

# Towards Enlightenment

Translation: Yogavani -Sidhayogopadesh



Rohan Shetti

# **Towards Enlightenment**

Translation of the original book Yogavani written by  
Shri Shankar Purshottam Teertha Maharaj in Hindi and  
translated in Marathi by

Shri Yogiraj Gulawani Maharaj as Siddhayogopadesha.

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**Rohan Shetti**

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## Foreword

It gives us immense pleasure to publish English translation of “Yogvani” by Rohan Shetti. This is a big milestone in “Mahayoga Lineage” opening it’s wings globally. There was absolute necessity to have such a good book on this subject. With this translation “Mahayoga” path will reach worldwide. The speciality of this translation is that this translation is done by Rohan, a very young talented scientist studying in Germany for his Ph.D.

Original “Yogvani” is written in Bengali. Hindi translation of the same is also available. Later on founder of ShriVasudevniwas P.P. Yogiraj Shri Gulavnimaharaj had translated it in Marathi, which is available at Shrivasudev Niwas.

Shrivasudev Niwas is the worldwide acclaimed, pious and prime seat of “Mahayoga”.

Mahayoga is a way to generate harmony and integrity amongst all human beings. “Mahayoga” is natural, divine and automatic path which will purify all human beings from inside. This human purification will help to reduce the level of unrest, confusion and build confidence and brotherhood across the world.

Shrivasudev Niwas is thankful to everybody who has contributed towards this treatise, which gives guidance to welfare of mankind.

Shrivasudev Niwas,  
Pune 411 004.

**Shri Sharad J. Joshi,**  
Chief Trustee



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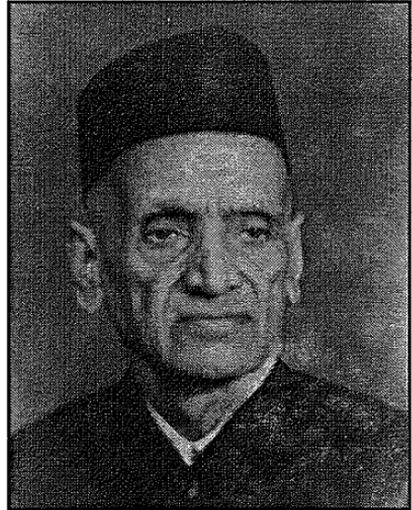






Shri Shankar Purushottam  
Teerth Maharaj

Writer of Yogvani



Shri Yogiraj Gulawani Maharaj

Translator of Yogvani in Marathi



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## Authors Note

Since ancient times the quest of life and the fear of death have confronted mankind. It has motivated humanity to search for the absolute truth. Every fundamental science and philosophy searches for this ultimate truth that powers life and living. Even after so many years of facing this equity human race is still bewildered of why life exists and why does it end. Every now and again the question strikes our minds that even when our material i.e. the body form dies, do we really cease to exist when it finishes? The reasoning for life and death is partly in its nature and we all have to live it, but to know its complete truth one needs to rise above life and death. To rise is to be awakened. To rise is to be enlightened. If life and death are just two states, then the question comes what is real and unreal and what is the absolute truth of enlightenment which is beyond life and death. Only an enlightened Guru can answer these questions.

Every soul which bears life (*Jeeva*) at some point of time in its journey through lives comes to a point to realize that material reality is not the complete truth. Then a person asks 'who am I? Where have I come from? And, where am I going?'. This quest leads a person to find a guru and to walk the final journey of the spiritual path. This book sheds light on these questions which every person asks on his inward journey of finding the self.

The discussion in the book is between an Enlightened Guru and a student on his quest of enlightenment. In truth, the questions asked by the student are questions which every person faces on his quest to finding the 'self'. Hence this book vents a very important discussion and sheds light on the path of Siddhayoga which can lead a person to enlightenment.

The beauty of the path of Siddhayoga is that the path leads a person towards enlightenment in a very natural and coherent way. I say natural and coherent as the path does not force physical regulations but brings about a change in the person from within. It has the potential to address every individual, which makes the path highly effective, as to attain enlightenment, 'one size fits all' is certainly not the rule. It addresses every individual with his uniqueness that is his karmic impressions from lives and dissolves his individuality into cosmic oneness, leading the person to become an enlightened being.

The book derives a logical understanding of *Yoga* and *Dnyana* which is conversion of factual knowledge to actual applied knowledge by practice, penance and *sadhana*. The discussion between the master and the student brings in to focus many aspects like nature of manifestation, nature of pure energy (*chaitanya*), spiritual powers (*siddhis*), rules and regulations of the path of Yoga (*yama, niyama*), and possible hurdles and their solutions for a person on this path. To this note I must say to every reader that don't be taken aback reading the rules and prohibitions recommended by this lineage. This path is such that once a person has initiated Kundalini Shakti the seekers body will eventually follow all the suggested rules. All the material tendencies from a person are shed like old leaves from a tree. One does not forcibly need to do anything. All that a person needs to do is to be a witness to the self and have utmost faith in his Guru. When a person follows rules forcibly, he sees them as barriers or limitations in his life. But, when a person realizes their importance from within he understands that the rules are in fact gateways to purify consciousness and bring in spiritual knowledge.

Another important aspect this book addresses is importance of dissolution of the ego. It is one thing to be humble once in a while, but to live a lifestyle of devotion and surrender is a truth of a completely different plane. The book derives this logic that when one surrenders the ego, (it's not only the ego, but all the *shadripu*)

in the real sense, does he become ready to gain divine knowledge. It broadens his vision and outlook about day-to-day things and makes him a better person and brings the person closer to being a better being and hence a better human. Surrender and devotion is explained by the master (Guru) in a very nice way, where a person not only sees the emotion but the logic behind it. It sparks a question in reader's mind that, than asking the petty rights and wrongs of life, ask what is real and unreal. This perspective is a great gift that a person gains by an insight offered by this book.

To this there are many discussions on what is real and what is illusion or *maya* between the student and the master. By many illustrations Guru explains to the reader that manifestation is momentary and anything that is created or manifested has to come to an end. This addresses that question of life and death in a very beautiful way. This also answers the question of what is real (absolute truth or *Satya*) and what is unreal (illusion or *maya*).

When these concepts are addressed, a person can be free from doubt. One realizes that to understand manifestation, life or death, one needs to rise above it and be one with knowledge of *Brahman*. One needs to realize that everything is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is everything.

The book speaks of the path of Siddhayoga which is a means to an end. The end result being enlightenment; but enlightenment is not something that happens in a day or a year. It is a gradual process. There is a steady transformation of a person on a physical, mental and cosmic level. The book details these changes and assures a student that he is on the right path.

Kundalini Shakti initiation is a rare gift and I believe is the best thing that can ever happen to any person. This process is not only an important event in one's life but is the most important event in any of his lives. This is a touch of the divine knowledge which helps the person ascend his consciousness to the level of the absolute truth; a truth that is more than material life and is not confounded by death. This understanding and realization can take

a person beyond life and death, for either of them is nothing but complementary manifestations of each other. However, understanding this and applying it in everyday life is very different. In this book the master, with simple illustration, builds a bridge of understanding where a person might lead a normal mundane life and still can follow the path of detachment and renunciation.

Lastly the greatest take-home message from this work for me was the understanding that everything is always changing as it is the nature of *maya*. But, the eternal truth of the atman remains the same. The penance and *sadhana* goes with every person and follows him through his journey through various lives. This immense grace of *gurutattav* is what keeps humanity sane.

Miracles in my opinion are not the things we don't understand but they are the things we realize. This process of ultimate realization which our Guru graces us with is the greatest wonder which humanity has and should cherish. I would encourage every person to walk this path and find his Guru, for every soul is *Brahman* and needs to realize its immortal, divine and peaceful nature.

|| Tvam Sakshat Atmasi Nityam ||

|| Shree Krishnarpanamastu ||

**Rohan Shetti**

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## Chapter - 1

Disciple: 'O lord', O kind master, I have a question to thee, that all I see around me is that all beings are attached to mundane reality. This attachment puts us through pain and pleasure. These experiences in turn cause us to be entwined in *maya*<sup>1</sup>. Can you please guide me through this veil and enlighten me to break free from this illusion?

Can you please tell me of a path which would enrich my life, and also that of any seeker who wishes to rise over the material reality and get closer to Divine?

Guru: O' humble disciple, I am impressed by your question and your sincere struggle for enlightenment. To this note I shall inform you that same this question was asked by Lord Bramha to Lord Shiva about how can mankind get over the veil of *maya* and get free from the cycle of birth, death, old age, disease and misery.

सर्वे जीवाः सुखैर्दुःखैर्मायाजालेन वेष्टिताः ॥  
तेषां मुक्तिः कथं देव कृपया वद शंकर ॥१॥  
सर्वसिद्धिकरं मार्गं मायाजालनिकृन्तनम् ॥  
जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिनाशनं सुखदं वद ॥२॥

Lord Bramha asked Lord Shiva, "O' Lord Shankar, it troubles me to see all beings entangled and attached to this mundane world, can you please enlighten me to guide these beings and release them from this tangle of life and death; To free them from disease, ill health, pain and aging and bestow on them siddhis<sup>2</sup> and fulfilment".

To this question of Lord Bramha, Lord Shiva answered

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1. *maya*: mundane reality / materialistic/ material reality
  2. Siddhis: are supernatural abilities gained by meditation and penance for years.

नानामार्गैस्तु दुष्प्राप्यं कैवल्यं परमं पदम् ॥  
सिद्धिमार्गेण लभते नान्यथा पद्मसंभव ॥३॥

O' Lord Brahma there are various ways of attaining enlightenment. Most of them are rigorous and tedious, but attaining enlightenment by *Siddha-marga* (the way of a Siddha) is relatively straight forward and fast.

By narrating this, the Teacher continued to tell the student that 'to achieve enlightenment is the only purpose of human life'.

