b to 30a.

The movement of prāṇa in the nādīs: *prāṇa*, *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and also *nāga*, *kūrma*, *kṛkara*, *devadatta* and *dhananjaya* are the ten prāṇas, circulating in all the nādīs. Of these, five prāṇas are the most beneficial, o Virtuous One. Among [these] five prāṇas, called prāṇa and apana, prāṇa is to be worshipped, o Sage. Thus the vital air called prāṇa exists continuously within the face, the nostrils, the navel [and] the heart, o excellent Sage. Apāna is continuously in the anus, stomach, navel, and each hip and thigh up to the knees, o Virtuous One. Vyāna is within the ears, eyes, from the shoulders and also in the ankles, and even in the pranic area in the neck, o esteemed Sage. Udāna is known in the feet [and] also the hands. Samāna is without doubt contained in the whole body. The five (minor) prāṇas, beginning with *nāga* are located in the skin, bones etc.

30b to 34.

Functions of the prāṇas: Sighing, exhalation and coughing are the activity of prāṇa, o Sāṃkṛti. Now, feces and urine etc are evacuated by the vital air called apāna. Samāna acts in this whole region, o esteemed Sage.

For sure udāna performs the upward movement. Vyāna is said by those who know vedānta to cause conflict [between them], o Sage. The one called *nāga* is said [to have] the attributes of belching etc, o great Sage. *Dhanamjaya* is said [to have] the effect [of] lustre, o Sāmkṛti. Now *kūrma* [causes] shutting the eyes etc, and *krkara* [causes] hunger. It is stated that *devadatta* [is] the cause [of] sleep, o distinguished Brahman.

35 to 39a.

The nādī deities: Śiva is the deity of *susumnā*. Hari is the deity of *idā*, Virinca of *piṅgalā* and Virat of *sarasvatī*, o Sage. Adhidevata, the Supreme Deity, is said [to be for] *pūṣā* [and] Varuṇā, the deity of *vāyu*, is the deity of the one named *hastijihvā*. It is declared, o distinguished Sage, that Bhagavān Bhaskara [is the deity] of *yaśasvinī*, and Varuṇā [has] the nature of *alambusā*. The deity of *kuhū* is Hunger; the Moon is called the deity of *gāndhārī*. Likewise, *śaṅkhinī* has the Moon, *payasvinī* Prajapati and the one named *viśvodara* has the lord Bhagavan Pavaka.

39b, 40a.

The movement of the moon and sun in the nādīs: The lunar energy does always flow in *idā*, o Great Sage. Likewise, the solar energy [flows] in *piṅgalā*, o excellent Sage of those who know the Vedas.

40b to 43a.

The yearly flow of the solar (and lunar) energy in the nādīs: Now, when the vital airs move from *piṅgalā* into *idā*, that is called *uttarāyanam*, the northern path, by those who know vedānta, o Sage. However, the prāṇa moving from *idā* into *piṅgalā* is said to be *dakṣināyanam*, the southern path, o Sage, as it is stated in the Vedas about *piṅgalā*. When the prāṇas of *idā* and *piṅgalā* join, then *amavasya* is said [to be] in the body of living creatures, o eminent One.

43b to 47.

When the prāṇa enters mūlādhāra, o wise Pandit, this is called the beginning of the equinox by ascetics, o excellent Ascetic. When this prāṇa enters the crown of the head, o esteemed Sage, this is called the end of the equinox by ascetics who are conscious of the True Reality. Every month there is the coming together of the exhalation and inhalation. When the

prāṇa reaches the site of the kundalini through *idā*, then it is said [to be] the eclipse of the moon by the knowers of the true reality, o excellent One. When the *prāṇa* enters the site of the kundalini through *piṅgalā*, then it is the solar eclipse, o esteemed Sage.

48 to 56.

Praise of the inner *tīrthas*: *Mt. Kailash* [is] within the head, *Kedāra* [is] in the forehead, *Vārāṇasī* [is] between the eyebrows and the nose, o wise One. *Kurukṣetra* [is] within the chest. *Prayāga* moves up in the heart. Now, *Cidambara* [is] in the heart centre. *Kamalālaya* [is] in the base. Whoever goes to external *tīrthas*, abandoning the inner *tīrtha*, seeks a piece of glass, while disregarding the precious jewel lying in his hand. *Bhāvatīrtha* is the highest *tīrtha* [and] proof of all actions. Either the wife or the daughter may be embraced. Yogins, because of understanding the self, do not need water *tīrthas* [or] gods made of wood or other [materials]. The inner *tīrtha* [is] the supreme *tīrtha*, [higher] than the external *tīrtha*, o great Sage; the *tīrtha* of the soul is the greatest *tīrtha*; another *tīrtha* [is] useless. Dirt concealed in the mind cannot be cleansed by baths in *tīrthas*, just as a container for alcohol [is] impure, even though it has been washed a hundred times. Always bathing in *Vārāṇasī* and such places, during all the solstices and other eclipses, a man becomes pure. Yet, having his feet washed for purity of mind by masters of *jñāna yoga*, that is the *tīrtha* of the ignorant, o esteemed Sage.

57 to 59.

Vision of Śiva in oneself. The unconscious self always sees Śiva in *tīrtha*, charitable gifts, *japa*, *yajña*, movement of wind and cloud, stone [idols], whereas Śiva is established in the body. Thus, whoever worships the external, forsaking me, the internal, [is as if] he licks his own elbow, having cast away the food in this hand. The yogins see Śiva inside themselves, not in idols. Idols are designed for the benefit of ignorant people.

60 to 63.

Absorption in Brahman through insight into Brahma: Whoever sees Brahma [as] incomparable, unexcelled, true, non-dual, full of knowledge [and] bliss, he sees his own Self. Thus affirming ‘Through the Self, I am the Self’, having renounced the mass of *nādīs* [as] ever unimportant to the spirit

of man, o great Sage, [and] having rejoiced with one's own eyes in the bodiless within the body [and] the imperishable bliss of the great all-pervading *Īśvara*, the wise one does not grieve. [When] the knowledge which has generated distinctions is destroyed by the forces of wisdom, o Sage, [there] being no difference between the Self and Brahman, what can it do?

Fifth Section

1 to 4.

Purification of the nādīs: O Brahman, describe to me exactly [and] succinctly the purification of the nādīs, [so that] always contemplating through this purity, I become liberated while in this body. O Sāmkṛti, listen! I will tell you concisely of the purification of the nādīs, according to ritual and set actions [and] devoid of personal desires and wishes. Serene, merged with the eightfold path, beginning with the yamas, [their] highest aim truth, and fixed on their true self, the wise practise correctly. Having made a hut in a pleasant, clean place, on a mountain peak, on the bank of a river, at the base of a *bilva* tree, or else in a forest, one can withdraw the mind.

5 to 10.

And having begun āsana from the west, facing east or even facing north, neck, head [and] body aligned, [the body] covered [and] immobile, with well-focused mind on the nose tip, one should see with one's own eyes *turiya*, the flow of nectar in the crescent moon at *bindu*. Drawing the prāṇa in through idā, filling the belly, then meditating on the fire arising from the flames in the centre of the body, one should reflect upon the *bija* of *agni*, together with the *nāda* of *bindu*. Next the sage emits the prāṇa completely through piṅgalā. Then, inhaling through piṅgalā, one should reflect upon the *bija* of *agni*. Then, with full awareness, one should exhale very slowly through idā. One should practise six times for three or four days or else three or four times, and always in secret at sunrise, noon and sunset.

11, 12.

Indications of nādī purification: One obtains purification of the nādīs [when] different signs are perceived: lightness of the body, radiance of fire, moving in the digestive system. It is said the manifestation of *nāda* is the

sign, indicating this *siddhi*. One should do the practices until one recognises these [signs].

13, 14.

Purification of one's own self: Or, having ceased this [practice], one should practise purification of one's own self. The *ātman* [is] always pure, ever delightful, and self-illuminated. Whoever is cleansed of the dirt of ignorance by the water of knowledge, he is indeed completely pure and is not bound to other action.

Sixth Section

Aspects of Prāṇāyāma

1, 2.

Description of prāṇāyāma: Listen respectfully, Sāmkṛti. I will speak of the system of prāṇāyāma. It is declared [that] prāṇāyāma [is] by means of exhalation, inhalation and breath retention. Exhalation, inhalation and breath retention are said to consist of the three sounds; this is called *pranava*, and prāṇāyāma is formed of this.

3 to 9.

Drawing the breath in through *idā*, and filling the abdomen, one should bring to mind the sound 'A', [counting] slowly for sixteen *mātrās*. Then, holding the inhalation for sixty four *mātrās*, [and] also contemplating here the form of 'U', one should repeat the *pranava*. The sage should hold the inhalation as long as he can; following the repetition [of the *pranava*], he should then expel the vital air with the sound 'M' slowly for thirty-two *mātrās* through *piṅgalā* again. This is prāṇāyāma, and therefore, one should practise correctly. Again, inhaling through *piṅgalā* for sixteen *mātrās*, one should also concentrate here on the form of 'A' with one-pointed attention. The knowledgeable one should hold the inhalation for sixty-four *mātrās*, repeating powerfully the *pranava*, while meditating on the form of 'U'. Then, concentrating on 'M', he should expel the vital air through *idā*. Inhaling through *idā*, the wise one should repeat [the process] in this way.

10 to 12a.

O excellent Sage, one should practise prāṇāyāma regularly [and] correctly. Having practised regularly [and] correctly, one becomes a *jñāni* in

six months. One will be a *brahmavit* in a year. Thus one should practise continually. Whoever is always engaged in the practice of yoga and devoted to his *svadharma*, by control of the *prāṇa*, will indeed become liberated through higher wisdom.

12b, 13.

Description of *pūraka*: So, filling the abdomen with vital air from outside [is] *pūraka*. Holding the vital air as if in a full pot is *kumbhaka*. Expelling the vital air from the abdomen is called *recaka*.

14 to 20.

Siddhis of *prāṇāyāma*: He who produces perspiration is at the lowest [level] of *prāṇāyāma*. Trembling is the middle [stage], and the most accomplished one [who] levitates is the highest. When this is done repeatedly, the highest stage is attained, [and] the wise one becomes joyful in *prāṇāyāma*. O virtuous One, through *prāṇāyāma* there is purification of the mind. When the mind is purified, the bright inward light is clearly established. Having united the *prāṇās* with the mind, he rests in the supreme spirit. This supreme *prāṇāyāma* [is] the spirit of the great soul. The body rises and thus [there is] loss of any [mundane] knowledge. Leaving exhalation and inhalation, he should practise breath retention regularly. Released from all sins, he obtains correct knowledge. He gains swiftness of thought and grey hair etc disappears. Nothing [is] hard to obtain for one who is singularly intent on *prāṇāyāma*. Thus, one should practise *prāṇāyāma* with total effort.

21 to 32a.

The various *prāṇāyāmas* [which] eradicate disease: O virtuous One, I will explain the uses of *prāṇāyāma* at dawn and dusk, before sunrise, at noon, or else at all times. Inhaling the external *prāṇa* [until] the abdomen [is] full, and by concentrating on the nose tip, navel or the big toe, released from all disease, a man can live a hundred years. [*Prāṇa*] can be conquered by holding it at the nose tip, o virtuous One. All diseases disappear, when it is held at the navel. If it is confined to the big toe, o wise One, the body [becomes] light. The man who continuously drinks the vital air, having drawn it in through the tongue, is a yogin [who] attains good health, free of fatigue and heat. Drawing the vital air in through the tongue [and] holding

[it] at its root, one should drink the nectar steadily, [thus] obtaining total happiness.

Drawing the vital air in through *idā* [and] holding it at the eyebrow centre, whoever drinks pure nectar will surely be freed from sickness. O you, who understands the essence of the Veda, [drawing the breath in] through *idā*, or even through *piṅgalā*, and holding it at the navel, then a man will be freed from sickness. Inhaling the air through the tongue at [these] three points for a whole month, he should drink the nectar and hold it very gradually at the navel. Without doubt the disorders caused by *vāta* and *pitta* disappear, after drawing in the *vāyu* [and] retaining [it] in both eyes. The more he holds the breath for a long time, having placed [it there], the more will diseases of the eyes be annihilated, [and diseases of] the ears destroyed. Diseases of the head will be annihilated. I declare this the truth, o Sāmkṛti!

32b to 43a.

Control of *vāyu* through the practice of *ṣaṇmukhī mudrā*: Seated in *swastikāsana*, the mind steady, then, raising the *apāna* upwards very slowly with *pranava*, he should completely cover the ears and other sense organs with his hands. Having covered the sense organs well, o Sage, with the thumbs on the ears, the index fingers on the eyes [and] then two others on the nostrils, he should hold the *prāṇa* with effort at the roof of the palate until he experiences the bliss of the *brahmarandhra*, o Great Sage. When the *vāyu* reaches the *brahmarandhra*, the *nāda* comes forth, o Faultless One, and that is like the sound of a conch, inside like thunder. When the *vāyu* goes inside the head, [it is] like a waterfall coming down from the mountains. Afterwards there is delight in the sight of the appearance of the *ātman*, o Great Wise One. When he is again in possession of that knowledge, which has come forth, there is repudiation of the material world. He should press the suture firmly, with the right and left ankles. The wise man should press with the right ankle, contemplating its site at the junction above the knees, and then also meditating on the deities Triyambaka, Vināyaka and Vāgīśvarī. Drawing *vāyu* from the front, o Sage, having contracted the urethra, united with *pranava* and *bindu*, the wise one should hold it in the centre of *mūlādhāra*, o Chief of Brahmins. Having been restrained by the *vāyu*, the brilliant fire ascends the *kuṇḍalī*;

then, together with the fire of *vāyu*, it goes through *suṣumnā*. Thus, with his regular practice, he definitely becomes the conqueror of *vāyu*.

43b, 44a.

Signs of the conquest of *vāyu*: At first [there is] excessive perspiration, then trembling, o esteemed Sage, and raising of the body, this sign vanquishes the air [element].

44b to 51.

The conquest of *vāyu* gives rise to the knowledge of *vairagya*, non-attachment, and removal of disease and sins: Thus, with constant practice, the root cause of disease is eradicated. [Even] a fistula can be destroyed. All diseases and sins, both small and large, disappear, o *Sāmkṛti*. With the removal of sin, the mind becomes pure [and] wondrous [like] a mirror. Then, because of delight in Brahma and other [gods], *vairagya* is produced in the heart. Indifferent to the material world, [this] knowledge is the means for liberation. Through it, when one has known the god *Sadaśiva*, the snare is removed. Thus, he who has tasted the nectar of immortality, of *jñāna* once, having renounced all actions, hastens straight there. Because of ignorance of the purpose of their own true nature, others see with defective eyesight the appearances of this crooked world, not the true form of *jñāna*. When there is realisation of the true nature of the atman, that is the end of ignorance. When ignorance is eroded, great wise One, that is the end of desires and other [afflictions]. When desires and other [afflictions] are absent, o wise One, [there] is no inquiry into virtue and vice. With the destruction of these, one is no longer attached to the body.

Seventh Section

Pratyāhāra

1 to 4a.

Description of *pratyāhāra* and its modifications: Now I will explain *pratyāhāra*, o great Sage. The senses move about naturally in the sense objects. Wilfully withdrawing [the senses] from them is called *pratyāhāra*. Seeing in this withdrawn state, whatever one sees, all that [is] Brahma. This is *pratyāhāra*, as formerly declared by knowers of Brahma. Whatever one does, [be it] pure or impure, until the end of this life, all this one should do in [the awareness of] Brahma; this is called *pratyāhāra*. Or one should

perform regular and desired actions, knowing [that they are] homage to Brahma; this is called *pratyāhāra*.

4b to 8.

One should perform daily actions and desired (actions) while knowing Brahma and (paying) homage to Brahma. This is called *pratyāhāra*. Or, having inhaled the *vāyu*, one should hold [it] from place to place. Thus, having drawn in the vital air, one should retain [it] from the root of the teeth to the throat, from the throat to the chest, [and] from the chest to the navel. Drawing [it] in from the navel, the wise one should retain [it] in the *kundalī*, from the place of the *kundalī* in *mūlādhāra*. Thereupon, one should retain the *apāna* in the waist, and then in the hips and thighs, from there in the knees, lower legs [and] toes.

9, 10a.

This is said [to be] *pratyāhāra* by those accomplished in *pratyāhāra* in ancient times. Thus, [whenever] a great being [is] engaged in regular practice, all sins and worldly disease vanish, o virtuous One.

10b to 12.

Pratyāhāra by holding the *prāṇa* within: Inhaling through the nostrils [while sitting] steadily in *svastikāsana*, the wise one should fill [the body] from the soles of the feet to the top of the head. Next it is held also in both legs, then at *mūlādhāra*, at the knot of the navel, the heart centre, throat pit, palate, eyebrow centre, forehead and then the top of the head.

13, 14.

Pratyāhara, according to *vedānta*: Withdrawing the attachment to his body, the wise one is withdrawn into the true self, non-dual [and] thoughtless. [This is] clearly called *pratyāhāra* by knowers of *vedānta*. For one who practises thus, nothing [is] difficult to attain.

Eighth Section

Dhāraṇā

1 to 6.

Dhāraṇā, or concentration, on the five elements: Thus I shall describe the five forms of concentration, o virtuous One. Now, one should

concentrate on the external ether in the atmosphere, contained in the centre of the body; also on the external air in the *prāṇa*, and on the fire burning in the belly, water in the watery part [and] earth in the earthy place, o great Sage. One should utter in sequence the sounds [of the] names [of the] mantras: *Ham, Yam, Ram, Vam, Lam*. This [is] declared the supreme concentration, purifying all sins. For it is said the earth section is down from the knees, water [is up from the knees], then fire section in the area the heart centre, air section at the eyebrow centre [and] ether section is at the top of the head; thus it is proclaimed, o wise One. Then one should concentrate on Brahma in the earth place, Visṇu in the water area, Maheśa in the fire section, Īśvara in the air portion and Sadāśiva in the ether section, o great wise One.

7 to 9.

Concentration on the self: Now shall I describe to you [this] concentration, o esteemed Sage? This [is] in the *puruṣa*, (who is) Śiva, the ruler of all, blissful [and] all-knowing. The wise one, for the purification of all sins, should always concentrate on the forms [and] deeds of Brahma and other [gods], absorbing [them] into one's own cause, [concentrating on] the unmanifest, without form [and] indefinable [which is] the cause of everything. One should fix the mind clearly [and] completely on the *pranava* in the *ātman*; having withdrawn the senses, one should merge the mind with the self.

Ninth Section

Dhyāna

1, 2.

Meditation on the attributes of Brahma: Now I shall describe *dhyāna*, [which] destroys the illusory world, [which is] divine harmony, truth, the supreme Brahma, the remedy for all delusions. Saying reverently 'I Am That', the yogin should meditate on the Lord of Lords, [whose] seed [is] contained, [who is] Śiva of many forms, of the cosmic form, [and] Maheśvara, the highest reality.

3 to 5.

Meditation on Brahma without attributes: Now [this is] Śiva, the possessor of truth, [whose] knowledge [and] bliss [are] non-dual, [who is]

beyond meaning, pure, eternal, without beginning, middle [and] end. Thus, [being] without matter, space, touch, sight, taste and smell, [he is] immeasurable [and] incomparable. Brahma [is] the soul, infinite existence-consciousness-bliss, o Virtuous One. Being absorbed in the mantra *iti aham asmi*, 'Thus I Am', one transcends the body [and] is liberated.

6.

Fruits of dhyāna: Without doubt there should gradually bring forth in a great soul, [who] engages thus in regular practice, knowledge of *vedānta*.

Tenth Section

Samādhi

1 to 5.

Nature of samādhi: Now I shall describe *samādhi*, the destroyer of worldly existence. Samādhi gives rise to knowledge [and] hence oneness with other beings. The ātman is, for sure, eternal, everywhere, unchangeable [and] devoid of faults. Being one, it differs from the mistaken illusion, [but] not in its own form. Therefore, there is really no duality, no phenomenal world, no transmigration, just as, it is said, the space in a pot or hermitage is obtained from the ether element. So, because of false notions [of] duality, the ātman is called *jīva* [and] *Īśvara*. Indeed I am not the body, nor the prāṇa, nor the senses, nor the mind. I am Śiva alone, ever the witness [of my] true form. This wisdom is said [to be] samādhi in this life, o excellent Sage.

6 to 12.

Here Brahma Remains: I am this Brahma, not the worldly being. [There is] nothing other than me. Just as the foam [of the] waves, arising from the ocean, is absorbed back into the ocean, in the same way the world is absorbed in me. Thus, the mind is not separate, nor is the material world. He, whose supreme self has been purified within [and] illumined, immediately reaches maturity and his own immortality. When the all-pervading consciousness shines continually [and] without interruption in the mind, then the yogin becomes absorbed in himself. When indeed he sees all creatures in himself and himself in all creatures, then he merges with Brahma. When, absorbed in samādhi, he does not see all creatures [as many], but [as] one, then that pure consciousness is attained. And when he

sees the self alone [as] the true reality, then he is set free from the whole world, [which is] merely an illusion.

13.

Epilogue: The great sage Lord Dattātreya having spoken thus, Sāṃkṛti [is] joyfully [and] fearlessly established in his own true nature.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Swami Satyadharma is a senior sannyasin, a yoga acharya, and a versatile teacher of yogic meditation and allied philosophies, having a Master of Arts in Yoga Philosophy with First Class Honors from Bihar Yoga Bharati, India. She wrote the commentary on the *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad*, while living in India, which was published by Yoga Publications Trust in 2003. In 2015 she published her commentary on *Yoga Tattwa Upanishad*. Born in Connecticut USA, she lived in India for over 35 years under the direct tutelage of her yoga master, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, where she imbibed the traditional yogic teachings, and became Director of the Department of Undergraduate Studies at Bihar Yoga Bharati. She has compiled and edited many major yoga publications, such as *Yoga Darshan*, *Sannyasa Darshan*, *Dharana Darshan* and the *Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. Now based in Australia, she lives a life of sadhana and

introspection, while continuing to elucidate the ancient teachings of yoga in the form of the 20 Yoga Upanishads.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR



Srimukti (Ruth Perini) was for many years a teacher of yoga and meditation. Already a linguist, having graduated in French, Italian and Japanese from the Universities of Sydney and Queensland, Australia, she undertook four years of studies in Sanskrit at the Australian National University (ANU) with Dr McComas Taylor. She was invited to join the Golden Key International Society for outstanding academic achievement, as she was awarded High Distinctions throughout her Sanskrit studies. She is the translator of *Yoga Tattwa Upaniṣad*, commentary by Swami Satyadharma. She has translated the *Nāda Bindu*, *Dhyānabindu*, *Yoga Kuṇḍalī Upaniṣads*, and is currently working on the *Varāha Upaniṣad*.

Ruth (Srimukti) may be contacted on yoga.upanishads@yahoo.com.

Yoga Kundali Upanishad

Theory and Practices for Awakening Kundalini

Swami Satyadharma Saraswati



Translated by Ruth Perini (Srimukti)

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Yoga Upaniṣad Series

Volume 4

Yoga Kuṇḍalī Upaniṣad

Theory and Practices for Awakening Kuṇḍalinī

Original Sanskrit text with

Transliteration, Translation and Commentary

Commentary by

Śwāmī Satyadharma Sarasvatī

Translation and Transliteration by

Śrimukti (Ruth Perini)

Dedication

To all friends, practitioners and teachers of yoga,

and to all seekers of spiritual wisdom,

regardless of time or place, creed, gender, age or race

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Introduction

Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘knowledge’. In the context of the Vedas, it means ‘revealed knowledge which is *śruti*, ‘heard’ from within, not taught. These ancient spiritual texts or hymns, through which we can learn much of the perceptions and insights of the early vedic seers, are grouped into four *samhitas* or collections: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. They were revealed to enlightened beings 3,000 to 4,500 years ago or more (the Rig-Veda contains astronomical references describing occurrences in 5,000 to 3,000 BCE), and transmitted orally by the sages from generation to generation within brahmin families.

The four Vedas were considered to be divine revelations, and each word was carefully memorised. This was to ensure accurate transmission, but also because each syllable was considered to have spiritual power, its source being the supreme, eternal sound. This was a mammoth task, as there are 20,358 verses in the four Vedas, approximately two thousand printed pages. They were composed in fifteen different metres, which demanded perfect control of the breath. Georg Feuerstein describes them as ‘a composite of symbol, metaphor, allegory, myth and story, as well as paradox and riddle’ and their composers as ‘recipients and revealers of the invisible order of the cosmos [with] inspired insights or illumined visions’¹.

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest spiritual text in the world and still regarded as sacred, containing 1,028 hymns or songs of 10,589 verses in praise of the divine (*rig* or *ric* meaning ‘praise’). Each hymn is recognised as a *mantra*, a sacred sound vibration, which releases energy from limited material awareness, thus expanding the consciousness. It is also the earliest surviving form of Sanskrit. The illumined seers composed the hymns while established in the highest consciousness, thus able to commune with luminous beings of the higher realms. There are about 250 hymns in praise of *Indra*, the divine force behind the ocean, heavens, thunder, lightning, rain and the light of the sun; 200 of *Agni*, born of the Sun, becoming the god of sacrificial fire, and over 100 of *Soma*, who gives immortality, and who is connected to the Sun, Moon, mountains, rivers and oceans. Others are dedicated to *Varuna*, who protects cosmic order; the *Ashvins*, supreme healers; *Ushas*, goddess of the dawn; *Aditi*, goddess of eternity; and *Saraswati*, goddess of the Vedas and of music and the arts.

Yajur Veda

The hymns of the Yajur-Veda, Veda of Sacrifice, consist of sacrificial formulas or prayers, including those of an internal or spiritual nature, which are chanted by the *adhvaryu* (priest), who performs the sacrifice. About a third of its 1,975 verses are taken from the Rig Veda. The rest are original and in prose form.

Sāma Veda

The Sāma Veda, Veda of Chants, gives instructions on the chanting of vedic hymns. The majority of its 1,875 verses are from the Rig Veda; only 75 verses are original. Many of the hymns were sung by special priests during sacrificial rites. Some are still sung today.

Atharva Veda

The Atharva Veda, named after the seer Atharvan, whose family were great seers in vedic times, contains 731 hymns of 5,977 verses, about one fifth of which are from the RigVeda. Much of the Atharva Veda consists of magical spells and charms for gaining health, love, peace and prosperity, or taking revenge on an enemy. Possibly for this reason, the Atharva Veda was either not accepted by the orthodox priesthood, or not given the same standing as the other Vedas.

The vedic people and their culture

The vedic people lived for over 2,500 years mainly along the banks of the Saraswati River, which was located in Northern India between the modern Ravi and Yamuna Rivers down to what is now the desert of Rajasthan. The Saraswati River dried up in about 1,900 BCE due to tectonic upheavals. Other areas of habitation included the Ganges River and its tributaries, rivers in Afghanistan (previously called Gandhara), the Himalayas and Mount Kailash in Tibet.

The vedic people had a complex multi-tiered view of the universe, in which humankind, nature and the divine are intertwined and interrelated. They had a deep knowledge of the oceans, mountains, deserts and forests of the physical world, as well as of the subtle worlds of deities and different levels of consciousness. People lived in cities or villages or were nomads, and were fully engaged in worldly life. They were an agrarian people, yet also had herds of cattle, horses and camels. Cities were constructed of stone, bricks and metal. They built chariots and ships. They were skilled workers in gold, metal, clay, stone, wood, leather and wool, and showed a very high standard in arts, crafts, astrology, medicine, music, dance and poetry.

After the Vedas

The Vedas were the foundation for the later revelations (*śruti*) in the *Brāhmaṇas* (ritual texts), the *Āranyakas* (texts on rituals and meditation for forest-dwelling ascetics) and the *Upaniṣads* (esoteric texts). Later still, the Vedas were the basis for numerous works of remembered or traditional knowledge, known as *smṛti*, including the epics: i.e. the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas*, and the *Sūtras*, or threads of knowledge, e.g. *Yoga Sūtras*. All these texts contain many concepts and practices, which come directly from the four Vedas.

Upaniṣads

The word *upaniṣad* is comprised of three roots: *upa* or ‘near’, *ni* or ‘attentively’, and *sad*, ‘to sit’. The term describes the situation in which these unique texts were transmitted. The students or disciples sat near the realized master and listened attentively, as he expounded his experiences and understanding of the ultimate reality. These teachings are said to destroy the ignorance or illusion of the spiritual aspirant in regard to what is self and non-self, what is real and unreal, in relation to the absolute and relative reality. Only disciples were chosen, who had persevered in *sādhana catusṭaya*, the four kinds of spiritual effort, viz. *viveka* (discrimination between the permanent and impermanent), *vairagya* (non-attachment), *śadsampatti* (six virtues of serenity, self-control, withdrawal of the senses, endurance, perfect concentration and strong faith) and *mumukṣutva* (intense desire for liberation).

The Upaniṣads are derived from the Āranyakas, because they were chanted in the forest (*āranya*) after

the aspirant had retired from worldly life. They are recorded in the later form of Sanskrit used in the Brāhmaṇas, and considered the last phase of śruti, vedic revelation. The Upaniṣads are regarded as *vedānta*, the end of the Vedas, inferring that *vedānta* is the end or completion of all perceivable knowledge, as they guide the aspirant beyond the limited mind to the *ātman* (spiritual self) and thus to *mokṣa* (liberation). Each upaniṣad reflected the teachings and tradition of a realized master, and was connected with a specific Veda and vedic school. It is estimated that there are over 200 Upaniṣads, which have been divided into seven groups: *Major*, *Vedānta*, *Śaiva*, *Śakta*, *Vaiśnava*, *Sannyasa* and *Yoga*.

Yoga Upaniṣads

The twenty one Yoga Upaniṣads give an understanding of the hidden forces in nature and human beings, and describe esoteric yogic practices by which these forces can be manipulated and controlled. They emphasise that the inner journey to the one permanent reality, the *ātman*, is the essential one. Journeys to external places, such as holy sites and temples, as well as rituals and ceremonies, are not given importance. Their teachings give important information on the subtle body (*cakras*, *kōṣas*, *prāṇa*, *kundalīnī*, meditative states), and the tantric and yogic techniques, not given in the earlier upaniṣads, to attain them. Therefore, they are regarded as a significant integration of Vedanta and Tantra, which were previously considered incompatible. They are classified as ‘minor’ only because they postdate Ādi Śaṅkara.

Although their teachings actually predate Patañjali, the Yoga Upaniṣads were codified after the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, and form an important part of the classical yoga literature. However, they contain no references to Patañjali or his *Yoga Sūtras*. So, although the compilation of the Yoga Upaniṣads is post-Patañjali, the *vidyās*, or meditative disciplines, contained within them are pre-Patañjali. The Yoga Upaniṣads emerged at a time when the vedic and tantric cultures were coming together to share their knowledge. The wise thinkers from each culture sat down together and discussed how their insights and teachings could be combined in order to benefit humanity. Thus these upanisads combine the teachings of both tantra and yoga. It is evident in them that yoga leads to *vedānta*, and *vedānta* leads to yoga. However, they were written down by vedantic scholars and practitioners in order to show that these *vidyās* and related practices were not borrowed from Patañjali, but were known and practised from the ancient period.

Within the twenty-one Yoga Upaniṣads are six sub-groups which have their own main focus. The *Bindu Upaniṣads*, which include the *Amṛta-Bindu* (also known as the *Brahma-Bindu-Upaniṣad*), *Amṛta-Nada-Bindu*, *Nada-Bindu*, *Dhyāna-Bindu* and *Tejo-Bindu-Upaniṣads*, all concentrate on the bindu, the source or origin of all sound, and hence of creation. Bindu represents the transcendental sound manifested in the mantra *Aum*. The *Hamsa-Mantra*, *Soham*, is the main practice of the *Hamsa*, *Brahma-Vidya*, *Mahavakya* and *Paśupata-Brahma-Upaniṣads*. Concentration on *prāṇa*, the life force related to the process of inhalation and exhalation, brings the yogin to the knowledge of the transcendental self. The light of pure consciousness, which the enlightened irradiate is the theme of the *Advaya-Taraka* and *Maṇḍala-Brahmana-Upaniṣads*. The *Kṣurika-Upaniṣad* (*kṣurika* meaning ‘dagger’) emphasises non-attachment as a means to liberation. The sixth group, comprised of eight late Yoga Upaniṣads from 1200 to 1300 A.D., covers teachings related to hatha and kundalini yogas. They are the *Yoga-Kuṇḍalī*, *Yoga-Tattwa*, *Yoga-Śikhā*, *Varāha*, *Śāndilya*, *Tri-Śikhi-Brahmana*, *Yoga-Darśana* and *Yoga-Cūḍāmani Upaniṣads*.

Yoga Kuṇḍali Upaniṣad

The teachings provided in this text on *kundalīnī yoga* are totally original and unique. They were given

by an experienced master, whose name is never mentioned, and who lived in an earlier period when such knowledge of yoga prevailed. The text is arranged in three parts. Chapter one contains the yogic physiology of kūḍalinī and the requisite disciplines necessary to undertake her activation and awakening. It begins with a relevant discussion on the two main ways to bring about an awakening: *citta*, expansion of consciousness, or *prāṇa*, liberation of energy. Kūḍalinī yoga belongs to the latter, but also accomplishes the former, which also demonstrates its tantric influence.

The disciplines required for kūḍalinī yoga include *mitāhāra*, moderation in diet, and the practice of *āsana*, specifically *padmāsana* and *vajrāsana*. These are followed by a thorough section on *prāṇāyāma*, or *kumbhaka*, which details the four major techniques: *suryabhedā*, *ujjāyī*, *śītalā* and *bhastrikā*. The practice of *śakticālā*, an important method of kūḍalinī yoga, is described here in detail. This is an original practice, which cannot be found elsewhere. There is also an in-depth discussion on the *kūḍalinī śakti* herself, and what she really is. These are followed by the practices of the three *bandhas*: *mūlabandha*, *uddhiyāna*, and *jālandhara*, and their role in redirecting the energy upward to the brain.

These practices are followed by a detailed explanation of the ten obstructions, which arise on the path of higher yoga, and prevent the practitioner from achieving his or her goal. Then the process of kūḍalinī awakening is described and the practice is given, whereby it can be accomplished. The theory and rechannelling of *amṛta*, or immortal nectar, is further detailed to complete the process. The first chapter ends with the detailed practice of the *kūḍalinī śakti*, rising up the *suṣumnā*, piercing the three *granthis*, or psychic knots, and the six *cakras*, to unite with her Lord at *sahasrāra*, the crown centre.

Chapter two contains an exposition of *khecarī mudrā*, as it was known to and practised by the yogīs of old. Its importance as a practice leading to enlightenment, esoteric details and benefits are described here, along with the entire method, which is not found in modern books on yoga. The science of *khecarī* is followed by an explanation of *sūtra neti*. This is given as an adjunct to *khecarī mudrā*, in order to enhance the final awakening of *kūḍalinī* through the higher stages of *suṣumnā*.

Chapter three contains more specific instructions on how to maintain a higher *sādhana*. The auspicious days of practice are included, along with the necessity of renunciation. The two principles of creation, *manas* and *śakti*, are discussed, so that the *sādhaka* understands the basis of human bondage, which relates to identification with *śakti*, name and form. The practice of kūḍalinī yoga is further delineated in five precise steps. The *cakras* are described as the the stairway to enlightenment and a major aspect of kūḍalinī yoga. The importance of yoga, guru and *sādhana* is explained. The chapter describes several important meditation practices: (i) on sound and *Soham*, (ii) on the *ātman*, (iii) spontaneous *jñāna yoga*, and (iv) merging with the *ātman*. Finally the master tells how to become a supreme yogī.

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योगकुण्डल्युपनिषत्

Yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣat

Invocation

योगकुण्डल्युपनिषद्योगसिद्धिहृदासनम् ।

निर्विशेषब्रह्मतत्त्वं स्वमात्रमिति चिन्तये ।

ॐ सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ॥

yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣadyoga-siddhi-hṛdāsanam

nirviśeṣa-brahma-tattvam svamātramiti cintaye

Om saha nāvavatviti śāntih

Anvay

iti: thus; *cintaye:* I meditated on; *hrd-āsanam:* seat of the heart; *yoga-siddhi:* power of yoga; *yoga-kuṇḍalī-upaniṣat:* upaniṣad of yoga kuṇḍalī; *svamātram:* being nothing but; *nirviśesa:* undiscriminating; *brahma-tattvam:* true knowledge of Brahma; *iti:* saying; *avavatu:* may [it] help; *nau:* both of us; *saha:* together; *śāntih:* peace.

Translation

Thus I meditated on the seat of the heart, [which is] the power of yoga, on the upanishad of yoga kuṇḍalī, being nothing but the undiscriminating, true knowledge of Brahma. Saying: Om, may this teaching benefit both of us together. Peace.

Invocation

This invocation is chanted by the rishi or seer of the *Yoga Kuṇḍalī Upaniṣad*, to ensure that the teachings of this text may be revealed by the teacher to the student in a way most auspicious and beneficial to both. Before undertaking the study of this text, the rishi says that he meditated on the seat of the heart, which is the centre of wisdom, where the soul resides. Being the seat of the soul, the heart is also the power of yoga. The purpose of yoga is ultimately to merge the individual soul with the cosmic soul, or consciousness, and this process of union begins at the heart. During his meditation, the rishi realised that the teaching given in this upanishad is nothing but the true knowledge of Brahma, the universal creative potential, which is one with all existence and beyond all qualification and discrimination.

Chapter One

Verse 1: Two causes of citta

हेतद्वयं हि चित्तस्य वासना च समीरणः ।

तयोर्विनष्ट एकस्मिंस्तद्वावपि विनश्यतः ॥१॥

hetadvayam hi cittasya vāsanā ca samīraṇah

tayorvinaṣṭa ekasmīmstaddvāvapi vinaśyataḥ (1)

Anvay

heta-dvayam: two causes; *cittasya*: of individual consciousness; *vāsanā ca samīraṇah*: mental disposition and vital energy; *ekasmin tayoḥ*: if one of these two; *vinaṣṭah*: is destroyed; *api dvau*: then both; *vinaśyataḥ*: are destroyed.

Translation

The two causes of individual consciousness [are] the mental disposition and vital energy. If one of these two is destroyed, then both are destroyed.

Commentary

Citta is the individual consciousness. It is also referred to as the subconscious, individual mind, or mind-stuff, and the store-house of memory, or *samskāra*. *Citta* is one of the four parts of the *antahkaraṇa*, inner instrument of the consciousness. The four aspects of *antahkaraṇa* are: (i) *manas*, mind; (ii) *buddhi*, intellect; (iii) *citta*, subconscious; and (iv) *ahamkāra* or ego. *Samskāras* are the impressions of actions imbedded in the subconscious mind. These stored impressions become our memories, and they condition the mind to think, feel and behave in particular patterns throughout our lives.

Vāsanās are the deep rooted desires, which we carry with us over many lifetimes. These deep desires motivate our actions and ultimately create bondage, due to identification with and attachment to the desired object, person or place. We are born with certain fixed, deep rooted desires, which determine our character, qualities, habits, interests, opportunities and abilities. In a sense, it is the *vāsanā* that define our nature and destiny, and set out what we can and cannot, will and will not do or be, for the duration of our lives.

The mind draws on the *samskāra*, or memories, in order to better understand how to go about fulfilling the *vāsanās* in one's given situation in life. This requires the process of thinking or contemplation. Thinking is also an action, and it requires *prāṇa*, or life force, in order to carry out this process efficiently. Once the mind comes to a decision and formulates a plan, then *karma*, or action, will follow. Any action, whether the determination to act or the physical movement required to act, requires *prāṇa*. In the absence of *prāṇa*, there can be no life, no thought, no action.

Therefore, the two causes of *citta* are *vāsanā* and *prāṇa*. Both must work together in order to fulfil the purpose and destiny of each individual. It is an important tenet of yoga that, if one of these two can be eliminated, then the other will also be destroyed. Maybe this is the point where yoga first began. Because the yogis of old were not so interested in enhancing the body and mind, as we are today, but in transcending their conditioning and limitations. They had the supreme desire to merge the

individual consciousness with the transcendental, and experience the totality of consciousness.

Here, in the first verse of this upaniṣad, we are given the two ways to achieve this: one by eliminating the deep-rooted desires, and the other by controlling the prāṇa.

Verses 2 and 3a: Control of prāṇa

तयोरादौ समीरस्य जय कुर्यान्नरः सदा ।

मिताहारश्चासनं च शक्तिचालस्तृतीयकः ॥२॥

एतेषां लक्षनं वक्ष्ये शृणु गौतम सादरम् ॥३॥

taylorādau samīrasya jaya kuryānnarah sadā

mitāhāraścāsanam ca śakticālastṛtīyakah (2)

eteṣāṁ lakṣanam vakṣye śṛṇu gautama sādaram (3a)

Anvay

tayoḥ: of these two; *narah:* man; *ādau:* at first; *sadā:* always; *kuryāt jaya:* should have control; *śakticālastṛtīyakah:* rotation and control of pranic force; *vakṣye:* I shall describe; *lakṣanam:* characteristics; *eteṣāṁ:* of these; *śṛṇu:* listen; *sādaram:* attentively; *gautama:* Gautama.

Translation

Of these two, a man should always control the prāṇa first (by) moderation in diet, (second) posture and thirdly, rotation and control of the pranic force. I shall describe the characteristics of these. Listen attentively, Gautama.

Commentary

Here, we are given the easiest method to transcend the mind, which is control of the prāṇa. Rooting out the vāsanā is a very laborious job. The deep desires grow like weeds in a field, and the roots of each vāsanā are so deep that it is difficult to pull them out root and all. Some remnant of the root always remains, and then grows back again, when the time and situation are conducive for its expression. Furthermore, each vāsanā becomes the cause for new vasanas to grow and develop around it. So, the job goes on and on.

This is the difficulty of meditation, and all mind-orientated practices; whereas, control of the pranic force can be accomplished more easily. There are specific methods, which are given in yoga for this purpose. This verse enumerates three such methods: (i) *mitāhāra*, dietary control, (ii) *āsana*, control of posture, and (iii) *śakticāla*, control of the pranic force by rotation. These three are further described in the following verses.

Verse 3b and 4a: Mitāhāra, moderation in diet

सुस्निधमधुराहारश्चतुर्थशविवर्जितः ॥३॥

भुज्यते शिवसंप्रीत्यै मिताहारः स उच्यते ।४।

susnigdhamadhurāhāraścaturthaṁśavivarjitaḥ (3b)

bhuujyate śivasamprītyai mitāhāraḥ sa ucyate (4a)

Anvay

susnigdha: soft; *madhura*: sweet; *āharah*: offering; *bhuujyate*: should be consumed; *vivarjitaḥ*: without filling; *caturthaṁśa*: one fourth; *śivas-amprītyai*: in order to please Śiva; *sa ucyate*: this is called; *mitāhāraḥ*: moderation in diet.

Translation

A soft, sweet offering should be consumed, without filling one fourth [of the stomach] in order to please Śiva. This is called moderation in diet.

Commentary

We can understand the importance of diet, when we observe our society today. There are so many different diets available, which people try to follow for their own purposes and needs. Yogic diet is another type of diet, where the emphasis is on *sattvic* food, for the purpose of maintaining a regular *sādhana*, or yogic practice. Yogic diet incorporates pure and balanced nutrition, which is neither too much nor too little, overcooked nor undercooked; which is fresh, and available locally and seasonally. The yogis of old generally consumed foods that were fresh, because there was no cold storage, fridges and freezers, as we have today. They also ate foods that were available locally and seasonally, because long distance transport, preservation and packaging were minimal.

Here, the verse recommends sweet and soft foods, meaning those items which are not bitter, salty, astringent or piquant, Yogic diet should be simple and consist of only one or two items per meal. It should be bland to the taste, so that it does not excite or upset the system or cause overeating. It should be soft, so that it does not require excess energy to break down and assimilate. A yogi considers the food that is consumed as an offering, which is made to the digestive fire and transmuted into energy for the life of the body and the evolution of consciousness.

Mitāhāra, moderation in diet, is also a measurement of discipline and self-control, whereby the yogi does not eat until the stomach is full. Rather, at the end of the meal, the stomach should always remain one fourth empty. When the stomach is filled to capacity, a state of *tamas*, or lethargy follows, which is not conducive to yogic practice. Therefore, the amount of food consumed is reduced, and this is done to please Śiva, the transcendental consciousness, which is the ultimate goal of yoga.

Verses 4b to 6: Āsana, posture

आसनं द्विविधं प्रोक्तं पद्मं वज्रासनं तथा ॥४॥

ऊर्वोरुपरि चेद्धते उभे पादतले यथा ।

पद्मासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥५॥

वामाङ्ग्रिमूलकन्दाधो ह्यन्यं तदुपरि क्षिपेत् ।

समग्रीवशिरः कायो वज्रासनमितीरितम् ॥६॥

āsanam dvividham proktam padmam vajrāsanam tathā (4b)

ūrvorupari ceddhatte ubhe pādatale yathā

padmāsanam bhavedetatsarvapāpaprāṇāśanam (5)

vāmāṅghrimūlakandādho hyanyam tadupari kṣipet

samagrīvaśirah kāyo vajrāsanamitīritam (6)

Anvay

tathā: then; *āsanam*: posture; *proktam*: is declared; *dvividham*: of two kinds; *bhavet*: it is; *padmāsanam*: lotus posture; *cet*: if; *ubhe pādatale*: both soles of the feet; *dhatte*: are placed; *upari*: on top of; *ūrvoh*: thighs; *etat*: this; *prāṇāśanam*: destroys; *sarva-pāpa*: all sins; *iti īritam*: it is said; *vajrāsanam*: thunderbolt posture; *kṣipet*: one places; *vāma-anghri*: opposite foot; *mūlakanda-adhah*: below the *mūlakanda*; *anyam*: other; *tat-upari*: above it; *grīva*: neck; *śirah*: head; *kāyah*: body; *sama*: upright.

Translation

Then posture is declared [to be] of two kinds: *padma* [and] *vajra*. It is *padmāsana* if both soles of the feet are placed on top of the thighs; this destroys all sins. It is said [to be] *vajrāsana* [when] one places the opposite foot below the *mūlakanda*, the other above it, the neck, head [and] body upright.

Commentary

In order to control the *prāṇa*, three methods were given above. The first being *mitāhāra*, or moderation in diet, and now the second, *āsana* or posture. The early yogis did not consider *āsana* to be an end in itself, and they did not have a variety of *āsana* to choose from, as we know today, such as dynamic, static, forward bending, backward bending, inverted, balancing, and so on. Ordinarily, the body requires frequent movement, so we go on changing our position, or we reach for something or get up and walk somewhere. *Āsana* were regarded as postures in which the body could remain still, without the slightest movement, for long periods of time. For this purpose, two kinds of *āsana* are recommended in this teaching: *padma* and *vajra*.

Padmāsana

Padmāsana is the ‘lotus posture’. The lotus flower is regarded as a symbol of purity because, although it blooms on top of the water, its petals always remain dry. In the same way, the yogi is one who lives in the world, but remains untouched by it. *Padmāsana* is described here as sitting with both feet placed on top of the thighs. This posture can only be performed by practitioners with very flexible knees and ankles. The method is as follows:

Sit with both legs stretched forward in front of the body. Bend the right knee and place the right foot on top of the left thigh, so that the sole is turned upward and the heel is close to the pubic bone. In the same way, bend the left knee and place the left foot on top of the right thigh.

In the final position both knees should touch the ground. The spine, neck and head should be upright and straight. Relax the arms, and make sure that the shoulders are not hunched forward or raised. Close the eyes and observe the balance and alignment of the whole body.

Padmāsana is the most balanced posture, when it is performed correctly. Perfect alignment indicates that the posture is correct. Padmāsana is also a locked posture, which can hold the body steady and still for long durations of time. While the body remains still, the mind becomes still. When the body and mind remain still, *suṣumnā*, the spiritual channel located at the center of the spinal column, opens. Padmāsana then directs the flow of *prāṇa* from the lower *cakras*, or psychic centers, upward through the *suṣumnā* pathway, to *sahasrāra* cakra, at the crown of the head. In this way, higher meditative states can be achieved spontaneously, by sitting in this posture alone.

Vajrāsana or siddhāsana

Vajrāsana is the ‘thunderbolt posture’. *Vajra* is also a major *nādī*, or energy channel, connected with the uro-genital system, which regulates the sexual energy. Today, we have several variations of this posture, such as sitting with both knees bent, so that the lower legs are beneath the upper legs and the buttocks sits in-between the feet. In early times, however, vajrāsana was also known as *guptāsana*, the ‘secret pose’. In modern times, *guptāsana* is better known as *siddhāsana*, the ‘perfect pose’. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradīpika*, a classical text on yoga, (chapter 1, verse 37) it says that “*Siddhāsana* is also known as vajrāsana; some call it *muktāsana* and lastly it is called *guptāsana*.“ Therefore, we are describing the method here for *siddhāsana*, which is as follows:

Sit with both legs extended in front of the body. Bend the right knee and place the right sole against the left inner thigh. Bring the right heel underneath the body, so that it presses the perineum, midway between the genitals and the anus. Bend the left knee, and push the toes into the area between the right calf and thigh. Place the left ankle directly over the right ankle, so that the left heel is above the right heel. The left heel should also press the pubic bone, so that the genitals are in-between the two heels. Finally, grasp the right toes, and pull them up between the left calf and thigh.

In the final posture, the body weight rests on the right heel. Make sure that the pressure of the right heel is firmly applied. The legs are both in a locked position, with the knees touching the ground. The spine, neck and head should remain upright and straight.

This posture also directs the sexual energy upward from the lower psychic centers. The position of the right foot at the perineum activates *mūlādhāra* cakra, while the left foot at the pubis activates *swādhiṣṭhāna*. The energy from these centers is then redirected up the *suṣumnā* for the purpose of higher meditation.

Verses 7 to 10a: Śakticāla, raising the kundalinī

कुण्डल्येव भवेच्छक्तिस्तां तु संचालयेद्गृह्य ।

स्वस्थानाभा भ्रुवोर्मध्यं शक्तिचालनमुच्यते ॥७॥

तत्साधने द्वयं मुख्यं सरस्वत्सास्तु चालनम् ।

प्राणरोधमथाभ्यासादृज्जी कुण्डलिनी भवेत् ॥८॥

तयोरादौ सरस्वत्याश्वालनं कथयामि ते ।

अरुन्धत्येव कथिता पुराविद्धिः सरस्वती ॥९॥

यस्याः संचालनेनैव स्वयं चलति कुण्डली ॥१०॥

*kuṇḍalyeva bhavecchaktistām tu saṃcālayedbudha
svasthānābhā bhruvormadhyam śakticālanamucyate (7)*

tatsādhane dvayam mukhyam sarasvatsāstu cālanam

prāṇarodhamathābhyaśādṛjvī kuṇḍalinī bhavet (8)

taylorādau sarasvatyāścālanam kathayāmi te

arundhatyeva kathitā purāvidbhiḥ sarasvatī (9)

yasyāḥ saṃcālanenaiva svayam calati kuṇḍalī (10a)

Anvay

śaktih: śakti; bhavet: is; eva: really; kuṇḍalī: kuṇḍalinī; budhah: wise person; tām saṃcālayet: should move it up to; svasthā-nābhā: location [at] the navel; bhruvormadhyam: eyebrow centre; ucyclate: is called; śakticālam: raising the śakti; tat sādhane: to achieve this; dvayam: two; mukhyam: essential; sarasvat-cālam: sarasvaticāla; prāṇa-rodham: control of prāṇa; atha: then; ābhyaśāt: through practice; kuṇḍalinī bhavet: kuṇḍalinī becomes; rjvī : straight; tayoḥ: of these two; kathayāmi: I shall describe; te: to you; ādau: first; sarasvatyāścālam: sarasvatīcāla; kathitā: it is told; purāvidbhiḥ: by those who know the past; sarasvatī: Sarasvatī; eva: really; arundhatī: Arundhatī; eva: only; saṃcālanena yasyāḥ: by arousing her; calati kuṇḍalī: will kuṇḍalī arise; svayam: spontaneously.

Translation

Śakti is really kuṇḍalinī. A wise person should move it up [from] its location [to] the navel [and] to the eyebrow centre. [This] is called śakticāla. To achieve this, two [things] are essential: sarasvatīcāla [and] control of prāṇa. Then, through practice, the kuṇḍalinī becomes straight. Of these two, I shall describe to you first sarasvatīcāla. It is told by those who know the past [that] Sarasvatī [is] really Arundhatī. Only by arousing her will kuṇḍalinī arise spontaneously.

Commentary

According to yoga and tantra, Śakti is the universal energy that is inherent in consciousness and that brings about all of creation. The above verse states that śakti is really kuṇḍalinī. In this sense, kuṇḍalinī is the evolutionary energy, the creative potential of śakti in all beings, whether sentient or insentient. The word kuṇḍalinī comes from the root *kuṇḍa*, meaning a ‘pit’, such as a *havan* kuṇḍa, or a ‘deeper place’ such as a pond or lake. In human beings the kuṇḍalinī brings about individual creation by depositing the *cakra*, or psychic energy centers, and then descending downward through them, from the cosmic level at *sahasrāra*, the crown center, to *mūlādhāra*, the earthly or mundane level, at the perineum.

While the kundalinī descends through the cakra in order to create our manifest being, she is the evolutionary potential, transforming her cosmic potential into earthly existence. At every level, or cakra, the kundalinī deposits part of herself. These parts then combine to become the elements of our existence, starting with individual consciousness (*ajña cakra* at the mid-brain), and then space (*viśuddhi cakra* behind the throat), air (*anāhata cakra* behind the heart), fire (*manipura cakra* behind the navel), water (*swādhishṭhāna cakra*, behind the pubis) and finally earth (*mūlādhāra cakra* at the perineum). Each of these elements is stored in the relevant cakra, as a part of our core energy, for the duration of our life.

Having completed her descent from the unmanifest into the manifest dimension of existence, the kundalinī rests for a while in a dormant state at the mūlādhāra cakra, the root center, which equates to a deeper place. While resting, her cosmic, kinetic force becomes contracted and coiled, like a serpent, which sleeps inside the earth. During this dormant phase of creation, the kundalinī dreams our life on Earth, and we experience this earthly existence as if it were very real, very permanent, very important. Upon completion of this dormant phase, however, the kundalinī begins to awaken, to rise up, in order to return back to the source of her existence.

At this point in our evolution, the spiritual phase begins. The kundalinī slowly unwinds her coils, and stretches herself back up through the cakra, on her return journey to the cosmic dimension of consciousness. As she moves upward, from cakra to cakra, she raises the consciousness that had descended into the earthly existence along with her, and dissolves all the identifications and illusions of material life. In this way, she ultimately becomes our spiritual path and guides our consciousness back through higher and subtler states. Hence, the significance of kundalinī is actually three-fold. She is the creator, the sustainer, and also the dissolver of our individual being or nature. Like a mother, she brings us into this world, then patiently allows us to experience it fully, and finally returns us back to our spirit nature.

Hence, the teaching continues, that a wise person should move the kundalinī upward, from its location at the mūlādhāra cakra, the base, to manipura cakra, behind the navel, and then to

ajña cakra behind the eyebrow center. This upward movement of the kundalinī energy is called *śakticāla*. In order to achieve this, there are two essential practices: *sarasvatīcāla* and control of *prāṇa*. Sarasvatī is another name for *susumnā*, the subtle spiritual channel at the center of the spinal column. Sarasvatīcāla refers to the awakening of *susumnā*, and śakticāla to raising the kundalinī energy up the *susumnā*.

In most people, the *susumnā* channel remains closed and dormant. Only by awakening *susumnā* can the kundalinī arise spontaneously. *Susumnā* can be opened by controlling and equalising the *prāṇa* in *idā* and *piṅgalā nādīs*, the two major energy channels, which carry the mental and vital energies respectively. This is achieved by moderation of diet, yogic postures, and rotation of the *prāṇa* and the breath. Then, by regular practice, the kundalinī force begins to awaken and uncoil itself. In order for this cosmic potential to stretch out and straighten herself, she must first enter the mouth of *susumnā*, situated just above the mūlādhāra cakra, and rise up to manipura cakra and then *ajña cakra*. From *ajña cakra* the final upward movement of kundalinī to sahasrāra cakra takes place effortlessly.

The teacher further adds that those persons, who know the history of the past, also consider saraswati to be the same as Arundhatī, the esteemed and spiritually awakened wife of Rishi Vaśiṣṭha, who was one of the *sapta rishis*, the seven most venerated seers of ancient India. Arundhatī is respected, even today, for her chastity as well as learning. Her qualities are also seen to be those of saraswati, or *susumnā*, *nādī*. Being the spiritual channel in the human body, *susumnā* holds all knowledge, and is

beyond worldly desire. Arundhatī was said to be fully awakened, and her name comes from the root *arundhi*, meaning ‘to arise’, ‘to ascend’. When the kūṇḍalinī rises to the crown centre, one is said to be fully awakened.

Verses 10b to 18: Method of śakticāla

यस्याः संचालनेनैव स्वयं चलति कुण्डली ।

इडायां वहति प्राणे बद्ध्वा पद्मासनं दृढम् ॥१०॥

द्वादशाङ्गुलदैर्घ्यं च अम्बरं चतुरङ्गुलम् ।

विस्तीर्य तेन तनानार्डों वेष्टयित्वा ततः सुधीः ॥११॥

अङ्गुष्ठतर्जनीभ्यां तु हस्ताभ्यां धारयेद्वद्म् ।

स्वशक्त्या चालयेद्वामे दक्षिणेन पुनःपुनः ॥१२॥

मुहूर्तद्वयपर्यन्तं निर्भयाच्चालयेत्सुधीः ।

ऊर्ध्वमाकर्षयेत्किंचित्सुषुम्नां कुण्डलीगताम् ॥१३॥

तेन कुण्डलिनी तस्याः सुषुम्नाया मुखं ब्रजेत् ।

जहाति तस्मात्प्राणोऽयं सुषुम्नां ब्रजति स्वतः ॥१४॥

तुन्दे तु तानं कुर्याच्च कण्ठसंकोचने कृते ।

सरस्वत्यां चालनेन वक्षसश्चोर्ध्वगो मरुत् ॥१५॥

सूर्येण रेचयेद्वायुं सरस्वत्यास्तु चालने ।

कण्ठसंकोचनं कृत्वा वक्षसश्चोर्ध्वगो मरुत् ॥१६॥

तस्मात्संचालयेनित्यं शब्दगर्भं सरस्वतीम् ।

यस्याः संचालनेनैव योगी रोगैः प्रमुच्यते ॥१७॥

गुल्मं जलोदरः प्लीहा ये चान्ये तुन्दमध्यगाः ।

सर्वे ते शक्तिचालने रोगा नायन्ति निश्चयम् ॥१८॥

idāyām vahati prāne baddhvā padmāsanam dr̥dham (10b)

dvādaśāṅguladairghyam ca ambaram caturaṅgulam

vistīrya tena tanānādīm veṣṭayitvā tataḥ sudhīḥ (11)

aṅguṣṭhatarjanībhyaṁ tu hastābhyaṁ dhārayeddvadham

svaśaktyā cālayedvāme dakshiṇena punahpunah (12)

muhūrtadvayaparyantam nirbhayaaccālayetsudhīḥ

ūrdhvamākarşayetkiṁcitsuṣumnāṁ kuṇḍalīgatām (13)

tena kuṇḍalinī tasyāḥ suṣumnāyā mukham vrajet

jahāti tasmātprāṇo ‘yam suṣumnāṁ vrajati svataḥ (14)

tunde tu tānam kuryācca kaṇṭhasaṁkocane krte

sarasvatyāṁ cālanena vakṣasaścordhvago marut (15)

sūryeṇa recayedvāyum sarasvatyāstu cālane

kaṇṭhasaṁkocanam kr̥tvā vakṣasaścordhvago marut (16)

tasmātsaṁcālayennityam śabdagarbhā sarasvatīm

yasyāḥ saṁcālanenaiva yogī rogaiḥ pramucyate (17)

gulmaṁ jalodaraḥ plīhā ye cānye tundamadhyagāḥ

sarve te śakticālena rogā nāyanti niścayam (18)

Anvay

prāṇe: when the prāṇa; *vahati*: passes; *idāyām*: through ida; *sudhīḥ*: wise man; *dṛḍham*: firmly; *baddhvā*: bound; *padmāsanam*: padmāsana; *vistīrya*: having expanded; *nādīm*: nādī; *dairghyam*: length; *dvādaśa-aṅgula*: twelve fingers; *ca*: and; *ambaram*: circumference; *catuḥ-aṅgulam*: four fingers; *dhārayet*: he should hold; *tanā*: continually; *veṣṭayitvā*: enclosing; *aṅguṣṭha-tarjanībhyaṁ*: with the thumb [and] forefingers; *dvadham hastābhyaṁ*: of both hands; *punahpunah*: repeatedly; *cālayet*: stir up; *svaśaktyā*: śakti; *dakshiṇena vāme*: from right to left; *sudhīḥ*: wise man; *cālayet*: stir up; *nirbhayāt*: fearlessly; *paryantam*: for the duration; *muhūrta-dvaya*: two muhūrtas (48 minutes); *ākarşayet*: he should draw; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *kiṁcit*: a little; *kuṇḍalī*: kuṇḍalinī; *gatām*: goes into; *suṣumnām*: suṣumnā, central nādī; *tena*: thus; *kuṇḍalinī*: kuṇḍalinī; *vrajet*: enters; *mukham*: mouth; *tasyāḥ suṣumnāyāḥ*: of the suṣumnā; *ayam prāṇah*: the prāṇa; *jahāti*: departs; *tasmāt*: from there; *vrajati*: enters; *suṣumnām*: suṣumnā; *svataḥ*: of its own accord; *kuryāt tānam*: he should expand; *tunde*: abdomen; *saṁkocane krte*: by contracting; *kaṇṭha*: throat; *cālanena sarasvatyām*: by agitating in *sarasvatī*; *marut*: prāṇa; *ūrdhvagāḥ*: going upwards; *vakṣasah*: chest; *vāyum recayet*: he should exhale; *sūryeṇa*: through the right nostril; *āstu cālane sarasvatī*: continuing to agitate *sarasvatī*; *saṁkocanam kr̥tvā*: by contracting; *kaṇṭha*: throat; *marut*: prāṇa; *ūrdhvagāḥ*: going upwards; *vakṣasah*: chest; *tasmāt*: therefore; *nityam saṁcālayet sarasvatīm*: he should continually stir up *sarasvatī*; *garbhā*: womb; *śabda*: sound; *eva*: simply; *saṁcālanena yasyāḥ*: by arousing her; *yogī pramucyate*: yogin is freed; *rogaiḥ*: from disease; *gulmam*: gulma, disease of the spleen; *jalodaraḥ*: *jalodara*, dropsy; *plīhā*: plīha, disease of the spleen; *ca*: and; *sarve anye rogāḥ*: all other diseases; *tunda-madhyā-gāḥ*: arising within the abdomen; *niścayam*: certainly; *nāyanti*: are prevented;

śakticālena: by śakticāla.

Translation

When the prāṇa passes through *idā*, [then] the wise man, firmly bound [in] padmāsana, having expanded the nādī the length [of] twelve fingers and circumference [of] four fingers, should hold [the lower ribs] continually enclosing [them] with the thumb [and] forefingers of both hands, [and] repeatedly stir up the śakti from right to left. The wise man should stir [it] up fearlessly for the duration [of] two muhūrtas. He should draw [it] upwards a little [so that] the kuṇḍalinī goes into *suṣumnā*.

Thus kuṇḍalinī enters the mouth of the suṣumnā. The prāṇa departs from there [and] enters suṣumnā of its own accord. He should expand the abdomen by contracting the throat. By agitating in *sarasvatī*, the prāṇa, going upwards, [reaches] the chest. He should exhale through the right nostril, [while] continuing to agitate *sarasvatī* [and] contracting the throat, the prāṇa goes upwards [from] the chest. Therefore he should continually stir up *sarasvatī* [whose] womb [is of] sound. Simply by arousing her, the yogin is freed from disease. Diseases of the spleen, dropsy, and all other diseases arising within the abdomen are certainly prevented by śakticāla.

Technique: Arousing Śakti

Sit in padmāsana, if it is comfortable for you, or in another locked meditative pose of your choice. Allow the body to become calm and still. Become aware of the natural breath. Breathe slowly and rhythmically without any effort or strain.

Become aware of suṣumnā nādī, the spiritual channel through which kuṇḍalinī arises. See it arising from a point below the coccyx and just above mūlādhāra cakra, and flowing upward through the center of the spinal column to the crown of the head. See the major cakras attached to suṣumnā, each in their proper place: mūlādhāra at the perineum, swādhiṣṭhāna at the coccyx, maṇipura behind the navel, anāhata behind the heart, viśuddhi behind the throat pit, and ajña at the mid-brain.

Next, begin to sense or to imagine the *idā* (mental) and *pingalā* (vital) energy channels, which arise from mūlādhāra cakra. See *idā* arising from the left of mūlādhāra, and *piṅgalā* from the right. These two energy channels spiral upward, merging with suṣumnā, and then crossing over at each cakra junction.

Focus on the pathway of *idā*, curving to the left from mūlādhāra and crossing swādhiṣṭhāna. From swādhiṣṭhāna, *idā* curves to the right and crosses maṇipura. From maṇipura, *idā* curves to the left and crosses anāhata. From anāhata, *idā* curves to the right and crosses viśuddhi. From viśuddhi, *idā* curves to the left and terminates at ajña.

Now imagine or feel a stream of prāṇaśakti, in the form of white light, passing through the *idā* pathway. See or feel the white light, expanding upward through *idā* for about twelve fingers, or nine inches, to the level of the maṇipura cakra. The width of the channel also expands with light to about four fingers, or three inches.

At this point, place both hands on the lower part of the ribcage, continually enclosing it, with the thumbs behind and the four fingers in front. Repeatedly stir up the prāṇaśakti fearlessly from left to right and right to left for as long as you feel comfortable to do so. The duration can be gradually increased to a period of two hours. Draw the prāṇaśakti upward little by little, so that the kuṇḍalinī enters the suṣumnā channel at maṇipura cakra, behind the navel.

Raising Śakti up suṣumnā

When the kuṇḍalinī enters suṣumnā, the prāṇaśakti departs from ida nādī and enters suṣumnā of its own accord. Perform *jālandhara bandha*, the throat lock, by bending the head forward and contracting the throat. Simultaneously, expand and contract the abdomen, agitating the kuṇḍalinī in suṣumnā, so that it flows upward and reaches the anāhata cakra in chest region.

Become aware of the breath, flowing through the nostrils. Imagine or feel the breath flowing in through the left nostril and out through the right. Continue to perform jālandhara bandha, contraction of the throat, and agitate the kuṇḍalinī in suṣumnā, so that the kuṇḍalinī flows upward from anāhata cakra in the chest region to viśuddhi cakra behind the throat, and then to ajña cakra, at the mid-brain.

In this way, the yogi should continually stir up the kuṇḍalinī in suṣumnā, which is the womb of sound. Different subtle *nāda*, or psychic sounds, emanate from suṣumnā, such as bells, flute, conch, vina and so on. As the kuṇḍalinī ascends, these sounds can be heard from within the consciousness itself. By following these subtle sound vibrations, the kuṇḍalinī ascends through the cakra, and reaches bindu, at the top back of the head, and ultimately sahasrāra, at the crown.

Therefore, the yogi should continually stir up the kuṇḍalinī in suṣumnā. One is freed from disease simply by arousing the kuṇḍalinī and raising her through suṣumnā. Diseases of the spleen, the abdomen, dropsy and all other diseases are averted by the practice of śakticāla.

Verses 19 to 21: Kumbhaka, retention of the breath

प्राणरोधमथेदानीं प्रवक्ष्यामि समासतः ।

प्राणश्च देहयो वायुरायामः कुम्भकः स्मृतिः ॥१९॥

स एव द्विविधः प्रोक्तः सहितः केवलस्तथा ।

यावत्केवलसिद्धिः स्यात्तावत्सहितमभ्यसेत् ॥२०॥

सूर्योज्जायी शीतली च भस्त्री चैव चतुर्थिका ।

भेदैरेव समं कुम्भो यः स्यात्सहितकुम्भकः ॥२१॥

prāṇarodhamathedānīm pravakṣyāmi samāsataḥ

prāṇaśca dehayo vāyurāyāmaḥ kumbhakaḥ smṛtiḥ (19)

sa eva dvividhaḥ proktāḥ sahitāḥ kevalastathā

yāvatkevalasiddhiḥ syāttāvatsahitamabhyaset (20)

sūryojjāyī śītalī ca bhastri caiva caturthikā

bhedaireva samām kumbho yaḥ syātsahitakumbhakaḥ (21)

Anvay

atha idānīm: so now; *pravakṣyāmi*: I shall explain; *samāsataḥ*: succinctly; *prāṇa-rodham*: suppression of prāṇa; *āyāmaḥ*: movement; *vāyuḥ*: air; *dehayah*: in the body; *ca*: and; *smṛtiḥ*: is called; *kumbhakah*: breath retention; *sa proktah*: it is said; *eva*: just; *dvividhaḥ*: of two kinds; *sahitaḥ*: by practice; *kevalaḥ*: spontaneous, absolute; *yāvat . . . tāvat*: as long as; *abhyaset*: one practises; *sahitam*: by practice; *syāt*: one will have; *kevala-siddhiḥ*: power of absolute; *kumbhah*: closing of the nostrils and mouth; *samam*: same; *caturthikā bhedaiḥ*: in the four parts; *eva*: namely; *sūrya ujjāyī śītalī ca bhastrī*: *sūrya*, *ujjāyī*, *śītalī* and *bhastrī*; *yāḥ syāt*: this is; *sahitakumbhakah*: sahita kumbhaka.

Translation

So now, I shall explain succinctly the suppression of prāṇa. Prāṇa is the movement [of] vital air in the body and [its retention] is called *kumbhaka*. It is said [to be] just of two kinds, *sahita* and *kevala*. As long as he practises *sahita*, he will have the power of *kevala*. The closing of the nostrils and the mouth [is] the same in the four parts, namely *sūrya*, *ujjāyī*, *śītalī* and *bhastrī*. This is *sahita kumbhaka*.

Commentary

Kumbhaka, the retention of breath or prāṇa, is the basis of prāṇāyāma. Prāṇa is the vital energy or life force, constantly moving in all beings, and which also moves in and out with the breath. Ordinarily, the prāṇa of an individual moves throughout the body, and also flows outside, whenever the senses connect with people, places and things. Every interaction is an exchange of prāṇa. The practice of kumbhaka developed, because the yogis of old wished to conserve their prāṇa in order to awaken the consciousness.

The word kumbhaka comes from the root *kumbha*, meaning a ‘vessel’ or ‘pot’. In order to retain the breath inside, the diaphragm expands, so that the belly forms a pot, where the air is stored for a duration of time. There are two types of kumbhaka: *sahita*, retention practised by intentionally holding the breath, and *kevala*, spontaneous breath retention. Sahita or intentional retention is also of two types: *antar kumbhaka*, where the breath is held inside, following inhalation, and *bahir kumbhaka*, where the breath is held outside, following exhalation.

The practice of sahita kumbhaka leads to kevala kumbhaka, where breath suspension takes place by itself, during deep meditation, as an alternate state of consciousness arises. During this state the pressure in the lungs becomes the same as the atmospheric pressure, allowing the respiratory process to cease and the lungs to stop their activity. When the breath ceases, the mind becomes totally still, and the veil that separates the mind from the higher consciousness is raised. Therefore, the most important aspect of prāṇāyāma is kumbhaka, and in the ancient texts prāṇāyāma is also known as kumbhaka.

In order to master kumbhaka, the yogi must gradually gain control over the breathing process. For this reason great emphasis has been placed on the inhalation and exhalation during prāṇāyāma practice. Control of the breath leads to control of prāṇa, and control of prāṇa leads to control of the mind. By regulating the flow of breath, one can calm the mind in preparation for higher meditation. Hence, the above verse states that the yogi, who practises sahita prāṇāyāma, will have the power of *kevala*, the power to transcend the mind and experience the pure consciousness.

Sahita kumbhaka involves the breathing process and extension of the breath, because it is practised; whereas, kevala kumbhaka, which arises spontaneously, does not. A number of prāṇāyāma practices are therefore included in the sahita category. The above verse mentions four methods: (i) *sūrya*, (ii) *ujjāyī*, (iii) *śītalī*, and (iv) *bhastrī*. Each of these practices involves a particular type of inhalation and exhalation, for the regulation of the prāṇas and the mind. However, all four utilise the same method of retention, so these comprise sahita kumbhaka.

Verses 22 to 23: Preparation for kumbhaka

पवित्रे निर्जने देशे शर्करादिविवर्जिते ।

धनुःप्रमाणपर्यन्ते शीताग्निजलवर्जिते ॥२२॥

पवित्रे नात्युच्चनीचे ह्यासने सुखदे सखे ।

बद्धपद्मासनं कृत्वा सरस्वत्यास्तु चालनम् ॥२३॥

pavitre nirjane deśe śarkarādivivarjite

dhanuhpramāṇaparyante śītāgnijalavarjite (22)

pavitre nātyuccanīce hyāsana sukhade sakhe

baddhapadmāsanam kṛtvā sarasvatyāstu cālanam (23)

Anvay

kṛtvā padmāsanam: seated in *padmāsana*; *baddha*: firmly; *āsane*: on a seat; *sukhade*: pleasant; *sakhe*: favourable; *pavitre*: pure; *nāti*: not too; *uccanīce*: high or low; *deśe*: in a place; *pavitre*: sacred; *nirjane*: solitary; *vivarjite*: free from; *śarkara-ādi*: grit etc; *pramāṇa-paryante*: of the length; *dhanuh*: bow; *varjite*: without; *śīta*: cold; *agni*: fire; *jala*: water; *āstu*: one should remain; *cālanam sarasvatī*: stirring up *sarasvatī*.

Translation

Seated firmly in *padmāsana* on a pleasant [and] favourable seat [which is] pure [and] not too high or low, in a sacred [and] solitary place free from grit etc, of the length [of] a bow, without cold, fire [or] water, he should remain stirring up *sarasvatī*.

Commentary

In modern times *prāṇāyāma* is generally practised on a yoga mat or cushion, in a yoga room or studio. These verses describe how the yogis of old prepared for the practice. Being more flexible and used to sitting on the floor or the ground, they used the balanced and locked position of padmasana, the lotus pose, which most yogis could maintain easily for long durations. They traditionally sat on a seat, which was not too high or too low. The seat should not be too high, so that if they entered a trance state during the practice, there was no chance of falling from the seat. The seat should not be too low, so that insects or rodents would not crawl on the body and disturb the practice.

The seat should also be favorable and pure, ie., sweet smelling, clean and comfortable to sit on. For this purpose they often placed a mound of special grasses, such as kusa grass, which was then covered by a deer skin and a soft clean cloth. The seat would be freshened each day with freshly cut grasses and a clean cloth, to maintain its purity. The seat measured about one metre, the length of a bow, and should be free from dirt or grit. A quiet and solitary place was chosen for the practice, generally in a forest under a spreading tree, on a river bank, in a secluded cave, or on the side of a hill. The most favorable and sacred place would be where another yogi had practised *sādhana* or *tapasya* and achieved higher states of meditation.

In such an auspicious setting, which is free from excessive cold or heat, fire or smoke, and which is dry and protected from the rain and sun, the yogi should remain seated, constantly stirring up the saraswatī, or raising the prāṇa up the suṣumnā nādī in preparation for the practice of prāṇāyāma.

Verses 24 to 26a: Sūryabheda kumbhaka

दक्षनाड्या समाकृष्टं बहिष्ठं पवनं शनैः ।

यथेष्टं पूरयेद्वायुं रेचयेदिड्या ततः ॥२४॥

कपालशोधने वापि रेचयेत्पवनं शनैः ।

चतुष्कं वातदोषं तु कृमिदोषं निहन्ति च ॥२५॥

पुनः पुनरिदं कार्यं सूर्यभेददमुदाहृतम् ।२६।

dakṣanādyā samākṛṣya bahiṣṭham pavanam śanaiḥ

yatheṣṭam pūrayedvāyūṇ recayedidaya tatah (24)

kapālaśodhane vāpi recayetpavanam śanaiḥ

catuṣkam vātadoṣam tu kṛmidoṣam nihanti ca (25)

punah punaridam kāryam sūryabhedadamudāhṛtam (26a)

Anvay

samākṛṣya: having drawn in; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *pavanam*: air; *bahiṣṭham*: from outside; *dakṣa-nādyā*: through the right nostril; *vāyūṇ pūrayet*: he should inhale; *yatheṣṭam*: for as long as he wants; *tatah*: then; *recayet*: exhale; *iḍaya*: through the left; *śodhane*: after purifying; *kapāla*: skull; *pavanam recayet*: he should exhale; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *nihanti*: destroys; *catuṣkam*: four; *vāta-doṣam*: *vāta* diseases; *ca*: and; *kṛmi-doṣam*: disease of worms; *idam kāryam*: this should be done; *punah punah*: repeatedly; *tam udāhṛtam*: this is called; *sūryabeda*: *sūryabeda*.

Translation

Having slowly drawn in the air from outside through the right nostril, he should inhale for as long as he wants, [and] then exhale through the left [nostril]. After purifying the skull, he should exhale slowly. [This] destroys the four *vāta* diseases and the disease of worms. This should be done repeatedly. This is called *sūryabeda*.

Commentary

Sūryabeda is the first kumbhaka described here, although it is not commonly taught nowadays. The word *sūrya* means ‘sun’, and in this context it refers to the vitalising power of the piṅgalā nādī. The word *bheda* means ‘to pierce’ or ‘to pass through’. So, *sūryabeda* is a practice that activates the vital energy by piercing the piṅgalā nādī, which is associated with the flow of breath through the right nostril.

Technique

Sit in padmāsana or any comfortable meditation āsana. Allow the body to relax completely and the mind to become still. Become aware of the breath. Practice slow rhythmic breathing. While inhaling, raise the prāṇa with the breath up the suṣumnā pathway from mūlādhāra cakra (at the perineum) to maṇipura cakra (behind the navel). Hold the breath and the prāṇa at maṇipura for a few seconds. Exhale slowly and return the prāṇa from maṇipura to mūlādhāra through the suṣumnā. Go on activating the prāṇa in suṣumnā in this way until you feel the maṇipura cakra becoming vibrant and heated.

Raise the right hand in front of the face and close the left nostril with the ring finger. Inhale slowly through the right nostril, drawing the breath up the suṣumnā from manipura to ajña cakra at the mid-brain. Continue the inhalation for as long as comfortable. At the end of inhalation hold the breath at ajña, inside the cranium, for a few seconds and feel the energy purifying the cranium and skull.

