

YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

A Guide to Self-knowledge

Mahamandleshwar Paramhans
Swami Maheshwaranandapuri

विभूति पादः
VIBHŪTI-PĀDAḤ

बलेषुहस्तिबलादीनि ॥ २५ ॥

25. baleṣuhasti-balādīni

bala – strength, power

hasti – elephant

balādīni – strength and other

By *samyama* on the power of an elephant, one attains its strength.

If a yogi concentrates on an elephant, they obtain its strength. If they concentrate on an eagle, they acquire its sharp vision and marksmanship. In this way, the Yogi can acquire any skill by concentration.

I have myself seen a yogi pull an aeroplane by a chain which he held between his teeth. I also knew a sadhu who could stop a locomotive from moving away by putting his hands against it. How is such a thing possible? Physical strength alone is not enough for that. Man's strength lies in mental strength and concentration. Physical strength is limited, mental strength is unlimited. By concentration, physical power can be increased infinitely. *Siddhis*, however, are not to be used to demonstrate miraculous things. There are more difficult things in life than stopping a locomotive, namely, controlling one's emotions.

प्रवृत्त्यालोकन्यासात्सूक्ष्मव्यवहितविप्रकृष्टज्ञानम् ॥ २६ ॥

26. pravṛtṭyāloka-nyāsāt-sūkṣma-vyavahita-viprakṛṣṭa-jñānam

pravṛtṭi – the progression

āloka – to behold, sight

nyāsa – the setting down

sūkṣma – fine, subtle

vyavahita – that which is hidden

viprakṛṣṭa – that which is distant

jñāna – knowledge

***Samyama* on the inner perception leads to the realisation of the subtle, hidden and distant.**

There are three things that cannot be perceived by the physical senses:

1. subtle elements (*tattvas*),
2. hidden things (e.g., what is under the earth or in a other room),
3. distant things.

For a realised Yogi matter is no obstacle. They can see through it everywhere by inner perception and see things which are hidden or distant or are in the astral planes quite clearly.

Those who practice *Kriyā-yoga* with concentration can realise this power more easily. *Trātaka* (candle meditation) is also a very good exercise to develop concentration (see "Yoga in Daily Life – The System", chapter *Hatha Yoga Kriyas*).

The next three *sūtras* describe how a yogi can attain extraordinary knowledge of the universe through their concentrated power of concentration.

भुवनज्ञानभ सूर्ये सभयमात् ॥ २७ ॥

27. bhuvana-jñānaṁsūryesaṁyamāt.

bhuvana – world

sūrya – sun

jñāna – knowledge

saṁyamāt = saṁyama – deep contemplation, meditation

Samyama on the sun gives knowledge of the cosmos.

चन्द्रेताराव्यूहज्ञानम् ॥ २८ ॥

28. candretārā-vyūha-jñānam

candra – moon

tāra – star

vyūha – arrangement, wholeness

jñāna – knowledge

Samyama on the moon gives knowledge of the order of the stars.

ध्रुवेतद्रतिज्ञानम् ॥ २९ ॥

29. dhruve tad-gati-jñānam

dhruva – polar star

tad – to be, her

gati – movement

jñāna – knowledge

Samyama on the pole star gives knowledge about the course of the stars.

The yogi's concentration is so far-reaching that, without leaving their seat, without binoculars and other aids, they can obtain information about the entire cosmos. The *rishis* of ancient times already possessed extraordinary knowledge about the universe. For example, the Vedas contain precise information about the solar system and the planets – although there were no telescopes, satellites or spaceships at that time. The *rishis* also developed an "atomic theory" without electron microscopes.

नाभिचक्रे कायव्यूहज्ञानम् ॥ ३० ॥

30. nābhi-cakrekāya-vyūha-jñānam

nābhi – navel

cakra = chakra, energy center

kāya – body

vyūha – arrangement, wholeness

jñāna – knowledge

***Samyama* on the navel center (*Manipūra Chakra*) gives knowledge about the body.**

Knowing something about the body, about the state of health, the cause of a disease, etc., can be achieved by concentrating on the *Manipūra Chakra* (navel centre). The navel is where many nerves meet, and where a particularly large amount of *prāṇa* gathers. The energy that supplies and nourishes the whole body radiates from the *Manipūra chakra*. Concentration on this *chakra* therefore imparts the knowledge of all bodily functions.

कण्ठकूपे क्षूत्पिपासानिवृत्तिः ॥ ३१ ॥

31. kaṇṭha-kūpekṣut-pipāsā-nivṛttiḥ

kaṇṭha – throat

kūpa – well, hole, cave kṣut

(kṣudh) – hunger

pipāsā – thirst

nivṛtti – stop

Through *samyama* on the throat centre (*Vishuddhi Chakra*), hunger and thirst pass away.

Certain yoga exercises that act on the *Vishuddhi Chakra* act against hunger pangs and increase the vital force in the body. These exercises are: *Bhastrika-Prāṇāyāma*, *MahāBandha* as well as *Ujjāyi-Prāṇāyāma*, and rebreath performed in the open air.

By concentrating on the laryngeal center and the yoga techniques of *Ujjāyi-Prāṇāyāma*, *Khechari-Mudrā* and *JālandharBandha*, it is possible to collect and harness the "nectar" (*amrit*), a type of hormone produced in the *bindu chakra*. This revitalises and rejuvenates the body.

For a detailed description of the techniques, see the book "Yoga in Daily Life – The System". It is important that such advanced exercises are performed only after an appropriate period of preparation and under the guidance of a master.

कूर्मनाड्यास्थैर्यम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. *kūrma-nāḍyāṁsthairyam*

kūrma – turtle

nāḍya – energy channel, born from the river

sthairya – firmness, stability

***Samyama* on the *kūrma-nāḍi* gives stability.**

According to yoga anatomy, there are 72,000 *nādis* in the human body. They act as energy channels and information transmitters in the body. Each *nāḍi* has a Sanskrit name. Some of the most important *nādis* are *idā*, *pingalā*, *shushumnā*, *brahmānāḍi* and *vajra-nāḍi*. (About the *nādis* and their effect on the body, see the book "The Hidden Forces in Man").

Kūrmā means turtle. The *kūrma-nāḍi* runs in the armpit and is directly connected to the *Vishuddhi Chakra* (throat center). It has a relaxing effect and helps to calm the mind in concentration and meditation.

A simple technique can help when one is nervous, and against restlessness, sadness, nervousness, and lack of concentration. It helps to activate the *kūrma-nāḍi* by briefly pressing both fists into the armpits.

Near the *kūrma-nāḍi* there are two *nādis* (*idā* and *pingalā*) connected to the left and right nostrils. One can take advantage of this fact when the nose is blocked:

– If the right nostril is misplaced, press with the right fist into the left armpit for a few minutes.

– If the left nostril is closed, it is helpful to apply pressure with the fist in the right armpit.