Enlightenment by divine knowledge destroys the veil of *maya* and makes us aware of the complete truth. This state of enlightenment is a permanent state and not a momentary sense of pleasure. This completely and permanently rids the seeker of pain and despair.

Attaining *moksha*<sup>3</sup> permanently releases a being from karmic bondages, making him free from pain, pleasure and attachment to the material world.

Disciple: O' mighty Guru, can you please elaborate on the concept of *Siddhamarga*<sup>4</sup> and explain its details to me? Can you please explain what the real meaning of *Kaivalya*<sup>5</sup> or realization (enlightenment) is?

Guru: "*Siddha marga* is a path which leads you to enlightenment optimally. This is a school of thought developed from *Yoga marga*. *Yoga marga* focusses on ways to make *Prana Shakti* enter the *Sushumna nadi*<sup>6</sup>. This path leads to realization of unison of *Jiva*(Individual consciousness) and *Brahman*<sup>7</sup> (universal consciousness). This can happen when divine grace of the Guru is bestowed on the disciple. Once this happens there are sequential

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3. Moksha: realization, liberation, salvation.

4. Marga: path, line of thought.

5. Kaivlya: Kaivalya encompasses many meanings like enlightenment, liberation, eternal salvation Moksha or Mukti.

6. Sushumna nadi: Energy meridian which originates at the base of the last lumbar and reaches the topmost point on the brain cortex.

7. Brahman: Cosmic oneness, cosmic ever existing consciousness.

changes that take place in the disciple. The disciple gains insights of *Yoga Marga* and eventually attains enlightenment. The beauty of this path is that even without prior knowledge of Yoga when the *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened the seeker in his meditation can perform *asana*<sup>8</sup>, *mudras*<sup>9</sup> and *pranayama*<sup>10</sup>. Such is the power of the divine grace. When *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened by Guru's grace there is no reason to do particular *asan, mudra or pranayama*. All the above happens occasionally to the seeker when he sits for meditation. The Shakti herself decides what is essential for the disciple. The student has to sit in an *asana* comfortable to him and be an observer to what happens. Only by the mere will (*Sankalpa*<sup>11</sup>) of the Guru the *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened and the student must be an observer to what happens to him. This is the same path as described in the Bhagwad Geeta. It is quiet important to be an observer and not the 'doer' and witness what happens in a natural event of things; this in the true sense is natural selection and happens at ease (automatically).

The paths to enlightenment can be distinctly categorized in two ways viz. 'the natural' and 'the non-natural'. Natural and non-natural in this context means that a path where *kriyas, mudras, pranayama* happen in the natural sequence as selected by the *Kundalini*<sup>12</sup> *Shakti*<sup>13</sup> and the student must be an observer to the happening and the 'non-natural' is where the student is actively a

- 
8. Asana: Yogic posture particularly designed to facilitate movement of *vayu* (air element) in the body.
  9. Mudra: specific hand gesture facilitated to activate various energy meridians in the body. The word mudra has another context wherein it is a Yogic posture or exercise that happens during *sadhana* (meditation or penance).
  10. Pranayama: Specific / Methodical inhalation and exhalation of breath.
  11. Sankalpa: Sanskrit word for will; firm thought; motive
  12. Kundalini: Primordial energy that sustains all life, located at the base of the spine
  13. Shakti: Energy, power.

doer. The non-natural path is highly tough and there is a scope for many mistakes which can lead to disastrous results whereas, if you let *prakriti*<sup>14</sup> i.e. nature itself to decide what is essential, then one can safely progress on this path.

This can be better illustrated by looking at our own body processes wherein bodily processes like sleep, hunger, digestion of food, all have a natural sequence of their own which when followed properly keeps us healthy and happy. Similarly, all Yogic practices need to happen in their own natural sequence. If one forcibly tries to sleep he might have dreams and might end up having sleep problems, if one tries to eat even when he is not hungry he might lose interest in food and might have a loss of appetite. Similarly if one forcibly tries to pass stools then he might end up having digestive problems so one must understand that even Yogic practices like *pranayama*, *asana*, *mudra* etc. need to happen of their own accord. Only then one can have a stable spiritual progress. Only when one proceeds with the natural flow of events can one progress. Obstructing a natural phenomenon or forcibly making it happen can only create problems. For instance if a person undergoes a sad event and feels like crying one should cry, suppressing the emotion causes psychosomatic disorders and even chest congestion. If one needs an outburst of emotion one needs to follow it. Suppressing it will not solve the problem, likewise any yogic happening or phenomenon is of a natural cause. It should be allowed to happen, one should not insist or suppress a yogic happening (event)".

Guru: Just the way one gets medication from a doctor when he is ill, similarly when one is initiated by the *guru*, yogic phenomenon like *asan*, *mudra*, *pranayama* happen during meditation. One does not need to practice them separately. Resultantly, in this path all the *asana*, *mudra*, *kumbhak* etc. happen automatically on their own accord as the student progresses. This

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14. Prakriti: Nature, also a synonym to natural course of happenings, energy.

happens sequentially as the Karmic ties of the disciple are cut off during meditation (*sadhana*<sup>15</sup>). Eventually this leads to the union of *Jiva-Bramha* where the disciple's consciousness transcends to higher forms of reality. This path is known as *Siddha Marga* or *Siddha Yoga*.

Now, it is important to understand the concept of *Kaivalya* i.e. realization or enlightenment. Human consciousness has three *gunas*<sup>16</sup> or attributes which tie it to material reality viz. *Satva*<sup>17</sup>, *Rajas*<sup>18</sup> and *Tamas*<sup>19</sup>. Among the three, *Satva guna* leads a person to his quest for realization of truth whereas *Rajas Guna* makes a person passionate about specific interests and the *Tamas guna* makes a person have prejudice about his acts.

When the human mind and intellect is influenced by *Rajas* and *Tamas gunas* a person desires knowledge of material and mundane reality. He also desires to accumulate wealth and becomes materialistic. When the mind or intellect is highly influenced by the *Tamasguna* i.e. pride, envy or jealousy a person's ego takes over his sound mind and he/she thinks of evil deeds. A person might get highly attached to mundane things and becomes greedy and possessive about them. But when a person's mind becomes highly *satvik* he surrenders to the Almighty. This surrender itself leads the him/her to be polite and opens the doors of true knowledge. Such a person starts thinking about enlightenment and strives for renunciation of the material world and becomes a sage or a saint. A person's mind, when completely free from *Rajas guna* to the extent that there is not a single egoistic thought even for a split second only then the person can reach enlightenment. This is

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15. *Sadhana*: Sanskrit word of worship, practise commonly used in this context for meditation and Yoga Practices

16. *Guna*: property or attribute.

17. *Satva*: *guna* / property of a person to strive for equilibrium or be a seeker for spiritual awareness; also known as *Satvik*.

18. *Rajas*: *guna*/ property or behaviour of a person; having pride; active doer.

19. *Tamas*: *guna*/ greedy and jealous behaviour of a person; Possessive nature.

the phase where a person's individual consciousness dissolves to become one with the universal consciousness. And then the person is enlightened as he is bestowed with universal knowledge. Yogis, rishis and Siddhas constantly strive to attain this state. This elevated state of consciousness is known as *Vivekadnyan* or *Vivekakhyaati*. When a mind is completely free from *Rajas Guna* (pride oriented and hence prejudiced) and *Tamas guna* (greed or jealousy) one can gain complete knowledge of pure energy. This energy is known as *chaitanya* and gaining complete unanimity with this energy leads to *Savikalpa Samadhi*.

A mind when goes beyond this union it breaks free from this material energy (*chaitanya*<sup>20</sup>). The mind transcends beyond the laws of material energy. This state is known as *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

In this state the knowledge, the disciple and the guru all reach unison.

The individual consciousness of the seeker merges with the divine consciousness. In this state the observer, the consciousness and the *atman* unite and become one with the cosmos. But this phase can be very temperamental and if one loses focus, his mind will descend back to individual consciousness attaching itself to material reality. Furthermore when a mind absolutely focusses and reaches a permanent unison with the observer then it can stabilize in this state. This permanently elevated state of consciousness is known as *Keval Sthiti*. Hence this permanent shift from individual consciousness to cosmic consciousness leads to absolute dissolution of the three attributes (*gunas*) viz. *satva*, *rajas* and *tamas* and opens up the consciousness to higher form of reality.

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां प्रतिप्रसवं कैवल्यं

स्वरूपप्रतिष्ठावचितिशक्तेरिति । (पातंजलयोगसूत्र ४.३४)

(Patanjali Yogasutra Ch: 4. 34)

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20. Chaitanya: Sanskrit word for pure energy; formless ever pervading energy.

This means that when the functionality of all the three *gunas* becomes nil, a person's consciousness attains *kaivalya*. In other words *kaivalya* can be defined as dissolution of individual consciousness (*Chitta-shakti*) in the universal energy (*Chaitanya Shakti*).

Disciple: "It is said that knowledge (*dnyan*) is the key to liberation or realization, but your interpretation suggests that *Yog* is the path to enlightenment. Can you please elaborate the difference between the two? Can you please guide me through this duality of understanding (dilemma)? Or is it so that either of them is necessary for enlightenment?"

Guru: Just the way a bird cannot fly with one wing similarly one cannot attain *moksha* or enlightenment with just knowledge (*dnyan*) or just *Yog*. He needs both, *yoga* and *dnyan* (knowledge) to attain *moksha*.

ज्ञानं केचिद्वदन्त्यत्र केवलं तत्र सिद्धये ॥  
योगहीनं कथं ज्ञानं मोक्षदं भवतीह भो ॥१३॥  
योगोऽपि ज्ञानहीनस्तु न क्षमो मोक्षकर्मणि ॥  
तस्माज्ज्ञानं च योगं च मुमुक्षुर्दृढमभ्यसेत् ॥१४॥

योगशिखोपनिषद् (अ. १)  
(Yogashikhopanishad Chapter 1.)