Close the right nostril with the thumb and release the left nostril. Exhale slowly through the left nostril, descending back down the suṣumnā with the breath and energy from ajña to manipura chakra, behind the navel. This is one round. Continue the practice for ten to twenty rounds.

Sūryabheda kumbhaka activates the piṅgalā nāḍī by inhaling through the right nostril. However, this action is balanced by exhaling through the left nostril, which stimulates the idā nāḍī, associated with the mental or passive energy. By activating the vital and mental forces in this way, sūryabheda rebalances the three *doṣas*, or humours, in the body: *kapha* (mucus), *pitta* (acid or bile) and *vāta* (wind). Regular practice of this prāṇāyāma thereby removes the four *vāta* disorders: (i) gas and indigestion, (ii) constipation, (iii) nervousness and palsy, and (iv) anxiety and stress; along with the disease of worms.

Verses 26b to 29: Ujjāyī kumbhaka

मुखं संयम्य नाडिभ्यामाकृष्टं पवनं शनैः ॥२६॥

यथा लगति कण्ठात् हृदयावधि सस्वनम् ।

पूर्ववत्कुम्भयेत्राणं रेचयेदिडया ततः ॥२७॥

शीषोदितानलहरं गलश्लेष्महरं परम् ।

सर्वरोगहरं पुण्यं देहानलविवर्धनम् ॥२८॥

नाडीजलोदरं धातुगतदोषविनाशनम् ।

गच्छतस्तिष्ठतः कार्यमुज्जायाख्यं तु कुम्भकम् ॥२९॥

mukham samyamyam nāḍibhyāmākṛṣya pavanam śanaiḥ (26b)

yathā lagati kanṭhāttu hr̥dayāvadhi sasvanam

pūrvavatkumbhayetprāṇam recayedidaya tataḥ (27)

śīrṣoditānaharam galaśleśmaharam param

sarvarogaharam puṇyam dehānalavivardhanam (28)

nādījalodaram dhātugatadośavināśanam

gacchatastiṣṭhataḥ kāryamujjāyākhyam tu kumbhakam (29)

Anvay

śanaiḥ: slowly; *ākr̥ṣya*: drawing in; *pavanam*: breath; *nādibhyām*: through both nostrils; *mukham*: mouth; *samyamyam*: closed; *lagati*: he holds; *sasvanam*: its sound; *kaṇṭhāt*: from the throat; *hṛdayāvadhi*: to the heart; *yathā*: as long as; *kumbhayet prāṇam*: he restrains the *prāṇa*; *pūrvavat*: as before; *tataḥ*: then; *recayet*: exhales; *iḍayā*: through the left; *haram*: destroys; *anala*: fire; *udita*: produced; *śīrṣa*: head; *ślesma*: phlegm; *gala*: throat; *param*: afterwards; *sarva-roga*: all sicknesses; *vividhanam*: increasing; *anala*: digestive power; *deha*: body; *puṇyam*: purifying; *vināśanam*: it removes; *dosa*: diseases; *gata*: arising in; *nādī-jalodaram dhātu*: *nādīs*, *jalodara*, *dhātus*; *tu kumbhakam*: this kumbhaka; *ākhyam*: is called; *ujjāya*: *ujjāyī*; *kāryam*: is to be done; *gacchatah-tiṣṭhataḥ*: walking or standing.

Translation

Slowly drawing in the breath through both nostrils, mouth closed, he holds its sound from the throat to the heart as long as [he wishes]. He restrains the *prāṇa* as before, then exhales through the left [nostril]. [This] destroys the fire produced [in] the head, the phlegm [in] the throat [and] afterwards destroys all sicknesses, [thereby] increasing the digestive power [in] the body [and] purifying [it]. It removes diseases arising in the *nādīs*, *jalodara* [and] *dhātus*. This kumbhaka is called *ujjāyī* [and] is to be done walking or standing.

Commentary

Ujjāyī kumbhaka is a relaxing practice, also known as ‘psychic breathing’. The word *ujjāyī* comes from the root *jaya*, meaning ‘victorious’. This method can be done anywhere, even while standing or walking. However, it is useful to develop the practice while sitting, as it is very subtle and brings about a deep introverted state rapidly and effortlessly. *Ujjāyī* has been integrated into different meditation practices, such as *japa* and *ajapa japa*, because it takes place spontaneously, when the awareness enters deeper states of consciousness. It is an important adjunct to the practices of *kriya yoga* and *prāṇa vidya*, and may also be practised together with the techniques of *hatha yoga*.

In *ujjāyī*, the upper region of the throat is contracted slightly, so that the breath produces a gentle snoring sound, like the breathing of a sleeping baby. This sound can be heard from within by the practitioner, but should not be forced or loud enough to be heard by others outside.

Technique

Sit in any comfortable meditation posture. Relax the entire body from head to toe. Feel the body becoming calm and still. Become aware of the natural breath. Begin to practise slow rhythmic breathing. Feel the smooth even flow of breath through both nostrils. Keep the mouth closed.

Slowly draw the breath in through both nostrils, while contracting the glottis slightly, so that a sonorous sound can be heard in the throat, Descend with the inhalation and the sound from the throat

to the region of the heart. Retain the breath inside the chest for a comfortable duration.

Then, raising the right hand in front of the face, close the right nostril with the thumb. Exhale slowly through the left nostril, contracting the glottis. Ascend from the heart region to the throat with the ujjāyī exhalation and the sonorous sound. Practice ten to twenty rounds, or continue the practice for five to ten minutes.

The practice of ujjāyī calms the mind and alleviates anger, fear, stress and anxiety. It effectively removes phlegm from the throat and manages mucus-related disorders. It increases the digestive power and purifies the digestive tract, which helps to destroy all disease. It rebalances the nāḍīs, and removes disorders related with the energy flows. It manages conditions of water retention, such as dropsy and edema, and restores the body tissues and vital force.

Verses 30 and 31: Śītalī kumbhaka

जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्टं पूर्ववत्कुम्भकादनु ।

शनैस्तु घ्राणरन्ध्राभ्यां रेचयेदनिलं सुधीः ॥३०॥

गुल्मप्लीहादिकान्दोषान्क्षयं पित्तं ज्वरं तृषाम् ।

विषाणि शीतली नाम कुम्भकोऽयं निहन्ति च ॥३१॥

jihvayā vāyumākṛṣya pūrvavatkumbhakādanu

śanaistu ghrāṇarandhrābhyaṁ recayedanilam sudhīḥ (30)

gulmaplīhādikāndoṣāṅkṣayam pittam jvaram trṣām

viṣāṇi śītalī nāma kumbhako ‘yam nihanti ca (31)

Anvay

ākṛṣya: after drawing in; *vāyum*: breath; *jihvayā*: through the tongue; *anu*: then; *kumbhakāt*: retaining; *pūrvavat*: as before; *sudhīḥ*: wise man; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *anilam recayet*: should exhale; *ghrāṇarandhrābhyaṁ*: through both nostrils; *ayam kumbhakah*: this breath retention; *nāma śītalī*: called *śītalī*; *nihanti kṣayam*: causes the removal; *doṣān*: diseases; *ādikān*: such as; *gulma plīha*: diseases of the spleen; *pittam*: bile; *jvaram*: fever; *trṣām*: thirst; *ca viṣāṇi*: and poisons.

Translation

After drawing in the breath through the tongue, then retaining [it] as before, the wise man should slowly exhale through both nostrils. This breath retention called *śītalī* causes the removal [of] diseases such as *gulma*, *plīha*, bile, fever, thirst and poisons.

Commentary

The word *śītalī* means ‘cooling’ or ‘calming’. This kumbhaka cools the body and relaxes the mind. It is performed by breathing in through the rolled tongue, which cools the ingoing breath before it enters the throat and lungs.

Technique

Sit in a comfortable meditation position. Close the eyes and relax the whole body. Allow the breath to become slow and rhythmic. Open the mouth and extend the tongue. Roll the tongue, so that the sides curl upward and inward, forming a tube. The front of the tongue should protrude beyond the lips.

Slowly inhale through the tube-like aperture, formed by the rolled tongue. While inhaling draw the breath and the awareness downward into the chest cavity. At the end of inhalation, withdraw the tongue and close the mouth. Hold the breath inside, relaxing the diaphragm, for a comfortable duration. Exhale slowly through both nostrils. This is one round. Perform ten to twenty rounds, or practice for five to ten minutes.

This breath retention, called śītalī kumbhaka, is very powerful. It removes diseases, such as enlarged spleen and stomach, and other conditions, such as fever, excess bile, hunger, thirst, and poisons.

Verses 32 to 39: Bhastrika kumbhaka

ततः पद्मासनं बद्ध्या समग्रीवोदरः सुधीः ।

मुखं संयम्य यत्नेन प्राणं घ्राणेन रेचयेत् ॥३२॥

यथा लगति कण्ठात् कपाले सस्वनं ततः ।

वेगेन पूरयेत् किंचिद्भृत्पद्मावधि मारुतम् ॥३३॥

पुनविरचयेत्तद्वत्पूरयेच्च पुनः पुनः ।

यथैव लोहकाराणां भस्त्रा वेगेन चाल्यते ॥३४॥

यथैव स्वशरीरस्थं चालयेत्पवनं शनैः ।

यथा श्रमो भवेद्देह तथा सूर्येण पूरयेत् ॥३५॥

यथोदरं भवेत्पूर्णं पवनेन तथा लघु ।

धारयन्नासिकामध्यं तर्जनीभ्यां विना दृढम् ॥३६॥

कुम्भकं पूर्ववत्कृत्वा रेचयेदिड्यानिलम् ।

कण्ठोत्थितानलहरं शरीराग्निविवर्दनम् ॥३७॥

कुण्डलीबोदहकं पुण्यं पापघ्नं शुभदं सुखम् ।

ब्रह्मनाडीमुखान्तस्थकफाद्वर्गलनाशनम् ॥३८॥

गुणत्रयसमुद्भूतग्रन्थित्रयविमेदकम् ।

विशेषैव कर्तव्यं भस्त्राख्यं कुम्भं त्विदम् ॥३१॥

tataḥ padmāsanam baddhvā samagrīvodataraḥ sudhīḥ

mukhaṁ samyamya yatnena prāṇam ghrānena recayet (32)

yathā lagati kanṭhāttu kapāle sasvanam tataḥ

vegena pūrayet kiṁciddhṛtpadmāvadhi mārutam (33)

punarvirecayettadvatpūrayecca punaḥ punaḥ

yathaiva lohakārāṇāṁ bhastrā vegenā cālyate (34)

yathaiva svaśarīrastham cālayetpavanam śanaiḥ

yathā śramo bhaveddeha tathā sūryeṇa pūrayet (35)

yathodaram bhavetpūrṇam pavanena tathā laghu

dhārayannāsikāmadhyam tarjanībhyaṁ vinā dṛḍham (36)

kumbhakam pūrvavatkṛtvā recayedidāyānilam

kanṭhotthitānalaharam śarīrāgnivivardanam (37)

kuṇḍalībodhakam puṇyam pāpaghnam śubhadam sukham

brahmanādīmukhāntasthakaphāddargalanāśanam (38)

guṇatrayasamudbhūtagranthitrayavibhedakam

višeṣenaiva kartavyam bhastrākhyam kumbhakam tvidam (39)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; baddhvā padmāsanam: having assumed padmāsana; grīva: neck; udarah: abdomen; sama: upright; sudhīḥ: wise man; mukham: mouth; samyamya: closed; recayet: should exhale; yatnena: with effort; ghrānena: through the nose; yathā lagati: as soon as this ensues; pūrayet: he should draw; mārutam: breath; vegenā: with force; adhi: upwards; padmau: from the feet; dhṛt: holding; kiṁcit: a while; tataḥ: then; sasvanam: loudly; kanṭhāt: from the neck; kapāle: into the skull; tadvat: in the same way; virecayet: he should exhale; punaḥ: again; ca: and; pūrayet: he should inhale; punaḥ punaḥ: again and again; yatha eva: just as; bhastrāḥ: bellows; lohakārāṇāṁ: of blacksmiths; cālyate: are moved; vegenā: with force; yatha eva: so; śanaiḥ: slowly; cālayet: he should move; pavanam: air; svaśarīrastham: within his own body; yathā: if; deha: body; bhavet: becomes; śramah: weary; tathā: then; pūrayet: he should inhale; sūryeṇa: through the right nostril; yathā: if; udaram: belly; bhavet: becomes; pūrṇam: full; pavanena: with air; tathā: then; laghu: quickly; dhārayat: pressing; madhyam: centre; nāsikā: nostrils; dṛḍham: firmly; vinā tarjanībhyaṁ: not with the forefingers; kṛtvā kumbhakam: retaining the breath; pūrvavat: as before; recayet anilam: he should exhale; idāyā: through the left nostril; haram: destroys; anala: bile; utthita: rising up; kanṭha: throat; vivardanam: increases; agni: digestive fire; śarīra: body; bodhakam: arouses; kuṇḍalī: kuṇḍalinī; puṇyam: purifies;

pāpaghnām: destroying sins; *śubhadam*: gives auspiciousness; *sukham*: happiness; *nāśanam*: destroys; *argala*: bolt; *ādi*: beginning; *kapha*: phlegm; *antastha*: is at the end; *mukha*: mouth; *brahmanādī*: *brahmanādī*; *vibhedakam*: it pierces; *granthi-traya*: three *granthis*, knots; *samudbhūta*: produced by; *guṇa-traya*: three *guṇas*, characteristics; *idam kumbhakam*: this kumbhaka; *ākhyam*: called; *bhastrā*: bellows [breath]; *viśeṣena*: especially; *kartavyam*: should be performed.

Translation

Then, the wise man having assumed padmāsana, neck and abdomen upright, mouth closed, should exhale with effort through the nose. As soon as this ensues, he should draw the breath with force upwards from the feet, then loudly from the neck into the skull, holding [it] a while. In the same way he should exhale again, and inhale again and again. Just as the bellows of blacksmiths are moved with force, so he should slowly move the air within his own body. If the body becomes weary, then he should inhale through the right nostril. If the belly becomes full of air, then quickly pressing the centre [of] the nostrils firmly [but] not with the forefingers, [and] retaining the breath as before, he should exhale through the left nostril.

[This kumbhaka] destroys the bile rising up the throat, increases the digestive fire [of] the body, arouses kundalini, purifies [by] destroying sins, gives auspiciousness [and] happiness, [and] destroys the bolt [of] the beginning [of] phlegm [which] is at the end [of] the mouth [of] *brahmanādī*. It pierces the three *granthis* produced by the three *guṇas*. This kumbhaka, called bellows [breath], should be especially performed.

Commentary

The word *bhastrika* comes from the root *bhastra*, meaning ‘bellows’. Hence, it is known as the bellows breathing. Just as the blacksmith of old fanned the fire of his trade with the bellows, this kumbhaka fans the yogic fire within the abdomen. Bhastrika is a dynamic prāṇāyāma, which utilises forceful breathing to draw air in and out of the lungs. In this way, it activates the maṇipura cakra, located behind the navel, and increases the internal heat. Regular practice of bhastrika is an important method of purification, because it burns up all the impurities accumulated in the body, whether physical, pranic or mental.

Technique

Sit in padmāsana, the lotus posture, or in any comfortable meditation position. Ensure that the head, neck and spine are upright. Relax the whole body from head to toe. Close the mouth and breath through the nose.

Exhale forcefully through the nose. At the end of exhalation, draw the breath in with force, mentally directing it upward through the body from the feet to the chest, and then loudly from the neck into the head. Hold the breath for a few moments, focusing at ajña cakra at the mid brain, and then exhale forcefully through the nose.

Go on exhaling and inhaling forcefully in the same way, again and again. Move the air through your own body, just as the blacksmith fans the fire forcefully with his bellows.

If the body becomes tired, close the left nostril, pressing it with the middle finger, and inhale forcefully through the right nostril. If the abdomen fills with air, press the center of both nostrils firmly with the middle finger and the thumb at the end of inhalation. Retain the breath as before, and then exhale through the left nostril.

Bhastrika kumbhaka has many benefits. It increases the digestive fire and improves the entire digestive process, preventing regurgitation of bile and acid in the throat. It arouses the kuṇḍalinī śakti and removes the bolt of phlegm at the mouth of *brahmaṇādī*, the innermost channel of suṣumnā, allowing the kuṇḍalinī force to arise unimpeded. It purifies the entire system, destroys negative propensities, and bestows auspiciousness and happiness upon the practitioner.

This kumbhaka pierces the three *granthis*, or psychic knots, which bind us into the material dimension by inhibiting our spiritual evolution. These three knots include: *brahma* granthi, the knot of procreation, *viṣṇu* granthi, the knot of sustaining and loving life, and *rudra* granthi, the knot of fearing dissolution. These three *granthis*, which affect all who are born, are the product of the three *guṇas*, or qualities of nature: *sattwa* (balance), *rajas* (dynamism) and *tamas* (stability). For these reasons, the above verses recommend that bhaktrika kumbhaka should be especially performed.

Verses 40 and 41: Three bandhas

चतुर्णामपि भेदानां कुम्भके समुपस्थिते ।

बन्धत्रयमिदं कार्यं योगिभिर्वित्कल्पशैः ॥४०॥

प्रथमो मूलबन्धस्तु द्वितीयोङ्गीयणाभिधः ।

जालन्धरस्तृतीयस्तु तेषां लक्षणमुच्यते ॥४१॥

caturṇāmapi bhedānām kumbhake samupasthite

bandhatravyamidam kāryam yogibhirvītakalmaśaiḥ (40)

prathamo mūlabandhastu dvittiyoddīyaṇābhidhah

jālandharastrīyastu teṣāṁ lakṣaṇamucyate (41)

Anvay

caturṇām api bhedānām: through those four means; *kumbhake samupasthite*: when kumbhaka is imminent; *idam bandha-trayam*: these three bandhas; *kāryam*: should be performed; *yogibhiḥ*: by the yogins; *vītakalmaśaiḥ*: who are untainted; *prathamaḥ*: first; *mūlabandhah*: perineal lock; *dvittīya*: second; *ābhidhah*: is called; *uddīyana*: abdominal lock; *tu*: and; *trīyah*: third; *jālandhara*: throat lock; *lakṣaṇam*: detailed description; *teṣām*: of them; *ucyate*: is given.

Translation

Through those four means, when kumbhaka is imminent, these three bandhas should be performed by the yogins, who are untainted. The first [is] *mūlabandha*; the second is called *uddīyana* and the third *jālandhara*. A detailed description of them is given [here].

Commentary

The ‘four means’ referred to above are the four prāṇāyāmas: sūryabheda, ujjāyī, śitalī and bhastrika. While performing these practices, at the time of kumbhaka, the three *bandhas*, or psychic locks, should be applied. The bandhas have a powerful effect on the prāṇas, nādīs and cakras. Therefore, one

should undergo purification through diet, lifestyle and practice, before utilising them. The bandhas should be applied while performing kumbhaka in the following order: first, mūlabandha, the perineal lock; second, uddīyana bandha, the abdominal lock, and third, jālandhara, the throat lock. Although it is recommended here to apply the three bandhas during kumbhaka, it is very important to establish them first, by practicing one bandha at a time. A detailed description of each bandha is given in the following verses.

Verses 42 to 46: Mūlabandha

अधोगतिमपानं वै ऊर्ध्वं कुरुते बलात् ।

आकुञ्जनेन तं प्रहुर्मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते ॥४२॥

अपाने चोर्ध्वं याते संप्राप्ते वह्निमण्डले ।

ततोऽनलशिखा दीर्घा वर्धते वायुनाहता ॥४३॥

ततो यातौ वह्न्यपानौ प्राणमुष्णस्वरूपकम् ।

तेनात्यन्तप्रदीप्तेन ज्वलनो देहजस्तथा ॥४४॥

तेन कुण्डलिनी सुप्ता संतप्ता संप्रबुध्यते ।

दण्डाहतभुजङ्गेव निःश्वस्य ऋजुतां व्रजेत् ॥४५॥

बिलप्रवेशितो यत्र ब्रह्मनाड्यन्तरं व्रजेत् ।

तस्मान्नित्यं मूलबन्धः कर्तव्यो योगिभिः सदा ॥४६॥

adhogatimapānam vai ūrdhvagam kurute balāt

ākuñcanena tam prahurmūlabandho ‘yamucyate (42)

apāne cordhvage yāte samprāpte vahnimaṇdale

tato ‘nalaśikhā dīrghā vardhate vāyunāhatā (43)

tato yātau vahnyapānau prāṇamuṣṭasvarūpakam

tenātyantapradīptena jvalano dehajastathā (44)

tena kuṇḍalinī suptā saṃtaptā samprabudhyate

daṇḍāhatabhujaṅgeva niḥsvasya ṛjutām vrajet (45)

bilapraveśito yatra brahmaṇādyantaram vrajet

tasmānnityam mūlabandhah kartavyo yogibhiḥ sadā (46)

Anvay

apāna: one of the five prāṇas, flowing in-between the waist and the pelvic floor; *adhogatim*: downward movement; *balāt*: forcibly; *kurute*: is made; *ūrdhvagam*: go upwards; *ākuñcanena*: by bending forward; *ayam prahuḥ*: this offering; *ucyate*: is called; *mūlabandhah*: perineal lock; *ca*: and; *apāne yāte ūrdhvage*: when *apāna* goes upwards; *samprāpte*: arriving at; *mandale*: sphere; *vahni*: agni; *tataḥ*: then; *śikhā*: flame; *anala*: agni; *vardhate*: grows; *dīrghā*: long; *vāyunā-āhatā*: buffeted by *vāyu*; *tataḥ*: then; *vahni-apānau*: agni and *apāna*; *svarūpakam*: in the form; *uṣṇa*: heat; *yātau*: enter; *prāṇam*: one of the five pranas, flowing sideways from the diaphragm to the waist; *tenāt*: through this; *atyanta*: powerfully; *pradīptena*: blazing; *jvalanah*: fire; *tathā*: thus; *deha-jah*: is produced in the body; *tena*: so; *suptā kūḍalinī*: sleeping kūḍalinī; *samprabudhyate*: is awakened; *samaptā*: glowing heat; *nīḥsvasya*: hissing; *vrajet*: becomes; *rjutām*: erect; *iva*: like; *bhujanga*: snake; *āhata*: struck; *danda*: stick; *praveśitah*: it enters; *bila*: opening; *brahmanādī*: subtlest channel within the sushumna; *vrajet*: moving; *antaram yatra*: inside there; *tasmāt*: therefore; *mūlabandhah*: perineal lock; *sadā*: always; *kartavyah*: should be practised; *nityam*: daily; *yogibhiḥ*: by the yogins.

Translation

Apāna, [which has] a downward movement, is forcibly made [to] go upwards by bending forward. This offering is called *mūlabandha*. And when *apāna* goes upwards, arriving at the sphere [of] agni, then the flame [of] agni grows long, buffeted by *vāyu*. Then agni and *apāna*, in the form [of] heat, enter prāṇa. Through this [process], a powerfully blazing fire is thus produced in the body, [and] so the sleeping kūḍalinī is awakened [by] its glowing heat. [Then the kūḍalinī], hissing, becomes erect like a snake struck [by] a stick. It enters the opening [of] *brahmanādi*, moving inside there. Therefore, *mūlabandha* should always be practised daily by the yogins.

Commentary

Mūlabandha, the perineal lock, is an important practice for the awakening of kūḍalinī. It is said that the kūḍalinī force lies in a dormant state at the mūlādhāra cakra until it is awakened. Normally, *apāna* prāṇa flows downward in the body from the waist to the pelvic floor. This downward flow of energy is responsible for the elimination processes, such as urination, defecation, expulsion of gas and wind, reproductive fluids and even the fetus at the time of birth. In this process, the downward flow of energy is generally lost as the waste products leave the body. However, by applying mūlabandha, the downward flow of *apāna* is reversed and directed upward. This reversal of the downward flow of *apāna* by the application of mūlabandha activates mūlādhāra cakra and awakens the kūḍalinī force.

Technique

Sit in siddhāsana or any other comfortable meditation āsana. Allow the body to become calm and still. Become aware of the natural breath, flowing in and out.

Inhale slowly and deeply through both nostrils. At the end of inhalation, hold the breath inside and bend forward slightly. Pulling upward with the muscles of the pelvic floor, contract the perineum, midway between the urinary organ and the anal sphincter. In females, the contraction should take place in the upper vagina, where it meets the cervix.

Hold the contraction and the breath for a few moments. Experience the combined kumbhaka with contraction, reversing the downward flow of *apāna* energy. Continue holding the contraction and the breath, and feel the energy rising from the pelvic floor, upward into the sphere of *agni*, or fire, located behind the navel.

With the merging of apāna into the circle of agni, behind the navel, the flame of fire becomes long, extending upward towards the sphere of vāyu, or air, in the region of the heart. Feel the flame, being fanned by vāyu, grows hotter and stronger.

Now, agni and apāna, in the form of heat, enter the field of prāna at the maṇipura cakra, the psychic center behind the navel in suṣumnā. This process produces a powerful, blazing fire in the body, which is known as the yogic fire.

The sleeping kundalinī is awakened by the glowing heat of this fire. Hissing, the kundalinī uncoils herself and becomes erect. Then, she enters the opening of brahmanādī, the subtlest channel of suṣumnā, and arises inside from there.

Hence, mūlabandha is a major method of kundalinī yoga, and should be practised daily by the yogins.

Verses 47 to 50: Uddiyāna bandha

कुम्भकान्ते रेचकादौ कर्तव्यस्तूङ्गियाणकः ।

बन्धो येन सुषुम्नायां प्राणस्तूङ्गीयते यतः ॥४७॥

तस्मादुङ्गीयणाख्योऽयं योगिभिः समुदाहृतः ।

सति वज्रासने पादौ कराभ्या धारयेद्वदम् ॥४८॥

गुल्फदेशसमीपे च कन्दं तत्र प्रपीडेत् ।

पश्चिमं ताणमुदरे धारयेद्वदये गले ॥४९॥

शनैः शनैर्यदा प्राणस्तुन्दसन्धिं निगच्छति ।

तुन्ददोषं विनिर्धूय कर्तव्यं सततं शनैः ॥५०॥

kumbhakānte recakādau kartavyastūddiyāṇakah

bandho yena suṣumnāyām prāṇastūḍḍītyate yataḥ (47)

tasmāduḍḍīyanākhyo ‘yam yogibhiḥ samudāhṛtah

sati vajrāsane pādau karābhya dhārayeddvadham (48)

gulphadeśasamīpe ca kandaṁ tatra prapīdet

paścimam tāṇamudare dhārayeddhrdaye gale (49)

śanaiḥ śanairyadā prāṇastundasandhim nigacchati

tundadoṣam vinirdhūya kartavyam satataṁ śanaiḥ (50)

Anvay

tu: now; uddiyānakah: abdominal lock; kartavyah: should be performed; kumbhaka-anta: at the end of kumbhaka; recaka-ādau: at the beginning of exhalation; yatah: because; yena: through this; prāṇa uddīyate: flies up; suṣumnāyām: suṣumnā; ayam bandhaḥ: this bandha; tasmāt: therefore; samudāhṛtaḥ: is called; uddīyaṇa: uddīyaṇa; yogibhiḥ: by yogins; sati: remaining; vajrāsane: in vajrāsana; dhārayet: one should grasp; dvadham: both; pādau: feet; karābhyaḥ: with both hands; ca: and; prapīdet: one should press; tatra: there; kandam: kanda; deśa: place; samīpe: near; gulpha: ankles; dhārayet: one should hold; śanaiḥ śanaiḥ: very slowly; paścimam: back side; tānam: thread, nādī; udare: in the abdomen; hrdaye: in the heart; gale: in the throat; yadā: when; prāṇah: prāṇa; nigacchati: reaches; sandhim: junction; tunda: navel; vinirdhūya: it drives away; doṣam: disease; tunda: navel; kartavyam: should be done; satatam: regularly.

Translation

Now *uddīyaṇa* should be performed at the end of kumbhaka [and] the beginning of exhalation. Because through this [practice] prāṇa flies up suṣumnā, this bandha is therefore called *uddīyaṇa* by yogins. Remaining in *vajrāsana*, one should firmly grasp the feet with both hands, and press there the *kanda* [at] the place near the ankles. One should very slowly hold the [awareness] at the back side [of] the thread or nādī in the abdomen, heart [and] throat. When prāṇa reaches the junction [of] the navel, it drives away disease [in] the navel. [So the practice] should be done regularly.

Commentary

Uddīyaṇa bandha, the abdominal lock, is another important practice of kundalinī yoga. The word *uddīyaṇa* comes from the root *ud*, meaning ‘to raise up’ or ‘to fly upward’. This abdominal contraction activates the kundalinī and directs it upward on its ascent through the brahmanādī, within the suṣumnā. The above verse says that *uddīyaṇa* should be initiated at the end of internal kumbhaka, and the beginning of exhalation. This description of *uddīyaṇa* bandha is different to the practice, as it is taught today, and is not found in other classical yoga texts, although the result of the practice is the same, ie. the prāṇa flies upward through suṣumnā.

The above verse recommends *uddīyaṇa* bandha to be performed, while sitting in the posture of *vajrāsana*. Refer to the explanation given for *vajrāsana* in the previous verses (4-6) for clarification on this position. *Vajrāsana* was earlier known as *muktāsana*, or *guptāsana*, both being different names for the posture of *siddhāsana*. The technique further mentions the *kanda*, which is the root of the nādīs, situated in the pelvic region, in-between the navel and the anus. Activation of the *kanda* causes the kundalinī to arise.

Technique

Sit quietly in *siddhāsana* and relax the entire body from head to toe. Allow the body to become steady and still. Become aware of the natural breath flowing in and out through the nostrils.

Breathe in slowly and deeply. Hold the breath inside for a comfortable duration. Towards the end of internal retention, just before exhalation, firmly grasp the feet with both hands, and press the *kanda* in-between the ankles and the navel.

Exhaling slowly, rotate the prāṇa upward through suṣumnā, the thread behind, to the abdomen, heart and throat. At the end of exhalation, bring the prāṇa and the awareness straight back to the navel.

Hold the breath outside and contract the abdomen, pulling the navel inward towards the back and then drawing it upward. Hold the contraction and the external retention for as long as you feel comfortable.

When the external retention is complete, release the abdominal contraction and the hold on the ankles. Relax and allow the breath to normalise before beginning the next round.

When the prāṇa is activated at the navel by this lock, it triggers manipura chakra and the storehouse of prāṇa situated there. This energy boosts the entire system and regulates the digestive organs, removing disease in the abdominal region. Yogis often suffer from digestive ailments due to the introverted sādhanas they perform. Therefore, this practice should be done by them regularly.

Verses 51 to 55: Jālandhara bandha

पूरकान्ते तु कर्तव्यो बन्धो जालन्धराभिधः ।

कण्ठसंकोचरूपोऽसौ वायुमार्गनिरोधकः ॥५१॥

अधस्तात्कुञ्चनेनाशु कण्ठसंकोचने कृते ।

मध्ये पश्चिमताणेन स्यात्प्राणो ब्रह्मनाडिगः ॥५२॥

पूर्वोक्तेन क्रमेणैव सम्यगासनमास्थितः

चालनं तु सरस्वत्याः कृत्वा प्राणं निरोधयेत् ॥५३॥

प्रथमे दिवसे कार्यं कुम्भकानां चुतष्यम् ।

प्रत्येकं दशसंख्याकं द्वितीये पञ्चमिस्तथा ॥५४॥

विंशत्यलं तृतीयेऽहि पञ्चवृद्ध्या दिनेदिने ।

कर्तव्यः कुम्भको नित्यं बन्धत्रयसमन्वितः ॥५५॥

pūrakānte tu kartavyo bandho jālandharābhidhah

kañṭhasaṁkocarūpo ‘sau vāyumārganirodhakah (51)

adhastātkuñcanenāśu kañṭhasaṁkocane krte

madhye paścimatāṇena syātprāṇo brahmanāḍigah (52)

pūrvoktena kramenaiva samyagāsanamāsthitaḥ

cālanaṁ tu sarasvatyāḥ kr̥tvā prāṇam nirodhayet (53)

prathame divase kāryam kumbhakānāṁ cutasyam

pratyekam daśasaṁkhyākam dvitīye pañcabhistathā (54)

viṁśatyalam tr̥tīye ‘hni pañcavṛddhyā dinedine

kartavyah kumbhako nityam bandhatrayasamanvitah (55)

Anvay

tu: now; *bandhaḥ:* bandha, lock; *abhidhaḥ:* of the name; *jālandhara:* jālandhara; *kartavyah:* is to be done; *pūrakāntē:* at the end of inhalation; *asau:* this; *rūpah:* form; *samkoca:* contraction; *kaṇṭha:* throat; *nirodhakah:* obstructing; *vāyu-mārga:* path of vāyu; *kaṇṭha-samkocane krte:* when the throat is contracted; *āśu:* quickly; *kuñcnena:* by bending; *ad hastāt:* down; *prāṇah:* prāṇa; *syāt:* is; *paścimā-tāṇena:* on the western thread; *madhye:* in the middle; *brahmaṇāḍī-gaḥ:* on its way through brahmaṇāḍī; *āsthitaḥ:* staying in; *samyak āsanam:* same posture; *pūrvoktena:* as before; *tu:* and; *cālanam kṛtvā:* stirring up; *sarasvatyāḥ:* sarasvatī; *kramena:* gradually; *nirodhayet:* one controls; *prāṇam:* prāṇa; *prathame divase:* on the first day; *catuh:* four; *kāryam:* should be done; *dvitīye:* on the second; *daśa-samkhyākam:* ten times; *tathā:* then; *pañcabhiḥ:* five; *pratyekam:* singly; *trītye ahni:* on the third day; *viṁśati-alam:* twenty times; *kumbhakah kartavyah:* kumbhaka should be practised; *nityam:* always; *samanvitah:* together with; *bandha-traya:* three bandhas; *pañca-vrddhyā:* with an increase of five; *dinedine:* each day.

Translation

Now the bandha of the name jālandhara is to be done at the end of inhalation. This [bandha is of] the form [of] contraction [of] the throat, obstructing the path of vāyu. When the throat is contracted by quickly bending down, the prāṇa is on the western thread in the middle on its way through brahmaṇāḍī. Staying in the same posture as before and stirring up sarasvatī, one gradually controls the prāṇa. On the first day, four [rounds] of kumbhaka should be done, on the second [day], ten times, then five singly, [and] on the third day twenty times. Kumbhaka should always be practised together with the three bandhas [and] with an increase of five [rounds] each day.

Commentary

Jālandhara bandha is the throat lock. The word *jālan* means ‘net’ and the word *dhara*, ‘stream’ or ‘flow’. Hence, the flow of prāṇa and consciousness is netted and locked at the throat by this bandha. The practice of bandha is ancient and relates to the tantric concept of *amrit*, or immortal nectar, the energy of life that drips downward continually from the moon at *bindu visarga*, the point at the top back of the head. This flow of nectar is a higher form of energy, responsible for the prāṇa and consciousness, which maintain the life of the individual. If this energy can be retained in the region of the head, it heightens perception of the subtle dimensions of knowledge and existence. If it is allowed to fall down into the body, however, it is used up by the physical processes, which leads to degeneration, old age and ultimately death.

Yogis of old, therefore, practised jālandhara bandha in order to net this energy of life and redirect it back to the higher regions in the head. When this energy falls down into the body, it first passes through *viśuddhi cakra*, at the throat region, where it gets spent in speech and emotional expression. From there, it passes down to *manipura cakra*, behind the navel, where it is consumed by the metabolic and digestive fire, as well as the activities in the external world. The remaining energy falls down to the lower cakras, *mūlādhāra* and *swādhishthana*, where it is transformed into *ojas* or sexual energy, and discharged through sexual attraction and interaction.

This pathway of the descent of life energy was well understood by the yogis of old, and they used the three bandhas to redirect this subtle force back up to the higher centers in the head. When the energy fell down to the throat region, it was redirected upward by jālandhara bandha. When it fell down further into the abdominal region, it was rechannelled by *uddiyāna* bandha. And when it fell into the

lower centres, the flow was reversed by mūla bandha. Although, the three bandhas should be mastered separately, later on, all three can be performed together. Then the practice is called *maha bandha*, the great lock.

Technique

Sit in siddhāsana, or any comfortable meditation posture. Place the hands on the knees with the palms facing downward. Relax the whole body, and allow it to become steady and still. Become aware of the natural breath. Focus on the breath, flowing in and out at the nose tip. Feel the breath becoming slow and even.

Bring the awareness down to the pelvic floor, and direct the flow of inhalation up the *brahmanādī*, at the center of suṣumnā, from mūlādhāra cakra at the base to ajña cakra at the mid-brain. Exhale back down from ajña to mūlādhāra, directing the flow of breath through the *brahmanādī*. Continue the rotation of breath and awareness up and down, stirring up the energy in suṣumnā.

Next, at the end of inhalation, when the breath reaches viśuddhi cakra behind the throat, quickly bend the head forward, so that the chin touches the chest. Hold the breath inside. Straighten the arms and press downward with the hands on the knees. Hold the breath retention and the throat lock for as long as you feel comfortable. Then bend the elbows, raise the head, and exhale slowly back down the *brahmanādī* to mūlādhāra cakra at the base.

Allow the breath to normalise, and then begin the next round. At first, four rounds of jālandhara kumbhaka can be done. Gradually increase the practice to ten rounds. Then do five rounds of each bandha: mūla bandha, uḍḍiyāna bandha and jālandhara bandha, one by one.

Finally, practise maha bandha at the end of exhalation, combining the three bandhas, one after the other, for five rounds. Remain in the same posture, and go on stirring up the energy in suṣumnā, gradually gaining control over the prāṇa. Increase the practice when you feel ready, five rounds at a time, up to twenty rounds.

Verses 56 to 58: First obstacle to yoga

दिवा सुप्तिर्निशायां तु जागरादतिमैथुनात् ।

बहुसंक्रमणं नित्यं रोधान्मूत्रपुरीषयोः ॥५६॥

विषमाशनदोषाच्च प्रयासप्राणचिन्तनात् ।

शीघ्रमुत्पद्यते रोगः स्तम्भयेद्यदि संयमी ॥५७॥

योगाभ्यासेन मे रोग उत्पन्न इति कथ्यते ।

ततोऽभ्यासं त्यजेदेवं प्रथमं विघ्नोच्यते ॥५८॥

divā suptirniśāyām tu jāgarādatimaithunāt

bahusamkramanam nityam rodhānmūtrapurīṣayoh (56)

viṣamāśanadoṣācca prayāsaprāṇacintanāt

śīghramutpadyate rogaḥ stambhayedyadi samyamī (57)

yogābhyaśena me roga utpanna iti kathyate

tato ‘bhyāsam tyajedevam̄ prathamam̄ vighnocyate (58)

Anvay

rogaḥ: disease; *śīghram*: quickly; *utpadyate*: is caused; *suptih*: by sleeping; *divā*: during the day; *jāgarāt-ati*: by staying awake late; *niśāyām*: at night; *bahu maithunāt*: by too much sexual intercourse; *nityam saṃkramanām*: continual socialising; *rodhān*: obstructions; *mūtra-purīṣayoh*: urine [and] faeces; *doṣāt*: by the bad habit; *viṣamāśana*: irregular eating; *ca*: and; *prāṇa*: energy; *cintanāt* *prayāsa*: through mental exertion; *yadi*: if; *samyamī*: yogin; *stambhayet*: stops; *iti kathyate*: saying; *me rogaḥ*: my disease; *utpannah*: has appeared; *yoga-abhyāsena*: through the practice of yoga; *tataḥ*: then; *tyajet*: he gives up; *abhyāsam*: practice; *evam ucyate*: this is said; *prathamam vighna*: first obstacle.

Translation

Disease is quickly caused by sleeping during the day, staying awake late at night, too much sexual intercourse, continual socialising, obstructions [of] urine [and] faeces, bad habit [of] irregular eating and [too much] energy through mental exertion. If the yogin stops [the practice], saying ‘My disease has appeared through the practice of yoga’, then he gives up his practice. This is said [to be] the first obstacle [to yoga].

Commentary

The above verses explain very simply the causes of disease, which have all become a way of life in our time. The first causes given are: irregular sleeping hours, sleeping during the day and staying awake late at night. The natural sleep cycle should be about eight hours per night, and in rhythm with the sun. The sun rises around six am and sets around six pm, with seasonal variations and also depending on location. However, in the modern world, many people prefer to stay up past midnight and then get up much later. Traditionally, the best time for yoga and meditation is at dawn, in-between four and six am. This is a special time, known as *brahma muhurta*, when the environment is very pure and still. Similarly, in the evening, the best time is at dusk, in-between four and six pm. These two times of the day also relate with an increased flow of *sushumna*, which is very helpful for achieving inner experience.

However, it is not possible for a person to practice regularly at dawn and at dusk, without first regulating the sleep patterns. As long as one is in the habit of sleeping late, one will arise late, because a certain amount of sleep is needed each night. Adequate sleep is essential for the health and balance of the entire system. In modern life, where the entire society goes to sleep late, it becomes difficult to sleep earlier. The vibrations all around do not support silence, introversion and rest. If one sleeps late and gets up early, sleep deprivation arises, which can lead to chronic stress and low energy. In order to get the proper amount of sleep, one sleeps during the day. This imbalanced sleep cycle becomes a habit and causes disease over time.

The second cause of disease is excessive sexual activity. Sexual emissions are not waste products. They are a vital form of energy, known as *ojas*, which has the possibility to create new life. When this

energy is overused, it depletes the nervous system and the prana. Excessive sexual drive is counter-productive for yogis, and causes weakness and disease in the society. This is why *brahmacārya*, or sexual abstention, was practised by the yogis of old. Nowadays, moderation in sexual activity is recommended. One may also consider the energy exchange that takes place with each sexual interaction. This is why it is recommended in yoga to engage with one partner, rather than with many. For a person, who is addicted to sexuality with many partners, progress in yoga becomes remote, and disease draws near.

The number three cause of disease is continual socialising. This is very interesting, because in modern life, socialising is regarded as healthy. The more one socialises, the better integrated and accepted one is. Many people keep appointment books with meetings at every possible hour of the day. They feel that unless this book is filled, their lives are not meaningful. The yogi, on the other hand, regards socialising as a necessary evil, and only complies when absolutely necessary. This is because constant socialising extroverts the mind and keeps it on high alert. Even when one has a quiet moment, thoughts of previous conversations and interactions fill the mind with unease, stress and fruitless expectations. The need for continual socialising causes an energetic imbalance, which develops from a young age, and becomes a cause of disease, as we get older, without our even realising it.

The number four cause of disease is obstruction of urine and faeces. Urinary blockage may be caused by urinary tract infection or disease, or stones in the kidney or urinary tract. In later years, men may suffer urinary blockage due to enlarged prostate gland. Constipation, or difficulty in eliminating faeces, has many causes, such as: busy and stressful lifestyle, fast food, dry and hard food from packets, dehydration, and inadequate exercise. Obstruction of elimination is the mother of all diseases, and leads to chronic energy imbalance, toxicity and dullness. The yogic practitioner, who suffers from this condition, will need to adjust the diet, lifestyle and yoga practice accordingly, so that these problems are eliminated.

The number five cause of disease is irregularity in eating and poor food choices. In order to progress in yoga, the diet and lifestyle must be regulated and sattvic. The food one chooses to eat on a daily basis should be light, pure and fresh. Instead of combining many food items, meals should be simple, consisting of two or three items. Food should be well cooked, but not overcooked, with a minimum of raw food. Meal timings should be planned around the movement of the sun, which relates with the digestive fire in the body. So, just after sunrise, a small meal can be taken. When the sun is at its zenith, around noon, a large meal can be assimilated. Later on, just after sunset, a small meal can be consumed. By following these dietary guidelines, the yogic practitioner avoids many diseases.

The number six cause of disease is excessive mental exertion, which is also a symptom of modern life. Many of us are mentally active all day and into the night. Although we may try to get some physical exercise, the mental activity far exceeds the physical. This creates a basic and chronic energetic imbalance, which may be at the root of many diseases that people suffer today. When we use the mind in a focused way, such as study, research and contemplation, mental energy is utilised. When the mind is used in an unfocused way, such as entertainment, socialising, day dreaming, fantasising, mental energy is dissipated. Mental energy is more subtle and powerful than physical energy, and it easily becomes discharged, like a battery. When the mind runs on low energy, it becomes flat and stress levels rise. This is another major cause of disease.

When the yogi believes that disease has arisen due to the practice of yoga, rather than to the actual causes referred to above, he or she faces the first obstruction to yoga. This obstacle is very difficult to overcome, and arises at some point during the *sādhana* for most practitioners, because everyone born in the body is susceptible to disease. When this obstruction arises, the yogi should recognise the real

causes of disease, and work to eliminate them. In this way, the yoga practice may be temporarily adjusted to suit the condition, and then resumed more seriously, when the disease passes. However, if one blames yoga for the disease, his/her practice will be given up and perhaps never resumed. The most valuable asset of the yogi is the practice. He or she must be determined to maintain it, even in the most difficult situations, such as loss of health and welfare. The practice may be reduced; it may be hidden, but it should never be blamed as the cause of disease and given up.

Verses 59 to 61: Following nine obstacles

द्वितीय संशयाख्यं च तृतीयं च प्रमत्तता ।

आलस्याख्यं चतुर्थं च निद्रारूपं तु पञ्चमम् ॥५९॥

षष्ठं तु विरतिप्राप्तिः सप्तमं परिकीर्तितम् ।

विषमं चाष्टमं चैव अनास्था नवमं सूतम् ॥६०॥

अलब्धिर्योगतत्त्वस्य दशमं प्रोच्यते बुधैः ।

इत्येतद्विद्वन्दशकं विचारेण त्यजेद्गुह्यः ॥६१॥

dvitīya samśayākhyam ca trtīyam ca pramattatā

ālasyākhyam caturtham ca nindrārūpam tu pañcamam (59)

saṣṭham tu viratirbhrāntih saptamam parikīrtitam

viṣamam cāṣṭamam caiva anāsthā navamam smṛtam (60)

alabdhiryogatattvasya daśamam procyate budhaiḥ

ityetadvighnadaśakam vicārena tyajedbudhah (61)

Anvay

dvitīya: second; *ākhyam*: is called; *saṃśaya*: doubt; *trtīyam*: third; *pramattatā*: inattentiveness; *caturtham*: fourth; *ālasya*: laziness; *pañcamam*: fifth; *nindrārūpam*: sleep; *saṣṭham*: sixth; *viratiḥ*: erratic; *saptamam*: seventh; *bhrāntih*: confusion; *aṣṭamam*: eighth; *viṣamam*: distress; *navamam*: ninth; *anāsthā*: lack of faith; *ca*: and; *daśamam*: tenth; *procyate*: is called; *budhaiḥ*: by the wise; *alabdhīḥ*: inability to attain; *yoga-tattvasya*: essence of yoga; *iti*: thus; *vicārena*: after reflecting; *budhah*: wise one; *tyajet*: should forgo; *etat daśakam vighna*: these ten obstacles.

Translation

The second is called doubt, the third inattentiveness, the fourth laziness, the fifth sleep, the sixth erratic [practice], the seventh confusion, the eighth distress, the ninth lack of faith, and the tenth is called by the wise the inability to attain the essence of yoga. Thus, after reflecting [on these], the wise one should forgo these ten obstacles.

Commentary

The serious practitioner of yoga needs to understand and recognise the obstructions that may arise during the period of sādhana. In the earlier teaching, the sādhana given here is prāṇāyāma and bandha. However, the same obstructions may arise in the course of other sādhanas as well. The above verses enumerate the following nine obstructions: (ii) doubt, (iii) inattentiveness, (iv) laziness, (v) sleep, (vi) irregular practice, (vii) confusion, (viii) distress, (ix) lack of faith, and (x) inability to attain the subtle states of yoga.

Doubt is the second obstruction to sadhana, because it becomes an obsession and weakens the resolve to practice. Doubt may arise for many reasons, for example: we are unsure that the practice is correct or the best one for us. We feel there may be another better practice, or a different system, which will help us attain our goals more easily or quickly. We begin to doubt the teacher and the teaching related with the practice, and start to look around for other teachers, systems and techniques. This obstruction is probably more difficult to overcome today, than it was in the past, because there is so much intellectualisation, and there are so many teachers and teachings. Yoga practice does not yield instantaneous results; it needs to be continued assiduously, over a long period of time. This requires commitment and dedication. As soon as doubt arises, one must have the willpower to dispel it. Otherwise, one will leave the practice in search of another and then another.

With each new practice, the will and the commitment to continue grow weaker, until the practice can no longer be sustained. We have all heard the story about the man, who needed water for his crops, and decided to dig a well. A douser recommended a good place to find water, and the man began to dig. In a few days he had dug down about 30 feet, but still he found no water. So, he gave up on that place, and decided to choose another. In the second place that was selected, he dug down about 25 feet, and then began to think that there would be no water there either. So, he climbed out of the second well, and went in search of another location. The man continued in this way, and after several months he had dug about 50 wells, but he never did find any water. This is the story of many yoga practitioners. Therefore, doubt needs to be managed, if one is to progress in the practice. Doubt is easily managed by one who has already attained some spiritual experience. In the absence of experience, however, one must rely on positive associations, study of spiritual teachings and biographies, and firm resolution.

Inattentiveness is the third obstruction, which reduces our ability to succeed at anything, whether inner work or outer work. When we say that our concentration is poor, we really mean our ability to remain attentive is weak. We develop the habit of inattention from an early age. As soon as our interest in some person, someplace or something wanes, we become inattentive. All activities require a certain degree of attention, whether mental or physical, and yoga is no different. In fact, the actual purpose of yoga and meditation is really to develop and direct our attention, to become attentive at will, and remain attentive for longer periods of time. The only difference is the object and plane of attention. With family, social or professional engagements, the attention remains outside. In yoga, however, the attention is focused within oneself, depending on the specific yoga technique or meditation. This is why a person with high levels of stress and dissipation often finds yoga very difficult, although the practice in itself may not be difficult at all. By regular yoga practice and the combination of different systems of yoga, we gradually retrain the mind to become attentive and remain attentive at will. This attention, which is developed through yoga, is required in order to attain deeper experiences on the inner path. In fact, it is the quality of attention that determines the level of yoga that one has attained.

Laziness, the fourth obstruction, is the bane of all practitioners. The yogis of old aimed to practise for several hours daily. In order to achieve this, they had to adjust their diet and lifestyle, reducing outside

activities to a minimum. The diet should be simple and bland; the lifestyle regulated and quiet. Meeting with family, friends and associates was deferred, so that more time could be devoted to solitude and practice. Although this may seem like the ideal sort of life for a yogi, it may also lead to laziness, because there is no external stimulation, no external demand or expectation to get one moving, to get things done. The yogi must find the motivation from within to follow the discipline and continue the practice, day in and day out. In the beginning the practice may go well, because one is strict about the regimen. But later on, there will be lapses. One will think, I don't want to practise just now. Maybe I can just sit in the sun and skip the practice. The mind can conjure up many excuses to take a rest or do something else. In this way, laziness slowly sets in. When this happens, the energy and the will power dissipate, and the practice becomes difficult to sustain.

Sleep is the fifth obstruction. Here sleep does not just refer to the time one spends in bed at night, or even in naps during the day. The obstacle arises when one goes deep into meditation, and then sleeps intervenes. The purpose of yoga is ultimately to discover the more subtle states of consciousness, the subconscious, the unconscious and the superconscious. The problem arises, because these are the states normally reserved for sleep. When we enter these states, we habitually fall asleep. In the absence of an experienced teacher or guide, it is difficult to know whether the mind is awake and attentive or asleep in the deep states of consciousness. Even the yogi, who practises regularly and is able to enter the deeper consciousness at will, may succumb to sleep in these states, without knowing it. This can actually lead to regression in the path of yoga, and must be avoided. But how to avoid it, when one readily falls into sleep. This is why intensive yoga practice was only recommended for advanced practitioners, who had control over wakefulness and sleep in all states and conditions.

Irregular practice is the sixth obstacle in yoga. A regular practice, performed at regular times of the day, seems easy to follow. But again, over time, regularity in practice becomes very difficult to sustain. Regularity is one of the most important lifestyle observances. It is really the difference between success and failure in sadhana and higher yoga. In order to be regular in practice, one must be regular in all activities throughout the day: eating, sleeping, walking, talking, relaxing and exercising. Any lapse in regularity will disturb the practice. In fact, the smoother and more regulated the lifestyle, the deeper and easier the practice becomes. However, the mind is easily bored with this type of regulated lifestyle and practice, and seeks distractions and diversions in illusive ways. It gives many excuses to vary the routine, to have an outing, to meet with so and so. After some time, the constant barrage from the mind becomes overwhelming, and slowly one starts to give in. The practice will be done a little later, in the evening or tomorrow. First it happens once, then twice, and then, just like that, the practice is disturbed and upended.

Confusion is the seventh obstacle. Confusion arises when we are unable to see things in their proper light. The classic example of this is a man, who is out walking late at night. Just ahead of him, he sights a large serpent in the middle of the road. He begins to tremble with fear and trepidation. As he approaches the location, however, he sees that the serpent is actually a long, thick rope, dropped by a passerby earlier in the day. In the same way, we are confused about many things in sadhana and in life. For example, we may mistake emotion for devotion; we may think that violent breathing is prāṇāyāma; we may mistake tamas in our practice for sattwa; we may mistake egoistic feelings for exaltation. However, during a sustained yoga practice, even subtler confusions are sometimes experienced. We may see visions, hear voices, feel certain sensations or an unexplained presence, without knowing or understanding whether or not they are relevant or even real. We may enter into a state of total oblivion, and believe that we are in samādhi. This actually happened to our master, Swami Satyananda, when he was living with his guru, Swami Sivananda, in Rishikesh. Swami Sivananda immediately removed his confusion and instructed him about the correct way to practise in the future.

Distress is the eighth obstacle. Although the practitioner may expect the outcome of sādhana to be enlightenment or ecstasy, it is often necessary to go through periods of distress, unease, anxiety and pain, due to the systemic changes that intensive practice may bring about. With the regular practice of sādhana, the psyche is stimulated and sensitised, causing many old, painful and traumatic memories to arise. These memories may be relived many times over with total clarity, as if the event or situation were happening at the present moment. One may think that sādhana would bring up the positive and pleasant memories, but it is often the exact opposite. Our subconscious is the storehouse of memories, and many of these are unpleasant. Some are traumatic and difficult to re-experience time and time again. These painful memories act as powerful toxins in the psyche and must be removed before higher experiences can be attained. This is one of the main causes of distress during the entire course of sādhana.

Another cause of distress is the process of spiritual awakening itself. Any sādhana, which is performed regularly, will bring about an awakening of the prāṇas, nādīs and cakras. In the beginning there will be major blockages in one or several of these subtle energetic areas. The elevated energy, awakened by the practice, must be able to pass through on its upward journey to the higher centres, located in the head region and at the crown. In the normal course of daily life, the energies are allowed to leak and dissipate, but the yogic practitioner must learn to conserve the energy and plug the leaks. This means that more energy becomes available, which must be properly directed. The correct channel for spiritual energy is suṣumnā nādī, the central passage in the spinal column. However, if there is any blockage or imbalance in the suṣumnā, the energy may then travel up the wrong pathway, perhaps idā or piṅgalā, or another minor nādī in close proximity. Such an ascent of spiritual energy through the wrong channel can cause great distress on all levels, until the energy is brought back down and redirected up the proper channel.

Furthermore, there are nervous imbalances, which may arise due to irregular activation of the prāṇas and nādīs. These can cause distress at the mental and physical levels, which is difficult to treat by doctors or with medication. Introversion, depression, mood swings, restlessness, headaches, insomnia, diarrhea, constipation, infections, rashes, and pain of all kinds may arise without any external causes. During such times, one will have to ride it out, and keep faith in the power of the sādhana to restore the balance and regain the health. It may also become necessary to adjust or reduce the practice and the diet until the condition normalises.

Lack of faith is the ninth obstacle. Faith is different to belief. Many practitioners may believe in the power and efficacy of sādhana, because they have heard or read about it from reliable sources. On the strength of this belief, they may wish to take up a regular sādhana. Faith, however, is based on one's own inner knowledge and experience. It is, therefore, unique to oneself and cannot be replicated or copied. Faith is the greatest wealth of the sadhak or yogi. Faith lends strength and steadiness to the practice, so that it cannot be given up on any account. In the absence of faith, the sadhak will lack determination, and the practice will become subject to outside influences, motivations and desires. Instead of practising, one may prefer to go out and meet someone or do something else. Faith binds the practitioner to the practice, and to the higher consciousness and divine powers from within, which sustain, guide and support the practice. In this way, the sādhana becomes a constant expression of love and pulls the practitioner along effortlessly into the higher domains of self realisation.

Inability to attain the essence of yoga is the tenth obstacle, and also the culmination of all the above obstacles. Any one or combination of the above obstacles will lead the practitioner to this result. An inability to attain the subtle inner states and experiences of yoga is disturbing and disappointing for many practitioners. Some may even give up the practice on this account. One feels that inner progress is necessary and must be marked by certain experiences, just as outer progress is marked by certain

gains in the external world. Because outer gains often take place in a relatively short period, one expects that inner goals should also be experienced in such time frames. However, the mind will only open when it is ready; in the same way that a flower blooms only in the right season. In order to realise the essence or truth of yoga, the limited individual mind must expand to encompass the entire universe and dimensions beyond. This is the unity of the individual consciousness with the supreme consciousness, of the individual self with the supreme self, or godhead. Only the sadhak with great patience and fortitude can think of ever attaining such essence or truth.

Thus, after reflecting on the above obstructions, the wise sadhak should forgo these ten obstacles.

Verses 62 to 65: Merging apāna and prāṇa with agni

प्राणाभ्यासस्ततः कार्यो नित्यं सत्त्वस्थया धिया ।

सुषुम्ना लीयते चित्तं तथा वायुः प्रधावति ॥६२॥

शुष्के मले तु योगी च स्याद्विश्वलिता ततः ।

अधोगतिमपानं वै उर्ध्वं कुरुते बलात् ॥६३॥

आकुञ्जनेन तं प्राहुर्मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते ।

अपानश्वोर्ध्वगो भूत्वा वह्निं सह गच्छति ॥६४॥

प्राणस्थानं ततो वह्निः प्राणापानौ च सत्त्वरम् ।

मिलित्वा कुण्डलीं याति प्रसुप्ता कुण्डलाकृतिः ॥६५॥

prāṇābhyaśastataḥ kāryo nityam sattvasthayā dhiyā

suṣumnā līyate cittam tathā vāyuh pradhāvati (62)

śuṣke male tu yogī ca syādgatiścalitā tataḥ

adhogatimapānam vai urdhvagam kurute balāt (63)

ākuñcanena tam prāhurmūlabandho ‘yamucyate

apānaścordhvago bhūtvā vahninā saha gacchati (64)

prāṇasthānam tato vahniḥ prāṇāpānau ca satvaram

militvā kuṇḍalīm yāti prasuptā kuṇḍalākṛtiḥ (65)

Anvay

tataḥ: thus; *prāṇa-abhyāsaḥ*: practice of prāṇāyāma; *nityam*: always; *kāryaḥ*: should be performed; *dhiyā*: by meditating on; *sthayā*: steadily; *sattva*: purity; *tathā*: then; *cittam*: mind; *līyate*: is dissolved in; *suṣumnā*: suṣumnā; *vāyuh*: prāṇa; *pradhāvati*: pervades; *male śuṣke male*: when the impurities have

withered away; *ca*: and; *gatih-calitā*: with movement up; *tatah*: then; *syāt*: he becomes; *yogī*: yogin; *apāna*: apāna; *adhogatim*: moving downwards; *kurute urdhvagam*: should be raised upwards; *ākuñcanena prāhuḥ*: by contracting; *tam*: it; *balāt*: with force; *ayam ucyate*: this is called; *mūlabandhaḥ*: mūlabandha; *apānah*: apāna; *bhūtvā urdhvagah*: having been raised up; *gacchati*: moves to; *saha vahninā*: together with agni; *prāṇa-sthānam*: seat of prāṇa; *tatah vahnih*: then agni; *milityvā*: having united; *prāṇa-apānau*: prāṇa and apāna; *satvaram*: quickly; *yāti*: goes to; *kuṇḍalīm*: kuṇḍalinī; *kuṇḍalākṛtih*: coiled; *prasuptā*: fast asleep.

Translation

Thus the practice of prāṇāyāma should always be performed by meditating steadily on purity. Then the mind is dissolved in suṣumnā [and] prāṇa pervades [it]. When the impurities have withered away, and with movement up [the suṣumnā], he then becomes a yogin. Apāna moving downwards should be raised upwards by contracting it with force. This is called mūlabandha. Apāna, having been raised up, moves together with agni to the seat of prāṇa. Then agni, having united prāṇa and apāna, quickly goes to kuṇḍalinī [who is] coiled, fast asleep.

Commentary

In the 1900's when yoga was revived by international teachers coming out of India, and taught around the world, prāṇāyāma and meditation played a very minor role. Later on, many teachers began to teach yoga in their own countries, but their focus was āsana. They were not confident to teach prāṇāyāma, because their masters had not revealed it, and they did not understand the methods or scope of this practice. However, prāṇāyāma was gradually included in the yoga teaching as a mild form of breath control, for the purpose of physical benefits.

In early times, prāṇāyāma was considered to be *kumbhaka*, breath retention, and it played a considerable role in meditation and the awakening of kuṇḍalinī. This teaching relates to the period, when prāṇāyāma was used as a precursor to higher yogas. The instruction given on the awakening of the kuṇḍalinī begins with the practice of prāṇāyāma, which refers to kumbhaka, or breath retention. When the breath is retained, or stopped, for an extended period, the mind also stops. Breath and mind function in tandem. When the mind stops, meditation occurs spontaneously, without the need for vigilance and control.

Thus, by the perfection of prāṇāyāma, the yogi was able to meditate steadily on the pure mind. In this way, prāṇāyāma was utilised as a form of meditation. The two practices, prāṇāyāma and meditation, were done in tandem for several hours at a stretch, until the mind dissolved into suṣumnā, the spiritual channel. Suṣumnā is pervaded by cosmic prāṇa. With the upward movement of this force, the mental impurities, which relate with the individual mind and consciousness, wither away. Henceforth, the mind of the practitioner is altered, and he becomes a yogi.

When this practice becomes steady, the course of apāna, the field of prāṇa, which normally flows downward in-between the waist and the pelvic floor, should be reversed and directed upward. This is achieved by redirecting the movement of energy together with the breath, and also by forceful contraction of the perineum, at the pelvic floor, which is known as mūlabandha.

When the energy of apāna is redirected upward, it unites with *agni*, the element of fire, behind the navel. Together the forces of apāna and agni merge with prāṇa at the manipura cakra. Having united with prāṇa and apāna, agni, quickly descends to the mūlādhāra cakra, where the kuṇḍalinī lies coiled, fast asleep.

Technique

Sit in a comfortable meditation āsana and relax the whole body from head to toe. Develop the awareness of steadiness and stillness. When the body is absolutely still, focus the attention on the breath. Practise slow rhythmic breathing through both nostrils until the breath becomes smooth and even.

Then apply the ratio with each breath, breathing in to the count of five and out to the count of five. When this ratio becomes effortless, add breath retention to the count of five after the completion of each inhalation. The ratio can be increased gradually, according to the capacity of the practitioner. After several rounds of practice, begin to pause in-between each round, for a few seconds. During the pause, breathe normally and become aware of the space of the mind. Then resume the prāṇāyāma practice. In this way, continue to practise prāṇāyāma together with meditation until the individual mind is dissolved into suṣumnā, and the thoughts have disappeared.

Awareness of prāṇa vāyu: Take the awareness to the field of prāṇa, in-between the diaphragm and the shoulders. Become aware of the upward flow of this field. Inhale slowly upward from the diaphragm to the shoulders, along with the flow of prāṇa. Imagine or feel waves of light, flowing together with the breath. Exhale back down. Feel the flow of light moving together with the breath from the shoulders to the diaphragm. Repeat the rotation of breath and light in this region until it becomes natural and spontaneous.

Awareness of apāna vāyu: Leave the region of prāṇa, and bring the attention to the area of apāna, in-between the waist and the pelvic floor. Here, see or imagine streams of light, flowing downward. Inhale downward slowly alongside the descending streams of light from the waist to the pelvic floor. Hold the breath inside and do mūlabandha, contraction of the perineum. Release mūlabandha and exhale back upward. Feel the flow of breath and light, moving upward together. At the end of exhalation, feel the force of apāna merging with agni, the element of fire, at the manipura cakra, behind the navel. Continue this rotation until it becomes spontaneous.

Merging apāna and prāṇa with agni:

While synchronising the movement of apāna with the breath, simultaneously become aware of the movement of prāṇa. During inhalation, prāṇa moves upward and apāna moves downward. Visualise these two forces moving away from each other. At the time of exhalation, both flows are reversed. Prāṇa moves downward from the shoulders to the waist, and apāna moves upward from the pelvic floor to the waist. Imagine these two forces coming together at the navel. At the end of each inhalation, retain the breath and perform mūlabandha, contraction of the pelvic floor, for a few seconds. Release mūlabandha and exhale, merging the forces of apāna and prāṇa with agni at the navel.

Descending of agni to kundalini: Be aware of the two distinct movements of apāna and prāṇa, moving away from each other on inhalation, followed by mūlabandha, and then the two forces come together and merge with agni at the navel. Each time apāna and prāṇa meet at the navel, feel the buildup of heat and light at the solar plexus, the center of prāṇa. Then agni having united with apāna and prāṇa quickly descends to mūlādhāra cakra, at the pelvic floor, where the kuṇḍalinī śakti lies coiled, fast asleep.

Verses 66 to 69a: Awakening of kuṇḍalini

तेनाग्निना च संतप्ता पवनेनैव चालिता ।

प्रसार्य स्वशरीरं तु सुषुम्ना वदनान्तरे ॥६६॥

ब्रह्मग्रन्थिं ततो मित्त्या रजोगुणसमुद्धवम् ।

सुषुम्ना वदने शीघ्रं विद्युल्लेखेव संस्कुरेत् ॥६७॥

विष्णुग्रन्थिं प्रयात्युच्चैः सत्वरं हृदि संस्थिता ।

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छति यच्चास्ते रुद्रग्रन्थिं तदुद्धवम् ॥६८॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्यं तु संमिद्य याति शीतांशुमण्डलम् ।६९।

tenāgninā ca saṃtaptā pavanenaiva cālitā

prasāryam svaśarīram tu suṣumnā vadanāntarem (66)

brahmagrānthim tato bhittvā rajoguṇasamudbhavam

suṣumnā vadane śīghram vidyullekheva saṃspuret (67)

viṣṇugrānthim prayātyuccaiḥ satvaram hr̥di saṃsthitā

ūrdhvam gacchati yaccāste rudragrānthim tadudbhavam (68)

bhruvormadhyam tu saṃbhidya yāti śītāmśu-maṇḍalam (69a)

Anvay

tena: thus; *saṃtaptā*: heated; *agninā*: by agni; *ca*: and; *cālitā*: stirred up; *pavanena*: by vāyu; *tu*: now; *prasāryam*: stretches out; *sva-śarīram*: her body; *vadana-antarem*: inside the mouth; *suṣumnā*: suṣumnā; *tataḥ*: then; *bhittvā*: having pierced; *brahmagrānthim*: psychic knot of creation; *rajoguṇasamudbhavam*: produced by *rajoguṇa*; *samsphuret*: she blazes; *śīghram*: forthwith; *iva*: like; *vidyut-lekha*: stroke of lightning; *suṣumnā vadane*: at the mouth of suṣumnā; *satvaram*: immediately; *prayātyuccaiḥ*: she proceeds up; *viṣṇugrānthim*: through the psychic knot that sustains; *saṃsthitā*: abiding; *hr̥di*: in the heart; *gacchati*: she goes; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *ca āste*: and continues; *rudragrānthim*: through the psychic knot of duality; *yat*: which; *udbhavam*: comes from; *bhruvormadhyam*: eyebrow centre; *tu*: then; *saṃbhidya*: having pierced; *yāti*: she goes to; *śītāmśu-maṇḍalam*: *maṇḍala* of the moon.

Translation

Thus [kuṇḍalinī], heated by agni and stirred up by vāyu, now stretches out her body inside the mouth [of] suṣumnā. Then, having pierced *brahmagrānthis* produced by *rajoguṇa*, she blazes forthwith like a stroke of lightning at the mouth [of] suṣumnā. She immediately proceeds up through *viṣṇugrānthis*, abiding in the heart. She goes upwards and continues through *rudragrānthis*, which comes from the eyebrow centre. Then, having pierced [it], she goes to the *maṇḍala* of the moon.

Commentary

Many yoga practitioners ask about the process of kūndalinī awakening; how does this cosmic force arise? Here the ascension of kūndalinī is explained, following on from the previous verses. Agni, the element of fire, held by the manipura cakra, having merged with the combined forces of apāna and prāṇa vāyus, quickly descends to mūlādhāra cakra, at the perineum, where kūndalinī śakti lies coiled, fast asleep. Kūndalinī is heated by agni and stirred up by the vāyus, apāna and prāṇa. This causes her to awaken suddenly, and with an angry hiss, she enters the mouth of suṣumnā, located just above the mūlādhāra cakra. Inside suṣumnā she stretches out her coils and begins to ascend.

However, there are obstructions in her path in the form of the three *granthis*, or psychic knots, which bind her cosmic force in the world of creation. The first knot that she must pass through is *brahmagrāntha*, the knot of creation. This knot is located in the region of mūlādhāra cakra, and relates with the reproductive drive, which is very powerful, especially in the early years. It is associated with *Brahma*, the lord of creation, and the desire for progeny that arises in all sentient beings. Under its influence, one feels the undeniable urge to reproduce oneself anew through the begetting of children. As long as this knot remains firm, the kūndalinī cannot awaken fully and pass beyond the instinctive drives of mūlādhāra cakra, the root psychic center. In order to loosen this knot, the serious yoga practitioner must be in control of the basic urges. Then only will the kūndalinī will be able to pass through brahmagrāntha, which is produced by *rajoguṇa*, the quality of dynamism and attraction to the world.

Having pierced through the brahmagrāntha, the kūndalinī then blazes forth from the mouth of suṣumnā, like a bolt of lightning. Thus, she immediately proceeds up the suṣumnā pathway to the second psychic knot, *viṣṇugrāntha*, which is located in the region of anāhata cakra, behind the heart. Viṣṇugrāntha represents the knot that sustains life, holding the individual in the world. Being located in the heart center, this knot relates with relationships and attachment to people, places and things. It encompasses all the love and affection one feels for family, home, work, friends, neighbours, pets, teachers, elders and so on. And conversely, all the disappointment, worry, anxiety, heart break, dejection and desolation, one may feel when there is loss or breakdown of any relationship. It is as if one's whole life is falling apart. In order to loosen this knot, the practitioner must develop one-pointed faith in and devotion to the divine self, or one's God in any form, which is most appealing. This follows the principle that lesser attraction succumbs to greater attraction.

Having pierced through viṣṇugrāntha, the kūndalinī continues on her ascent to the region of ajña cakra, behind the eyebrow center, where *rudragrāntha* is located. Rudra is the lord of transformation or dissolution. This is the knot which binds one into the objective world of name and form. This world seems to be very real and permanent, as long as the rudragrāntha holds one's perception firmly in the dimension of duality. When this knot becomes loosened, however, the unmanifest dimension unfolds. This is the reality behind the illusion of objectivity, which sustains the entire manifest creation. This knot may be terrifying for one, who is attached to the material world and all of its deceptive propensities. Therefore, it is called rudragrāntha, the terrible knot, because by loosening it, one is catapulted into the void, beyond the senses and the mind, where there is nothing.

Then, having pierced rudragrāntha, at the ajña cakra, kūndalinī goes straight up bindu visarga, the point of light at the top back of the head, which is also known as the maṇḍala, or circle of the moon.

Symbolically, the moon represents the nectar of immortality. As long as the moon drips this nectar into the body, there will be prāṇa and life on the earthly plane. So, bindu is the source of life, through which the kūndalinī first passes on its evolutionary journey, from cosmic existence to individual life.

And again, she returns to bindu on her return journey at the time of enlightenment, or at the moment of death, when the soul passes out of the body.

Verses 69b to 73: Falling of the nectar

अनाहताख्यं यच्चक्रं दलैः षोडशभिर्युतम् ॥६९॥

तत्र शीतांशुसंजातं द्रवं शोषयति स्वयम्

चलिते प्राणवेगेन रक्तं पित्तं रवेर्ग्रहात् ॥७०॥

यातेन्दुचक्रं यत्रास्ते शुद्धश्लेष्मद्रवात्मकम् ।

तत्र सिक्तं ग्रसत्युष्णं कथं शीतस्वभावकम् ॥७१॥

तथैव रभसा शुक्लं चन्द्ररूपं हि तप्यते ।

ऊर्ध्वं प्रवर्ति क्षुब्धा तदैवं प्रमतेतराम् ॥७२॥

तस्यास्वादवशाच्चित्तं बहिष्ठं विषयेषु यत् ।

तदेव परं भुक्त्वा स्वस्थः स्वात्मरतो युवा ॥७३॥

anāhatākhyam yaccakram dalaiḥ ṣodaśabhiryutam (69b)

tatra śītāṁśusamjātam dravam śoṣayati svayam

calite prāṇavegena raktam pittam ravergrahāt (70)

yātenducakram yatrāste śuddhaśleṣmadravātmakam

tatra siktam grasyuṣṇam katham śītasvabhāvakam (71)

tathaiva rabhasā śuklam candrarūpam hi tapyate

ūrdhvam̄ pravarti kṣubdhā tadaivam bhramatetarām (72)

tasyāsvādavaśāccittam bahiṣṭham viṣayeṣu yat

tadeva param bhuktivā svasthah svātmarato yuvā (73)

Anvay

tatra: there; *śoṣayati:* it dries up; *svayam:* by itself; *dravam:* fluid; *samjātam:* produced by; *śītāṁśu:* moon; *cakram:* in the cakra; *anāhata-ākhyam:* called *anāhata*; *yat:* which; *yutam:* has; *ṣodaśabhiḥ* *dalaiḥ:* sixteen petals; *raktam:* blood; *calite:* when agitated; *prāṇa-vegena:* through the force of *prāṇa*; *pittam:* bile; *grahāt:* through contact; *raveḥ:* sun; *yāta:* having gone to; *cakram:* sphere; *indu:* moon; *yatra:* where; *āste:* it exists as; *drava-ātmakam:* fluid nature; *śuddha-śleṣma:* pure phlegm; *katham:*

how; *svabhāvakam*: by nature; *śīta*: cold; *grasati*: is converted into; *uṣṇam*: heat; *siktam*: it is poured out; *tatra*: there; *hi tathaiva*: in exactly the same manner; *śuklam*: white; *candra-rūpam*: form of the moon; *tapyate*: is heated; *rabhasā*: intensely; *tasya vaśā*: because of its desire for; *āsvadā*: enjoyment; *cittam*: mind; *yat bahiṣṭham*: is externalised; *viṣayeṣu*: among sensory objects; *yuvā*: aspirant; *bhuktvā*: enjoying; *tat param*: this high state; *svātmarataḥ svasthah*: rejoices in [and] abides in the self.

Translation

There it dries up by itself the fluid produced by the moon in the cakra called *anāhata*, which has sixteen petals. The blood, when agitated through the force of *prāṇa*, [becomes] bile through contact [with] the sun, [then] having gone to the sphere [of] the moon, where it exists as the fluid nature of pure phlegm. How is [blood, which is] by nature cold, converted into heat [when] it is poured out there? In exactly the same manner, the white form of the moon is heated intensely. Because of its desire for enjoyment, the mind is externalised among sensory objects. The aspirant, enjoying this high state, rejoices in [and] abides in the self.

Commentary

During the normal course of life, the nectar from the the moon at bindu drips down into the body very slowly on a regular basis. First, it drips down into the field of consciousness in the head region, ruled by *ajña* cakra at the mid-brain, where it becomes the force for the individual consciousness and mind. This nectar of life has two propensities: *amṛta*, eternal life, and *viṣa*, poison or degeneration. As long as the nectar remains in the field of consciousness, the poison aspect is inactive. But the body must also be nourished and enlivened by this nectar. So, the nectar next drips down to *viśuddhi* cakra, behind the throat pit, which is the junction in-between the head and the body.

The word *viśuddhi* has two roots: *vi*, ‘special’ or ‘complete’, and *śuddhi*, ‘purification’. When *viśuddhi* cakra is activated, it has the potential to collect the nectar and purify the poison, before it drips down into the body. However, if *viśuddhi* cakra is inactive, the poison passes straight through, along with the nectar. When this nectar mixed with poison falls down into the body, it becomes the source of life, as well as of degeneration and death. Having passed through *viśuddhi* cakra, the nectar next drips down to *anāhata* cakra, located behind the heart, where it is fanned by *vāyu*, the wind or air element. There, the fluid produced by the moon sustains the body, but it is also dried up by the wind, resulting in chronic and debilitating conditions, such as: nervous, cardiac, respiratory, and immune disorders, any of which may arise over time.

After passing through *anāhata* cakra, the remaining nectar then drips down to the region of the solar plexus, which is ruled by *maṇipura* cakra, where it becomes the storehouse of *prāṇa* in the body. *Maṇipura* holds the element of fire, or the sun, which is responsible for the process of metabolism and transformation. The nectar, which falls down into *maṇipura*, has two propensities, the red form and the white form. The red form becomes a catalyst for the production of blood, and is known as the red bindu. Agitated by the force of *prāṇa*, the blood, which is cold by nature, is transformed into bile and other gastric fluids through contact with the heat of the sun, or fire element.

The white form relates with the nectar from the sphere of the moon, which exists as the fluid nature of pure phlegm. The white form of the moon, or the white bindu, is also heated intensely due to desire for enjoyment. In this way the mind and senses are externalised amongst sensory objects, and move hither and thither in order to experience them. In the quest for further enjoyment, the white bindu falls down further to *swādhiṣṭhāna* and *mūlādhāra* cakras in the reproductive region, where it is transformed into semen and ova. At this level the drive for sexual union becomes formidable, and the aspirant, enjoying this high state, rejoices in and abides in the self.

