

# YOGA SUTRAS OF PATANJALI

## A Guide to Self-knowledge

Mahamandleshwar Paramhans  
Swami Maheshwaranandapuri

विभूति पादः  
VIBHŪTI-PĀDAḥ

ततःप्रातिभ्रावणवेदनादर्शस्वादावार्ताजायन्ते ॥ ३७ ॥

37. tataḥprātibha-śrāvaṇa-vedanādarśāsvāda-vārtājāyante.

tataḥ – therefore

prātibha – essence, quick comprehension

śrāvaṇa – hearing

vedanā – feeling

ādarśa – seeing

āsvāda – taste

vārtā – smell

jāyante – arises, generates, born

This gives rise to immediate cognitions and the abilities of supernatural hearing, feeling, seeing, tasting and smelling.

By learning to master the senses and mind and beginning to realise spiritual knowledge (para vidyā), the yogi begins the dawn of light, even though self-realisation has not yet been achieved.

Gradually, SŪKSHMA INDRIYAS, subtle sense organs unfold within them. Unlike the bodily sense organs, these are unlimited and all-embracing. At the moment

we are attached to the body and can see and hear only what the eyes and ears convey to us. When the Yogi has reached this high stage of consciousness by a pure and spiritual way of life, their faculty of cognition goes far beyond that of the senses and is not limited by time, space or matter.

The order of awakening of these siddhis varies individually.

PRĀTIBHA–Clairvoyance, knowledge of the past, present and future. One who has attained this siddhi can discern future tendencies. The developments of the future are laid out, but not completely fixed and can change. Predictions should therefore only be made with extreme caution and a great sense of responsibility.

One student told me she was prophesied to die in seven months. But five years later, thank God, she was still healthy and well. One should not play around with such "prophecies". It is better to help without revealing your knowledge. Be considerate of the other person's feelings, and say only what is helpful and what you are certain will come to pass.

SHRĀVANA–Clairaudience

Whoever realises the siddhi of clairaudience can hear the sounds (nāda) of the astral planes.

Nādarūpaparabrahman– Sound or vibration is the form of the Supreme Self. Vibration is the origin of the universe.

VEDANĀ –Sensing, feeling

This siddhi enables the yogi to make contact with distant things or persons. It is said that there are yogis who can visit the moon in the mind – not in imagination, but they actually see and experience what is going on there. But what is meant here is mainly that the intensity of feeling becomes so strong that it is possible to make contact even with distant persons. This can be compared to the strong inner connection that a mother has with her child. She "lives" with the child even when they are at school or

elsewhere at a great distance. No force in the world can stop or interrupt this flow of feelings. The mother can be separated from the child, friends, partners, lovers can be far away from each other, but the love, the feelings and the inner contact remain. Feelings are immaterial and associated with the element of space (ākāsha-tattva). They cannot be seen or touched, but they are constantly flowing around us, within us and through us.

### ĀDARSHA – Astral Sight

Through this siddhi, the yogi in meditation can enter the spheres of the saints, angels, gods and astral beings.

### ĀSVĀDA – "Divine" taste

Through this siddhi, the Yogi experiences the taste of the heavenly nectar. Those who have this siddhi are always happy and contented. They feel permeated with cosmic energy and divine nectar at all times and filled with joy and harmony, whatever may happen.

### VĀRTĀ – Subtle Sense of Smell

The yogi is able to perceive the "divine" fragrance, the subtle presence of the divine Self in all planes of the cosmos.

Patanjali further elaborates:

तेसमाधावुपसर्गाव्युत्थानेसिद्धयः ॥ ३८ ॥

38. *tesamādhāv-upasargāvyutthānesiddhayah*

te – this, that

samādhāv (samādhi) – for samādhi

upasarga – obstacle

vyutthāna – outwardly directed mind

siddhayah – powers

However, these powers are obstacles on the path to samādhi.

The siddhis are an obstacle on the spiritual path when the practitioner clings to them and becomes entangled in them. Patanjali repeatedly admonishes: The aspirant should also develop viveka and vairāgya in relation to the siddhis.