Some people do believe that mere knowledge is enough to attain enlightenment, but this is certainly a misconception. Knowing mere facts does not mean one has acquired the ability to apply them in practical life. Similarly just by practicing *Yoga* without knowing its potential effects on the body is futile; therefore it is essential that *Yoga* and *dnyan* go hand-in-hand.

*Yog* stabilizes the mind improving its concentration, and knowledge i.e. an informed mind helps itself through the process of *Jiva-Bramha* union (*Jiva*: Individual consciousness, *Bramha*: universal consciousness).

Knowledge (*dnyan*) removes all doubts from the mind which is essential for progress. One cannot progress having doubts in

mind. Removal of doubt is important as doubts lead to confusion. It also reduces faith. Doubts are of two kinds

1. Quantitative (*Pramanagat*):
2. Fundamental or empirical (*Prameyagat*):

I shall illustrate the difference in 'quantitative' doubt and 'fundamental' doubt with an example. "Does Vedanta state that there is a differentiation in *Jiva-Bramha*?" Such a doubt is a quantitative doubt. "Is separation of *Jiva-Bramha* possible?" this is a type of fundamental doubt.

To suffice such doubts, knowledge is highly essential. Knowledge is of two types as well viz. *Paroksha dnyan*<sup>21</sup> and *Aparoksha dnyan*<sup>22</sup>.

*Paroksha dnyan*: knowledge gained by learning facts/ taught by a teacher. This basically implies knowing facts gathered by recording and learning from other people's experiences.

*Aparoksha dnyan*: knowledge gained by first-hand experience. This also implies knowing the fact well enough to apply it.

Every yogic phenomenon is an event. It is an experience for the student and every student learns from it according to his capacity.

यावन्नेव प्रविशति चरन् मारुतो मध्यमार्गे  
यावद्विदुर्न भवति दृढप्राणवातप्रबंधात् ॥  
यावद्व्याने सहजसदृशं जायते नैव तथ्यं  
तावज्ज्ञानं वदति तदिदं दंभमिथ्याप्रलापः ॥१४॥

हठयोगप्रदीपिका (प्र. ४)

(Hathayoga Pradipika Chapter 4)

Until *Prana* (air element) in the body does not enter the central energy meridian known as *Sushumna* and unless *Kumbhak*<sup>23</sup>, does

21. *Paroksha dnyan*: knowledge gained by reading texts or taught by a teacher. *Paroksha dyana* is someone else's experience noted (recorded) and learnt.
22. *Aparoksha dnyan*: knowledge gained by experience.
23. *Kumbhak*: Yogic practice or happening wherein air is with held in the body or outside the body for various intervals.

not stabilize one's mind to focus, one cannot attain enlightenment. This means focus attained with this can yield understanding of complete reality. In fact material or matter is nothing but confound or bonded energy. The study of this nature and properties of this matter (or energy) is 'fundamental study' or '*tatva dnyan*'. God is nothing but the most fundamental unit of this universal energy. Hence studying *tatva dnyan* is the same as studying the nature of god or in other words realization.

The following are the verses from the Bhagwata which iterate the same point.

वदन्ति तत् तत्त्वविदस्तवं यज्ज्ञानमद्वयम् ।

ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवानिति शब्द्यते ॥ (श्रीमद्भागवत)

(Shrimad Bhagwad)

Disciple: O' Lord. Can you please elaborate on the concepts of *Paroksha dnyan* and *Aparoksha dnyan*?

Guru: Lighting a lamp rids a place of darkness. But just knowing this fact or merely by saying 'lamp' one cannot get rid of real darkness. One needs to know how to actually light a lamp and do it in the time of need. Similarly just knowing about *Atman* and *Brahman* does not mean one understands their true form or existence. One can only attain union with them by penance and *sadhana*. So just to know factually about *atman* and *Brahman* is *Paroksha dnyan* and actually attaining union with them (experiencing them) is *Aparoksha dnyan*.

अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद् वेद परोक्षज्ञानमेव तत् ।

अहं ब्रह्मेति चेद्वेद अपरोक्षं तदुच्यते ॥ (पंचदशी)

(Panchadashi)

It is easy to read texts and know the description of *atman* and *Bramha* but it is very difficult to understand their reality. It is not possible to attain *Aparoksha dnyan* i.e. *Bramhasthiti* in this context without actually cleansing the mind. Realization or enlightenment is not possible merely by having known descriptions of *Brahman* or *Paroksha dnyan*.

स्वात्मप्रकाशरूपं तत् किं शास्त्रेण प्रकाशते ॥ (योगशिखोपनिषद्)

(Yogashikhopanishad)

Cleansing the mind is very important. One cannot attain enlightenment only by reading books or listening to spiritual discourses. Words or any language don't have the capacity to describe the nature of *Brahman* or *Atman*. Words or any language is just a mode of communication with limitations of the material plane. They don't have the capacity to describe what is beyond the boundaries of material plane.

Any science or *shastra* develops because of people who are in search of fundamental truth. This fundamental reality is nothing but enlightenment and realization of oneness with the ultimate reality. Once in unison with this reality these people become visionaries with divine vision for the betterment of humanity as a whole. This godly experience of unison with the divine and being one with His will and hence vision is known as *Bramhasthiti*. Hence it is important to know that science(s) or *shastra* develops because of people and their understanding, people don't develop because of science.

One can study a map of a place and can acquire facts about a place but that does not mean he has acquired detailed knowledge about the place. Looking at a map one cannot know about people's life style, cultural norms, social structure and so on. To know and experience these realistic details one needs to practically visit the place. Similarly one can know the facts about *Brahman* but that does not mean one has experienced *Bramhasthiti*. One can only attain *Bramhasthiti* by intense *sadhana* and serving penance by yoga and meditation.

Disciple: Master, but can anyone attain Samadhi without performing *Yoga*? If a person merely concentrates his thoughts on the knowledge he has acquired can he acquire Samadhi?

Guru: Just by pure thoughts it is very difficult to stabilise the mind and bring it to focus on one point and maintain it that way. Being fickle is the nature of mind; persay even if a person does

attain Samadhi for some time even a small impure thought can disrupt the meditative state and the person will descend to individual consciousness. Yogashikhopanishada speaks of an elucidation about this as said by Lord Shiva:

सर्वो योगाग्निना देहो ह्यजडः शोकवर्जितः ॥२६॥  
जडस्तु पार्थिवो ज्ञेयो ह्यपक्वो दुःखदो भवेत् ।  
ध्यानस्थोऽसौ तथाप्येवमिन्द्रियैर्विवशो भवेत् ॥२७॥  
तानि गाढं नियम्यपि तथाप्यन्यै प्रबाध्यते ।  
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखाद्यैर्व्याधिभिर्मानसैस्तथा ॥२८॥  
अन्यैर्नानाविधैर्जीवैः शस्त्राग्निजलमारुतैः ।  
शरीरं पीड्यते तैस्तैश्चित्तं संक्षुभ्यते ततः ॥२९॥  
तथा प्राणविपत्तौ तु क्षोभमायाति मारुतः ।  
ततो दुःखशतैर्व्याप्तं चित्तं क्षुब्धं भवेन्नृणाम् ॥३०॥

(Yogashikhopanishad)

A mind and body forged in relentless *yogasadhana* is very light, agile and free from disease, despair and pain. Such a body is pure in the true sense. An impure body can never help mind to concentrate and focus. Even if such a person sits for meditation his mind will be disturbed and will run towards worldly desires. An impure body can easily be troubled by externalities like rain, fire, cold, insects etc. It can be harmed by infections and diseases and will disturb the mind of the meditator. The mind being unstable will result in the *Prana*(life force attached to the air element)being unstable.

If a person practices *yogasadhana* with meditation then his body can combat all the externalities stabilizing the mind to focus. Only such a mind can transcend to higher forms of reality and can have unison with the cosmic mind and study the nature of *atman*. When a person conquers his mind and body by *Yogasadhana* his mind cannot be gripped by anything else hence even bodily pains or pleasures cannot affect such a person's mind. Only such a yogi

can perceive pure and absolute knowledge and can unite with the *atman*.

Lord Krishna says in the Bhagwad Geeta, "there are two ways to attain enlightenment or *moksha*. One is to look within and attain unison with Bramha (*Dnyan marga / Dnyan Yoga*), or secondly by offering service to the community (*Karma marga / Karma Yoga*). "*Dnyan yogena sankhyanaam, karma yogena yoginaam*". But to the same note Lord Shri Krishna says that *Dnyan Marga* is not free from *Karma*. Even to follow *Dnyan Yoga* one has to do his *Karma*. *Yadnya*<sup>24</sup>, *Pranayama*, *dhyana*, *asana*, *mudra* and other yogic practices are *karma* and they need to be practiced daily. Therefore even if a person does follow *dnyan yoga* he is still not exclusive of *Karma*. Traditional Vedic practices like *yadnya* have been lost hence daily practices of *sandhyawandan*<sup>25</sup> allied with yogic practices as advised by a guru is now the way to enlightenment.

The following verse is taken from Yogashikhopanishada

ज्ञाननिष्ठो विरक्तोऽपि धर्मज्ञो विजितेन्द्रियः ।

विना देहेन योगेन न मोक्षं लभते विधे ॥२४॥

Even though a student is detached materially, is knowledgeable and might have conquered all of his senses but still he cannot attain enlightenment without *Yoga*. Without *yoga* the primary cleansing of the body is not possible. An unbaked earthen pot cannot hold water. Even if one puts water in an unbaked earthen pot the water will flow away and will also render the pot broken. Similarly a body not forged in the penance of *yoga* cannot hold knowledge. An impure body will eventually die of disease. From a yogic perspective there can be two types of bodies. One which is purified by *yogasadhana* over years and second which is impure and is not exposed to *yoga*.