Verses 74 to 76: Union of kuṇḍalinī with Śiva at mūlādhāra cakra

प्रकृत्यष्टकरूपं च स्थानं गच्छति कुण्डली ।

क्रोडीकृत्य शिवं याति क्रोडीकृत्य विलीयते ॥७४॥

इत्यधोर्धर्जः शुक्लं शिवे तदनु मारुतः ।

प्राणापानौ समा याति सदा जातौ तथैव च ॥७५॥

भूतेऽल्पे चाप्यनल्पे वा वाचके त्वतिवर्धते ।

धावयत्यखिला वाता अग्निमूषाहिरण्यवत् ॥७६॥

prakṛtyaṣṭakarūpam ca sthānam gacchati kuṇḍalī

kroḍikṛtya śivam yāti kroḍikṛtya vilt̄yate (74)

ityadhordhvaramajah śuklam śive tadanu mārutah

prāṇapānau samau yāti sadā jātau tathaiva ca (75)

bhūte 'lpe cāpyanalpe vā vācake tvativedhate

dhāvayatyakhilā vātā agnimūṣāhiraṇyavat (76)

Anvay

kuṇḍalī: kuṇḍalinī; *gacchati*: goes to; *sthānam*: place; *aṣṭaka-rūpam*: eight forms; *prakṛti*: nature; *ca*: and; *kroḍikṛtya*: embracing; *yāti śivam*: attains Śiva; *vilt̄yate*: is dissolved; *iti*: thus; *śuklam rajah*: white matter; *adhordhva*: falls down; *tadanu*: after that; *yāti*: goes; *mārutah*: by means of the vital air; *śive*: to Śiva; *ca tathaiva*: and then; *prāṇa-apānau*: prāṇa and apāna; *sadā*: always; *jātau*: are produced; *samau*: equally; *ativardhate*: it transcends; *bhūte alpe*: whatever is small; *ca api analpe*: and even not small; *vā vācake*: or describable; *akhilāḥ vātāḥ*: entire prāṇa; *dhāvayati*: fires up; *hiraṇyavat*: like gold; *agnim-ūṣā*: earth's fire.

Translation

Kuṇḍalinī goes to the place [where she takes] the eight forms [of] nature, and, embracing [her Lord she], attains Śiva [and] is dissolved [in him]. Thus the white matter [which] falls down, after that goes by means of the vital air to Śiva, and then prāṇa and apāna are always produced equally. It transcends whatever is small and even not small or describable. The entire prāṇa fires up like gold [heated by] the earth's fire.

Commentary

In this way, the kuṇḍalinī descends on her journey of evolution in the form of *amṛta*, immortal nectar, creating and enlivening the form of the person, until she reaches mūlādhāra cakra, the center of *mūlaprakṛti*, the root essence of nature. There she abides in the eight forms of nature, the eight

directions: east, west, north, south, north east, north west, south east, south west, and sustains the eight elements: earth, water, fire, air, ether, ego, memories and intellect. Although the kundalinī descends from the cosmic reality into the material dimension, she is never without her Lord. Even at the mūlādhāra cakra, Siva resides with her in the form of the smokey śivalingam. Thus, taking the form of a tiny green serpent, the kundalinī settles into the earth and embraces her Lord. Coiling around him three and a half times, she dissolves into him and enters a dormant state of consciousness.

Therefore, the wise practitioner, who has understood this process, takes control over the sexual proclivities. The white bindu that falls down from manipura to mūlādhāra cakra should not be allowed to dissipate in sexual activities. Rather, it should be redirected upward by the prāṇa to the higher dimensions of Śiva. By redirecting the white bindu upward, the sexual and nervous energies become calm and balanced. This causes the pranic forces of prāṇa and apāṇa to be harmonised and equalised. When prāṇa and apāṇa are equalised, the mind becomes still and transcendent. The consciousness expands beyond the limitations of time, space and objects, whether small or large, describable or indescribable. The entire pranic system undergoes an awakening, and is fired up like gold, being heated by the kundalinī in the fire of the earth.

Verses 77 and 78: Pranic body is the commander of all

आधिभौतिकदेहं तु आधिदैविकविग्रहे ।

देहोऽतिविमलं याति जातिवाहिकतामियात् ॥७७॥

जाङ्घभावविनिर्मुक्तममलं चिन्मयात्मकम् ।

तस्यातिवाहिकं मुख्यं सर्वेषां तु मदात्मकम् ॥७८॥

ādhibhautikadeham tu ādhidaivikavigrahe

deho 'tvimalam yāti jātivāhikatāmiyāt (77)

jādyabhāvavinirmuktamamalam cinmayātmakam

tasyātivāhikam mukhyam sarveṣām tu madātmakam (78)

Anvay

tu: then; *dehah:* body; *ādhibhautika-deham:* body composed of elements; *yāti:* becomes; *ativimalam:* very pure; *ādhidaivika-vigrahe:* in a deified form; *ja-ativāhikatāmiyāt:* produced by its pranic body; *vinirmuktam:* released from; *jādyabhaava:* dormant state; *cinmaya-ātmakam:* it consists of pure consciousness; *tasyāt:* thus; *ativāhikam:* pranic body; *mad-ātmakam:* being in the nature of the self; *mukhyam:* commander; *sarveṣām:* of all.

Translation

Then the body, [which is] a body composed of elements, becomes very pure in a deified form, produced by its pranic body. Released from the dormant state, it consists of pure consciousness. Thus, the pranic body, being in the nature of the self, [is] the commander of all.

Commentary

When the white bindu is redirected back up to its source, the prāṇas are harmonised. The material body comprised of the five elements (i.e.: earth, water, fire, air and ether) becomes absolutely pure, and assumes its divine form, produced by the subtle pranic body. With the purification of the elemental body, the entire pranic field undergoes an awakening, which is known as *prāṇottana*, awakening of the prāṇas. This pranic awakening precedes the awakening of kuṇḍalinī, and causes the kuṇḍalinī to uncoil her potential and enter the mouth of suṣumnā. As kuṇḍalinī ascends suṣumnā, the limited state of consciousness falls away, and the consciousness assumes its pure, expanded state.

Thus, it is said that the pranic body, being the nature of the self, or pure consciousness, is the commander of all. Prāṇa, being the nature of the self, is the first evolute of pure consciousness, and the source of all life and existence. Where prāṇa flows, there is life; there is existence. Where there is no prāṇa, there is no life. Nothing can exist in the absence of prāṇa. When the prāṇa flows downward into physical being, the consciousness becomes limited by the senses, and their perception of material existence. When the prāṇa is redirected upward, the consciousness is freed from the illusion of sensory perception, and the bondage of time, space and object no longer exist.

Verses 79 to 81: Tearing asunder the veil of illusion

जायाभविनिर्मुक्तः कालरूपस्य विप्रमः ।

इति तं स्वस्वरूपा हि मति रज्जुभुजङ्घवत् ॥७९॥

मृषैवोदेति सकलं मृषैव प्रविलीयते ।

रौप्यबुद्धिः शुक्तिकायां स्त्रीपुंसोर्प्रमतो यथा ॥८०॥

पिण्डब्रह्माण्डयोरैक्यं लिङ्गसूत्रात्मनोरपि ।

स्वापाव्याकृतयोरैक्यं स्वप्रकाशचिदात्मनोः ॥८१॥

jāyābhavavinirmuktah kālarūpasya vibramah

iti tam svasvarūpā hi mati rajjubhujangavat (79)

mṛṣaivodeti sakalam mṛṣaiva pravilīyate

raupyabuddhiḥ śuktikāyām strīpumsorbhramato yathā (80)

piṇḍabrahmāṇḍayoraikyam liṅgasūtrātmanorapi

svāpāvyākṛtayoraikyam svaprakāśacidātmanoh (81)

Anvay

iti: thus; *svasvarūpa*: one's true self; *tam*: this; *vinirmuktah*: release from; *jāyā-bhava*: existence of a wife; *vibramah*: illusion; *kāla-rūpasya*: of the nature of time; *hi*: as; *mati*: belief; *rajju-bhujangavat*: rope like a snake; *sakalam*: all; *udeti*: arises; *eva mṛṣa*: indeed false; *pravilīyate*: dissolves; *yathā*: just as; *buddhiḥ*: idea; *raupya*: silver; *śuktikāyām*: in mother-of-pearl; *bhramataḥ*: illusion; *strīpumsoḥ*: of man and wife; *piṇḍa-brahmāṇḍayoh*: earth and cosmos; *aikyam*: one and the same; *api*: as; *liṅga-*

sūtrātmanoh: soul which passes like a thread through the universe and its symbol; *svāpa-avyākṛtayoh*: sleep and the primordial spirit; *aikyam*: one and the same; *svaprakāśa-cidātmanoh*: light of consciousness and pure intelligence.

Translation

Thus one's true self [knows] this: the release from the existence of a wife, the illusion of the nature of time, as [is] the belief [that] a rope [is] like a snake. All [that] arises [is] indeed false; indeed [all that] dissolves [is] false. Just as the idea [of] silver in mother-of-pearl [is] an illusion, [so is that] of man and wife. The earth and the cosmos [are] one and the same, as [are] the soul which passes like a thread through the universe and its symbol. Sleep and the primordial spirit [are] one and the same, [as are] the light of consciousness and pure intelligence.

Commentary

Prāṇa is the first evolute of the self, or the consciousness. The entire manifest existence and all the beings within it depend on prāṇa. Hence, prāṇa is universal as well as individual. When the individual prāṇa is directed outside, one knows the external world, and its appearances seem to be very real. However, when the prāṇa is directed back to its source within, the true self is revealed. The higher consciousness then knows the appearance of form and object to be unreal and illusive.

In order to further elucidate this point, several examples are given, such as the release from the identity of wife or husband, father or son, friend or relative, etc. All the identities and roles that one assumes in life are actually transient and illusory. Being dependent on time, place and situation, they are impermanent and therefore unreal, just as the belief that a rope is a snake. All that is created and all that is dissolved is illusion, like the shimmer of silver in mother of pearl. Similarly, the idea of husband and wife is illusory and therefore, untrue.

The earth and the cosmos are one and the same, being of the same matter and origin. Similarly, the soul which passes through the universe, like a thread of consciousness, is the same as its symbol, the *lingam* (black oval). The state of sleep, being the deep unconscious, and the primordial spirit are also one and the same; as are the light of consciousness and pure intelligence. Light and intelligence both being the qualities of consciousness.

Verses 82 and 83a: Śakti enters brahmarandhra

शक्तिः कुण्डलिनी नाम बिसतन्तुनिभा शुभा ।

मूलकन्दं फणाग्रेण दृष्ट्वा कमलकन्दवत् ॥८२॥

मुखेन पुच्छं संगृह्य ब्रह्मरन्ध्रसमन्विता ॥८३॥

śaktih kundalinī nāma bisatantunibhā śubhā

mūlakandam phanāgreṇa drṣtvā kamalakandavat (82)

mukhenā puccham samgrhyā brahmarandhrasamanvitā (83a)

Anvay

śaktih: śakti; *nāma kūṇḍalinī*: called kūṇḍalinī; *śubhā*: luminous; *bisatantu-nibhā*: like the lotus-fibre; *dṛṣṭvā*: seeing; *phāṇa-agreṇa*: with the tip of her hood; *mūla-kandam*: bulb at the base; *kamala-kandavat*: similar to the bulb of the lotus; *samgrhya*: grasping; *puccham*: tail; *mukhena*: with her mouth; *brahmaṇḍra-samanvitā*: she connects with the brahmaṇḍra.

Translation

The śakti called kūṇḍalinī, luminous [and] like the lotus-fibre, seeing with the tip of her hood the bulb at the base, similar to the bulb of the lotus, [and] grasping her tail with her mouth, she connects with the brahmaṇḍra.

Commentary

Kūṇḍalinī śakti is the cosmic creative force, which brings about all existence. Having created our physical being, she lies dormant within us at the *mūlakanda*, root or base, which is similar to the bulb of the lotus that remains rooted in the mud, beneath the water. The lotus, which grows up through the water and blooms on top, is sustained by the bulbous root beneath it. In the same way, our entire physical existence is created and sustained by the kūṇḍalinī śakti, who is luminous and bright, like the lotus fibre.

The dormant kūṇḍalinī is also described as a tiny green serpent, coiled three and a half times around the smoky black śivalingam. There, at *mūlādhāra cakra*, the root center, she lies with her head on top of the lingam, asleep. However, her desire is not to remain in the earth forever. It is also her destiny to awaken within all beings, at some point in time. When her kinetic force begins to awaken, she sees with the tip of her hood the opening of the channel through which she descended, just above her head. Then, grasping her tail in her mouth, she enters the brahmaṇḍra, the subtlest channel inside suṣumnā, and prepares to ascend.

Verses 83b to 87: Arising of kūṇḍalinī through the granthis and cakras

पद्मासनगतः स्वस्थो गुदमाकुञ्च्य साधकः ॥८३॥

वायुमूर्ध्वीगतं कुर्वन्कुम्भकाविष्टमानसः ।

वाय्याधातवशादग्निः स्वाधिष्ठानगतो ज्वलन् ॥८४॥

ज्वलनाधातपवना घातोरुनिद्रितोऽहिरात् ।

ब्रह्मग्रन्थिं ततो भित्त्वा विष्णुग्रन्थिं भिनत्यतः ॥८५॥

रुद्रग्रन्थिं च भित्त्वैव कमलानि भिनति षट् ।

सहस्राकमले शक्तिः शिवेन सह मोदते ॥८६॥

सैववस्था परा ज्ञेया सैव निर्वृतिकारिणी इति ॥८७॥

padmāsanagataḥ svastho gudamākuñcya sādhakah (83b)

vāyumūrdhvagatam kurvankumbhakāviṣṭamānasah
 vāyvāghātavaśādagnih svādhīṣṭhānagato jvalan (84)
 jvalanāghātapavanāghātorunnidrito ‘hirāt
 brahmagrānthis tato bhittvā viṣṇugrānthis bhinattyatah (85)
 rudragrānthis ca bhittvaiva kamalāni bhinatti ṣaṭ
 sahasrākamale śaktih śivena saha modate (86)
 saivavasthā parā jñeyā saiva nirvṛtikāriṇī iti (87)

Anvay

sādhakah: yogin; *padmāsana-gatah svasthah*: has taken his place in padmāsana; *gudam-ākuñcya*: anus contracted; *kurvan*: making; *vāyum*: vāyu; *ūrdhva-gatam*: go upwards; *mānasah*: mind; *kumbhaka-āviṣṭa*: enter kumbhaka; *agnih*: agni; *vaśat*: through the force; *vāyu-āghāta*: gust of vāyu; *svādhīṣṭhāna-gatah*: goes to svādhīṣṭhān; *jvalan*: in flames; *unnidritah*: blowing; *jvalan-āghāta-pavan-āghātoh*: gusts of agni and vāyu; *ahirāt*: through the serpent; *tatah*: then; *bhittvā brahmagrānthis*: having pierced brahmagrānthis; *atah*: next; *bhinatti viṣṇugrānthis*: stabs viṣṇugrānthis; *ca*: and; *bhittvā rudragrānthis*: after piercing rudragrānthis; *ṣaṭ kamalāni*: six lotuses; *Śaktih*: Śakti; *Modate*: happy; *saha Śivena*: with Śiva; *sahasrā-kamale*: in the thousand-petalled lotus; *iti*: thus; *jñeyā*: it should be understood; *sa parā avasthā*: this highest state; *eva*: alone; *kāriṇī*: produces; *nirvṛti*: bliss.

Translation

[When] the yogin has taken his place in padmāsana, his anus contracted, making the vāyu go upwards [and] the mind enter kumbhaka, [then] agni, through the force [of] the gust of vāyu, goes in flames to svādhīṣṭhāna. The blowing [of] the gusts of agni and vāyu through the serpent [which] then having pierced brahmagrānthis, next stabs viṣṇugrānthis and, after piercing rudragrānthis, the six lotuses. [Now] Śakti [is] happy [to be] with Śiva in the thousand-petalled lotus. Thus it should be understood [that] this [is] the highest state; it alone produces bliss.

Commentary

The awakening and ascension of the kuṇḍalinī śakti from the earthly foundation to the divine is the goal of all yogas. Every yoga, every spiritual practice leads to this milestone in human evolution, however, kuṇḍalinī yoga is the most direct path. These verses, which complete the first chapter, describe the entire course of the awakening very succinctly and precisely.

Technique

The yogi, who has prepared and disciplined him/herself to undergo this process, should sit in padmāsana, or any comfortable meditative āsana, in a quiet and pure place, undisturbed by the trammels of life all around.

At first, one should be aware of the body, and relax it part by part from head to toe. Then become aware of the natural breath. Follow the movement of each breath with the awareness. Practice slow,

rhythmic breathing until the mind and body become steady.

Bring the awareness down to the mooladhara chakra. Inhale slowly up through the perineum. Exhale back down again slowly. Continue to rotate the breath and the awareness up and down through the perineal body, and feel that you are piercing this region with each rotation.

Begin the practice of *prāṇāyāma* with kumbhaka. Inhale slowly through both nostrils and contract the anal sphincter. Redirect the *apāna vāyu* upward through the perineum with the ingoing breath. At the end of inhalation, retain the breath. Continue to hold the contraction and focus the attention on the state of kumbhaka. Experience the mind becoming absolutely still. Go deep into this stillness. Then exhale slowly through both nostrils, releasing the contraction. Direct the breath and the vayu back down through the perineum. Continue this rotation until the feeling of heat arises.

Releasing brahmagrānθi: Next, visualise or imagine the *brahmagrānθi*, psychic knot of creation, sitting like the bulb of a lotus, just above the *mūlādhāra* cakra. Continue the practice of pranayama with kumbhaka. While inhaling, feel the waves of *apāna vāyu* and *agni*, heat, arising together with the *kuṇḍalinī* śakti and piercing *brahmagrānθi*. At the end of inhalation, hold the breath inside and experience the psychic knot opening. Exhale slowly back down through the *brahmagrānθi*. Go on with this practice, until the knot is fully opened and there is no feeling of resistance.

Continue the practice of kumbhaka. While inhaling, experience the force of *apāna vāyu*, ascending in flames with the *kuṇḍalinī* serpent, through the sushumna pathway to *svādhiṣṭhāna* cakra, at the base of the spine. Retain the breath inside at *svādhiṣṭhāna*, and then exhale back down to *mūlādhāra*. Repeat this rotation until it becomes spontaneous. Then ascend in the same way to *manipura* cakra, behind the navel.

Having pierced *brahmagrānθi* and the lower cakras with the waves of *vāyu* and *agni*, the *kuṇḍalinī* serpent next arises to the region of *anāhata* cakra, behind the heart, and stabs *viṣṇugrānθi*, the psychic knot of sustenance.

Releasing viṣṇugrānθi: Now, focus the awareness at *anāhata* cakra. Visualise the *viṣṇugrānθi*, sitting just above it, like the bulb of a lotus. Inhaling slowly upward through the *anāhata* cakra, direct a stream of golden *prāṇa* together with the luminous *kuṇḍalinī* śakti. Feel the psychic knot, situated just above, being pierced by the flow of *prāṇa*, *kuṇḍalinī* and breath. At the end of inhalation, retain the breath and experience absolute stillness. Then exhale back down through the psychic knot and the cakra. Go on with the practice, piercing *viṣṇugrānθi* with each rotation until the psychic knot is released and holds no resistance.

Having pierced *viṣṇugrānθi*, in the region of the heart, with the waves of golden *prāṇa*, the *kuṇḍalinī* next ascends to *viśuddhi* cakra, behind the throat.

Continue the practice of kumbhaka. While inhaling, experience the flow of *prāṇa vāyu*, ascending with the luminous *kuṇḍalinī* serpent through the *suṣumnā* pathway from *anāhata* cakra to *viśuddhi* cakra, unimpeded. At the end of inhalation, hold the breath and the awareness at *viśuddhi*. Experience vacuous space everywhere. Then exhale slowly back down through *suṣumnā* to the *anāhata* cakra. Repeat this rotation until it becomes spontaneous. Then ascend in the same way to *ajña* cakra, at the midbrain.

Releasing rudragrānθi: Now focus the awareness at *ajña* cakra. Visualise the *rudragrānθi*, psychic knot of dissolution, situated just above it. Inhaling slowly upward through *ajña* cakra, direct a stream of *prana vāyu* in the form of white light together with the luminous *kuṇḍalinī* śakti. Feel the psychic

knot, situated just above, being pierced by the flow of white light, kūḍalini and breath. At the end of inhalation, retain the breath and experience the light of consciousness. Then exhale back down through the psychic knot and the cakra. Go on with the practice, piercing rudragranthi with each rotation, until the psychic knot is released and holds no resistance.

After piercing the three granthis and the six cakras, Śakti easily makes her way unobstructed to sahasrā cakra, the crown centre, where she is most pleased to unite with her Lord Śiva in the transcendent sphere of the thousand petalled lotus. This is the highest state, which alone produces bliss.

इति प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

iti prathamo ‘dhyāyah

Thus [ends] the first chapter.

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

dvitīyo ‘dhyāyah

Chapter Two

Verses 1 to 4a: Khecarī vidyā

अथाहं संप्रवक्ष्यामि विद्यां खेचरीसंज्ञिकाम् ।

यथा विज्ञानवानस्या लोकेऽस्मिन्नजरोऽमरः ॥१॥

मृत्युव्याधिजराप्रस्तो दृष्ट्वा विद्यामिमां मुने ।

बुद्धिं दृढतरां कृत्वा खेचरीं तु समभ्यसेत् ॥२॥

जरामृत्युगदघ्नो यः खेचरीं वेत्ति भूतले ।

ग्रन्थतश्चर्थतश्चैव तदभ्यासप्रयोगतः ॥३॥

तं मुने सर्वभावेन गुरुं मत्या समाश्रयेत् ॥४॥

athāham sampravakṣyāmi vidyāṁ khecarīsamjñikām

yathā vijñānavānasyā loke ‘sminnajaro ‘marah (1)

mṛtyuvyādhijarāgrasto drṣṭvā vidyāmimāṁ mune

buddhiṁ dṛḍhatarāṁ kṛtvā khecarīṁ tu samabhyaset (2)

jarāmṛtyugadaghno yaḥ khecarīṁ vetti bhūtale

granthataścārthataścaiva tadabhyāsaprayogatah (3)

tam mune sarvabhāvena gurum matyā samāśrayet (4a)

Anvay

atha: now; *aham sampravakṣyāmi:* I shall describe; *vidyām:* *vidyā;* *khecarī-samjñikām:* called *khecarī;* *yathā:* since; *asmin loke:* in this place; *amarah:* no death; *najarah:* no old age; *vijñānavānasyāḥ:* those who are endowed with this knowledge; *grastah:* whoever is at the mercy of; *mṛtyu-vyādhī-jarā:* death, disease and old age; *dṛṣṭvā:* having learned; *imām vidyām:* this *vidya;* *mune:* o Sage; *kṛtvā dṛḍhatarām:* having strengthened; *buddhim:* mind; *tu:* then; *samabhyaset khecarīm:* should practise *khecarī;* *matyā:* respectfully; *samāśrayet:* one should approach; *sarva-bhāvena:* with total devotion; *tam gurum:* the guru; *ghnah:* destroyer; *jarā-mṛtyu-gada:* old age, death [and] disease; *bhūtale:* on earth; *yah vetti khecarīm:* who knows *khecarī;* *arthataḥ:* meaning; *ca . . . ca:* both . . . and; *granthataḥ:* from books; *abhyāsa-prayogataḥ:* continual practice.

Translation

Now I shall describe the *vidyā* called *khecarī*, since [there is] in this place no death [or] old age [for] those who are endowed with this knowledge. Whoever is at the mercy of death, disease and old age, having learned this *vidyā*, o Sage, [and] having strengthened his mind, should then practise *khecarī*. One should respectfully approach with total devotion the guru, the destroyer [of] old age, death [and] disease on earth, who knows *khecarī* [and has learned] its meaning both from books and continual practice.

Commentary

Khecarī mudrā, the tongue lock, is one of the most highly venerated yoga practices. It is discussed at length in many of the upaniṣads, as well as in the classical haṭha yoga texts. There are two versions of this practice: the rāja yoga method and the haṭha yoga method. The rāja yoga method is used as an adjunct to prāṇāyāma, meditation and kriya yoga practices. It simply involves folding the tongue back, so that the under surface presses against the roof of the mouth, and the tip reaches into the region at the back of the throat. The haṭha yoga method involves gradual cutting of the frenum under the tongue, and is therefore irreversible. By systematic cutting, massaging and stretching, the tongue gradually becomes elongated and can reach into the nasal cavity. This position of the tongue activates ajña cakra and blocks the descent of the nectar and the consciousness into the lower centres.

The word *khecarī* comes from two roots: *khe*, meaning ‘sky’ and *carya*, meaning ‘one who roams’. The yogi, who perfects *khecarī*, is considered to be liberated while living. He is able to roam freely in the space of consciousness, unaffected by the limitations and associations of the mind and the world. In the teachings given here, *khecarī* is described as a *vidyā*, knowledge that arises from within through practice and experience. *Khecarī* is said to be so powerful that old age and death cannot affect those who are endowed with this knowledge. Therefore, whoever is faced with disease, old age and death, should learn this *vidyā*, strengthen the mind, and practice *khecarī*. In order to learn *khecarī*, one should respectively approach the master, who has perfected it. Such a master, who knows the meaning of *khecarī* from books as well as from continual practice is regarded as the destroyer of disease, old age and death on earth.

Verses 4b to 10: Importance of *khecarī*

दुर्लभा खेचरी विद्या तदभ्यासोऽपि दुर्लभः ॥४॥

अभ्यासं मेलनं चैव युगपन्नैव सिध्यति ।

अभ्यासमात्रनिरता न विन्दत्ते ह मेलनम् ॥५॥

अभ्यासं लभते ब्रह्मज्ञन्मान्तरे क्वचित् ।

मेलनं तत्तु जन्मनां शतान्तेऽपि न लभ्यते ॥६॥

अभ्यासं बहुजन्मान्ते कृत्वा तद्वावसाधितम् ।

मेलनं लभते कश्चिद्योगी जन्मान्तरे क्वचित् ॥७॥

यदा तु मेलनं योगी लभते गुरुवक्रतः ।

तदा तत्सिद्धिमाप्नोति यदुक्ता शास्त्रसंततौ ॥८॥

ग्रन्थतश्चार्थतश्चैव मेलनं लभते यदा ।

तदा शिवात्वमाप्नोति निर्मुक्तः सर्वसंसृतेः ॥९॥

शास्त्रं विनापि संबोद्धुं गुरवोऽपि न शक्नुयुः ।

तस्मात्सुदुर्लभतरं लभ्यं शास्त्रमिदं मुने ॥१०॥

durlabha khecarī vidyā tadabhyāśo ‘pi durlabhaḥ (4b)

abhyāśam melanam caiva yugapannaiva sidhyati

abhyāśamātraniratā na vindante ha melanam (5)

abhyāśam labhate brahmanjanmāntare kvacit

melanam tattu janmanām śatānte ‘pi na labhyate (6)

abhyāśam bahujanmānte kṛtvā tadbhāvasādhitarām

melanam labhate kaścid�ogī janmāntare kvacit (7)

yadā tu melanam yogī labhate guruvaktrataḥ

tadā tatsiddhimāpnoti yaduktā śāstrasaṃtatau (8)

granthataścārthataścaiva melanam labhate yadā

tadā śivātvamāpnoti nirmuktaḥ sarvasaṃsṛteḥ (9)

śāstram vināpi sambodhūm guravo ‘pi na śaknuyuḥ

tasmātsudurlabhataram labhyam śāstramidam mune (10)

Anvay

vidyā khecarī: *vidyā* [of] *khecarī*; *durlabha*: difficult to attain; *tat-abhyāsaḥ*: its practice; *api*: also; *durlabhaḥ*: difficult to attain; *abhyāsam ca melanam*: practice and melana; *na sidhyati*: are not accomplished; *yugapat*: at the same time; *nirataḥ*: those intent on; *abhyāsa-mātra*: practice alone; *na vindante melanam*: do not gain melana; *labhate*: one obtains; *abhyāsam*: practice; *brahman*: o Brahman; *kvacit*: at some time; *janmāntare*: in another life; *tu*: but; *na labhyate melanam*: one does not attain melana; *api*: even; *śatānte janmanām*: after a hundred lives; *kṛtvā*: having performed; *abhyāsam*: practice; *bahu-janmānte*: through many births; *tat-bhāvasādhitam*: perfected it; *kaścit yogī*: a yogin; *labhate melanam*: attains melana; *kvacit*: at some time; *janmāntare*: in a future birth; *yadā yogī labhate melanam*: if a yogin attains melana; *guru-vaktrataḥ*: from the mouth of the guru; *tadā āpnoti*: then he obtains; *tat-siddhim*: that *siddhi*; *yaduktā*: spoken of; *śāstra-saṃtatau*: in the eternal sacred teachings; *yadā labhate melanam*: if he attains melana; *ārthataḥ*: through its meaning; *granthataḥ*: in books; *tadā āpnoti*: then he reaches; *śivātvam*: Śiva; *nirmuktāḥ*: freed from; *sva-samsrteḥ*: all reincarnations; *api guravāḥ*: even gurus; *na śaknuyuḥ*: may not be able to; *sambodhūm*: have this knowledge; *vinā śāstram*: without the sacred books; *tasmāt*: therefore; *mune*: o Sage; *idam śāstram*: this teaching; *sudurlabhataram*: very difficult to acquire.

Translation

The *vidyā* [of] *khecarī* [is] difficult to attain; its practice [is] also difficult to attain. Practice and *melana* are not accomplished at the same time. Those [who are] intent on practice alone do not gain melana. One obtains the practice, o Brahman, at some time in another life, but one does not attain melana even after a hundred lives. Having performed the practice through many births [and] perfected it, a yogin attains melana at some time in a future birth. If a yogin attains melana from the mouth of the guru, then he obtains that *siddhi* spoken of in the eternal sacred teachings. If he attains melana through its meaning in books, then he reaches Śiva [and is] freed from all reincarnations. Even gurus may not be able to have this knowledge without the sacred books. Therefore, o Sage, this teaching [is] very difficult to acquire.

Commentary

One may wonder why so much importance and respect were given by the yogis of old to this one practice of yoga. On closer examination, however, one can see that the experience of *khecarī* is indeed difficult to attain; even the practice is difficult to attain. Of course, the *rāja* yoga version can be done by anyone. Folding the tongue back, so that the tip reaches inward towards the throat cavity, has a calming and introverting effect on the mind. But the *hatha* yoga method is not so easily achieved; it requires sacrifice and years of practice. The tongue must be gradually cut and stretched, until it can reach up into the nasal cavity, blocking the downward flow of the nectar and the connection of *ajña* cakra with the lower centres.

So, the practice of *khecarī* is one thing, and the *melana*, ‘union’ or ‘coming together’ that is achieved by establishing the position of the tongue at *ajña* cakra, is quite another. This union is also the definition of yoga, the union of the individual mind and consciousness with the supreme. *Khecarī* *vidyā* brings about this union by the activation of *ajña* cakra with the inverted and raised position of the tongue. However, the practice and the *melana*, or union, are not accomplished simultaneously. In fact, those who focus on perfecting the practice alone, do not attain the *melana*, or union. *Khecarī* is

said to be so difficult that, although one may learn the practice in this life or in another life, the union or perfection is not acquired, even after one hundred lifetimes.

However, having performed the practice, and perfecting it over many births, the yogi will attain the union in a future birth. Another way to attain this melana, or union, is from the mouth of the guru, who has himself realised it. When the union is conveyed to the worthy disciple in this way, then he attains that spiritual power spoken of in the eternal sacred teachings. This melana, or union, may also be conveyed through its meaning in books. Then the yogi reaches Śiva, universal consciousness, and is freed from all further rebirths or incarnations. Even the gurus, self-realised masters, may not be able to acquire this knowledge without the sacred books. Therefore, this teaching is considered very difficult to attain.

Verses 11 to 16a: How to acquire this knowledge

यावन्न लभ्यते शास्त्रं तावद्गां पर्यटेद्यतिः ।

यदा संलभ्यते शास्त्रं तदा सिद्धिः करे स्थिता ॥११॥

न शास्त्रेण विना सिद्धिर्दृष्टा चैव जगत्रये ।

तस्मान्मेलनदातारं शास्त्रदातारमच्युतम् ॥१२॥

तदध्यासप्रदातारं शिवं मत्वा समाश्रयेत् ।

लब्ध्वा शास्त्रमिदं मह्यमन्येषां न प्रकाशयेत् ॥१३॥

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन गोपनैयं विजजानता ।

यत्रास्ते च गुरुर्ब्रह्मन्दिव्ययोगप्रदायकः ॥१४॥

तत्र गत्वा च तेनोक्तविद्यां संगृह्य खेचरीम् ।

तेनोक्तः संयगम्यासं कुर्यादावतन्द्रितः ॥१५॥

अनया विद्यया योगी खेचरीसिद्धिभाग्मवेत् ॥१६॥

yāvanna labhyate śāstram tāvadgām paryatedyatiḥ

yadā samlabhyate śāstram tadā siddhiḥ kare sthitā (11)

na śāstrena vinā siddhirdṛṣṭā caiva jagattraye

tasmānmelanadātāram śāstradātāramacyutam (12)

tadabhyāsapradātāram śivam matvā samāśrayet

labdhvā śāstramidam mahyamanyeṣām na prakāśayet (13)

tasmātsarvaprayatnena gopanaiyam vijñānatā

yatrāste ca gururbrahmandivyayogapradāyakah (14)

tatra gatvā ca tenoktavidyām samgrhya khecharīm

tenoktaḥ samyagabhyāsam kuryādāvatandritah (15)

anayā vidyayā yogī khecarīsiddhibhāgbhavet (16a)

Anvay

yatiḥ: ascetic; *gām paryatet*: should go wandering; *yāvat tāvat*: for as long as; *na labhyate*: he does not have; *śāstram*: knowledge; *yadā*: when; *samlabhyate śāstram*: he does obtain the knowledge; *tadā*: then; *siddhiḥ sthitā*: siddhi is firmly; *kare*: in his hand; *tasmāt*: therefore; *acyutam*: Imperishable One; *śāstra-dātāram*: giving the teachings; *melana-dātāram*: readily gives melana; *saṁśrayet śivam*: he seeks refuge in Śiva; *matvā*: regarding; *abhyāsa-pradātāram*: bestower of the practice; *labdhvā idam śāstram*: having obtained this teaching; *mahyamani*: from the highly honoured ones; *na prakāśayet*: he should not reveal; *eṣām*: to others; *tasmāt*: therefore; *iyam vijñānatā*: this deep knowledge; *sarva-prayatnena*: with every effort; *gopana*: should be kept secret; *brahman*: o Brahman; *gatvā tatra*: having gone there; *yatra-āste*: where dwells; *guruḥ*: guru; *pradāyakah*: imparts; *divya-yoga*: divine yoga; *ca*: and; *saṁgrhya*: having comprehended; *khecharīm vidiyām*: khecharī vidyā; *tena-uktā*: expressed by him; *ādau-atandritah*: undaunted right from the start; *kuryāt*: one should do; *abhyāsam*: practice; *samyak*: correctly; *tena-uktah*: as described by him; *anayā vidyayā*: through this knowledge; *yogī*: yogin; *khecarī-siddhi-bhāg-bhavet*: may become part of the siddhi of khecarī.

Translation

An ascetic should go wandering for as long as he does not have [this] knowledge. When he does obtain the knowledge, then the siddhi is firmly in his hand. Without this knowledge, the siddhi cannot be manifested in the three worlds. Therefore [it is] the imperishable one [who], giving the teachings, readily gives melana. [The yogin] seeks refuge in Śiva, regarding [him as] the bestower of the practice. Having obtained this teaching from the highly honoured ones, he should not reveal [it] to others. Therefore this deep knowledge should, with every effort, be kept secret. O Brahman, having gone there where dwells a guru [who] imparts the divine yoga, and having comprehended the khecharī vidyā expressed by him, one should, undaunted right from the start, do the practice correctly as described by him. Through this knowledge, the yogin may become part of the siddhi of khecarī.

Commentary

Khecharī vidyā in its full form is not intended for the worldly-minded practitioner, because cutting the tongue assures that communication with the world will also be cut. Therefore, the *yati*, or ascetic, who is disengaged from the activities of the world, should go wandering from place to place, until he acquires this knowledge. The imperishable one, being firmly established in the unchanging reality, who gives the teachings on this vidyā, also readily gives the melana.

When the yogi obtains this knowledge, spiritual power will be firmly in his hand. Without this knowledge, however, spiritual power cannot be manifested in the three worlds.

The yogi, who has received this knowledge, should take refuge in Śiva, regarding him as the bestower of the practice. Having received this deep knowledge from the highly honored ones, he should make

every effort to keep it secret and avoid revealing it to others for any reason. Having reached the dwelling place of a guru, who imparts this divine yoga, one should listen carefully to the khecarī vidyā taught by him. Afterwards, one should find a suitable place and, undaunted right from the start, perform the practice correctly, as described by him. Through this knowledge, the yogi may become part of the powerful tradition of khecarī vidyā.

Verses 16b to 18a: Khecarī bīja

खेचर्या खेचरां युज्जन्खेचरीबीजपूरया ॥१६॥

खेचराधिपतिर्भूत्वा खेचरेषु सदा वसेत् ।

खेचरावसथं वह्निमम्बुमण्डल भूषितम् ॥१७॥

आख्यातं खेचरीबीजं तेन योगः प्रसिध्यति ।

khecaryā khecarīm yunjan khecarībījapūrayā (16b)

*khecarādhipatirbhūtvā khecareṣu sadā vase*t

khecarāvasatham vahnimambumandala bhūṣitam (17)

ākhyātam khecarībījam tena yogah prasidhyati (18a)

Anvay

pūrayā: having expanded; *khecarī-bīja*: bīja of khecarī; *yunjan*: by uniting; *khecarīm*: khecarī; *khecaryā*: with the energy of khecarī; *bhūtvā*: he becomes; *khecarādhi-patiḥ*: Lord of the Khecaras; *vase*t: lives; *sadā*: forever; *khecareṣu*: amongst them (the Khecaras); *khecarī-bījam*: khecarī bīja; *ākhyātam*: is described as; *khecarā-āvasatham*: abode of the Khecaras; *bhūṣitam*: adorned; *mandala*: circle; *vahnim-ambu*: fire and water; *tena*: through this; *yogah prasidhyati*: yoga is perfected.

Translation

Having expanded the bīja of khecarī by uniting khecarī with the energy of khecarī, he becomes Lord of the Khecaras and lives forever amongst them. Khecarī-bīja is described as the abode of the khecaras [and is] adorned [like] a circle [of] fire and water. Through this, yoga is perfected.

Commentary

The *bīja mantra*, or seed sound, of khecarī is *hrīm*. This bīja is expanded by uniting the practice of khecarī with the energy of khecarī, which is the kundalinī śakti. This means that with the perfection of khecarī, the practice itself becomes the final ascending energy of kundalinī, as she rises from viśuddhi cakra to pierce *lalana*, the nectar center behind the throat, and then ascends to ajña cakra at the mid-brain. The yogi, who becomes established in the perfected state of khecarī, having thus awakened ajña, becomes lord of khecaras, and resides in the unconditioned state of consciousness all the time.

The khecarī bīja, *hrīm*, is described here as the abode of the khecaras. This means that the mantra is compounded from the sound *ha*, which represents the element of space, and *khecara* means one who roams, *cara*, in the *khe*, sky or space. The *ra* or ‘*repha*’ sound is the state of fire, and the *ī* sound is

adorned with the space of the moon (i.e. the *bindu* or *anusvāra* placed above the letter to indicate the *m* sound). In this way, the khecarī bija, *hr̥īṁ*, which grants perfection in yoga, is formed.

Verses 18b to 21a: Esoteric details of the practice

सोमांशनवकं वर्णं प्रतिलोमेन चोद्धरेत् ॥१८॥

तस्मात्प्रशंशकमाख्यातमक्षरं चन्द्ररूपकम् ।

तस्मादप्यष्टमं वर्णं विलोमेन परं मुने ॥१९॥

तथा तत्परमं विद्धि तदादिरपि पञ्चमी ।

इन्दोश्च बहुभिन्ने च कूटोऽयं परिकीर्तिः ॥२०॥

गुरुपदेशलभ्यं च सर्वयोगप्रसिद्धीदम् ।२१।

somāṁśanavakam varṇam pratilomena coddharet (18b)

tasmāttryaṣṭamākhyātamaṅśaram candrarūpakam

tasmādapyasṭamam varṇam vilomena param mune (19)

tathā tatparamam viddhi tadādirapi pañcamī

indośca bahubhinne ca kūṭo ‘yam parikīrtitah (20)

gurūpadeśalabhyam ca sarvayogaprasiddhitam (21a)

Anvay

navakam: ninth; *soma-amśa*: phase of the moon; *uddharet*: should be pronounced; *pratilomena*: in reverse; *tasmāt*: then; *ākhyātām*: it is told; *akṣaram*: sound; *tri-aṁśakam*: three phases; *candra-rūpakam*: form of the moon; *tasmāt-api*: then also; *aṣṭamam varṇam*: eighth sound; *vilomena*: in the opposite direction; *param*: supreme; *mune*: o Sage; *viddhi*: know; *tat-paramam*: it is supreme; *tat-ādiḥ*: its beginning; *pañcamī*: fifth; *ca*: and; *ayam parikīrtitah*: this is said; *kutah*: peak; *indoh*: of the moon; *bahu-bhinne*: in its great part; *idam*: this; *prasiddhi*: success in; *sarva-yoga*: all yogas; *labhyam*: is to be gained; *guru-upadesā*: through instruction by the guru.

Translation

The ninth sound [of] the phase of the moon should be pronounced in reverse. Then it is told [there is] a sound [made of] three phases [of] the form of the moon. Then also the eighth sound [pronounced] in the opposite direction [is] supreme, o Sage. Know [that] it is supreme [and] its beginning [is] the fifth, and this is said [to be] the peak of the moon in its great part. This [which gives] success in all yogas is to be gained through instruction by the guru.

Commentary

In order to reveal the precise meaning and method of practice referred to in the above verses, initiation of a guru in the khecara tradition must be sought. That teaching, which gives success in all yogas, is to be gained through direct instruction from the guru.

Verses 21b to 24a: Benefits of the khecarī mantra

यत्स्य देहजा माया निरुद्धकरणाश्रया ॥२१॥

स्वप्नेऽपि न लभेत्स्य नित्यं द्वादशजप्यतः ।

य इमां पञ्च लक्षाणि जपेदपि सुयन्त्रितः ॥२२॥

तस्य श्रीखेचरीसिद्धिः स्वयमेव प्रवर्तते ।

नश्यन्ति सर्वविघ्नानि प्रसीदन्ति च देवताः ॥२३॥

वलीपलितनाशश्च भविष्यति न संशयः ॥२४॥

yattasya dehajā māyā niruddhakaraṇāśrayā (21b)

svapne 'pi na labhettasya nityam dvādaśajapyataḥ

ya imāṁ pañca lakṣāni japedapi suyantritaḥ (22)

tasya śrīkhecarī-siddhiḥ svayameva pravartate

naśyanti sarvavighnāni prasīdanti ca devatāḥ (23)

valī-palitanāśaśca bhaviṣyati na samśayah (24a)

Anvay

tasya japyataḥ: whoever repeats; *dvādaśa*: twelve; *nityam*: every day; *na labhet*: does not get; *api svapne*: even in sleep; *māyā dehajā*: *māya* born of the body; *āśrayā*: source; *niruddha-karaṇa*: hidden actions; *api suyantritaḥ*: and he who is self-disciplined; *japet*: repeats; *imām*: this; *pañca lakṣāni*: five hundred thousand times; *tasya*: to him; *śrīkhecarī-siddhiḥ*: siddhi of the glorious khecarī; *pravartate*: comes forth; *svayameva*: spontaneously; *sarva-vighnāni*: all obstructions; *naśyanti*: disappear; *ca*: and; *devatāḥ*: devas; *prasīdanti*: rejoice; *ca*: and; *na samśayah*: without doubt; *bhaviṣyati*: there will be; *śah*: elimination of; *valī-palitanā*: wrinkles and grey hair.

Translation

Whoever repeats [this] twelve [times] every day does not get even in sleep the *māya* [which is] born of the body [and] the source [of] hidden actions. And he who is self-disciplined repeats this five hundred thousand times, to him the siddhi of the glorious khecarī comes forth spontaneously. All obstructions disappear and the devas rejoice; and without doubt there will be elimination of wrinkles and grey hair.

Commentary

The yogi, who repeats the *khecarī* mantra, described in the previous verses twelve times daily, is freed from the bondage of *maya*, which is born of the body, and the source of all the hidden *samskara* and *karma*. The word *maya* means ‘measured’. The spirit or soul of a person, being formless and timeless, is immeasurable and eternal. But when the spirit is born in a material body, it becomes bound by the physical form and its attributes, which are measurable and limited by time. Repetition of the *khecarī* mantras frees the practitioner from this bondage, even in the state of sleep and dream, which is very difficult to control, even for a yogi.

The disciplined yogi, who is able to repeat these mantras 500,000 times, will acquire the siddhi of *khecarī* spontaneously. All obstructions on the path of *khecarī sādhana* will be removed for him, and the divine beings rejoice in this attainment. These effects will also be experienced on the physical plane. There will be rejuvenation of the body and elimination of grey hair and wrinkles, without a doubt.

Verses 24b to 27: Necessity of practice

एवं लब्ध्वा महाविद्यामभ्यासं कारयेत्ततः ॥२४॥

अन्यथा क्लिश्यते ब्रह्मन् सिद्धिः खेचरीपथे ।

यदभ्यासविधौ विद्यां न लभेयः सुधामयीम् ॥२५॥

ततः संमेलकादौ च लब्ध्वा विद्यां सदा जपेत् ।

नान्यथा रहितो ब्रह्मन् किंचित्सिद्धिभाभवेत् ॥२६॥

यदीदं लभ्यते शास्त्रं तदा विद्यां समाश्रयेत् ।

ततस्तदोदितां सिद्धिमाशु तां लभते मुनिः ॥२७॥

evam labdhvā mahāvidyāmabhyāsam kārayettataḥ (24b)

anyathā kliśyate brahmanna siddhiḥ khecarīpathe

yadabhyāsavidhau vidyāṁ na labhedyah sudhāmayīm (25)

tataḥ sammelakādau ca labdhvā vidyāṁ sadā japet

nānyathā rahito brahmanna kiñcitsiddhibhāghbhavet (26)

yadīdam labhyate śāstram tada vidyāṁ samāśrayet

tatastadoditāṁ siddhimāśu tāṁ labhate munih (27)

Anvay

labdhvā: having obtained; *mahāvidyām*: great knowledge; *tataḥ*: then; *kārayet*: one should do; *abhyāsam*: practice; *anyathā*: otherwise; *brahman*: o Brahman; *kliśyate*: one will suffer; *na*: without; *siddhiḥ*: siddhi; *khecarī-pathe*: on the path of *khecarī*; *yah na labhet*: whoever does not gain;

sudhāmayīm vidyām: nectar-like knowledge; *yat-abhyāsa-vidhau*: through this cleansing practice; *labdhvā vidyām*: having gained it (the knowledge); *sammelaka-ādau*: at the beginning of melana; *japet*: should repeat; *sadā*: forever; *na-anyathā*: if not; *brahman*: o Brahman; *rahitah*: who is lacking; *na bhavet*: does not get; *kimcit-siddhi-bhāg*: even a small part of siddhi; *yadi*: if; *labhyate*: he obtains; *idam śāstram*: this teaching; *tadā*: then; *samāśrayet*: he should practise; *vidyām*: knowledge; *tataḥ*: then; *muniḥ*: sage; *āśu*: quickly; *labhate*: obtains; *tām siddhim*: that siddhi; *uditām*: handed down.

Translation

Having obtained this great knowledge, one should then do the practice. Otherwise, o Brahman, one will suffer without [gaining] siddhi on the path of khecarī. Whoever does not gain this nectar-like knowledge through this cleansing practice, having gained it at the beginning of melana, should repeat it forever. If not, o Brahman, who is lacking it, does not get even a small part of siddhi. If he obtains this teaching, then he should practise its knowledge. Then the sage quickly obtains that siddhi handed down [to him].

Commentary

The khecarī mantras are the prelude to the practice of khecarī mudra. They set up the conducive vibrations within and all around the yogi, which allow this revered practice to be performed successfully. Therefore, the yogi who has acquired the knowledge of khecarī and repeated the specific mantras, should go on to perform the actual practice. Otherwise, one will continue to suffer on the wheel of birth and death, without ever gaining the ultimate liberation through the perfection of khecarī.

The knowledge of khecarī has been held in highest esteem from ancient times. Therefore, it remained secret, and was known to very few masters, who could pass it down in its entirety. For this reason, it is said that one who receives the direct experience of khecarī, even without the hidden knowledge of its background or mantras, should continue to practice it always. Otherwise, in the absence of khecarī, the yogi will not attain even a fraction of perfection. The yogi, who is fortunate to receive this teaching, should practise it. Then he will quickly obtain the perfection of yoga, which has been handed down to him.

Verses 28 to 37a: Method of khecarī

तालुमूलं समुक्तष्ट सप्तवासरमात्मवित् ।

स्वगुरुक्तप्रकारेण मलं सर्वं विशोधयेत् ॥२८॥

सुहिपत्रनिमं शस्त्रं सुतीक्ष्णं स्निधनिर्मलम् ।

समादाय ततस्तेन रोममात्रं समुच्छिनेत् ॥२९॥

हित्वा सैन्धवपथ्याभ्यां चूर्णिताभ्यां प्रकर्षयेत् ।

पुनः सप्तदिने प्राप्ते रोममात्रं समुच्छिनेत् ॥३०॥

एवं क्रमेण षन्मासं नित्योद्युक्तः समाचरेत् ।

षण्मासाद्रसनामूलं शिराबद्धं प्रणश्यति ॥३१॥

अथ वागीश्वरीधाम शिरो वस्त्रेण वेष्टयेत् ।

शनैरुत्कर्षयेद्योगी कालवेलाविधानवित् ॥३२॥

पुनः षण्मासमात्रेण नित्यं संघर्षणाम्भुने ।

भ्रूमध्यावधि चाप्येति तिर्यक्कर्णबिलावधि: ॥३३॥

अधश्च चुबुकं मूलं प्रयाति क्रमचारिता ।

पुनः संवत्सराणां तु तृतीयादेव लीलया ॥३४॥

केशान्तमूर्ध्यं क्रामति तिर्यक्षाखावधिर्मुने ।

अधस्तात्कण्ठकूपान्तं पुनर्वर्षत्रयेण तु ॥३५॥

ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं समावृत्य तिष्ठेदेव न संशयः ।

तिर्यक् चूलितलं याति अधः कण्ठबिलावधि ॥३६॥

शनैः शनैर्मस्तकाच्च महावज्रकपाटभित् ॥३७॥

tālumūlam samutkṛṣya saptavāsaramātmavit

svagurūktapratkāreṇa malam sarvam viśodhayet (28)

snuhipatranibham śastram sutikṣṇam snigdhanirmalam

samādāya tatastena romamātram samucchinet (29)

hitvā saindhavapathyābhyaṁ cūrnitābhyaṁ prakarṣayet

punah saptadine prāpte romamātram samucchinet (30)

evam krameṇa ṣanmāsam nityodyuktaḥ samācaret

ṣanmāsādrasanāmūlam śirābaddham pranaśyati (31)

atha vāgīśvarīdhāma śiro vastreṇa veṣṭayet

śanairutkarṣayedyogī kālavelāvidhānavit (32)

punah ṣanmāsamātreṇa nityam samgharṣaṇānmune

bhrūmadhyāvadhi cāpyeti tiryakkarṇabilāvadhiḥ (33)

adhaśca cubukam mūlam prayāti kramacāritā

punah samvatsarāñām tu ṛtīyādeva līlayā (34)

keśāntamūrdhvam krāmati tiryakśākhāvadhirmune

ad hastātkaṇṭhakūpāntam punarvarṣatrayeṇa tu (35)

brahmaṇḍhraṁ samāvṛtya tiṣṭhedeva na saṁśayah

tiryak cūlitalam yāti adhaḥ kaṇṭhabilāvadhi (36)

śanaiḥ śanairmastakācca mahāvajrakapātabhit (37a)

Anvay

samutkṛṣya: having drawn up; *tālu-mūlam*: root of the palate; *ātmavit*: knower of atman; *sapta-vāsaram*: for seven days; *viśodhayet*: should clear; *sarvam malam*: every impurity; *prakāreṇa*: in the way; *svaguru-ukta*: described by his guru; *nirmalam*: clean; *snigdha*: oiled; *sutikṣṇam*: sharp; *śastram*: knife; *nibham*: resembling; *snuhi-patra*: leaf of the *snuhi* plant; *tataḥ*: then; *saṁdāya tena*: with it; *saṁucchinet*: he should cut off; *roma-mātram*: size of a hair; *prāpte sapta-dine*: when he has completed the seventh day; *punah*: again; *saṁucchinet*: he should cut off; *roma-mātram*: size of a hair; *evam*: so; *nitya-udyuktaḥ*: having made constant effort; *saṁcāret*: he should continue; *krameṇa*: steadily; *śan-māsāt*: in six months; *rasanā-mūlam*: root of the organ of taste; *śirā-baddham*: attached to the head; *pranaśyati*: is destroyed; *atha yogī*: then the yogin; *kāla-velā-vidhāna-vit*: who knows the right time and method; *veṣṭayet*: should enclose; *vastrena*: with cloth; *śirah*: head; *dhāma*: mighty; *vāk-īśvarī*: Lord of Speech; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *utkarsayet*: elevating; *punah*: again; *nityam* *saṁgharsanāt*: through daily friction; *śan-māsa-mātrenā*: for a period of six months; *mune*: o Sage; *āpyeti*: it reaches; *bhrūmadhya-avadhi*: up to the eyebrow centre; *ca*: and; *tiryak*: sideways; *karṇa-bila-avadhiḥ*: up to the opening of the ears; *ca adhah*: and then; *krama-cāritā*: gradually set in motion; *prayāti*: it proceeds to; *mūlam*: root; *cubukam*: chin; *tu punah*: then again; *ṛtīyāt samvatsarāñām*: after the third year; *krāmati*: it progresses to; *līlayā*: easily; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *keśāntam*: where the hair meets the forehead; *tiryak*: sideways; *śākhā-avadhiḥ*: up to the aperture at the top back of the head; *mune*: o Sage; *ad hastāt*: downwards to; *kaṇṭha-kūpāntam*: throat-pit; *punah-varṣa-trayēṇa*: in another three years; *brahmaṇḍhraṁ samāvṛtya*: having reached *brahmaṇḍhra*; *na saṁśayah*: without doubt; *tiṣṭhet-eva*: it remains there; *yāti*: it goes to; *tiryak*: sideways; *cūli-talam*: beneath the crest of hair; *adhah*: downwards; *kaṇṭha-kūpāntam-avadhi*: right to the throat-pit; *ca śanaiḥ śanaiḥ*: and very slowly; *mahā-vajra-kapātabhit*: through the great adamantine doors; *mastakāt*: of the skull.

Translation

Having drawn up [the tongue from] the root of the palate, the knower of ātman should for seven days clear every impurity [from it] in the way described by his guru. [He should take] a clean, oiled and sharp knife resembling the leaf of the *snuhi* plant, then with it [make a] cut the size of a hair. He should quickly apply [it] with crushed rock-salt and sea-salt. When he has completed the seventh day, he should again cut off [a piece] the size of a hair. So, having made constant effort, he should continue steadily. In six months the root of the organ of taste attached to the head is destroyed. Then the yogin who knows the right time and method should enclose with cloth the head [of] the mighty Lord of Speech, slowly elevating [it]. Again through daily friction for a period of six months, o Sage, it reaches up to the eyebrow centre and sideways up to the opening of the ears. And then, gradually set in motion, it proceeds to the root [of] the chin. Then again, after the third year, it progresses easily

upwards to where the hair meets the forehead, [then] sideways up to *shakha*, the aperture at the top back of the head, o Sage, [and] downwards to the throat-pit. In another three years, having reached *brahmarandhra*, it without doubt remains there. It goes sideways to beneath the crest of hair, downwards right to the throat-pit and very slowly through the great adamantine doors of the skull.

Technique

Stage one, purifying the tongue: The tongue should first be cleaned with a tooth brush or a metal tool, called a tongue scraper. This should be done daily in the early morning to clear away all impurities. Next the tongue may be oiled, massaged and pulled in order to loosen it from the root or base of the mouth. This initial purification should be performed daily for at least 7 days.

Stage two, preliminary practice: Sit in a comfortable meditative asana with the back straight. Head neck and shoulders should be in alignment with the back. The hands should be placed on the knees in chin or jnana mudra. Relax the whole body and close the eyes. Fold the tongue upward and backward, so that the lower surface lies in contact with the roof of the mouth. Stretch the tip of the tongue back towards the opening of the throat. Hold the position with the tongue as far back as comfortable. Breathe slowly and deeply. When the tongue becomes tired, release and relax it. Then repeat the practice.

Stage three, cutting the frenum: Using a clean, oiled and sharp knife or razor, make a tiny incision into the frenum, no larger than the width of a hair. Quickly apply crushed rock salt or sea salt to the cut. After seven days, when the cut has healed over, make another hair width incision. Continue in the same way steadily for six months, until the root of the tongue that attaches it to the base of the mouth, is severed.

Stage four, elongating the tongue externally: Fold a small cloth around the tongue and slowly begin to manipulate it. Pull gently on the tongue and stretch it outward and upward. Continue this practice daily. After a period of six months, the tip of the tongue will reach upward to the eyebrow center, sideways to the opening of the ears, and downward to the base of the chin. After three years, with regular practice, the tongue will easily reach upward to where the hairline meets the forehead, sideways to the top back of the head, where the brahmins keep a tuft, and downward to the throat-pit.

Stage five, rotating the tongue internally: Manually insert the tongue into the aperture at the back of the throat and begin to feed it upward internally. After another three years, the tip of the tongue will reach the *brahmarandhra*, at the crown of the head, where the fontanelle is located. It will remain there, without a doubt, for as long as one chooses. The tongue will also move sideways to the point beneath the crest of hair, and very slowly right down through the doors of the skull to the throat-pit.

Verses 37b to 40a: Practise slowly

पूर्व बीजयुता विद्या ह्याख्याता यातिदुर्लभा ॥३७॥

तस्या: षडङ्गं कुर्वतं तया षट्स्वरभिन्या ।

कुर्यादेवं करन्यासं सर्वसिद्ध्यादिहेतवे ॥३८॥

शनैरेवं प्रकर्तव्यमध्यासं युगपन्हि ।

युगपद्वर्ते यस्य शरीरं विलयं ब्रजेत् ॥३९॥

तस्माच्छनैः शनैः कार्यमध्यासं मुनिपुङ्गव ।४०।

pūrvam bījayutā vidyā hyākhyātā yātidurlabhā (37b)

tasyāḥ ṣadaṅgam kurvātam tayā ṣaṭsvarabhinnayā

kuryādevam karanyāsam sarvasiddhyādihetave (38)

śanairevam prakartavyamabhyāsam yugapannahi

yugapadvartate yasya śarīram vilayam vrajet (39)

tasmācchanaiḥ śanaiḥ kāryamabhyāsam munipuṅgava (40a)

Anvay

vidyā bīja-yutā: knowledge concerning the seed sound; *ākhyātā*: was explained; *pūrvam*: previously; *yāti hi durlabhā*: is indeed extraordinary; *kurvātam*: one should do; *ṣat-āṅgam*: six parts; *tasyāḥ*: of this; *tayā ṣaṭ-svara-bhinnayā*: through its six different tones; *kuryāt*: one should do; *karanyāsam*: mystic hand movements; *hetave*: for the purpose of; *sarva-siddhi-ādi*: all the first siddhis; *evam abhyāsam*: this practice; *prakartavyam*: should be prepared; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *na yugapat*: not all at the same time; *hi*: since; *śarīram*: body; *yasya*: which; *vartate*: practises; *yugapat*: all at once; *vilayam vrajet*: quickly decomposes; *tasmāt*: therefore; *abhyāsam*: practice; *kāryam*: should be done; *śanaiḥ*; *śanaiḥ*: very gradually; *munipuṅgava*: o Esteemed Sage.

Translation

The knowledge concerning the seed sound, [which] was explained previously, is indeed extraordinary. One should do the six parts of this [vidyā] through its six different tones. One should do mystic hand movements for the purpose of [attaining] all the first siddhis. This practice should be prepared slowly [and] not all at the same time, since the body which practises [it] all at once quickly decomposes. Therefore, the practice should be done very gradually, o Esteemed Sage.

Commentary

Khecarī is the main yoga practice found in the yoga upaniṣads. Today, only the first two stages described in the previous section are generally practised and taught. However, when undertaken in its full form each stage of khecarī needs to be done slowly and methodically, under the guidance of an experienced master. The meaning of the word *khecarī* is very relevant here. One who perfects this practice is able to roam freely in the vast sky of consciousness, unfettered by worldly associations and limitations. In this sense, khecarī is synonymous with *mokṣa*, because it bestows liberation on its practitioners.

Liberation means to soar free from the bondage, the karma, the gravitational pull of the material world. However, the full practice of khecarī is not intended for those who are actively engaged in the world, because the faculties of speech and swallowing are seriously obstructed. Khecarī redirects the energy of viśuddhi cakra back upward to the field of consciousness, before it falls down into the lower centres and becomes identified or associated with the external world. As long as the full form of khecarī is maintained, one is able to roam freely in the vast sky of consciousness without any mental

disturbance or dissipation.

Verses 40b to 44a: Last stage of khecarī

तदा च बाह्यमार्गेण जिह्वा ब्रह्मबिलं व्रजेत् ॥४०॥

तदा ब्रह्मार्गलं ब्रह्मन्दुर्भेदं त्रिदशनैरपि ।

अङ्गुल्यग्रेण संघृष्य जिह्वामात्रं निवेशयेत् ॥४१॥

एवं वर्षत्रयं कृत्वा ब्रह्मद्वारं प्रविश्यति ।

ब्रह्मद्वारे प्रविष्टे तु सम्युक्तमथनमाचरेत् ॥४२॥

मथनेन विना किञ्चित्साधयन्ति विपश्चिताः ।

खेचरीमन्त्रसिद्धस्य सिध्यां मथनेन विना ॥४३॥

जपं च मथनं चैव कृत्वा शीघ्रं फलं लभेत् ॥४४॥

tadā ca bāhyamārgeṇa jihvā brahmabilam vrajet (40b)

tadā brahmārgalam brahmandurbhedyam tridaśanairapi

aṅgulyagreṇa samghṛṣya jihvāmātram niveśayet (41)

evam varṣatrayam kṛtvā brahma-dvāram praviśyati

brahma-dvāre praviṣṭe tu samyañmathanamācaret (42)

mathanena vinā kiñcitsādhayanti vipaścitāḥ

khecarīmantrasiddhasya sidhyāṁ mathanena vinā (43)

japam ca mathanam caiva kṛtvā śīghram phalam labhet (44a)

Anvay

tadā: then; *jihvā:* tongue; *vrajet:* moves to; *brahmabilam:* brahmarandhra; *bāhya-mārgeṇa:* through the outer path; *ca tadā:* and then; *saṃghṛṣya:* having been rubbed; *aṅgulyagreṇa:* with the finger-tip; *brahmārgalam:* bolt of Brahma; *durbhedyam:* is difficult to be pierced; *api:* even; *brahman tridaśanaiḥ:* by the gods; *niveśayet:* enters; *jihvā-mātram:* space of the tongue; *kṛtvā evam:* having done this; *varṣa-trayam:* for three years; *praviśyati:* it moves through; *brahma-dvāram:* entrance to Brahma; *tu:* now; *praviṣṭe:* having moved through; *brahma-dvāre:* entrance to Brahma; *mathanamācaret:* it performs rubbing, churning; *samyak:* perfectly; *vipaścitāḥ:* inspired people; *kiñcit:* sometimes; *sādhayanti:* reach the goal; *mathanena vinā:* without rubbing or churning; *khecarī-mantra-siddhasya:* whoever masters khecarī mantra; *sidhyām:* may attain; *mathanena vinā:* without churning; *labhet:* one obtains; *phalam:* fruits; *śīghram:* quickly; *kṛtvā:* by doing; *japam ca mathanam ca:* both repetition of mantra and churning.

Translation

Then the tongue moves to the brahmarandhra through the outer path. And then, having been rubbed with the finger-tips, the tongue enters the bolt of Brahma, [which] is difficult to be pierced even by the gods. Having done this for three years, it moves through to the entrance to Brahma. Now, having moved through to the entrance to Brahma, it performs churning perfectly. Inspired people sometimes reach the goal without churning. Whoever masters khecarī mantra may attain without churning. One obtains the fruits quickly by doing both repetition of mantra and churning.

Commentary

These verses describe stage five of the practice given in the previous section. This stage can only be applied after the frenum has been gradually cut and the tongue elongated in the systematic manner detailed above. Then the tongue is massaged with the fingertips and pushed methodically inward and upward through the outer path, ie. the opening at the back of the throat. When the elongated tongue reaches ajña cakra, at the mid-brain, the yogi experiences the ‘bolt of brahma’, allowing him to transcend the mind and enter the space of consciousness. This space is highly revered and is said to be difficult to attain, even by the gods.

After performing this practice on a regular basis for three years, the tongue moves further upward to the *brahmarandhra*, at the top back of the head, where the fontanelle is located. This point is also known as bindu cakra, from which the spirit descends into the body before birth and leaves the body at the time of death. In the above verses this point is called the ‘entrance to Brahma’, because it represents the source of individual consciousness and creation. Beyond this point there is nothing: no name, no form, no ideation, only brahman, ever expanding cosmic consciousness, pure and absolute.

Now, having reached the brahmarandhra, at the top back of the head, the tongue performs perfect and spontaneous churning in order to gain access to the cosmic consciousness beyond. Some yogis may reach this pinnacle, even without churning. It is said that whoever masters the khecarī mantra may attain this state without churning. However, one obtains the goal more quickly by utilising both the repetition of the mantra and the churning.

Verses 44b to 49: Sūtra neti, adjunct to khecarī

स्वर्णजां रौप्यजां वापि लोहजां वा शलाकिकाम् ॥४४॥

नियोच्य नासिकारन्धं दुध सिक्तेन तन्तुना ।

प्राणानिरुद्ध्य हृदये सुखमासनमात्मनः ॥४५॥

शनैः सुमथनं कुर्याद्भ्रूमध्ये न्यस्य चक्षुषी ।

षण्मासं मथनावस्था भावेनैव प्रजायते ॥४६॥

यथा सुषुप्तिर्बालानां यथा भवस्तथा भरेत् ।

न सदा मथनं शस्तं मासे समाचरेत् ॥४७॥

सदा रसनया योगी मार्गं न परिसंक्रमेत् ।

एवं द्वादशवर्षान्ते संसिद्धिर्भवति ध्रुवा ॥४८॥

शरि सकलं विश्वं पश्यन्त्यात्माविमेदतः ।

ब्रह्माण्डोऽयं महामार्गो राजदन्तोर्ध्वकुण्डली ॥४९॥ इति ॥

svarnajām raupyajām vāpi lohajām vā śalākikām (44b)

niyojya nāsikārandhram dugdha siktena tantunā

prāṇānnirudhya hrdaye sukhamāsanamātmanah (45)

śanaiḥ sumathanaṁ kuryādbhrūmadhye nyasya cakṣuṣī

śaṁmāsaṁ mathanāvasthā bhāvenaiva prajāyate (46)

yathā suṣuptibālānām yathā bhavastathā bharet

na sadā mathanam śastam māse samācaret (47)

sadā rasanayā yogī mārgam na parisamkramet

evam dvādaśavarṣānte saṁsiddhirbhavati dhruvā (48)

śarīre sakalam viśvam paśyantyātmāvibhedataḥ

brahmāṇdo ‘yam mahāmārgo rājadantordhvakuṇḍalī (49)

Anvay

niyojya: having attached to; *śalākikām*: thin rod; *svarnajām*: made of gold; *raupyajām*: made of silver; *vā api*: or even; *lohajām*: made of iron; *nāsikārandhram*: nostrils; *tantunā*: by means of a thread; *siktena dugdha*: impregnated with milk; *prāṇāt-nirudhya*: holding the breath; *hrdaye*: in the heart; *ātmanah*: self; *sukham-āsanam*: comfortable position; *nyasya*: focusing; *cakṣuṣī*: eyes; *bhrūmadhye*: on the eyebrow centre; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *kuryāt*: one should perform; *sumathanaṁ*: auspicious mathana; *śaṁmāsaṁ*: in six months; *mathana-avasthā*: state of mathana; *prajāyate bhāvena*: comes naturally; *yathā*: just like; *suṣuptih-bālānām*: sleep of children; *bharet*: is maintained; *samācaret*: one should practise; *na sadā*: not always; *śastam mathanam*: excellent mathana; *māse*: [every] month; *yogī*: yogin; *na sadā parisamkramet*: should not always revolve; *rasanayā*: tongue; *margam*: path; *dvādaśa-varṣānte*: after twelve years; *bhavati dhruvā*: there is sure; *saṁsiddhiḥ*: attainment of siddhis; *sakalam viśvam*: whole universe; *paśyanti*: is seen; *śarīre*: in the body; *ātmā-vibhedataḥ*: not distinct from the ātman; *ayam mahā-mārgah*: this great path; *ūrdhvakuṇḍalī*: ascending kuṇḍalīni; *rājadanta*: infinite ruler; *brahmāṇḍah*: cosmos.

Translation

Having attached a thin rod made of gold, silver or even iron to the nostrils by means of a thread impregnated with milk, holding the breath in the heart, the self [in] a comfortable position [and]

focusing the eyes on the eyebrow centre, one should slowly perform the auspicious mathana. In six months, the state of mathana comes naturally, just like the state of sleep in children is maintained. One should not always practise [this] excellent mathana [every] month. The yogin should not always revolve his tongue [on] the path. After twelve years there is sure [to be] attainment of siddhis. The whole universe is seen in the body [as] indistinct from the ātman. This great path [of] ascending kūḍalīni is the infinite ruler [of] the cosmos.

Commentary

The practice of *sūtra neti*, cleansing the nostrils with a thread, is described here, as an adjunct to khecarī mudrā. Sūtra neti will help to rebalance and open the pranic pathways of idā and piṅgalā, removing any obstruction of air or prāṇa in these flows. The left nostril corresponds to the physical termination point of idā nādī, and the right nostril to the physical termination of piṅgalā nādī. Idā controls the mental energy and piṅgalā the vital. When these two major channels are in equilibrium, the third and most important channel, suṣumnā, which controls the spiritual force, opens. Without the opening of suṣumnā, the highest stage of khecarī, described above, is impossible to attain.

Technique

Stage one, preparing the sūtra: Cut a length of silken thread, about one and a half meters long, to be used for the practice. Attach a thin rod made of gold, silver, or iron, at the midpoint of the thread. Heat some beeswax in a spoon, over a flame, and apply it to one end of the thread. Allow the wax to dry and harden. Soak the thread just below the beeswax, along with the attached rod, in a bowl of milk for a few minutes, before beginning the practice of sūtra neti.

Stage two, awareness of body and breath: Sit in a comfortable meditation position. The bowl of milk, with the thread soaking in it, should be placed in front of you. Allow the entire body to relax in the posture from head to toe. Leave all worries and concerns, regarding the daily life, and draw the attention within. Focus the awareness on the breath. Practice slow rhythmic breathing. Inhale slowly from the nostrils down to the heart. Hold the breath at the heart for a comfortable duration. Exhale slowly from the heart back upward to the nostrils. Establish a comfortable rhythm of the breath, while inhaling, holding and exhaling.

Stage three, inserting the thread: Change back to normal breathing. Pick up the end of the thread with the beeswax from the bowl in front of you. Slowly begin to insert it into the opening of the right nostril. Push the thread upward into the right nostril and into the opening at the back of the throat. Manoeuvre the thread, so that it passes down the throat. Then pull it out manually from the back of the throat through the mouth.

Stage four, pulling the thread: Hold the two ends of the thread. The left hand holds the thread coming from the mouth, and the right hand holds the thread from the nostrils. Practice śambhavi mudrā, holding the gaze inward at the eyebrow centre. Resume the awareness of the breath. Inhale slowly downward from the nostrils to the heart. Hold the breath at the heart and simultaneously pull the thread up and down, so that the rod massages the entire length of the right nostril. This is called mathana. Rotate the thread with the rod affixed up and down the right nostril slowly from three to five times. Then exhale slowly back upward from the heart to the nostrils. This is one round. Practise four more rounds. Then withdraw the thread from the right nostril, and perform the practice in the same way through the left nostril for five rounds.

Stage five, alternative method: You can also insert the thread up the right nostril and pull it out through the left nostril. Hold the two ends of the thread, with the right end from the right nostril in the

right hand, and the left end from the left nostril in the left hand. Focus the gaze at the eyebrow centre and resume the heart breath, as described above. Perform five rounds of mathana in this way, so that the rod massages the right nostril. Then remove the thread. Insert the thread up the left nostril and pull it out through the right. Perform five rounds of mathana in this way.

Stage six, spontaneous mathana: In six months the state of mathana comes naturally and is maintained, like the state of sleep in children. This continuous state of mathana allows the flow of idā and pingalā to remain equalised and keeps suṣumnā open for longer durations of time. This is the condition required for the last stage of khecarī to be successful.

Precautions: However, the text further states that the yogi should not practise this auspicious mathana every month. There must be a break for the preservation of the vital and mental forces. The channel of suṣumnā should not remain open all the time. Similarly, the yogi should not practise khecarī, revolving the tongue on the path of suṣumnā, for continuous durations of time.

Benefits: The yogi who is able to maintain this practice for twelve years will surely attain siddhi, the powers of perfection. He will experience the whole universe as ātman, the pure self, within the body. The path of ūrdhvā, the ascending, kūḍalinī is the infinite ruler of the universe. It is she who creates all existence while descending, who maintains the creation while resting at its base, and who dissolves all creation back into her cosmic being while ascending.

इति द्वीतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

iti dvītiyo ‘dhyāyah

Thus [ends] the second chapter.

Chapter Three

तृतीयोऽध्यायः

tr̥tiyo ‘dhyāyah

मेलनमनुः । हीं भं सं पं फं सं क्षं ।

melanamanuh: hīṁ bham̄ sam̄ pam̄ pham̄ sam̄ ksham̄

पद्मज उवाच ।

padmaja uvāca

The Lotus-born said:

Verses 1 and 2: Auspicious days

अमावास्या च प्रतिपत्तौर्णमासी च शंकर ।

अस्याः का वर्ण्यते संज्ञा एतदाख्याहि तत्त्वतः ॥१॥

प्रतिपद्धिनती 'काले अमावास्या तथैव च ।

पौर्णमास्यां स्थिरीकृद्यात्स च पन्था हि नान्यथा ॥२॥

amāvāsyā ca pratipatpaurṇamāstī ca śaṅkara

asyāḥ kā varṇyate samjñā etadākhyāhi tattvataḥ (1)

pratipaddinattī 'kāle amāvāsyā tathaiva ca

paurṇamāsyām sthīrīkuryātsa ca panthā hi nānyathā (2)

Anvay

śaṅkara: o Śaṅkara; *kā*: which one; *amāvāsyā*: night of the dark moon; *ca*: or; *pratipatpaurṇamāstī*: beginning of the full moon; *varṇyate*: is described as; *asyāḥ samjñā*: its sign; *etad*: this; *tattvataḥ*: truly; *ākhyā*: name; *sthīrī-kuryāt*: it should be established; *akāle*: when is not the right time; *pratipaddinattī*: first day of the lunar fortnight; *tathaiva ca*: or; *amāvāsyā*: night of the new moon; *paurṇamāsyām*: day of the full moon; *sā panthā*: this [is] the way; *ca nānyathā*: and no other.

Translation

O Śaṅkara, which one, the night of the dark moon or the beginning of the full moon, is described as its sign? This [is] truly [its] name. It should be established when is not the right time: the first day of the lunar fortnight, or the night of the dark moon, or the day of the full moon. This [is] the way, and no other.

Commentary

The lunar calendar was used in ancient times and is still consulted today to determine the best dates for initiating auspicious practices or conducting events. The lunar calendar is based upon the monthly cycles of the phases of the moon, in contrast to the solar calendar, which is based upon the solar year. The lunar month is comprised of 29 days. The days of the lunar calendar are called *tithi*. Each month has two cycles: 14 days waxing or *śukla pakṣa*, bright fortnight, and 14 days waning or *kṛṣṇa pakṣa*, dark fortnight, plus a few hours extra in-between to make up the 29 days. There are twelve lunar cycles in one year.

Within these two cycles that occur each month, several days are considered to be auspicious. The three days generally observed are referred to in the verses above. The full moon day, or *pūrṇima*, occurs at the end of the waxing cycle. This day is very powerful, and can be appreciated by all. But little is generally known about the dark moon, or *amāvāsyā*, which is the second auspicious day. The dark moon day occurs at the end of the waning cycle, before the beginning of the waxing cycle, when there is no conjunction between the sun and the moon. Therefore, the moon is not visible at all during this time. The next lunar month begins on the day of the [new moon](#), *pratipaddinattī*, when the moon comes into conjunction with the sun again, and this is the third auspicious day.

The question is asked here: which of these days is described as its sign, the dark moon day or the first day of the new moon? These two days are often described as one and the same, although they are actually distinct from one another with their own attributes. It is also asked, when is it not the right time to initiate an event or a *sādhana*, on the dark moon day, the new moon day, or the full moon day?

Generally, the dark moon day is auspicious for starting tantric or esoteric practices. The new moon day is beneficial for starting sādhanas of a universal nature. The full moon day is conducive for conducting ceremonies and public worship.

Verses 3 and 4a: Renunciation

कामेन विषयाकाङ्क्षी विषयात्काममोहितः ।

द्वावेव संत्यजेन्नित्यं निरञ्जनमुपाश्रयेत् ॥३॥

अपरं संत्यजेत्सर्वं यदिच्छेदात्मनो हितम् ।४।

kāmena viṣayākāṅkṣī viṣayāt kāmamohitah

dvāveva samtyajennityam nirañjanam upāśrayet (3)

aparam samtyajetsarvam yadicchedātmano hitam (4a)

Anvay

kāṅkṣī: longing for; *viṣayā*: sensual enjoyment; *kāmena*: because of desire; *mohitah*: one is deluded by; *viṣayāt-kāma*: desire for sensual enjoyment; *samtyajet*: one should renounce; *dvau*: two; *nityam*: forever; *upāśrayet*: one should devote oneself to; *niranjanam*: that which is stainless; *aparam*: moreover; *samtyajet*: one should abandon; *sarvam hitam*: everything pleasurable; *yad icchet*: which one wishes; *ātmanah*: for oneself.