In a bhajan of Holy Gurujī this is explained very well: Sādhanachyārā karo haripyārā chin se hove moksha tumhārā

Four techniques God loves the most. By practicing them you attain liberation. The first technique is the training of discrimination (viveka). Through this you separate truth from untruth.

Through vivekayou weigh and decide what is beneficial and what is detrimental to spiritual development, what is honest and what is dishonest, what is pure and what is impure.

Thus, you develop the insight: "brahma satyam jagat mithyā" – God is reality, the world is unreality. You can realise the Supreme Self only by detaching yourself from unreality and connecting yourself with reality.

What does solve mean? To be above things. You can and should live a normal life in the community, work, eat, drink, etc. But don't be dependent on it. It is the same with human relationships. Do not cling to them, and you will save yourself much suffering. Give freedom, then you will be free yourself. This does not mean that you should throw everything away or leave all people. This would only mean going to the other extreme. Keep moderation and stay within your capacity.

The second technique is the development of renunciation (vairāgya) until you detach yourself from the pleasures of heaven and the world.

Renounce even siddhis and supernatural powers. Many aspirants seeking spiritual development are seduced by esoteric lectures, courses or books that promise all kinds of powers and siddhis – aura vision, clairvoyance and other supernatural

powers, attainment of power, wealth, and so on. Such enticements pose a great danger to a spiritual seeker. In every plane there are distractions. The material world offers many temptations, but even greater distractions exist in the astral planes. If the yogi is sincere in their pursuit of the goal of God-realisation, they should not be distracted by such "small" forces. The goal is to realise union with the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent and eternal divine consciousness and not to get stuck in side paths and dead ends.

The bhajan goes on to say:

The third technique is the awakening of the six inner treasures through which you attain infinite bliss: desirelessness, self-control, faith, steadfastness, being above things, and not losing the goal.

The fourth technique is constant desire for liberation (moksha).

When will the world be liberated from its problems?

Only when you practice these techniques will your soul be liberated. O Mahāprabhuji, my master, by your blessings you make this possible. Swāmi Madhavānanda says, "Only by these four techniques you will be liberated."

बन्धकारणशैथिल्यात्प्रचारसंवेदनाच्च चित्तस्यपरशरीरावेशः ॥ ३९ ॥

39. *bandha-kāraṇa-śaithilyāt-pracāra-saṁvedanāc ca cittasya para-śarīrāveśah*

bandha – binding, fetters

kāraṇa – cause

śaithilyāt (śaithilya) – solution, looseness

pracāra – passages, channels

saṁvedana (-āt) – the recognition, sensation

cittasya (citta) – mind

para – from another

śarīra – body

āveśah – entrance, approach

By releasing the attachment to the body and knowing the exit of consciousness, the yogi can enter another body.

Through all these experiences described, through mastery of the elements and control of the functions in body, mind and consciousness, further supernatural powers awaken. A yogi who has developed this siddhi can enter into another person with their consciousness. This is called *jīvat-samādhi*.

The term *samādhi* is also used in India for the day of death or dying.

Everyone has to die. Whoever is born has to say goodbye one day. Be it a king, a beggar, a minister, worker or official – time waits for no one. It treats everyone equally. Those who are connected with the law of nature and are therefore subject to time and karmas, participate in the cycle of nature. We can observe her cycle in the succession of the seasons. Similarly, we too are born, die, are born again, die again and so on.

There are yogis who have the ability that when their body is sick and weak, they can leave it at their will to be reborn in another body. Changing a body is as unproblematic for them as changing clothes is for us.

In *jīvat-samādhior mahā-samādhi*, a yogi can take leave of this world in full possession of their powers and consciousness. There are eyewitness accounts of yogis settling down in the meditation seat and, while chanting OM, leaving the body.

It is reported about the great Indian mystic and poet Kabir that when he died and his followers removed the shroud to bury his body, there were only fragrant flowers underneath and the body had disappeared.

The realised and liberated yogi, when they take leave of this world, becomes one with the light of the universe. We too can realise this through yoga, with patience and daily practice.