24. *Yadnya*: fire ceremony; ritual done with sacrifices in fire as a form of worship.

25. *Sandhyawandan*: Daily ritual practiced by Bramhins; ritual of paying respect to Sun and invoking Gayatri mantra.

Due to *yogasadhana* body undergoes a steady transformation. There is rectification in a person's overall posture and built due to *asana*. Due to *dhyana*, *pranayama* and *mudra* a person's mind can focus and be steady for long periods of time. *Pranayama* also helps in purification of the nervous systems and triggers the energy meridians (*nadis*) in the body. This collectively results in increase in stamina, strength and agility of a body. The body becomes light, fast, agile and flexible. Dietary control leads to reduction in fat and also helps in meditation. This in turn renders a person detached from the material world.

The essence of Vedanta also suggests that by mere knowledge one cannot attain *Bramhasthiti* or enlightenment. Only guru will grace a student with divine experiences when a student is hard working in his *yogasadhana*, is humble and polite and is completely surrendered to the learning process. Absolute surrender is the key to realization. "tatvamasi".

प्रशान्तचित्ताय जितेन्द्रियाय च  
 प्रक्षीणदोष दोषाय यथोक्तकारिणे ।  
 गुणान्वितायानुगताय सर्वदा  
 प्रदेयमेतत् सततं मुमुक्षवे ॥ (वेदान्तसार)

The above is a description of a student worthy of being graced by the guru.

A person who has a calm mind, who has conquered all his senses and desires, a person whose sins have been burnt off by his *yogasadhana* and who abides by his responsibilities and follows his traditional customs and norms is a student worthy of being graced by the guru. Above all a person who has utmost faith and has surrender to his guru is worthy of divine grace.

Guru: Just the way one cannot fix colour on a dirty cloth, an impure mind cannot grasp the true nature of *atman*. A person who only speaks of spiritual concepts and does not know the depth of its truth is just a mimic. Such a person is not only fooling the people around him but is also fooling himself. Only a person who

lives the life style within the limits of *sadhanchatushtaya*<sup>26</sup> can lead to enlightenment.

Disciple: O' master can you please explain to me what is the meaning of *sadhanechatushtaya*?

Guru: *Sadhanachatushtay* is a framework that enlists rules that need to be followed for a *sadhak's*<sup>27</sup> lifestyle. A person who abides by these rules can have fast spiritual progress and is worthy of enlightenment. There are four main aspects to this and they are as follows;

1. *Nitya vastu vivek*: The fundamental thought behind any moral faith is what you believe in. To have absolute faith that *Brahman* is the absolute reality. Everything is subject to change and hence is a manifestation of *maya*.
2. *Ihamutra falabhoga virag*: When one absolutely believes in *Brahman* to be the absolute reality and rest all to be *maya* he starts getting detached from the mundane world. Such a person realizes that every mundane desire like taste, smell, wealth or women can be earned and hence can also be lost and so are momentary pleasures. Even the pleasures of heaven can be earned by penance but even that does not last forever. When a person really understands these facts in the true sense he becomes a real *vairagi* and hence follows the path of renunciation.
3. *Shamadi shat asampatti*: this aspect is further divided in six sub-aspects.
  - i. *Shama*: This is a state of mind achieved when a person follows the path of renunciation and loses desire about every material subject. He is only passionate about knowing the nature of *Brahman* and *Atman*. Such a phase is known as *Shama*.

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26. *Sadhanchatushtaya*: four foundation pillars of yoga. Four major concepts of discipline that one needs to follow while walking the path of Yoga.

27. *Sadhak*: disciple, student of Yoga.

- ii. *Dama*: Human body has ten *indriyas* i.e. five *karmendriyas* and five *dnyanindriyas*. Hands, legs speech, reproductive and excretory organs are the *Karmendriya*. Eyes, nose, tongue and skin are the *dnyanendriya*. *Karmendriyas* are the organs that help a person connect to the environment. In other words a person cannot bring about his impact or make his presence felt in the environment without *karmendriyas*. *Dnyanendriyas* on the other hand act as portals of entry for knowledge for an individual. Touch, smell, taste, sight, feeling of heat or cold provides individual information about the environment he or she is in. Hence when a person has complete control over all his ten *indriyas* he can control his impact on the environment and he can control how much he will be impacted by changes in the environment. At this stage he goes completely inert. Such a phase is known as *Dama*.
- iii. *Uparati*: *Uparati* is an understanding that once a person has renunciation of all worldly interests the renunciation is permanent and his sense of interest in the mundane world shall not invoke. When a person realizes this he has laid the real seed for *sanyasashrama*.
- iv. *Titiksha*: *Titiksha* is a state where a person reaches an absolution of being inert. His body is physically present but he needs to face harsh and pleasant weather with changes in the internal body temperature without emotionally reacting to them. That is he should accept pain and pleasure with the same enthusiasm. One should gain the capability to be constant with changing physical or mental stresses and they should not inflict any harm to the person. This ability of fortification is known as *titiksha*.

v. *Shraddha*: Absolute faith and surrender to the guru and the path shown by him. This also implies having faith in all the rules of the lineage.

vi. *Samadhan*: Focusing thought, mind and body to learn the nature of atman and *Brahman* with absolute surrender and servitude to it. Finding peace and content in the present and unison with it is known as *Samadhan*.

4. *Mumukshutva*: This phase is the apex of all the phases. This is a state where the seeker or student rids himself of all kinds of pain, misery or despair. He is free and realizes liberation in the true sense. Realization of this freedom where no physical or mental pain can affect a seeker is known as *Mumukshatva*.

Disciple: Master, so when a person does not do *Yogasadhana* and only gains knowledge then are his efforts to enlightenment futile?

Disciple: No, any effort done towards enlightenment is never futile. A person who has acquired knowledge and facts and wants to progress will follow his path in his present life and beyond. At the end of his present life his body will perish but his mind and soul will move on with the knowledge. Such a soul will enjoy the rewards of his deeds and fruits (karma) of his life and will be reborn. His deeds will yield him success in finding a guru and the guru will eventually initiate him in *Yogamarga*. The guru will grace him with the path of *Siddhayoga* and he will eventually attain enlightenment.

देहान्ते ज्ञानिभिः पुण्यात् पापाच्च फलमाप्यते ।

ईदृशं तु भवेत् तद् भुक्त्वा ज्ञानी पुनर्भवेत् ॥४९॥

पश्चात् पुण्येन लभते सिद्धेन सह सङ्गतिम् ।

ततः सिद्धस्य कृपया योगी भवति नान्यथा ॥५०॥

ततो नश्यति संसारो नान्यथा शिवभाषितम्

(योगशिखोपनिषद् अ. १)

Disciple: Master, just like the earlier example if person just practices yoga without having factual knowledge will he be graced with knowledge in his next life?

Guru: No, a person needs many lives to acquire knowledge only then is he graced by the path of Yoga. But a yogi by his *yogasadhana* can acquire knowledge in one life. Hence no other path is as quick and straight forward as the *yogamarga*. *Yogamarga* is also known as the *Markatamarga* or the path of the monkey.

ज्ञानं तु जन्मनैकेन योगादेव प्रजायते ।

तस्मात् योगात् परतरो नास्ति मार्गस्तु मोक्षदः ॥५३॥

एकेनैव शरीरेण योगाभ्यासाच्छनैः शनैः ।

चिरात् संप्राप्यते मुक्तिर्मर्कटक्रम एव सः ॥१४०॥

(योगशिखोपनिषद् अ. १)

(Yogashikhopanishad Ch. 1)

Disciple: O' master can you please explain to me what does *Markatamarga* mean?

Guru: Just the way monkey jumps from one branch to another and reaches the top of the tree and can eat the desired fruit, a yogi directs *Pranavayu* in the central energy meridian known as *Sushumna* and raises the energy from one *chakra* to another. The energy rises from the base of the spine reaching the apex that is the highest point on the brain cortex. When mind and *Pranavayu* concentrate on this point a person's entire consciousness rises and the person is enlightened. This path is known as the *Markatamarga*.

Disciple: Master, by your kind grace I have realized that knowledge (*dnyan*) and *Yoga* both are essential for enlightenment. I still have a doubt that if a dedicated student follows *Siddhamarga* but still falls prey to his desires and loses control over his *indriyas* or if death finds a dedicated student before he reaches enlightenment then what happens to such a soul?

Guru: I am glad hearing the intricacy and honest relevance of

your doubts. I shall answer your query in brief. The same doubt that you have asked today was once asked by Arjuna to Lord Shri Krishna. Lord Krishna has answered to that in the Bhagwad Geeta and has said that “a Yogi is never lost in the real sense i.e. a good student never really degrades. A yogi is always respected on the earthly plane and the celestial plane. If a yogi goes astray from his path due to losing control over his *indriyas* or dies before gaining enlightenment his soul enjoys a joyous realm in the celestial plane and he is reborn in a wealthy family on the earth and peruses his path as a Yogi and starts striving for enlightenment. It is said in the sixth chapter of the Bhagwad Geeta that if a Yogi dies before enlightenment he is reborn in the house of Yogis or a highly pious family and redeems his onward journey towards enlightenment. But such a birth is rare. Such a person will always find his *Sadguru* who will initiate him on the path of yoga and lead him towards enlightenment. But such a birth is only possible with penance and *sadhana* from previous lives.

Yogis also call this process as *Kaakmat* which means perusing your goal with a raven’s vision. A student travels through many lives and keeps his focus on enlightenment and eventually attains it. This approach of looking at the goal constantly, from various angles is known as *Kaakmat*.

The following verses describe *Kakamat* and its importance.