Translation

[When there is] longing for sensual enjoyment because of desire, one is deluded by the desire for sensual enjoyment. One should renounce [these] two [and] forever devote oneself to that which is stainless. Moreover, one should abandon everything pleasurable, which one wishes for oneself.

Commentary

Whenever there is longing for sensual enjoyment, the mind always becomes clouded by that desire. Longing and desire for sensual experience create endless waves in the mind, which aggravate and disturb it, making sādhana impossible. The longing will continue on in the mind, long after the practice is over, causing tumult and unrest, until it is fulfilled. Even after satisfying the desire, however, there is no respite, for another desire will immediately replace it. Hence, desire, longing and satisfaction form a continual cycle, which bind one to the world. There can be no liberation in this life for one whose mind is set upon following desires.

Therefore, the yogi who wishes to dedicate himself to a regular practice must first free the mind of all hankering and longing for external things. The sādhaka must develop sensory control to such a degree that as soon as the thoughts start to wander into areas of desire, he or she is able to bring it back immediately and focus on the practice at hand and the inner goal to be achieved. There must be a clear distinction between sensory satisfaction and self realisation. One must be determined to sacrifice the former in order to achieve the latter.

The yogi must be prepared to renounce desire and longing for sensory experience forever, in order to

devote himself completely to that which is stainless and permanent. There is no external person, place or object that can be considered absolutely pure. All material existence is impermanent and impure, because it is bound by the elements and influenced by time and space. What then can be considered stainless in this world? Only the pure consciousness, which is unbound and unaffected by the trammels of life.

Therefore, in order to become a yogi, one must abandon all pleasures, especially those which one wishes for oneself, and focus on attaining the absolute consciousness. It is interesting to note that the pleasures and welfare that one may wish or seek for others have a different effect on the mind. Wishing others well has a calming and expansive effect, generating love and good will all around. Even a renunciate should practise it in order to bring peace to the world. The fruits of sādhana may also be dedicated in this way for the happiness and welfare of all beings.

Verses 4b to 7a: Manas and śakti

शक्तिमध्ये मनः कृत्वा मनः शक्तेश्च मध्यगम् ॥४॥

मनसा मन आलोक्य तत्यजेत्परं पदम् ।

मन एव हि बिन्दुश्च उत्पत्तिस्थितिकारणम् ॥५॥

मनसोत्पद्यते बिन्दुर्यथा क्षीरं घृतात्मकम् ।

न च बन्धनमध्यस्थं तद्वे कारणमानसम् ॥६॥

चन्द्रार्कमध्यमा शक्तिर्यत्रस्था तत्र बन्धनम् ॥७॥

śaktimadhye manah kṛtvā manah śakteśca madhyagam (4b)

manasā mana ālokya tattyajetparam padam

mana eva hi binduśca utpattisthiti-kāraṇam (5)

manasotpadyate binduryathā kṣīram gṛtātmakam

na ca bandhanamadhyastham tadve kāraṇamānasam (6)

candrārka-madhyamā śaktiryatras्था tatra bandhanam (7a)

Anvay

kṛtvā: having put; *manah śaktimadhye*: *manas* within *śakti*; *manah madhyagam śakteḥ*: *manas* being amongst *śakti*; *ca ālokya*: and viewed; *manah manasā*: *manas* through *manas*; *tyajet*: one leaves; *tat param padam*: this highest stage; *hi*: for; *manah eva binduh*: *manas* [is] indeed the *bindu*; *ca*: and; *kāraṇam*: cause; *utpatti-sthiti*: creation and continued existence; *binduh utpadyate manasā*: *bindu* comes into existence through *manas*; *yathā*: just as; *ghṛta-ātmakam*: ghee comes from; *kṣīram*: milk; *tat kāraṇa-mānasam*: its mental cause; *ve*: definitely; *na bandhana-madhyā-stham*: not situated in the middle of bondage; *bandhanam tatra*: bondage [is] there; *yatra śaktih sthā*: where *śakti* is located; *candra-arka-madhyamā*: between the moon and the sun.

Translation

Having put *manas* within *śakti*, *manas* being amongst *śakti*, and viewed *manas* through *manas*, one leaves this highest stage. For *manas* [is] indeed the *bindu*, and the cause [of] creation and continued existence. *Bindu* comes into existence through *manas*, just as ghee comes from milk. Its mental cause [is] definitely not situated in the middle of bondage. Binding [is] there where *śakti* is located between the moon and the sun.

Commentary

Manas and *śakti* are the two principles of creation. Here, *manas* refers to mind in the sense of consciousness, and *śakti*, the eternal energy. All existence evolves from these two. When *manas* functions from within *śakti*, there is creation and the different experiences of name and form and ideation. Oneself and the world around are seen from that perspective. However, when *manas* is withdrawn from *śakti*, ie., *puruṣa* is withdrawn from *prakṛti*, then all existence is seen as consciousness, *manas* within *manas*. All beings, all worlds, all existence are only consciousness. This is said to be the absolute truth; while the vision of *manas* within *śakti* is the relative.

Having viewed and understood these two perspectives: *manas* within *śakti*, and *manas* within *manas*, one leaves this highest stage of realisation. Individual being is imminent for all those who are born. *Bindu* is the point or source of *manas*, where being becomes manifest. So, *manas* is indeed *bindu*, the cause of creation and continued existence. *Bindu* comes into existence through *manas*. The point or source of being is thus an evolute of consciousness, in the same way that butter is an evolute of milk. The unmanifest, unbound consciousness undergoes a transformation at this point, whereby it becomes manifest and bound. *Bindu* is the entry point, where being becomes manifest, as well as the exit point, where all being is unmanifest, formless and timeless.

The cause of consciousness is definitely not any kind of binding, fettering or holding. Consciousness in itself is free from all bondage and limitation. The consciousness becomes bound only when it associates with *śakti* and manifests in-between the sun and moon, in the body and mind, and in the world of name and form.

Verses 7b to 9a: Practice of *kunḍalinī* yoga

ज्ञात्वा सुषुम्नां तद्वेदं कृत्वा वायुं च मध्यगम् ॥७॥

स्थित्वासौवैन्दवस्थाने ग्राणरन्ध्रे निरोधयेत् ।

वायुं बिन्दुं समाख्यातं सत्त्वं प्रकृतिमेव च ॥८॥

षट् चक्राणि परिज्ञत्वा प्रविशेत्सुखमण्डलम् ॥९॥

jñātvā suṣumnām tadbhedam krtvā vāyum ca madhyagam (7b)

sthitvāsauvaindavasthāne ghrāṇarandhre nirodhayet

vāyum bindum samākhyātām sattvam prakṛtimeva ca (8)

ṣaṭ cakrāṇi parijñatvā praviśetsukhamandalam (9a)

Anvay

jñātvā suṣumnām: having known the suṣumnā; *tat-bhedam*: its piercing; *kṛtvā vāyum madhyagam*: moved the prāṇa up the centre; *ca sthitvā*: and remained; *aindava-sthāne*: in the site of the moon; *nirodhayet*: one should close; *ghrāṇarandhre*: nostrils; *parijñatvā*: having experienced; *vāyum*: prāṇa; *bindum samākhyātam*: bindu as described; *sattvam prakṛtim*: quality of *sattva*; *ca ṣaṭ cakrāṇi*: and the six cakras; *pravīset*: one enters; *sukha-maṇḍalam*: sphere of joy.

Translation

Having known the suṣumnā [and] its piercing, moved the prāṇa up the centre, and remained in the site of the moon, one should close the nostrils. Having experienced the prāṇa, the bindu as described, the quality of *sattva* and the six cakras, one enters the sphere of joy.

Commentary

Here the path of kundalinī yoga is succinctly described in a simple and easy formula:

The first step is to become aware of *suṣumnā nāḍī*, located at the centre of the spinal column, and its significance as the direct channel of the kundalinī śakti, both descending from spirit into matter and ascending from matter into spirit.

The second step is to open the suṣumnā by rotating the prāṇa along with the breath through the centre of this pathway. Inhale slowly upward from the base of suṣumnā at mūlādhāra cakra to bindu cakra at the top back of the head, and then exhale back down from bindu to mūlādhāra. Imagine particles of light or streaks of light flowing upward and downward with the breath. You may also experience heat or cold, itching or tingling along with this movement.

The third step is to become aware of the six major cakras and their locations alongside the suṣumnā. Imagine you are piercing each cakra in turn with the sharp needle of the prāṇa, with each ascending breath, and again with each descending breath.

The fourth step is to practise breath retention at bindu cakra, the site of the moon. While inhaling, rotate the breath and the prāṇa upward through the centre of suṣumnā from mūlādhāra to bindu, piercing each cakra in turn. Hold the breath at bindu for as long as you feel comfortable. Focus on a bright point of light there. Then exhale back down the suṣumnā from bindu to mūlādhāra, again piercing each cakra point in turn.

The fifth step comes after experiencing the movement of prāṇa in suṣumnā and breath retention at bindu, as described in the earlier stages. Sit quietly in a comfortable pose and meditate on the quality of *sattva*, in the form of stillness, luminosity and peace, until you enter the sphere of *ānanda*, bliss and joy absolute.

Verses 9b to 13: Stairway to enlightenment

मूलाधार स्वाधिष्ठानं मणिपुरं तृतीयकम् ॥९॥

अनाहतं विशुद्धं च आज्ञाचक्रं च षष्ठकम् ।

आधारं गुदमित्युक्तं स्वाधिष्ठानं तु लैङ्गिकम् ॥१०॥

मणिपुरं नाभिदेशं हृदयस्थमनाहतम् ।

विशुद्धिः कण्ठमूले च आज्ञाचक्रं च मस्तकम् ॥११॥

षट् चक्राणि परिज्ञत्वा प्रविशेत्सुखमण्डले ।

प्रविशेद्वायुमाकृष्ट्य तयैवोर्ध्वं नियोजयेत् ॥१२॥

एवं समभ्यसेद्वायुं स ब्रह्माण्डमयो भवेत् ।

वायुं बिन्दुं तथा चक्रं चित्तं चैव समभ्यसेत् ॥१३॥

mūlādhāra svādhiṣṭhānam maṇipuraṁ trtīyakam (9b)

anāhatam viśuddhaṁ ca ājñācakram ca ṣaṣṭhakam

ādhāram gudamityuktam svādhiṣṭhānam tu laiṅgikam (10)

maṇipuraṁ nābhīdeśam hṛdayasthamanāhatam

viśuddhiḥ kaṇṭhamūle ca ājñācakram ca mastakam (11)

ṣaṭ cakrāṇi parijñatvā praviśetsukhamandale

praviśedvāyumākṛṣya tayaivordhvam niyojayet (12)

evam samabhyasedvāyum sa brahmāṇḍamayo bhavet

vāyum bindum tathā cakram cittam caiva samabhyaset (13)

Anvay

mūlādhāra: mūlādhāra chakra; *svādhiṣṭhāna*: svādhiṣṭhāna; *maṇipuraṁ*: manipura; *trtīyakam*: third; *anāhatam*: anāhata; *viśuddhaṁ*: viśuddhi; *ca*: and; *ājñā*: ājñā; *ṣaṣṭhakam*: sixth; *iti uktam*: it is said; *ādhāram*: base; *gudam*: anus; *laingikam*: sexual; *nābhi-deśam*: area of the navel; *hṛdayastham*: placed in the heart; *viśuddhiḥ kaṇṭha-mūle*: viśuddhi at the base of the throat; *ca ājñā-cakram mastakam*: and ājñā chakra in the skull; *parijñatvā*: having experienced; *ṣaṭ cakrāṇi*: six cakras; *praviśet*: one enters; *sukha-mandale*: sphere of joy; *vāyum-ākṛṣya*: having drawn in the breath or prāṇa; *niyojayet*: one should direct; *taya ūrdhvam*: it upwards; *sa bhavet*: he becomes; *brahmāṇḍamayah*: part of the cosmos; *samabhyaset-vāyum evam*: practises this breath control; *tathā*: therefore; *samabhyaset*: one should practise; *vāyum bindum cakram ca cittam*: vāyu, bindu, cakras and citta.

Translation

[They are] *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipura* the third, *anāhata*, *viśuddhi*, and *ājñā*, the sixth. It is said the base [cakra is] in the anus, *svādhiṣṭhāna* in the sexual [region], *maṇipura* in the area of the navel, *anāhata* is placed in the heart, *viśuddhi* at the base of the throat, and *ājñā* cakra in the skull. Having experienced the six cakras, one enters the sphere of joy. Having drawn in the *vāyu*, one should direct [it] upwards. He becomes part of the cosmos [who] practises this breath control. Therefore one

should practise [control of] vāyu, bindu, cakras and *citta*.

Commentary

These verses further elucidate the pathway of kuṇḍalinī yoga. The principle philosophy and practices of kuṇḍalinī yoga deal with the cakras, the psychic energy centers located alongside suṣumnā. The six cakras, along with their locations, are given here, as follows: (i) mūlādhāra at the anus or perineum, (ii) svādhiṣṭhāna in the pubic region, (iii) manipura at the navel region, (iv) anāhata at the heart, (v) viśuddhi at the base of the throat, and (vi) ājñā in the skull, at the mid-brain. Having experienced the six cakras, one enters the sphere of joy.

Drawing in the breath and prāṇa, one should direct it upwards through the suṣumnā pathway. By practising this form of breath control, the consciousness is expanded and one becomes part of the cosmos. Otherwise, while breathing normally, the mind is drawn outside, together with the senses, and engages with the external affairs of the world. Therefore, one should practise control of vāyu (breath), bindu (point at top back of the head), cakras (psychic energy centers) and citta (mind and consciousness). This is the pathway to enlightenment, and no other.

Verses 14 to 18a: Significance of yoga, guru and sādhana

समाधिमेकेन सममृतं यान्ति योगिनः ।

यथाग्निर्दर्शनध्यस्थो नोत्तिष्ठेन्मथनं विना ॥१४॥

विना चाभ्यासयोगेन जजानदीपस्तथा न हि ।

घटमध्यगतो दीपो बाह्ये नैव प्रकाशते ॥१५॥

भिन्ने तस्मिन्द्वये चैव दीपज्वाला च भासते ।

स्वकायं घटमित्युक्तं यथा दीपो हि तत्पदम् ॥१६॥

गुरुवाक्यसमाभिन्ने ब्रह्मज्ञानं स्फुटीभवेत् ।

कर्णधारं गुरुं प्राप्य कृत्वा सूक्ष्मं तरन्ति च ॥१७॥

अभ्यासवासनाशक्त्या तरन्ति भवसागरम् ॥१८॥

samādhimekena samamamṛtam yānti yoginah

yathāgnirdārumadhyastho nottiṣthenmathanam vinā (14)

vinā cābhyaśayogena jñānadīpastathā na hi

ghaṭamadhyagato dīpo bāhye naiva prakāśate (15)

bhinne tasminhaṭe caiva dīpajvālā ca bhāsate

svakāyam ghaṭamityuktam yathā dīpo hi tatpadam (16)

guruvākyasamābhinne brahmajñānam sphuṭībhavet

karṇadhāram gurum prāpya kṛtvā sūkṣmam taranti ca (17)

abhyāsavāsanāśaktyā taranti bhavasāgaram (18a)

Anvay

yoginah yānti: yogins attain; *samam-amrtam*: pure nectar of immortality; *samādhim-ekena*: through *samādhi* alone; *yathā*: just as; *agnih*: fire; *madhya-sthah*: inherent in; *dāru*: timber; *na uttiṣṭhet*: does not rise up; *vinā mathanam*: without friction; *tathā*: so; *jñāna-dīpah*: light of wisdom; *na*: not; *vinā abhyāsa-yogena*: without the practice of yoga; *dīpah*: light; *ghaṭa-madhyagataḥ*: inside a pot; *na prakāśate*: does not shine; *bāhye*: outside; *eva*: only; *tasmin-ghaṭe bhinne*: when the pot is broken; *dīpa-jvālā*: flame of light; *bhāsate*: is visible; *iti*: thus; *sva-kāyam*: one's body; *uktam*: is spoken of as; *ghaṭam*: vessel; *yathā*: while; *tat-padam*: its cause; *dīpah*: light; *samābhinne*: when it is completely broken; *guru-vākyā*: by the speech of the guru; *brahma-jñānam*: divine wisdom of Brahma; *bhavet*: becomes; *sphuṭī*: clear; *prāpya*: having attained; *kṛtvā*: made; *Gurum karṇadhāram*: guru the helmsman; *taranti*: one crosses; *sūkṣmam*: subtle dimension; *ca*: and; *bhavasāgaram*: ocean of worldly existence; *śaktyā*: through the power; *vāsanā*: desire for; *abhyāsa*: sādhana.

Translation

Yogins attain the pure nectar of immortality through *samādhi* alone. Just as the fire inherent in timber does not rise up without friction, so the light of wisdom does not [appear] without the practice of yoga. The light inside a pot does not shine outside. Only when the pot is broken, does the flame of light become visible. Thus, one's body is spoken of as the vessel, while its cause [is] light. When it is completely broken by the speech of the guru, the divine wisdom of Brahma becomes clear. Having attained [it and] made the guru the helmsman, one crosses the subtle dimension and the ocean of worldly existence through the power [of] the desire for sādhana.

Commentary

The pure nectar of immortality has been sought by renunciates, mystics and seekers of all traditions worldwide for millennia, perhaps even from the beginning of civilisation. But very few have had a clear notion of what this nectar actually is, and where it is to be found. Kundalinī yoga is a very ancient science, belonging to the early tantras. Here, we can find the answer to these questions in the concept of the kundalinī and its entry point into the material dimension at bindu cakra. The principle of creation was explained in this way by the ancient seers.

When the kundalinī śakti enters the point at bindu, she unleashes the flow of life in the form of a powerful fluid, called *amṛta*, or immortal nectar. This amṛta is the source of eternal life and, at bindu, it remains indestructible. However, as the nectar falls down from bindu into the lower centers, its quality and propensity changes. From viśuddhi cakra, behind the throat, the nectar becomes activated with *viṣ*, the principle of degeneration, which is responsible for incurring disease, old age and death.

As the nectar of life drips down further from viśuddhi into the lower cakras, it is used up by the systems of the body, as well as the external activities and associations, which the body engages with. In order to control this downward process of dissipation and degeneration, it is necessary to redirect the nectar, so that it merges back into the field of consciousness above viśuddhi. Through the practices

of kundalinī yoga, yogis were able to attain *samādhi*, the transcendental state of consciousness, by raising the kundalinī and establishing the nectar in the higher centers.

When the kundalinī force ascends through the cakras, it draws the nectar back upward along with it. Hence, the mind and perception become finer and subtler with each cakra that the kundalinī passes through. This results in an ongoing flow of wisdom and subtle perception, which the yogi is able to access freely. In the same way that the fire inherent in wood will only arise when adequate friction is applied, similarly the light of wisdom will only appear in a person through the practice of yoga. Today, yoga is regarded as a form of physical exercise. But the yogis of old regarded it as a means to kindle the light within and thereby attain self-realisation.

The light inside a fire pot does not shine outside. The flame of light only becomes visible outside, when the pot is broken. In this way, the physical body is compared to the pot, but its cause is the light, burning within. When the illusion of the pot, the identity with the body, is completely broken by the teachings of the guru, the divine wisdom of Brahman, the ever expanding consciousness, becomes clear. Guru is spoken of as 'he who removes the darkness'. Guru is thus the illumined one, for only light can remove darkness.

Having attained this wisdom, and made the guru his helmsman, the yogi crosses the ocean of worldly existence and also the subtle existence, through the power of and the desire for *sādhana*. Yoga is a vast body of systems and practices, which can be applied by different persons at different times and in different situations. Sādhana, on the other hand, is a specific formula of practices, which will help the yogi to attain his or her particular goals.

Learning yoga is one stage and teaching yoga is another. But to maintain a regular yoga practice, over a long period of time, with firm faith and conviction, until one's goals are achieved, is sādhana. In the absence of sādhana, very little can be attained through the practice of yoga, even though one may study all the principles and practices. At the end of the day, an ounce of sādhana is better than a ton of theory. In order to maintain a regular sādhana, one must have a disciplined lifestyle and a very powerful desire to attain self-realisation. This desire must be more important than the achievement of any worldly desire, status or aim.

Verses 18b to 21a: Evolution of sound and Soham

परायामङ्कुरीभूया पश्यन्त्यां द्विदलीकृता ॥१८॥

मध्यमायां मुकुलिता वैखर्या विकसीकृता ।

पूर्वं यथोदिता या वाग्विलोमेनास्तगा भवेत् ॥१९॥

तस्या वाचः परो देवः कूटस्थो वाक्प्रबोधकः ।

सोहमस्मीति निश्चित्य यः सदा वर्तते पुमान् ॥२०॥

शब्दैरुच्चावचैर्नीचैर्भाषितोऽपि न लिप्यते ॥२१॥

parāyāmaṅkuribhūyā paśyantyām dvidalīkṛtā (18b)

madhyamāyām mukulitā vaikharyām vikasīkṛtā

pūrvam yathoditā yā vāgvilomenāstagā bhavet (19)

tasyā vācaḥ paro devaḥ kūṭastho vākprabodhakāḥ

sohamasmīti niścītya yah sadā vartate pumān (20)

śabdairuccāvacairnīcairbhāṣito ‘pi na lipyate (21a)

Anvay

yā pūrvam uditā: that aforesaid; *aṅkurībhūyā*: sprouts; *parāyām*: in *para*; *dvidalī-kṛtā*: makes two leaves; *paśyantyām*: in *paśyanti*; *mukulitā*: buds; *madhyamāyām*: in *madhyama*; *vikasīkṛtā*: blossoms; *vaikharyām*: in *vaikhari*; *bhavet astagā*: becomes set; *vilomena*: by reversing this order; *parah devaḥ*: Supreme Divinity; *kūṭa-sthāḥ*: is at the peak; *vācaḥ*: of *vāc*; *yah pumān*: whoever; *vartate*: remains; *sadā*: always; *niścītya*: convinced; *iti ‘soham asmi’*: that ‘I am Soham’; *vāc-prabodhakāḥ*: causes the *vāc* to blossom; *na api*: not even; *lipyate*: is affected by; *uccāvacaiḥ-nīcaiḥ-śabdaiḥ*: by various vile words; *bhāṣitāḥ*: are spoken.

Translation

That aforesaid [*vāc*], [which] sprouts in *para*, makes two leaves in *paśyanti*, buds in *madhyama* [and] blossoms in *vaikhari*, becomes set by reversing this order. The supreme divinity is at the peak of *vāc*. Whoever remains always convinced that ‘*I am Soham*’, causes the *vāc* to blossom [and] is not even affected by various vile words [that] are spoken.

Commentary

According to yoga philosophy, sound is the first principle of creation. In the Bible it also says, ‘In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.’ The first sound vibration to sprout in the supreme consciousness is known as *para vāc*. This is the subtlest sound that gives rise to all of creation. This pure sound produces two shoots. In *paśyanti*, or mental sound, which reverberates in the mind, as we think, feel, remember, and dream, it buds. In *madhyama*, the sound midway between inside and outside, neither mental nor audible, which arises while whispering, it blossoms. From *madhyama*, *vaikari*, or audible sound, arises. In *vaikari*, the sound vibration becomes set and then the order is reversed, i.e. from *vaikari*, *madhyama* arises, from *madhyama* *paśyanti*, and from *paśyanti*, *para*. In this way, the entire creation goes on manifesting and dissolving itself throughout eternity.

The supreme divinity, which we may call God, or cosmic consciousness, is the ultimate source of *vac*. Whoever repeats the sound *Soham asmi*, I am Soham, or I am That (supreme consciousness), with firm faith in this truth, causes the *vāc* or sound vibration to blossom. By hearing, thinking or repeating this particular sound vibration, it becomes very powerful, effecting the entire field of the person, as well as the environment all around. The field of sound vibration pervades and sustains all existence. Altering the sound vibration in any given object, person or place, causes changes to occur on all dimensions within and around it. This is the power of sound. Therefore, sound vibration may be utilised to create as well as to destroy, to protect as well as to harm. One who repeats this sound and always remains convinced that ‘I am Soham’ remains unaffected by the situations and conditions of life, even by various vile words that are spoken.

Verses 21b to 26: Meditation on the ātman

विश्वश्व तैजसश्वैव प्राज्ञश्वेति च ते त्रयः ॥२१॥

विराह्मिण्यगर्भश्व ईश्वरश्वेति ते त्रयः ।

ब्रह्माण्डं चैव पिण्डाण्डं लोका भूरादयः क्रमात् ॥२२॥

स्वस्वोपाधिलयादेव लीयन्ते प्रत्यगात्मनि ।

अण्डं ज्ञानाग्निना तप्तं लीयते कारणैः सह ॥२३॥

परमात्मनि लीनं तत्परं ब्रह्मैव जायते ।

ततः स्तिमितगम्भीरं तेजो न तमस्ततम् ॥२४॥

अनाख्यमनभिव्यक्तं सत्किंचिदवशिष्यते ।

ध्यात्वा मध्यस्थमात्मानं कलसान्तरदीपवत् ॥२५॥

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रमात्मानमधूमज्योतिरूपकम् ।

प्रकाशयन्तमन्तस्स्थं ध्यायेत्कृटस्थमव्ययम् ॥२६॥

viśvaśca taijasaścaiva prājñāsceti ca te trayah (21b)

virāddhirānyagarbhaśca īśvaraśceti te trayah

brahmāṇḍam caiva piṇḍāṇḍam lokā bhūrādayah kramāt (22)

svasvopādhilayādeva līyante pratyagātmani

aṇḍam jñānāgninā taptam līyate kāraṇaiḥ saha (23)

paramātmani līnam tatparam brahmaiva jāyate

tataḥ stimitagambhīram tejo na tamastatam (24)

anākhyamanabhivyaktaṁ satkiṁcidavaśisyate

dhyātvā madhyasthamātmānam kalasāntaradīpavat (25)

aṅguṣṭhamātramātmānamadhūmajyotirūpakam

prakāśayantamantasstham dhyāyetkūṭasthamavyayam (26)

Anvay

te trayah: the three; *viśvah*: waking; *taijasah*: dreaming; *ca*: and; *prājñah*: deep sleep; *ca te trayah*: and the three; *virāt*: entire manifest universe; *hirānyagarbhaḥ*: cosmic subtle body; *ca īśvarah*:

supreme consciousness; *brahmāṇḍam*: macrocosm; *ca eva piṇḍāṇḍam*: and even the microcosm; *lokāḥ*: worlds; *bhūḥ-ādayaḥ*: earth and others; *layāt*: through absorption in; *svasva-upādhi*: their true attributes; *līyante*: are merged; *pratyagātmani*: into the inner self; *aṇḍam*: egg; *taptam*: heated; *jñāna-agnipinā*: by the fire of knowledge; *līyate*: is absorbed; *saha kāraṇaiḥ*: with its cause; *paramātmani*: into the supreme self; *jāyate līnam*: becomes merged in; *param brahma*: supreme Brahma; *tataḥ*: then; *stimita-gambhīram*: still and deep; *tejāḥ na tamah*: light nor darkness; *anākhyam*: neither describable; *anabhivyaktam*: nor distinct; *dhyātvā*: reflect on; *madhya-stham-ātmānam*: ātman resting within the body; *dīpavat*: like a light; *kala-antara*: inside a jar; *kimcit*: just; *sat*: essence; *avaśiṣyate*: remains; *dhyāyet ātmānam*: one should think of ātman; *aṅguṣṭha-mātram*: size of a thumb; *jyoti-rūpakam*: form of light; *adhūma*: without smoke; *prakāśayantam-antah-stham*: shining within; *kūṭastham-avyayam*: unchangeable and imperishable.

Translation

The three [states of consciousness]: waking, dreaming and deep sleep; and the three [aspects of existence]: the entire manifest universe, the cosmic subtle body and the supreme consciousness; the macrocosm and even the microcosm, the worlds of the earth and others, [all these], through absorption in their true attributes, are merged into the inner self. The egg, heated by the fire of knowledge, is absorbed with its cause into the supreme self [and] becomes merged in the supreme Brahma. Then, still and deep, [it is neither] light nor darkness, neither describable nor distinct. Reflect on the ātman resting within the body, like a light inside a jar. Just the essence remains. One should think of the ātman [as] the size of a thumb, a form of light, without smoke, shining within, unchangeable and imperishable.

Commentary

Just as sound is the underlying principle of creation, consciousness is the essence of existence. All beings, whether sentient or insentient, manifest or unmanifest, are bound together by consciousness. Ultimately, all existence is a part of the same consciousness. Although consciousness is one field, it can be experienced as three states: waking, dreaming and deep sleep. While awake, we become conscious of the world around us through the mind and senses. While dreaming, we experience the subconscious, and its inner manifestations. In deep sleep, we float in the unconscious, beyond all vestige of perception, ideation and dream. In this way, the one field is interwoven throughout the three states of consciousness. Similarly, consciousness is the one reality that pervades the three dimensions of existence: the manifest creation, the subtle cosmic cause, or womb of creation, and the supreme consciousness.

The macrocosm and the microcosm, the *lokas*, or planes of existence, the earth and others, all merge with the inner self by means of absorption into their true attribute, which is consciousness. The cosmic egg, or womb of creation, heated by the fire of *jñāna*, knowledge, is absorbed into its cause, *paramātman*, the supreme self, and merges into the *parambrahman*, the supreme, ever expanding consciousness. This consciousness is constant and steady, still and deep. It is neither light nor dark, distinct nor describable. Meditate on your own ātman, the pure consciousness, resting in the body, like a light inside a jar, until just the essence remains. Think of the atman as the size of your thumb. See or imagine it as a form of light, without any emanation of smoke, shining within. Unchangeable, imperishable and eternal.

Verses 27 to 29: Spontaneous practice of *jñāna* yoga

विज्ञानात्मा तथा देहे जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिः ।

मायया मोहितः पश्चाद्धुजन्मान्तरे पुनः ॥२७॥

सत्कर्मपरिपाकात् स्वविकारं चिकीषति ।

कोऽहं कथमयं दोषः संसाराख्य उपागतः ॥२८॥

जाग्रत्स्वप्ने व्यवहरन्त्सुषुप्तौ क्व गतिर्मम ।

इति चिन्तापरो भूत्वा स्वभासा च विशेषतः ॥२९॥

vijñānātma tathā dehe jāgratsvapna-susuptitah

māyayā mohitaḥ paścādbahujanmāntare punaḥ (27)

satkarmaparipākāttu svavikāram cikīrṣati

ko ‘ham kathamayam doṣaḥ saṃsārākhyā upāgataḥ (28)

jāgratsvapne vyavaharantsuṣuptau kva gatirmama

iti cintāparo bhūtvā svabhāsā ca višeṣataḥ (29)

Anvay

vijñāna-ātmā: *vijñāna ātman*; *dehe*: in the body; *mohitaḥ*: is deluded; *māyayā*: by the unreal; *jāgrat-svapna-suṣuptitah*: waking, dreaming and sleeping; *paścāt*: at last; *bahu-janma-antare punaḥ*: after many births; *paripākāt*: as a result of; *sat-karma*: good karma; *cikīrṣati*: it wishes to return to; *svavikāram*: its true state; *kah aham*: who am I?; *katham*: how; *ayam doṣaḥ*: this disease; *saṃsāra-akhya*: called *samsāra*; *upāgataḥ*: did come to; *kva gatiḥ*: what happens; *suṣuptau*: during deep sleep; *mama*: to me; *vyavaharant*: who is active in mundane life; *jāgrat-svapne*: in waking and dreaming; *iti*: it asks; *bhūtvā*: having become; *svabhāsā*: through its own light; *višeṣataḥ*: above all; *cintāparah*: engrossed in reflection.

Translation

The *vijñāna ātman* in the body is deluded by the unreal [during the states of] waking, dreaming and sleeping. At last, after many births, as a result of good karma, it wishes to return to its true state. Who am I? How did this disease called *samsāra* come to [me]? What happens during deep sleep to me, who is active in mundane life in [the states of] waking and dreaming? It asks, having become engrossed in reflection through its own light, above all.

Commentary

The ātman is the pure self, or unbound consciousness. The *jīvātman* is the pure self, living in the body, and thus bound by it. The *vijñāna ātman* is the psychic or reflected knowledge of the *jīvātman*, which is limited by the states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. It is also influenced by the seed karmas or impressions of the associations derived from interactions with the world outside. Due to its proximity with the ātman, or pure self, the *vijñāna ātman* has the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal. When focussed downward, however, it becomes identified with the mind and body, and is therefore deluded by the transitory nature of life, believing it to be permanent and real.

In this way, the ātman passes through many births and has many different experiences in life. At last, as a result of good karma and the fulfilment of residual desires, it wishes to return to its true nature, which is free from duality, limitation and identification. When this resolution dawns, the vijñāna ātman becomes dissatisfied with the worldly roles and associations, and begins to question itself and its existence. Through a process of inner analysis and reflection, it asks: Who am I? How did this disease called *samsāra*, worldly life, come upon me? What happens to me, where do I go, during deep sleep? In mundane life, who is active in the state of waking, and again, who is dreaming? Withdrawing the mind and senses, the vijñāna ātman becomes engrossed in meditation, and asks these questions through its own light, received from the pure ātman above it.

The upaniṣads are a body of ancient knowledge, which contain the experiences of rishis and seers of the vedic traditions, as well as some munis from traditions, such as yoga and tantra. Therefore, although this text is devoted to the teachings of kūṇḍalinī yoga, we find the vedantic approach, along with its practice of jñāna yoga, is also honored. According to vedānta, Brahman, the pure, ever-expanding consciousness, is the one absolute reality; everything else is illusion. However, according to yoga and tantra, this pure state of consciousness can only be attained by the awakening of kūṇḍalinī śakti. Without the awakening of energy, the highest consciousness remains obscure and remote. Therefore, in the yoga upaniṣads, we find the melding of traditions: yoga and tantra to awaken the energy followed by vedānta to realise the highest consciousness.

Verses 30 to 32: Merging with the ātman

अज्ञानात् चिदाभासो बहिस्तापेन तापितः ।

दग्धं भवत्येव तदा तूलपिण्डमिवाग्निना ॥३०॥

दहरस्थः प्रत्यगात्मा नष्टे ज्ञाने ततः परम् ।

विततो व्याप्य विज्ञानं दहत्येव क्षणेन तु ॥३१॥

मनोमयज्ञानमयान्त्सम्यगदध्वा क्रमेण तु ।

घटस्थदीपवच्छश्वदत्तरेव प्रकाशते ॥३२॥

ajñānāttu cidābhāso bahistāpena tāpitah

dagdham bhavatyeva tadā tūlapinḍamivāgninā (30)

daharasthah pratyagātmā naṣṭe jñāne tataḥ param

vitato vyāpya vijñānam dahatyeva kṣaṇena tu (31)

manomaya jñānamayāntsamyaगदध्वा kramena tu

ghaṭasthadīpavacchaśvadantareva prakāśate (32)

Anvay

cidābhāsaḥ: reflected consciousness; *ajñānāt*: because of its lack of wisdom; *tāpitah*: is burned;

bahih-tāpena: by an external heat; *tadā iva*: just like; *tūla-piṇḍam*: bale of cotton; *bhavati dagdham*: is burnt; *agninā*: by fire; *jñāne naṣṭe*: when *jñāna* has been destroyed; *pratyagātmā*: inner self; *daharasthaḥ*: located in the ether; *kṣanena*: immediately; *param vijñānam*: highest *vijñāna*; *vitataḥ vyāpya*: permeating everything; *dadhvā*: having maintained; *manomaya-jñānamaya-ant*: both *manomaya* and *jñānamaya*; *tu*: now; *dahati*: burns; *krameṇa*: one by one; *tu prakāśate*: then it shines forth; *antar*: from within; *dīp-avacchaśvat*: like a clear light; *ghaṭastha*: inside a pot.

Translation

The reflected consciousness, because of its lack of wisdom, is burned by an external heat, just like a bale of cotton is burnt by fire. When *jñāna* has been destroyed, the inner self located in the ether immediately [expresses] the highest *vijñāna*, permeating everything, [and] having maintained both *manomaya* and *jñānamaya*, now burns [them] one by one. Then it shines forth from within, like a clear light inside a pot.

Commentary

The ātman, or pure consciousness of the self, abides within beyond the association of the body, mind and senses. Although the essence of existence, it remains unattainable and unknowable, as long as the soul resides in the body. This is the human condition, or we may even say, the human error. As soon as the consciousness is born in the body, it becomes veiled or obscured for the entire duration of one's lifetime. It is not until the time of death, or else by means of certain esoteric practices, that the direct knowledge of the ātman can be regained. The teachings provided in the above verses are meant for this purpose.

The pure consciousness of the ātman remains ever suffused in its own luminosity and bliss. When this consciousness is born in the body, it remains apart, unaffected, and inaccessible in its true state. However, its reflection permeates downward and suffuses the psyche, the mind and senses, and the body with light and life. In this way, human beings are able to function with intelligence and awareness in the different activities and stations of life. As long as this downward reflection of light continues to illumine the person and his life, there will be little memory of or desire to attain the ātman, the sublime consciousness, within. However, for those few individuals, who are nearing completion of their human evolution, the path and practices for attaining the experience of the atman in this lifetime are made available.

The reflected consciousness is considered to be impure at all of its levels due to its association with the mind and body. The ātman is pure knowledge, eternal wisdom, but the reflected consciousness lacks this quality on account of the *vikara*, or impurities, that are stored within it in the form of *samskāra*, or worldly impressions. Due to its lack of purity and wisdom, the reflected consciousness is sensitive to and easily affected by the situations, conditions and relations in the world around. It becomes heated and burns on account of adversity, just like a bale of cotton bursts into flame, if burning objects are placed on or near it.

When the mind and senses are withdrawn from the sensory objects, the external knowledge of the world has no access within. Then the ātman, or inner self, which is located in the pure space of consciousness, immediately permeates everything below it with the highest wisdom. Having maintained both the mind and intellect through the reflected light of consciousness, it now burns them both, one by one, with its pure light of wisdom. Free from delusion, the consciousness now shines forth from within, like a clear light inside a pot.

Verses 33 to 35: Supreme yogi

ध्यायनास्ते मुनिश्चैवमासुप्तेरामृतेस्तु यः ।

जीवन्मुक्तः स विज्ञेयः स धन्यः कृतकृत्यवान् ॥३३॥

जीवन्मुक्तपदं त्यक्त्वा स्वदेहे कालसात्कृते ।

विशत्यदेहमुक्तत्वं पवनोऽस्पन्दतमिव ॥३४॥

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरूपमव्ययं तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।

अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं तदेव शिष्यत्यमलं निरामयम् ॥३५॥

dhyāyannāste muniścaivamāsupterāmr̥testu yah

jīvanmuktaḥ sa vijñeyah sa dhanyah kṛtakṛtyavān (33)

jīvanmuktapadam tyaktvā svadehe kālasātkṛte

viśatyadehamuktatvam pavano ‘spandatamiva (34)

aśabdamaśparśamarūpamavyayam tathārasam nityamagandhavacca yat

anādyanantam mahataḥ param dhruvam tadeva śiṣyat�amalam nirāmayam (35)

Anvay

munih: muni; *yah āste:* who remains; *dhyāyan:* meditating; *evam-āsupteh-āmr̥teh:* right until sleep and death; *vijñeyah jīvanmuktaḥ:* is to be known as a *jīvanmukta*; *kṛtakṛtyavān:* having done his duty; *dhanyah:* blessed; *tyaktvā:* renouncing; *jīvanmukta-padam:* state of *jīvanmukta*; *svadehe kr̥te viśatyā:* when his body has decomposed; *kālasāt:* in time; *deha-muktatvam:* liberation from the body; *tam pavanaḥ:* its breath; *aspanda:* unmoving; *tat-eva śiṣyatā:* only that remains; *yat:* which; *avyayam:* imperishable; *aśabdāśparśāśarūpam:* without sound, touch or form; *tathā:* that is; *rasam:* taste; *nityam:* eternal; *ca:* and; *agandhavat:* odourless; *anādi-anantam:* without beginning or end; *mahataḥ param:* beyond the great; *dhruvam:* permanent; *amalam:* pure; *nirāmayam:* untainted.

Translation

The muni, who remains meditating right until sleep and death, is to be known as a *jīvanmukta* [who], having done his duty, [is] blessed. Renouncing the state of *jīvanmukta*, when in time his body has decomposed, [he attains] liberation from the body, its breath unmoving. Only that remains which [is] imperishable, without sound, touch or form, that is, the essence, eternal and odourless, without beginning or end, beyond great, permanent, pure [and] untainted.

Commentary

Most people consider themselves in relation to their social status and the work they do, while living in the world. Their life and worth are measured by how active they are, how well they do, and how

wealthy they are. But the life of a *muni* is assessed by totally different criteria. The word *muni* has a more tantric association, as does *kundalini yoga*, and refers to a yogi, saint, sage or hermit, especially one who remains in silence. At the end of this teaching, we are given the criterion of a *muni* or yogi, whom we must assume has achieved mastery over the self. The *muni* is one, who remains in meditation on a daily basis until he sleeps. In this way he passes his life, and remains free from involvement with the world, right up until death.

Such a *muni* or yogi is known as a *jivanmukta*, liberated, living soul. Having fulfilled the highest duty of man, to attain self-realisation while living, he is truly blessed. At the time of passing, when the breath stops and the body decomposes, he renounces the state of *jivanmukta*, and attains *dehamukta*, liberation outside the body. When the liberated soul is freed from all vestiges of the physical existence, only the imperishable, pure consciousness remains. Merged in the supreme consciousness, he is beyond the perception of sound, taste, touch, form or smell. He is eternal, untainted, without beginning or end, beyond great.

इत्युपनिषत् ॥

ityupaniṣat

Thus [ends] the Upaniṣad.

Appendices

1.Sanskrit text

योगकृण्डल्युपनिषद्योगसिद्धिहृदासनम् ।

निर्विशेषब्रह्मतत्त्वं स्वमात्रमिति चिन्तये ।

ॐ सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ॥

प्रथमोऽध्यायः

हेतद्वयं हि चित्तस्य वासना च समीरणः ।

तयोर्विनष्ट एकस्मिंस्तद्वावपि विनश्यतः ॥१॥

तयोरादौ समीरस्य जय कुर्यान्नरः सदा ।

मिताहारश्चासनं च शक्तिचालस्तृतीयकः ॥२॥

एतेषां लक्षनं वक्ष्ये शृणु गौतम सादरम् ॥३॥

सुस्निग्धमधुराहारश्चतुर्थशविवर्जितः ॥४॥

भुज्यते शिवसंप्रीत्यै मिताहारः स उच्यते ॥५॥

आसनं द्विविधं प्रोक्तं पद्मं वज्रासनं तथा ॥४॥

ऊर्वोरुपरि चेद्गते उभे पादतले यथा ।

पद्मासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥५॥

वामाङ्गिमूलकन्दाधो ह्यन्यं तदुपरि क्षिपेत् ।

समग्रीवशिरः कायो वज्रासनमितीरितम् ॥६॥

कुण्डल्येव भवेच्छक्तिस्तां तु संचालयेद्वुध ।

स्वस्थानाभा भ्रुवोर्मध्यं शक्तिचालनमुच्यते ॥७॥

तत्साधने द्वयं मुख्यं सरस्वत्सास्तु चालनम् ।

प्राणरोधमथाभ्यासादृज्जी कुण्डलिनी भवेत् ॥८॥

तयोरादौ सरस्वत्याश्वालनं कथयामि ते ।

अरुन्धत्येव कथिता पुराविद्धिः सरस्वती ॥९॥

यस्याः संचालनेनैव स्वयं चलति कुण्डली ॥१०॥

इडायां वहति प्राणे बद्ध्वा पद्मासनं दृढम् ॥१०॥

द्वादशाङ्गुलदैर्घ्यं च अम्बरं चतुरङ्गुलम् ।

विस्तीर्य तेन तनानार्डो वेष्टयित्वा ततः सुधीः ॥११॥

अङ्गुष्ठतर्जनीभ्यां तु हस्ताभ्यां धारयेद्वद्वद्म् ।

स्वशक्त्या चालयेद्वामे दक्षिणेन पुनःपुनः ॥१२॥

मुहूर्तद्वयपर्यन्तं निर्मयाच्चालयेत्सुधीः ।

ऊर्ध्वमाकर्षयेत्किंचित्सुषुम्नां कुण्डलीगताम् ॥१३॥

तेन कुण्डलिनी तस्याः सुषुम्नाया मुखं व्रजेत् ।

जहाति तस्मात्माणोऽयं सुषुम्नां व्रजति स्वतः ॥१४॥

तुन्दे तु तानं कुर्याच्च कण्ठसंकोचने कृते ।

सरस्वत्यां चालनेन वक्षसश्वोर्ध्वगो मरुत् ॥१५॥

सूर्येण रेचयेद्वायुं सरस्वत्यास्तु चालने ।

कण्ठसंकोचनं कृत्वा वक्षसश्वोर्ध्वगो मरुत् ॥१६॥

तस्मात्संचालयेनित्यं शब्दगर्भा सरस्वतीम् ।

यस्याः संचालनेनैव योगी रोगैः प्रमुच्यते ॥१७॥

गुल्मं जलोदरः प्लीहा ये चान्ये तुन्दमध्यगाः ।

सर्वे ते शक्तिचालेन रोगा नायन्ति निश्चयम् ॥१८॥

प्राणरोधमथेदार्नीं प्रवक्ष्यामि समासतः ।

प्राणश्च देहयो वायुरायामः कुम्भकः स्मृतिः ॥१९॥

स एव द्विविधः प्रोक्तः सहितः केवलस्तथा ।

यावत्केवलसिद्धिः स्यात्तावत्सहितमध्यसेत् ॥२०॥

सूर्योज्जायी शीतली च भस्त्री चैव चतुर्थिका ।

भेदैरेव समं कुम्भो यः स्यात्सहितकुम्भकः ॥२१॥

पवित्रे निर्जने देशे शर्करादिविवर्जिते ।

धनुःप्रमाणपर्यन्ते शीताग्निजलवर्जिते ॥२२॥

पवित्रे नात्युच्चनीचे ह्यासने सुखदे सखे ।

बद्धपद्मासनं कृत्वा सरस्वत्यास्तु चालनम् ॥२३॥

दक्षनाड्या समाकृष्ट्य बहिष्ठं पवनं शनैः ।

यथेष्टं पूरयेद्वायुं रेचयेदिड्या ततः ॥२४॥

कपालशोधने वापि रेचयेत्पवनं शनैः ।

चतुष्कं वातदोषं तु कृमिदोषं निहन्ति च ॥२५॥

पुनः पुनरिदं कार्यं सूर्यमेददमुदाहृतम् ॥२६॥

मुखं संयस्यं नाडिभ्यामाकृष्णं पवनं शनैः ॥२६॥

यथा लगति कण्ठात् हृदयावधि सस्वनम् ।

पूर्ववत्कुम्भयेत्राणं रेचयेदिङ्या ततः ॥२७॥

शीर्षोदितानलहरं गलश्लेष्महरं परम् ।

सर्वरोगहरं पुण्यं देहानलविवर्धनम् ॥२८॥

नाडीजलोदरं धातुगतदोषविनाशनम् ।

गच्छतस्तिष्ठतः कार्यमुज्जायाख्यं तु कुम्भकम् ॥२९॥

जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्णं पूर्ववत्कुम्भकादनु ।

शनैस्तु घ्राणरन्ध्राभ्यां रेचयेदनिलं सुधीः ॥३०॥

गुल्मप्लीहादिकान्दोषान्क्षयं पित्तं ज्वरं तृष्णाम् ।

विषाणि शीतली नाम कुम्भकोऽयं निहन्ति च ॥३१॥

ततः पद्मासनं बद्ध्या समग्रीवोदरः सुधीः ।

मुखं संयस्य यत्नेन प्राणं घ्राणेन रेचयेत् ॥३२॥

यथा लगति कण्ठात् कपाले सस्वनं ततः ।

वेगेन पूरयेत् किंचिद्दृत्पद्मावधि मारुतम् ॥३३॥

पुनर्विरचयेत्तद्विषयेच्च पुनः पुनः ।

यथैव लोहकाराणां भस्त्रा वेगेन चाल्यते ॥३४॥

यथैव स्वशरीरस्थं चालयेत्पवनं शनैः ।

यथा श्रमो भवेद्देहं तथा सूर्योणं पूरयेत् ॥३५॥

यथोदरं भवेत्पूर्णं पवनेन तथा लघु ।

धारयन्नासिकामध्यं तर्जनीभ्यां विना दृढम् ॥३६॥

कुम्भकं पूर्ववत्कृत्वा रेचयेदिङ्यानिलम् ।

कण्ठोत्थितानलहरं शरीराग्निविवर्दनम् ॥३७॥

कुण्डलीबोदहकं पुण्यं पापघं शुभदं सुखम् ।

ब्रह्मनाडीमुखान्तस्थकफाद्गलनाशनम् ॥३८॥

गुणत्रयसमुद्भूतग्रन्थित्रयविमेदकम् ।

विशेषेणैव कर्तव्यं भस्त्राख्यं कुम्भकं त्विदम् ॥३९॥

चतुर्णामिपि भेदानां कुम्भके समुपस्थिते ।

बन्धत्रयमिदं कार्यं योगिभिर्वीतकल्मशैः ॥४०॥

प्रथमो मूलबन्धस्तु द्वितीयोद्गुयणाभिधः ।

जालन्धरस्तृतीयस्तु तेषां लक्षणमुच्यते ॥४१॥

अधोगतिमपानं वै ऊर्ध्वं कुरुते बलात् ।

आकुञ्चनेन तं प्रहुर्मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते ॥४२॥

अपाने चोर्ध्वं याते संप्राप्ते वह्निमण्डले ।

ततोऽनलशिखा दीर्घा वर्धते वायुनाहता ॥४३॥

ततो यातौ वह्न्यपानौ प्राणमुष्णास्वरूपकम् ।

तेनात्यन्तप्रदीप्तेन ज्वलनो देहजस्तथा ॥४४॥

तेन कुण्डलिनी सुप्ता संतप्ता संप्रबुध्यते ।

दण्डाहतभुजङ्गेव निःश्वस्य ऋजुतां व्रजेत् ॥४५॥

बिलप्रवेशितो यत्र ब्रह्मनाड्यन्तरं व्रजेत् ।

तस्मान्नित्यं मूलबन्धः कर्तव्यो योगिभिः सदा ॥४६॥

कुम्भकान्ते रेचकादौ कर्तव्यस्तूद्गुयणाकः ।

बन्धो येन सुषुम्नायां प्राणस्तूद्गुयते यतः ॥४७॥

तस्मादुद्गुयणाख्योऽयं योगिभिः समुदाहतः ।

सति वज्रासने पादौ कराभ्या धारयेद्वदम् ॥४८॥

गुल्फदेशसमीपे च कन्दं तत्र प्रपीडेत् ।

पश्चिमं ताणमुदरे धारयेद्वदये गले ॥४९॥

शनैः शनैर्यदा प्राणस्तुन्दसन्धिं निगच्छति ।

तुन्ददोषं विनिर्धूय कर्तव्यं सततं शनैः ॥५०॥

पूरकान्ते तु कर्तव्यो बन्धो जालन्धरामिधः ।

कण्ठसंकोचरूपोऽसौ वायुमार्गनिरोधकः ॥५१॥

अधस्तात्कुञ्चनेनाशु कण्ठसंकोचने कृते ।

मध्ये पश्चिमताणेन स्यात्प्राणो ब्रह्मनाडिगः ॥५२॥

पूर्वोक्तेन क्रमेणैव सम्यगासनमास्थितः

चालनं तु सरस्वत्याः कृत्वा प्राणं निरोधयेत् ॥५३॥

प्रथमे दिवसे कार्यं कुम्भकानां चुतष्यम् ।

प्रत्येकं दशसंख्याकं द्वितीये पञ्चमिस्तथा ॥५४॥

विंशत्यलं तृतीयेऽह्नि पञ्चवृद्ध्या दिनेदिने ।

कर्तव्यः कुम्भको नित्यं बन्धत्रयसमन्वितः ॥५५॥

दिवा सुप्तिर्निंशायां तु जागरादतिमैथुनात् ।

बहुसंक्रमणं नित्यं रोधान्मूत्रपुरीषयोः ॥५६॥

विषमाशनदोषाच्च प्रयासप्राणचिन्तनात् ।

शीघ्रमुत्पद्यते रोगः स्तम्भयेद्यदि संयमी ॥५७॥

योगाभ्यासेन मे रोग उत्पन्न इति कथ्यते ।

ततोऽभ्यासं त्यजेदेवं प्रथमं विघ्नोच्यते ॥५८॥

द्वितीय संशयाख्यं च तृतीयं च प्रमत्तता ।

आलस्याख्यं चतुर्थं च निद्रारूपं तु पञ्चमम् ॥५९॥

षष्ठं तु विरतिप्राप्निः सप्तमं परिकीर्तिम् ।

विषमं चाष्टमं चैव अनास्था नवमं सूतम् ॥६०॥

अलब्धिर्योगतत्त्वस्य दशमं प्रोच्यते बुधैः ।

इत्येतद्विद्वन्दशकं विचारेण त्यजेद्बृहः ॥६१॥

प्राणाभ्यासस्ततः कार्यो नित्यं सत्त्वस्थया धिया ।

सुषुम्ना लीयते चित्तं तथा वायुः प्रधावति ॥६२॥

शुष्के मले तु योगी च स्याद्गतिश्वलिता ततः ।

अधोगतिमपानं वै उर्ध्वगं कुरुते बलात् ॥६३॥

आकुञ्जनेन तं प्राहुर्मूलबन्धोऽयमुच्यते ।

अपानश्चोर्ध्वगो भूत्वा वह्निं सह गच्छति ॥६४॥

प्राणस्थानं ततो वह्निः प्राणापानौ च सत्वरम् ।

मिलित्वा कुण्डलीं याति प्रसुप्ता कुण्डलाकृतिः ॥६५॥

तेनाग्निना च संतप्ता पवनेनैव चालिता ।

प्रसार्य स्वशरीरं तु सुषुम्ना वदनान्तरे ॥६६॥

ब्रह्मग्रन्थिं ततो भित्त्वा रजोगुणसमुद्घवम् ।

सुषुम्ना वदने शीघ्रं विद्युल्लेखेव संस्फुरेत् ॥६७॥

विष्णुग्रन्थिं प्रयात्युच्चैः सत्वरं हृदि संस्थिता ।

ऊर्ध्वं गच्छति यच्चास्ते रुद्रग्रन्थिं तदुद्घवम् ॥६८॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्यं तु संभिद्य याति शीतांशुमण्डलम् ॥६९॥

अनाहताख्यं यच्चक्रं दलैः षोडशभिर्युतम् ॥६९॥

तत्र शीतांशुसंजातं द्रवं शोषयति स्वयम्

चलिते प्राणवेगेन रक्तं पितं रवेर्हात् ॥७०॥

यातेन्दुचक्रं यत्रास्ते शुद्धश्लेष्मद्रवात्मकम् ।

तत्र सिक्तं ग्रसत्युष्णं कथं शीतस्वभावकम् ॥७१॥

तथैव रमसा शुक्लं चन्द्ररूपं हि तप्यते ।

ऊर्ध्वं प्रवर्ति क्षुब्धा तदैवं भ्रमतेराम् ॥७२॥

तस्यास्वादवशाच्चितं बहिष्ठं विषयेषु यत् ।

तदेव परं भुक्त्वा स्वस्थः स्वात्मरतो युवा ॥७३॥

प्रकृत्यष्टकरूपं च स्थानं गच्छति कुण्डली ।

क्रोडीकृत्य शिवं याति क्रोडीकृत्य विलीयते ॥७४॥

इत्यधोर्धर्जः शुक्लं शिवे तदनु मारुतः ।

प्राणापानौ समा याति सदा जातौ तथैव च ॥७५॥

भूतेऽल्पे चाप्यनल्पे वा वाचके त्वतिवर्धते ।

धावयत्यखिला वाता अग्निमूषाहिरण्यवत् ॥७६॥

आधिभौतिकदेहं तु आधिदैविकविग्रहे ।

देहोऽतिविमलं याति जातिवाहिकतामियात् ॥७७॥

जाङ्घभावविनिर्मुक्तममलं चिन्मयात्मकम् ।

तस्यातिवाहिकं मुख्यं सर्वेषां तु मदात्मकम् ॥७८॥

जायाभवविनिर्मुक्तः कालरूपस्य विभ्रमः ।

इति तं स्वस्वरूपा हि मति रज्जुभुजङ्गवत् ॥७९॥

मृषैवोदेति सकलं मृषैव प्रविलीयते ।

रौप्यबुद्धिः शुक्तिकायां स्त्रीपुंसोर्प्रमतो यथा ॥८०॥

पिण्डब्रह्माण्डयोरैक्यं लिङ्गसूत्रात्मनोरपि ।

स्वापाव्याकृतयौरैक्यं स्वप्रकाशचिदात्मनोः ॥८१॥

शक्तिः कुण्डलिनी नाम बिसतन्तुनिभा शुभा ।

मूलकन्दं फणाग्रेण दृष्टा कमलकन्दवत् ॥८२॥

मुखेन पुच्छं संगृह्य ब्रह्मरन्ध्रसमन्विता ॥८३॥

पद्मासनगतः स्वस्थो गुदमाकुञ्च्य साधकः ॥८३॥

वायुमूर्ध्वातं कुर्वन्कुम्भकाविष्टमानसः ।

वाय्याधातवशादग्निः स्वाधिष्ठानगतो ज्वलन् ॥८४॥

ज्वलनाधातपवना घातोरुनिद्रितोऽहिरात् ।

ब्रह्मग्रन्थिं ततो मित्त्वा विष्णुग्रन्थिं मिनत्यतः ॥८५॥

रुद्रग्रन्थिं च मित्त्वैव कमलानि मिनत्ति षट् ।

सहस्राकमले शक्तिः शिवेन सह मोदते ॥८६॥

सैवस्था परा ज्ञेया सैव निर्वृतिकारिणी इति ॥८७॥

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

अथाहं संप्रवक्ष्यामि विद्यां खेचरीसंज्ञिकाम् ।

यथा विज्ञानवानस्या लोकेऽस्मिन्जरोऽमरः ॥१॥

मृत्युव्याधिजराग्रस्तो दृष्टा विद्यामिमां मुने ।

बुद्धिं दृढतरां कृत्वा खेचरीं तु समभ्यसेत् ॥१२॥

जरामृत्युगदघ्नो यः खेचरीं वेत्ति भूतले ।

ग्रन्थतश्चर्थतश्चैव तदभ्यासप्रयोगतः ॥१३॥

तं मुने सर्वभावेन गुरुं मत्या समाश्रयेत् ॥१४॥

दुर्लभा खेचरी विद्या तदभ्यासोऽपि दुर्लभः ॥१४॥

अभ्यासं मेलनं चैव युगपन्नैव सिध्यति ।

अथासमात्रनिरता न विन्दन्ते ह मेलनम् ॥५॥

अथासं लभते ब्रह्मज्ञानात्तरे क्वचित् ।

मेलनं ततु जन्मनां शतान्तेऽपि न लभ्यते ॥६॥

अभ्यासं बहुजन्मान्ते कृत्वा तद्वावसाधितम् ।

मेलनं लभते कश्चिद्योगी जन्मान्तरे क्वचित् ॥७॥

यदा तु मेलनं योगी लभते गुरुवक्रतः ।

तदा तत्सिद्धिमाप्नोति यदुक्ता शास्त्रसंततौ ॥८॥

ग्रन्थतश्चार्थतश्चैव मेलनं लभते यदा ।

तदा शिवात्वमाप्नोति निर्मुक्तः सर्वसंसृतेः ॥९॥

शास्त्रं विनापि संबोद्धुं गुरवोऽपि न शक्नुयुः ।

तस्मात्सुदुर्लभतरं लभ्यं शास्त्रमिदं मुने ॥१०॥

यावन्न लभ्यते शास्त्रं तावदां पर्यटेद्यतिः ।

यदा संलभ्यते शास्त्रं तदा सिद्धिः करे स्थिता ॥११॥

न शास्त्रेण विना सिद्धिर्दृष्टा चैव जगत्रये ।

तस्मान्मेलनदातारं शास्त्रदातारमच्युतम् ॥१२॥

तदध्यासप्रदातारं शिवं मत्वा समाश्रयेत् ।

लब्ध्वा शास्त्रमिदं मह्यमन्येषां न प्रकाशयेत् ॥१३॥

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन गोपनैयं विजजानता ।

यत्रास्ते च गुरुर्ब्रह्मन्दिव्ययोगप्रदायकः ॥१४॥

तत्र गत्वा च तेनोक्तविद्यां संगृह्य खेचरीम् ।

तेनोक्तः संयगम्यासं कुर्यादावतन्द्रितः ॥१५॥

अनया विद्यया योगी खेचरीसिद्धिमाग्भवेत् ॥१६॥

खेचर्या खेचरीं युञ्जन्खेचरीबीजपूरया ॥१६॥

खेचराधिपतिर्भूत्वा खेचरेषु सदा वसेत् ।

खेचरावसथं वह्निमम्बुमण्डल भूषितम् ॥१७॥

आख्यातं खेचरीबीजं तेन योगः प्रसिध्यति ॥१८॥

सोमांशनवकं वर्णं प्रतिलोमेन चोद्धरेत् ॥१९॥

तस्मात्व्यंशकमाख्यातमक्षरं चन्द्ररूपकम् ।

तस्मादप्यष्टमं वर्णं विलोमेन परं मुने ॥२०॥

तथा तत्परमं विद्धि तदादिरपि पञ्चमी ।

इन्दोश्च बहुभिन्ने च कूटोऽयं परिकीर्तिः ॥२१॥

गुरुरूपदेशलभ्यं च सर्वयोगप्रसिद्धोदम् ॥२२॥

यत्स्य देहजा माया निरुद्धकरणाश्रया ॥२३॥

स्वप्नेऽपि न लभेत्स्य नित्यं द्वादशजप्यतः ।

य इमां पञ्च लक्षाणि जपेदपि सुयन्त्रितः ॥२४॥

तस्य श्रीखेचरीसिद्धिः स्वयमेव प्रवर्तते ।

नश्यन्ति सर्वविघ्नानि प्रसीदन्ति च देवताः ॥२५॥

वलीपलितनाशश्च भविष्यति न संशयः ॥२६॥

एवं लब्ध्वा महाविद्यामभ्यासं कारयेत्ततः ॥२७॥

अन्यथा क्लिश्यते ब्रह्मन् सिद्धिः खेचरीपथे ।

यदभ्यासविधौ विद्यां न लभेद्यः सुधामयीम् ॥२८॥

ततः संमेलकादौ च लब्ध्वा विद्यां सदा जपेत् ।

नान्यथा रहितो ब्रह्मन् किंचित्सिद्धिभामवेत् ॥२९॥

यदीदं लभ्यते शास्त्रं तदा विद्यां समाश्रयेत् ।

ततस्तदोदितां सिद्धिमाशु तां लभते मुनिः ॥२७॥

तालुमूलं समुक्तृष्य सप्तवासरमात्मवित् ।

स्वगुरुक्तप्रकारेण मलं सर्वं विशोधयेत् ॥२८॥

सुहिपत्रनिमं शस्त्रं सुतीक्ष्णं स्निग्धनिर्मलम् ।

समादाय ततस्तेन रोममात्रं समुच्छिनेत् ॥२९॥

हित्वा सैन्धवपथ्याभ्यां चूर्णिताभ्यां प्रकर्षयेत् ।

पुनः सप्तदिने प्राप्ते रोममात्रं समुच्छिनेत् ॥३०॥

एवं क्रमेण षन्मासं नित्योद्युक्तः समाचरेत् ।

षण्मासाद्रसनामूलं शिराबद्धं प्रणश्यति ॥३१॥

अथ वार्गीश्वरीधाम शिरो वस्त्रेण वेष्टयेत् ।

शनैरुत्कर्षयेद्योगी कालवेलाविधानवित् ॥३२॥

पुनः षण्मासमात्रेण नित्यं संघर्षणाम्नुने ।

भ्रूमध्यावधि चाप्येति तिर्यक्कर्णबिलावधि: ॥३३॥

अधश्च चुबुकं मूलं प्रयाति क्रमचारिता ।

पुनः संवत्सराणां तु तृतीयादेव लीलया ॥३४॥

केशान्तमूर्ध्वं क्रामति तिर्यक्षाखावधिर्मुने ।

अधस्तात्कण्ठकूपान्तं पुनर्वर्षत्रयेण तु ॥३५॥

ब्रह्मरन्धं समावृत्य तिष्ठेदेव न संशयः ।

तिर्यक् चूलितलं याति अधः कण्ठबिलावधि ॥३६॥

शनैः शनैर्मस्तकाच्च महावज्रकपाटमित् ॥३७॥

पूर्वं बीजयुता विद्या ह्याख्याता यातिदुर्लभा ॥३७॥

तस्याः षडङ्गं कुर्वति तया षट्स्वरमिन्नया ।

कुर्यादेवं करन्यासं सर्वसिद्ध्यादिहेतवे ॥३८॥

शनैरेवं प्रकर्तव्यमभ्यासं युगपन्हि ।

युगपद्वर्तते यस्य शरीरं विलयं व्रजेत् ॥३९॥

तस्माच्छनैः शनैः कार्यमभ्यासं मुनिपुङ्गव ॥४०॥

तदा च बाह्यमार्गेण जिह्वा ब्रह्मबिलं व्रजेत् ॥४०॥

तदा ब्रह्मार्गलं ब्रह्मन्दुर्भेद्यं त्रिदशनैरपि ।

अङ्गुल्यग्रेण संघृष्य जिह्वामात्रं निवेशयेत् ॥४१॥

एवं वर्षत्रयं कृत्वा ब्रह्मद्वारं प्रविश्यति ।

ब्रह्मद्वारे प्रविष्टे तु सम्यड्मथनमाचरेत् ॥४२॥

मथनेन विना किञ्चित्साधयन्ति विपश्चिताः ।

खेचरीमन्त्रसिद्धस्य सिध्यां मथनेन विना ॥४३॥

जपं च मथनं चैव कृत्वा शीघ्रं फलं लभेत् ॥४४॥

स्वर्णजां रौप्यजां वापि लोहजां वा शलाकिकाम् ॥४४॥

नियोच्य नासिकारन्धं दुधं सिक्तेन तनुना ।

प्राणानिस्त्रिय हृदये सुखमासनमात्मनः ॥४५॥

शनैः सुमथनं कुर्याद्भूमध्ये न्यस्य चक्षुषी ।

षण्मासं मथनावस्था भावेनैव प्रजायते ॥४६॥

यथा सुषुप्तिर्बालानां यथा भवस्तथा भरेत् ।

न सदा मथनं शस्तं मासे समाचरेत् ॥४७॥

सदा रसनया योगी मार्गं न परिसंक्रमेत् ।

एवं द्वादशवर्षान्ते संसिद्धिर्भवति ध्रुवा ॥४८॥

शरिरे सकलं विश्वं पश्यन्त्यात्माविमेदतः ।

ब्रह्माण्डोऽयं महामार्गो राजदन्तोर्ध्वकुण्डली ॥४९॥ इति ॥

तृतियोऽध्यायः

मेलनमनुः । हीं भं सं पं फं सं क्षं ।

पद्मज उवाच ।

अमावास्या च प्रतिपत्पौर्णमासी च शंकर ।

अस्याः का वर्ण्यते संज्ञा एतदाख्याहि तत्त्वतः ॥१॥

प्रतिपद्मिनती ‘काले अमावास्या तथैव च ।

पौर्णमास्यां स्थिरीकुर्यात्स च पन्था हि नान्यथा ॥२॥

कामेन विषयाकाङ्क्षी विषयात्काममोहितः ।

द्वावेव संत्यजेन्नित्यं निरञ्जनमुपाश्रयेत् ॥३॥

अपरं संत्यजेत्सर्वं यदिच्छेदात्मनो हितम् ॥४॥

शक्तिमध्ये मनः कृत्वा मनः शक्तेश्च मध्यगम् ॥५॥

मनसा मन आलोक्य तत्यजेत्परं पदम् ।

मन एव हि बिन्दुश्च उत्पत्तिस्थितिकारणम् ॥६॥

मनसोत्पद्यते बिन्दुर्यथा क्षीरं घृतात्मकम् ।

न च बन्धनमध्यस्थं तद्वे कारणमानसम् ॥७॥

चन्द्रार्कमध्यमा शक्तिर्यत्रस्था तत्र बन्धनम् ॥८॥

ज्ञात्वा सुषुम्नां तद्देदं कृत्वा वायुं च मध्यगम् ॥९॥

स्थित्वासौवैन्दवस्थाने ग्राणरन्त्रे निरोधयेत् ।

वायुं बिन्दुं समाख्यातं सत्त्वं प्रकृतिमेव च ॥१०॥

षट् चक्राणि परिज्ञत्वा प्रविशेत्सुखमण्डलम् ॥१॥

मूलाधार स्वाधिष्ठानं मणिपुरं तृतीयकम् ॥१२॥

अनाहतं विशुद्धं च आज्ञाचक्रं च षष्ठकम् ।

आधारं गुदमित्युक्तं स्वाधिष्ठानं तु लैङ्गिकम् ॥१०॥

मणिपुरं नाभिदेशं हृदयस्थमनाहतम् ।

विशुद्धिः कण्ठमूले च आज्ञाचक्रं च मस्तकम् ॥११॥

षट् चक्राणि परिज्ञत्वा प्रविशेत्सुखमण्डले ।

प्रविशेद्वायुमाकृष्टं तयैवोर्ध्वं नियोजयेत् ॥१२॥

एवं समभ्यसेद्वायुं स ब्रह्माण्डमयो भवेत् ।

वायुं बिन्दुं तथा चक्रं चित्तं चैव समभ्यसेत् ॥१३॥

समाधिमेकेन समममृतं यान्ति योगिनः ।

यथाग्निर्दीरुमध्यस्थो नोत्तिष्ठेन्मथनं विना ॥१४॥

विना चाभ्यासयोगेन जज्ञानदीपस्तथा न हि ।

घटमध्यगतो दीपो बाह्ये नैव प्रकाशते ॥१५॥

भिन्ने तस्मिन्द्यटे चैव दीपज्वाला च भासते ।

स्वकायं घटमित्युक्तं यथा दीपो हि तत्पदम् ॥१६॥

गुरुवाक्यसमाभिन्ने ब्रह्मज्ञानं स्फुटीभवेत् ।

कर्णधारं गुरुं प्राप्य कृत्वा सूक्ष्मं तरन्ति च ॥१७॥

अभ्यासवासनाशक्त्या तरन्ति भवसागरम् ॥१८॥

परायामङ्कुरीभूया पश्यन्त्यां द्विदलीकृता ॥१९॥

मध्यमायां मुकुलिता वैखर्या विकसीकृता ।

पूर्वं यथोदिता या वाग्विलोमेनास्तगा भवेत् ॥२०॥

तस्या वाचः परो देवः कूटस्थो वाक्प्रबोधकः ।

सोहमस्मीति निश्चित्य यः सदा वर्तते पुमान् ॥२१॥

शब्दैरुच्चावचैर्नीचैर्भाषितोऽपि न लिप्यते । २१ ।

विश्वश्च तैजसश्वै प्राज्ञश्वेति च ते त्रयः ॥ २१ ॥

विराङ्गिरण्यगर्मश्च ईश्वरश्वेति ते त्रयः ।

ब्रह्माण्डं चैव पिण्डाण्डं लोका भूरादयः क्रमात् ॥ २२ ॥

स्वस्वोपाधिलयादेव लीयन्ते प्रत्यगात्मनि ।

अण्डं ज्ञानाग्निना तप्तं लीयते कारणैः सह ॥ २३ ॥

परमात्मनि लीनं तत्परं ब्रह्मैव जायते ।

ततः स्तिमितगम्भीरं तेजो न तमस्ततम् ॥ २४ ॥

अनाख्यमनभिव्यक्तं सत्किंचिदवशिष्यते ।

ध्यात्वा मध्यस्थमात्मानं कलसान्तरदीपवत् ॥ २५ ॥

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रमात्मानमधूमज्योतिरूपकम् ।

प्रकाशयन्तमन्तस्थं ध्यायेत्कूटस्थमव्ययम् ॥ २६ ॥

विज्ञानात्मा तथा देहे जाग्रत्स्वप्नसुषुप्तिः ।

मायया मोहितः पश्चाद्व्युजन्मान्तरे पुनः ॥ २७ ॥

सत्कर्मपरिपाकात् स्वविकारं चिकिर्षति ।

कोऽहं कथमयं दोषः संसाराख्य उपागतः ॥ २८ ॥

जाग्रत्स्वप्ने व्यवहरन्त्सुषुप्तौ क्व गतिर्मम ।

इति चिन्तापरो भूत्वा स्वभासा च विशेषतः ॥ २९ ॥

अज्ञानात् चिदाभासो बहिस्तापेन तापितः ।

दग्धं भवत्येव तदा तूलपिण्डमिवाग्निना ॥ ३० ॥

दहरस्थः प्रत्यगात्मा नष्टे ज्ञाने ततः परम् ।

विततो व्याप्य विज्ञानं दहत्येव क्षणेन तु ॥ ३१ ॥

मनोमयज्ञानमयान्त्सम्यगदध्या क्रमेण तु ।

घटस्थदीपवच्छश्वदन्तरेव प्रकाशते ॥३२॥

ध्यायनास्ते मुनिश्चैवमासुप्तेरामृतेस्तु यः ।

जीवन्मुक्तः स विज्ञेयः स धन्यः कृतकृत्यवान् ॥३३॥

जीवन्मुक्तपदं त्यक्त्वा स्वदेहे कालसात्कृते ।

विशत्यदेहमुक्तत्वं पवनोऽस्पन्दतमिव ॥३४॥

अशब्दमस्पर्शमरुपमव्ययं तथारसं नित्यमगन्धवच्च यत् ।

अनाद्यनन्तं महतः परं ध्रुवं तदेव शिष्यत्यमलं निरामयम् ॥३५॥

इत्युपनिषत् ॥

2.Pronunciation Guide

anutborscht

āfather**r**hborscht home

ibitdfresh dill

īkneedhflushed heat

uhooknrainy

ūsuettarp

ṛhurtthscout hall

enetmodern

aitimedhmud hut

ogotnbanal

auhouseppapa

mhumph**t**op half

ḥh + preceding vowel maybe

kpaprikabhmob hall

khink hornmchroma

gagoyyoung

ghbig_hutrmerit

nangerlalas

cchatvlava

chmuch_harmśshin

jjogssunshine

jhraj_househhut

ñengine

3. Continuous Translation

Invocation

Thus I meditated on the seat of the heart, [which is] the power of yoga, on the upanishad of yoga kundalī, being nothing but the undiscriminating, true knowledge of Brahma. Saying: Om, may this teaching benefit both of us together. Peace.

Chapter One

1.

The two causes of individual consciousness [are] the mental disposition and vital energy. If one of these two is destroyed, then both are destroyed.

2, 3a.

Of these two, a man should always control the prāṇa first (by) moderation in diet, (second) posture and thirdly, rotation and control of the pranic force. I shall describe the characteristics of these. Listen attentively, Gautama.

3b, 4a.

A soft, sweet offering should be consumed, without filling one fourth [of the stomach] in order to please Śiva. This is called moderation in diet.

4b-6.

Then posture is declared [to be] of two kinds: *padma* [and] *vajra*. It is *padmāsana* if both soles of the feet are placed on top of the thighs; this destroys all sins. It is said [to be] *vajrāsana* [when] one places the opposite foot below the *mūlakanda*, the other above it, the neck, head [and] body upright.

7-10a.

Śakti is really kundalinī. A wise person should move it up [from] its location [to] the navel [and] to the eyebrow centre. [This] is called *śakticāla*. To achieve this, two [things] are essential: *sarasvattīcāla*

[and] control of prāṇa. Then, through practice, the kuṇḍalinī becomes straight. Of these two, I shall describe to you first sarasvatīcāla. It is told by those who know the past [that] Sarasvatī [is] really Arundhatī. Only by arousing her will kuṇḍalinī arise spontaneously.

10b-18.

When the prāṇa passes through *idā*, [then] the wise man, firmly bound [in] padmāsana, having expanded the nādī the length [of] twelve fingers and circumference [of] four fingers, should hold [the lower ribs] continually enclosing [them] with the thumb [and] forefingers of both hands, [and] repeatedly stir up the śakti from right to left. The wise man should stir [it] up fearlessly for the duration [of] two muhūrtas. He should draw [it] upwards a little [so that] the kuṇḍalinī goes into suṣumnā.

Thus kuṇḍalinī enters the mouth of the suṣumnā. The prāṇa departs from there [and] enters suṣumnā of its own accord. He should expand the abdomen by contracting the throat. By agitating in *sarasvatī*, the prāṇa, going upwards, [reaches] the chest. He should exhale through the right nostril, [while] continuing to agitate *sarasvatī* [and] contracting the throat, the prāṇa goes upwards [from] the chest. Therefore he should continually stir up *sarasvatī* [whose] womb [is of] sound. Simply by arousing her, the yogin is freed from disease. Diseases of the spleen, dropsy, and all other diseases arising within the abdomen are certainly prevented by śakticāla.

19-21.

So now, I shall explain succinctly the suppression of prāṇa. Prāṇa is the movement [of] vital air in the body and [its retention] is called *kumbhaka*. It is said [to be] just of two kinds, *sahita* and *kevala*. As long as he practises *sahita*, he will have the power of *kevala*. The closing of the nostrils and the mouth [is] the same in the four parts, namely *sūrya*, *ujjāyī*, *sītālī* and *bhastrī*. This is *sahita kumbhaka*.

22-23.

Seated firmly in *padmāsana* on a pleasant [and] favourable seat [which is] pure [and] not too high or low, in a sacred [and] solitary place free from grit etc, of the length [of] a bow, without cold, fire [or] water, he should remain stirring up *sarasvatī*.

24-26a.

Having slowly drawn in the air from outside through the right nostril, he should inhale for as long as he wants, [and] then exhale through the left [nostril]. After purifying the skull, he should exhale slowly. [This] destroys the four *vāta* diseases and the disease of worms. This should be done repeatedly. This is called *sūryabheda*.

26b-29.

Slowly drawing in the breath through both nostrils, mouth closed, he holds its sound from the throat to the heart as long as [he wishes]. He restrains the prāṇa as before, then exhales through the left [nostril]. [This] destroys the fire produced [in] the head, the phlegm [in] the throat [and] afterwards destroys all sicknesses, [thereby] increasing the digestive power [in] the body [and] purifying [it]. It removes diseases arising in the nādīs, *jalodara* [and] *dhātus*. This kumbhaka is called *ujjāyī* [and] is to be done walking or standing.

30-31.

After drawing in the breath through the tongue, then retaining [it] as before, the wise man should slowly exhale through both nostrils. This breath retention called *śītalī* causes the removal [of] diseases such as *gulma*, *plīha*, bile, fever, thirst and poisons.

32-39.

Then, the wise man having assumed padmāsana, neck and abdomen upright, mouth closed, should exhale with effort through the nose. As soon as this ensues, he should draw the breath with force upwards from the feet, then loudly from the neck into the skull, holding [it] a while. In the same way he should exhale again, and inhale again and again. Just as the bellows of blacksmiths are moved with force, so he should slowly move the air within his own body. If the body becomes weary, then he should inhale through the right nostril. If the belly becomes full of air, then quickly pressing the centre [of] the nostrils firmly [but] not with the forefingers, [and] retaining the breath as before, he should exhale through the left nostril.

40-41.

Through those four means, when kumbhaka is imminent, these three bandhas should be performed by the yogins, who are untainted. The first [is] *mūlabandha*; the second is called *uddīyana* and the third *jālandhara*. A detailed description of them is given [here].

42-46.

Apāna, [which has] a downward movement, is forcibly made [to] go upwards by bending forward. This offering is called *mūlabandha*. And when *apāna* goes upwards, arriving at the sphere [of] agni, then the flame [of] agni grows long, buffeted by *vāyu*. Then agni and *apāna*, in the form [of] heat, enter *prāṇa*. Through this [process], a powerfully blazing fire is thus produced in the body, [and] so the sleeping *kundalinī* is awakened [by] its glowing heat. [Then the *kundalinī*], hissing, becomes erect like a snake struck [by] a stick. It enters the opening [of] *brahmanāḍī*, moving inside there. Therefore, *mūlabandha* should always be practised daily by the yogins.

47-50.

Now *uddīyana* should be performed at the end of kumbhaka [and] the beginning of exhalation. Because through this [practice] *prāṇa* flies up *sūṣumnā*, this bandha is therefore called *uddīyana* by yogins. Remaining in *vajrāsana*, one should firmly grasp the feet with both hands, and press there the *kanda* [at] the place near the ankles. One should very slowly hold the [awareness] at the back side [of] the thread or *nādī* in the abdomen, heart [and] throat. When *prāṇa* reaches the junction [of] the navel, it drives away disease [in] the navel. [So the practice] should be done regularly.

51-55.

Now the bandha of the name *jālandhara* is to be done at the end of inhalation. This [bandha is of] the form [of] contraction [of] the throat, obstructing the path of *vāyu*. When the throat is contracted by quickly bending down, the *prāṇa* is on the western thread in the middle on its way through *brahmanāḍī*. Staying in the same posture as before and stirring up *sarasvatī*, one gradually controls the *prāṇa*. On the first day, four [rounds] of kumbhaka should be done, on the second [day], ten times, then five singly, [and] on the third day twenty times. Kumbhaka should always be practised together with the three bandhas [and] with an increase of five [rounds] each day.

56-58.

Disease is quickly caused by sleeping during the day, staying awake late at night, too much sexual intercourse, continual socialising, obstructions [of] urine [and] faeces, bad habit [of] irregular eating and [too much] energy through mental exertion. If the yogin stops [the practice], saying ‘My disease has appeared through the practice of yoga’, then he gives up his practice. This is said [to be] the first obstacle [to yoga].

59-61.

The second is called doubt, the third inattentiveness, the fourth laziness, the fifth sleep, the sixth erratic [practice], the seventh confusion, the eighth distress, the ninth lack of faith, and the tenth is called by the wise the inability to attain the essence of yoga. Thus, after reflecting [on these], the wise one should forgo these ten obstacles.

62-65.

Thus the practice of *prāṇāyāma* should always be performed by meditating steadily on purity. Then the mind is dissolved in *suṣumnā* [and] *prāṇa* pervades [it]. When the impurities have withered away, and with movement up [the *suṣumnā*], he then becomes a yogin. *Apāna* moving downwards should be raised upwards by contracting it with force. This is called *mūlabandha*. *Apāna*, having been raised up, moves together with *agni* to the seat of *prāṇa*. Then *agni*, having united *prāṇa* and *apāna*, quickly goes to *kundalinī* [who is] coiled, fast asleep.

66-69a.

Thus [*kundalinī*], heated by *agni* and stirred up by *vāyu*, now stretches out her body inside the mouth [of] *suṣumnā*. Then, having pierced *brahmagrāntha* produced by *rajoguṇa*, she blazes forthwith like a stroke of lightning at the mouth [of] *suṣumnā*. She immediately proceeds up through *viṣṇugrāntha*, abiding in the heart. She goes upwards and continues through *rudragrāntha*, which comes from the eyebrow centre. Then, having pierced [it], she goes to the *mandala* of the moon.

69b-73.

There it dries up by itself the fluid produced by the moon in the cakra called *anāhata*, which has sixteen petals. The blood, when agitated through the force of *prāṇa*, [becomes] bile through contact [with] the sun, [then] having gone to the sphere [of] the moon, where it exists as the fluid nature of pure phlegm. How is [blood, which is] by nature cold, converted into heat [when] it is poured out there? In exactly the same manner, the white form of the moon is heated intensely. Because of its desire for enjoyment, the mind is externalised among sensory objects. The aspirant, enjoying this high state, rejoices in [and] abides in the self.

74-76.

Kuṇḍalinī goes to the place [where she takes] the eight forms [of] nature, and, embracing [her Lord she], attains Śiva [and] is dissolved [in him]. Thus the white matter [which] falls down, after that goes by means of the vital air to Śiva, and then *prāṇa* and *apāna* are always produced equally. It transcends whatever is small and even not small or describable. The entire *prāṇa* fires up like gold [heated by] the earth’s fire.

77-78.

Then the body, [which is] a body composed of elements, becomes very pure in a deified form,

produced by its pranic body. Released from the dormant state, it consists of pure consciousness. Thus, the pranic body, being in the nature of the self, [is] the commander of all.

79-81.

Thus one's true self [knows] this: the release from the existence of a wife, the illusion of the nature of time, as [is] the belief [that] a rope [is] like a snake. All [that] arises [is] indeed false; indeed [all that] dissolves [is] false. Just as the idea [of] silver in mother-of-pearl [is] an illusion, [so is that] of man and wife. The earth and the cosmos [are] one and the same, as [are] the soul which passes like a thread through the universe and its symbol. Sleep and the primordial spirit [are] one and the same, [as are] the light of consciousness and pure intelligence.

82-83a.

The śakti called kundalini, luminous [and] like the lotus-fibre, seeing with the tip of her hood the bulb at the base, similar to the bulb of the lotus, [and] grasping her tail with her mouth, she connects with the brahmarandhra.

83b-87.

[When] the yogin has taken his place in padmāsana, his anus contracted, making the vāyu go upwards [and] the mind enter kumbhaka, [then] agni, through the force [of] the gust of vāyu, goes in flames to svādhiṣṭhāna. The blowing [of] the gusts of agni and vāyu through the serpent [which] then having pierced brahmagrāntha, next stabs viṣṇugrāntha and, after piercing rudragrāntha, the six lotuses. [Now] Śakti [is] happy [to be] with Śiva in the thousand-petalled lotus. Thus it should be understood [that] this [is] the highest state; it alone produces bliss.

Chapter Two

1-4a.

Now I shall describe the *vidyā* called *khecarī*, since [there is] in this place no death [or] old age [for] those who are endowed with this knowledge. Whoever is at the mercy of death, disease and old age, having learned this *vidyā*, o Sage, [and] having strengthened his mind, should then practise *khecarī*. One should respectfully approach with total devotion the guru, the destroyer [of] old age, death [and] disease on earth, who knows *khecarī* [and has learned] its meaning both from books and continual practice.

4b-10.

The *vidyā* [of] *khecarī* [is] difficult to attain; its practice [is] also difficult to attain. Practice and *melana* are not accomplished at the same time. Those [who are] intent on practice alone do not gain *melana*. One obtains the practice, o Brahman, at some time in another life, but one does not attain *melana* even after a hundred lives. Having performed the practice through many births [and] perfected it, a yogin attains *melana* at some time in a future birth. If a yogin attains *melana* from the mouth of the guru, then he obtains that *siddhi* spoken of in the eternal sacred teachings. If he attains *melana* through its meaning in books, then he reaches Śiva [and is] freed from all reincarnations. Even gurus may not be able to have this knowledge without the sacred books. Therefore, o Sage, this teaching [is] very difficult to acquire.

11-16a.

An ascetic should go wandering for as long as he does not have [this] knowledge. When he does obtain the knowledge, then the siddhi is firmly in his hand. Without this knowledge, the siddhi cannot be manifested in the three worlds. Therefore [it is] the imperishable one [who], giving the teachings, readily gives melana. [The yogin] seeks refuge in Śiva, regarding [him as] the bestower of the practice. Having obtained this teaching from the highly honoured ones, he should not reveal [it] to others. Therefore this deep knowledge should, with every effort, be kept secret. O Brahman, having gone there where dwells a guru [who] imparts the divine yoga, and having comprehended the khecarī vidyā expressed by him, one should, undaunted right from the start, do the practice correctly as described by him. Through this knowledge, the yogin may become part of the siddhi of khecarī.

16b-18a.

Having expanded the bīja of khecarī by uniting khecarī with the energy of khecarī, he becomes Lord of the Khecaras and lives forever amongst them. Khecarī-bīja is described as the abode of the khecaras [and is] adorned [like] a circle [of] fire and water. Through this, yoga is perfected.

18b-21a.

The ninth sound [of] the phase of the moon should be pronounced in reverse. Then it is told [there is] a sound [made of] three phases [of] the form of the moon. Then also the eighth sound [pronounced] in the opposite direction [is] supreme, o Sage. Know [that] it is supreme [and] its beginning [is] the fifth, and this is said [to be] the peak of the moon in its great part. This [which gives] success in all yogas is to be gained through instruction by the guru.

21b-24a.

Whoever repeats [this] twelve [times] every day does not get even in sleep the *māya* [which is] born of the body [and] the source [of] hidden actions. And he who is self-disciplined repeats this five hundred thousand times, to him the siddhi of the glorious khecarī comes forth spontaneously. All obstructions disappear and the devas rejoice; and without doubt there will be elimination of wrinkles and grey hair.

24b-27.

Having obtained this great knowledge, one should then do the practice. Otherwise, o Brahman, one will suffer without [gaining] siddhi on the path of khecarī. Whoever does not gain this nectar-like knowledge through this cleansing practice, having gained it at the beginning of melana, should repeat it forever. If not, o Brahman, who is lacking it, does not get even a small part of siddhi. If he obtains this teaching, then he should practise its knowledge. Then the sage quickly obtains that siddhi handed down [to him].

28-37a.

Having drawn up [the tongue from] the root of the palate, the knower of ātman should for seven days clear every impurity [from it] in the way described by his guru. [He should take] a clean, oiled and sharp knife resembling the leaf of the *snuhī* plant, then with it [make a] cut the size of a hair. He should quickly apply [it] with crushed rock-salt and sea-salt. When he has completed the seventh day, he should again cut off [a piece] the size of a hair. So, having made constant effort, he should continue steadily. In six months the root of the organ of taste attached to the head is destroyed. Then the yogin who knows the right time and method should enclose with cloth the head [of] the mighty Lord of Speech, slowly elevating [it]. Again through daily friction for a period of six months, o Sage, it reaches up to the eyebrow centre and sideways up to the opening of the ears. And then, gradually set

in motion, it proceeds to the root [of] the chin. Then again, after the third year, it progresses easily upwards to where the hair meets the forehead, [then] sideways up to *shakha*, the aperture at the top back of the head, o Sage, [and] downwards to the throat-pit. In another three years, having reached *brahmaṇḍra*, it without doubt remains there. It goes sideways to beneath the crest of hair, downwards right to the throat-pit and very slowly through the great adamantine doors of the skull.

37b-40a.

The knowledge concerning the seed sound, [which] was explained previously, is indeed extraordinary. One should do the six parts of this [vidyā] through its six different tones. One should do mystic hand movements for the purpose of [attaining] all the first siddhis. This practice should be prepared slowly [and] not all at the same time, since the body which practises [it] all at once quickly decomposes. Therefore, the practice should be done very gradually, o Esteemed Sage.

40b-44a.

Then the tongue moves to the *brahmaṇḍra* through the outer path. And then, having been rubbed with the finger-tips, the tongue enters the bolt of Brahma, [which] is difficult to be pierced even by the gods. Having done this for three years, it moves through to the entrance to Brahma. Now, having moved through to the entrance to Brahma, it performs churning perfectly. Inspired people sometimes reach the goal without churning. Whoever masters *khecari* mantra may attain without churning. One obtains the fruits quickly by doing both repetition of mantra and churning.

44b-49.

Having attached a thin rod made of gold, silver or even iron to the nostrils by means of a thread impregnated with milk, holding the breath in the heart, the self [in] a comfortable position [and] focusing the eyes on the eyebrow centre, one should slowly perform the auspicious mathana. In six months the state of mathana comes naturally, just like the state of sleep in children is maintained. One should not always practise [this] excellent mathana [every] month. The yogin should not always revolve his tongue [on] the path. After twelve years there is sure [to be] attainment of siddhis. The whole universe is seen in the body [as] indistinct from the atman. This great path [of] ascending *kundalini* is the infinite ruler [of] the cosmos.

Chapter Three

The Lotus-born said:

1-2.

O Śaṅkara, which one, the night of the dark moon or the beginning of the full moon, is described as its sign? This [is] truly [its] name. It should be established when is not the right time: the first day of the lunar fortnight, or the night of the dark moon, or the day of the full moon. This [is] the way, and no other.

3-4a.

[When there is] longing for sensual enjoyment because of desire, one is deluded by the desire for sensual enjoyment. One should renounce [these] two [and] forever devote oneself to that which is stainless. Moreover, one should abandon everything pleasurable, which one wishes for oneself.

4b-7a.

Having put *manas* within *śakti*, *manas* being amongst *śakti*, and viewed *manas* through *manas*, one leaves this highest stage. For *manas* [is] indeed the *bindu*, and the cause [of] creation and continued existence. *Bindu* comes into existence through *manas*, just as ghee comes from milk. Its mental cause [is] definitely not situated in the middle of bondage. Binding [is] there where *śakti* is located between the moon and the sun.

7b-9a.

Having known the *suṣumnā* [and] its piercing, moved the *prāṇa* up the centre, and remained in the site of the moon, one should close the nostrils. Having experienced the *prāṇa*, the *bindu* as described, the quality of *sattva* and the six cakras, one enters the sphere of joy.

9b-13.

[They are] *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *manipura* the third, *anāhata*, *viśuddhi*, and *ājñā*, the sixth. It is said the base [cakra is] in the anus, *svādhiṣṭhāna* in the sexual [region], *manipura* in the area of the navel, *anāhata* is placed in the heart, *viśuddhi* at the base of the throat, and *ājñā* cakra in the skull. Having experienced the six cakras, one enters the sphere of joy. Having drawn in the *vāyu*, one should direct [it] upwards. He becomes part of the cosmos [who] practises this breath control. Therefore one should practise [control of] *vāyu*, *bindu*, cakras and *citta*.

14-18a.

Yogins attain the pure nectar of immortality through *saṃādhi* alone. Just as the fire inherent in timber does not rise up without friction, so the light of wisdom does not [appear] without the practice of yoga. The light inside a pot does not shine outside. Only when the pot is broken, does the flame of light become visible. Thus, one's body is spoken of as the vessel, while its cause [is] light. When it is completely broken by the speech of the guru, the divine wisdom of Brahma becomes clear. Having attained [it and] made the guru the helmsman, one crosses the subtle dimension and the ocean of worldly existence through the power [of] the desire for *sādhana*.

18b-21a.

That aforesaid [*vāc*], [which] sprouts in *para*, makes two leaves in *paśyanti*, buds in *madhyama* [and] blossoms in *vaikhari*, becomes set by reversing this order. The supreme divinity is at the peak of *vāc*. Whoever remains always convinced that '*I am Soham*', causes the *vāc* to blossom [and] is not even affected by various vile words [that] are spoken.

21b-26.

The three [states of consciousness]: waking, dreaming and deep sleep; and the three [aspects of existence]: the entire manifest universe, the cosmic subtle body and the supreme consciousness; the macrocosm and even the microcosm, the worlds of the earth and others, [all these], through absorption in their true attributes, are merged into the inner self. The egg, heated by the fire of knowledge, is absorbed with its cause into the supreme self [and] becomes merged in the supreme Brahma. Then, still and deep, [it is neither] light nor darkness, neither describable nor distinct. Reflect on the *ātman* resting within the body, like a light inside a jar. Just the essence remains. One should think of the *ātman* [as] the size of a thumb, a form of light, without smoke, shining within, unchangeable and imperishable.

27-29.

The *vijñāna ātman* in the body is deluded by the unreal [during the states of] waking, dreaming and sleeping. At last, after many births, as a result of good karma, it wishes to return to its true state. Who am I? How did this disease called *samsāra* come to [me]? What happens during deep sleep to me, who is active in mundane life in [the states of] waking and dreaming? It asks, having become engrossed in reflection through its own light, above all.

30-32.

The reflected consciousness, because of its lack of wisdom, is burned by an external heat, just like a bale of cotton is burnt by fire. When *jñāna* has been destroyed, the inner self located in the ether immediately [expresses] the highest *vijñāna*, permeating everything, [and] having maintained both *manomaya* and *jñānamaya*, now burns [them] one by one. Then it shines forth from within, like a clear light inside a pot.

33-35.

The muni, who remains meditating right until sleep and death, is to be known as a *jīvanmukta* [who], having done his duty, [is] blessed. Renouncing the state of *jīvanmukta*, when in time his body has decomposed, [he attains] liberation from the body, its breath unmoving. Only that remains which [is] imperishable, without sound, touch or form, that is, the essence, eternal and odourless, without beginning or end, beyond great, permanent, pure [and] untainted.

Thus [ends] the Upaniṣad.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Swami Satyadharma is a senior sannyasin, a yoga acharya, and a versatile teacher of yogic meditation and allied philosophies, having a Master of Arts in Yoga Philosophy with First Class Honors from Bihar Yoga Bharati, India. She wrote the commentary on the *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad*, while

living in India, which was published by Yoga Publications Trust in 2003. In 2015 she published her commentary on *Yoga Tattwa Upanishad*, and in 2018 her commentary on *Yoga Darshan Upanishad*.

Born in Connecticut USA, she lived in India for over 35 years under the direct tutelage of her yoga master, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, where she imbibed the traditional yogic teachings, and became Director of the Department of Undergraduate Studies at Bihar Yoga Bharati. She has compiled and edited many major yoga publications, such as *Yoga Darshan*, *Sannyasa Darshan*, *Dharana Darshan* and the *Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. Now based in Australia, she lives a life of sadhana and introspection, while continuing to elucidate the ancient teachings of yoga in the form of the twenty Yoga Upanishads.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR



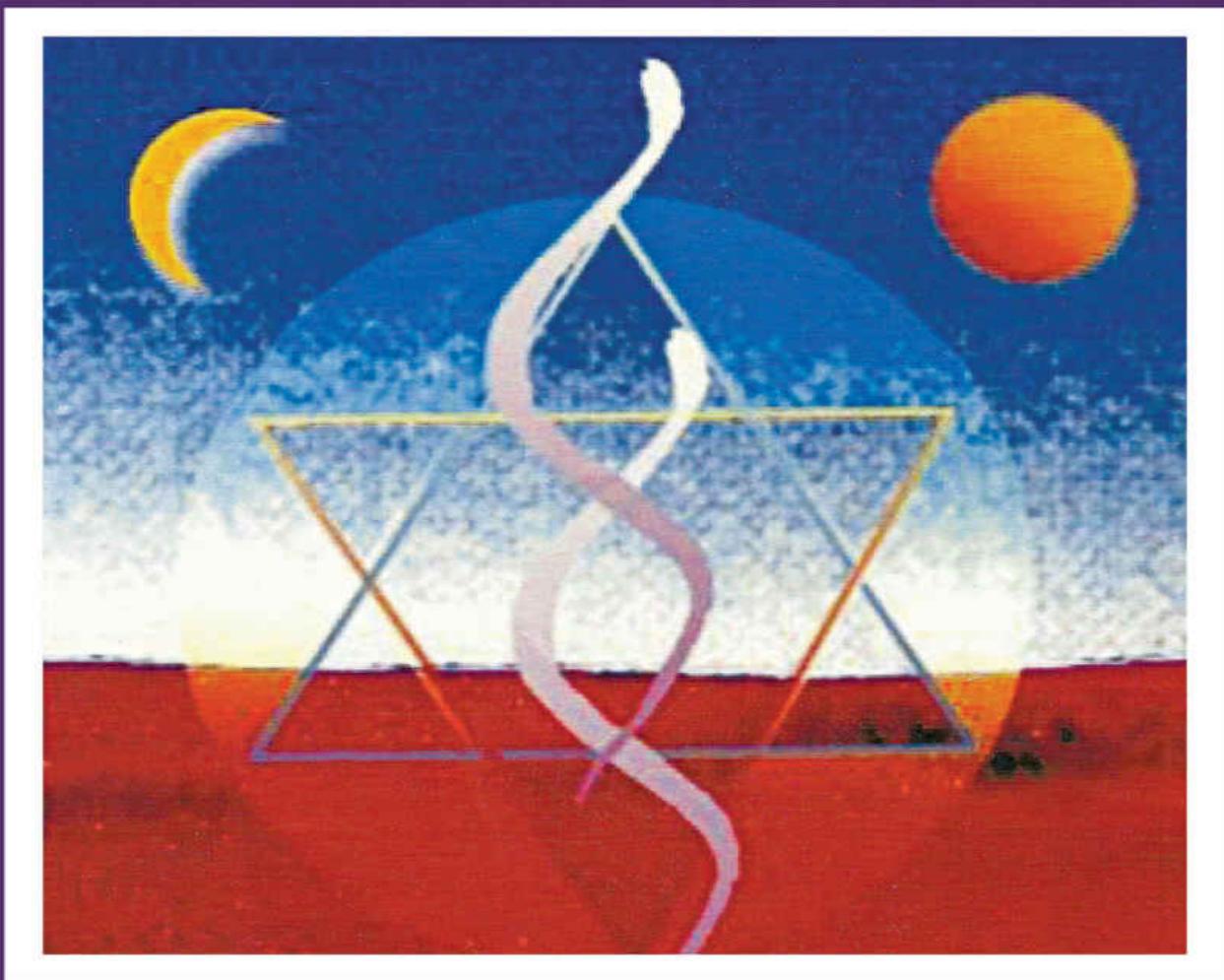
Srimukti (Ruth Perini) was for many years a teacher of yoga and meditation. Already a linguist, having graduated in French, Italian and Japanese from the Universities of Sydney and Queensland, Australia, she undertook four years of studies in Sanskrit at the Australian National University (ANU) with Dr McComas Taylor. She was invited to join the Golden Key International Society for outstanding academic achievement, as she was awarded High Distinctions throughout her Sanskrit studies. She is the translator of *Yoga Tattwa Upaniṣad* and *Yoga Darshana Upanishad*, commentaries by Swami Satyadharma. She has also translated the *Nāda Bindu* and *Dhyānabindu Upanishads*, and is currently working on the *Varāha Upaniṣad*.

Ruth (Srimukti) may be contacted on yoga.upanishads@yahoo.com.

Yoga Tattwa Upanishad

Essence of Yoga

Swami Satyadharma Saraswati



Translated by Ruth Perini (Srimukti)

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Ruth Perini

First edition 2015

Second edition 2018

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Yoga Upaniṣad Series

Volume 2

Yoga Tattwa Upaniṣad

Essence of Yoga

Second edition

Original Sanskrit text with

Transliteration, Translation and Commentary

Śwāmī Satyadharma Sarasvatī

Sannyāsī Śrimukti (Ruth Perini)

Dedication

To all illumined sages, yogis, rishis

and spiritual aspirants

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Introduction

Veda is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘knowledge’. In the context of the Vedas, it means ‘divine knowledge which is *śruti*, ‘heard’, that is, revealed from within, not taught. These ancient spiritual texts or hymns are grouped into four *samhitās* or collections: *Rig Veda*, *Yajur Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Atharva Veda*. They were revealed to enlightened beings 3,000 to 4,500 years ago or more (the Rig-Veda contains astronomical references describing occurrences in 5,000 to 3,000 BCE), and transmitted orally by the sages from generation to generation within brahmin families.

The four Vedas were considered to be divine revelation, and each word was carefully memorised. This was to ensure accurate transmission, but also because each syllable was considered to have spiritual power, its source being the supreme eternal sound. This was a mammoth task, as there are 20,358 verses in the four Vedas, approximately two thousand printed pages. They were composed in fifteen different metres, which demanded perfect control of the breath. Georg Feuerstein describes them as ‘a composite of symbol, metaphor, allegory, myth and story, as well as paradox and riddle’ and their composers as ‘recipients and revealers of the invisible order of the cosmos [with] inspired insights or illumined visions’. 1

Rig Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest of the four hymnodies, containing 1,028 hymns or songs in praise of the divine (*rig* or *ric* meaning ‘praise’), comprising 10,589 verses. Each hymn is also recognised as a *mantra*, a sacred sound vibration. The illumined seers composed the hymns while established in the highest consciousness, thus able to commune with luminous beings of the higher realms. There are about 250 hymns in praise of *Indra*, the divine force behind the ocean, heavens, thunder, lightning, rain and the light of the sun; 200 of *Agni*, born of the Sun, becoming the god of sacrificial fire, and over 100 of *Soma*, who gives immortality, and who is connected to the Sun, Moon, mountains, rivers and ocean. Others are dedicated to *Varuṇa*, who protects cosmic order; the *Aśvins*, supreme healers; *Uṣās*, goddess of dawn; *Aditi*, goddess of eternity; and *Saraswati*, goddess of the Vedas and of music and the arts.

Yajur Veda

The hymns of the Yajur-Veda, Veda of Sacrifice, consist of sacrificial formulas or prayers, including those of an internal or spiritual nature. About a third of its 1,975 verses are taken from the Rig Veda. The rest are original and in prose form.

Sāma Veda

The Sāma Veda, Veda of Chants, gives instructions on the chanting of vedic hymns. The majority of its 1,875 verses are from the Rig Veda; only 75 verses are original. Many of the hymns were sung by special priests during sacrificial rites. Some are still sung today.

Atharva Veda

The Atharva Veda, named after the seer Atharvan, whose family were great seers in Vedic times, contains 731 hymns of 5,977 verses, about one fifth of which are from the Rig Veda. Much of the Atharva Veda consists of magical spells and charms for gaining health, love, peace and prosperity, or taking revenge on an enemy. Possibly for this reason, the Atharva Veda was either not accepted by the orthodox priesthood, or given the same standing as the other Vedas.

The vedic people and their culture

The vedic people lived for over 2,500 years mainly along the banks of the Saraswatī River, which was located in Northern India between the modern Rāvi and Yamunā Rivers

of habitation included the Ganges River and its tributaries, rivers in Afghanistan (previously called Gandhara), the Himalayas and Mount Kailash in Tibet.

The vedic people had a complex multi-tiered view of the universe, in which humankind, nature and the divine are intertwined and interrelated. They had a deep knowledge of the oceans, mountains, deserts and forests of the physical world, as well as of the subtle worlds of deities and different levels of consciousness. They were also fully engaged in worldly life. People lived in cities or villages or were nomads. Cities were constructed of stone, bricks and metal. They were an agrarian people, yet also had herds of cattle, horses and camels. They built chariots and ships. They were skilled workers in gold, metal, clay, stone, wood, leather and wool, and showed a very high standard in arts, crafts, astrology, medicine, music, dance and poetry.

After the Vedas

The Vedas were the foundation for the later revelations (*śruti*) in the *Brāhmaṇas* (ritual texts), the *Āranyakas* (texts on rituals and meditation for forest-dwelling ascetics) and the *Upaniṣads* (esoteric texts). Later still, the Vedas were the basis for numerous works of remembered or traditional knowledge, known as *smṛti*, including the epics: i.e. the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Purāṇas*, and the *Sūtras*, or threads of knowledge, e.g. *Yoga Sūtra*. All these texts contain many concepts and practices which come directly from the four Vedas.

Upaniṣads

The word *upaniṣad* is comprised of three roots: *upa* or ‘near’, *ni* or ‘attentively’, and *ṣad*, ‘to sit’. The term actually describes the situation in which these unique texts were transmitted. The students or disciples sat near the realized master and listened attentively, as he expounded his experiences and understanding of the ultimate reality. This teaching was said to destroy the ignorance or illusion of the spiritual aspirant in regard to what is self and non-self, what is real and unreal in relation to the absolute and relative reality.

The Upaniṣads are derived from the Āranyakas, because they were chanted in the forest (*āranya*) after the aspirant had retired from worldly life. They are considered the last phase of *śruti*, vedic revelation. The Upaniṣads are regarded as *Vedānta*, the end of the Vedas, inferring that *Vedānta* is the end or completion of all knowledge, as they guide the aspirant to the *ātman* (spiritual self) and thus to *mokṣa* (liberation). Each Upaniṣad reflected the teachings and tradition of a realized master, and was connected with a specific Veda and vedic school. It is estimated that there are over 200 Upanishads, which have been divided into seven groups: Major, *Vedānta*, *Śaiva*, *Śakta*, *Vaiṣṇava*, *Sannyāsa* and *Yoga*. The *Vedānta* and *Yoga* Upaniṣads are considered the most important.

Yoga Upaniṣads

The twenty one Yoga Upaniṣads give an understanding of the hidden forces in nature and human beings, and describe methods by which these forces can be manipulated and controlled. They emphasise that the inner journey to the one permanent reality, the *atman*, is the essential one. Journeys to external places, such as holy sites and temples, as well as rituals and ceremonies, are not given importance. Their teachings are concerned with the subtle body, that is, *prāṇa*, *kundalinī*, *cakras*,

nādīs, as well as descriptions of meditative states, and the tantric and yogic techniques to attain them. Therefore, they are regarded as a significant integration of Vedānta and Tantra, which were previously considered incompatible.

The Yoga Upaniṣads were composed after the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, and form an important part of the classical yoga literature. However, they contain no references to Patañjali or his *Yoga Sūtras*. Although the time of compilation of the Yoga Upaniṣads is post-Patañjali, the *vidyās*, or meditative disciplines contained within them are pre-Patañjali. The Yoga Upaniṣads were written by vedantic scholars and practitioners in order to show that these *vidyās* and related practices were not borrowed from Patanjali, but were known and practised from the ancient period.

The following are classified as Yoga Upaniṣads: *Advayataraka*, *Amṛtanāda*, *Amṛtabindu*, *Brahmavidyā*, *Darśana*, *Dhyānabindu*, *Haṃsa*, *Kṣurika*, *Mahā Vakyā*, *Maṇḍalabrahmāna*, *Nādabindu*, *Paśupatabrahmāna*, *Śandilya*, *Tejobindu*, *Triśikhibrähmāna*, *Varāha*, *Yoga Cudamani*, *Yogakuṇḍalī*, *Yogarāja*, *Yogaśikha* and *Yogatattva*.

Yogatattva Upaniṣad

Yogatattva is a concise and unique text on yoga, as it was known and practised in the early times. The word *tattva* used here is comprised of two roots: *tat* or ‘That’ and *twa*, ‘essence’. So, the term *yogatattva* refers to ‘the essence of That’, the ultimate reality, which is attainable through yoga. This *upaniṣad* belongs to the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. The absence of the author’s name from this *upaniṣad* shows the sentiment of the eminent yogins of this period, who were concerned with spreading the message of Truth, rather than their own personal name and fame.

The teaching conveyed in this *upaniṣad* begins with a dialogue between Viṣṇu, the supreme godhead, and Brahma, his disciple, who is also the creator of all the manifest worlds. Creation implies the endless process of birth and death, and all the suffering and attachment that arises in-between. Therefore, Brahma inquires from Viṣṇu about the path, which liberates one from the trammels of this cycle. Thus, Viṣṇu enlightens him about the path of yoga, as a means to attain higher states of meditation, and ultimately *moksha*, or liberation.

Yogatattva Upaniṣad is comprised of 142 verses, which deal with the philosophy, systems and practices of yoga. There are many important topics dealt with here, such as: mantra yoga, laya yoga, haṭha yoga, rāja yoga, the four states of yoga – *ārambhāvasthā*, *ghaṭāvasthā*, *paricayavasthā* and *niṣpattyavasthā*. The text discusses particular practices of yoga, ie: *nādīśodhan* *prāṇāyāma*, kumbhaka, bandhas, mahāvedha, khecarī mudrā, *viparītakaranī* mudrā, vajrolī mudrā, and amarolī. It further discusses the five *tattwas*, or elements of creation: earth, water, fire, air and ether, and provides detailed instruction on how to meditate upon and realise these elements and their associated powers. The text finally states that, only by the mastery of these practices, is rāja yoga perfected. Dealing with the principle of non-attachment, it explains the practice of Praṇava, meditation on *Aum* in the lotus of the heart. It ends with the discussion of the method of attaining knowledge of the ātman by restraining the senses.

The appendices at the end of the text further provide the reader with a complete version of the Sanskrit text, as well as the pronunciation guide and translation for reference purposes.

It is our hope that by the sincere study of this and other classical texts on yoga, the modern day practitioners and teachers will be able to connect with the roots of yoga, which go back in time to the very dawn of human civilization. By connecting with the antiquity of yoga, a new vision emerges in which one begins to see the vast scope of the practices and the highest aspirations that the yogis of old

cherished in their hearts, not only for wellbeing, but for enlightenment and immortality.

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योगतत्त्वोपनिषत्

YOGATATTVOPI^NISAT

Essence of Yoga

Invocation

योगैश्वर्यं च कैवल्यं जायते यत्प्रसादतः ।

तद्वैष्णवं योगतत्त्वं रामचन्द्रपदं भजे ॥

ॐ सह नाववत्विति शान्तिः ।

yogaiśvaryam ca kaivalyam jāyate yatprasādataḥ

tadvaiṣnavam yogatattvam rāmacandrapadam bhaje

om saha nāvavatviti śāntih

Anvay

prasādataḥ: the blessed one; *jāyate*: is born with; *yoga*: yoga; *ca*: and; *yat*: this; *aiśvaryam*: divine auspiciousness; *kaivalyam*: emancipation; *bhaje*: I worship; *padam*: the feet; *rāmacandra*: of Rāma; *tat*: this; *yogatattvam*: essence of yoga; *vaiṣnavam*: derived from Viṣṇu; *iti*: saying; *avavatu*: may [it] help; *nau*: both of us; *saha*: together; *śāntih*: peace.

Translation

The blessed one is born in the divine auspiciousness of yoga and emancipation. I worship the feet of Rāma, who is the essence of yoga, arisen from Viṣṇu. Saying: Om, may this teaching benefit both of us together. Peace.

Commentary

Prasad is the gift offered to God, which has been returned, after being received by God, and therefore, carries the divine blessing of God. Rāma is that gift, born of Lord Viṣṇu, into the world of men. He is

considered to be a *pūrṇa avatāra*, complete form of God, born to man, to live on Earth as a man, for a limited period of time. In this sense, Rāma is truly the blessed one, who was born liberated in the highest state of yoga. The author of this Upaniṣad has dedicated the teaching on the essential nature of yoga to the feet of Rāma.

The author's name is not disclosed, perhaps because he is not the original revealer of this knowledge and, therefore, does not consider it to be his own. In ancient times, knowledge such as this, was passed down directly from teacher to disciple over many generations. So, the author may also have heard it from another teacher of his lineage. However, it can be inferred from this invocation that he is a follower of the Vaishnavite tradition, and a devotee of Rāma. In the Vedic tradition, each Upaniṣad is linked with a particular Veda. The Yogatattwa Upaniṣad belongs to the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda.

Today, yoga is considered to be a science in its own right, but originally, many thousands of years ago, it belonged to the culture of Tantra. The tantric tradition was prominent in the South of the Indian subcontinent, and the vedic tradition in the North. At different times, however, interchanges took place between the wise and learned practitioners and teachers of both systems. During these interchanges, vast amounts of spiritual knowledge were passed from one system to another. Afterwards, this knowledge was held, integrated and further disseminated by the tradition of the teachers, who had received it. This would be how the knowledge of yoga came to be held and disseminated by the vedic tradition of Vaisnavism.

The invocation ends with the upanishadic *śāntipāṭh*, or invocation of peace, *Om saha nāvavatu*, which is found above in its abbreviated form. The complete form of this *śāntipāṭh* and its translation are as follows:

Om saha nāvavatu, saha nau bhunaktu

saha vīryam karavāvahai

tejasvi nāvadhītamastu mā vidviśāvahai

Om śāntih śāntih śāntih

Om ! O Lord, protect us both (teacher and student) together;

Nourish us both together.

May we work together with great energy.

May our study be illumined and clear.

May we have no altercations.

Om ! Peace Peace Peace

Verse 1: Enquiry into the path of Yoga

योगतत्त्वं प्रवक्ष्यामि योगिनां हितकाम्यया ।

यच्छुत्वा च पठितवा च सर्वपापैः प्रमच्यते ॥१॥

*yogatattvam pravakṣyāmi yoginām hitakāmyayā
yacchutvā ca paṭhitvā ca sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate* (1)

Anvay

pravakṣyāmi: I shall describe; *yogatattvam*: the essence of Yoga; *hitakāmyayā*: with the desire of benefiting; *yoginām*: the yogis; *ca . . . ca*: both . . . and; *śrutvā*: having heard; *paṭhitvā*: having studied; *yat*: this; *pramucyate*: he is freed; *sarvapāpaiḥ*: from all evils.

Translation

I shall describe the essence of Yoga, with the desire of benefiting the yogis. He, who has both heard and studied this, is freed from all evils.

Commentary

Herein begins the discourse on yoga. As a precedent to the teachings, the Rishi, or illumined teacher, clarifies that his aim in disseminating the teaching is not self-oriented. He does not wish to attain name, fame, wealth or glory for himself, but to benefit the yogis of all lineages and times. We can assume that in his time, as well as now, the true teacher and path of yoga were very hard to come by. There may have been persons, who claimed to know, but whose knowledge was imperfect or incomplete. Therefore, in declaring his desire to benefit others by this teaching, the Rishi shows his true nature and integrity.

The complete yoga can only be revealed to a worthy student by the yogin, who has fully mastered and traversed the path. The realized teacher, the worthy student, and the true

teachings are the three requisites of the yoga path described here. These three form a triangle, which represents the conditions for the transmission of true yoga. Yogatattva is the essence or truth of yoga, which is eternal, and remains one and the same for all time. Those yoga students, who have heard this teaching and then have studied it, and put it into practice, will free themselves of all negative propensities. With the removal of darkness, only the light remains. It should be observed, however, that the mere hearing of, or reading about, the path will not suffice. In order to attain the fullness of yoga, the student must put it into practice.

Verse 2: Viṣṇu, the path and goal

विष्णुर्नामं महायोगो महाभूतो महातपाः ।

तत्त्वमार्गं यथा दीपो दृश्यते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥२॥

*viṣṇurnāma mahāyogī mahābhūto mahātapāḥ
tattvamārge yathā dīpo drśyate puruṣottamah* (2)

Anvay

mahāyogī: the great yogin; *mahābhūtaḥ*: the great being; *mahātapāḥ*: the great ascetic; *viṣṇuh*: Viṣṇu; *nāma*: by name; *puruṣottamah*: the Supreme Spirit; *drśyate*: is seen; *yathā*: like; *dīpah*: a light; *mārge*: on the way; *tattva*: to the essence.

Translation

The great yogin, the great being, the great ascetic is Viṣṇu by name. He, the Supreme Spirit, is seen like a light on the way to the essence.

Commentary

Viṣṇu is the name of God, revered in the Vaiṣṇav tradition, as the *Puruśottama*, or highest, supreme spirit. The name Viṣṇu does not refer to any one personage as such, but represents the universal consciousness, which pervades all beings, sentient and insentient, manifest and unmanifest, and also exists beyond them in the highest truth, which is untouched by space, time and object. Hence, Viṣṇu, the unborn universal consciousness, is the essence of all beings and forms of existence, and at the same time, ever retains its own unlimited and pure expansiveness, which is untouched by any quality or limitation of name and form, birth and death.

This verse also refers to Viṣṇu as: the great yogin, the great ascetic, and the great being, for these three are all aspirants and seekers of the universal truth, and as such, they each embody it to some degree on this earthly plane. The yogin seeks to attain Viṣṇu, the supreme consciousness, through the practices of yoga and meditation, the ascetic through a life of penance, hardship and endurance, and the great person, through meritorious and exemplary acts. In this sense, He, the supreme being, is the universal light, which is seen by those, who travel the path of self-realization or enlightenment. This light is what guides the seeker on his chosen path towards the true essence of himself and of all existence. So, Viṣṇu, the eternal, ever-expanding consciousness, is both the path and the goal for the seekers, and therefore, the knowledge contained in this upaniṣad is dedicated to Him.

Verse 3: Brahma's question on yoga

तमाराध्य जगन्नाथं प्रणिपत्य पितामः ।

पप्रच्छ योगतत्त्वं मे ब्रूहि चाष्टाङ्गसंयुतम् ॥३॥

tamārādhya jagannātham praṇipatya pitāmah

papraccha yogatattvam me brūhi cāṣṭāṅgasamyutam

Anvay

pitāmah: paternal grandfather (Brahma); *ārādhya*: having served; *praṇipatya*: having prostrated; *jagannātham*: protector of the world (Viṣṇu); *papraccha*; asked; *tam*: him; *brūhi*: describe; *me*: to me; *yogatattvam*: the essence of yoga; *ca*: and; *samyutam*: the joining together; *aṣṭāṅga*: of its eight components.

Translation

The paternal grandfather (Brahma), having served and prostrated to the protector of the world (Viṣṇu), asked him: ‘Describe to me the essence of yoga and the joining together of its eight components’.

Commentary

Although Viṣṇu is the supreme consciousness, the origin of all existence, both manifest and

unmanifest, he brings about the creation through Brahma, who is his evolute, or his first mind-born son. Brahma is therefore considered to be the lord of all manifest creation, and hence the paternal grandfather of all beings in creation.

Brahma is the creative force of Viṣṇu. He is the creator of all the manifest worlds in existence. Brahma is symbolized as a deity with four heads, enabling him to gaze into every direction. The creator must be all-seeing and all-knowing in order to manifest the creation. Brahma arises from the navel of Viṣṇu, seated upon a lotus flower, which represents his pure origin. He is the creative power of the universal, supreme consciousness.

In this verse, Brahma first serves and prostrates before his father, Viṣṇu, the ultimate source and Lord of the world. Through service and prostration, one is able to open oneself to and connect oneself with the higher forces, and receive their guidance and wisdom. Then, having offered his respects, Brahma asks his father, Viṣṇu, to explain to him the essence of yoga, the union between the individual and supreme consciousness.

This question regarding the essence of yoga is a very deep subject, which must be known to Brahma, as he is the progenitor of all the individual beings in creation. It is only with the evolution of manifest beings that unity with the unmanifest consciousness becomes relevant. Brahma also asks for a description of the eight limbs of yoga, which are the means for living beings to achieve this unity. The eight limbs include: (1) *yama*, codes of external conduct, (2) *niyama*, codes of internal conduct, (3) *āsana*, posture, (4) *prāṇāyāma*, breath control, (5) *pratyāhāra*, sensory withdrawal, (6) *dhāraṇā*, one pointed concentration, (7) *dhyāna*, unbroken continuity of meditation, and (8) *samādhi*, transcendental meditation.

Verse 4: Web of illusion

तमुवाच हृषीकेशो वक्ष्यामि शृणु तत्त्वतः ।

सर्वे जीवाः सुखैर्दुःखैर्मायाजालेन वेष्टिताः ॥४॥

tamuvāca hrṣīkeśo vakṣyāmi śṛṇu tattvataḥ

sarve jīvāḥ sukhairduḥkhairmāyājālena veṣṭitāḥ (4)

Anvay

hrṣīkeśah: another name for Viṣṇu, controller of the senses; *uvāca*: said; *tam*: to him; *śṛṇu*: listen; *vakṣyāmi*: I will explain; *tattvataḥ*: thoroughly; *jīvāḥ*: living beings; *veṣṭitāḥ*: are trapped; *sarve*: always; *jālena*: by the web; *māyā*: of illusion; *sukhaiḥ-dukhaiḥ*: in happiness [and] sorrow.

Translation

Hṛṣīkeśah said to him: ‘Listen, I will explain thoroughly: living beings are always trapped by the web of illusion in happiness and sorrow.

Commentary

Hṛṣīkeśah is another name for Viṣṇu. He is also known as the ‘controller of the senses’, because this is the requisite quality of one, who remains ever merged in the absolute consciousness. This

question on yoga, being very mysterious, requires a thorough explanation in order to understand it. Such an explanation can only be given by one, who has complete mastery of the subject. Similarly, it can only be understood by one who is totally receptive to the master and the teaching. Therefore, this verse also shows the time-honoured relationship between the master and the disciple, which has always existed from the first moment of creation.

So, Guru instructs the disciple to listen carefully. He first explains that the path of yoga is necessary for living beings, because they are enmeshed in the web of illusion. All embodied beings are deluded by the idea of individuality, which arises from birth. Due to their identity with the body, they forget their true nature, which is consciousness, and begin to experience the external world as the reality. The individual being, who is identified with the body and the world, is always susceptible to the play of opposites: pain and pleasure, loss and gain, happiness and sorrow, which are the outcome of every interaction in life. This play of opposites gives rise to anxiety, fear and confusion, which cause suffering, and further obscure the individual's understanding of himself and of life.

Verses 5 and 6: Difficulty of attaining the path

तेषां मुक्तिकरं मार्गं मायाजालनिकृत्तनम् ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिनाशनं मृत्युतारकम् ॥५॥

नानामार्गेस्तु दुष्प्रापं कैवल्यं परमं पदम् ।

पतिताः शास्त्रजालेषु प्रज्ञया तेन मोहिताः ॥६॥

teṣām muktikaram mārgam māyājālanikrntanam

janmamṛtyujarāvyādhināśanam mṛtyutārakam (5)

nānāmārgaistu duṣprāpam kaivalyaṁ paramam padam

patitāḥ śāstra-jāleṣu prajñayā tena mohitāḥ (6)

Anvay

tu: but; *kaivalya:* emancipation; *paramam:* supreme; *padam:* abode; *duṣprāpam:* difficult to reach; *nānāmārgaiḥ:* by different ways; *teṣām:* of these (ways); *mārgam:* the way; *mukti-karam:* leads to liberation; *nikrntanam:* destroying; *māyā-jāla:* the web of illusion; *nāśanam:* eliminating; *janma:* birth; *mṛtyu:* death; *jarā:* old age; *vyādhi:* disease; *tārakam:* delivering from; *mṛtyu:* death; *patitāḥ:* those fallen; *śāstra-jāleṣu:* among the webs of teachings; *mohitāḥ:* are deluded; *tena:* by that; *prajñayā:* knowledge.

Translation

But, *kaivalya*, the supreme abode, is difficult to reach by different ways. Of these, the way (to *kaivalya*) is the one which leads to liberation, destroying the web of illusion, eliminating birth, death, old age [and] disease, [and] delivering [the aspirant] from death. Those fallen among the web of teachings are deluded by that knowledge.

Commentary

Man's mistaken identity with the body and the world becomes the cause of his infinite suffering. In order to correct this erroneous conception, it is necessary to realize the true nature of oneself and the world, which is the unlimited, ever expansive consciousness. This realization is known as *kaivalya*, merging into the supreme abode of consciousness. Although this infinite consciousness pervades all beings and existence, it is very difficult to attain. There are thousands of paths and systems of higher knowledge in the world, and teachers abound who would elucidate them.

However, *kaivalya*, the experience of the supreme, all pervading consciousness, is almost impossible to reach by these. The way that leads to *kaivalya* is the path of liberation. This is a practical and experiential path, which destroys the web of illusion, wrong identification and suffering. The seeker of truth, who follows this path, is able to eliminate the causes of suffering: birth, disease and old age, and is delivered from death. However, those who are enmeshed in the different systems of teachings become deluded by that knowledge, and are unable to attain the ultimate experience of *kaivalya*.

Verse 7: Indescribable nature of the ultimate consciousness

अनिर्वाच्यं पदं वक्तुं न शक्यं तैः सुरैरपि ।

स्वात्मप्रकाशरूपं तत्किं शास्त्रेण प्रकाश्यते ॥७॥

anirvācyam padam vaktum na śakyam taiḥ surairapi

svātmaprakāśarūpam tatkim śāstreṇa prakāśyate (7)

Anvay

na: not; *śakyam*: possible; *api*: even; *taiḥ suraiḥ*: for the gods; *vaktum*: to describe; *padam*: a place; *anirvācyam*: indescribable; *tatkim*: how; *rūpam*: a form; *Prakaasha*: illuminated; *Svaatma*: by its own Self; *prakāśyate*: can be illuminated; *śāstreṇa*: by teachings.

Translation

[It is] not possible even for the gods to describe a place [which is] indescribable. How can a form [already] illuminated by its own Self be illuminated by [any] teachings?

Commentary

Within the infinite strata of creation there are thousands of *lokas*, or planes of existence, which are instinctive, human and divine. Some levels, such as our world, have myriad material forms, both sentient and insentient, which exist for specified periods of time. There are also higher planes, which are beyond form, beyond duality. Even the gods are unable to describe such a plane or dimension of being, which exists beyond form, because there is no object to describe and no subject to describe it. The pathway to liberation leads to this dimension, which is beyond form, beyond subject and object, beyond duality. The absolute consciousness is self-arisen and is illumined by its own self. Hence, Viṣṇu, who is that very form of luminous consciousness, asks, how can the self-illuminated consciousness be illuminated by any form of teachings?

Verse 8: The path of liberation

निष्कलं निर्मलं शान्तं सार्वतोतं निरामयं ।

तदेव जौवरुपेण पुण्यपापफलैर्वृतम् ॥८॥

niṣkalam nirmalam śāntam sarvātītam nirāmayam

tadeva jīvarūpeṇa punyapāpaphalairvṛtam (8)

Anvay

eva: just; *tat*: that; *niṣkalam*: undivided; *nirmalam*: unsullied; *śāntam*: calm; *atītam*: gone beyond; *sarva*: all; *nirāmayam*: welfare; *vṛtam*: chosen; *jīvarūpeṇa*: by a living form; *phalaiḥ*: by the fruits; *punya*: good deeds; *pāpa*: evil deeds.

Translation

Just that, [which is] undivided, unsullied, calm and has gone beyond all welfare, is chosen by a living form with the fruits of good and evil deeds.

Commentary

A person, living in the world, is chosen to tread the path of liberation by the fruits of his or her good and evil deeds. If the accumulated karmas, or actions, of a person are unripened or unsuitable, he or she will not be chosen to walk this path. The path to kaivalya leads one inward to the experience of oneness, where the consciousness remains undivided. This experience goes beyond all forms or ideals of happiness and wellbeing. It just is... that.

Verse 9: The big question

परमात्मपदं नित्यं तात्कथं जीवतां गतम् ।

सर्वभावपदातोतं ज्ञानरूपं निरञ्जनम् ॥९॥

paramātmepadam nityam tatkatham jīvatām gatam

sarvabhāvapadātītam jñānarūpam nirañjanam (9)

Anvay

katham: how; *tat*: that; *padam*: seat; *paramātmā*: Supreme Soul; *nityam*: eternal; *atītam*: beyond; *pada*: the state; *sarva*: all; *bhāva*: existing things; *rūpam*: the form; *jñāna*: of wisdom; *nirañjanam*: pure; *gatam*: did pass to; *jīvatām*: of the living.

Translation

How did that, which is the seat of the supreme soul, eternal [and] beyond the state of all existing things, [and is] pure [and] has the form of wisdom, pass to [the state] of the living?

Commentary

This verse poses the age-old question... If that consciousness is the seat of the supreme soul, that exists in the unmanifest, beyond the state of all manifest things, is eternal, all knowing, perfect, and pure, how then did it pass into the state of the living, manifest existence, which has none of these qualities?

Verse 10: Material evolution

वारिवात्स्फुरितं तासमिस्तात्राहंकृतिरुत्थिता ।

पञ्चात्मकमभूत्पिण्डं धातुबद्धं गुणात्मकम् ॥१०॥

vārivatsphuritaṁ tasmistatrāhaṅkṛtirutthitā

pañcātmakamabhūtpiṇḍam dhātubaddham guṇātmakam (10)

Anvay

tatra: there; *ahamkr̥tiḥ:* *ahamkara* (individual ego); *utthitā:* brought forth; *tasmin:* in this; *vat:* like; *vāri:* water; *sphuritam:* suddenly arising; *pīṇḍam:* a body; *ātmakama:* consisting of; *pañca:* five; *bhūta:* elements; *guṇa:* *guṇas* (three qualities of nature); *baddham:* bound by; *dhātu:* seven layers of the body: flesh, blood, digestive juice, fat, bone, marrow, semen.

Translation

There, the *ahamkāra* brought forth in this, like [a bubble] suddenly arising in the water, a body consisting of the five elements, of the three *guṇas*, and bound by the seven *dhātus*.

Commentary

That supreme consciousness, being the source of all manifest existence, yet ever unmanifest in itself, requires a path and evolutes in order to become manifest. In the evolution of different beings, the supreme or universal consciousness, which exists in the state of eternal oneness, must first become individuated, so that the One may become many. Therefore, the first evolute of consciousness is *ahamkāra*, the individual ego, or sense of personal identity. What was One, now sees itself as an individual consciousness, which is separate from the whole.

The verse describes the emerging of ego, like a bubble suddenly arising in water. In this analogy, the bubble, which has been chosen to represent the arising of ego, appears to be an entity, but in reality it is a phantasm, empty, having no substance at all. The bubble arises suddenly from water in the same way that the ego arises from the unmanifest consciousness. The adjective ‘suddenly’ is used here to indicate the transition from stillness to movement, from the unmanifest to the manifest. When there is no creation, there is no movement. The first evolute, therefore, seems to appear suddenly out of the depths of the unmanifest.

With the arising of the first evolute, or ego identity, the path of evolution is set into motion. *Ahamkāra*, the identity of the individual conscious field, next requires a body in which to live and interact on the worldly plane. So from ego, the five elements of: (i) space, (ii) air, (iii) fire, (iv) water and (v) earth, combine and permute to form a material body. These five elements are influenced by the three *guṇas*, or qualities of nature, which are: (i) *tamas*, stability; (ii) *rajas*, motion; and (iii) *sattwa*, balance. The different possible combinations of the *guṇas* and elements is infinite, and thus the multitude of beings comes into existence.

This transition from the formless state of existence into individual forms is bound into place with the further permutation of the seven *dhātus*, which are the fundamental tissue layers of the body

responsible for its formation, support and survival. These seven dhātus are the evolutes of the five elements. All earthly beings are influenced by the dhātus, which give substance and structure to the tissues, organs and systems of the body. The seven dhātus are as follows: (i) *rasa*, lymph or fluid; (ii) *rakta*, blood; (iii) *mansa*, muscle; (iv) *meda*, fat and hormones; (v) *asthi*, bone and connective tissue; (vi) *majja*, bone marrow and nerves; (vii) *śukra*, reproductive fluid.

Verse 11: Paramātmā and jīvātmā

सुखदुःखैः समायुक्तं जीवभावनया कुरु ।

तेन जीवाभिधा प्रोक्ता विशुद्धैः परमात्मनि ॥११॥

sukhaduḥkhaiḥ samāyuktam jīvabhāvanayā kuru

tena jīvābhidhā proktā viśuddhaiḥ paramātmani (11)

Anvay

kuru: perceive; *samāyuktam*: joined with; *sukha-duḥkhaiḥ*: happiness and sorrow; *viśuddhaiḥ*: purified; *bhāvanayā*: through the production of; *tena*: thus; *abhidhā*: term; *jīva*: embodied consciousness; *proktā*: revealed; *paramātmani*: in the supreme self.

Translation

Perceive that which is joined with happiness and sorrow, which has been purified, is through the production of *jīva*. Thus the term *jīva* is revealed in the supreme self.

Commentary

Try to understand that the consciousness, which remains ever pure, unlimited and free in itself, has for some indeterminable reason, manifested an ego, or individual identity, and a body in which to dwell on earth for a limited period of time. By virtue of the ego in the body, the consciousness is able to connect and interact with the beings in the world around it. Thus the idea of duality develops, because the ego experiences itself as separate from other beings. So, there is always I and other, which is the basis for all action. In this way, the one field of all-knowing consciousness, which exists behind the ego and the body, is joined with pleasure and pain, and experiences happiness and sorrow with each interaction of the body in the world.

When the consciousness, which is the real self, remains in the unembodied state, it is called *paramātmā*, the highest or supreme self. But when that consciousness becomes embodied and lives in the world, it is called *jīvātmā*, the living self. The *paramātmā* is eternal, unbound and free, but the *jīvātmā* becomes bound while living in the body. The living consciousness becomes identified with the body, and is thus limited by this perception of itself. As attachment develops for the material persona and the things of the world, the consciousness becomes bound by them. This is how the *jīvātmā*, which is bound by the condition of living in the body, relates to the *paramātmā*, which is unbound and, therefore, ever free. In this way the embodied self is revealed by the unembodied self.

Verses 12 and 13: Causes of bondage

कामक्रोधभयं चापि मोहलोभमदो रजः ।

जन्म मृत्युश्च कर्पचं शोकस्तन्द्रा क्षुधातृषा ॥१२॥

तृष्णा लज्जा भयं दुःखः विषादो हर्ष एव च ।

एभिर्दोषैर्विनिर्मुक्तः स जौवः केवलो मतः ॥१३॥

kāmakrodhabhayaṁ cāpi mohalobhamado rajaḥ

janma mr̥tyuśca kārpaṇyam śokastandrā kṣudhātṛṣā (12)

trṣṇā lajjā bhayam duhkham viṣādo harṣa eva ca

ebhirdoṣairvinirmuktaḥ sa jīvah kevalo mataḥ (13)

Anvay

sa jīvah: that embodied soul; *mataḥ:* is thought; *kevalaḥ:* complete; *vinirmuktaḥ:* freed from; *ebhiḥ:* these; *doṣaiḥ:* faults; *kāma:* lust; *krodha:* anger; *bhayam:* fear; *ca:* and; *api:* also; *moha:* delusion; *lobha:* greed; *mada:* pride; *raja:* passion; *janma:* birth; *mr̥tyu:* death; *kārpaṇyam:* miserliness; *śokah:* grief; *tandrā:* laziness; *kṣudhā:* hunger; *trṣā:* thirst; *trṣṇā:* craving; *lajjā:* shame; *bhayam:* fright; *duhkham:* sorrow; *viṣādah:* despair; *ca:* and; *harṣah:* exultation; *eva:* as well.

Translation

That embodied soul is thought [to be] complete [when] freed from these faults: desire, anger, fear and also delusion, greed, pride, lust, birth and death, miserliness, grief, laziness, hunger, thirst, craving, shame, fear, sorrow, despair and exultation as well.

Commentary

Although the *jīvātmā*, embodied consciousness, is of the same stuff as the *paramātmā*, the unembodied consciousness, it is considered to be impure, limited and bound, due to its proximity and identification with the body and the world. Whereas the supreme consciousness, having no worldly contact or influence, is pure and free. The *jīva* can only be freed from bondage, and thus return to its homogeneous state, where it is complete in itself, when all the associations, which arise from contact with the material world, have been rooted out. These associations are regarded as *doṣa*, or faults, due to their limiting effect on the consciousness. They are the experiences of the self in the world of duality, the most fundamental being *janma*, birth, and *mr̥tyu*, death, which are the unavoidable outcomes of association with the body that is born, lives for a period of time, and then dies.

In-between birth and death, while the body is living in the world, the other *doṣa*, or defects, arise. The six basic faults of the *jīva*, or living consciousness, which arise due to worldly contact, are mentioned in this verse: (1) *kāma*, desire, attraction, (2) *krodha*, anger, aversion, (3) *bhaya*, fear, (4) *lobha*, greed, (5) *moha*, delusion, and (6) *mada*, pride. All spiritual texts and traditions speak about the importance of removing these six faults; otherwise, the aspirant will be unable to progress on the spiritual path. These faults are also described as the great enemies of the yogi, or the great fires, which destroy the outcome of all yogic practice and penance.

The first of these six enemies is desire, the initial cause of birth itself and of all the positive tendencies.

The second is aversion, the opposite to desire and the cause of all the negative propensities. Where there is attraction or liking, there will also be aversion or disliking. Together desire and aversion represent the first two steps of the ego into the world of duality, and they act as the catalyst for all the other faults, which arise in the course of life. The primary outcome of desire and aversion is the third enemy, fear. The jīva fears that it will not get what it likes, and again fears that it will get what it dislikes. So, due to desire and aversion, fear is ever-present in the life of the jīva, regardless of its position or situation in the world. Ever-fearful, the jīva suffers anxiety and stress, and knows no peace within himself or in the world around him.

From desire also springs the fourth enemy, greed. When something is very attractive and desirable, one wants to have more and more of it. The stronger the desire, the greater the greed. Under the influence of greed, one can never have enough of the desired object. The fifth enemy is delusion, or erroneous perception. The jīva becomes attached to the notion that the body and the world around it are permanent and real, and forgets its true nature, which is consciousness. This misidentification is the root of all troubles, because material beings and objects are impermanent; only consciousness is permanent. The identification with all that is impermanent causes suffering. The sixth enemy is pride whereby the ego feels satisfaction with itself and its achievements, which are not founded in the reality of consciousness, but in the illusive existence of the world.

From these six enemies of the self, a further host of faults arises. Desire and attachment give rise to craving, a continual longing, yearning or hankering for the pleasurable objects or persons, which can never be satisfied. From craving arises miserliness, because the desired object, once obtained, should never leave one's sight or be lost. Birth leads to perpetual hunger and thirst; while death brings sorrow and grief. Success brings pride and exultation, while failure brings despair and remorse. Failure to live and behave in accordance with truth leads to shame. Unwillingness to work for one's welfare or salvation leads to laziness and lack of motivation. Each of these faults creates obstruction and obscures the light of consciousness. Only by the removal of these faults will the true nature, which is pure consciousness, complete in itself, be revealed.

Verse 14: Removal of the faults

तस्मादोषविनाशार्थमुपायः कथयामि ते ।

योगहीनं कथं ज्ञानं मोक्षदं भवति ध्रुवम् ॥१४॥

*tasmāddoṣavinaśārthamupāyam kathayāmi te
yogaḥīnam katham jñānam mokṣadam bhavati dhruvam (14)*

Anvay

tasmāt: thus; *kathayāmi:* I shall tell; *te:* you; *upāyam:* means; *artham:* purpose; *vināśa:* destruction; *doṣa:* faults; *katham:* how; *jñānam:* higher knowledge, wisdom; *hīnam:* which omits; *yoga:* practices leading to union with the supreme consciousness); *bhavati:* can be; *dhruvam:* sure; *dam:* to give; *mokṣa:* liberation.

Translation

Thus I shall tell you the means and purpose for the destruction of these faults. How can that knowledge, which omits yoga, be sure to give liberation?

Commentary

Now, the means and the purpose will be discovered for the destruction and removal of the human faults, which obscure the true nature of consciousness. These faults perpetuate a false notion of ego-body-self existing in a constantly changing world, through the perception of the senses and their objects. The purpose for the destruction of these faults is the attainment of *jñāna*, direct knowledge of the reality of consciousness. The means or method to remove these faults and attain *jñāna* is yoga, the practical science of liberation, which unites the *jīvātma* with the *paramātma*, the limited or bound consciousness with the supreme or complete consciousness. The verse then asks, how can knowledge, the purpose alone, be sure to give liberation in the absence of yoga, which provides the practical means or path of attainment?

Verse 15: Path of *jñāna* and yoga

योगो हि ज्ञानहीनस्तु न क्षमो मोक्षकर्मणि ।

तस्माज्ज्ञानं च योगं च मुमुक्षुर्दृढम्यसेत् ॥१५॥

yogo hi jñānahīnastu na kṣamo mokṣakarmani

tasmājjñānam ca yogam ca mumukṣurdrḍhamyaset (15)

Anvay

tu: but; *hi*: surely; *yoga*: practices leading to union with the supreme consciousness; *hīnah*: without; *jñāna*: higher knowledge, wisdom; *na*: not; *kṣamah*: favourable for; *karmani*: the effect; *mokṣa*: of liberation; *tasmāt*: thus; *mumukṣuh*: the seeker of liberation; *drḍhamyaset*: must be established in; *ca . . . ca*: both . . . and; *jñāna*: knowledge; *yoga*: *yoga*.

Translation

But surely yoga without *jñāna* [is] not favourable for the effect of liberation. Thus the seeker of liberation must be established in both *jñāna* and *yoga*.

Commentary

Here, the other side of the question is presented. Just as *jñāna* in the absence of *yoga* will not be a sure path to attain liberation; similarly, the practice of *yoga* in the absence of *jñāna* will not lead to liberation. In order to progress on any given path, the objective or goal must be known. *Jñāna* is the knowledge of *paramātma*, the supreme consciousness, which is necessary to progress on the path of *yoga*. In the absence of this knowledge, the practice of *yoga* will have no ultimate goal or outcome. Interestingly, this describes the path of *yoga*, which is prevalent today: *yoga* for fitness, *yoga* for relaxation, but not *yoga* for the liberation of consciousness. Only this path will lead to a definite and sure outcome.

Verse 16: Path and goal of *jñāna*

अज्ञानादेव संसारे ज्ञानादेव विमुच्यते ।

झानस्वरूपमेवादौ झानं झेयैकसाधनम् ॥१६॥

ajñānādeva samsāro jñānādeva vimucyate

jñānasvarūpamevādau jñānam jñeyaikasādhanam (16)

Anvay

samsārah: cycle of birth, death and rebirth; *eva*: only; *ajñānāt*: from ignorance; *vimucyate*: is released; *jñānāt*: through knowledge; *ādau*: at the beginning; *jñāna*: knowledge; *eva*: indeed; *svarūpam*: the very embodiment; *jñāna*: of knowledge; *eka*: the only; *sādhanam*: means; *jñānam*: for knowledge; *jñeya*: to be understood.

Translation

The cycle of *samsāra* (birth, death and rebirth) [occurs] only due to *ajñāna* (ignorance) [and] is released through *jñāna* (knowledge). In the beginning, *jñāna* [was] indeed the very embodiment of knowledge [and was] the only means for *jñāna* to be understood.

Commentary

All beings in creation are subject to the cycle of *samsāra*, which is the process of birth and death. Generally, life is considered as a celebration, but in yoga and spiritual life, it is also seen as a condition undergone by the soul, which is fraught with pain and suffering. From the time of conception, the being undergoes much discomfort in the tight confines of the womb. After the pain of birth and emerging suddenly into the light of the external world, it experiences the difficulties of growth and subjugation by parents and teachers. In all the stages of life, it is susceptible to disease, which is inborn and also transmitted from the environment. Finally old age ensues with its onslaught of pains and limitations, followed by the fear and transition of death and ultimately rebirth.

The embodied being undergoes this cycle of *samsāra* due to *ajñāna*, ignorance of its true nature, which is ever-expanding consciousness. Once born in the body, the soul enters a state of forgetfulness, wherein it identifies with the material world around it, and loses sight of its real nature. There is no escape from this cycle for the living being, except through the path of *jñāna*, which leads to reunion with the inner knowledge of consciousness. When the being is able to reunite with the light of its own consciousness, the ignorance and suffering caused by its misidentification with the world is removed.

The verse states that from the very beginning of all existence, *jñāna* was the self-born inner knowledge of the consciousness. Thus, *jñāna* is the only means, by which this knowledge of the self can be understood. In the light of the sun, all darkness disappears. Similarly, in the light of knowledge, all ignorance and suffering are removed. The cycle of *samsāra* can no longer bind the being, who is illumined with self-knowledge. Such a being lives in the world, but not of it, and therefore does not undergo the suffering of life in the same way as one, who is identified with the world and ignorant of the self.

Verse 17: Liberation

झातं येन निजं रूपं कैवल्यं परमं पदम् ।

निष्कलं निर्मलं साक्षात्सच्चिदानन्दरूपकम् ॥१७॥

jñātam yena nijam rūpanam kaivalyam paramam padam

niṣkalam nirmalam sākṣātsaccidānandarūpakam (17)

Anvay

yena: by it; *paramam*: supreme; *padam*: seat; *jñātam*: is known; *sākṣāt*: directly; *nijam*: indwelling; *nirmalam*: unsullied; *niṣkalam*: undivided; *rūpanam*: form; *kaivalyam*: of emancipation; *rūpakam*: consisting of the form of; *sat-cit-ānanda*: the supreme reality as existence-consciousness-bliss.

Translation

By it (jñāna), the supreme seat is known directly as the indwelling, pure, undivided form of *kaivalya*, consisting of the form of *sat-cit-ānanda*.

Commentary

The seat of the supreme consciousness, which dwells within all beings, can only be known by jñāna, direct inner knowledge of the self. This knowledge cannot be known by the mind or senses; it cannot be seen or heard or received in any way from any outside source. The experience of this pure, unlimited and undivided form of consciousness is called *kaivalya*, or liberation. The word *kaivalya* comes from the root *kevala*, meaning ‘one only’. This seat of supreme consciousness is the superconscious state, where all duality, which relates with name, form object and idea, is transcended.

In *kaivalya*, only the one universal consciousness remains. This is the highest state of samādhi, also known as *mokṣa* or *nirvāṇa*. This supreme, liberated consciousness has three qualities: (1) *sat*, truth absolute, ultimate existence, (2) *cit*, consciousness, totality of knowing, and (3) *ānanda*, bliss. In this state only these three qualities of consciousness are known. There is only truth, only knowing, only bliss. So this experience is described by the yogins, who have attained it, as *satcitatānanda*.

Verse 18: About the ultimate knowledge

उत्पत्तिस्थितिसंहारस्फूर्तिज्ञानविवीर्जतम् ।

एतज्ञानमिति परोक्तमथ योगं ब्रवीमि ते ॥१८॥

utpattisthitisamhārasphūrtijñānavivīrjatam

etajjñānamiti proktamatha yogam bravīmi te (18)

Anvay

vivīrjatam: beyond; *jñāna*: knowledge; *sphūrti*: appearance; *utpatti*: creation; *sthiti*: maintenance; *saṃhāra*: dissolution; *iti*: thus; *etat*: this; *proktam*: was said; *jñāna*: knowledge; *atha*: now; *bravīmi*: I shall describe; *yogam*: yoga; *te*: to you.

Translation

[It is] beyond the knowledge and appearance [of] creation, maintenance and dissolution. Thus, this was said about *jñāna*. Now I shall describe yoga to you.

Commentary

The experience of the supreme, undivided, unlimited consciousness, is beyond the knowledge and perception of worldly appearances. It is beyond the universal cycle of existence. The universe comes into being with all of its galaxies, planets and stars, through the process of creation. It is then sustained for millions of ages through the process of maintenance, and ultimately it goes through the process of dissolution, in order to be born anew once again. *Jñāna* is the ultimate knowledge of the supreme, unborn consciousness which exists beyond and behind all of the manifest existence and its cycles. This much has been said about *jñāna*.

Now Viṣṇu, the transmitter of this teaching, will describe yoga to Brahma.

Verse 19: Four paths of yoga

योगो हि बहुधा ब्रह्मन्मिद्यते व्यवहारतः ।

मन्त्रयोगो लयश्चैव हठो ऽसौ राजयोगतः ॥१९॥

yogo hi bahudhā brahmanbhidyate vyavahārataḥ

mantrayoga layaścaiva haṭho ‘sau rājayogataḥ (19)

Anvay

brahman: O Brahman; *yoga*: yoga; *bhidye*: is divided; *bahudhā*: in many parts; *vyavahārataḥ*: namely; *mantrayogaḥ*: mantra yoga; *layaḥ*: laya yoga; *ca*: and; *haṭhaḥ*: hatha yoga; *eva*: as well; *asau*: that; *rājayogataḥ*: in accordance with *rāja* yoga.

Translation

O Brahman, yoga is divided into many parts, namely: mantra yoga, laya yoga and *haṭha* yoga, as well; that is in accordance with *rāja* yoga.

Commentary

In this verse Brahma, the seeker of knowledge, is addressed as Brahman by Viṣṇu, the Lord and the teacher of this *upaniṣad*. In the ancient vedic tradition the Brahmins were considered to be of superior intellect. Therefore, they were considered to be most worthy, receptive and capable of understanding this pinnacle of knowledge. Having explained *jñana*, the highest knowledge and attainment of human endeavour, the teacher begins to speak about yoga, the path to *jñāna*.

The word *yoga* means ‘union’, and pertains to the union of the individual with the supreme consciousness. Yoga is not the philosophy or the meaning of this union, but the practical means by which to achieve it. The verse says that the science of yoga is divided into many parts. There are many paths to reach the one supreme consciousness, because there are many types of individual beings, who walk them. Different people have different natures and qualities; therefore different paths of yoga are required to facilitate their journey.

Viṣṇu speaks here of the four main yogas, which were known and practised in his time. (1) *Mantra yoga* is the liberation of mind through the principle of sound. The word mantra comes from the term *mananāt trayati*, or liberation of the mind. (2) *Laya yoga* is the yoga of dissolution, whereby the individual consciousness is dissolved into the supreme consciousness. (3) *Hatha yoga* is the yoga of balancing the sun and moon, the vital and mental energies, and thereby awakening the kundalini force. (4) These three yogas were to be known and practised in accordance with *rāja yoga*, the yoga of meditation. Rāja yoga was known as the kingly yoga, for only the most powerful practitioners were able to face the mind by the mind.

Verse 20: Progression of yoga

आरम्भश्च घटश्चैव तथा परिचयः स्मृतः ।

निष्पत्तिश्चेत्यवस्था च सर्वत्र परिकीर्तिं ॥२०॥

ārambhaśca ghaṭaścaiva tathā paricayah smṛtah

niṣpattiścetyavasthā ca sarvatra parikīrtitā (20)

Anvay

tathā: therefore; *ārambhah*: beginning stage; *ghaṭah*: second stage; *paricayah*: third stage; *ca*: and; *eva*: indeed; *niṣpattiḥ*: fourth and final stage; *smṛtah*: prescribed; *ca*: and; *iti*: thus; *avasthā*: state; *sarvatra*: always; *parikīrtitā*: proclaimed.

Translation

Therefore, the beginning stage, the second, third and indeed the fourth and final stage [are] prescribed, and thus [this] state is always proclaimed.

Commentary

In the previous verse, the four yogas that were widely known at the time when this upaniṣad was taught, are mentioned. In this verse the application of these yogas is further indicated. First, mantra yoga should be practised, followed by laya yoga, then hatha yoga and finally rāja yoga. This was the recognised progression of yoga to be observed by a sincere aspirant. In this context, however, it should be considered that yoga is not a static system, but an evolutionary science, which has been adapted to the developing and changing needs of humanity in every age. Therefore, the progression of yogas utilized by practitioners in the past may not be suitable or applicable for the level of seekers today.

Verses 21 and 22: Mantra yoga

एतेषाः लक्षणं ब्रह्मन्वक्ष्ये शृणु समासतः ।

मातृकादियुतं मनं द्वादशाब्दं तु यो जपेत् ॥२१॥

क्रमेण लभते ज्ञानमणिमादिगुणान्वितम् ।

अल्पबुद्धिरिमं योगं सेवते साधकाधमः ॥२२॥

*eteśām lakṣaṇam brahmaṇvakṣye śṛṇu samāsataḥ
māṭrkādiyutam mantram dvādaśabdam tu yo jape (21)*
*krameṇa labhate jñānamāṇimādiguṇānvitam
alpabuddhirimam yogam sevate sādhakādhamah (22)*

Anvay

brahman: O Brahman; *śṛṇu:* listen; *vakṣye:* I shall describe; *samāsataḥ:* concisely; *lakṣaṇam:* characteristic; *eteśām:* of these; *yah:* whoever; *jape:* should repeat; *mantram:* sacred sounds; *dvādaśabdam:* for twelve years; *māṭrkāt:* *māṭrkās*, Sanskrit letters; *iyatam:* together with; *krameṇa:* gradually; *labhate:* obtains; *jñānam:* *jñāna*; *ādi:* beginning with; *āṇimā:* *āṇiman* one of eight *siddhis*, the power of making the body subtle; *anvitam:* possessing; *guṇa:* attributes of nature; *adhamah:* most inferior; *sādhaka:* *sādhaka*, spiritual aspirant; *alpabuddhiḥ:* of little intelligence; *sevate:* practises; *imam:* this; *yogam:* *yoga*.

Translation

O Brahman, listen! I shall describe concisely the characteristic[s] of these [yogas]. Whoever should repeat the mantra for twelve years together with the syllables, gradually obtains *jñāna*, beginning with the power of making the body subtle and light, and the knowledge of *guṇa*, the qualities of nature. The most inferior aspirant of low intelligence practises this *yoga*.

Commentary

Here begins a brief but comprehensive explanation of the attributes of these four *yogas*, starting in this verse with

mantra *yoga*. The teacher asks the student to listen carefully in order to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding, as these *yogas* are very distinct. Mantras are not ordinary words; they are specific and special sounds of power, which were to be received directly from a mantra master. The repetition of mantra is known as *japa*, and is one of the major practices of meditation in *yoga*. The teacher says that the aspirant, who repeats the mantra with awareness of the *matrikas*, the sounds of each letter comprising the mantra, for twelve years together, will gradually attain *jñāna*, self-knowledge.

On the path of mantra meditation, the *sādhaka* encounters the eight *siddhis*, yogic powers or perfections, beginning with *anima*, the ability to make the body very light and subtle. Lightness of the body is necessary in order to enter deeper states of meditation. When a person is very worldly, the body is correspondingly heavy and gross. By the continued repetition of mantra, the vibratory field of the body becomes purified and harmonized. This leads to a feeling of lightness and increased perception, which allows the practitioner to enter into deeper states of meditation.

In the course of mantra meditation, with the increase of lightness and perception, the *sadhaka* becomes aware of the *gunas*, or qualities of nature, and their influence in every aspect of life. All beings at all times are influenced by three qualities of nature: (1) *tamas:* stability or inertia, (2) *rajas:* activity or dynamism, and (3) *sattwa:* balance or purity. In order to progress in meditation the *guṇas* or qualities must be understood. When *tamas* and *rajas* are predominant, meditation will not be successful. Only when *sattwa* predominates is meditation fruitful. Therefore, knowledge of the *gunas* and the ability to regulate them is an important requisite, and it is an outcome of mantra *yoga*.