योगसिद्धिं विना देहः प्रमादाद्यदि नश्यति ।  
 पूर्ववासनया युक्तः शरीरं चान्यदाप्नुयात् ॥१४१॥  
 ततः पुण्यवशात् सिद्धो गुरुणा सह संगतः ।  
 पश्चिमद्वारामार्गेण जायते त्वरितं फलम् ॥१४२॥  
 पूर्वजन्मकृताभ्यासात्सत्वरं फलमश्नुते ।  
 एतदेव हि विज्ञेयं तत् काकमतमुच्यते ॥१४३॥  
 नास्ति काकमतादन्यदभ्यासाख्यमतः परम् ।  
 तेनैव प्राप्यते मुक्तिर्नान्यथा शिवभाषितम् ॥१४४॥

*Kakmat*: Just the way a Raven focusses his concentration on his target a student uses *dneyana* and *yoga* to focus on attaining enlightenment. A raven studies his target from various perspectives and viewpoints similarly a *sadhak* perceives enlightenment from various viewpoints in his life.

Now you must have realized that a student of *yoga* never really degrades; he might go astray from his path but will soon find himself back on track. Hence every soul must understand *yoga* and strive for enlightenment. There is a verse in the *Shivasamhita* that states that, if one has the knowledge of *yoga* he can attain knowledge about everything else.

आलोक्य सर्वशास्त्राणि विचार्य च पुनः पुनः ।  
इदमेकं सुनिष्पन्नं योगशास्त्रं परं मतम् ।  
यस्मिन् ज्ञाते सर्वमिदं ज्ञातं भवति निश्चितम् ।  
तस्मिन् परिश्रमः कार्यः किमन्यत् शास्त्रभाषितम् ॥ (शिवसंहिता)  
(Shiva Samhita)

All sciences strive for understanding the truth. *Yoga* is the study of time and energy, which are the fundamental truths of this universe so all sciences at their apex come in unison with *yoga*. Hence *yoga* is the apex or the essence of all sciences.

In the Bhagwad Geeta Lord Krishna advises Arjuna to become a *yogi*.

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।  
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥  
(भगवद्गीता अ. ६.४६)  
(Bhagwad Geeta Chapter 6. 46)

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna that a *yogi* is greater than any scholar or man of power. Therefore he must strive to become a *yogi*. Every person who has curiosity of enlightenment attains the highest state of intelligence and is eventually enlightened with divine knowledge.

जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मतिवर्तते । (अ. ६.४४)

(Bhagwad Geeta Chapter 6.44)

A person who masters *yoga* attains knowledge beyond rituals, Vedas or Vedic scriptures. A person only walks the path of *yoga* when he is detached. This detachment is not only about the material world but also about the celestial world. Such a person does not even care about the pleasures of the heavens. Therefore it is said that, once a person walks the path of *yoga* he goes beyond rituals and practices. Such a person has really renounced the world in the true sense and is on his final quest for the ultimate truth. ■

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## Chapter -2

Student: O' Master, please guide me in understanding what is *Yoga* and how can it be practised.

Master: I am glad to see your sincere interest in *Yoga*. I shall elucidate a detailed account of yoga to you. I would consider my life a success the day I see you practising yoga and progressing on the path to enlightenment.

योऽपानप्राणयोरैक्यं स्वरजोरेतसोस्तथा ॥

सूर्याचन्द्रमसोर्योगो जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ॥६८॥

एवं तु द्वन्द्वजालस्य संयोगो योग उच्यते ॥ (योगशिखोपनिषद अ. १)

(Yogashikhopanishada: Chapter. 1)

The word *Yoga* in the literal sense means unison. It means the end of duality. Life and human body is full of duality that makes it functional. These dualities are existent in physiology to the very manifestation of life. *Yoga* is the union of these dualities to reach and realize the absolute unity. For instance, the union of *shukla-varna Shakti* i.e. the linear and creative centres of the brain, unison of energies from the solar plexus in the stomach and lunar plexus in the temple region etc.

न योगो नभसः पृष्ठे न भूमौ न रसातले ॥

एक्यं जीवात्मनोराहुर्योगं योगविशारदाः ॥

The above verse is from a book known as *Devi Bhagwata*. The verse means that *Yoga* is not in the heavens, earth or hell. It is the mere union of *atman* (individual consciousness) to *param-ataman* (universal or cosmic consciousness). I shall simplify this concept using the concept of numbers. We know numbers like 1, 2,3, and so on. The addition, subtraction or multiplication of all numbers will give you another number. But all the numbers are

just variations of unity that is one. Similarly energy manifests in various forms. These variations are different components of the biotic and abiotic world but in truth all the variations are forms of the same energy and cosmic reality. These variations make impressions on our mind and hence we perceive different things differently. *Yoga* removes all these impressions from our mind give us a clear perception of the ultimate reality. The following verse is from *Patanjali Yogasutra*

### योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः

The above verse means that once the mind is purified there is no confusion or conflict in thoughts. A soul reflects the nature of mind. If mind is fickle even the soul appears to be so and if the mind is stable the soul appears to be stable. In truth soul does not have any property, it is pure energy. It takes the impression of the mind. Just the way a pure crystal is a clear and colourless, but if one places a red flower next to it the crystal will appear red. The crystal basically takes the colour of the object closest to it. Therefore only when one clears his mind of all doubts, conflicts and desires can he really see the real nature of the soul or *atman*. When all the confusion and doubt are removed from the mind only then can one study the nature of *atman* and have union with it. The real root-cause of any problem is the fickle nature of the mind. It is the nature of mind to cling on to impressions, *maya* and material manifestations. Once this problem is addressed that is one realizes and accepts the fact that everything is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is everything, then there is a detachment. One understands that life, death, birth, heaven and hell are all just perceptions of the mind. When there are no impressions over the mind then there is only pure existence of *atman* in its own true form. This is when space and time cease to exist. Space, time and manifestation are all impression over the mind; they create a veil of *maya* around the absolute reality of the *atman*.

It is important know how mind is attached to the material reality. Mind is attached to the material reality by the *Pranavayu*

in the body. *Pranavayu* is the elemental air in the body that engages with the environment through respiration. The mind is tangled with so many thoughts about the external world that it is very difficult to make it stable. The only way one can do this is by controlling the *Pranavayu*. This can be done by controlling the breathing. The speed, rate and the periodicity of breathing determines the impressions your mind holds and hence the stability of it. Stable and controlled breathing helps calm the mind.

चित्तं कारणमनर्थानां तस्मिन् सति जगत्त्रयम् ॥  
 तस्मिन् क्षीणे जगत् क्षीणं तत् चिकित्स्यं प्रयत्नतः ॥  
 चित्तं प्राणेन संबद्धं सर्वजीवेषु संस्थितम् ॥  
 रज्ज्वा यद्वत् सुबद्धः स्यात् पक्षी तद्वदिदं मनः ॥५६॥  
 नानाविधैः विचारैस्तु न बाध्यं जायते मनः ॥  
 तस्मात्तस्य जयोपायः प्राण एव हि नान्यथा ॥६०॥

(योगशिखोपनिषद् अ. १)

(Yogashikhopanishada Chapter 1)

There is no chant, mantra, logic or any external instrument that can help gain control over the *Pranavayu*. This control can only be gained by Siddha-yoga meditation. The 1<sup>st</sup> chapter briefly described what Siddha yoga or Siddhamarga means. In this school of thought the guru by his will (*Sankalpa*) initiates the *Kundalini Shakti* in his student. Then by providing him the due guidance he helps the student to raise the Shakti through the *chakras*. The *Kularnava Tantra* describes such an initiation as *Vedha Deeksha*.

आजानुनाभिहृत्कंठतालुमूर्धान्तमम्बिके ।  
 गुरुपदिष्टमार्गेण वैधं कुर्याद्विचक्षणः ॥

(Kularnava Tantra Chapter 14)

The above verse is a prayer to Goddess *Ambika* who is one of the godheads of Shakti. The verse prays to the goddess to rise in a wise person and help him seek salvation or enlightenment with help of a *Sadguru*. Once initiated the Shakti is requested to rise from

the base of the spine through the genitals to the stomach then the heart and leading from the throat and temple region to the cortex of the brain.

Such an initiation can happen by a mantra granted by a guru or by his touch or merely by his will (*Sankalpa*). The Shakti ascends through all the *chakras* and graces the seeker with divine knowledge.

सुप्ता गुरुप्रसादेन यदा जागर्ति कुण्डली ।

तदा सर्वाणि पद्मानि भिद्यते ग्रन्थयोऽपि च ॥ (हठयोग प्र. ३/२)

(Hathayoga Pradipika 3/2)

When the *Kundalini Shakti* ascends, she rises through three major neural centres viz. *Bramha-granthi*, *Vishnu-granthi* and *Rudra-granthi*. The three energy centres represent three *gunas* or attributes. When energy rises over all the three attributes, she stabilizes in the brain cortex known as the *Brahmarandhra*. This is where a person gains knowledge of *chaitanya* i.e. pure energy.

Disciple: O, kind master by your kind grace I have realized how Kundalini sequentially ascends and results in the union of *Jiva-Bramha*. Can you please now tell me how does the divine touch, gaze or mere will of guru initiate this Shakti in the disciple?

Master: Touch (*Sparsha*), gaze (*Piouslook*) or mere will (*Sankalpa*) are three ways by which a guru can initiate *Kundalini Shakti* in a student. Such an initiation is also known as the *Vedha Deeksha* and is described in the *Kularnava Tantra*. The following verses describe the initiation process.

तर्कैर्जल्पैः शास्त्रजालैर्युक्तिभिर्मन्त्रभेषजैः

न वशो जायते प्राणो सिद्धोपायंविना विधे ॥६१॥

(योगशिखोपनिषद अ. १)

(Yogashikhopanishada Chapter 1)

यथा पक्षी स्वपक्षाभ्यां शिशून् संवर्धयेच्छनैः ।

स्पर्शदीक्षोपदेशश्च सादृशः कथितः प्रिये ॥३४॥

The initiation by touch is explained by the analogy of a bird. Just the way a bird raises her chicks and helps them fly by flying with it, similarly a Guru raises the *Kundalini Shakti* in his student and helps him meditate and go through the process. The guru physically touches the student with his divine grace and brings about the initiation. This initiation is known as *Sparsha Deeksha*.