In yoga, all practitioners are not considered to be equal. According to the predominant guṇa, a person's nature may be more or less developed and ready for yoga. The verse says that mantra yoga is suitable even for the most inferior sādhaka, who is of tamasic nature and possesses little intelligence and motivation. By the practice of mantra yoga, such a sādhaka will be able to attain jñāna.

Verse 23: Laya yoga

लययोगश्चित्तलयः कोटिषः परिकीर्तिः ।

गच्छन्ति षष्ठ्यपनुज्ञन्ध्यायेनिष्कलमीश्वरम् ॥२३॥

*layayogaścittalayah koṭiṣah parikīrtitah
gacchanstiṣṭhansvapanbhuñjandhyāyenniṣkalamīśvaram* (23)

Anvay

layayogah: laya yoga; *layah*: dissolution; *citta*: citta, individual consciousness; *parikīrtitah*: is described; *koṭiṣah*: in innumerable ways; *dhyāyet*: one should meditate on; *niṣkalam*: absolute; *īśvaram*: Lord; *gacchan*: moving; *tiṣṭhan*: resting; *svapan*: sleeping; *bhuñjan*: eating.

Translation

Laya Yoga, dissolution of individual consciousness, is described in innumerable ways. One should meditate on the absolute Lord [while] moving, resting, sleeping [or] eating.

Commentary

Although laya yoga is not well known today, it was an important yoga in previous times. The word *laya* means 'dissolution'. In this yoga the individual, limited mind is dissolved into the universal, unlimited consciousness. The rishi says there are innumerable ways in which laya yoga may be practised. One of the ways, which he mentions here, is meditation on the absolute Lord during the course of one's daily activities. The absolute Lord is another way of saying the supreme or universal consciousness. The Lord, whether he be represented in human form, divine form, or God himself, is always immersed in the highest consciousness. So to meditate on the Lord is to connect oneself with the supreme consciousness. The mind of the sadhaka, who is aware of the Lord, even while moving through life, resting, eating and sleeping, will gradually drop worldly identifications and dissolve into the universal consciousness.

Verses 24 and 25: Hatha yoga and rāja yoga

स एव लययोगः स्याद्वहठयोगमतः शृणु ।

यमश्च नियमशब्दे आसनं प्राणसंयमः ॥२४॥

प्रत्याहारो धारणा च ध्यानं भ्रूमध्यं हरिम् ।

समाधिः समतावस्था साष्टाङ्गो योग उच्यते ॥२५॥

sa eva layayogah syāddhaṭhayogamataḥ śṛṇu
 yamaśca niyamaścaiva āsanam prāṇasamyamah (24)
 pratyāhāro dhāraṇā ca dhyānam bhrūmadhyam harim
 samādhiḥ samatāvasthā sāṣṭāṅgo yoga ucyate (25)

Anvay

sa: this; syāt: must be; layayogah: laya yoga; śṛṇu: listen to; haṭhayogamataḥ: that which is haṭha yoga; yoga: yoga; ucyate: is said; sāṣṭāṅgah: with eight limbs; yamah: ethical behavior; ca: and; niyamah: inner discipline; ca eva: and indeed; āsanam: steady physical posture; prāṇasamyamah: prāṇāyāma, breathing techniques which expand the life force; pratyāhārah: withdrawal of the senses; dhāraṇā: concentration; dhyānam: meditation; harim: Hari, Viṣṇu; bhrūmadhyam: eyebrow centre; samādhiḥ: pure awareness; samata-avasthā: state of equilibrium.

Translation

This must be laya yoga. Listen to that which is haṭha yoga. Yoga is said [to have] eight limbs: yama and niyama, and indeed āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, and dhyāna (meditation on Viṣṇu at the eyebrow centre), [leading to] samādhi, the state of equilibrium.

Commentary

Having explained laya yoga briefly, the teacher continues to speak on haṭha yoga. This discussion will continue throughout the rest of the upaniṣad. After asking his disciple to listen to the teachings on haṭha yoga, he proceeds to enumerate the eight limbs, which are regarded as the components of raja yoga: (1) *yama*, the external disciplinary codes of yoga; (2) *niyama*, the internal disciplinary codes of yoga; (3) *āsana*, physical postures; (4) *prāṇāyāma*, breathing practices; (5) *pratyāhāra*, sensory withdrawal; (6) *dhāraṇā*, one-pointed attention; (7) *dhyāna*, unbroken flow of meditation; and (8) *samādhi*, transcendental meditation. We may infer that the verse combines the teaching of haṭha yoga and rāja yoga into one system, which is then termed as ‘yoga’. Perhaps the first four limbs, which are known as *bahiraṅga*, or the external limbs of yoga, were to be considered as haṭha yoga, and the last four limbs, which are known as *antaraṅga*, the inner limbs of yoga, as rāja yoga.

It is also of interest to note that in defining dhyāna, the seventh limb, the teacher speaks of meditation on Viṣṇu at *bhrūmadhya*, the eyebrow centre. Viṣṇu is the guru or master of the knowledge conveyed in this upaniṣad. He is further the luminary, which represents God, or the universal consciousness, as described in verse 2. Bhrūmadhya, the trigger point for ajña cakra, is located at the eyebrow centre. Ajña cakra is also known as the guru cakra, where the disciple may be guided in deep states of meditation by the inner voice of the guru. Finally the verse describes samādhi, the highest limb of yoga, as the state of equilibrium, in the sense that it is totally beyond all duality and multiplicity.

Verses 26 and 27: Inclusion of mudrās and bandhas

महामुद्रा महाबन्धः महावेदश्च खेचरी ।

जालंधरोद्दियाणश्च मूलबन्धस्तथैव च ॥२६॥

दीर्घप्रणवसंधानं सिद्धान्तश्रवणं परम् ।

वज्रोली च अमरोली च सहजोली त्रिधामता ॥२७॥

mahāmudro mahābandho mahāvedhaśca khecarī

jālamdhāroddiyānaśca mūlabandhastathaiva ca (26)

dīrghapraṇavasamdhānam siddhāntaśravaṇam param

vajrolī cāmarolī ca mahajolī tridhāmatā (27)

Anvay

mahāmudrah: combination of mūlabandha and śambhavi mudra; *mahābandhah*: combination of mūlabandha, uddiyāna bandha and jālandhara bandha; *ca*: and; *mahāvedhah*: great piercing mudra; *khecarī*: tongue lock; *jālandhara*: chin lock; *uddiyānah*: abdominal lock; *tathā-eva*: likewise; *mūlabandhah*: perineal lock; *saṃdhānam*: meditation; *praṇava*: mantra Aum; *dīrgha*: for a long time; *śravaṇam*: listening to; *param*: highest; *siddhānta*: truth; *tridhāmatā*: triad; *vajrolī*: urinary lock; *amarolī*: drinking of one's own urine; *sahajolī*: smearing the body with a special paste of ashes after performing vajrolī.

Translation

[This yoga also includes practices of mudrā and bandha:] mahā mudrā, mahā bandha and mahā vedha, khecarī mudrā, jālandhara bandha, uddiyāna bandha, and likewise mūla bandha, [as well as] chanting the mantra *Aum* for a long time, listening to the highest truth, and the triad of vajrolī, amarolī and sahajolī.

Commentary

Having discussed the eight limbs of yoga in the previous verse, the teacher adds that the mudrās and bandhas are also important aspects of yoga, although they are not enumerated in the eight limbs, which include only āsana and prāṇāyāma, as the third and fourth limbs. He mentions the major mudrās and bandhas, which are important components of haṭha, kundalinī and kriyā yogas. The mudras, which he includes here are: mahā mudrā, mahābheda mudrā, khecarī mudrā, along with the triad vajrolī mudrā, sahajolī mudrā and amarolī, which is not actually a mudra, but involves the drinking of one's own urine, as a purification practice. The bandhas are: jālandhara bandha, uddiyāna bandha, mūla bandha, and mahā bandha.

Along with the mudrās and bandhas, the rishi mentions meditation on the *praṇava*, or mantra *Aum*, which is recommended here to be practised for long durations of time. This form of mantra meditation has been highly respected from ancient times as a means to reconnect the sādhaka with the supreme consciousness, as the sound *Aum* is the first emanation or vibration of creation. He further adds that listening to the highest truth, as in attending satsang or spiritual discussions, is an important aspect of yoga, because this will explain the direction and the ultimate outcome of the yoga practices.

Verses 28 and 29: Characteristics of yama, niyama and āsana

एतेषां लक्षणं ब्रह्मन्त्येकं शृणु तत्त्वतः ।

लघ्वाहारो यमेष्वेको मुख्यो भवति नेतरः ॥२८॥

अहिंसा नियमेष्वेका मुख्या वै चतुरानन् ।

सिद्धं पद्मं तथा सिंहं भद्रं चेति चतुष्टयम् ॥२९॥

eteśāṁ lakṣaṇam brahmaṇpratyekam śṛṇu tattvataḥ

ladhvāhāro yameśveko mukhyo bhavati netaraḥ (28)

ahiṁsā niyameśvekā mukhyā vai caturānana

siddham padmam tathā siṁham bhadram ceti catuṣṭayam (29)

Anvay

brahmaṇ: O Brahman; *śṛṇu*: listen; *tattvataḥ*: attentively; *pratyekam*: each; *lakṣaṇam*: characteristic; *eteśāṁ*: of these; *caturānana*: O Four-faced one (Brahma); *yameśu*: amongst the *yamas*; *laghu-āhāraḥ*: light eating; *bhavati*: is; *ekāḥ*: single; *mukhyāḥ*: chief; *netaraḥ*: factor; *niyameśu*: amongst the *niyamas*; *ahiṁsā*: non-violence; *vai*: definitely; *ekā mukhyā*: most important; *tathā*: likewise; *catuṣṭayam*: four; *iti*: namely; *siddham*: siddhāsana, accomplished pose; *padmam*: padmāsana, lotus pose; *siṁham*: siṁhāsana, lion pose; *ca*: and; *bhadram*: bhadrāsana, gracious pose.

Translation

O Brahman, listen attentively to each characteristic of these [limbs]. Amongst the *yamas*, light eating is the single chief factor. Amongst the *niyamas*, non-violence

is definitely the most important, O four-faced one. Likewise, [there are] four [main postures]: *siddhāsana*, *padmāsana*, *siṁhāsana* and *bhadrāsana*.

Commentary

Here Brahma, as the brāhmaṇ disciple, is exhorted to listen carefully as the main attributes of the eight limbs of yoga are given. He is later referred to as the ‘Four-Faced one’, a common appellation, as Brahma has four heads. This discussion begins with the first two limbs, and here it must be remembered that the *yama* and *niyama* of haṭha yoga are different to those delineated in rāja yoga. The *yama*, which is given precedence here, is eating lightly. Heavy food is tamasic, and therefore, counter-productive to the practice of yoga. It makes the body and mind heavy, and predisposes one to digestive ailments of all kinds. Light food, taken in moderation, is sattvic, and so conducive to yoga. A light diet requires less time and energy to digest, allowing more time and energy for the practice. As a simple guideline, one should allow two hours to elapse before practising after a light meal and four hours after a heavy meal.

Of the *niyamas*, non-violence is said here to be the most important. Non-violence is the first tenet in all spiritual traditions. Violence, whether in thought, word or deed, disturbs the mind of the practitioner, as well as the environment all around, and makes it very difficult to progress in yoga. Violence enhances the tamasic and rajasic gunas, while peace and harmony promote sattwa. Yoga practices balance the system and increase sattwa. Therefore, it is necessary for the serious practitioner to refrain from all types of violent behaviour, and to establish the practice in a peaceful and

harmonious environment.

In regard to āsana, the third limb of yoga, the four main postures are given: (1) *siddhāsana*, adept posture, (2) *padmāsana*, lotus posture, (3) *simhāsana*, lion posture, and (4) *bhadrāsana*, pleasing posture. These are the four main meditative postures, and are mentioned in preference to all the other āsanas, because haṭha yoga leads to rāja yoga. The ability to sit comfortably in a meditative posture with the spine erect for long durations of time is a main requisite of yoga. Each of these postures hold the body in an ideal position for the unfolding of higher states of consciousness.

Verses 30 and 31: Obstacles to yoga

प्रथमाभ्यासकाले तु विघ्नः स्युश्चतुरानन् ।

आलस्य कथ्यनं धूर्तगोष्टी मन्त्रादिसाधनम् ॥३०॥

धातुस्त्रीलौल्यकादीनि मृगतृष्णामायानिवै ।

ज्ञात्वा सुधीस्त्यजेत्सर्वान्विघ्नान्पुण्यप्रभावतः ॥३१॥

prathamābhyaśakāle tu vighnāḥ syuścaturānan

ālasya katthanam dhūrtagoṣṭī mantrādisādhanam (30)

dhātustṛtlaukyakādīni mrgatṛṣṇāmāyāni vai

jñātvā sudhīstyajetsarvānvighnānpuṇyaprabhāvataḥ (31)

Anvay

tu: but; *caturānan*: O Four-faced One; *kāle*: time; *prathama*: early; *abhyāsa*: practice; *syuhu*: following; *vighnāḥ*: obstacles; *ālasya*: laziness; *katthanam*: boasting; *goṣṭī*: company; *dhūrta*: fraudulent; *sādhanam*: *sādhana*, spiritual practice; *ādi*: beginning with; *mantra*: sacred sounds; *laulakya*: desire for; *dhātu*: metals; *strī*: women; *ādīni*: etcetera; *vai*: indeed; *māyāni*: illusions; *mrga*: craving; *trṣṇā*: greed; *jñātvā*: knowing; *sudhīḥ*: wise man; *tyajet*: should relinquish; *sarvān vighnān*: all obstacles; *punya*: virtuous; *prabhāvataḥ*: powers.

Translation

But, O Four-faced One, the following obstacles [arise]: time of early practice, laziness, boasting, the company of fraudulent people, beginning *sādhana* with mantra, desire for metals and women etc, [and] indeed illusions of craving and greed. Knowing [this], a wise man should relinquish all obstacles through [his] virtuous powers.

Commentary

The limbs of yoga are clearly set out, O Brahma (Four-faced one), but the path is beset with numerous obstacles, which make it difficult for practitioners to progress. The first difficulty, which many aspirants face, is to get up early in the morning and perform the yoga practice at the time of *brahmamuhūrta*, between four and six am. This is a special period in the day, when God is said to walk the earth, so it is the optimal time for yoga practice. The atmosphere is peaceful and sublime, so

regular practice at this time will yield good results. However, arising early in the morning on a regular basis is difficult, unless one goes to bed early in the evening. Again, it is not possible to retire early, unless the evening meal is taken early. In this way, it becomes evident that lifestyle changes and commitment are necessary in order to avoid this first obstruction, which is the early time of practice.

The second obstruction is laziness, which nearly every practitioner falls prey to at some point in the sādhana. Laziness arises from the influence of tamas. In the morning one wishes to remain in the bed, rather than get up early and start the practice. In the evening one prefers to turn on the television or have a drink, rather than retire early for the practice. Any activity that is easy and effortless would be preferred to the practice, when one is feeling lazy. If the practitioner gives in to laziness, it will become chronic, and the practice will come to a halt. When the practice stops due to laziness, it is very difficult to begin again. So, laziness is a very powerful obstruction. The practitioner must be aware and take great care to handle it correctly.

The third obstruction is boasting. The desire to boast arises when one has some success or achievement in sādhana. Pride is one of the six major deterrents to spiritual life, and boasting is an expression of this attribute. Boasting depletes one's spiritual merit and grace, and leads to disappointment and downfall. There are some things, which a person should never talk about. One of these is the experiences, which arise during sādhana. A practitioner may have wonderful and illuminating visions during the course of sādhana, but these are just indications of what is to come. They do not denote any particular achievement or power in themselves, and usually disappear in time, never to return again. The practitioner, who feels proud and boasts of these experiences, will feel doubly disappointed and lost, when they no longer manifest during the sādhana. This may even cause one to leave the sādhana.

The fourth obstruction to sādhana is bad associations. The company one keeps is very important, because it has a powerful influence on the mind. The main objective of yoga sadhana is to discover and awaken the mind. Bad company dissipates and clouds the mind, and leads one away from sadhana. The practitioner must constantly be on guard against negative influences. One hour of bad company is detrimental to sādhana and may take hours and even days to undo. In order to maintain a continuity in sādhana, the mind should be kept in a calm and optimistic state. The practitioner should avoid the company of friends, relatives and associates, who have a discouraging influence and keep the mind stirred up. Ultimately a choice must be made between those associations and the sādhana.

The fifth obstruction is beginning sādhana with mantra. Yoga sādhana is very scientific and specific. Mantra is a method of meditation. Yoga practice should begin with āsana, followed by prāṇāyāma, mudra and bandha, then relaxation and finally meditation. By adhering to this sequence, the body, energy and mind are prepared, balanced and focussed for the practice of meditation. If one ignores this sequence, or performs the practices out of sequence, the result may not be favourable. The mind is very subtle and the awareness must be attuned to it gradually and systematically. The external awareness of the world is very different to the internal awareness of the mind. The practitioner, who begins the sādhana with mantra meditation, will often be lost in hypnotic states, without attaining inner awareness and clarity.

The sixth obstruction to sādhana is the desire for wealth and women. This is the age-old warning that is found in all spiritual traditions. In order to be regular in sādhana, one's spiritual resolve must take priority over all material attainments and enjoyments. The desire for wealth takes one in the opposite direction to sādhana, and uses up a lot of time and energy, which would otherwise be dedicated to

attaining one's spiritual goals. Similarly, the desire for sexual interaction is equally or even more disturbing and consuming. Sexual stimulation draws the energy down to the lower centres and makes it very difficult to concentrate or meditate on anything other than the object of its fulfillment. These two desires should be satisfied, or one should feel that their fulfillment is not necessary for one's happiness, before taking up a regular sadhana,. Otherwise, there will be continual conflict between the desires and the sādhana, and the strongest will always win out.

The seventh obstruction is craving and greed. Craving means that once a desire is fulfilled, one wants to experience it again and again. Continual hankering for the things of the world disturbs the mind and draws it away from the practice. Greed arises when one takes more than one needs and more than one's share. Both craving and greed result in strong material attachment, which holds one in bondage to the objects and associations of the world. The ultimate purpose of yoga and meditation is *mokṣa*, liberation from worldly bondage and attachment.

So, knowing this, the wise person renounces these seven obstructions by the power of his or her virtuous nature and actions. It is not easy to avoid these seven obstacles to the yogic path, while living in the world. Many have tried, but few have succeeded. That is why the sincere sādhaka is considered to be of upright and noble character, having cultivated self-control and ethical behaviour in every situation and circumstance.

Verses 32 and 33: Sādhana kutir

प्राणायामं ततः कुर्यात्पद्मासनगतः स्वयम् ।

सुशोभनं मठं कुर्यात्सूक्ष्मद्वारं तु निर्वणम् ॥३२॥

सुस्थुं लिप्तं गोमयेन सुधया वा प्रयत्नतः ।

मत्कुनैर्मशकैलूतैर्वर्जितं च प्रयत्नतः ॥३३॥

prāṇayāmam tataḥ kuryātpadmāsanagataḥ svayam

suśobhanam maṭham kuryātsūkṣmadvāram tu nirvraṇam (32)

susthum liptam gomayena sudhayā vā prayatnataḥ

matkunairmaśakairlūtairvarjitam ca prayatnataḥ (33)

Anvay

tu: now; *kuryāt:* he should make; *suśobhanam:* beautiful; *maṭham:* monastic hut; *sūksma:* narrow; *dvāram:* doorway; *nirvranam:* without cracks; *susthum:* well; *liptam:* smeared; *gomayena:* with cowdung; *vā:* or; *sudhayā:* with mortar; *ca:* and; *prayatnataḥ:* carefully; *varjitam:* cleared of; *matkunaiḥ:* bugs; *maśakaiḥ:* mosquitoes; *lūtaiḥ:* spiders; *tataḥ:* then; *gataḥ:* having gone into; *padmāsana:* *padmāsana*, lotus pose; *kuryāt:* he should practise; *prāṇyāma:* *prāṇyāma*, breathing practices; *svayam:* by himself.

Translation

Now he should make a beautiful monastic hut with a narrow doorway, without cracks, well-smeared

with cow-dung or mortar, and carefully cleared of bugs, mosquitoes [and] spiders. Then, having gone into padmāsana, he should practise prāṇāyāma by himself.

Commentary

Here the place of sādhana is described. The idea that a special place should be constructed expressly for the practice of yoga shows the level of seriousness and dedication to the practice, which the yogis of old had. After diligently rooting out the seven obstructions within oneself, which in itself is a gigantic task for any person living in the world, the aspirant searches for an appropriate place to retire to for the practice of yoga. This place should be free of smoke, pollution, noise, proximity of violent or ignoble persons, and distractions of all kinds.

In such a place, the dedicated practitioner should construct a beautiful *kutir*, or cottage, to be used exclusively for the practice of yoga. The sādhana kutir should be small and proportional, and pleasing to the aesthetics. It should be constructed from natural materials with a narrow door and no windows. Windows are for seeing out, but during yogic practice, one should be intent upon seeing within. The narrow door is to discourage the entry of any other persons or creatures, apart from the sādhaka. The floor and walls of the kutir should be free of cracks and smeared regularly with the paste of cow-dung or clay. Cow-dung is considered to be a pure and natural substance. It has antiseptic properties and keeps bacteria, mould and insects away. Any cracks in the walls should be filled in to prevent the entry of insects and small creatures.

The kutir should be carefully cleaned each day to remove dust, insects, mosquitoes and spiders, whose movement would disturb the sādhana. Then sitting down, by oneself, in padmāsana, the lotus posture, the sādhaka should begin the practice of prāṇāyāma. The word *swayam*, by oneself, alone, is indicative of an important requisite for higher sādhana. In the beginning the yoga aspirant learns and practises yoga in a group with several others, but ultimately, the practice must be continued alone, without the proximity of other persons to engage one's attention.

Verse 34: Pleasing atmosphere

दिने दिने च संमृष्टं समार्जन्या विशेषतः ।

वासितं च सुगन्धेन धूपितं गुग्गुलादिभिः ॥३४॥

dine dine ca saṃmr̥ṣṭam samārjanyā viśeṣataḥ

vāsitam ca sugandhenā dhūpitam guggulādibhiḥ (34)

Anvay

Dine Dine: every day; *viśeṣataḥ*: specially; *saṃmr̥ṣṭam*: swept; *samārjanyā*: with a broom; *vāsitam*: imbued with; *sugandhenā*: pleasant fragrances; *ca*: and; *dhūpitam*: perfumed; *guggulādibhiḥ*: sweet-smelling gum.

Translation

Every day [the sādhana kutir should be] specially swept with a broom, imbued with pleasant fragrances and perfumed with sweet-smelling gum.

Commentary

A pleasing atmosphere is important for regularity and success in the practice of yoga. The mind should be tranquil, positive and happy in the environment, where the practices are undertaken. It is said that cleanliness is godliness. So, each day the sādhana kutir should be dusted and swept clean with a special broom, which is made from sweet smelling grasses. The room is then permeated with natural fragrances, such as incense or sweet smelling herbs and gums.

Verses 35 and 36(a): Preparing the seat and beginning the practice

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ।

तत्रोपविश्य मेधावी पद्मासनसमन्वितः ॥३५॥

ऋजुकायः प्राञ्जलिश्च प्रणमेदिष्टदेवताम् ॥३६॥

nātyucchritam nātinīcam cailājinakuśottaram

tatropaviśya medhāvī padmāsanasaṁvitah (35)

rjukāyah prāñjaliśca pranamediṣṭadevatām (36a)

Anvay

upaviśya: having sat down; *tatra*: there; *samanvitah*: assumed; *padmāsana*: lotus pose; *uttaram*: on a pile; *caila*: cloth; *ajina*: deerskin; *kuśa*: *kuśa* grass; *na-ati-ucchritam*: not very high; *na-ati-nīcam*: not very low; *medhāvī*: wise man; *kāyah*: body; *rju*: upright; *ca*: and; *prāñjaliḥ*: his clasped hands respectfully outstretched; *pranamet*: should bow down; *iṣṭa-devatām*: *iṣṭa devata*, personal deity.

Translation

Having sat down there [and] assumed padmāsana on a cushion of cloth, deerskin [and] *kuśa* grass, not very high [and] not very low, the wise man, his body upright and his clasped hands respectfully outstretched, should bow down to his personal deity.

Commentary

After preparing the space for sādhana, the practitioner then prepares the seat. The traditional seat for the practice of yoga was very specific and also scientific. The seat should be of medium height, not too high and not too low. This means there should be a feeling of connection and balance with the earth. This connection may be lost, when the seat is too elevated. At the same time, the seat is to be somewhat elevated for comfort and also to avoid the disturbance of any insect or creature, which may crawl in from outside.

The seat was generally comprised of three layers: a pile of *kuśa* grass on the bottom, covered by a deer skin, and finally a clean cotton cloth placed on the top. *Kuśa* grass creates a cushion for the buttocks and hips, and is also an excellent energy conductor. The deer skin has auspicious properties for yoga, as the deer is known to be gentle, non-violent, alert and fleet. The cotton cloth placed on the top is

again for comfort and also absorption.

Having prepared the seat, the practitioner sits upon it in the position of padmāsana with the body upright. Before beginning the yoga practice, the wise person respectfully clasps his hands together, stretches his arms forward, and bows down to his *iṣṭa devata*, personal deity. Here the *iṣṭa* devata may be a mental concept or a picture or image of one's personal deity, which may be placed strategically to one side of the sādhana kutir. The verse speaks of the wise man, who would first offer this respect to the personal form of God. Before beginning any undertaking, it is auspicious to remember one's goal, and in yoga, the ultimate goal is union with the divine.

Verses 36(b), 37 and 38: Nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma

ततो दक्षिणहस्तस्य अङ्गष्टेनैव पिङ्गलाम् ॥३६॥

निरुद्ध्य पूरयेद्वायुमिडया तु शनैः शनैः ।

यथाशक्त्यविरोधेन ततः कुर्याच्च कुम्भकम् ॥३७॥

पुनस्त्यजेत्पिङ्गलया शनैरेव न वेगातः ।

पुनः पिङ्गलयापूर्य पूरयेदुदरं शनैः ॥३८॥

tato dakṣinahastasya aṅguṣṭhenava piṅgalām (36b)

nirudhya pūrayedvāyumiḍayā tu śanaiḥ śanaiḥ

yathāśaktiyavirodhena tataḥ kuryācca kumbhakam (37)

punastyajetpiṅgalayā śanaireva na vegataḥ

punah piṅgalayāpūrya pūrayedudaram śanaiḥ (38)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; *nirudhya*: having closed; *piṅgalām*: right nostril; *aṅguṣṭhenā*: thumb; *dakṣina-hastasya*: of his right hand; *vāyum pūrayet*: he should inhale; *śanaiḥ śanaiḥ*: very slowly; *idāyā*: through the left nostril; *ca*: and; *tataḥ*: then; *avirodhena*: without pausing; *kuryāt*: he should perform; *kumbhakam*: breath retention; *yathāśakti*: for as long as he can; *tyajet*: he should exhale; *punah*: again; *piṅgalayā*: through the right nostril; *eva*: quite; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *na*: not; *vegataḥ*: quickly; *pūrya*: having inhaled; *piṅgalayā*: through the right nostril; *punah*: again; *pūrayet*: he should fill; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *udaram*: inner area.

Translation

Then, having closed his right nostril with the thumb of his right hand, he should inhale very slowly through the left nostril, and then, without pausing, he should perform breath retention for as long as he can. He should exhale again through the right nostril quite slowly, not quickly. Having inhaled through the right nostril again, he should slowly fill the inner area.

Commentary

Having offered *pranam*, or respectful greeting, to one's iṣṭa devata, the practitioner begins the yoga practice with prāṇāyāma. The prāṇāyāma technique prescribed here is *nādī śodhana*, the breath balancing practice. This was the major method that the ancient yogis used as a preliminary to meditation. Holding the right hand in front of the face, the right nostril should be closed with the pressure of the thumb. One should then inhale very slowly through the left nostril. At the end of inhalation, one should perform *kumbhaka*, internal breath retention, for as long as possible.

In this verse the left and right nostrils are referred to as *idā* and *piṅgalā*. *Idā* is the flow of lunar or mental energy, which passes through the left nostril. *Piṅgalā* is the flow of solar or vital energy, which passes through the right nostril. The purpose of balancing the breath is to balance these two flows of energy. The practice of *kumbhaka*, internal breath retention, activates *suṣumnā*, the spiritual flow of energy. In order for meditation to be successful, it is necessary to first balance the breath, which controls the mental and vital energies, and then activate *suṣumnā*, the spiritual force.

One round of *nādī śodhana* prāṇāyāma equals two complete breaths. So, after inhaling through the left nostril and holding the breath inside, one should exhale through the right nostril. The speed of exhalation is emphasised here. The breath should be exhaled quite slowly, and not quickly, which would be the normal tendency, after holding the breath inside for as long as possible. After all the air has been expelled from the right nostril, the second half of the round begins. Now one should inhale again through the right nostril. Breathing in slowly, one should fill the lungs slowly to capacity.

Verse 39: Continuation of *nādī śodhana* prāṇāyāma

धारयित्वा यथाशक्ति रेचयेदिदया शनैः ।

यथा त्यजेत्तयापूर्य धारयेदविरोधतः ॥३९॥

dhārayitvā yathāśakti recayedidayā śanaiḥ

yayā tyajettayāpūrya dhārayedavirodhataḥ (39)

Anvay

dhārayitvā: having retained; *yathā-śakti*: as long as possible; *recayet*: he should exhale; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *idayā*: through the left nostril; *yayā*: through whichever; *tyajet*: he exhales; *pūrya*: inhaling; *tayā*: through it; *dhārayet*: he should retain; *avirodhataḥ*: without interruption.

Translation

Having retained [the breath for] as long as possible, he should exhale slowly through the left nostril. Through whichever nostril he exhales, inhaling [again] through it, he should retain [the breath] without interruption.

Commentary

After inhaling through the right nostril, one should again retain the breath inside for as long as possible, without causing any distress or discomfort. Then the breath should be exhaled slowly through the left nostril. This completes one full round of *nādī śodhana* prāṇāyāma. In the first half of the round, one inhales through the left nostril and exhales through the right. In the second half, one

inhales through the right nostril and exhales through the left. This process equalises the flow of breath in both the left and right nostrils, which in turn regulates the idā and piṅgalā nāḍīs, the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous system and the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

The verse further explains that the inhalation should always follow through whichever nostril one exhales from. Further, the breath should always be retained immediately after each inhalation. In this way the practice may be continued for a number of rounds seamlessly. Retention of the breath, as described here is an important aspect of this practice, as it activates the suṣumnā nāḍī and the central nervous system, unifying the two hemispheres of the brain. The effects of this practice on the nervous system, the pranic system and the brain, make it an important requisite for meditation and all higher sādhanas.

Verse 40: How to regulate the duration of each breath

जानु प्रदक्षिणीकृत्य न द्रुतं न विलम्बितम् ।

अङ्गुलिस्फोटनं कुर्यात्सा मात्रा परिगीयते ॥४०॥

jānu pradakṣiṇīkṛtya na drutam na vilambitam

aṅgulisphoṭanam kuryātsā mātrā parigīyate (40)

Anvay

sā: this; *parigīyate:* is declared; *mātrā:* unit of time; *pradakṣiṇī:* to the right; *kṛtya:* to be made; *jānu:* on the knee; *na . . . na:* neither . . . nor; *drutam:* quickly; *vilambitam:* slowly; *sphoṭanam kuryāt:* he should snap; *aṅguli:* thumb.

Translation

This is declared: the *mātrā*, unit of time, [is measured] by making [a circle] to the right [with the hand] on the knee, neither quickly nor slowly, [and then] he should snap his thumb.

Commentary

The length of each breath can be regulated simply by counting, which is how most people practise prāṇāyāma today. However, counting becomes irregular in nāḍī śodhana, where there are two complete breaths in and out per round, plus retention after each inhalation. So, the yogis of old evolved this system to regulate the counting. The *mātrā*, or unit of time for each breath, was regulated by a particular hand movement.

During the practice of nāḍī śodhana, the right hand is raised in front of the face, so that the flow of breath can be directed in and out of each nostril by the pressure of the fingers. The left hand remains on the knee and is used to regulate the duration of the breath. First a circle is made with the left hand, rotating to the right and around to the left in a controlled way, neither too quickly nor too slowly. Upon completion of the circle, one should snap the fingers by bringing the thumb and middle finger together with adequate pressure.

Verses 41 and 42: Recommended ratio for nāḍī śodhana

इडया वायुमारोप्य शनैः षोडशमात्रया ।

कुम्भयेत्पूरितं पश्चाच्चतुः षष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ॥४१॥

रेचयेत्पिङ्गलानाडया द्वात्रिशन्मात्रया पुनः ।

पुनः पिङ्गलयापूर्य पूर्ववत्सुसमाहितः ॥४२॥

idayā vāyumāropya śanaiḥ ṣodaśamātrayā

kumbhayetpūritam paścāccatuh ṣaṣṭyā tu mātrayā (41)

recayetpiṅgalānāḍyā dvātriśanmātrayā punah

punah piṅgalayā pūrya pūrvavatsusamāhitah (42)

Anvay

idayā: through the left nostril; *vāyum*: air; *āropya*: having directed; *śanaiḥ*: slowl; *ṣodaśa*: sixteen; *mātrayā*: *mātrās*; *kumbhayet*: he should retain; *paścāt*: then; *pūritam*: fully; *ṣaṣṭyā*: sixty; *catuh*: four; *mātrayā*: *mātrās*; *recayet*: he should exhale; *punah*: again; *piṅgalānāḍyā*: through the right nostril; *Dvaatrishan*: thirty two; *mātrayā*: *mātrās*; *pūrya*: having inhaled; *piṅgalayā*: through the right nostril; *punah*: again; *pūrvavat*: as before; *susamāhitah*: established.

Translation

Having directed the inhaled breath slowly through the left nostril for sixteen *mātrās*, he should then retain [the breath] fully for sixty four *mātrās*. He should exhale again through the right nostril for thirty two *mātrās*. Having inhaled again through the right nostril as before [he should become] established [in the practice].

Commentary

Here the recommended ratio, or number of *mātrās*, for the practice of *nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma* is given as a guideline for the practitioner. This may be considered as an advanced ratio to be used by one who has mastered the initial stages of the practice. The practitioner should first inhale slowly through the left nostril for a duration of sixteen *mātrās*. Next the breath should be retained inside fully for a period of sixty four *mātrās*, and then exhaled through the right nostril for the duration of thirty two *mātrās*.

So, inhalation for sixteen *mātrās*, retention for sixty four matras, and exhalation for thirty two *mātrās*, makes the ratio of 1:4:2. It must be remembered that this ratio is not the initial practice. Much training and practice are required to develop sufficient lung capacity for this ratio to be performed with comfort and ease. The same ratio is to be followed for both breaths, first breathing in from the left nostril and out the right, and again breathing in through the right nostril and out the left, as described in the previous verses.

Verse 43: Number of practice sessions and rounds

प्रातर्मध्याम्दिने सायमर्धरात्रे च कुम्भकान् ।

शनैरशीतिपर्यन्तं चतुर्वारं समभ्यसेत् ॥४३॥

prātarmadhyāmdine sāyamardharātre ca kumbhakān

śanairāśītiparyantam caturvāram samabhyaset (43)

Anvay

samabhyaset: he should practise; *caturvāram*: four times; *dine*: a day; *prātar*: in the morning; *madhyām*: at midday; *sāyam*: in the evening; *ca*: and; *ardharātre*: at midnight; *śanaiḥ*: slowly; *paryantam*: up to; *aśīti*: eighty; *kumbhakān*: breath retentions.

Translation

He should practise four times a day: in the morning, at midday, in the evening and at midnight, slowly [increasing] up to eighty breath retentions.

Commentary

After establishing the practice, it is recommended for the serious sādhaka to perform the practice four times a day. Such an intensive practice is not intended for casual practitioners. It can only be undertaken by a person, who is able to set aside all worldly concerns for a period of time. The four optimal times in the day for this practice are also given here: (i) in the early morning around dawn, between 4:00 and 6:00 am, (ii) at midday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, (iii) in the early evening around dusk from 4:00 to 6:00 pm, and (iv) at midnight from 11:00 pm to 1:00 am. The number of rounds to be practised during each session is also given here. One should slowly work up to eighty breath retentions, or forty rounds.

Verses 44 and 45: Benefits of the practice of nādī śodhana

एवं मासत्रयाभ्यासान्नाडीशुद्धिस्ततो भवेत् ।

यदा तु नाडीशुद्धिः स्यात्तदा चिह्नानि बाह्यतः ॥४४॥

जायन्ते योगिनो देहे तानि वक्ष्याम्यशेषतः ।

शरीरलघुता दीप्तिर्जाठराग्निविवर्धनम् ॥४५॥

evam māsatrayābhyaśānnādīśuddhistato bhavet

yadā tu nādīśuddhiḥ syāttadā cihnāni bāhyataḥ (44)

jāyante yogino dehe tāni vakṣyāmyaśeṣataḥ

śarīralaghutā dīptirjāṭharāgnivivardhanam (45)

Anvay

evam: in this way; *traya*: three; *māsa*: months; *abhyāsāt*: after the practice; *bhavet*: there should be; *tataḥ*: then; *śuddhiḥ*: purification; *nādī*: of the channels of energy; *yadā*: when; *syāt*: there is; *śuddhiḥ*: purification; *nādī*: of the energy channels; *tadā*: then; *bāhyataḥ*: external; *cīhnāni*: signs; *jāyante*: are produced; *dehe*: in the body; *yogināḥ*: of the yogi; *vakṣyāmi*: I shall describe; *tāni*: them; *aśeṣataḥ*: fully; *laghutā*: lightness; *śarīra*: of the body; *dīptih*: radiance; *vividhanam*: increase; *jāthara-agni*: of digestive fire.

Translation

After practising in this way for three months, there should then be purification of the nādīs. When there is purification of the nādīs, then external signs are produced in the body of the yogin. I shall describe them fully: lightness of the body, radiance, increase of digestive fire.

Commentary

Here the results of the practice are given. If nādī śodhana is performed for three months, according to the method described above, the nādīs, or energy channels in the body, will be purified. Purification of the nādīs is one of the important requisites for all the higher yogas. When the nādīs are purified, certain external signs manifest in the body. The first is lightness of the body, the second is radiance or luminosity, and the third is increased digestive power. These three qualities are also the signs of a yogi, one who has become adept in the practice of yoga.

Verse 46: Leanness of the body and choice of food

कृशत्वं च शरीरस्य तदा जायेत निश्चितम् ।

योगविघ्नकराहारं वर्जयेद्योगवित्तमः ॥४६॥

kṛśatvam ca śarīrasya tadā jāyeta niścitam

yoga-vighnakarāhāram varjayedyogavittamah

Anvay

ca: and; *tadā*: then; *niścitam*: surely; *jāyeta*: it should bring about; *kṛśatvam*: leanness; *śarīrasya*: of the body; *yoga-vittamah*: one who is accomplished in yoga; *varjayet*: should avoid; *āhāram*: food; *yoga-vighnakara*: obstructs yoga.

Translation

And then it should surely bring about leanness of the body. One who is accomplished in yoga should avoid foods [which] obstruct [the practice of] yoga.

Commentary

The yogi generally has a lean body. Mastery of the yogic practices, particularly nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma, rebalances the bodily systems. The nervous, metabolic and digestive systems function more efficiently and there is less buildup of toxin, fluid and fat in the body. The scriptural texts describe the yogi as one who is lean as a bamboo pole.

Again, having developed a certain mastery of yoga, one naturally becomes very careful in regard to

diet. Wrong eating habits are counter-productive to yoga practice. A major aim of yoga is to purify and rebalance the body, so that spiritual awakening can take place. The body is comprised of the food one eats. Heavy, fatty, spicy and salty foods disturb the digestive system. They remain in the stomach for many hours and obstruct the practice of yoga during that period and even for long hours afterwards.

According to yoga, there are three types of diet: tamasic, rajasic and sattvic. Tamasic diet is comprised of foods, which are heavy, stale and old. These foods provide minimal energy and nutrients, and tend to clog the system. The preserved foods available in the supermarkets today are in this category. Rajasic diet contains foods, which are tasty, spicy, sour, pungent and salty. The fast food industry thrives on the production of this type of food, which today has become so addictive to the youth of every country. The combination of tamasic and rajasic diet is responsible for disease and suffering.

Sattvic diet is balancing, nutritious, light and bland. It is comprised of foods, which are fresh and produced locally in season. It is free from preservatives, pesticides and chemicals. Sattvic food digests very rapidly and leaves no toxic residues in the system. This diet is considered to be most appropriate for the practitioner of yoga, so it is also known as yogic diet.

Verses 47, 48 and 49: Guidelines during periods of practice

लवणं सर्षपं चाम्लमुष्णं रुक्षं च तीक्ष्णकम् ।

शाकजातं रामठादि वह्निस्त्रीपथसेवनम् ॥४७॥

प्रातः स्नानोपवासादिकायक्लेशाम्श्व वर्जयेत् ।

अभ्यासकाले प्रथमं शस्तं क्षीराज्यभोजनम् ॥४८॥

गोधूममुद्धशाल्यनं योगवृद्धिकरं विदुः ।

ततः परं यथेष्टं तु शक्तः स्याद्वायुधारणे ॥४९॥

lavaṇam sarṣapam cāmlamuṣṇam rūkṣam ca tīkṣṇakam

sākajātam rāmaṭhādi vahnistrīpathasevanam (47)

prātaḥ snānopavāsādikāyakleśāmśca varjayet

abhyāsakāle prathamam śastam kṣīrājyabhojanam (48)

godhūmamudgaśālyannam yogavrddhikaram viduh

tataḥ param yatheṣṭam tu śaktaḥ syādvāyudhāraṇe (49)

Anvay

varjayet: he should give up; *lavanam:* salt; *sarṣapam:* mustard; *ca:* and; *amlam:* sour; *uṣṇam:* hot; *rūkṣam:* dry; *tīkṣṇakam:* pungent; *sāka:* vegetables; *jātam:* of every kind; *rāmaṭha:* asafoetida; *ādi:*

etc; *sevanam*: enjoyment of; *vahni*: fire; *strī*: women; *patha*: travel; *snāna*: bathing; *prātaḥ*: in the morning; *upavāsa*: fasting; *ādi*: etc; *ca*: and; *kāya-kleśān*: distress to the body; *kāle*: during the period; *abhyāsa*: of yoga practice; *bhojanam*: food; *kṣīra*: milk; *ājya*: ghee; *śastam*: is ordained; *prathamam*: the best; *godhūmam*: wheat; *udga*: horse beans; *śālyannam*: boiled rice; *viduh*: are known for; *yoga-vrddhikaram*: development of yoga; *tataḥ*: then; *syāt*: he should be; *param*: most; *śaktah*: capable; *vāyu-dhāraṇe*: suspension of breath; *yatheṣṭam*: as long as he wishes.

Translation

He should give up salt, mustard and [food which is] sour and hot, dry and pungent, vegetables of every kind, asafoetida etc, enjoyment of [the warmth of] fire, women and travel, bathing in the morning, fasting etc, and [whatever gives] distress to the body. During the period of yoga practice, food of milk and ghee is ordained the best. Wheat, horse beans and boiled rice are known for their development of yoga. Then he should be most capable of suspension of the breath for as long as he wishes.

Commentary

Here the specific condiments to be avoided by yogic practitioners are mentioned, such as mustard and asafoetida. Foods that are salty, sour, pungent, and dry are also included, along with vegetables of every kind. All of these items, with the exception of vegetables, fall into the rajasic category, which stimulates taste and desire. Yogis preferred a sattvic diet, which is bland and easily digested. Vegetables are generally considered to be sattvic, but are also not recommended here, because they contain large amounts of fibre. During periods of sadhana, small amounts of food would be consumed at one time, filling the stomach to only one half of its capacity. Therefore, the preferred foods were more concentrated and rich in carbohydrate, protein and fat.

Along with the dietary restrictions, the sincere yogi is further advised to give up all attachment to bodily comfort, the first and foremost being the warmth of the hearth and home. The body's sensitivity to heat and cold is a great deterrent in yoga. The yogi is therefore encouraged to develop equanimity in regard to heat and cold, so that the practice can continue without interruption. The second comfort to be given up is a partner of the opposite sex. Sexual relationships require time and energy, both of which need to be redirected towards the practice of yoga. They also cause emotional disturbance, which unsettles the mind and makes the deeper stages of yoga inaccessible.

Furthermore, fasting is to be given up, along with bathing in the early morning, and any activity that causes distress to the body. Too much fasting weakens the body and causes the mind to lose focus. The yogi is therefore recommended to take a sattvic diet, and to eat in moderation, not too much and not too little. In regard to bathing, the early morning hours are not advised, as the outside temperature drops at that time. The inner body temperature also drops due to the previous hours of sleep. Yogis generally take cold water bath, which is very refreshing and revitalises the system. But a cold bath in the early morning will cause distress to the body. Therefore, bathing should be done just before noon, when the sun is high in the sky and the body is warm.

Travel is also mentioned here as an activity to be given up during periods of sādhana, as it causes distress to the body. The very thought of a trip in the distant or near future is enough to disturb the mind. When travel is imminent, the mind constantly engages in the possibilities of what should be done and what will arise. Once the thought of travel takes hold of the mind, it becomes restless and difficult to focus on sādhana and meditation for any period of time. During the actual period of travel, the body is further subjected to many changes in the environment, climate, food, water and air. All these changes cause distress to the body and mind, making sādhana nearly impossible.

During the period of yoga practice, the following foods are recommended: dishes prepared with milk and clarified butter were considered to be the best, as they were highly nourishing and digestible. Intensive practice of prāṇāyāma raises the metabolic fire and burns the fat in the body. The natural fats found in dairy products help to maintain the metabolic balance. We must also consider that in times past, cows were carefully tended in the home and hermitage. All dairy products were consumed in their pure and fresh state, without any chemicals or pasteurization. Wheat bread, prepared without any yeast or raising additive, beans and boiled rice were also considered to be beneficial for the development of yoga.

The yogi, who observes these guidelines, should then be able to retain the breath for as long as he wishes. Here we should recall the basic ratio for the practice of nādī śodhana was 1:4:2. One should inhale for the count of 16, hold the breath for the count of 64 and exhale for the count of 32. This practice is very difficult to sustain, unless the body is perfectly balanced and finely tuned. Retention of the breath is a major practice for bringing about a spiritual awakening. It stills the body and mind, awakens the susumna nādī and aids in expansion of consciousness.

Verses 50 and 51a: Kevala kumbhaka—spontaneous breath retention

यथेष्ठारणाद्वायोः सिध्येत्केवलकुम्भकः ।

केवले कुम्भके सिद्धे रेचपूरविवर्जिते ॥५०॥

न तस्य दुर्लभं किंचित् त्रिषु लोकेषु विद्यते ॥५१॥

yatheṣṭadhāraṇādvāyoḥ sidhyetkevalakumbhakaḥ

kevale kumbhake siddhe recapūravivarjite (50)
na tasya durlabham kiṃcit triṣu lokeṣu vidyate (51a)

Anvay

kevala kumbhaka: spontaneous breath retention; *sidhyet:* is attained; *dhāraṇāt-vāyoh:* by holding the breath in; *yatheṣṭa:* as long as possible; *siddhe:* when perfected; *kevale kumbhake:* in spontaneous breath retention; *reca:* exhaling; *pūra:* inhaling; *vivarjite:* are given up; *vidyate:* there exists; *na . . . kiṃcit:* nothing; *durlabham:* unattainable; *tasya:* by him; *triṣu:* in the three; *lokeṣu:* worlds.

Translation

Kevala kumbhaka, spontaneous breath retention, is attained by holding the breath inside for as long as possible. When perfected in spontaneous breath retention, exhaling [and] inhaling are given up. There exists nothing unattainable by him in the three worlds.

Commentary

In the previous verses the method of nādī śodhana prāṇāyāma was described. This method focuses on the ratio of breath through the alternate nostrils with the addition of kumbhaka, breath retention, at the end of each inhalation. Nādī śodhana was the main prāṇāyāma practised earlier, and it remains so even today, because of its balancing effects on the prāṇas, nervous system, and mind. The perfection of nādī śodhana is kevala kumbhaka, spontaneous breath retention, in which there is complete cessation

of the breath for a period of time.

Cessation of the breath is an important stage of yoga, because it allows the deeper states of consciousness to be accessed effortlessly. When the breath stops, the mind becomes absolutely still. In this state of total stillness, the yogi is able to penetrate the subconscious and unconscious states. The active mind is the barrier to achieving in-depth meditation. When the mind is stilled as a result of kevala kumbhaka, meditation dawns effortlessly.

The verse further states that for the yogi, who is able to access the three states of consciousness through the attainment of kevala kumbhaka, spontaneous breath retention, nothing remains unattainable in the three worlds. The three states of consciousness: conscious, subconscious and unconscious, which can be accessed during spontaneous breath retention, are related to the three planes of existence: earthly, intermediary or purgatory, and heavenly.

Verses 51b, 52 and 53a: Three stages of kumbhaka

प्रस्वेदो जायते पूर्वं मर्दनं तेन कारयेत् ॥५१॥

ततोऽपि धारणाद्वायोः क्रमेणैव शनैः ।

कम्पो भवति देहस्य आसनस्थस्य देहिनः ॥५२॥

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासादार्दुरी स्वेद जायते ।५३।

prasvedo jāyate pūrvam mardanam tena kārayet (51b)

tato 'pi dhāraṇādvāyoh kramenaiva śanaiḥ

kampo bhavati dehasya āsanasthasya dehinah (52)

tato 'dhikatarābhyaśāddārdurī sveda jāyate (53a)

Anvay

pūrvam: at first; *prasvedah:* perspiration; *jāyate:* is produced; *tena:* therefore; *mardanam kārayet:* it should be cleaned; *tatah:* then; *api:* again; *kramena:* in the course of; *śanaiḥ:* slowly; *dhāraṇāt-vāyoh:* holding the breath; *dehinah:* person; *bhavati:* has; *kampah:* tremor; *dehasya:* in the body; *āsanasthasya:* while sitting; *tatah:* then; *adhikatara-abhyāsāt:* from much more practice; *dārduri:* frog-like; *sveda:* sweat; *jāyate:* is produced.

Translation

At first perspiration is produced; therefore it should be cleaned. Then again, in the course of slowly holding the breath, the person experiences tremor in the body, while sitting. Then, from much more practice, frog-like sweat is produced.

Commentary

During the practice of kumbhaka, the yogi will experience different stages, which can be known by the signs that are given in this verse. In the first stage the yogi will perspire profusely, and the

perspiration will need to be wiped off with a clean cloth in-between the rounds of practice. Perspiration is an indication that the inner body temperature is increasing, due to activation of the yogic fire at the manipura cakra, or navel centre. The yogic fire is responsible for purification and transformation of the gross bodily elements into subtle essence.

In the second stage, while holding the breath for longer durations, the yogi experiences tremor in the body. This indicates the awakening of prāṇa śakti at anāhata cakra, the heart centre, which rules the air element, or prāṇa vāyu. Then, from much longer practice, the third stage of kumbhaka is realized. This is indicated by a cold, or frog-like, sweat, which is produced during the practice, indicating the activation of viśuddhi cakra, the centre of purification and gateway to higher consciousness. So, first there is heat and then tremor. Finally, when the heat cools and the tremors abate, there is cold sweat. These are the signs of the first three stages of kumbhaka.

Verses 53b, 54 and 55: Levitation in kumbhaka

यथा च दर्दुरो भाव उत्प्लुत्योत्प्लुत्य गच्छति ॥५३॥

पद्मासनस्थितो योगी तथा गच्छति भूतले ।

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासाद्भूमित्यागश्च जायते ॥५४॥

पद्मासनस्थ एवासौ भूमिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते ।

अतिमानुषचेष्टादि तथा सामर्थ्यमुद्भवेत् ॥५५॥

yathā ca darduro bhāva utplutyotplutya gacchati (53b)

padmāsanasthito yogī tathā gacchati bhūtale

tato ‘dhikatarābhyaśādbhūmyāgaśca jāyate (54)

padmāsanastha evāsau bhūmimutsrjya vartate

atimānuṣaceṣṭādi tathā sāmarthyamudbhavet (55)

Anvay

ca: and; *yathā:* just as; *dardurah:* frog; *gacchati:* moves; *bhāva:* up; *utplutyotplutya:* by leaps and bounds; *tathā:* thus; *yogī:* yogi, adept in yoga; *gacchati:* moves; *sthitah:* seated; *padmāsana:* lotus pose; *bhūtale:* on the ground; *tatah:* then; *adhikatara-abhyāsat:* because of much more practice; *tyagah:* rising up; *bhūmi:* earth; *jāyate:* is accomplished; *ca:* and; *asau:* that person; *utsrjya:* having levitated; *bhūmi:* earth; *vartate:* remains; *eva:* still; *padmāsanastha:* seated in *padmāsana*; *tathā:* thus; *sāmarthyam:* power; *atimānuṣa:* superhuman; *ceṣṭa:* action; *ādi:* and other things; *udbhavet:* may arise.

Translation

And, just as the frog moves up by leaps and bounds, thus the yogin moves [while] seated in padmāsana on the ground. Then, because of much more practice, rising up [from] the earth is

accomplished, and that person, having levitated from the earth, still remains seated in padmāsana. Thus the power for superhuman action and other things may arise.

Commentary

In this verse the stages of kumbhaka are further described. In the fourth stage, the breath retention becomes more effortless and spontaneous. The body feels very light, as if it were about to lift off the ground, even while seated in the meditative asana. This is another reason why padmāsana was chosen as the ideal posture for advanced practices of prāṇāyāma and meditation. Many of the āsanas were performed simply to loosen the limbs and strengthen the back, so that this posture could be maintained for long durations of time. Padmāsana is a locked posture in which the body will remain balanced, firm and steady, even if it rises off the ground, or the practitioner falls into a deep trance.

Here the teaching continues with the analogy of the frog. Just as the frog moves forward by leaps and bounds, the body begins to jerk and lift upward by its own momentum. Even while seated in padmāsana on the ground, the practitioner feels that the body is bounding upward. In the fifth stage, which follows after much more practice, the body actually rises from the ground. While levitating above the ground, the body remains seated in padmāsana. In this way the siddhis, or perfections of yoga, begin to manifest.

Lightness of the body is one of the eight siddhis, or paranormal yogic powers, which were experienced by the perfected yogins of old.

Verse 56: Importance of secrecy

न दर्शयेच्च सामर्थ्यं दर्शनं वीर्यवत्तरम् ।

स्वल्पं वा बहुधा दुःखं योगी न व्यथते तदा ॥५६॥

na darśayecca sāmarthyam darśanam vīryavattaram

svalpam vā bahudhā duḥkham yogī na vyathate tadā (56)

Anvay

na darśayet: he should not reveal; *darśanam:* teaching; *sāmarthyam:* power; *vīry-avattaram:* heroically inspired; *tadā:* then; *yogī:* yogi, adept in *yoga*; *na:* not; *vyathate:* is affected; *duḥkham:* hardship; *svalpam:* very small; *vā:* or; *bahudhā:* great.

Translation

He should not reveal [this] teaching [whose] power [is] heroically inspired. Then the yogin is not affected by hardship, [whether] very small or great.

Commentary

When the fruits of yogic practice begin to manifest, one should not reveal them to others. All the yogic texts advocate absolute secrecy in regard to one's personal practice. One who keeps a box of gold and jewels in the house should not inform others about these assets and their whereabouts. In the same way, when the yogic practice begins to yield results, these experiences should not become a common

topic for conversation. The practitioner who boasts and exclaims about the results of his or her practice will surely lose them. The

results of the practice will steadily diminish and disappear altogether; in the same way that thieves will surely come in the dead of night to remove all the gold and jewels that are kept in the house of a foolish loud-mouth.

The verse speaks of the power of this teaching, as being heroically inspired. It means that such teaching was traditionally known only to a master yogin, who had realized the practice and its result for him or herself, and would reveal it only to a sincere and worthy practitioner. Such masters were considered to be heroes in their time, for they had attained the perfection of human birth and evolution through their practice.

It is further stated here that the realized yogin, who holds the practice and its results in secrecy and highest regard, will be empowered by it from within. In this way, he or she will experience an elevated life, free from suffering and the affects of all hardships, whether great or small.

Verses 57 and 58a: Physical effects of the practice

अल्पमूत्रपुरीषश्च स्वल्पनिद्रश्च जायते ।

कीलवो दूषिका लाला स्वेददुर्गन्धतानने ॥५७॥

एतानि सर्वथा तस्य न जायन्ते ततः परम् ॥५८॥

alpamūtrapurīṣaśca svalpanidraśca jāyate

kīlavovo dūṣikā lālā svedadurgandhatānane (57)

etāni sarvathā tasya na jāyante tataḥ param (58a)

Anvay

alpa: little; *mūtra*: urine; *puriṣah*: excrement; *jāyate*: are produced; *ca*: and; *svalpa*: very little; *nidrah*: sleep; *kīlavah*: indeed; *dūṣikā*: rheum of the eyes; *lālā*: saliva; *sveda*: sweat; *dur-gandha*: bad smell; *tānane*: negligible; *tataḥ*: then; *param*: subsequently; *etāni*: these things; *na . . . sarvathā*: not at all; *jāyante*: arise; *tasya*: in him.

Translation

Little urine and excrement are produced, and [there is] very little sleep. [When] indeed, rheum of the eyes, saliva, sweat and bad smell are negligible, then subsequently these things do not arise in him at all.

Commentary

Now we are told of the physical effects, which manifest with mastery of the practice. First of all, the body of the yogin, who has mastered the higher stages of prāṇāyāma, will produce very small amounts

of urine and faeces. This is because the metabolic processes will be purified and regenerated to the extent that whatever is consumed will be metabolized completely, leaving very little residue. The need for sleep will also be greatly reduced, as the practitioner enters into the deeper states of consciousness, even while awake, during the higher stages of the practice.

Similarly, the watery fluid that collects and streams from the eyes is greatly reduced. The secretion of saliva, sweat and body odour become negligible, and ultimately, they do not arise in the yogin at all.

Verses 58b, 59 and 60a: Power over the earth

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासाद्वलमुत्पद्यते बहु ॥५८॥

येन भूचर सिद्धिः स्याद्भूचराणां जये क्षमः ।

व्याघ्रो वा शरमो वापि गजो गवय एव वा ॥५९॥

सिंहो वा योगिना तेन मृचन्ते हस्ततादिताः ।६०।

tato 'dhikatarābhyaśādbalamutpadyate bahu (58b)

yena bhūcara siddhiḥ syādbhūcarāṇām jaye kṣamah

vyāghro vā śarabho vāpi gajo gavaya eva vā (59)

simho vā yoginā tena mrcante hastatāditāḥ (60a)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; *adhikatara-abhyāsāt*: after a lot more practice; *bahu*: great; *balam*: strength; *utpadyate*: arises; *yena*: by which; *syāt*: he attains; *bhūcara siddhiḥ*: power to move through earth, mountains and walls; *kṣamah*: gives the power; *jaye*: to have mastery over; *carāṇām*: creatures which move; *bhū*: on the earth; *tena*: thus; *vyāghrah*: tiger; *śarabhaḥ*: deer; *vā*: or; *api*: even; *gajah*: elephant; *gavayah*: wild bull; *mrcante*: perish; *tāditāḥ*: struck; *hasta*: by the hand; *yoginā*: of the yogin.

Translation

Then, after a lot more practice, great strength arises, by which he attains *bhūcara siddhi*, which gives him the power to move through mountains and walls, and mastery over all creatures moving on the earth. Thus the deer, lion, tiger, or even elephant or wild bull perish, when struck by the hand of this yogin.

Commentary

After further practice, great physical strength arises. Such a yogi attains *bhūcara siddhi*, the power to walk the earth without fear of any living creature. By this power, the body is able to move anywhere on earth and to pass through walls and mountains. The body grows so powerful that any creature, such as a deer, lion, tiger, or even a wild bull or an elephant, will perish if struck by the hand of this yogin.

Verses 60b and 61: Power of attraction

कन्दर्पस्य यथा रूपं तथा स्यादपि योगिनः ॥६०॥

तद्रूपवशगा नार्यः काङ्क्षन्ते तसय सङ्गमम् ।

यदि सङ्गं करोत्येष तस्य बिन्दुक्षयो भवेत् ॥६१॥

kandarpasya yathā rūpam tathā syādapi yoginah (60b)

tadrūpavaśagā nāryaḥ kāṅkṣante tasya saṅgamam

yadi saṅgam karotyeṣa tasya bindukṣayo bhavet (61)

Anvay

yoginah: yogin; *syāt*: is; *api*: even; *yathā .. tathā*: just like; *rūpam*: form; *Kandarpasya*: Kāma, god of love; *nāryaḥ*: women; *vaśagāḥ*: enthralled by; *tadrūpa*: such an appearance; *kāṅkṣante*: desire; *sangamam*: intercourse; *tasya*: with him; *yadi*: if; *karoti*: he makes; *saṅgam*: connection; *eṣa*: then; *bhavet*: there will be; *kṣayah*: decrease; *tasya*: of his; *bindu*: semen.

Translation

The *yogin* is just like the form of *Kāma*, the god of love. Women enthralled by such an appearance desire intercourse with him. If he makes [this] connection, then there will be a decrease of his semen.

Commentary

With the mastery of prāṇāyāma, the metabolic processes and the prāṇas remain elevated, giving the yogi an appearance of great beauty and luminosity. Hence he is said to resemble the form of Kāma, the god of love. Women are highly attracted to his beautiful appearance, like bees to honey, and immediately fall in love with him. However, if he indulges in sexual union with them, his semen will fall, and hence the level of prāṇa will decline.

Verse 62: Preservation of semen

वर्जयित्वा स्त्रियाः सङ्गं कुर्यादभ्यासमादरात् ।

योगिनो इङ्गे सुगन्धश्च जायते बिन्दुधारणात् ॥६२॥

varjayitvā striyāḥ saṅgam kuryādabhyāsamādarāt

yogino ‘nge sugandhaśca jāyate bindudhāraṇāt (62)

Anvay

varjayitvā: having given up; *saṅgam*: intercourse; *striyāḥ*: with woman; *kuryāt*: he should do; *abhyāsam*: practice; *ādarāt*: seriously; *dhāraṇāt*: by preserving; *bindu*: semen; *sugandhah*: pleasant fragrance; *jāyate*: is produced; *ānge*: in the body; *yoginah*: of the yogin.

Translation

Having given up intercourse with woman, he should do [his] practice seriously. By preserving the semen, a pleasant fragrance is produced in the body of the yogin.

Commentary

Therefore, the yogi, who has attained a high level of mastery, should abstain from sexual intercourse with women, and remain dedicated to his practice. When the yogi is attracted towards the opposite sex and wishes to co-mingle, the mind and prāṇas become disturbed. In this condition of excitement and anticipation, it is difficult to maintain mental focus and clarity during the sādhana. When the semen is preserved, the prāṇa and mind of the yogi remain calm, and the body emits a pleasant fragrance.

Verse 63: Aum meditation

ततो रहस्युपाविष्टः प्रणवं प्लुतमात्रया ।

जपेत्पूर्वार्जितानां तु पापानां नाशहेतवे ॥६३॥

tato rahasyupāvistah pranavam plutamātrayā

japetpūrvārjitatānām tu pāpānām nāśahetave (63)

Anvay

tatah: then; *upāvistah:* seated; *rahasi:* secret; *japet:* he should repeat; *pranavam:* Aum; *pluta-mātrayā:* prolonged mātrās; *hetave:* for the purpose of; *nāśa:* destruction; *pūrvārjitatānām:* previously committed; *pāpānām:* sins.

Translation

Then, seated in a secret [place], he should repeat *Aum* with prolonged mātrās for the purpose of the destruction of previously committed sins.

Commentary

Having mastered prāṇāyāma and attained the related powers, or siddhis, mentioned in the previous verses, the yogi should then sit in a quiet and secluded spot, which is not known to others, in order to practise the Praṇava. The creation has come into existence from the Prāṇa, universal energy. The Aum sound is known as Praṇava, because it is the first sound of creation. The Aum sound contains three syllables: ‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’. The ‘A’ sound corresponds to the conscious state. The ‘U’ sound corresponds to the subconscious state, and the ‘M’ sound to the unconscious state. When the Aum sound is repeated constantly with elongated ‘A’, ‘U’ and ‘M’ sounds, the three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming and sleeping, or conscious, subconscious and unconscious, are systematically awakened.

All the karmas, or actions, which one has done in this birth and previous births remain in seed form in the deeper consciousness. Aum, being the first sound, is the purest vibration. When this sound vibrates throughout the consciousness, it neutralizes and roots out all the karmas stored in the deeper layers of the consciousness.

Verse 64: First state of perfection

सर्वविघ्नहरो मन्त्रः प्रणवः सर्वदोषहा ।

एवमन्यासयोगेन सिद्धिरारभसंभवा ॥६४॥

*sarvavighnaharo mantraḥ pranavah sarvadoṣahā
evamabhyāsayogena siddhirārambhasam bhavā* (64)

Anvay

mantraḥ: subtle sound vibration; *pranavah*: Aum; *harah*: destroys; *sarva*: all; *vighna*: obstacles; *hā*: removes; *doṣa*: faults; *evam*: in this way; *abhyāsa-yogena*: by the practice of yoga; *sambhavā*: he enters into; *ārambhasam*: first; *siddhiḥ*: supernatural accomplishment.

Translation

The mantra *Aum* destroys all obstacles [and] removes all faults. In this way, by the practice of yoga, he enters into the first *siddhi*.

Commentary

The obstacles and faults referred to in this verse are the weaknesses, which prevent one from succeeding in the path of yogic *sādhana* and meditation. These include: (i) disease, (ii) dullness, (iii) doubt, (iv) procrastination, (v) laziness, (vi) craving, (vii) erroneous perception, (viii) inability to achieve finer stages, and (ix) instability. When these obstructions are removed, the path of *sādhana* becomes unhindered. During the course of practice, different obstacles are bound to arise from time to time. For example, due to extensive introversion during periods of *sādhana*, the different systems of the body may be affected, causing physical ailments, relating to the digestive, respiratory, nervous or endocrine systems. Physical disorders may also manifest as an expression of purification.

Many times these obstructions relate with the influence of the *guṇas*, or qualities of nature. Ultimately, *sādhana* should lead one towards a state of *sattwa*, in which lightness and balance are experienced. However, there may be times when the *sādhaka* enters into the state of *tamas*, where heaviness and dullness arise, due to sitting in one place and position for extensive periods without sensory contact with the outside world. If *tamas* cannot be shaken, then the *sādhaka* may fall into habits of procrastination and laziness in regard to the practice. In this case, one would prefer to put the practice off until later, or maybe not perform it at all. Even when the practice is undertaken, one becomes lazy and is unable to apply oneself fully.

Again, when the *sādhaka* enters the state of *rajas*, the dullness experienced previously is replaced by desires and cravings for sensory objects, which are not conducive to the *sādhana*. These cravings distract the mind, and if the *sādhaka* gives way to them, there will be a break in the *sādhana*. If the *sādhana* is broken at any time, it may become very difficult to return to it.

Even when the *sādhana* proceeds well, sometimes erroneous perception may arise, especially when the practitioner has little previous experience of the deeper levels of *sādhana* and meditation. When one is unfamiliar with the inner states of mind and consciousness, psychic phenomena, such as visions and hallucinations, may become disturbing or frightening, making it difficult to continue the practice. Again, one may believe that one has achieved a high level of practice, when in fact, the reverse is true.

During the course of sādhana, it may also happen that even with regular and dedicated practice, one is unable to attain the finer or subtler states. One reaches a certain point, and then comes up against a mental curtain or wall, which is impossible to pass through. This obstruction can be very disheartening for the sādhaka, who has strong ambition and desire to attain the higher states. One requires much patience and strong resolution to continue the sādhana, even in the face of this obstruction, knowing that it will be lifted in the right time.

The last obstruction is instability, or inability to sit completely still during the practice. In meditation the body becomes restless or uncomfortable, and one is compelled to shift the position. The body may also shake or tremble involuntarily. This movement of the body prevents the practitioner from going deeper into the practice. Everytime the body moves, the mind is again thrown back into the conscious state. This instability indicates a disparity between the body and the mind, which needs to be addressed before the practitioner can proceed.

This verse states that all of the above obstructions can be removed by meditation on the mantra *Aum*. The obstructions arise due to a predominance of tamo and rajo guṇa at the time of sādhana. *Aum* is a pure sound vibration, which harmonizes the mind and consciousness, and brings about a sattvic state. By this yoga of meditation on the meaning of *Aum*, the symbol of *Aum*, and repetition of the sound of *Aum*, the sādhaka is able to progress, and so attains the first siddhi, or stage of perfection. In this stage, one is able to maintain the meditative state without disturbance of body or mind, and the sādhana thus becomes ongoing, steady and effortless.

Verses 65 and 66: Second state of perfection

ततो भवेद्घटावस्था पवनाभ्यासतत्परा ।

प्राणोऽपानो मनो बुद्धिर्जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ॥६५॥

अन्योन्यस्याविरोधेन एकता घटते यदा ।

घटावस्थेति सा प्रोक्ता तच्चिह्नानि ब्रविष्यहम् ॥६६॥

tato bhavedghaṭāvasthā pavanābhyaśatataparā

prāṇo ‘pāno mano buddhirjīvātmaparamātmanoh (65)

anyonyasyāvirodhena ekatā ghaṭate yadā

ghaṭāvastheti sā proktā taccihñāni bravimyaham (66)

Anvay

tataḥ: then; *tatparā*: following upon that; *abhyāsa*: with practice; *pavana*: on the breath; *bhavet*: is; *ghaṭa avasthā*: second state; *yadā*: when; *ekatā*: union; *ghaṭate*: takes place; *anyonyasa*: with each other; *avirodhena*: without conflict; *prāṇah*: upward-moving energy; *apānah*: downward-moving energy; *manah*: rational mind; *buddhiḥ*: intuitive mind; *jīvātma-paramātmanoh*: between the individual soul and the universal soul; *sā*: this; *proktā*: is declared; *ghaṭa avasthā*: second state; *aham*: I; *bravimi*: shall describe; *tat*: its; *cihnāni*: signs.

Translation

Then, following upon that, with practice on the breath, is the second state. When union takes place with each other without conflict, between *prāṇa* and *apāna*, *manas* and *buddhi*, *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*, this is declared the second state. I shall describe its signs.

Commentary

The yogis practised *prāṇāyāma* as a form of meditation, because it helped them to jump over the mind and enter directly into the field of consciousness. After attaining the first state of perfection in yoga through repetition of and meditation on *Aum*, *prāṇāyāma* should be taken up in order to attain the second state. The word *yoga* itself means ‘union’. Here the union of yoga is described at three levels between: (i) *prāṇa* and *apāna*, (ii) *manas* and *buddhi*, and (iii) *jīvātmā* and *paramātmā*; or between energy, mind and spirit.

Yoga speaks of five *prāṇas*: (i) *prāṇa*, (ii) *apāna*, (iii) *samāna*, (iv) *udāna*, and (v) *vyāna*, which together maintain all of the physical systems and their functions. Each *prāṇa* has its own particular location and direction of flow in the body. *Prāṇa* and *apāna* are the two *prāṇas*, which flow upward and downward, thus maintaining the equilibrium of the body. *Prāṇa* flows upward in the region of the chest from the diaphragm to the shoulders. *Apāna* flows downward in the pelvic region from the waist to the pelvic floor. The inhalation relates with *prāṇa* and the exhalation with *apāna*. When the breath is regulated through the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, these two *prāṇas* unite at the solar plexis, bringing about an awakening of the kundalini, or spiritual force. This is the first level of union.

In yoga the mind is known as *antahkaraṇa*, or the ‘inner instrument’ of consciousness. The *antahkaraṇa* is comprised of four components: (i) *manas*, (ii) *buddhi*, (iii) *citta* and (iv) *ahamkāra*. *Manas* is the lower, thinking or rational mind, and *buddhi* is the higher faculty of intellect, awareness and discrimination.

Citta is the accumulation of memories or associations, which are stored in the consciousness, and *ahamkāra* is the ego or identification principle. Normally, most individuals are ruled by *manas*, the thinking component of mind, which is constantly influenced by the ego and the associations. *Buddhi*, the higher mind, or awareness principle, is less functional or non-functional in most people. With the awakening of energy, which results from the union of *prāṇa* and *apāna*, *buddhi*, the awareness principle awakens and unites with *manas*. Thus the thinking mind is suffused with awareness, wisdom and discrimination. This is the second level of union.

The third and highest level of union takes place between the *jīvātmā*, individual self, or consciousness, and the *paramātmā*, supreme or universal self or consciousness. The word *jīva* means ‘living’ and *ātmā* means ‘self’. When the self, the *atma*, is born and lives in a human body, it is known as *jīvatma*. The *ātmā* in itself is eternal and unbound, but when it is born in the body, it becomes limited by the physical constraints and thus bound by them. If the *jīvātmā* can be merged into the *paramātmā*, even while living, the outcome is *mokṣa*, self-realization or liberation. This is the ultimate union of yoga. The verse states that all three levels of union described above can be achieved through the practice of *prāṇāyāma*.

Verses 67 and 68a: Practice of *prāṇāyāma*

पूर्व यः कथितो ऽभ्यासश्चतुर्थाशं परिग्रहेत् ।

दिवा वा यदि वा सायं याममात्रं समध्यसेत् ॥६७॥

एकवारं प्रतिदिनं कुर्यात्केवलकुम्भकम् ।६८।

pūrvam yah kathito ‘bhyāsaścaturthāśam parigrahet

divā vā yadi vā sāyam yāmamātram samabhyaset (67)
ekavāram pratidinam kuryātkevalakumbhakam (68a)

Anvay

parigrahet: he should undertake; *caturthāśam*: one fourth; *abhyāsaḥ*: practice; *kathitah*: prescribed; *pūrvam*: before; *samabhyaset*: he should practise; *mātram*: only one; *yāma*: period of two hours; *yadi . . . vā*: either . . . or; *divā*: by day; *sāyam*: at night; *kuryāt*: he should do; *kevala kumbhakam*: spontaneous breath retention; *ekavāram*: once; *pratidinam*: every day.

Translation

He should undertake one fourth of the practice described before. He should practise only one restraint, either by day or at night. He should do *kevala kumbhaka* once every day.

Commentary

The practice of prāṇāyāma is explained in detail in verses 35-40. The process is described in verses 41-43, including the ratio, the number of practice sessions per day, and the duration of each practice session. These are general instructions, which can be found in different upaniṣads and classical yogic texts. In this verse, however, specific instructions are given for the practitioner. Initially, prāṇāyāma should be practised one time only, either in the day or in the night. The practice should be performed for one *yama*, or a period of two hours. The verse further mentions *kevala kumbhaka*, spontaneous breath retention, and says that it should be done only once every day.

This means that one should practise for a period of two hours, or until spontaneous kumbhaka occurs. After the arising of *kevala kumbhaka*, there is no need to continue or repeat the practice.

Verses 68b, 69, 70, 71 and 72: Practice of pratyāhāra, sensory control

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो यत्प्रत्याहरणं स्फुतम् ॥६८॥

योगी कुम्भकमास्थाय प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।

यद्यत्पश्यति चक्षुभ्यां तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥६९॥

यद्यच्छृणोति कर्णाभ्यां तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ।

लभते नासया यद्यत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥७०॥

जिह्वया यद्रसं ह्यति तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ।

त्वचा यद्यत्पृशेद्योगी तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥७१॥

एवं ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणां तु तत्तत्सौख्यं सुसाधयेत् ।

याममात्रं प्रतिदिनं योगी यत्तादतन्द्रितः ॥७२॥

indriyāñāndriyārthebhyo yatpratyāharanam sphuṭam (68b)

yogī kumbhakamāsthāya pratyāhārah sa ucyate

yadyatpaśyati cakṣurbhyām tattadātmeti bhāvayet (69)

yadyacchṛnoti karṇābhyaṁ tattadātmeti bhāvayet

labhate nāsayā yadyattattadātmeti bhāvayet (70)

jihvayā yadrasam hyatti tattadātmeti bhāvayet

tvacā yadyatspṛśedyogī tattadātmeti bhāvayet (71)

evam jñānendriyāñām tu tattatsaukhyam susādhayet

yāmamātram pratidinam yogī yatnādatandritah (72)

Anvay

yat: for; *pratyāharaṇam:* withdrawing; *sphutam:* completely; *indriyāñāt:* sense organs; *indriya-arthebhyaḥ:* from the objects of the senses; *āsthāya:* through strenuous; *kumbhakam:* retention of the breath; *sa:* this; *ucyate:* is called; *pratyāhāraḥ:* *pratyāhāra;* *yadyat:* whatever; *yogī:* yogin; *paśyati:* sees; *cakṣurbhyām:* with his eyes; *tat-tat:* then this; *bhāvayet:* is to be; *iti:* declared; *ātmā:* self, consciousness, spirit; *śṛnoti:* he hears; *karṇābhyaṁ:* with his ears; *labhate:* he perceives; *nāsayā:* through his nose; *rasam:* taste; *atti:* he eats; *jihvayā:* with his tongue; *spṛśet:* he touches; *tvacā:* with his skin; *evam:* thus; *yatnāt:* with effort; *atandritah:* undaunted; *tat-tat-saukhyam:* for the welfare; *jñānendriyāñām:* of the sense organs; *susādhayet:* should control; *mātram:* for a period; *yāma:* two hours; *pratidinam:* every day.

Translation

Complete withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects of the senses by strenuous retention of the breath is called *pratyāhāra*. Whatever the yogin then sees with his eyes, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then hears with his ears, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then smells through his nose, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then tastes with his tongue, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then touches with his skin, this is to be declared ātman. Thus, with undaunted effort, for the welfare of the sensory organs, the yogin should control them for a period of two hours every day.

Commentary

Today *prāṇāyāma* is practised as a part of hatha yoga to balance the nervous system and increase the energy. However, the yogis of old practised *prāṇāyāma* as a means to meditation. This verse describes

how the practice of vigorous breath retention leads directly to the state of *pratyāhāra*, introversion of the senses, which is the first stage of meditation described in rāja yoga. When the senses are completely withdrawn from the objects of the world and focused within the mind, the yogi perceives his own self, or ātman.