स्वापत्यानि यथा मत्स्यो वीक्षणेनैव पोषयते ।  
दृग्भ्यां दीक्षोपदेशश्च सादृशः परमेश्वरि ॥३५॥

This form of *Deeksha* is explained using the analogy of a fish. A fish raises its young ones by closely watching them and swimming with them. It will focus all its attention on the young ones and help them survive and grow. Similarly a guru's gaze can initiate the *Kundalini Shakti* in a student. The teacher will focus all his attention on progress of his student and lead him on the path of enlightenment.

यथा कूर्मः स्वतनयान् ध्यानमात्रेण पोषयते ।  
वेधदीक्षोपदेशश्च मानुषस्य तथाविधः ॥३६॥

A tortoise takes care of its young one by merely focusing its attention on the young one. It's will is the only force that protects the young one in its post-natal phases. Similarly a guru by his mere will can focus his energy on his student and can initiate the *Kundalini Shakti* in his disciple.

*Vayavya Samhita* reports this awakening as *Shambhavi Deeksha*. Hence *Vedha Deeksha*, *Shambhavi Deeksha* and *Siddhayoga* are one and the same. All three are attained by initiating the *Kundalini Shakti*.

शक्तिपातानुसारेण शिष्योऽनुग्रहमर्हति ।  
यत्र शक्तिर्न पतति तत्र सिद्धिर्न जायते ॥३७॥ (कुलार्णवतन्त्र १४)

(Kularnava Tantra Chapter 14)

*Kularnava Tantra* also reports that a student will have various yogic experiences after *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened. Without

the awakening of this energy a student can never gain Siddhis nor can he reach enlightenment. This awakening brings about a new life in him. It changes the student drastically. Just the way a sperm and ovum fuse to form a zygote which fertilizes to become a new individual similarly Guru's will sparks a new life in the student which makes him a better person and leads him towards enlightenment.

When a woman conceives and is pregnant, she needs to take utmost care till her baby is born, similarly once a student has an awakened *Kundalini Shakti* he needs to be utterly careful and abide by the rules set by his guru and his lineage. He must take due guidance from his guru and lead a life that is conducive for spiritual progress.

Disciple: Master, once the Shakti is initiated, what kind of experiences does a student get? Or does the student just need to believe his guru that he has been initiated?

आनंदश्चैव कंपश्चोद्भवो घूर्णा कुलेश्वर ।

निद्रा मूर्च्छा च वेधस्य षडवस्थाः प्रकीर्तिताः ॥१४.६३॥

Guru: One cannot see energy by naked eyes, but one can experience her when she is functional. *Vayavya Samhita* and *Kularnava Tantra* have reported that when the Shakti is awakened a student might experience jerks, tremors or might feel intense happiness or might enter a trance and can perform many *yoga-asana*. It is also reported that one can dance, or sway in happiness or might fall asleep or become unconscious. *Yogashikhopanishad* reports heavy jerks and tremors in the genitals and base of the spine as a symptom of awakening.

यदाऽनुध्यायते मन्त्रं गात्रकम्पोऽथजायते ॥१.७०॥

The above verse describes another way of initiation of the *Kundalini Shakti* by using a Mantra. It says that if a student repeatedly chants a mantra and practises meditation as recommended by his guru he can undergo the initiation of *Kundalini Shakti* in his body. While this phenomenon is happening he might

experience tremors in his body. It must be noted that such experiences happen sequentially as the energy ascends. They change as the karmic bondages are reduced and the energy can ascend to a higher level. Eventually a person gains Siddhis and becomes enlightened. Such experiences should be looked upon as encouragement and motivation to practice more meditation and do *sadhana*. If a student meditates and does his penance and does not see any result there is a chance he might lose faith and motivation. Hence these experiences should be looked upon as motivation but one should not get entangled in it or attached to it. This happening can be better explained by an example; if a person is told that there is fish in a lake and if he does fishing for long time without any catch he might lose faith. But if this person sees the fish with his eyes he might see the chance to gaining a catch. Similarly these experiences are a mere glimpse of what the real enlightenment can be.

‘यद्यपि हि तत्तच्छास्त्रानुमानाचार्योपदेशैरवगतमर्थतत्त्वे सदभूतमेव भवति, एतेषां यथाभूतार्थप्रतिपादनसामर्थ्यात् तथापि यावदेकदेशोपि कश्चिन्न स्वकरणसंवेद्यो भवति तावत्सर्वं परोक्षमिव अपवर्गादिषु सूक्ष्मेष्वर्थेषु न दृढां बुद्धिमुत्पादयति ।

तस्माच्छास्त्रानुमानाचार्योपदेशोपो-द्वलनार्थमेवावश्यं कश्चित् विशेषः प्रत्यक्षी कर्तव्यः । तत्र तदुपदिष्टार्थैकदेशप्रत्यक्षत्वं सति सर्वं सुसूक्ष्मविषयमपि आ अपवर्गात् सुश्रद्धीयते ।’

A student might have utmost faith in his master. He might believe every verdict set by the lineage but he can only get absolute faith and quantification of his progress by a true supra-normal experience. A divine experience motivates a *sadhak* to do *sadhana* more devotedly and gets him more disciplined. Such an experience is beyond the understating of mundane senses and it helps a seeker broaden his view and understanding of the truth. Knowing about a divine experience from others is just having factual information but undergoing an experience is to have knowledge. Only such an

experience can make the student understand the depth and power of micro and macro cosmos. Therefore if the knowledge provided by the guru, the practice and the experience become one then there is no scope for confusion or doubt. The disciple's mind is then clear and hence ready to acquire divine knowledge. When a student gains knowledge and becomes absolute with it then he can gain *siddhis*.

To this note various schools of thought have also defined a definition of a right guru or who can be known as a guru.

The following verses are taken from the book *Yogawasishta*,

दर्शनात् स्पर्शनात् शब्दात् यो गुरुः शिष्यदेहके ।

जनयेद्यः समावेशं शांभवं स हि देशिकः ॥

(योगवासिष्ठ नि. प्र. पू. १२८, ६१)

(Yogawasishta Chapter 128, 61)

The above lines mean that a guru is a person who can initiate *Kundalini Shakti* in a student. And a right student is a person in whom the *Kundalini Shakti* is initiated. Such a student is also known as the "*Atmaja*".

Another definition of a Guru is mentioned in the Mahopanishada:

स्वानूभूतेश्च शास्त्रस्य गुरोश्चैकवाक्यता ।

यस्याभ्यासेन तेनात्मा सततं चावलोक्यते ॥

(महोपनिषद अ.४, श्लो. ५)

(Mahopanishada A4. Shlok.5)

The above verses say that guru is a person who by his touch, will or by granting a mantra can bring about divine bliss and immense peace in a student.

गुरोर्यस्यैव संस्पर्शात् परानन्दोऽभिजायते ।

गुरुं तमेव वृणुयात् नापरं मतिमान्नरः ॥

The above verses are taken from another Vedanta text and means that a person whose divine touch can bring about peace

should be acknowledged as a guru.

मंत्रचैतन्यविज्ञाता गुरुरक्तः स्वयंभुवो। (गौतमीयतन्त्र)

(Gautamiya Tantra)

Another understanding of gurus is that a person who can manifest mantra *chaitanya* is a guru. To this understanding it is also important to note that granting a mantra is the same as initiating the *Kundalini Shakti*.

Disciple: O' master I now understand the true meaning of guru and realize its depths in a better way. But can everybody find such a person? If a seeker is following his family guru or mentor and wishes to initiate his *Kundalini Shakti* then can he do so by finding another guru? And if such a person does find another guru then will that be understood as betrayal to the 'family-guru' or mentor?

Master: You have asked a very important question in the said context. The truth is "*Atama vai gurureka*" this mean that the absolute and the only guru is the atman itself. There is no guru to the *atman*. This is so because to learn the nature of the atman one needs to find a guru in the external physical form. Hence to find a guru to answer this quest one can find a guru till a person is satisfied and can confide in such a person. If a guru cannot satisfy the curiosity of a student because of his lack of knowledge then there is nothing wrong in finding another guru who can lead the student in a better way.

The following verses are from the thirteenth chapter from *Kularnava Tantra*.

अनभिज्ञं गुरु प्राप्य संशयच्छेदकारकम् ।

गुर्वन्तरं तु गत्वा स नैतद्दोषेण लिप्यते ॥१०९॥

मधुलुब्धो यथा भृङ्गःपुष्पात् पुष्पान्तरं व्रजेत ।

ज्ञानलुब्धस्तथा शिष्यो गुरोगुर्वन्तरं व्रजेत ॥११०॥

The above verses mean if a guru cannot lead a student on his path to enlightenment due to his incompetence and lack of knowledge then the student should find himself another guru. Just

the way a bee goes from one flower to the other in search of nectar similarly a person can go from one guru to another in search of knowledge. There is a statement about this from the *Shivapurana* which is as follows:

यत्रानंदः प्रबोधो वा नाल्पमप्युपलभ्यते ।  
वत्सरादपि शिष्येण सोऽन्यं गुरुमुपरश्रयेत् ॥

The above verses mean that even after initiation from a guru and doing *sadhana* for more than a year if a student does not get any experiences or knowledge there is nothing wrong in finding another guru.

This can also be understood with a simple example, in a school all teachers don't teach all subjects. One has to go to a particular teacher who has an expertise with the concerned topic and take due guidance. So in totality guru is person who gives knowledge and leads a person on the path to enlightenment. These days it is very hard to find a guru as everything is becoming commercial. One must be careful of this and should search for a real authentic person who is devoted and committed to *guru-tattva*<sup>28</sup>.