This verse describes the five senses and their action. Normally, a person sees the objects of the world through the eyes, hears the objects through the ears, smells the objects through the nose, tastes the objects through the tongue, and feels the objects through the skin. When all the five senses are projected outward in this way, one experiences the world, as if one were outside in it.

But this is an illusion. The experiences of the world are never outside; they are only reflections of the sensory organs, perceived in the mind. Therefore, the world is regarded as illusory, while the consciousness, or the self, is real.

While living in the world, a person generally becomes so accustomed to directing the senses outward, that one remains unaware of and unable to perceive one's own inner self. The yogis considered this condition of humankind to be deplorable. Even while living in the body and performing one's duties in life, a person should still be able to know oneself. Hence, the practices of yoga evolved, not just to live a better life, a more healthy life, but to know the self.

The yogi is a person, who practices with undaunted effort, for a long time, without giving up. A practitioner may easily become discouraged by the strenuous effort required and disappointed by the lack of an immediate result. The verse states that in order to attain *pratyāhāra*, the yogi should control the senses and direct them inwardly for a period of two hours every day. In this way, the senses and the mind will be purified and strengthened, so that one can enter the higher states of meditation.

Verses 73, 74 and 75: Siddhis or powers of yoga

यथा वा चित्तसामर्थ्यं जायते योगिनो ध्रुवम् ।

दूरश्रुतिर्दूरदृष्टिः क्षणाद्वागमस्तथा ॥७३॥

वाक्सिद्धिः कामरूपत्वमदृश्यकरणी तथा ।

मलमूत्रप्रलेपेन लोहादेः स्वर्णता भवेत् ॥७४॥

खे गतिस्तसय जायेत संतताभ्यासयोगतः ।

सदा बुद्धिमता भाव्यं योगिना योगसिद्धये ॥७५॥

yathā vā cittasāmarthyam jāyate yogino dhruvam

dūraśrutirdūradṛṣṭih kṣaṇāddūrāgamastathā (73)

vāksiddhiḥ kāmarūpatvamadṛśyakaraṇī tathā

malamūtrapralēpena lohādeḥ svarṇatā bhavet (74)

khe gatistasya jāyeta samtatābhyaśayogataḥ

sadā buddhimatā bhāvyam yoginā yogasiddhaye (75)

Anvay

vā: just; *yathā:* as; *yoginah:* yogin's; *sāmarthyam:* power; *citta:* of mind; *jāyate:* becomes; *dhruvam:* stable; *tathā:* then; *bhavet:* arises; *dūraśrutiḥ:* clairaudience; *dūradṛṣṭiḥ:* clairvoyance; *dūrāgamah:* travel far; *kṣanāt:* within a moment; *vāksiddhiḥ:* power of speech; *karaṇī:* ability to; *kāma-rūpatvam:* assume any form desired; *adrśya:* become invisible; *lohādeḥ:* from iron; *pralepena:* smeared with; *mala:* excrement; *mūtra:* urine; *svarṇatā:* gold; *buddhimatā:* wise; *yoginā:* yogin; *bhāvyam:* must be; *sadā:* always; *yogataḥ:* assiduously; *sāntata:* continuously; *abhyāsa:* practising; *yoga-siddhaye:* for attainment in *yoga*; *khe gatiḥ:* levitation; *jāyeta:* should be possible; *tasya:* for him.

Translation

Just as the *yogin*'s power of mind becomes stable, then arises clairaudience, clairvoyance, [the ability to] travel far within a moment, [great] power of speech, the ability to assume any form desired, [and] to become invisible, [and to turn] iron, [when] smeared with excrement and urine, into gold. The wise *yogin* must always be assiduously [and] continuously practising for attainment in *yoga*. [Then] levitation should be possible for him.

Commentary

This verse describes eight siddhis, or powers of perfection, which arise in the yogi, who practices continuously for a long period of time. Through regular practice, the distraction and dissipation of the mind gradually cease and the mind becomes stable. The mind is considered to be stable, when the yogi can remain focused within, on one point, without fluctuation, for an extended duration. When the mind becomes stable, the first perfection that arises is clairaudience, the ability to hear within. This ability makes it is possible to perceive within one's own mind what another is thinking or feeling, without any external interaction or input through the ears.

The second perfection is clairvoyance, the ability to see within. Inner vision allows the yogi to see any person, place, object or situation within his own mind, without any external contact through the eyes. The third perfection is the ability to astral travel, while the physical body remains inert in one place. The yogi is able to leave the physical body and travel in his subtle body to any destination in time and space within a moment, and then return to the physical body unhampered. The fourth perfection is the power of speech. The yogi will become a great orator, able to inspire multitudes. The words uttered by such a yogi are melodious, well spoken and bound to be true.

The fifth perfection is the ability to assume any form desired. This siddhi is mentioned in the ancient texts, but it is not seen today. It involves transforming one's present form into another form at will, and then changing it back to the original again. In the *Rāmacaritamānas*, the life story of Śri Rāma, who lived several thousand years ago, we find abundant references to this siddhi. For example, Hanumān, the great devotee of Śri Rāma, was born as a *Vanara*, a race of half monkey/ half man, but he could change his form at any time. When he first encountered Śri Rāma, he felt ashamed of his monkey form, and transformed himself into a Brahmin. But Śri Rāma saw into the deception, and when they embraced, Hanumān immediately resumed his monkey form.

The sixth perfection is the ability to become invisible. This siddhi is also not seen today, although sometimes we may wish we had it. It involves the ability to dematerialize one's physical form at any time or in any situation, and then to materialize it again at will. The seventh perfection is what alchemists have sought to achieve from time immemorial. The ability to transform iron that is smeared

with urine and feces into gold. Here iron, urine and feces represent the rough, gross forms of matter, while gold is the pure element. The eighth siddhi mentioned here is levitation, the ability to elevate the body without any external supports. This perfection arises in the yogi, who practises regularly and tirelessly, over a long period of time.

Verses 76, 77 and 78a: Siddhis are obstacles in yoga

एते विघ्ना महासिद्धेन रमेतेषु बुद्धिमान् ।

न दर्शयेत्स्वसामर्थ्यं यस्यकस्यापि योगिराट् ॥७६॥

यथा मूढो यथा मूर्खो यथा बधिर एव वा ।

तथा वर्तेत लोकस्य स्वसामर्थ्यस्य गुप्तये ॥७७॥

शिष्याश्च स्वस्वकार्येषु प्रार्थयन्ति न संशयः ॥७८॥

ete vighnā mahāsiddherna rametteṣu buddhimān

na darśayetsvasāmarthyam yasya kasyāpi yogirāt (76)

yathā mūḍho yathā mūrkha yathā badhira eva vā

tathā varteta lokasya svasāmarthyasya guptaye (77)

śisyāśca svasvakāryeṣu prārthayanti na samśayah (78a)

Anvay

ete: these; *mahāsiddheḥ*: great powers; *vighnāḥ*: obstacles; *buddhimān*: wise man; *na*: not; *ramet*: should delight; *teṣu*: in them; *yogirāt*: king of yogins; *na darśayet*: should not display; *sva-sāmarthyam*: his own ability; *yasya kasyāpi*: to anyone whatsoever; *varṭeta*: he should live; *lokasya*: in the world; *yathā*: like; *mūḍhaḥ*: fool; *mūrkhaḥ*: idiot; *vā*: or; *eva*: even; *badhirah*: deaf person; *tathā*: thus; *guptaye*: guarding; *sva-sāmarthyasya*: his own power; *na samśayah*: no doubt; *śisyāḥ*: disciples; *prārthayanti*: would beg; *svasvakāryeṣu*: for their own purposes.

Translation

These great powers [are] obstacles. The wise man should not delight in them. The king of yogins should not display his own ability to anyone, whosoever. He should live in the world like a fool, an idiot or even a deaf person, thus guarding his own power. There is no doubt his disciples would beg [him to reveal his powers] for their own purposes.

Commentary

Although a worldly person may think of the above mentioned siddhis as most desireable and advantageous, the yogi looks upon them as obstacles to the spiritual path. The aim of a yogi is nothing less than enlightenment, while living in the physical body, in this material world. Delving into the powers of yoga may prove to be a great distraction to the yogi and prevent him or her from attaining his goal in this very lifetime. Therefore, the wise yogi, who has attained the level of siddhi, never

takes pleasure in such powers or exhibits them to others, no matter who they may be. If asked whether or not the yogi has attained such powers, he or she will deny it.

Not too long ago, there was a great siddha, living in the South of India. He stayed with a pack of mongrel dogs in a small hut outside the town, on the edge of a forest. After a while, the townspeople came to know that a siddha yogi was living nearby, and they came one day in a group to pay him a visit. As they were approaching the siddha's hut, he ran outside and quickly began to gather up a pile of rocks. When the people came within hearing range, he shouted at them, "Go away and never come back." But the people did not heed his words and continued walking towards him. So the siddha began to pelt them with the stones. He went on throwing stones at them, until they finally turned round and headed back to the town. Then he shouted, "Never come here again. If you do, I will set my dogs upon you."

It is further said here that the siddha yogi should not live as a great person. He or she should not expect or wish to be respected, praised or revered for having attained yogic powers. Rather, he or she should appear to others like a fool, an idiot or a mute. For it is only in this way that the yogic powers can be safe-guarded from exposure and use for worldly gain. It also stands to reason, and so the verse goes on to say that, otherwise the disciples of such a siddha would undoubtedly ask him again and again to show and then to give them these powers for their own worldly purposes.

Verses 78b and 79: Assiduous practice

तत्तकर्मकरव्यग्रः स्वाभ्यासे विस्मृतो भवेत् ॥७८॥

अविस्मृत्य गुरोर्वाक्यमभ्यसेत्तदहर्निशम् ।

एवं भवेद्धठावस्था संतताभ्यासयोगतः ॥७९॥

tattatkarmakaravyagrah svābhyaśe 'vismṛto bhavet (78b)

avismṛtya gurorvākyamabhyasettadaharniśam

evam bhavedghaṭhāvasthā samtatābhyāsayogataḥ (79)

Anvay

tat-tat: however; *vyagrah:* he who is occupied with; *karmakara:* working for others; *bhavet avismṛtaḥ:* should not forget; *sva-abhyāse:* his own practice; *avismṛtya:* not forgetting; *vākyam:* words; *guroḥ:* of the guru; *tad:* then; *abhyaset:* he should practise; *aharniśam:* day and night; *evam:* thus; *yogataḥ:* assiduously; *samtata:* continuously; *abhyāsa:* practising; *bhavet:* he becomes; *ghaṭha-avasthā:* second state.

Translation

However, he who is occupied with working for others should not forget his own practice. Not forgetting the words of the guru, then he should practise day and night. Thus, assiduously and continuously practising, he becomes (enters) the second state.

Commentary

The teaching given in this upanisad stresses the importance of assiduous practice. However, the path of yoga should not be followed in a selfish or obsessive way. If yoga is performed for oneself alone, the progress may be slow due to focus on and enhancement of the ego in relation to the practice. Therefore, the practitioner should always be mindful of the welfare and upliftment of others. At the same time, yogic aspirants, who are busy with work, family and social life, and have not yet attained siddhi, or perfection, should be regular in their own personal practice. They should receive regular guidance from the guru, regarding their practice, and should follow this diligently. By following the advice of the guru and not forgetting his or her words, they will progress in the practice without being deterred by obstacles and difficulties.

Whenever the aspirant is free from work and family obligations, he or she should practise as much as possible, both in the day and at night. Through dedicated and regular practice, one attains the ghatā state. The word *ghatā* used here refers to the second stage of yoga, where the awareness is able to penetrate and remain conscious in the subconscious state. Ghatā is a clay pot or jar that has been tempered by heat. The clay pot that has been fired in a kiln is able to retain water and other substances without subsequent leakage. Similarly, the sustained practice of yoga awakens the yogic fire in the aspirant, which gradually strengthens and transforms the body and mind into a vessel capable of withstanding the initial awakening of consciousness and energy that takes place during the second stage of yoga.

Verses 80 and 81a: Importance of associations and devotion

अनभ्यासवतश्चैव वृथागोष्ठ्या न सिद्ध्यति ।

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन योगमेव सदाभ्यसेत् ॥८०॥

ततः परिचयावस्था जायते अभ्यासयोगतः ॥८१॥

anabhyāsavataścaiva vr̥thāgoṣṭhyā na siddhyati

tasmātsarvaprayatnena yogameva sadābhyaṣet (80)
tataḥ paricaya-avasthā jāyate ‘bhyāsayogataḥ (81a)

Anvay

ca: and; *eva:* indeed; *na siddhyati:* he does not gain; *vr̥thā-goṣṭhyā:* by useless company; *anabhyāsavataḥ:* neglect of practice; *tasmāt:* therefore; *abhyāṣet:* he should practise; *sadā:* always; *yogaṁ:* yoga; *sarva-prayatnena:* with complete devotion; *tataḥ:* then; *abhyāsayogataḥ:* through strenuous practice; *paricaya-avasthā:* third state; *jāyate:* is attained.

Translation

And indeed, he does not gain by useless company [which leads to] neglect of practice. Therefore he should always practise yoga with complete devotion. Then, through strenuous practice, the third state (of yoga) is attained.

Commentary

The sincere yoga practitioner should avoid unnecessary association with persons, who are totally identified with the relationships and activities of the world, and have no interest in yoga or self-

realization. The company of such persons on a casual or regular basis is counter-productive, because it distracts the mind and leads it away from the practice. The mind of a worldly person is more externalized, and requires constant engagement, distraction and entertainment. The yoga practitioner, on the other hand, is learning to disengage the mind from dependence on external associations, in order to focus the attention within.

This inner work requires a totally different kind of effort and awareness, and the practitioner may meet with obstacles on the path, which make it difficult to remain centered and progress. At times, he or she may feel isolated and alone, with no one to reach out to who understands. Therefore, it is important for the sincere practitioner to have a *yoga saṅgha*, or spiritual associations, who can understand and support his or her aspirations and practice. The *yoga saṅgha* is group of like-minded persons, who share similar ideals and practices, in the same way that different family, social or professional groups support and help to further one's activities in the world.

In order to develop an inner life and progress in one's practice, one needs a different peer group, different friends and associations, who think and live in a similar way and share similar life visions and goals. Coming together with this group is called *satsaṅg*, being in the company of truth. *Satsang* is an important requisite for those who wish to follow the yogic path, and it is often mentioned in the yogic texts. By attending *satsang* the practitioner develops firm faith and conviction in the path, and is able to practise with complete dedication and devotion. In the absence of devotion, the practitioner will inevitably lose interest and motivation, and the practice will become irregular.

Therefore, the verse says that one should always practise yoga with complete devotion, and in this way, the practice will become stronger and stronger. The quality or the feeling of devotion has a very powerful influence on the mind. When devotion is added to the practice, it acts as a kind of glue, allowing the mind to adhere to and continue with the practice over a long period of time, without dissipation or slackening of effort. Devotion also sweetens the practice, in the same way that the presence of a lover or beloved sweetens one's life in the external world. When the yoga practice is

performed regularly with complete devotion, the mind becomes steady and unshakeable. Slowly the awareness penetrates deeper and deeper into the veils of consciousness until the *paricaya avasthā*, or third state of yoga, is attained, where the awareness remains conscious even in the unconscious state.

Verses 81b, 82 and 83a: Awakening of the kūṇḍalinī

वायुः परिचितो यत्नादग्निना सह कुण्डलीम् ॥८१॥

भावयित्वा सुषुम्नायां प्रविशेद्विरोधतः ।

वायुना सह चित्तं च प्रविशेच्च महापथम् ॥८२॥

यस्य चित्तं स्वपवनः सुषुम्नां प्रविशेदिह ॥८३।

vāyuh paricito yatnādagninā saha kūṇḍalīm (81b)

bhāvayitvā suṣumṇāyāṁ pravīśednirodhataḥ

vāyunā saha cittam ca praviśecca mahaapatham (82)
yasya cittam svapavanam suṣumnām praviśediha (83a)

Anvay

vāyuḥ: breath; *yatnāt*: after much effort; *bhāvayitvā*: having stimulated; *kuṇḍalīm*: spiritual energy; *saha*: with; *agninā*: fire; *paricitah*: knowingly; *praviśet*: enters; *suṣumnāyām*: spiritual energy channel; *nirodhataḥ*: without interruption; *yasya*: when; *svapavanah*: one's own vital energy; *praviśet*: enters; *citta*: consciousness; *saha vāyunā*: with the breath; *praviśet*: ascends; *iha*: hither; *mahāpatham*: great path; *suṣumnām*: channel of kuṇḍalinī.

Translation

The breath, after much effort, having stimulated the kuṇḍalinī with fire, knowingly enters the suṣumnā without interruption. When one's own vital energy enters the citta with the breath, it ascends hither the great path of the suṣumnā.

Commentary

In yoga, the awakening of consciousness is always preceded by the activation of kuṇḍalinī. Consciousness and energy are the two principles of creation. Kuṇḍalinī is the cosmic energy, which descends from the unmanifest into the manifest, and is responsible for the creation of all beings and existence. In this sense, kuṇḍalinī is the Mother of creation, and she brings it all about by the transmutation of her own cosmic force into a number of elements, or *tattwas*, which comprise the building blocks of all material existence in its manifold forms. In this way, the kuṇḍalinī remains immaterial in herself, although she is the mother of all forms of existence from the universe, galaxies and stars, to the minerals, vegetables and creatures of every dimension and kind.

In human beings, the kuṇḍalinī force descends from the unmanifest into the manifest through the channel of suṣumnā, which is located at the center of the spinal column. As the kuṇḍalinī descends through the suṣumnā, she makes certain energy deposits along the way, which when combined become the core forcefield for our individual existence all through life. These energy deposits are called *cakra*, circles or fields of psychic energy. Each cakra holds a particular elemental energy necessary for the creation and maintenance of our human existence. There are six major cakras, located alongside the suṣumnā. Ajña cakra is located at the mid-brain and holds the energy of individual consciousness and mind. Viśuddhi cakra is located behind the throat-pit and holds the energy of space or ether. Anāhata cakra is located behind the heart and holds the energy of air. Maṇipura cakra is located behind the navel and holds the energy of fire. Swādhiṣṭhāna cakra is located at the tail bone and holds the energy of water, and mūlādhāra cakra is located at the pelvic floor and holds the energy of earth.

Having travelled all this way, from the unmanifest down into the manifest, and deposited all the necessary elemental energies for our creation, the kuṇḍalinī coils herself up in the energy of earth at the mūlādhāra cakra and goes to sleep. While she sleeps, we dream our life on earth, and she sustains it with her energy. This is the position until one fine day she begins to awaken and ascends the suṣumnā in the same way as she descended. This is what will happen in every individual over the long course of our human evolution. However, the yogis of old made an important discovery. They found that the kuṇḍalinī could be awakened during one lifetime by the practices of yoga. This verse is a concise summary of this discovery.

Prāṇāyāma is a yogic practice, which gives mastery over the life force through control of the breath. The breath also refers to the vital energy, or prāṇa śakti. Prāṇāyāma is one of the important ways to

awaken the kūndalinī, and has been used by yogis for this purpose. The practices of prāṇāyāma involve mastering different ratios of the inhalation and exhalation, as well as the retention of the breath, both inner and outer. These practices require strenuous effort over a long period of time in order to attain proficiency. When prāṇāyāma is mastered, the two major channels of idā and pingalā, which spiral upward alongside the suṣumnā in opposite directions, are regulated and awakened. Idā and pingalā represent the dual forces of prāṇa śakti and citta śakti, vitality and consciousness. The awakening of idā and pingalā ignites the yogic fire at the mūlādhāra cakra, and initiates the awakening of the kūndalinī.

The awakening of kūndalinī causes this spiritual force, which has lain dormant in the root cakra, to become conscious, in the same way that a person becomes conscious after awakening from a deep sleep. Hence the kūndalinī knowingly or consciously enters the mouth of suṣumnā and begins to ascend. Due to the force of prāṇa that is released at the moment of awakening, kūndalinī enters the suṣumnā without interruption. The kūndalinī draws the vital force along with it, and merges with citta, the inner field of consciousness, along with the breath. In this way the kūndalinī ascends the great path of suṣumnā.

Verses 83b and 84a: Permutation of the five elements

भूमिरापो ऽन्लो वायुराकाशश्चेति पञ्चकः ॥८३॥

येषु पञ्चसु देवानां धारणा पञ्चधोच्यते ।८४।

bhūmirāpo ‘nalo vāyurākāśaśceti pañcakah (83b)

yeṣu pañcasu devānāṁ dhāraṇā pañcadhocaye (84a)

Anvay

iti: it is said; *pañcakah:* there are five; *bhūmih:* earth; *āpah:* water; *analah:* fire; *vāyuh:* air; *ca:* and; *ākāśah:* ether; *yeṣu pañcasu:* in these five; *dhāraṇā:* attention; *devānām:* of the deities; *ucyate:* is said; *pañcadhā:* five-fold.

Translation

It is said there are five [elements]: earth, water, fire, air and ether. In these five the attention of the deities is said [to be] five-fold.

Commentary

In the previous commentary, it was explained how the five elements came into existence in relation to the evolution of the kūndalinī and the cakras. The five elements in this sense are not substances, but energies. All beings in the material world, whether sentient or insentient, are comprised of the same five elemental energies: earth, water, fire, air and ether. Although these five elements are the same in everyone and everything, their proportions are very different. Even in our human species, we can see that some people are more earthy, while others are more fiery or airy. This varying proportion in the elements makes each person unique and special.

All matter is created through the five elements, which undergo a continuous process of permutation and combination. Even in relation to the individual elements themselves, the

proportional makeup of each element forms the components of the other elements. In yogic philosophy this process is explained as follows. Each individual element is divided into two equal parts. The first part forms the pure elemental energy. The second part is again divided into four equal parts, i.e., one eighth of the whole element. Then the first half of each element is combined with one eighth of each of the other four elements. In this way, the permutation and combination of the elements takes place to create the diversity of life.

Hence, in the verse, it says that the attention of the deities in these five elements is five-fold. The word *deva* or deity is used in this context as all the elements of creation were associated with particular aspects of the divine in ancient times. This infers that behind the manifest creation, there is the unmanifest existence, from which it arises and receives continual support.

Verses 84b, 85, 86 and 87a: Pr̄thivī dhāraṇā

पादादिजानुपर्यन्तं पृथिवीस्थानमुच्यते ॥८४॥

पृथिवी चतुरसं च पीतवर्णं लवर्णकम् ।

पार्थिवे वायुमारोप्य लकारेण समन्वितम् ॥८५॥

ध्यायंश्तुर्भजाकारं चतुर्वर्कं हिरन्मयम् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिकाः पृथिवीजयमाप्नुयात् ॥८६॥

पृथिवीयोगातो मृत्युर्भवेदस्य योगिनः ॥८७॥

pādādijānuparyantam pr̄thivīsthānamucyate (84b)

pr̄thivī catusrasnam ca pītavarṇam lavarṇakam

pārthive vāyumāropya lakāreṇa samanvitam (85)

dhyāyāmścaturbhajākāram caturvakram hiraṇmayam

dhārayetpañca ghaṭikāḥ pr̄thivījayamāpnuyāt (86)

pr̄thivīyogato mr̄tyurna bhavedasya yogināḥ (87a)

Anvay

ucyate: it is said; *sthānam*: site; *pr̄thivī*: *pr̄thivī*, earth element; *ādi*: begins at; *pāda*: feet; *parvantam*: ends at; *jānu*: knees; *catusrasnam*: square; *pīta*: yellow; *varṇam*: in colour; *varṇakam*: has the sound; *la*: *lam*, bija mantra or seed sound of earth element and mūlādhāra cakra; *āropya*: directing; *vāyum*: breath; *pārthive*: within the area of the earth element; *samanvitam*: together with; *lakāreṇa*: sound *lam*; *dhyāmam*: meditating on; *bhajākāram*: performing worship; *catur caturvakram*: four mouthed and faced one, ie Brahma; *hiraṇmayam*: golden; *dhārayet*: he should concentrate; *pañca ghaṭikāḥ*: two hours (5 x 24 minutes); *āpnuyāt*: he would obtain; *jayam*: victory; *pr̄thivī*: earth; *mr̄tyuh*: death; *bhavet*: is; *na*: not; *asya*: for this; *yogināḥ*: yogin; *yogataḥ*: united with; *pr̄thivī*: earth element.

Translation

It is said that the site of *prthivī*, the earth element, begins at the feet and ends at the knees. (The symbol for) *prthivī* is a yellow square, and the *bīja* mantra, or seed sound, is *lam*.

Directing the breath within the area of the earth element together with the sound *lam*, meditating on and performing worship to the four faced, golden one, he should concentrate for two hours. [Thus] he would obtain victory over the earth. Death is not for this yogin, who has united with the earth element.

Commentary

These verses describe the method of *prthivī dhāraṇā*, or meditation on the earth element. The location of the earth element in the physical body is in-between the knees and the toes. The symbol that invokes this energy is a large yellow square. Yellow is the color of earth and the square represents its solid and substantial nature. The *bīja* mantra, or seed sound, associated with this element is *lam*, which is also the sound for *mūlādhāra* cakra, located in the region of the pelvic floor. Although *mūlādhāra* cakra holds the initial store of *prthivī* energy, this element has its own location in the physical body, which is different to the cakra.

In order to meditate on the earth element, the practitioner should direct the awareness into the region between the knees and the toes and here visualize a large, heavy yellow square. Mentally trace the four sides of the large square. See the yellow color. Feel the solidity, the weight. Then add the breath, inhaling up one side, exhaling across the next side, inhaling down the third side and exhaling across the fourth side. The sound *lam* should be repeated with each inhalation and exhalation.

When the concentration deepens, and becomes spontaneous, begin to visualize the form of Brahma, the lord of creation. Brahma is of golden hue with four heads and four mouths. As in the yellow square, the four heads and four mouths represent the four directions on earth.

By meditating regularly in this way for a duration of two hours, the earth element will be purified and strengthened. The practitioner will gradually become one with the earth energy and will thus attain mastery over it. Death will not come unbidden to this yogi, who has united with the energy of the earth element.

Verses 87b, 88, 89 and 90: Āpas dhāraṇā

आजानोः पायुपर्यन्तमापां स्थानं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥८७॥

आपो इर्धचन्द्रं शुक्लं च वंबीजं परिकीर्तितम् ।

वारुणे वायुमारोप्य वकारेण समन्वितम् ॥८८॥

स्मरन्नारायणं देवं चतुर्बाहुं किरीटिनम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं पीतवाससमच्युतम् ॥८९॥

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिकाः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।

ततो जलाद्वयं नास्ति जले मृत्युर्न विद्यते ॥९०॥

ājānoḥ pāyuparyantamāpām sthānam prakīrtitam (87b)

āpo ‘rdhacandram śuklam ca vambījam prakīrtitam

vāruṇe vāyumāropya vakāreṇa samanvitam (88)

smarannārāyaṇam devam caturbāhum kirīṭinam

śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśam pītavāsasamacyutam (89)

dhārayetpañca ghaṭikāḥ sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate

tato jalādbhayam nāsti jale mr̥tyurna vidyate (90)

Anvay

sthānam: area; *ājānoḥ*: from the knees; *paryantam*: up to; *pāyu*: anus; *prakīrtitam*: is named; *āpaḥ*: water element; *śukla*: white; *ārdha*: half; *candram*: moon; *ca*: and; *bījam*: seed *mantra*, vibration; *prakīrtitam*: is called; *vam*: *vam*; *āropya*: directing; *vāyum*: breath; *vāruṇe*: within the region of *āpas*, water element; *samanvitam*: together with; *vakāreṇa*: sound *vam*; *smaran*: remembering; *caturbāhum*: four-armed; *samacyutam*: imperishable; *devam*: god; *nārāyaṇa*: form of Viṣṇu; *kirīṭinam*: adorned with a crown; *saṃkāśam*: with the appearance; *śuddha*: pure; *sphaṭika*: crystal; *pīta*: orange; *vāsa*: garment; *dhārayet*: he should concentrate; *pañca ghaṭikāḥ*: two hours (5 x 24 minutes); *pramucyate*: he is freed; *sarva-pāpaiḥ*: from all sins; *tataḥ*: thus; *nāsti*: there is no; *bhayam*: fear; *jalāt*: of water; *mr̥tyuh*: death; *na vidyate*: does not occur; *jale*: in water.

Translation

The area from the knees up to the anus is named *āpas*, water element. [The symbol is] a white half-moon and its *bīja mantra* is *vam*. Directing the breath within the region of the water element together with the sound *vam*, remembering the four-armed, imperishable god Nārāyaṇa, adorned with a crown, with the appearance of pure crystal, [and wearing] an orange garment, he should concentrate for two hours, [and then] he is freed from all sins. Thus there is no fear of water, [as his] death does not occur in water.

Commentary

These verses describe the method of *āpas dhāraṇā*, meditation on the water element. The location of the water element in the body is in-between the navel and the knees. The symbol of water is a white crescent moon. The moon is the symbol of water, because it relates with the tides and thus controls the seas. The color of *āpas* is white, which represents purity, as water washes all things clean. The seed sound vibration is *vam*, which is also the sound of the *swādhiṣṭāna* cakra, located in the region of the tailbone. As with the other elements, it should be remembered that the location of the water element in the body is different to that of the cakra.

In order to meditate on the water element, the practitioner should first direct the awareness into the region between the navel and the knees. Here the white crescent moon should be visualized. Rotate the awareness along the upper curve of the crescent moon from left to right, and then along the lower curve from right to left. See the white color. Feel the fluid quality and the coolness. Then rotate the breath together with the awareness, inhaling along the upper curve of the crescent moon from left to

right, and then exhaling along the lower curve from right to left. Mentally intone the sound vibration *vam* together with the rotation of each breath.

When the concentration deepens and becomes spontaneous, begin to visualize the form of Nārāyaṇa, the imperishable lord, who sustains the universe. See Nārāyaṇa, lying in yoga nidrā, upon the serpent Ananta, floating on the ocean of milk. Nārāyaṇa has four arms and his form is transparent, like crystal, like clear water. He is wearing orange raiment, orange being the color of the swādhīṣṭāna lotus flower.

By meditating regularly in this way for a duration of two hours, the water element will be purified and strengthened. The practitioner will gradually become one with the water energy and will thus be freed from all sins and impurities. This yogi will have no fear of water. His or her death will not occur through water.

Verses 91, 92, 93 and 94a: Agni dhāraṇā

आपायोर्हृदयान्तं च वह्निस्थानं प्रकीर्तिम् ।

वह्निस्त्रिकोणं रक्तं च रेफाक्षरसमुद्भवम् ॥९१॥

वह्नौ चानिलमारोप्य रेफाक्षरसमुज्ज्वलम् ।

त्रियक्षं वरदं रुद्रं तरुणादित्यसंनिभम् ॥९२॥

भस्मोद्भूलितसर्वाङ्गं सुप्रसन्नमनुस्मरन् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटका वह्निनासौ न दह्यते ॥९३॥

न दह्यते शरीरं च प्रविष्टस्याग्निमण्डले ।९४।

āpāyorhṛdayāntam ca vahnisthānam prakīrtitam

vahnistrikōṇam raktaṁ ca rephākṣarasamudbhavam (91)

vahnau cānilamāropya rephāksarasamujjvalam

triyakṣam varadaṁ rudraṁ taruṇādityasamnibham (92)

bhasmāddhūlitasarvāṅgam suprasannamanusmaran

dhārayetpañca ghaṭikāḥ vahnināsau na dahyate (93)
na dahyate śarīram ca praviṣṭasyāgnimanḍale (94a)

Anvay

āpāyoḥ: from water; *hṛdayāntam*: to the heart; *prakīrtitam*: is called; *sthānam*: site; *vahni*: of agni, fire element; *vahniḥ*: agni; *trikonam*: triangular in shape; *raktaṁ*: red; *ca*: and; *samudbhavan*: is the source; *ākṣara*: letter of Sanskrit alphabet, subtle sound; *repha*: *ram*; *āropya*: directing; *vahnau*: within the fire element; *anilam*: vital air; *samujjvalam*: radiant; *dhārayet*: he should concentrate; *pañca ghaṭikāḥ*: two hours (5 x 24 minutes); *rudram*: Rudra; *smaran*: remembering; *suprasanna*: dazzling;

manu: sovereign; *triyakṣam*: three eyes; *varadam*: grants boons; *samnibham*: resembles; *taruṇāditya*: newly risen sun; *ca*: and; *aṅgam*: limbs; *sarva*: all; *dhūlita*: bestrewn; *bhasmāt*: with ash; *asau*: that one; *na*: not; *dahyate*: burned; *vahninā*: by fire; *śarīram*: body; *ca praviṣṭasya*: even when it has entered; *agni-mandale*: circle of fire, fire-pit.

Translation

From (the region of) water to the heart is called the site of *agni*, the fire element. (The symbol of) *agni* is a red triangle, and it is the source of the subtle sound *ram*. He should concentrate for two hours, directing the vital air, radiant with the mantra *ram*, within the fire element. Remembering Rudra, this dazzling sovereign, the three-eyed one, who grants boons, who resembles the newly risen sun, whose limbs are all smeared with ash, that one is not burned by fire. The body is not burned, even when it has entered the fire-pit.

Commentary

These verses describe the method of *agni dhāraṇā*, meditation on the fire element. The region of the water element is located from the knees to the navel. The location of the fire element is from the navel to the heart. The symbol of *agni* is a fiery red, inverted triangle, with the lower angle at the navel, and the upper two angles parallel with the heart. The fire element is the source of the *bīja* mantra *ram*, which is also the subtle sound associated with the *manipura* cakra, located behind the navel.

In order to meditate on the fire element, the practitioner should direct the awareness to this region between the navel and the heart. Visualize the radiant red, inverted triangle, filling this entire region with heat and light. Rotate the awareness along the three sides of the triangle, starting at the navel. Ascend along the right side, then cross over the top parallel to the heart, and descend along the left side. When this practice becomes familiar, add the rotation of the breath. Inhale up the right side, then hold the breath inside while moving across the top of the triangle, and exhale down the left side. When the rotation of the awareness and the breath become comfortable and continuous, add the repetition of the sound *ram* with each rotation.

This practice should continue until the awareness and the breath become subtle and deep, and the vision of the red inverted triangle becomes steady. Then begin to visualize the dazzling form of Rudra, the lord of fire. See the radiant red form of Rudra, which shines like the rising sun. Gaze at the three-eyed one, whose limbs are smeared with white ash. Feel the presence of Rudra, who easily grants boons to the supplicator.

By meditating in this way regularly for a period of two hours, the fire element is strengthened and purified. The body of that yogin has a radiant lustre, and is not burned by fire, even when he or she enters a fire-pit.

Verses 94b, 95, 96 and 97a: Vāyu dhāraṇā

आहदयाद्भूवोर्मध्यं वायुस्थानं प्रकीर्तिम् ॥१४॥

वायुः षत्कोणकं कृष्णं यकाराक्षरभासुरम् ।

मारुतं मरुतां स्थाने यकाराक्षरभासुरम् ॥१५॥

धारयेत्तत्र सर्वज्ञमीश्वरं विश्वतोमुखम् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिका वायुवदव्योमगो भवेत् ॥१६॥

मरणं न तु वायोश्च भयं भवति योगिनः ॥१७॥

āhṛdayādbhrūvormadhyam vāyusthānam prakīrtitam (94b)

vāyuh ṣaṭkonakam kṛṣṇam yakārākṣarabhāsuram

mārutam marutām sthāne yakārākṣarabhāsuram (95)

dhārayettatra sarvajñamīśvaram viśvatomukham

dhārayetpañca ghaṭikā vāyuvadvyomago bhavet (96)
maraṇam na tu vāyośca bhayam bhavati yoginah (97a)

Anvay

āhṛdayāt: from the heart; *bhrūvormadhyam*: to the eyebrow centre; *prakīrtitam*: is called; *sthānam*: site; *vāyuh*: of the air element; *ṣaṭkonakam*: hexagonal in shape; *kṛṣṇam*: blue; *bhāsuram*: glows with; *yakārākṣara*: sound vibration *yam*; *dhārayet*: he should concentrate on; *mārutam*: vital air; *bhāsuram*: radiating; *sthāne*: in the site of; *marutām*: Vayu; *tatra*: there; *dhārayet*: he should concentrate; *pañca ghaṭikā*: two hours; *sarvajñam*: all-knowing; *īśvaram*: Supreme Being; *mukham*: who has faces; *viśvataḥ*: on all sides; *vyomagaḥ*: siddhi of levitation; *bhavet*: comes into being; *vāyuvat*: through mastery of the air element; *bhayam*: fear; *vāyoḥ*: of air; *na bhavati*: cannot cause; *maraṇam*: death; *yoginah*: of the yogin.

Translation

From the heart to the eyebrow centre is called the site of *vāyu*, the air element. [The symbol of] *vāyu* is hexagonal in shape, blue in color, and glows with the vibration of *yam*. He should concentrate for two hours on the vital air, radiating the vibration *yam*, at the site of *vāyu*, and then on the all-knowing *Īśwara*, the Supreme Being, who has faces on all sides. The siddhi of levitation arises through mastery of *vāyu*. Fear of wind [is overcome, because wind] cannot cause the death of the yogin.

Commentary

These verses describe the method of *vāyu dhāraṇā*, meditation on the air element. The region of the air element is in-between the heart and the eyebrow center. The symbol is a blue hexagon and the *bīja* mantra is *yam*, which is the same sound associated with the *anāhata cakra*, located behind the heart.

In order to perform this *dhāraṇā*, one should first bring the awareness into the region between the heart and the eyebrow center. Visualize the form of a large blue hexagon, filling this entire space. See one point of the hexagon at the heart, a second point at the eyebrow center, and two points to either side. Rotate the awareness around the six sides of the hexagon in a clockwise direction, seeing each side clearly. When the placement of the six sides of the hexagon is seen clearly, begin to rotate the breath along with the awareness, inhaling upward along the three sides to the right, and then exhaling downward along the three sides to the left. When this practice becomes comfortable, begin to mentally repeat the sound *yam*, as each side of the hexagon is traversed. With practice, it can be felt that the

hexagon itself is radiating the sound *yam*.

When deep steadiness and stillness develop, and the awareness is totally merged in the practice, one should begin to visualize the all knowing Īswara, the lord of air. Air flows everywhere, so Īswara, the Supreme being, has faces on all sides. The yogi, who performs this practice regularly over a duration of time, develops the siddhi, or perfection, of levitation through the mastery of the air element. He or she becomes free from the fear of wind, because wind cannot be the cause of his or her death.

Verses 97b, 98, 99, 100, 101 and 102a: Ākāśa dhāraṇā

आप्रूमध्यातु मूर्धन्तमाकाशस्थानमुच्यते ॥९७॥

व्योम वृत्तं च धूमं च हकाराश्चरभासुरम् ।

आकशे वायुमारोप्य हकारोपरि शंकरम् ॥९८॥

बिन्दुरूपं महादेवं व्योमाकारं सदाशिवम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं धृतबालेन्दुमौलिनम् ॥९९॥

पञ्चवक्त्रयुतं सौम्यं दशबाहुं त्रिलोचनम् ।

सर्वायुधैर्धृताकरं सर्वभूषणभूषितम् ॥१००॥

उमार्धदेहं वरदं सर्वकारणकारणम् ।

आकाशधारणात्तस्य खेचरत्वं भवेद्ध्रुवम् ॥१०१॥

यत्रकुत्र स्थितो वापि सुखमत्यन्तमश्नुते ॥१०२॥

ābhrūmadhyāttu mūrdhāntamākāśasthānamucyate (97b)

vyoma vṛttam ca dhūmram ca hakārāścarabhāsuram

ākaśe vāyumāropya hakāropari śaṅkaram (98)

bindurūpam mahādevam vyomākāram sadāśivam

śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśam dhṛtabālendumaulinam (99)

pañcavaktrayutam saumyam daśabāhum trilocanam

sarvāyudhairdhṛtakaram sarvabhūṣaṇabhūṣitam (100)

umārdhadeham varadam sarvakāraṇakāraṇam

ākāśadḥāraṇāttasya khecaratvam bhaveddhruvam (101)
yatrakutra sthito vāpi sukhamatyantamaśnute (102a)

Anvay

tu: now; *ucyate:* it is said; *sthānam:* site; *ākāśa:* ether element; *ābhrūmadhyāt:* from the eyebrow centre; *mūrdhāntam:* to the crown of the head; *vyomah:* ether element; *vṛttam:* circular; *ca:* and; *dhūmram:* smoky-grey; *bhāsuram:* glows with; *hakārāḥ-cara:* vibration *ham;* *āropyā:* directing; *vāyum:* breath; *upari:* upwards; *ākāśe:* within the ether; *ha-kāra:* repeating *ham;* *dhāraṇāt:* he who concentrates; *mahādevam:* Supreme Deity; *sadāśiva:* manifestation of Śiva at the crown of the head, who is always auspicious; *śaṅkaram:* who is tranquil; *bindu-rūpam:* form of *bindu*, source of creation; *vyomākāram:* symbol of ether; *saṅkāśam:* shining like; *śuddha:* pure; *sphaṭika:* crystal; *dhṛta:* wearing; *bālendu:* crescent moon; *maulinam:* on his head; *yutam:* possessing; *pañca-vaktra:* five faces; *saumyam:* with pleasing expressions; *daśa-bāhum:* ten arms; *trilocanam:* three eyes; *dhṛtakaram:* armed with; *sarva-āyudhaiḥ:* all weapons; *bhūṣitam:* adorned with; *sarva-bhūṣaṇa:* all ornaments; *umā:* another name of Parvati, consort of Śiva; *ardha-deham:* half of his body; *varadam:* granting boons; *sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam:* cause of all causes; *tasya:* that [yogin]; *dhruvam:* certainly; *bhavet:* will be able; *khecaratvam:* to levitate; *vā-api:* and also; *aśnute:* enjoy; *atyantam:* endless; *sukham:* happiness; *yatrakutra:* wherever; *sthitah:* he is.

Translation

Now, it is said, the site of *ākāśa* is from the eyebrow centre to the crown of the head. The (symbol of the) ether element is a smokey-grey circle, and it glows with the vibration *ham*. Directing the breath upwards within (the region of) *ākāśa* [he should] repeat the sound *ham*. (The deity of *ākāśa* is) Sadāśiva, who is tranquil, with the form of *bindu*, and the shape of *vyoma*. (He) shines like pure crystal, and is wearing a crescent moon on his head. (He) has five faces with pleasing expressions [and] three eyes. His ten arms hold all weapons [and are] adorned with all ornaments. Uma resides within half of his body, granting boons. That yogin who concentrates within *ākāśa* on the supreme deity, Sadāśiva, who is the cause of all causes, will certainly be able to levitate, and also enjoy endless happiness wherever he is.

Commentary

These verses describe the method of *ākāśa dhāraṇā*, meditation on the ether or space element. Ether, or space, is the subtlest element, and is also the vehicle of consciousness. The location of *ākāśa* in the physical body is between the eyebrow center and the crown of the head. The symbol for space is a circle, which has no beginning and no end. The color of the circle is said here to be smokey-grey. Other texts describe it as black, white or multi-colored. The color of the circle represents the void, which has no color, and yet contains the possibility of all colors. The circle of the void fills the space above the eyebrows, and it vibrates with the bija mantra *ham*.

The practitioner should direct his awareness into the space above the eyebrows, and visualize the circle of the void. Seeing the periphery of the circle clearly, he should rotate the awareness around it in a clockwise direction. When this rotation becomes effortless, he should add the awareness of the breath, so that each inhalation is one complete rotation of the circle and each exhalation is the next rotation. When this practice becomes spontaneous, the sound *ham* should be repeated together with each rotation of the breath. When the awareness becomes steady and one-pointed on the rotation of the breath and the sound around the perimeter of the circle, the practitioner should visualize the supreme deity, Sadāśiva, in the space of the circle.

Sadāśiva is calm and tranquil, and represents all auspiciousness. His form is also the *bindu*, or point of manifestation, indicating that he is the source of creation. He is the form of *vyoma*, or space, which is vast and unlimited, like the empty sky. He is transparent and shines like pure crystal. These are the symbols also found in the highest cakras. In *ajña*, there is the black *itarakya lingam*, or symbol of Śiva as the space of consciousness; in *bindu* the point of light in the space of consciousness, and in *sahasrāra*, the crystal lingam, the transparent form of Śiva, radiating the pure light of consciousness.

Sadāśiva wears the crescent moon on the crown of his head, which is another symbol of *bindu* cakra. The crescent moon represents the reflected wisdom of the pure consciousness, in the same way that the moon reflects the light of the sun. It is also the source of *amrit*, the eternal nectar, which drips down from *bindu* chakra into the body, conferring the energy of life, regeneration and transformation. Sadāśiva has five faces, each with three eyes and pleasing expressions. The five faces, which represent the five forms or aspects of Śiva, are as follows: (i) Īśāna, (ii) Tatpuruṣa, (iii) Aghora, (iv) Vamadeva, and (v) Sadyojāṭha.

These five faces of Śiva represent the five aspects of creation. The face of Īśāna is turned upward, and represents the highest aspect; it is also called Sadāśiva. This face represents the spiritual dimension, and is the deity which grants *mokṣa*, or liberation. It also represents the element of akasha. *Tatpuruṣa* faces east, rules over the air element and represents the forces of darkness and obscuration on the spiritual plane. *Aghora* faces south, and rules over the element of fire. It has the power of dissolution and regeneration. *Vamadeva* faces north, rules over the element water, and is responsible for preservation. *Sadyojāṭha* faces west, rules over the earth element, and represents the power of creation.

Each of these five faces has a pleasing expression, indicating their benign role in the process of creation and evolution. Each face is also described as having three eyes; two eyes which see the external existence and the third eye in the middle, which sees the subtle existence within. Sadāśiva, comprising the five aspects or faces of creation, is said to have ten arms, each holding different weapons. The five hands on the right side display a trident, axe, sword, bow, and *abhaya mudra*, gesture of fearlessness or protection. The five hands on the left side display a noose, snake, bell, sheath of arrows and *varada mudrā*, gesture of compassion or bestowing of boons.

The ten arms of Sadāśiva are also adorned with beautiful gems and ornaments. These two aspects, the weapons and the ornaments, represent the power of Sadāśiva to protect the creation, and also to provide it with the essence of beauty and value. He is also known as *Ardhanareśwara*, the androgenous Śiva, because Uma, his consort, who represents the cosmic energy, resides within the left half of his body, bestowing boons upon the creation. The verse further states, that yogin, who concentrates within the region of ākāśa, between the eyebrows and the crown of the head, on the supreme deity, Sadāśiva, who is the cause of all causes, will certainly be able to levitate, and will enjoy endless happiness wherever he may be.

Verses 102b and 103: Means to attain immortality

एवं च धारणा: पञ्च कुर्याद्योगी विचक्षणः ॥१०२॥

ततो दृढशरीरः स्यान्मृत्युस्तस्य न विद्यते ।

ब्रह्मणः प्रलयेनापि न सीदति महामतिः ॥१०३॥

evam ca dhāraṇāḥ pañca kuryādyogī vicakṣanah (102b)

tato dṛḍhaśarīrah syānmṛtyustasya na vidyate

brahmaṇah pralayenāpi na sīdati mahāmatih (103)

Anvay

ca: and; *evam:* so; *vicakṣanah:* accomplished; *yogī:* yogin; *kuryāt:* should perform; *pañca:* five; *dhāraṇāḥ:* types of concentration; *tatah:* then; *śarīrah:* body; *syāt:* becomes; *dṛḍha:* strong; *mṛtyuh:* death; *na:* not; *vidyate:* is known; *tasya:* to him; *mahāmatih:* wise man; *na:* not; *sīdati:* does perish; *api:* even; *pralaya:* dissolution of the manifest cosmos into the unmanifest; *brahmaṇah:* of Brahma, all-pervading creator.

Translation

And so the accomplished yogin should perform [these] five dhāraṇās. Then his body becomes strong [and] death is not known to him. The wise man does not perish, even at the time of *pralaya*, when the universe is dissolved back into Brahma.

Commentary

The physical body is comprised of the five elements. The proficient yogi should practise these five dhāraṇās because, by doing so, the five elements are purified, rebalanced and regenerated. When the elements are regenerated, the body becomes strong and immutable. In ordinary persons, disease, ageing and death are due to the imbalance and weakening of the elements, which is the natural cause of degeneration. For example, when the earth element weakens, the bones and nails become brittle, the muscles flacid, and the teeth and hair fall out. When the water element weakens, the body withers and the hair goes grey. When the fire element weakens, the skin becomes dull, and the digestion and metabolism are slowed. When the air element weakens, the nerves are affected and palsy sets in. When the ether element weakens, the mind is affected and the memory is impaired.

By the practice of these five dhāraṇās, the elemental forces become immutable. The body of that yogi, who masters the elemental forces, does not weaken, age or perish. Death cannot come to him or her unbidden, even at the time of universal dissolution, when the entire manifest existence is reabsorbed back into the unmanifest by Brahma, the lord of creation.

Verses 104, 105 and 106: Dhyāna

समर्थसेत्था ध्यानं घटकाषष्टिमेव च ।

वायुं निरुद्ध्य चाकाशे देवतामिष्टदामिति ॥१०४॥

सगुणं ध्यानमेतत्स्यादणिमादिगुणप्रदम् ।

निर्गुणध्यानयुक्तस्य समाधिश्च ततो भवेत् ॥१०५॥

दिनद्वादशकेनैव समाधि समवाज्ञयात्

वायुं निरुद्ध्य मेधावि जीवस्मुक्तो भवत्ययम् ॥१०६॥

samabhyasettathā dhyānam ghaṭikāṣṭimeva ca

vāyum nirudhya cākāśe devatāmiṣṭadāmiti (104)

sagunām dhyānametatsyādaṇimādiguṇapradam

nirguṇadhyānayuktasya samādhiśca tato bhavet (105)

dinadvādaśakenaiva samādhi samavāpnuyāt

vāyum nirudhya medhāvī jīvanmukto bhavatyayam (106)

Anvay

tathā: then; *nirudhya:* holding; *vāyum:* breath; *ṣaṭim:* six; *ākāśe:* in the ether element; *samabhyaset:* he should practise; *ghaṭikā:* period of twenty four minutes; *dhyānam:* deep meditation; *devatām:* on the deity; *dām:* grants; *iṣṭa:* wishes; *iti:* it is said; *etat:* this; *syāt:* is; *saguna dhyāna:* meditation on the deity with form and qualities; *pradam:* which bestows; *guṇa:* attributes; *ādi:* beginning with; *anīmā:* power of making the body small and subtle; *ca:* and; *tataḥ:* thus; *yuktasya:* he is merged in; *nirguna-dhyāna:* meditation on the deity without form and qualities; *bhavet:* attains; *saṁādhiḥ:* state of unity with the deity; *saṁavāpnuyāt:* he should obtain; *eva:* just; *dvādaśakena:* within twelve; *dina:* days; *nirudhya:* having retained; *vāyum:* breath; *ayam:* this; *medhāvi:* wise one; *bhavati:* becomes; *jīvanmuktaḥ:* liberated while living in the body.

Translation

Then, holding the breath in the ether element, he should practise deep meditation on the deity with form and qualities, who grants his wishes, for six *ghaṭikas* (two hours and twenty four minutes). It is said this is *saguna dhyāna*, meditation on form, which bestows attributes, beginning with *anīmā*, the power of making the body small and subtle. And thus he is merged in *nirguna dhyāna*, formless meditation, and attains *saṁādhi*, transcendental meditation. He should obtain this within just twelve days. Having retained the breath, this wise one becomes a *jīvanmukta*, liberated while still living in the body.

Commentary

These verses describe the attainment of the higher stages of meditation, *dhyāna* and *saṁādhi*, as it was experienced by the yogis of old. Holding the breath can be understood as breath retention in conjunction with the practice of pranayama. However, here it refers to focusing the breath and breathing into the region of *ākāśa* for a period of about two and a half hours. This is the period considered to be necessary for a practitioner to enter into a deep state of meditation. The space of *ākāśa*, as described earlier, can be experienced between the eyebrows and the crown of the head. While breathing in and out of this space, one should concentrate on the personal form of one's deity, who grants all wishes.

Space is the substratum for all manifestation, and therefore, everything exists within it. The deity visualized in the space represents the subtle source of all existence, and is therefore the one, who grants all wishes. The practitioner should imagine or visualize the deity in the illumined space of consciousness, which is within everything, and at the same time, beyond everything. This pure

consciousness can assume or manifest all forms, but in itself is formless. This practice of meditation is called *saguṇa dhyāna*, deep meditation on form, which bestows certain attributes, or siddhis, when it is perfected. The first of these powers is referred to here as *aṇīma*, the ability of subtlety, by which physical mass and density can be reduced at will.

When *saguṇa dhyāna* is perfected, one merges into the state of *nirguṇa dhyāna*, deep formless meditation, and thus attains *saṁādhi*, the transcendental state. The verse further states that the yogi should attain this state within twelve days, providing the practice is performed correctly. Hence, having focused the breath and the mind in deep meditation within the region of space, the wise person becomes a *jīvanmukta*, liberated while living in the body.

Verses 107 and 108: Samādhi

समाधिः समतावस्था जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ।

यदि स्वदेहमुत्सृष्टुमिच्छा चेदुत्सृजेत्स्वयम् ॥१०७॥

परब्रह्मणि लीयेत न तस्योत्क्रान्तिरिष्यते ।

अथ नो चेत्समुत्सृष्टं स्वशरीरं प्रियं यदि ॥१०८॥

saṁādhiḥ samatāvasthā jīvātmaparamātmanoḥ

yadi svadehamutsraṣṭumicchā cedutsrjetsvayam (107)

parabrahmaṇi līyeta na tasyotkrāntiriṣyate

atha no cetsamutsraṣṭum svaśarīram priyam yadi (108)

Anvay

saṁādhiḥ: unity with highest consciousness; *avasthā*: state; *jīvātma*: individual self; *paramātmanoḥ*: and the cosmic self; *saṁatā*: same; *yadi*: if; *icchā*: desire; *utsraṣṭum*: to abandon; *sva*: his own; *deham*: body; *utsrjet*: can be accomplished; *svayam*: by himself; *līyeta*: attached; *parabrahmani*: to the supreme reality; *tasya*: he; *na iṣyate*: does not seek; *utkrāntih*: to ascend.

Translation

Saṁādhi is the state [in which] the individual soul and the cosmic soul [are] the same. If (the yogin) desires to abandon the body, this can be accomplished by himself. Being attached to the supreme reality, he does not seek to ascend.

Commentary

In these verses, *saṁādhi* is described as the state of union between the *ātman* and the *paramātman*. The *ātman*, or self, is the individual field of consciousness. The *paramātman*, or supreme self, is the cosmic field of consciousness. When the spirit is born in the body, the unlimited, or supreme, consciousness becomes limited to that particular individual being. The consciousness, being limited, is

then perceived by the individual as comprising different states of consciousness such as: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. In the state of samādhi, this limitation or division of consciousness is transcended. The individual consciousness merges into the cosmic consciousness.

In samādhi, the embodied state of existence is transcended, although there is still a connection between the body and the consciousness. Usually, the yogin will return to the body via this connection and resume his or her physical existence. It is said that the consciousness may remain outside of the body in this way for a period of up to thirteen days. If the yogin wishes to remain in the super-conscious state beyond this period, the connection between the body and the consciousness will be severed, so that returning to the body will no longer be possible. Similarly, if the yogin should wish to abandon the body, this can also be accomplished at the time of his or her choosing, by entering the state of samādhi with the intention of not returning to the physical body.

Swami Satyananda, a great yogin of the 20th century, chose to leave his body in this way. On December 5th, 2009, he informed his disciple, Swami Satyasangananda, that he would leave his body that evening. He said that he had chosen that particular date and time, as it offered the best possible window for his ascension. At 8:00 pm, he sat down in his room in the company of his disciple and entered the state of samādhi. Over the next few hours, his disciple was able to witness the process of his ascension, as the prāṇas and consciousness of the master gradually rose upward and departed from the opening at the top back of the head. Around midnight, the doctor was called in, and after examining the body, he declared that Swami Satyananda had passed on.

An accomplished yogin is able to leave the body at will, because he has transcended the physical identity and all the desires that it ignites. Even while living in the body, during the course of his life and practice, the yogin has entered the supreme consciousness many times and become familiar with this transcendental state of being. In this way, he detaches himself from the physical state, and slowly attaches himself to *parabrahman*, the supreme state of ever-expanding consciousness. When this shift in consciousness is made, the yogin no longer seeks to ascend; he has ascended. The desire to ascend indicates that the transition from individual identity to cosmic consciousness is not yet complete.

Verses 109, 110 and 111: Liberation

सर्वलोकेषु विहरन्नणिमादिगुणान्वितः ।

कदाचित्स्वेच्छया देवो भूत्वा स्वर्गे महीयते ॥१०९॥

मनुष्यो वापि यक्षो वा स्वेच्छयापीक्षणाद्ववेत् ।

सिंहो व्याघ्रो गजो वाश्वः स्वेच्छया हुतामियात् ॥११०॥

यथेष्टमेव वर्तेत यद्वा योगी महेश्वरः ।

अभ्यासभेदतो भेदः फलं तु सममेव हि ॥१११॥

sarvalokeṣu viharannaṇimādiguṇānvitah

kadācitsvecchayā devo bhūtvā svarge mahīyate (109)

manuṣyo vāpi yakṣo vā svecchayāpīkṣaṇādbhavet

simho vyāghro gajo vāśvah svecchayā bahutāmiyat (110)

yathेष्टameva varteta yadvā yogī maheśvarah

abhyāsabhedato bhedah phalam tu samameva hi (111)

Anvay

anvitah: endowed with; *guṇa*: attributes; *ādi*: such as; *aṇimā*: power of making the body small and subtle; *viharan*: he moves; *sarva-lokeṣu*: within all the worlds; *kadācit*: at times; *bhūtvā*: having become; *devah*: divine being; *svecchayā*: through his own will; *mahīyate*: he is highly honoured; *svarge*: in the celestial world; *vā*: or; *api*: even; *bhavet*: he may take on; *svecchayā*: through his own will; *īkṣanāt*: appearance; *manuṣyah*: man; *yakṣah*: demi-god; *iyāt*: he may go; *svecchayā*: by his own will; *bahutām*: in many forms; *simhah*: lion; *vyāghrah*: tiger; *gajah*: elephant; *vā*: or; *aśvah*: horse; *yogī*: yogin; *yadvā*: who is like; *maheśvarah*: Supreme Lord; *varteta*: exists; *yathā*: in accordance with; *eva*: his own; *iṣṭam*: wishes; *bhedah*: difference; *bhedataḥ*: various; *abhyāsa*: practices; *tu . . . eva hi*: but . . . indeed; *phalam*: result; *samam*: same.

Translation

Endowed with attributes, such as *anima*, the power of making the body minute and subtle, he moves within all the worlds. At times, having become a *deva*, divine being, through his own will, he is highly honoured in the celestial world. Or, through his own will, he may even take the appearance of a man or a *yakṣa*, demi-god. By his own will, he may move in many forms, [such as] a lion, tiger, elephant or horse. The *yogin*, who is like the supreme lord, exists in accordance with his own wishes. [There is] a difference in the various practices, but indeed the result is the same.

Commentary

These verses describe the life of the accomplished yogin. Being endowed with all the *siddhis*, or attributes of perfection, such as *anima*, the power of making the body subtle and imperceptible, he moves freely within all the worlds, or planes of existence. At times, by the power of his own will, he transforms himself into a *deva*, luminous divine being, and is highly honored in the heavenly realms. At other times, again by the power of his own will, he may assume the appearance of a man or a demi-god. He is also able to move about in many animal forms by his own will, such as a lion, tiger, elephant or horse. This yogin, being liberated from a particular identity and merged with the totality of consciousness, is like the supreme lord, and exists in accordance with his own wishes. Finally, the verse says, there are many different yogic practices, which one may choose to perfect, but the result of them all is the same—liberation.

Verses 112, 113, 114 and 115a: Mahābandha

पार्ष्णि वामस्य पादस्य योनिस्थाने नियोजयेत् ।

प्रसार्य दक्षिणं पादं हस्ताभ्यां धारयेद्वृद्धम् ॥११२॥

चुबुकं हृदि विन्यस्य पूरयेद्वायुना पुनः ।

कुम्भकेन यथाशक्ति धारयित्वा तु रेचयेत् ॥११३॥

वामाङ्गेन समभ्यस्य दक्षाङ्गेन ततो उभ्यसेत् ।

प्रसारितस्तु यः पादस्तमूरूपरि नामयेत् ॥११४॥

अयमेव महाबन्ध उभयत्रैवमभ्यसेत् ॥११५॥

pārṣṇim vāmasya pādasya yonisthāne niyojayed

prasārya dakṣinam pādam hastābhyaṁ dhārayeddr̥dham(112)

cubukam hr̥di vinyasya pūrayedvāyunā punah

kumbhakena yathāśakti dhārayitvā tu recayet (113)

vāmāṅgena samabhyasya dakṣāṅgena tato ‘bhyaṣet

prasāritastu yah pādastamūrūpari nāmayet (114)

ayameva mahābandha ubhayatraivamabhyaset (115a)

Anvay

niyojayed: he should press; *pārṣṇim*: heel; *vāmasya pādasya*: of the left foot; *sthāne*: within the region; *yoni*: perineum; *prasārya*: having extended; *dakṣinam pādam*: right leg; *dhārayet*: he should hold; *dr̥dham*: firmly; *hastābhyaṁ*: with both hands; *vinyasya*: placing; *cubukam*: chin; *hr̥di*: on the chest; *pūrayet-vāyunā*: he should inhale; *punah*: again; *dhārayitvā*: maintaining; *kumbhakena*: breath retention; *yathāśakti*: as long as possible; *tu*: then; *recayet*: he should exhale; *samabhyasya*: having practised; *vāma-aṅgena*: with the

left foot; *tataḥ*: then; *abhyaset*: he should practise; *dakṣa-aṅgena*: with the right foot; *nāmayet*: he should bend; *yah*: whichever; *pādah*: leg; *prasāritah*: is stretched out; *pari*: against; *ūrū*: thigh; *ayameva*: this is; *mahābandha*: *mahābandha*, great lock; *evam*: in this way; *abhyaset*: it should be practised; *ubhayatra*: on both sides.

Translation

He should press the heel of the left foot in the region of the perineum. Having extended the right leg, he should hold [it] firmly with both hands. Placing the chin on the chest, he should inhale again. Maintaining breath retention for as long as possible, he should then exhale. Having practised with the left foot, he should then practise with the right. He should then bend whichever leg is stretched out against the thigh. This is *mahābandha*; in this way it should be practised on both sides.

Commentary

Here the practice of *mahābandha* is described. *Mahābandha*, the great lock, is a higher practice of *hatha* yoga, which is used to awaken the *kundalinī*, and free it from obstruction at the level of the *mūlādhāra* and *viśuddhi* cakras.

The instruction begins with the description of *uttanpadāsana*. Sitting with both legs outstretched in front, one should bend the left knee, and press the left heel into the region of the perineum. Next, keeping the right leg outstretched, one should grasp the toes of the right foot with both hands and hold

them firmly. While holding this position, inhale deeply and bend the head forward, placing the chin on the chest. Inhale again a little more with the head down, and then retain the breath inside for as long as possible. At the end of the breath retention, raise the head and then slowly exhale.

After completing the round of practice with the left foot pressed into the perineum, one should change legs and practice with the left leg extended and the right foot pressed into the perineum.

In this way, the technique should be practised on both sides.

At the completion of the practice, one should bend the outstretched leg, so that the sole of that foot presses against the opposite thigh, as in the meditation āsana, called siddhāsana. This is mahābandha.

In other hatha yoga texts, mahābandha incorporates all three of the bandhas: mūla bandha, uddiyāna bandha and jālandhara bandha. Mūlabandha is the perineal lock, which was described in the technique above, by pressing the heel into the perineum, and pulling upward on the muscles in this region. Jālandhara bandha is the chin lock, described as bending the head forward until the chin touches the chest. However, uddiyāna bandha, the abdominal lock, is not included in the above practice.

Mahābandha is traditionally performed in the cross-legged meditation posture, called siddhāsana; whereas the practice described here is performed in uttānpādāsana, with one leg stretched forward and the other leg bent. Therefore, we would say that the above description could also be an early version of the practice of mahāvedha mudrā.

Verses 115b, 116 and 117a: Mahāvedha mudrā

वायुनां गतिमावृत्य निभृतं कण्ठमुद्रया ।

पुटद्वयं समाक्रम्य वामहाबन्धस्थितो योगी कृत्वा पूरकमेकधीः ॥११५॥

युः स्फुरति सत्वरम् ॥११६॥

अयमेव महावेधः सिद्धैरभ्यस्यते ऽनिशम् ॥११७॥

mahābandhasthito yogī kṛtvā pūrakamekadhiḥ (115b)

vāyunām gatimāvṛtya nibhṛtam̄ kanṭhamudrayā

puṭadvayam samākramya vāyuḥ sphurati satvaram (116)

ayameva mahāvedhah siddhairabhyasyate ‘niśam (117a)

Anvay

yogī: yogin; *sthitaḥ*: in the position of; *mahābandha*: great lock; *kṛtvā pūrakam*: having inhaled; *ekadhiḥ*: his mind still; *avṛtya nibhṛtam*: stops; *kanṭha-mudrayā*: by means of the throat lock; *gatim*: flow; *vāyunām*: of the prāṇas, five vital energies; *samākramya*: having entered; *puṭa-dvayam*: two-sided cavity, two nāḍīs, idā and piṅgalā; *vāyuḥ*: prāṇa; *sphurati*: vibrates; *satvaram*: quickly; *ayam-eva*: this is; *mahāvedhah*: great piercer; *abhyasyate*: it is practised; *aniśam*: continually; *siddhaiḥ*: by accomplished yogins who have obtained the eight supernatural powers.

Translation

The yogin, (sitting) in the position of mahābandha, having inhaled, with his mind still, stops the flow of the prāṇas by means of the throat lock. The two nādīs, idā and piṅgalā, having entered (suṣumnā), the prāṇa vibrates quickly. This is *mahāvedha*; it is practised continually by the siddhas.

Commentary

Here the practice of *mahāvedha* mudrā is described. This is an earlier rendition of the technique, which later developed as a mudrā of haṭha yoga, and also of kriyā yoga. The root *mahā* means ‘great’, *vedha* means ‘piercing’ and *mudrā* means ‘attitude’. So this is the great piercing attitude or movement, which causes the kuṇḍalinī śakti to pierce through the opening of suṣumnā and rise upward to the brain.

The yogin should sit in the position of mahābandha, described above. Next he should inhale deeply, hold the breath inside, and bend the head forward into the throat lock. Retaining the breath inside for as long as possible in this position, the mind becomes very still and the flow of prāṇa is stopped by means of the throat lock.

When the activity of the mind and prāṇa cease, the two nādīs, idā and piṅgalā, become balanced and merge with suṣumnā. This causes the prāṇa to vibrate at a higher velocity, forcing the kuṇḍalinī śakti to pierce the suṣumnā and rise upward to the higher centers.

This method of *mahāvedha* is practised by the accomplished yogins, who wish to awaken the kuṇḍalinī, and maintain this awakening during their lifetime.

Verses 117b and 118a: Khecarī mudrā

अन्तःकपालकुहरे जिह्वां व्यावृत्य धारयेत् ॥११७॥

भ्रूमध्यदृष्टिरप्येषा मुद्रा भवति खेचरी ॥११८॥

antahkapālakuhare jihvām vyāvrtya dhārayet (117b)
bhrūmadhyadṛṣṭirapyeṣā mudrā bhavati khecarī (118a)

Anvay

vyāvrtya: folding back; *jihvām*: tongue; *kuhara*: within the cavity; *antah*: inside; *kapāla*: head; *dhārayet*: he should fix; *dṛṣṭih*: gaze; *bhrūmadhya*: on the point between the eyebrows; *api*: then; *eṣā*: this; *bhavati*: is; *khecarī mudrā*: tongue lock.

Translation

Folding the tongue back within the cavity inside the head, he should fix the gaze on the point between the eyebrows; then this is *khecarī mudrā*.

Commentary

Khecarī mudrā is an ancient practice, found in the yoga upaniṣads and in all the classical texts on haṭha yoga. Although it is regarded as a physical practice today, the yogis of old used it as a complete form of meditation in itself in order to attain the transcendental state of consciousness. The root *khe* comes from the word *kha*, meaning ‘sky’, and *cari* or *carya* means ‘to roam’. When the practice of

khecarī mudrā is perfected and performed regularly for long periods, it allows the yogin to roam freely in the vast sky, or space, of the higher consciousness. The technique given here is as follows:

Sitting in a comfortable and steady meditation āsana, one should close the eyes and allow the body and mind to become still. Next, fold the tongue back as far as possible into the cavity at the back of the throat. Maintaining this position for as long as possible, one should focus the awareness and the inner gaze upon the point of ajña cakra, in-between the eyebrows. At first, it may be necessary to release the tongue frequently, relax it and then resume the mudrā. With practice, however, it becomes easier to maintain the position for longer periods of time.

This is khecarī mudrā, the attitude of dwelling in the highest consciousness.

Verses 118b and 119a: Jālandhara bandha

कण्ठमाकुञ्चय हृदये स्थापयेद्वृढया धिया ॥११८॥

बन्धो जालंधराख्यो ऽयं मृत्युमातङ्ककेसरी ।११९।

kanṭhamākuñcaya hr̥daye sthāpayeddr̥dhayā dhiyā (118b)
bandho jālamdharaḥkhyo ‘yam mr̥tyumātaṅkakesarī (119a)

Anvay

akuñcaya: contracting; *kanṭham*: throat; *sthāpayet*: he should place; *dr̥dhayā dhiyā*: with focused mind; *hr̥daye*: on the chest; *ayam*: this; *ākhyah*: is called; *jālamdhara bandhah*: throat lock; *kesarī*: lion; *ātaṅka*: to the fear; *mr̥tyum*: of death.

Translation

Contracting the throat, he should place [the chin] on the chest with focused mind. This is called jālandhara bandha [and] is a lion to the fear of death.

Commentary

Jālandhara is one of the four bandhas, or psychic locks. It is performed by bending the head forward, so that the chin touches the chest. In this pose, the awareness should be focused on the point where the chin meets the chest. Bending the head forward in this manner contracts the region of viśuddhi cakra, which is located behind the throat pit.

The word jālandhara is comprised of two roots: *jāla* means ‘net’, and *dhara* is a ‘flow’. According to the philosophy of Tantra, the *amṛta*, or nectar of life, flows down through the body from bindu cakra, which is located at the top back of the head. This nectar contains two properties: *amṛta*, immortal life, and *viś*, poison, that is responsible for degeneration, disease, old age and death. As long as the nectar remains within the higher consciousness, in the region of the head, the *viś* aspect does not become active. However, when the nectar flows downward into the body, the *viś* is activated.

The purpose of viśuddhi cakra is to purify, or process, the nectar before it flows down into the body in order to remove the *vish*. The words *viś* and *suddhi*, ‘purification’ are contained within the term viśuddhi. However, viśuddhi can only process the nectar (i) if this center is activated, and (ii) if the nectar is held within this center for a duration of time. Jālandhara acts as a net at the base of the neck

for catching the flow of nectar, before it drips down into the body, along with the property of viś, or poison, which causes degeneration.

The regular practice of jālandhara bandha activates viśuddhi cakra, and enables it to become a processing center for the flow of amṛta. When the degenerative properties are removed from the amṛta on an ongoing basis, the body of the yogin is said to become free from aging, disease and death. Hence, this verse describes jālandhara bandha as a lion to the fear of death. Just as the lion roams the jungle fearlessly, the yogin who perfects the practice of jālandhara bandha, lives in this world free from the fear of degeneration, disease and death.

Verses 119b and 120a: Uddiyāna bandha

बन्धो येन सुषुम्नायां प्राणस्तूङ्गीयते यतः ॥११९॥

उड्डयानाख्यो हि बन्धो ऽयं योगिभिः समुदाहृतः ॥१२०॥

bandho yena suṣumnāyām prāṇastūḍīyate yataḥ (119b)
uddiyānākhyo hi bandho ‘yam yogibhīḥ samudāhṛtah (120a)

Anvay

tu: now; *yataḥ:* that; *bandhah:* lock; *yena:* by which; *prāṇa:* vital energy; *uddīyate:* flies up; *suṣumnāyām:* through suṣumnā, central energy channel in the spine; *samudāhṛtah:* is called; *uddīyāna bandhah:* abdominal lock; *yogibhīḥ:* by the yogins.

Translation

Now that bandha by which the prāṇa flies upward through suṣumnā is called *uddīyāna bandha* by the yogins.

Commentary

If the amṛta, or nectar of life, that falls down from bindu cakra, is not filtered in the net of jālandhara bandha and processed at viśuddhi cakra, then it falls down into the body and collects at maṇipura cakra, behind the navel. Here it maintains the life force, but also its antithesis, the force of degeneration, disease and death.

Uddīyāna bandha is known as the abdominal lock. It is performed by drawing the abdomen inward and then upward, causing an upsurge of energy. The word *uddīyāna* means ‘to rise up’, ‘to fly up’. Uddīyāna bandha is the psychic lock, which causes the prāṇa, or the amṛta, that is collected and stored at the maṇipura cakra to fly upward through the suṣumnā nāḍī to the brain and the higher centers of consciousness.

Verses 120b and 121a: Yoni or mūla bandha

पार्षिभागेन सम्पीड्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेद्वर्धम् ॥१२०॥

अपानमूर्धमुत्थाप्य योनिबन्धो ऽयमुच्यते ॥१२१॥

pārṣṇibhāgena sampīḍya yonimākuñcayeddrdhām (120b)

apānamūrdhvamutthāpya yonibandho ‘yamucyate (121a)

Anvay

ākuñcayet: he should contract; *drdham*: firmly; *yonim*: perineum; *sampīdya*: by means of pressure; *bhāgena*: with part; *pārṣṇi*: of the heel; *utthāpya*: raising; *apānam*: vital energy which moves downward from navel to perineum; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *ayam*: this; *ucyate*: is called; *yonibandhaḥ*: perineum lock.

Translation

He should firmly contract the perineum by means of pressure with part of the heel, raising the *apāna* upwards; this is called *yoni bandha*.

Commentary

This verse describes the practice of yoni bandha, also called mūla bandha, contraction of the perineum. Yoni or mūla bandha activates the mūlādhāra cakra, which is located below the tip of the spinal column, two centimeters interior to the perineum in the male body, and at the outer surface of the cervix in the female body.

Applying pressure to the perineum with the heel, suggests that the practitioner would sit in *siddhāsana*, or *siddhayoni āsana*, with the sole of the right foot placed flat against the inner left thigh and the right heel pressing firmly against the perineum. The toes of the left foot are wedged into the space between the right calf and thigh. The left heel rests on top of the right heel, exerting a mild pressure against the pubic bone, which is the triggerpoint for swādhishṭhāna cakra.

Apāna is one of the five flows of prānic energy, which sustain the physical body from within. Apāna flows downward in the pelvic region from the waist to the pelvic floor, and is responsible for the processes of evacuation in this area. By the practice of mūlabandha, this downward flow of prāna is reversed, and directed upward to ajña cakra, at the mid-brain. This is very beneficial for meditation, and for activating the mental processes. It helps to raise the energies, thereby removing negative states, such as anxiety, depression and mental dissipation.

Verses 121b, 122, 123 and 124a: Viparīta karaṇī mudrā with mūlabandha

प्राणापानौ नादबिन्दू मूलबन्धेन चैकताम् ॥१२१॥

गत्वा योगस्य संसिद्धिं यच्छतो नात्र संशयः ।

करणी विपरीताख्या सर्वव्याधिविनाशिनी ॥१२२॥

नित्यमध्यासयुक्तस्य जाठरान्निविवर्धनी ।

आहारो बहुलस्तस्य संपाद्यः साधकस्य च ॥१२३॥

अल्पाहारो यदि भवेदग्निर्देहं हरेत्क्षणात् ।१२४।

prāṇāpānau nādabindu mūlabandhena caikatām (121b)

gatvā yogasya samsiddhim yacchato nātra samśayah

karaṇī viparītākhyā sarvavyādhivināśinī (122)

nityamabhyāsayuktasya jāṭharāgnivivardhanī

āhāro bahulastasya sampadyah sādhakasya ca (123)

alpāhāro yadi bhavedagnirdeham haretkṣanāt (124a)

Anvay

prāṇa-apāna: prāṇa-apāna; *ca*: and; *nāda-bindu*: nāda (subtle sound vibration) and bindu (point of origin); *ekatām*: are united; *mūlabandhena*: through mūlabandha, perineal lock; *gatvā*: attaining; *samsiddhim*: success; *yogasya*: in yoga; *yacchataḥ*: there is; *na*; no; *samśayah*: doubt; *atra*: here; *karaṇī*: performing; *viparīta*: inverted; *yuktasya*: by one engaged in; *nityam*: continual; *abhyāsa*: practice; *ākhyā*: is said; *vivardhanī*: to increase; *jāṭhara-agni*: digestive fire; *vināśinī*: removing; *sarva*: all; *vyādhi*: diseases; *bahulastasya*: abundance [of food]; *āhārah*: should be brought; *ca*: and; *sampadyah*: consumed; *sādhakasya*: by the aspirant; *yadi*: if; *alpa*: little; *bhavet*: is; *āhārah*: supplied; *agnih*: fire; *kṣanāt*: immediately; *haret*: will take; *deham*: body.

Translation

Prāṇa/apāna and *nāda/bindu*, are united through (the

practice of) mūlabandha (combined with) *viparīta karaṇī* (mudrā). Success in yoga is attained by one who engages in this practice regularly; there is no doubt here. This practice is said to increase the digestive fire, removing all diseases. An abundance of food should be brought and consumed by the aspirant. If little is supplied, the fire will immediately take his body.

Commentary

Viparīta karaṇī mudrā is the inverted āsana, performed in the lying position, with the legs raised, so that the feet are above the head and the back is at a 45 degree angle with the floor. When mūlabandha is performed in this posture, the downward flow of apāna is easily reversed and united with prana, the energy which flows upward in the region of the chest, from the diaphragm to the shoulders.

On account of the inverted posture, the combined energies of prāṇa and apāna flow naturally into the neck and head region, activating the bindu cakra, at the top back of the head. Bindu cakra is the center of nāda, the cosmic sound, and bindu, the cosmic point of origin. The union of nāda and bindu result in transcendence, and hence success in yoga is attained by one, who performs this practice regularly.

Due to the inverted posture and the reversal of the prāṇas, this practice also activates the energy of samāna, located in the region between the waist and the diaphragm. This increases the digestive fire and removes all diseases, which are associated with low energy in this area. When the digestive fire is enhanced, however, one must take care to consume adequate food. If too little food is taken, the digestive fire will deplete the body.