गुरवो बहवः सन्ति शिष्यवित्तापहारकाः ।  
दुर्लभोऽयं गुरुर्देवि शिष्यदुःखापहारकः ॥

(गुरुगीता: कुलार्णवतंत्र: ३.१३.८५)

(Guru Geeta and Kularnava Tantra Chapter 13)

Student: When an initiation of *Kundalini Shakti* takes place why does one experience jerks or tremors at the base of the spine?

Master: This is a very important question and I shall answer it in detail in discussions ahead.



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28. Guru-Tattva: cosmic principle of enlightenment.

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## Chapter - 3

Disciple: O Master, could you please explain to me, what is a mantra? Why is it essential? How is it related to the *Kundalini Shakti*?

Master: Mantra in Sanskrit is described as

**मननात् त्रायते यस्मात् तस्मात् मन्त्रः प्रकीर्तितः ।**

Mantra is defined as definite will of mind that provides an energy protection. To wish or will for something is to have a firm thought in mind. To think and to aspire is the nature of mind. Hence dissolution of mind is the only way to be free from desires, doubts and confusion. When a mind is free from desires and doubts, it is free from any form of insecurity. *Prana* is the bridge between the external world and mind. It has the power to protect the mind and also make it insecure. *Prana* causes the mind to attach itself to external material reality. Hence control over *Prana* can cause attachment and detachment from the material reality. Therefore if *Prana* is stable so is the mind. A mind which is free from material aspirations or the mundane world rests in unison with the *atman*. When *Prana* rises over the three energy meridians of the body viz. *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* it rests in the highest energy abode in the body i.e. in the *Brahmarandhra*. (This is where it is in absolute union with the *atman*). The resultant of this is that even the mind is in union with the *atman*. When *Ida* and *Pingala* energy meridians influence the *Prana Shakti* it results in development of *Rajas* and *Tama guna* (pride and jealousy) in a person. But when *Prana Shakti* enters the central energy meridian i.e. the *Sushumna* energy meridian it develops a *satvik guna* (being humble, modest and realizing the importance of equilibrium). Therefore when a person becomes *satvik* and realizes the importance of being polite, humble modest and realistic does he start understanding the true nature of the *atman*. Once *Prana Shakti* enters *Sushumna* energy meridian a

person can accomplish good focus. His mind is stable and can concentrate. The person gains immense peace and experiences divine bliss (*ananda*). In his quest for learning the nature of the atman this phase graces the seeker with an ecstasy beyond words. He enters a state of Samadhi. Such a *Samadhi* is also known as *Savikalpa Samadhi*. A person attains his final need to be needless. But it should be noted that even the need to be needless is also a need hence this is known as *Savikalpa Samadhi*. The word *Savikalpa* is made of two parts Sa- with *Vikalpa* is to have a property of some sort. Hence the word means with a known property, which in this context is the “need”. But when a person’s meditative state ascends beyond this he attains what is called as the *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. In *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* the need to be needless is also dissolved and the consciousness leads to utmost purity. Hence by definition of Mantra, which means the functionality of mind, one can say that *Prana is Mantra*.

ब्रह्मादितृणपर्यंतं प्राणिनां प्राणवर्धनम् ।  
निःश्वासोच्छ्वासरूपेण मंत्रोऽयं वर्तते प्रिये ॥

The above verse is from the conversation of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva says to Goddess Parvati that life force of all living forms i.e. from Lord Bramha to a small reed of grass is governed by the *Prana*. The breath, inhaling and exhaling is a mantra in itself and is the key to sustaining life.

The Yogachudamani has given a brief summarization of how Kundalini is the same as *Prana* or mantra.

हंकारेण बहिर्याति सकारेण विशेत् पुनः ।  
हंसहंसेत्यमुं मन्त्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ॥३१॥  
षट्शतानि दिवारात्रौ सहस्राण्येकविंशतिः ।  
एतत् संख्यान्वितं मंत्रं जीवो जपति सर्वदा ॥३२॥  
अजपा नाम गायत्री योगिनां मोक्षदा सदा ।

The above verses describe the process of breathing. ‘When

we inhale there is a subtle sound “ham” that is created and when we exhale there is a subtle sound of “sa” that is created’. They together form the ‘Ham-sa’ mantra. A living being does a repetition of this mantra about twenty one thousand six hundred times in a day. A person’s breath causes sonic vibrations creating a resonance of this mantra. Hence from this we can infer that *Kundalini Shakti* is no different than *Prana Shakti* and is the same as a Mantra.

कुण्डलिन्यां समुद्भूता गायत्री प्राणधारिणी ।  
प्राणविद्या महाविद्या यस्तां वेत्ति स वेदवित् ॥

(योगचूडामणि उप.)  
(Yogachudamani Upanishad)

The above verses from Yogachudamani states that *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as *Prana Shakti* that holds the eternal energy for life also known as *gayatri*. She is the source of sound itself and hence the source of all knowledge. All the ever resonating cosmic sounds and syllables are present in this energy. Hence the potential of all mantras is stored in it. Chanting of mantra creates a field of resonance that initiates this energy.

मूलाधारगता शक्तिः स्वाधारा बिंदुरूपिणि ॥२॥  
तस्यामुत्पद्यते नादः सूक्ष्मबीजादिवाङ्कुरः ।  
तां पश्यन्तीं विदुर्विश्वं यथा पश्यन्ति योगिनः ॥३॥  
हृदये व्यज्यते घोषो गर्जत पर्जन्यसंनिभः ।  
तत्र स्थिता सुरेशान मध्यमेत्यभिधीयते ॥४॥  
प्राणेन च स्वराख्येन प्रथिता वैखरी पुनः  
शाखापल्लवरूपेण ताल्वादिस्थानघट्टनात् ॥५॥  
अकारादि क्षकारान्तानक्षराणि समीरयेत् ।  
अक्षरेभ्यः पदानि स्युः पदेभ्यो वाक्यसंभवः ॥६॥  
सर्वे वाक्यात्मकाः मन्त्राः वेदशास्त्राणि कृत्स्नशः ।  
पुराणानि च काव्यानि भाषाश्च विविधा अपि ॥७॥

सप्त स्वराश्च गेयाश्च सर्वे नादसमुद्भवाः ।

एषा सरस्वती देवी सर्वभूतगुहाश्रया ॥८॥

*Kundalini Shakti* resides in the *Mooladharachakra* (Sacral plexus). She is the basis of *atman* and hence is the point of origin of all consciousness. Just the way a seed bears buds and eventually sprouts and grows into a tree *Kundalini Shakti* possess the root of all energies. All sounds and sound frequencies originate from this energy. This energy bears the power of the micro-cosmos (*atisookshma*). Yogis can understand the knowledge and truths of the universe from this cosmic seed. The sound frequencies in this state are known as *para*. The cosmic seed emits sound frequencies and is known as *pashyanti*. The sound frequencies are emitted from the *Mooladharachakra* and make their way up to the heart and the thorax (*Anahata chakra*). It is said that in the thorax and heart they are amplified and sound like thundering clouds. In this phase these sound frequencies are known as *madhyama*. Then, by the medium of *Prana* these frequencies are confound to words as we know them and are released from the sound box (larynx) in the throat. These audibly released words are known as *vaikhari*. Hence from the base of the spine to the apex sound travels initially as simple frequencies of vowels to complex frequencies of words, motifs and mantras. There we can understand that all mantras, *stotras* and *Vedas* originate from sound (also known as *Naad* in Sanskrit). It is also said that Goddess Saraswati who is the goddess of knowledge and wisdom is the same as *Kundalini Shakti*.

The *atman* manifests itself in four forms viz.

1. *Sthoola (jagrita)*; gross or waking state
2. *Sookshma (svapna)*: subtle or dream state
3. *Sushupti (karana)*: Causal or deep sleep
4. *Turiya*: pure conscious or *atman*.

Similarly even sound manifests in four states:

1. *Vaikhari*: speech or audible words.
2. *Madhyama*: amplified sound in the heart and thorax region

3. *Pashyanti*: sound emitted from the cosmic seed
4. *Para*: the pure form of energy from which sound originates.

The cosmic seed that is the *Kundalini Shakti* is known as the *Para*. This state is also known as the *turiya avastha*. It is the primordial consciousness which is the source to everything. When sound as energy, is emitted from this cosmic seed it is known as *Pashyanti*. This form of sound is the primordial or the causal form of sound. When sound frequencies reach the heart they are said to be in the *Madhyama avastha*. Thence when sound is audibly voiced it is known as *Vaikhari*. The initial phases of sound are analogous to the subconscious. The sound in *madhyam avastha* is also known as *Anahat Naad*(frictionless sound). And the voiced or the audible phase of sound is analogous to the conscious state of the atman. *Anahat Naad* is called so because this sound does not originate from any friction in the body. It can only be heard or perceived by accomplished yogis. Some yogis can even hear *Anahata Naad* by performing a yogic procedure known as *Yoni Mudra* and *Bhramari Kumbhaka*. By now you must have realized that *Kundalini Shakti* is the source of all mantras as she is the source of sound itself. Awakening the *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as awakening the *mantra chaitanya* which can be translated as sonic energy.

Without initiating the *mantra chaitanya* no mantra can yield its effect. One cannot attain any Siddhi without invoking the *mantra chaitanya*.