Verses 124b, 125, 126a: Method of rejuvenation

अधःशिरश्चोर्ध्वपादः क्षणं स्यात्प्रथमे दिने ॥१२४॥

क्षणात् किंचिदधिकमभ्यसेतु दिनेदिने ।

वली च पलितं चैव सण्मासाधार्नं दृश्यते ॥१२५॥

याममात्रं तु यो नित्यमभ्यसेत्स तु कालजित् ॥१२६॥

adhaḥśiraścordhvapādah kṣaṇam syātprathame dine (124b)

kṣaṇāttu kiṃcidadhikamabhyasettu dinedine

valī ca palitam caiva ṣaṇmāsārdhānna drśyate (125)

yāmamātram tu yo nityamabhyasetsa tu kālajit (126a)

Anvay

prathame dine: on the first day; *śirah*: head; *syāt*: should be; *adhaḥ*: on the ground; *ca*: and; *pādah*: his legs; *ūrdhva*: raised up; *kṣanam*: for a moment; *dine* *dine*: every day; *abhyaset*: he should practise; *kiṃcit-adhikam kṣaṇāt*: a little longer; *valī*: wrinkles; *ca eva*: and even; *palitam*: grey hair; *na drśyate*: will not be seen; *ṣaṇmā sa ardhāt*: after six and a half [months]; *tu*: indeed; *yāḥ*: whoever; *abhyaset*: practises; *nityam*: continuously; *mātram*: for a period; *yāma*: of three hours; *jit*: conquers; *kāla*: time.

Translation

On the first day [his] head should be on the ground and [his] legs raised up for a moment. Every day he should practise a little longer. Wrinkles and even grey hair will not be seen after six and a half months. Indeed, whoever practises continuously for a period of three hours conquers time.

Commentary

Viparīta karaṇī mudrā is a powerful practice due to the inverted position of the body. All the energy which would normally flow downward towards the feet due to the upright posture and the pull of gravity, is induced to flow in the opposite direction, into the head. Therefore, in this verse, it is recommended that one should develop the practice slowly.

On the first day the legs should be raised over the head and held in this position for a moment. Every day the duration of the practice can be increased a little longer. Viparīta karaṇī mudrā is described in the classical yogic texts as a rejuvenating practice. Due to the pressure placed on the base of the neck, while the legs are raised, this practice activates viśuddhi cakra, which is also known as the center of rejuvenation, the internal fountain of youth.

Bindu and viśuddhi cakras are linked due to the nectar connection. The *amṛta*, or nectar of life, is said to drip down slowly from bindu cakra throughout the duration of one's life. The nectar passes down through the region of the head without being absorbed, and collects at viśuddhi chakra. The nectar of life also contains *viś*, or 'poison', which is responsible for the processes of aging, disease and death. Hence the nectar of life also holds the cycle of disease and death within it.

The word viśuddhi has two roots, viś plus *suddhi*, which means ‘purification’. Hence, viśuddhi cakra is the purification center for the viś, or poison, contained within the nectar.

However, this process may only be carried out, if viśuddhi has been activated. In most people, viśuddhi remains relatively dormant, and so the nectar passes through it without being purified of the vish, or poison. This becomes the on-going cause of aging, disease and death in the body. In order to reverse this cycle of degeneration, viśuddhi cakra must be activated for extended periods on a regular basis. This is the main reason why the yogis of old performed *viparīta karaṇī mudrā* is a powerful practice due to the inverted position of the body. All the energy which would normally flow downward towards the feet due to the upright posture and the pull of gravity, is induced to flow in the opposite direction, into the head. Therefore, in this verse, it is recommended that one should develop the practice slowly. They found that by slowly increasing the duration of the practice, after six months, wrinkles and grey hair would disappear. The yogi would be endowed with youth and vitality. Furthermore, by extending the practice for a period of three hours on a regular basis they were able to transcend time and space, and experience the universal state of consciousness.

Verses 126b and 127: Benefits of vajrolī

वज्रोलीमध्यसेद्यस्तु स योगी सिद्धिभाजनम् ॥१२६॥

लभ्यते यदि तस्यैव योगसिद्धिः करे स्थिता ।

अतीतानागतं वेति खेचरी च भवेद्ध्युवम् ॥१२७॥

vajrolīmabhyasedyastu sa yogī siddhibhājanam (126b)

labhyate yadi tasyaiva yogasiddhiḥ karesthitā

atītānāgatam vetti khecarī ca bhaveddhruvam (127)

Anvay

tu: indeed; *yah*: whoever; *abhyaset*: practises; *vajrolīm*: contraction and release of the urinary passage; *yogī*: yogin; *bhājanam*: recipient; *siddhi*: of psychic powers; *yadi*: if; *yoga-siddhiḥ*: accomplishment in yoga; *eva*: ever; *labhyate*: is attained; *tasya*: by him; *kare sthitā*: it is lasting; *vetti*: he knows; *āgatam*: events; *atītān*: of the past; *ca*: and; *dhruvam*: certainly; *bhavet*: has; *khecarī*: power of flight.

Translation

Indeed whoever practises vajrolī is a yogin [and] the recipient of siddhis. If accomplishment in yoga is ever attained by him, it is lasting. He knows the events of the past and certainly has the power of flight.

Commentary

Vajrolī is an important mudrā, which involves direct contraction of the urethra. When practised regularly, it redirects the energy in the swādhiṣṭhāna cakra region upward to the brain. Swādhiṣṭhāna is the center for sexual pleasure and procreation. If the energy remains in this region, it will cause attraction towards these pursuits and will ultimately be lost in emission. By redirecting this energy upward, the higher centers of viśuddhi, ajña and bindu are suffused with prāṇa and become

activated.

The definition of a yogi is ‘one who is accomplished in yoga’. In order to be accomplished in yoga, the higher centers must be activated, which allows one to live in the subtle states of consciousness.

The verse further states that should a practitioner of vajrolī ever attain accomplishment in yoga, that mastery will be permanent. There will be no fall from or loss of this level of realization. Such a yogi will have the power to see the events of the past. He will also be able to leave the physical body at will and move about freely in the astral form.

Verses 128 and 129a: Amarolī and vajrolī

अमरीं यः पिबेन्तियं नस्यं कुर्वन्दिने ।

वज्रोलीमध्यसेन्तियमरोलीति कथ्यते ॥१२८॥

ततो भवेद्राजयोगो नान्तरा भवति ध्रुवम् ॥१२९॥

amarīm yah pibennityam nasyam kurvandine

vajrolīmabhyasennityamamarolīti kathyate (128)

tato bhavedrājayogo nāntarā bhavati dhruvam (129a)

Anvay

yah: whoever; *nityam*: always; *pibet*: drinks; *amarīm*: amarolī, midstream of urine; *dine*: daily; *kurvan*: taking; *nasyam*: through the nose; *nityam*: always; *abhyaset*: practises; *vajrolīm*: contraction and release of urinary passage; *kathyate*: he is said; *amarolīt*: drinking of one’s own urine for detoxification, stamina, vitality and immunity; *tataḥ*: then; *bhavet*: he attains; *rājayogah*: royal path of yoga, leading to enlightenment through meditation; *bhavati*: there is; *dhruvam*: certainly; *na*: no; *antarā*: distance.

Translation

Whoever always drinks the mid-stream of urine daily, taking [it] through the nose, [and] always practises vajrolī, is said [to be a practitioner of] amarolī. Then he attains rāja yoga, [and] there is certainly no distance [between him and enlightenment].

Commentary

Amarolī is the yogic practice of drinking the mid-stream of one’s first urination in the early morning, upon awakening. The word *amara* means ‘free from death’ or ‘undying’. One’s own urine contains many minerals and enzymes, which are particularly suitable to one’s body. Normally, these valuable nutrients would be lost during urination, but in this practice they are re-consumed. Only the mid-stream of the first urination should be collected in a glass.

This urine may then be drunk through the mouth, or sniffed through the nose and swallowed. Taking it through the nose has many benefits, as it clears the mucus membranes and sinuses of accumulated

mucus and bacteria.

When amarolī is performed along with vajrolī mudrā every day regularly over a long duration of time, the body is revitalised and the prāṇas are redirected upward. This shift in the energy influences the mind and consciousness, and is conducive for meditation. Rāja yoga is the yoga of meditation. Hence, the verse says that this practitioner attains rāja yoga, and there is no distance; the practitioner arrives at the goal, and becomes an enlightened yogi.

Verses 129b, 130 and 131a: Kriyās of rāja yoga

यदा तु राजयोगेन निष्पन्ना योगिभिः क्रिया ॥१२९॥

तदा विवेकवैराग्यं जायते योगिनो ध्रुवम् ।

विष्णुर्नाम महायोगी महाभूतो महातपाः ॥१३०॥

तत्त्वमार्गे तथा दीपो दृश्यते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥१३१॥

yadā tu rājayogena niṣpannā yogibhiḥ kriyā (129b)

tadā vivekavairāgyam jāyate yogino dhruvam

viṣṇurnāma mahāyogī mahābhūto mahātapāḥ (130)

tattvamārge tathā dīpo drśyate puruṣottamāḥ (131a)

Anvay

yadā: when; *kriyā*: spiritual activity due to yogic practices; *niṣpannā*: is brought about; *yogibhiḥ*: by yogins; *rājayogena*: through rāja yoga; *tadā*: then; *yoginah*: yogins; *dhruvam*: certainly; *jāyate*: are victorious in; *viveka*: viveka, discrimination between the permanent and impermanent; *vairagya*: non-attachment to the material world; *puruṣottamāḥ*: Supreme Spirit; *viṣṇuh*: preserver of the universe; *mahāyogī*: great yogin; *mahābhūtāḥ*: lord of the elements; *mahātapāḥ*: master of austerities; *tathā*: then; *drśyate*: is seen; *dīpah*: as a light; *mārge*: on the path; *tattva*: of the true reality.

Translation

When kriyā is brought about by yogins through rāja yoga, then the yogins are certainly victorious in viveka and vairagya. The supreme spirit, Viṣṇu, who is the great yogin, lord of the elements and master of austerities, is then seen as a light on the path of the true reality.

Commentary

The kriyās, spiritual actions, of haṭha yoga, kriyā yoga and rāja yoga, are different. The kriyās of haṭha yoga and kriyā yoga involve different combinations of āsana, prāṇāyāma, mudrā and bandha, for the awakening of the cakras and the kundalini energies. However, the kriyās of rāja yoga, as described in the ‘Yoga Sutras of Patañjali’, are spiritual disciplines, such as: *tapas* (austerity), *swadhyaya* (self-study) and *īśwara pranidhāna* (faith in or dedication to the highest reality).

Tapas, austerity, is an important spiritual discipline and practice, because it purifies and strengthens the body and mind, making one capable of sustaining higher levels of energy and consciousness.

Swadhyaya, self-study, is necessary for all yogic practitioners, as it redirects the attention from the outer phenomenal world to inner world of the body, mind and consciousness. It is self-awareness that leads to self-realization. Īśwara praṇidhāna, faith in a higher reality beyond oneself, is a requisite of yoga. Without faith in and dedication to a higher reality, there can be no ultimate aim or purpose in yoga, or even in life itself.

When these three kriyās of rāja yoga become an integral part of one's spiritual practice, the yogi develops *viveka* and *vairagya*, the spiritual attributes of yoga. Viveka means 'discrimination', the ability to know truth from untruth, permanent from impermanent, reality from illusion. This kind of discrimination is not only intellectual, but experiential. One knows the truth, because one has experienced it within one's own self. Vairagya, non-attachment, is a natural outcome of viveka. One who knows the reality, will no longer be attracted or attached to the ephemeral objects and relationships of the world.

Viṣṇu is a name or symbol that is used by yogis to represent the supreme, universal consciousness. Viṣṇu, the supreme consciousness, is the goal of yogis, and so is considered here to be the great yogin, himself. Viṣṇu is the lord of all the elements, because consciousness is the source of all material existence, and all material existence is comprised of elements. Viṣṇu is also considered to be the master of all austerities, because intentional hardship is an act of imposing the conscious will over the body and mind. Normally, in worldly life, the body and mind exert their influence over the consciousness. In this way, the yogi perceives Viṣṇu, the supreme consciousness, as light, illuminating the pathway of the ultimate reality.

Verses 131b, 132, 133 and 134a: Wheel of samsāra

यः स्तनः पूर्वपीतस्तं निष्पीड्य मुदमश्नुते ॥१३१॥

यस्माज्जातो भगात्पूर्वं तस्मिन्नेव भगे रमन् ।

या माता सा पुनर्भार्या या भार्या मातरेव हि ॥१३२॥

यः पिता स पुनः पुत्रो यः पुत्रः स पुनः पिता ।

एवं संसारचक्रेण कूपचक्रे घटा इव ॥१३३॥

प्रमन्तो योनिजन्मानि श्रुत्वा लोकात्समश्नुते ॥३४॥

yah stanah pūrvapītastam niṣpīdya mudamaśnute (131b)

yasmājjāto bhagātpūrvam tasminneva bhage raman

yā mātā sā punarbhāryā yā bhāryā mātareva hi (132)

yah pitā sa punah putro yah putrah sa punah pitā

evam samsāracakreṇa kūpacakre ghaṭā iva (133)

bhramanto yonijanmāni śrutvā lokānsamaśnute (134a)

Anvay

yah: that; *stanah*: breast; *pītah*: [from which] he drank; *pūrva*: before; *aśnute*: he obtains; *mudam*: joy; *niśpīdya*: by fondling; *raman*: he delights; *tasmin eva bhage*: in that very organ; *yasmāt*: from which; *jātah*: he was born; *pūrvam*: previously; *yā*: she who; *bhāryā*: wife; *eva*: now; *mātā*: mother; *sā*: she; *punah*: again; *sayah*: he who; *pītā*: father; *punah*: again; *putrah*: son; *śrutvā*: hearing; *samaśnute*: he abides in; *lokān*: worlds; *evam*: in the same way as; *yonijanmāni*: beings; *bhramantah*: wandering; *samsāra-cakreṇa*: through the wheel of birth, death and rebirth; *iva*: like; *ghaṭā*: jar; *kūpacakre*: in a water-wheel.

Translation

That breast from which he drank before, he obtains joy by fondling, [and] he delights in that very organ from which he was previously born. She who was his wife is now his mother, and she who is now his mother will again be his wife. He who is the father will again be the son, and he who is the son will again be the father. Hearing [this], he abides in the worlds, in the same way as the beings wandering through the wheel of *samsāra*, like a jar in a water-wheel.

Commentary

These verses allude to the purpose of yoga, which is ultimately to be liberated from the wheel of *samsāra*. Worldly life, or *samsāra*, is symbolized by a wheel, which turns around and around continuously, always coming back to the same point and then going around again. The wheel of *samsāra* is based upon the law of karma. Every action has an effect, which becomes the cause of another action. Every rotation of the wheel is followed by another, due to the relentless momentum of karma. As long as there is karma within the mind of an individual, the wheel of *samsāra* continues to turn, and one is hopelessly bound to it.

The wheel of *samsāra* is very aptly described here. The breast from which the infant son greedily drinks, later becomes an object of allurement, which the youth fondles with great joy. The birth canal, from which he was previously born, later becomes a source of pure delight, which he seeks again and again to penetrate. In his last birth, the woman who was his wife, now becomes his mother. In his next birth, she who is now his mother, will again become his wife. Similarly, he who is now the father, will next become the son, and he who is the son, will again become the father.

Understanding this, the yogi abides in the material world, like other beings, wandering around the wheel of *samsāra*, like a clay pot attached to a water wheel. The yogi also lives in the physical body, like other people, and is susceptible to the karmas and influences of the world. But the difference is that he realizes this, and takes great care to revolve around the wheel, without creating further karmas and attachments. He understands the fragility of life, which is easily and quickly broken, like a clay pot, and utilizes it to obtain emancipation, rather than future births in *samsāra*.

Verses 134b, 135 and 136a: Power of Aum

त्रयो लोकास्त्रयो वेदास्तिस्त्रः संध्यास्त्रयः स्वरा: ॥१३४॥

त्रयो ऽग्नयश्च त्रिगुणाः स्थिताः सर्वे त्रयाक्षरे ।

त्रयाणामक्षराणां च यो ऽधीते ऽप्यर्धमक्षरम् ॥१३५॥

तेन सर्वमिदं प्रोतं तत्सत्यं तत्परं पदम् ॥१३६॥

trayo lokāstrayo vedāstisrah samdhyāstrayah svarāḥ (134b)

trayo ‘gnayaśca triguṇāḥ sthitāḥ sarve trayākṣare

trayāṇāmakṣarāṇām ca yo ‘dhīte ‘pyardhamakṣaram (135)

tena sarvamidam protam tatsatyam tatparam padam (136a)

Anvay

trayah lokāḥ: three worlds; *trayah vedāḥ*: three Vedas, sacred knowledge of the *Rig Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Yajur Veda*; *tisrah samdhyāḥ*: three time junctures of the day when spiritual practices were performed at dawn, noon and dusk; *trayah svarāḥ*: three swara; *trayah agnayah*: three fires; *ca*: and; *triguṇāḥ*: three qualities of nature; *sarve*: all; *sthitāḥ*: are placed; *traya-aksare*: in the three imperishable sounds; *ca*: and; *yāḥ*: whoever; *adhīte*: has delved into; *api*: even; *ardham-akṣaram*: half a sound; *protam*: is pervaded by; *sarvam-idam*: all this; *tat*: this; *satyam*: Truth; *tat*: this; *param*: Supreme; *padam*: Seat.

Translation

The three worlds, three Vedas, three *sandhyās*, three *swaras*, three fires and the three *guṇas* are all placed in the three imperishable sounds [of *Aum*], and whoever has delved into even half a sound is pervaded by all this. This [is] the Truth; this [is] the Supreme Seat.

Commentary

The mantra *Aum* is the primal sound, the first vibration of creation. The Upaniṣads extoll this mantra and prescribe meditation upon it to attain the highest states of consciousness and self-realization. Being the first vibration, meditation on this pure sound brings the mind back to the source of being. Any other method or object of meditation falls short of this premise, because *Aum* is the first, and all other sounds and forms come after it. Even in the Bible it is said that ‘in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God’. *Aum* is that first word, first sound, that issued directly from the cosmic consciousness. From *Aum* all other sound vibrations emanated, and from sound vibrations came all forms, all the entities and beings in the manifest universe.

The sound of *Aum* represents the unity of all existence. However, it is comprised of three *mātrās*, or letters: A, U and M, which symbolize the trinity and hence the multiplicity of all created existence. Creation comes into existence due to the different trinities: (i) the three worlds, (ii) the three Vedas, (iii) the three *sandhyās*, (iv) the three *swaras*, (v) the three *agnis* and (vi) the three *guṇas*. The three worlds are the planes of: earth, purgatory and heaven. The three Vedas, which represent all knowledge, are the: *Rig Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Yajur Veda*. The three *sandhyās*, are the important periods of changeover during the day, which are often used for spiritual practice: ten minutes before and after dawn, ten minutes before and after midday, and ten minutes before and after dusk. The three *swaras* are the major energy channels in the body: *idā* (mental energy), *piṅgalā* (vital energy) and *suṣumnā* (spiritual energy). The three fires are the sources of light: fire, which burns on earth, lightening, which illuminates the sky, and the sun, which shines down from the heavens. The three *guṇas* are the qualities inherent in all nature: *tamas*, stability, *rajas*, movement, and *sattwa*, balance.

The verse states that all of the six trinities have their source in the three imperishable sounds A, U and M, which comprise the mantra *Aum*. And furthermore, any aspirant who contemplates these sounds, and experiences even half of one sound, is filled with the knowledge of all these trinities. This is the truth, because *Aum* is the supreme seat. All the trinities of creation issue from this one primal sound,

and ultimately all return to this one source.

Verses 136b, 137, 138 and 139a: Meditation on Aum in the heart lotus

पुष्पमध्ये यथा गन्धः पयोमध्ये यथा घृतम् ॥१३६॥

तिलमध्ये यथा तैलं पाषाणेष्विव काञ्चनम् ।

हृदि स्थाने स्थितं पद्मं तस्य वक्रमधोमुखम् ॥१३७॥

ऊर्ध्वनालमधोबिन्दुस्तस्य मध्ये स्थितं मनः ।

अकारे रेचितं पद्ममुकारेणैव भिद्यते ॥१३८॥

मकारे लभते नादमर्धमात्रा तु निश्चला ॥१३९॥

puṣpamadhye yathā gandhaḥ payomadhye yathā ghṛtam 136b

tilamadhye yathā tailam pāṣāṇeṣviva kāñcanam

hṛdi sthāne sthitam padmaṁ tasya vakramadhomukham (137)

ūrdhvānālamadhobindustasya madhye sthitam manah

akāre recitam padmamukāreṇaiva bhidyate (138)

makāre labhate nādamardhamātrā tu niścalā (139a)

Anvay

yathā: as; *gandhaḥ:* fragrance; *madhye:* within; *puṣpa:* flower; *yathā:* as; *ghṛtam:* ghee; *madhye:* within; *payah:* milk; *yathā:* as; *tailam:* oil; *madhye:* within; *tilam:* sesame; *iva:* like; *kāñcanam:* gold; *pāṣāṇeṣu:* in rocks; *padmam:* lotus; *sthitam:* is placed; *sthāne:* in the area; *hṛdi:* of the heart; *tasya:* its; *mukham:* face; *vakram:* bent; *adhaḥ:* down; *nālam:* stalk; *ūrdhva:* upright; *tasya:* its; *binduh:* seed, source; *adhaḥ:* below; *madhye:* within; *sthitam:* abides; *manah:* mind, intelligent principle; *padmam:* lotus; *recitam:* is expanded; *akāre:* with the sound A; *ukāreṇa:* with the sound U; *bhidyate:* is opened up; *makāre:* by the sound M; *labhate:* it obtains; *nādam:* inner sound of Aum; *ardhamātrā:* half syllable; *niścalā:* still.

Translation

As the fragrance within the flower, as the ghee within the milk, as the oil within the sesame, as the gold within the rock, [so] is the lotus placed in the area of the heart. Its face is bent down; its stalk is upright. Its *bindu* is below; within it abides *manas*. The lotus is expanded with the sound A; with the sound U, it is opened up; by the sound M, it obtains sound, and the half syllable is still.

Commentary

The power of *Aum* can only be realised by the aspirant through diligent practice of meditation. The sound of *Aum* is heard within the inner recesses of the heart. The heart is the abode of the *jīvātma*, the

living soul. This is why the *Aum* sound can be heard in the lotus of the heart. Just as fragrance is the subtle essence of the flower, ghee the inherent richness within milk, oil the extract of sesame, and gold the quintessence of rock; similarly, the lotus is the subtle essence of the heart. Here the lotus represents *anāhata cakra*, the psychic energy center, located in heart region. *Anāhata* comes from the root *anāhad*, which means ‘unstruck’. Unstruck refers to that *nāda*, or inner sound, which is not produced by the friction of two or more objects, as occurs with external sound.

When the *anāhata* lotus is dormant, it remains closed and faces downward. The closed lotus is fixed on the upright stalk of *sūṣumnā*, the spiritual energy channel. Because the lotus faces downwards, its bindu, or central point, is below. *Anāhata cakra* is associated with the principle of *manas*, or mind, and is connected with the intelligence of the heart. When the aspirant meditates on the three syllables of *Aum* in the heart, the lotus expands with the sound ‘A’. With the sound ‘U’ the lotus turns upward and opens. With the vibration ‘M’ the inner sound of *Aum* is complete, and resonates as *nāda*, the subtle, inner sound. The sound ‘M’ is actually a half letter, *ardhamātrā*, and so it is represented by a bindu or point. By following this point, the aspirant is lead deep within the inner consciousness to the state of absolute stillness, from which the *Aum* sound issues.

Verses 139b, 140a: Final realization of yoga

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं निष्कलं पापनाशनम् ॥१३९॥

लभते योगयुक्तात्मा पुरुषस्तत्परं पदम् ।१४०।

śuddhasphaṭikasamkāśam niṣkalam pāpanāśanam (139b)

labhate yogayuktātmā puruṣastatparam padam (140a)

Anvay

puruṣah: person; *ātmā*: self; *yoga-yukta*: is united with yoga; *labhate*: obtains; *tat-param padam*: that supreme seat; *samkāśam*: has the appearance of; *śuddha-sphaṭika*: pure crystal; *niṣkalaam*: undivided; *nāśanam*: destroys; *pāpa*: sins.

Translation

The person whose self is united with yoga obtains that supreme seat, [which] has the appearance of pure crystal, [is] undivided [and] destroys sins.

Commentary

Anāhata lotus, the heart center, is where meditation is practised. However, *sahasrāra*, the crown center, is where the highest meditation is ultimately realized. The person who has merged with his own *ātmā*, or pure consciousness, is united in yoga and has reached that supreme seat. *Sahasrāra* is the thousand petalled lotus, which extends like a thousand rays of light into the cosmic consciousness. At the center of this lotus is the crystal lingam, or symbol of pure transcendence. *Sahasrāra* is the center of the unmanifest, unborn consciousness, and so it is not influenced by or associated with any diversity, relating with name or form, in the dimension of time and space. Hence it is the One, undivided, essence of consciousness and existence. Being beyond all evolutes and phenomenon, *sahasrāra* is beyond all duality, and thus beyond all sin. Being beyond sin, there is no sin that can exist within it. Therefore, its proximity is said to destroy all sin.

Verses 140b, 141 and 142: The stillness of kumbhaka

कूर्मः स्वपाणिपादादिशिरश्चात्मनि धारयेत् ॥१४०॥

एवं द्वारेषु सर्वेषु वायुपूरितरेचितः ।

निषिद्धे तु नवद्वारे ऊर्ध्वं प्राङ्गनिश्चसंस्तथा ॥१४१॥

घटमध्ये यथा दीपो निवातं कुम्भकं विदुः ।

निषिद्धैर्नवभिर्वैर्निर्जने निरुपद्रवे ॥१४२॥

kūrmah svapāṇipādādiśiraścātmani dhārayet (140b)

evam dvāreṣu sarveṣu vāyupūritarecitaḥ

niṣiddhe tu navadvāre ūrdhvam prāñniśvasamstathā (141)

ghaṭamadhye yathā dīpo nivātam kumbhakam viduh

niṣiddhairnavabhirvītrairnirjane nirupadrave (142)

Anvay

kūrmah: tortoise; *dhārayet*: holds; *ātmani*: within itself; *sva-pāṇi*: its own hands; *pāda*: feet; *ca . . ādi*: and . . also; *śirah*: head; *evam*: so; *vāyu*: air; *pūrita*: is inhaled; *recitah*: exhaled; *sarveṣu dvāreṣu*: in all the orifices [of the body]; *tathā*: then; *niśvasam*: drawing in the breath; *prāñ*: forwards; *ūrdhvam*: upwards; *nava-dvāre*: nine orifices; *niṣiddhe*: are restrained; *yathā*: like; *dīpah*: lamp; *madhye*: inside; *ghaṭa*: jar; *nivātam*: stillness; *kumbhakam*: breath retention; *viduh*: is known; *vītraiḥ*: by adepts; *niṣiddhaiḥ*: who have restrained; *navabhiḥ*: nine orifices; *nirjane*: in a deserted place; *nirupadrave*: free from disturbances.

Translation

The tortoise holds within itself its own hands, feet and also head, so is the air inhaled and exhaled in all the orifices [of the body]. Then, drawing in the breath forwards and upwards, when the nine orifices are restrained, like a lamp inside a jar, the stillness of kumbhaka is known by adepts, who have restrained the nine orifices in a deserted place, free from disturbances.

Commentary

Just as the tortoise withdraws its head and four limbs within itself, similarly the yogi withdraws the five senses back into the mind. When the five senses are allowed to roam freely in the external world, that is sensory awareness. When the five senses are withdrawn back into the mind and restrained for a period of time, that is the state of *pratyāhāra*, the first level of meditation. In *pratyāhāra*, the mind is nourished by the subtle sensory impressions, which are accumulated in the mind. At this time the body continues to breathe in and out, and the nine orifices remain open. The nine orifices are the points where the body is open to the external world: the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the anal sphincter and the urinary opening.

In order to enter the higher states of meditation, yogis took recourse to the practice of kumbhaka, breath retention. In the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, it says that kumbhaka leads to dhārana, the state of concentration. Dhāraṇā is the second level of meditation, where the impressions of the mind begin to thin, and it is possible to focus on one object alone. In the above verse, internal kumbhaka is described for this purpose. Drawing the breath forward and upward refers to the inhalation. After inhalation, the breath is retained, and the nine orifices are restrained. In this way, the mind remains absolutely still, just like a lamp inside a jar.

When a flame is lit outside in the open air, it will flicker and waver continuously. Similarly, when the senses are exposed to the outside world, they will pull the mind hither and thither, from one object to another, ceaselessly. However, when the senses are withdrawn into the mind, and then restrained by the practice of kumbhaka, breath retention, the mind becomes absolutely still. This is not an imaginary experience or a hallucination. It is based on a scientific fact,

that when the breath stops, the mind also stops. As long as the breath continues to flow, the mind remains active. This was well known to the adepts of yoga, who perfected mind control through the practice of kumbhaka in deserted places, free from disturbances.

Conclusion

निश्चितं त्वात्समात्रेणावशिष्टं योगसेवया ॥

इत्युपनिषत् ॥

niścitatmātvātmatreṇāvaśiṣṭam yogasevayā

ityupaniṣat

Anvay

yoga-sevayā: through dedication to *yoga*; *tva*: you; *niścitatmā*: surely; *ātmā*: supreme consciousness; *mātrenā*: alone; *avaśiṣṭam*: remains; *iti*: thus; *upaniṣat*: ancient sacred text.

Translation

Through dedication to *yoga*, you surely [will realise] that the *atma*, the highest consciousness, alone remains. Thus ends the *Upaniṣad*.

Commentary

Yoga may be written about and discoursed in the *upaniṣads* and in other philosophical texts. However, the essence of *yoga* is not to be understood verbally or intellectually. *Yoga* is an experiential science; it is the science of the *ātmā*, the self. The self of every person is not the ego, the psyche or the mind; these are merely its evolutes. The self is the pure field of consciousness, which transcends the mind and its individual world of comings and goings. Through dedication to the practice of *yoga*, you will surely realize in the stillness of your being that only your pure consciousness remains, and you are That.

Thus [ends] the *Upaniṣad*.

APPENDICES

1. Sanskrit text

योगतत्त्वं प्रवक्ष्यामि योगिनां हितकाम्यया ।

यच्छुत्वा च पठितवा च सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ॥१॥

विष्णुर्नाम महायोगो महाभूतो महातपाः ।

तत्त्वमार्गं यथा दोषो दृश्यते पुरुषोत्तमः ॥२॥

तमाराध्य जगन्नाथं प्रणिपत्य पितामः ।

पप्रच्छ योगतत्त्वं मे ब्रूहि चाष्टाङ्गसंयुतम् ॥३॥

तमुवाच हृषोकेशो वक्ष्यामि शृणु तत्त्वतः ।

सर्वे जीवाः सुखदुःखैर्मायाजालेन वेष्टिताः ॥४॥

तेषां मुक्तिकरं मार्गं मायाजालनिकृत्तनम् ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिनाशनं मृत्युतारकम् ॥५॥

नानामार्गैस्तु दुष्ट्रापं कैवल्यं परमं पदम् ।

पतिताः शास्त्रजालेषु प्रज्ञया तेन मोहिताः ॥६॥

अनिर्वाच्यं पदं वक्तुं न शक्यं तैः सुरैरपि ।

स्वात्मप्रकाशरूपं तत्किं शास्त्रेण प्रकाश्यते ॥७॥

निष्कलं निर्मलं शान्तं सार्वातोतं निरामयं ।

तदेव जीवरूपेण पुण्यपापफलैर्वृतम् ॥८॥

परमात्मपदं नित्यं तात्कथं जीवतां गतम् ।

सर्वभावपदातोतं ज्ञानरूपं निरञ्जनम् ॥९॥

वारिवात्स्फुरितं तासमिस्तात्राहंकृतिरुत्थिता ।

पञ्चात्मकमभूत्प्रिणङ् धातुबद्धं गुणात्मकम् ॥१०॥

सुखदुःखैः समायुक्तं जौवभावनया कुरु ।

तेन जौवभिधा प्रोक्ता विशुद्धैः परमात्मनि ॥११॥

कामक्रोधभयं चापि मोहलोभमदो रजः ।

जन्म मृत्युश्च कर्पन्यं शोकस्तन्द्रा क्षुधातृषा ॥१२॥

तृष्णा लज्जा भयं दुःखः विषादो हर्ष एव च ।

एभिर्दोषैर्विनिर्मुक्तः स जौवः केवलो मतः ॥१३॥

तस्माद्बोषविनाशार्थमुपायः कथयामि ते ।

योगहीनं कथं ज्ञानं मोक्षदं भवति ध्रुवम् ॥१४॥

योगो हि ज्ञानहीनस्तु न क्षमो मोक्षकर्मणि ।

तस्माज्ज्ञानं च योगं च मुमुक्षुदृढ्यसेत् ॥१५॥

अज्ञानादेव संसारो ज्ञानादेव विमुच्यते ।

ज्ञानस्वरूपमेवादौ ज्ञानं झोयैकसाधनम् ॥१६॥

ज्ञातं येन निजं रूपं कैवल्यं परमं पदम् ।

निष्कलं निर्मलं साक्षात्सच्चिदानन्दरूपकम् ॥१७॥

उत्पत्तिस्थितिसंहारस्फूर्तिज्ञानविवीर्जतम् ।

एतज्ज्ञानमिति परोक्तमथ योगं ब्रवीमि ते ॥१८॥

योगो हि बहुधा ब्रह्मन्मिद्यते व्यवहारतः ।

मन्त्रयोगो लयश्चैव हठोऽसौ राजयोगतः ॥१९॥

आरम्भश्च घटश्चैव तथा परिचयः स्मृतः ।

निष्पत्तिश्चेत्यवस्था च सर्वत्र परिकीर्तिता ॥२०॥

एतेषाः लक्षणं ब्रह्मन्वक्ष्ये शृणु समासतः ।

मातृकादियुतं मन्त्रं द्वादशाब्दं तु यो जपेत् ॥२१॥

क्रमेण लभते ज्ञानमणिमादिगुणान्वितम् ।

अल्पबुद्धिरिमं योगं सेवते साधकाधमः ॥२२॥

लययोगश्चित्तलयः कोटिशः परिकीर्तिः ।

गच्छन्तिष्टस्वपन्मुञ्जन्ध्यायेनिष्कलमीश्वरम् ॥२३॥

स एव लययोगः स्याद्वहठयोगमतः शृणु ।

यमश्च नियमशचैव आसनं प्राणसंयमः ॥२४॥

प्रत्याहारो धारणा च ध्यानं भ्रूमध्यं हरिम् ।

समाधिः समतावस्था साष्टाङ्गो योग उच्यते ॥२५॥

महामुद्रा महाबन्धः महावेदश्च खेचरी ।

जालंधरोद्दियाणश्च मूलबन्धस्तथैव च ॥२६॥

दीर्घप्रणवसंधानं सिद्धान्तश्रवणं परम् ।

वज्रोली चामरोली च सहजोली त्रिधामता ॥२७॥

एतेषां लक्षणं ब्रह्मन्त्रयेकं शृणु तत्त्वतः ।

लघ्वाहारो यमेष्वेको मुख्यो भवति नेतरः ॥२८॥

अहिंसा नियमेष्वेका मुख्या वै चतुरानन् ।

सिद्धं पदं तथा सिंहं भद्रं चेति चतुष्टयम् ॥२९॥

प्रथमाभ्यासकाले तु विघ्नः स्युश्तुरानन् ।

आलस्य कथनं धूर्तगोष्टी मन्त्रादिसाधनम् ॥३०॥

धातुस्त्रीलौल्यकादीनि मृगतृष्णामायानि वै ।

ज्ञात्वा सुधीस्त्यजेत्सर्वान्विद्यान्युप्यप्रभावतः ॥३१॥

प्राणायामं ततः कुर्यात्पद्मासनगतः स्वयम् ।

सुशोभनं मठं कुर्यात्सूक्ष्मद्वारं तु निर्वेणम् ॥३२॥

सुस्थुं लिप्तं गोमयेन सुधया वा प्रयत्नतः ।

मत्कुनैर्मशकैलूतैर्वर्जितं च प्रयत्नतः ॥३३॥

दिने दिने च संमृष्टं समार्जन्या विशेषतः ।

वासितं च सुगन्धेन धूपितं गुणुलादिभिः ॥३४॥

नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ।

तत्रोपविश्य मेधावी पद्मासनसमन्वितः ॥३५॥

ऋजुकायः प्राञ्जलिश्च प्रणमेदिष्टदेवताम् ।

ततो दक्षिणहस्तस्य अङ्गष्टेनैव पिङ्गलाम् ॥३६॥

निरुद्ध्य पूरयेद्वायुमिडया तु शनैः शनैः ।

यथाशक्त्यविरोधेन ततः कुर्याच्च कुम्भकम् ॥३७॥

पुनस्त्यजेत्पिङ्गलया शनैरेव न वेगतः ।

पुनः पिङ्गलयापूर्य पूरयेदुदरं शनैः ॥३८॥

धारयित्वा यथाशक्ति रेचयेदिदया शनैः ।

यया त्यजेत्तयापूर्य धारयेदविरोधतः ॥३९॥

जानु प्रदक्षिणीकृत्य न द्रुतं न विलम्बितम् ।

अङ्गुलिस्फोटनं कुर्यात्सा मात्रा परिगीयते ॥४०॥

इडया वायुमारोप्य शनैः षोडशमात्रया ।

कुम्भयेत्पूरितं पश्चाच्चतुः षष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ॥४१॥

रेचयेत्पिङ्गलानाडया द्वात्रिशमात्रया पुनः ।

पुनः पिङ्गलयापूर्य पूर्वत्सुसमाहितः ॥४२॥

प्रातर्मध्याम्दिने सायमर्धरात्रे च कुम्भकान् ।

शनैरशीतिपर्यन्तं चतुर्वर्णं समध्यसेत् ॥४३॥

एवं मासत्रयाभ्यासानाडीशुद्धिस्ततो भवेत् ।

यदा तु नाडीशुद्धिः स्यात्तदा चिह्नानि बाह्यतः ॥४४॥

जायन्ते योगिनो देहे तानि वक्ष्याम्यशेसतः ।

शरीरलघुता दीप्तिर्जाठराग्निविवर्धनम् ॥४५॥

कृशत्वं च शरीरस्य तदा जायेत निश्चितम् ।

योगविघ्नकराहारं वर्जयेद्योगवित्तमः ॥४६॥

लवणं सर्षपं चाम्लमुष्णं रुक्षं च तीक्ष्णकम् ।

शाकजातं रामठादि वह्निस्त्रीपथसेवनम् ॥४७॥

प्रातः स्नानोपवासादिकायक्लेशाम्श वर्जयेत् ।

अभ्यासकाले प्रथमं शस्तं क्षीराज्यभोजनम् ॥४८॥

गोधूममुद्दशाल्यनं योगवृद्धिकरं विदुः ।

ततः परं यथेष्टं तु शक्तः स्याद्वायुधारणे ॥४९॥

यथेष्टधारणाद्वायोः सिध्येत्केवलकुम्भकः ।

केवले कुम्भके सिद्धे रेचपूरविवर्जिते ॥५०॥

न तस्य दुर्लमं किंचित् त्रिषु लोकेषु विद्यते ।

प्रस्वेदो जायते पूर्वं मर्दनं तेन कारयेत ॥५१॥

ततोऽपि धारणाद्वायोः क्रमेणैव शनैः ।

कम्पो भवति देहस्य आसनस्थस्य देहिनः ॥५२॥

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासाद्वार्दुरी स्वेदं जायते ।

यथा च दर्दुरो भाव उत्पत्तुत्योत्पत्त्वं गच्छति ॥५३॥

पद्मासनस्थितो योगी तथा गच्छति भूतले ।

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासाद्वूमित्याग्न्यं जायते ॥५४॥

पद्मासनस्थ एवासौ भूमिमुत्सृज्य वर्तते ।

अतिमानुषचेष्टादि तथा सामर्थ्यमुद्भवेत् ॥५५॥

न दर्शयेच्च सामर्थ्यं दर्शनं वीर्यवत्तरम् ।

स्वल्पं वा बहुधा दुःखं योगी न व्यथते तदा ॥५६॥

अल्पमूत्रपुरीषश्च स्वल्पनिद्रश्च जायते ।

कीलवो दूषिका लाला स्वेददुर्गम्यतानने ॥५७॥

एतानि सर्वथा तस्य न जायन्ते ततः परम् ।

ततोऽधिकतराभ्यासाद्वलमुत्पद्यते बहु ॥५८॥

येन भूचर सिद्धिः स्याद्भूचराणां जये क्षमः ।

व्याघ्रो वा शरभो वापि गजो गवय एव वा ॥५९॥

सिंहो वा योगिना तेन मृचन्ते हस्ततादिताः ।

कन्दर्पस्य यथा रूपं तथा स्यादपि योगिनः ॥६०॥

तद्रूपवशगा नार्यः काङ्क्षनते तसय सङ्गमम् ।

यदि सङ्गं करोत्येष तस्य बिन्दुक्षयो भवेत् ॥६१॥

वर्जयित्वा स्त्रियाः सङ्गं कुर्यादभ्यासमादरात् ।

योगिनोऽङ्गे सुगम्यश्च जायते बिन्दुधारणात् ॥६२॥

ततो रहस्युपाविष्टः प्रणवं प्लुतमात्रया ।

जपेत्पूर्वार्जितानां तु पापानां नाशहेतवे ॥६३॥

सर्वविघ्नहरो मन्त्रः प्रणवः सर्वदोषहा ।

एवमभ्यासयोगेन सिद्धिरारम्भसंभवा ॥६४॥

ततो भवेद्वटावस्था पवनाभ्यासतत्परा ।

प्राणोऽपानो मनो बुद्धिर्जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ॥६५॥

अन्योन्यस्याविरोधेन एकता घटते यदा ।

घटावस्थेति सा प्रोक्ता तच्चिह्नानि ब्रविम्यहम् ॥६६॥

पूर्वं यः कथितो ऽभ्यासश्चतुर्थाशं परिग्रहेत् ।

दिवा वा यदि वा सायं याममात्रं समध्यसेत् ॥६७॥

एकवारं प्रतिदिनं कुर्यात्केवलकुम्भकम् ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यो यत्प्रत्याहरणं स्फुतम् ॥६८॥

योगी कुम्भकमास्थाय प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ।

यद्यत्पश्यति चक्षुभ्यां तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥६९॥

यद्यच्छृणोति कर्णार्थां तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ।

लभते नासया यद्यत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥७०॥

जिह्वा यद्रसं ह्यति तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ।

त्वचा यद्यत्पृशेद्योगी तत्तदात्मेति भावयेत् ॥७१॥

एवं ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणां तु तत्तत्सौख्यं सुसाधयेत् ।

याममात्रं प्रतिदिनं योगी यत्तादतन्द्रितः ॥७२॥

यथा वा चित्तसामर्थ्यं जायते योगिनो ध्रुवम् ।

दूरश्रुतिर्दूरदृष्टिः क्षणाद्वूरागमस्तथा ॥७३॥

वाक्सिद्धिः कामरूपत्वमदृश्यकरणी तथा ।

मलमूत्रप्रलेपेन लोहादेः स्वर्णता भवेत् ॥७४॥

खे गतिस्तसय जायेत संतताभ्यासयोगतः ।

सदा बुद्धिमता भाव्यं योगिना योगसिद्धये ॥७५॥

एते विज्ञा महासिद्धेन रमेतेषु बुद्धिमान् ।

न दर्शयेत्स्वसामर्थ्यं यस्यकस्यापि योगिराट् ॥७६॥

यथा मूढो यथा मूर्खो यथा बधिर एव वा ।

तथा वर्तेत लोकस्य स्वसामर्थ्यस्य गुप्तये ॥७७॥

शिष्याश्च स्वस्वकार्येषु प्रार्थयन्ति न संशयः ।

तत्त्वकर्मकरव्यग्रः स्वाभ्यासे ऽविस्मृतो भवेत् ॥७८॥

अविस्मृत्य गुरोर्वाक्यमभ्यसेत्तदहर्निशम् ।

एवं भवेद्विठावस्था संतताभ्यासयोगतः ॥७९॥

अनभ्यासवतश्चैव वृथागोष्या न सिद्ध्यति ।

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन योगमेव सदाभ्यसेत् ॥८०॥

ततः परिचयावस्था जायते ऽभ्यासयोगतः ।

वायुः परिचितो यत्नादग्निना सह कुण्डलीम् ॥८१॥

भावयित्वा सुषुम्नायां प्रविशेद्विरोधतः ।

वायुना सह चित्तं च प्रविशेच्च महापथम् ॥८२॥

यस्य चित्तं स्वपवनः सुषुम्नां प्रविशेदिह ।

भूमिरापो ऽनलो वायुराकाशश्चेति पञ्चकः ॥८३॥

येषु पञ्चसु देवानां धारणा पञ्चधोच्यते ।

पादादिजानुपर्यन्तं पृथिवीस्थानमुच्यते ॥८४॥

पृथिवी चतुरस्नं च पीतवर्णं लवर्णकम् ।

पार्थिवे वायुमारोप्य लकारेण समन्वितम् ॥८५॥

ध्यायंश्तुर्मजाकारं चतुर्वक्त्रं हिरन्मयम् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिकाः पृथिवीजयमानुयात् ॥८६॥

पृथिवीयोगतो मृत्युर्भवेदस्य योगिनः ।

आजानोः पायुपर्यन्तमापां स्थानं प्रकीर्तिम् ॥८७॥

आपो ऋचन्द्रं शुक्लं च वंबीजं परिकीर्तितम् ।

वारुणे वायुमारोप्य वकारेण समन्वितम् ॥८८॥

स्मरन्नारायणं देवं चतुर्बाहुं किरीटिनम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं पीतवाससमच्युतम् ॥८९॥

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिकाः सर्वपापैः प्रमुच्यते ।

ततो जलाद्वयं नास्ति जले मृत्युर्न विद्यते ॥९०॥

आपायोर्हृदयान्तं च वह्निस्थानं प्रकीर्तितम् ।

वह्निस्त्रिकोणं रक्तं च रेफाक्षरसमुद्भवम् ॥९१॥

वह्नौ चानिलमारोप्य रेफाक्षरसमुज्ज्वलम् ।

त्रियक्षं वरदं रुद्रं तरुणादित्यसंनिभम् ॥९२॥

भस्मोद्भूलितसर्वाङ्गं सुप्रसन्नमनुस्मरन् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटका वह्निसौ न दद्यते ॥९३॥

न दद्यते शरीरं च प्रविष्टस्याग्निमण्डले ।

आहृदयाद्भूवोर्मध्यं वायुस्थानं प्रकीर्तितम् ॥९४॥

वायुः षत्कोणकं कृष्णं यकाराक्षरभासुरम् ।

मारुतं मरुतां स्थाने यकाराक्षरभासुरम् ॥९५॥

धारयेत्तत्र सर्वज्ञमीश्वरं विश्वतोमुखम् ।

धारयेत्पञ्च घटिका वायुवद्व्योमगो भवेत् ॥९६॥

मरणं न तु वायोश्च भयं भवति योगिनः ।

आप्रमध्यात्तु मूर्धान्तमाकाशस्थानमुच्यते ॥९७॥

व्योम वृत्तं च धूम्रं च हकाराश्वरभासुरम् ।

आकशे वायुमारोप्य हकारोपरि शंकरम् ॥९८॥

बिन्दूरूपं महादेवं व्योमाकारं सदाशिवम् ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं धृतबालेन्दुमौलिनम् ॥१९१॥

पञ्चवक्त्रयुतं सौम्यं दशबाहुं त्रिलोचनम् ।

सर्वायुधैर्घृताकरं सर्वभूषणभूषितम् ॥१००॥

उमार्धदेहं वरदं सर्वकारणकारणम् ।

आकाशधारणात्स्य खेचरत्वं भवेद्ध्रुवम् ॥१०१॥

यत्रकुत्र स्थितो वापि सुखमत्यन्तमश्नुते ।

एवं च धारणाः पञ्च कुर्याद्योगी विचक्षणः ॥१०२॥

ततो दृढशरीरः स्यान्मृत्युस्तस्य न विद्यते ।

ब्रह्मणः प्रलयेनापि न सीदति महामतिः ॥१०३॥

समभ्यसेत्तथा ध्यानं घटकाषष्टिमेव च ।

वायुं निरुद्ध्य चाकाशे देवतामिष्टदामिति ॥१०४॥

सगणं ध्यानमेतत्स्यादणिमादिगुणप्रदम् ।

निर्गुणध्यानयुक्तस्य समाधिश्च ततो भवेत् ॥१०५॥

दिनद्वादशकेनैव समाधि समवाज्ञयात्

वायुं निरुद्ध्य मेधावि जीवन्मुक्तो भवत्ययम् ॥१०६॥

समाधिः समतावस्था जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ।

यदि स्वदेहमुत्स्नष्टुमिच्छा चेदुत्सृजेत्स्वयम् ॥१०७॥

परब्रह्माणि लीयेत न तस्योत्क्रान्तिरिष्यते ।

अथ नो चेत्समुत्स्नष्टुं स्वशरीरं प्रियं यदि ॥१०८॥

सर्वलोकेषु विहरन्णिमादिगुणान्वितः ।

कदाचित्स्वेच्छया देवो भूत्वा स्वर्गे महीयते ॥१०९॥

मनुष्यो वापि यक्षो वा स्वेच्छयापीक्षणाद्ववेत् ।

सिंहो व्याघ्रो गजो वाश्वः स्वेच्छया हुतामियात् ॥११०॥

यथेष्टमेव वर्तेत यद्वा योगी महेश्वरः ।

अभ्यासमेदतो भेदः फलं तु सममेव हि ॥१११॥

पार्ष्णिं वामस्य पादस्य योनिस्थाने नियोजयेत् ।

प्रसार्य दक्षिणं पादं हस्ताभ्यां धारयेदृढम् ॥११२॥

चुबुकं हृदि विन्यस्य पूरयेद्वायुना पुनः ।

कुम्भकेन यथाशक्तिं धारयित्वा तु रेचयेत् ॥११३॥

वामाङ्गेन समभ्यस्य दक्षाङ्गेन ततो ऽभ्यसेत् ।

प्रसारितस्तु यः पादस्तमूरुपरि नामयेत् ॥११४॥

अयमेव महाबन्धं उभयत्रैवमध्यसेत् ।

महाबन्धस्थितो योगी कृत्वा पूरकमेकधीः ॥११५॥

वायुनां गतिमावृत्य निभृतं कण्ठमुद्रया ।

पुटद्वयं समाक्रम्य वायुः स्फुरति सत्वरम् ॥११६॥

अयमेव महावेधः सिद्धैरभ्यस्यते ऽनिशम् ।

अन्तःकपालकुहरे जिह्वां व्यावृत्य धारयेत् ॥११७॥

भ्रूमध्यदृष्टिरप्येषा मुद्रा भवति खेचरी ।

कण्ठमाकुञ्चय हृदये स्थापयेदृढया धिया ॥११८॥

बन्धो जालंधराख्यो ऽयं मृत्युमातङ्केसरी ।

बन्धो येन सुषुम्नायां प्राणस्तूङ्गीयते यतः ॥११९॥

उड्हयानाख्यो हि बन्धो ऽयं योगिभिः समुदाहृतः ।

पार्ष्णिभागेन सम्पीड्य योनिमाकुञ्चयेदृढम् ॥१२०॥

अपानमूर्ध्मुत्थाप्य योनिबन्धो ऽयमुच्यते ।

प्राणापानौ नादबिन्दू मूलबन्धेन चैकताम् ॥१२१॥

गत्वा योगस्य संसिद्धिं यच्छतो नात्र संशयः ।

करणी विपरीताख्या सर्वव्याधिविनाशिनी ॥१२२॥

नित्यमध्यासयुक्तस्य जाठराग्निविवर्धनी ।

आहारो बहुलस्तस्य संपाद्यः साधकस्य च ॥१२३॥

अल्पाहारो यदि भवेदग्निर्देहं हरेत्क्षणात् ।

अधःशिरश्चोर्ध्वपादः क्षणं स्यात्रथमे दिने ॥१२४॥

क्षणात् किंचिदधिकमध्यसेतु दिनेदिने ।

वली च पलितं चैव सण्मासार्धान्न दृश्यते ॥१२५॥

याममात्रं तु यो नित्यमध्यसेत्स तु कालजित् ।

वज्रोलीमध्यसेद्यस्तु स योगी सिद्धिभाजनम् ॥१२६॥

लभ्यते यदि तस्यैव योगसिद्धिः करे स्थिता ।

अतीतानागतं वेत्ति खेचरी च भवेद्ध्रुवम् ॥१२७॥

अमरीं यः पिबेन्नित्यं नस्यं कुर्वन्दिने ।

वज्रोलीमध्यसेनित्यमरोलीति कथ्यते ॥१२८॥

ततो भवेद्राजयोगो नान्तरा भवति ध्रुवम् ।

यदा तु राजयोगेन निष्पन्ना योगिभिः क्रिया ॥१२९॥

तदा विवेकवैराग्यं जायते योगिनो ध्रुवम् ।

विष्णुर्नामि महायोगी महाभूतो महातपाः ॥१३०॥

तत्त्वमार्गे तथा दीपो दृश्यते पुरुषोत्तमः ।

यः स्तनः पूर्वपीतस्तं निष्पीड्य मुदमश्नुते ॥१३१॥

यस्माज्जातो भगात्पूर्वं तस्मिन्नेव भगे रमन् ।

या माता सा पुनर्भार्या या भार्या मातरेव हि ॥१३२॥

यः पिता स पुनः पुत्रो यः पुत्रः स पुनः पिता ।

एवं संसारचक्रेण कूपचक्रे घटा इव ॥१३३॥

भ्रमन्तो योनिजन्मानि श्रुत्वा लोकान्समश्नुते ।

त्रयो लोकास्त्रयो वेदास्तिस्त्रः संध्यास्त्रयः स्वराः ॥१३४॥

त्रयो ऽग्नयश्च त्रिगुणाः स्थिताः सर्वे त्रयाक्षरे ।

त्रयाणामक्षराणां च यो ऽधीते ऽप्यर्धमक्षरम् ॥१३५॥

तेन सर्वमिदं प्रोतं तत्सत्यं तत्परं पदम् ।

पुष्पमध्ये यथा गन्धः पयोमध्ये यथा घृतम् ॥१३६॥

तिलमध्ये यथा तैलं पाषाणेष्विव काञ्छनम् ।

हृदि स्थाने स्थितं पद्मं तस्य वक्रमधोमुखम् ॥१३७॥

ऊर्ध्वनालमधोबिन्दुस्तस्य मध्ये स्थितं मनः ।

अकारे रेचितं पद्ममुकरेणैव भिद्यते ॥१३८॥

मकारे लभते नादमर्धमात्रा तु निश्चला ।

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं निष्कलं पापनाशनम् ॥१३९॥

लभते योगयुक्तात्मा पुरुषसस्तत्परं पदम् ।

कूर्मः स्वपाणिपादादिशिरश्चात्मनि धारयेत् ॥१४०॥

एवं द्वारेषु सर्वेषु वायुपूरितरेचितः ।

निषिद्धे तु नवद्वारे ऊर्ध्वं प्राश्वसंस्तथा ॥१४१॥

घटमध्ये यथा दीपो निवातं कुम्भं विदुः ।

निषिद्धैर्नवभिर्वर्तीर्निर्जने निरुपद्रवे ॥१४२॥

निश्चितं त्वात्मात्रेणावशिष्टं योगसेवया ॥

इत्युपनिषत् ॥

2. Transcription Pronunciation Guide

a	<u>nut</u>
ā	father
i	<u>bit</u>
ī	<u>knee</u>
u	<u>hook</u>
ū	<u>sue</u>
r	<u>hurt</u>
e	<u>net</u>
ai	<u>time</u>
o	<u>got</u>
au	<u>house</u>
m	<u>hum</u>
h	h + preceding vowel
k	papri <u>ka</u>
kh	ink <u>horn</u>
g	ago
gh	big <u>hut</u>
ñ	<u>anger</u>
c	<u>chat</u>
ch	much <u>harm</u>
j	jog
jh	raj <u>house</u>
ñ	<u>engine</u>
t	borscht <u>ł</u>
th	borscht <u>home</u>
đ	fresh <u>dill</u>
đh	flushed <u>heart</u>
ń	<u>rainy</u>
t	<u>tarp</u>
th	scout <u>hall</u>
d	modern
dh	mud <u>hut</u>
n	<u>banal</u>

p	<u>papa</u>
ph	<u>top half</u>
b	<u>maybe</u>
bh	<u>mob hall</u>
m	<u>chroma</u>
y	<u>young</u>
r	<u>merit</u>
l	<u>alas</u>
v	<u>laya</u>
ś	<u>shin</u>
ṣ	<u>sunshine</u>
h	<u>hut</u>

3. Continuous Translation

Invocation

The blessed one is born in the divine auspiciousness of yoga and emancipation. I worship the feet of Rāma, who is the essence of yoga, arisen from Viṣṇu. Saying: Om, may this teaching benefit both of us together. Peace.

1.

I shall describe the essence of Yoga, with the desire of benefiting the yogis. He, who has both heard and studied this, is freed from all evils.

2.

The great yogin, the great being, the great ascetic is Viṣṇu by name. He, the Supreme Spirit, is seen like a light on the way to the essence.

3.

The paternal grandfather (Brahma), having served and prostrated to the protector of the world (Viṣṇu), asked him: ‘Describe to me the essence of yoga and the joining together of its eight components’.

4.

Hṛṣīkeśa said to him: ‘Listen, I will explain thoroughly: living beings are always trapped by the web of illusion in happiness and sorrow.

5, 6.

But, *kaivalya*, the supreme abode, is difficult to reach by different ways. Of these, the way (to *kaivalya*) is the one which leads to liberation, destroying the web of illusion, eliminating birth, death, old age [and] disease, [and] delivering [the aspirant] from death. Those fallen among the web of teachings are deluded by that knowledge.

7.

[It is] not possible even for the gods to describe a place [which is] indescribable. How can a form [already] illuminated by its own self be illuminated by [any] teachings?

8.

Just that, [which is] undivided, unsullied, calm and has gone beyond all welfare, is chosen by a living form with the fruits of good and evil deeds.

9.

How did that, which is the seat of the supreme soul, eternal [and] beyond the state of all existing things, [and is] pure [and] has the form of wisdom, pass to [the state] of the living?

10.

There, the *ahamkāra* brought forth in this, like [a bubble] suddenly arising in the water, a body consisting of the five elements, of the three *gunas*, and bound by the seven *dhātus*.

11.

Perceive that which is joined with happiness and sorrow, which has been purified, is through the production of *jīva*. Thus the term *jīva* is revealed in the supreme self.

12, 13.

That embodied soul is thought [to be] complete [when] freed from these faults: desire, anger, fear and also delusion, greed, pride, lust, birth and death, miserliness, grief, laziness, hunger, thirst, craving, shame, fear, sorrow, despair and exultation as well.

14.

Thus I shall tell you the means and purpose for the destruction of these faults. How can that knowledge, which omits yoga, be sure to give liberation?

15.

But surely yoga without *jñāna* [is] not favourable for the effect of liberation. Thus the seeker of liberation must be established in both *jñāna* and yoga.

16.

The cycle of samsara (birth, death and rebirth) [occurs] only due to *ajñāna* (ignorance) [and] is released through *jñāna* (knowledge). In the beginning, *jñāna* [was] indeed the very embodiment of knowledge [and was] the only means for *jñāna* to be understood.

17.

By it (*jñāna*), the supreme seat is known directly as the indwelling, pure, undivided form of *kaivalya*, consisting of the form of *sat-cit-ānanda*.

18.

[It is] beyond the knowledge and appearance [of] creation, maintenance and dissolution. Thus, this was said about *jñāna*. Now I shall describe yoga to you.

19.

O Brahman, yoga is divided into many parts, namely: mantra yoga, laya yoga and *hatha* yoga, as well; that is in accordance with *rāja* yoga.

20.

Therefore, the beginning stage, the second, third and indeed the fourth and final stage [are] prescribed, and thus [this] state is always proclaimed.

21, 22.

O Brahman, listen! I shall describe concisely the characteristic[s] of these [yogas]. Whoever should repeat the mantra for twelve years together with the syllables, gradually obtains *jñāna*, beginning with the power of making the body subtle and light, and the knowledge of *guṇa*, the qualities of nature. The most inferior aspirant of low intelligence practises this yoga.

23.

Laya Yoga, dissolution of individual consciousness, is described in innumerable ways. One should meditate on the absolute Lord [while] moving, resting, sleeping [or] eating.

24, 25.

This must be laya yoga. Listen to that which is *hatha* yoga. Yoga is said [to have] eight limbs: *yama* and *niyama*, and indeed *āsana*, *prāṇayāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, and *dhyāna* (meditation on Vishnu at the eyebrow centre), [leading to] *samādhi*, the state of equilibrium.

26, 27.

[This yoga also includes practices of mudrā and bandha:] *mahā mudrā*, *mahā bandha* and *mahā vedha*, *khecarī mudrā*, *jālandhara bandha*, *uḍḍiyāna bandha*, and likewise *mūla bandha*, [as well as] chanting the mantra Aum for a long time, listening to the highest truth, and the triad of *vajrolī*, *amarolī* and

sahajolī.

28, 29.

O Brahman, listen attentively to each characteristic of these [limbs]. Amongst the yamas, light eating is the single chief factor. Amongst the niyamas, non-violence is definitely the most important, O four-faced one. Likewise, [there are] four [main postures]: siddhāsana, padmāsana, simhāsana and bhadrāsana.

30, 31.

But, O Four-faced One, the following obstacles [arise]: time of early practice, laziness, boasting, the company of fraudulent people, beginning sadhana with mantra, desire for metals and women etc, [and] indeed illusions of craving and greed. Knowing [this], a wise man should relinquish all obstacles through [his] virtuous powers.

32, 33.

Now he should make a beautiful monastic hut with a narrow doorway, without cracks, well-smeared with cow-dung or mortar, and carefully cleared of bugs, mosquitoes [and] spiders. Then, having gone into padmāsana, he should practise prāṇāyāma by himself.

34.

Every day [the sādhana kutir should be] specially swept with a broom, imbued with pleasant fragrances and perfumed with sweet-smelling gum.

35, 36a.

Having sat down there [and] assumed padmāsana on a cushion of cloth, deerskin [and] kuśa grass, not very high [and] not very low, the wise man, his body upright and his clasped hands respectfully outstretched, should bow down to his personal deity.

36b, 37, 38.

Then, having closed his right nostril with the thumb of his right hand, he should inhale very slowly through the left nostril, and then, without pausing, he should perform breath retention for as long as he can. He should exhale again through the right nostril quite slowly, not quickly. Having inhaled through the right nostril again, he should slowly fill the inner area.

39.

Having retained [the breath for] as long as possible, he should exhale slowly through the left nostril. Through whichever nostril he exhales, inhaling [again] through it, he should retain [the breath] without interruption.

40.

This is declared: the mātrā, unit of time, [is measured] by making [a circle] to the right [with the hand] on the knee, neither quickly nor slowly, [and then] he should snap his thumb.

41, 42.

Having directed the inhaled breath slowly through the left nostril for sixteen mātrās, he should then retain [the breath] fully for sixty four mātrās. He should exhale again through the right nostril for thirty two mātrās. Having inhaled again through the right nostril as before [he should become] established [in the practice].

43.

He should practise four times a day: in the morning, at midday, in the evening and at midnight, slowly [increasing] up to eighty breath retentions.

44, 45.

After practising in this way for three months, there should then be purification of the nādīs. When there is purification of the nādīs, then external signs are produced in the body of the yogin. I shall describe them fully: lightness of the body, radiance, increase of digestive fire.

46.

And then it should surely bring about leanness of the body. One who is accomplished in yoga should avoid foods [which] obstruct [the practice of] yoga.

47, 48, 49.

He should give up salt, mustard and [food which is] sour and hot, dry and pungent, vegetables of every kind, asafoetida etc, enjoyment of [the warmth of] fire, women and travel, bathing in the morning, fasting etc, and [whatever gives] distress to the body. During the period of yoga practice, food of milk and ghee is ordained the best. Wheat, horse beans and boiled rice are known for their development of yoga. Then he should be most capable of suspension of the breath for as long as he wishes.

50, 51a

Kevala kumbhaka, spontaneous breath retention, is attained by holding the breath inside for as long as possible. When perfected in spontaneous breath retention, exhaling [and] inhaling are given up. There exists nothing unattainable by him in the three worlds.

51b, 52, 53a.

At first perspiration is produced; therefore it should be cleaned. Then again, in the course of slowly holding the breath, the person experiences tremor in the body, while sitting. Then, from much more practice, frog-like sweat is produced.

53b, 54, 55.

And, just as the frog moves up by leaps and bounds, thus the yogin moves [while] seated in padmāsana on the ground. Then, because of much more practice, rising up [from] the earth is accomplished, and that person, having levitated from the earth, still remains seated in padmāsana. Thus the power for superhuman action and other things may arise.

56.

He should not reveal [this] teaching [whose] power [is] heroically inspired. Then the yogin is not affected by hardship, [whether] very small or great.

57, 58a.

Little urine and excrement are produced, and [there is] very little sleep. [When] indeed, rheum of the eyes, saliva, sweat and bad smell are negligible, then subsequently these things do not arise in him at all.

58b, 59, 60a.

Then, after a lot more practice, great strength arises, by which he attains bhūcara siddhi, which gives him the power to move through mountains and walls, and mastery over all creatures moving on the earth. Thus the deer, lion, tiger, or even elephant or wild bull perish, when struck by the hand of this yogin.

60b, 61.

The yogin is just like the form of *Kāma*, the god of love. Women enthralled by such an appearance desire intercourse with him. If he makes [this] connection, then there will be a decrease of his semen.

62.

Having given up intercourse with woman, he should do [his] practice seriously. By preserving the semen, a pleasant fragrance is produced in the body of the yogin.

63.

Then, seated in a secret [place], he should repeat *Aum* with prolonged mātrās for the purpose of the destruction of previously committed sins.

64.

The mantra *Aum* destroys all obstacles [and] removes all faults. In this way, by the practice of yoga, he enters into the first *siddhi*.

65, 66.

Then, following upon that, with practice on the breath, is the second state. When union takes place with each other without conflict, between *prāṇa* and *apāna*, *manas* and *buddhi*, *jīvātma* and *paramātma*, this is declared the second state. I shall describe its signs.

67, 68a.

He should undertake one fourth of the practice described before. He should practise only one restraint, either by day or at night. He should do *kevala kumbhaka* once every day.

68b, 69, 70, 71, 72.

Complete withdrawal of the sense organs from the objects of the senses by strenuous retention of the breath is called *pratyāhāra*. Whatever the yogin then sees with his eyes, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then hears with his ears, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then smells through his nose, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then tastes with his tongue, this is to be declared ātman. Whatever he then touches with his skin, this is to be declared ātman. Thus, with undaunted effort, for the welfare of the sensory organs, the yogin should control them for a period of

two hours every day.

73, 74, 75.

Just as the *yogin*'s power of mind becomes stable, then arises clairaudience, clairvoyance, [the ability to] travel far within a moment, [great] power of speech, the ability to assume any form desired, [and] to become invisible, [and to turn] iron, [when] smeared with excrement and urine, into gold. The wise *yogin* must always be assiduously [and] continuously practising for attainment in yoga. [Then] levitation should be possible for him.

76, 77, 78a.

These great powers [are] obstacles. The wise man should not delight in them. The king of yogins should not display his own ability to anyone, whosoever. He should live in the world like a fool, an idiot or even a deaf person, thus guarding his own power. There is no doubt his disciples would beg [him to reveal his powers] for their own purposes.

78b, 79.

However, he who is occupied with working for others should not forget his own practice. Not forgetting the words of the guru, then he should practise day and night. Thus, assiduously and continuously practising, he becomes (enters) the second state.

80, 81a.

And indeed, he does not gain by useless company [which leads to] neglect of practice. Therefore he should always practise yoga with complete devotion. Then, through strenuous practice, the third state (of yoga) is attained.

81b, 82, 83a.

The breath, after much effort, having stimulated the

kundalinī with fire, knowingly enters the suṣumnā without interruption. When one's own vital energy enters the citta with the breath, it ascends hither the great path of the suṣumnā.

83b, 84a.

It is said there are five [elements]: earth, water, fire, air and ether. In these five the attention of the deities is said [to be] five-fold.

84b, 85, 86, 87a.

It is said that the site of *prthvī*, the earth element, begins at the feet and ends at the knees. (The symbol for) pṛthvī is a yellow square, and the bīja mantra, or seed sound, is *lam*.

Directing the breath within the area of the earth element together with the sound *lam*, meditating on and performing worship to the four faced, golden one, he should concentrate for two hours. [Thus] he would obtain victory over the earth. Death is not for this *yogin*, who has united with the earth element.

87b, 88, 89, 90.

The area from the knees up to the anus is named āpas, water element. [The symbol is] a white half-moon and its bija mantra is vam. Directing the breath within the region of the water element together with the sound vam, remembering the four-armed, imperishable god Nārāyana, adorned with a crown, with the appearance of pure crystal, [and wearing] an orange garment, he should concentrate for two hours, [and then] he is freed from all sins. Thus there is no fear of water, [as his] death does not occur in water.

91, 92, 93, 94a.

From (the region of) water to the heart is called the site of *agni*, the fire element. (The symbol of) agni is a red triangle, and it is the source of the subtle sound *ram*. He should concentrate for two hours, directing the vital air, radiant with the mantra *ram*, within the fire element. Remembering Rudra, this dazzling sovereign, the three-eyed one, who grants boons, who resembles the newly risen sun, whose limbs are all smeared with ash, that one is not burned by fire. The body is not burned, even when it has entered the fire-pit.

94b, 95, 96, 97a.

From the heart to the eyebrow centre is called the site of *vāyu*, the air element. [The symbol of] *vāyu* is hexagonal in shape, blue in color, and glows with the vibration of *yam*. He should concentrate for two hours on the vital air, radiating the vibration *yam*, at the site of *vāyu*, and then on the all-knowing Iśwara, the Supreme Being, who has faces on all sides. The siddhi of levitation arises through mastery of *vāyu*. Fear of wind [is overcome, because wind] cannot cause the death of the yogin.

97b, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102a.

Now, it is said, the site of ākāśa is from the eyebrow centre to the crown of the head. The (symbol of the) ether element is a smokey-grey circle, and it glows with the vibration *ham*. Directing the breath upwards within (the region of) ākāśa [he should] repeat the sound *ham*. (The deity of ākāśa is) Sadāśiva, who is tranquil, with the form of bindu, and the shape of vyoma. (He) shines like pure crystal, and is wearing a crescent moon on his head. (He) has five faces with pleasing expressions [and] three eyes. His ten arms hold all weapons [and are] adorned with all ornaments. Uma resides within half of his body, granting boons. That yogin who concentrates within ākāśa on the supreme deity, Sadāśiva, who is the cause of all causes, will certainly be able to levitate, and also enjoy endless happiness wherever he is.

102b, 103.

And so the accomplished yogin should perform [these] five dhāraṇās. Then his body becomes strong [and] death is not known to him. The wise man does not perish, even at the time of *pralaya*, when the universe is dissolved back into Brahma.

104, 105, 106.

Then, holding the breath in the ether element, he should practise deep meditation on the deity with form and qualities, who grants his wishes, for six *ghaṭikas* (two hours and twenty four minutes). It is said this is *saguṇa dhyāna*, meditation on form, which bestows attributes, beginning with anima, the power of making the body small and subtle. And thus he is merged in *nirguṇa dhyāna*, formless meditation, and attains *saṃādhi*, transcendental meditation. He should obtain this within just

twelve days. Having retained the breath, this wise one becomes a *jīvanmukta*, liberated while still living in the body.

107, 108.

Samādhi is the state [in which] the individual soul and the cosmic soul [are] the same. If (the yogin) desires to abandon the body, this can be accomplished by himself. Being attached to the supreme reality, he does not seek to ascend.

109, 110, 111.

Endowed with attributes, such as *anīmā*, the power of making the body minute and subtle, he moves within all the worlds. At times, having become a *deva*, divine being, through his own will, he is highly honoured in the celestial world. Or, through his own will, he may even take the appearance of a man or a *yakṣa*, demi-god. By his own will, he may move in many forms, [such as] a lion, tiger, elephant or horse. The *yogin*, who is like the supreme lord, exists in accordance with his own wishes. [There is] a difference in the various practices, but indeed the result is the same.

112, 113, 114, 115a.

He should press the heel of the left foot in the region of the perineum. Having extended the right leg, he should hold [it] firmly with both hands. Placing the chin on the chest, he should inhale again. Maintaining breath retention for as long as possible, he should then exhale. Having practised with the left foot, he should then practise with the right. He should then bend whichever leg is stretched out against the thigh. This is *mahābandha*; in this way it should be practised on both sides.

115b, 116, 117a.

The *yogin*, (sitting) in the position of *mahābandha*, having inhaled, with his mind still, stops the flow of the prāṇas by means of the throat lock. The two nāḍīs, idā and pingalā, having entered (*suṣumnā*), the prāṇa vibrates quickly. This is *mahāvedha*; it is practised continually by the siddhas.

117b, 118a.

Folding the tongue back within the cavity inside the head, he should fix the gaze on the point between the eyebrows; then this is *khecarī mudrā*.

118b, 119a.

Contracting the throat, he should place [the chin] on the chest with focused mind. This is called *jālandhara bandha* [and] is a lion to the fear of death.

119b, 120a.

Now that bandha by which the prāṇa flies upward through *suṣumnā* is called *uddiyāna bandha* by the yogins.

120b, 121a.

He should firmly contract the perineum by means of pressure with part of the heel, raising the *apāna* upwards; this is called *yoni bandha*.

121b, 122, 123, 124a.

Prāṇa/apāna and *nāda/bindu*, are united through (the practice of) moolabandha (combined with) *viparīta karaṇī* (mudrā). Success in yoga is attained by one who engages in this practice regularly; there is no doubt here. This practice is said to increase the digestive fire, removing all diseases. An abundance of food should be brought and consumed by the aspirant. If little is supplied, the fire will immediately take his body.

124b, 125, 126a.

On the first day [his] head should be on the ground and [his] legs raised up for a moment. Every day he should practise a little longer. Wrinkles and even grey hair will not be seen after six and a half months. Indeed, whoever practises continuously for a period of three hours conquers time.

126b, 127.

Indeed whoever practises vajrolī is a yogin [and] the recipient of siddhis. If accomplishment in yoga is ever attained by him, it is lasting. He knows the events of the past and certainly has the power of flight.

128, 129a.

Whoever always drinks the mid-stream of urine daily, taking [it] through the nose, [and] always practises vajrolī, is said [to be a practitioner of] amarolī. Then he attains rāja yoga, [and] there is certainly no distance [between him and enlightenment].

129b, 130, 131a.

When *kriyā* is brought about by yogins through rāja yoga, then the yogins are certainly victorious in *viveka* and *vairagya*. The supreme spirit, Viṣṇu, who is the great yogin, lord of the elements and master of austerities, is then seen as a light on the path of the true reality.

131b, 132, 133, 134a.

That breast from which he drank before, he obtains joy by fondling, [and] he delights in that very organ from which he was previously born. She who was his wife is now his mother, and she who is now his mother will again be his wife. He who is the father will again be the son, and he who is the son will again be the father. Hearing [this], he abides in the worlds, in the same way as the beings wandering through the wheel of *samsāra*, like a jar in a water-wheel.

134b, 135, 136a.

The three worlds, three Vedas, three *sandhyās*, three *swaras*, three fires and the three *guṇas* are all placed in the three imperishable sounds [of *Aum*], and whoever has delved into even half a sound is pervaded by all this. This [is] the Truth; this [is] the Supreme Seat.

136b, 137, 138, 139a.

As the fragrance within the flower, as the ghee within the milk, as the oil within the sesame, as the gold within the rock, [so] is the lotus placed in the area of the heart. Its face is bent down; its stalk is upright. Its *bindu* is below; within it abides *manas*. The lotus is expanded with the sound A; with

the sound U, it is opened up; by the sound M, it obtains sound, and the half syllable is still.

139b, 140a.

The person whose self is united with yoga obtains that supreme seat, [which] has the appearance of pure crystal, [is] undivided [and] destroys sins.

140b, 141, 142.

The tortoise holds within itself its own hands, feet and also head, so is the air inhaled and exhaled in all the orifices [of the body]. Then, drawing in the breath forwards and upwards, when the nine orifices are restrained, like a lamp inside a jar, the stillness of kumbhaka is known by adepts, who have restrained the nine orifices in a deserted place, free from disturbances.

Conclusion

Through dedication to yoga, you surely [will realise] that the ātmās, the highest consciousness, alone remains. Thus ends the *Upaniṣad*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Swami Satyadharma is a senior sannyasin and versatile teacher of yogic meditation and allied philosophies, having a Master of Arts in Yoga Philosophy with First Class Honors from Bihar Yoga Bharati, India. She wrote the commentary on the *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad*, which was published by Yoga Publications Trust in 2003. Born in Connecticut USA, she lived in India for over 35 years under the direct tutelage of her yoga master, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, where she imbibed the traditional yogic teachings, and became Director of the Department of Undergraduate Studies at Bihar Yoga Bharati. She has compiled and edited many major yoga publications, such as *Yoga Darshan*, *Sannyasa Darshan*, *Dharana Darshan* and the *Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. After travelling for many years throughout Europe, USA, Asia and Australia, giving lectures and seminars, she now lives a life of sadhana and introspection in Australia, while continuing to elucidate the ancient teachings of yoga in the form of the twenty Yoga Upanishads.

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Srimukti (Ruth Perini) was for many years a teacher of yoga and meditation. Already a linguist, having graduated in French, Italian and Japanese from the Universities of Sydney and Queensland, Australia, she undertook four years of studies in Sanskrit at the Australian National University (ANU) with Dr McComas Taylor. She was invited to join the Golden Key International Society for outstanding academic achievement, as she was awarded High Distinctions throughout her Sanskrit studies. She has also translated the *Yoga Darśana* and *Nāda Bindu*, *Dhyānabindu*, *Yoga Kundalī Upaniṣads*, and is currently working on the *Varāha Upaniṣad*.

Ruth (Srimukti) may be contacted on yoga.upanishads@yahoo.com.