मूलादियं कुण्डलिनी यावन्निद्रायितः प्रभो ।  
तावत् किञ्चित् न सिध्येत मंत्रयंत्रार्चनादिकम् ॥  
स्याज्जागर्ति यदि स्यादेव बहुभिः पुण्यसंचयैः ।  
तदा प्रसादमायाति मंत्रयंत्रार्चनादिकम् ॥ (गौतमीय तंत्र)

(Gautamiya Tantra)

Student: O' Master, I have now realized that *Kundalini Shakti* is the basic primordial force of everything. It seems even for

chanting a mantra, doing rituals or using *yantra*<sup>29</sup>, awakening the Kundalini is a requisite. Just the way a body cannot live without a soul a mantra cannot yield its effects without initiating the *pranashakti* in it. Even if a sadhak chants a mantra a million times without knowing what it means it will not yield any results. Awakening ceremony or *Prana pratishtha* of any mantra is done for this purpose. The ancient Aryans were devotees of this same supreme energy and had devised techniques for her initiation. Even in idol worship the idol is awakened by the ritual of *Pranapratishtha*. The modern times are against idol worship as the people don't see a reason and think there is no outcome from it. In truth people don't understand the significance of awakening the *Pranashakti* in the idol and fail to realize the life in the idol. If a powerful and accomplished yogi does idol worship his mere worship can bring *Prana* i.e. life to the idol. If such an awakening is done then even an earthly statue can have divine presence in it. The omnipresent ever pervading almighty can enter in an idol to the call of a true devotee. In truth everything alive is manifestation of *Prana*.

प्राणोऽपि भगवानीशः प्राणो विष्णुः पितामहः ।  
प्राणेन धार्यते लोकः सर्वं प्राणमयं जगत् ॥

The above verses mean that *Prana* is Lord Bramha, Vishnu and Mahesh. It is because of *Prana* that life can stably manifest. The following verses are from *Mahanirvana Tantra* and depict the importance of *Prana*:

विना प्राणं यथा देहः सर्वकर्मसु न क्षमः ।  
विना प्राणं तथा मंत्रः पुरश्चर्याशतरैपि ॥  
मंत्रार्थं मंत्रचैतन्यं यो न जानाति साधकः ।  
शतलक्षं प्रजप्तोऽपि तस्य मंत्रो न सिद्ध्यति ॥ (महानिर्वाणतंत्र)

(Mahanirvana Tantra)

29. Yantra: Sanskrit word for instrument, craft, tool or machine.

Once there was a man who wanted to travel instantly to distant lands and worlds. He desired for an ability to do so and started performing a penance for the same. Looking at the man's humble attempt to do so, an ancient sage Vyasadev decided to bless him with a boon. The man asked for his desired wish and sage Vyasdev agreed to fulfil it. He took a leaf from a tree and wrote a mantra on it. Carefully folding the leaf he gave it to the man and told him to keep it safe and wrapped up in a cloth. He asked the man to keep the leaf with him whenever he wanted to go anywhere and that he will be teleported to any world he wishes to see. The man was overjoyed that his wish had been fulfilled. For many a years the man travelled to distant lands, heavens and other worlds, he realized in time that the leaf had long time become tattered and old. Out of curiosity he thought he should see what was that mantra was written on the leaf and was so powerful that it could take him to different worlds? He opened the leaf to see 'Om Shree Ram' written on the leaf. He thought he always knew this mantra but never knew the potential it had. He thought that he knows the mantra and can write it on a new leaf and discard the old leaf. The man let go off the old leaf in a river and wrote on a new leaf the same mantra. When wanted to travel he used the new leaf and there was no effect. Astonished at this fact he came to sage Vyasdev and told him about everything. To this, sage Vyasdev told the person that the mantra was simple but he had done a penance for many years and had invoked the manta *chaitanya* of that mantra. It was that energy that made it possible for him to travel. Just knowing the mantra does not yield its effects. Due to foolishness the person had lost his boon and sage Vyasdev said he could not do anything more about it. Hence the moral of the story is that every mantra to invoke its effects needs to be awakened by *Sadhana*, penance or ritualistic *Pranaprtishtha*.

Student: O' master I have now realized what Mantra *chaitanya* means. Can you please explain to me what is the meaning of mantra and how does it function?

Master: the true meaning of a mantra is the deity it describes.

The deity is the absolute truth and mantra is like a bridge between the person who is chanting the mantra and the deity. For instance when a person says 'Sun', light and the whole solar system is a part of the word. When a person actually says the word the relation of this reality is just demonstrated in the person's mind. The Sun and all its aspects are the absolute truth but saying the word 'Sun' demonstrates the absolute relation. Similarly a mantra describes a deity, which develops a relation with the absolute form of the deity. Hence it is important for any sadhak to first understand various mantras and the associated deities. By reciting a mantra and focusing thoughts on a particular deity one can stabilize his mind. The final result of this is that the impression of the deity can be perceived in the *atman*. Ancient sage Vyasdev has mentioned the following verse in the yoga sutras that give an elucidation of the same.

प्रणवस्य जपः प्रणवाभिधेयस्य च ईश्वरस्य भावना तदस्य  
योगिता प्रणवजपतः प्रणवार्थं भावयतश्चित्तं ऐकाग्रं संपद्यते ।

The verses mean that a person who can focus his mind and can recite a mantra finds ultimate stability. Such a person's mind gains union with the deity itself. A person should choose a mantra of his favourite deity. Such a mantra is the persons *Pranava Mantra*.

प्राणान् सर्वान् परमात्मनि प्रणयतीत्येतस्मात् प्रणवः ॥१॥

*Pranava* mantra is a mantra which can dissolve a persons all individual attributes or properties in the supreme.

Disciple: O' Master I have now completely realized that *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as *Prana Shakti*. She is the basis of all energies and all manifestation. But then to this note I have a doubt that if this energy (Shakti) is always manifesting and active then why is there a necessity of awakening ? Isn't the force active already? If this was not so, it wouldn't have been possible to make individual differentiation of objects.

Master: *Kundalini Shakti* has two faces. The Shakti is also

described as a two headed serpent. One face is active and is engaged in material world (*Bahirmukh*) whereas the other one sits dormant (*Antarmukh*). The other face is dormant and is said that it guards the doorway of *Bramhagranthi* (pelvic and abdominal plexus). This face in Sanskrit is called as *Anatarmukh*. The dormant face is at the bottom of the *Sushumna* energy meridian.

द्विवक्त्रा कुण्डलिन्यभिज्ञा नित्यानन्दस्वरूपा  
परमा कला प्रकृतिः वर्तते ।

Every person derives his energy for life from the out facing head of the *Kundalini Shakti*. Everyone also realizes matter and energy in various forms. One realizes variation in manifestation but does not realize the fact that everything is made from the same primordial energy. One cannot see the ultimate reality which is unity. That everything is made of the same energy just having different forms. A person can have the perception of the ultimate reality when the other face of *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened. The ultimate realization that everything is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is everything can only be possible when the inward face of the *Kundalini Shakti* is active.

नाकृतं मोक्षमार्गं स्यात् प्रसिद्धं पश्चिमं विना ॥१.१४५॥

The above phrase describes the significance of the *pashchima-marga*. (The literal translation of the word *pashchima-marga* means the path of the west. In this context the path of the west is the basal region of the spine). Thence the meaning of the verse is that till the pelvic plexus is not initiated and energy does not flow through it one cannot attain enlightenment.

To understand the above statement it is important to understand circulation of air (*Pranavayu*) in the body. Body is divided in two sections viz. the eastern section and the western section according to the flow of *Pranavayu*. The gonads, stomach, heart and nostrils make the eastern section (also known as *Poorva Marga*). *Prana*(air element) circulation takes place on the eastern section (pathway) as it attaches a person's mind to the mundane material reality. This

pathway represents the outward or worldly face of *Kundalini Shakti*. *Sushumna* energy meridian running from the base of the spine to the brain cortex is the western section also known as *pashchima-marga*. This is the inward face of the Kundalini Shakti (*anatar mookha*). This pathway is controlled (blocked or unblocked) from the Mooladhara Chakra (*moolasthan*<sup>30</sup>). One cannot initiate the Kundalini Shakti till this path way is opened. To open this pathway is to initiate Kundalini Shakti.

From the *moolasthan* emerges a serpent like coiled energy meridian (Kundalakruta<sup>31</sup>) and is the host of the *Prana Shakti*. Therefore *Prana Shakti* is also known as the *Kundalini Shakti*.

The *Kundalini Shakti* is commonly compared to lightening in the clouds. Light or pure energy is formless but we still see the lightning like a straight line, similarly energy is formless but when it rises through the *Sushumna* Energy meridian it looks like a serpentine form. Therefore this energy is compared to snake. Hence awakening the *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as directing the *Prana Vayu* in *Sushumna* energy meridian.

Disciple: O' Master once awakened why can't *Kundalini Shakti* reach *Sahasrara* and lead to *Samadhi*?

Guru: If a farmer has to irrigate any part of his farm he does not manually carry the water in hands from one part of the farm to the other. He makes a small stream of water and removes all obstructions in its way. Similarly once initiated *Kundalini Shakti* flows from one *chakra* (energy plexus) to the other and ultimately unites with Shiva. The only way *Kundalini Shakti* can reach Shiva is by flowing through the *Sushumna* energy meridian.

मूलाधारे सर्पवत्कुण्डलीभूता नाडी वर्तते ।

तन्मध्ये स्थायित्वात् इयं कुण्डला ।

(शारदातिलक टीका)

(Sharada tilika tika)

30. *Moolasthan*: Sanskrit words (*moola*: basic/ basal; *sthana*: place, position;) in this context can be understood to be the same as Mooladhanra Chakra

31. Kundalakruta: Coiled, curled shape.

Another reference from Mahanarayana Upanishad also confirms about the flow and the circulation of *Kundalini Shakti*.

तस्य मध्ये वह्निशिखा अणीयोर्ध्वा व्यवस्थिता ।

नीलतोयदमध्यस्था विद्युल्लेखेव भास्वरा ।

नीवारशूकवत्तन्वी पीता भास्वत्यणूपमा ॥१३.२॥

(Mahanarayana Upanishad)

The above verse means that “*Sahasrara* (brain) is the centre of all energy”. Energy flows downwards from *Sahasrara* towards *MooladharaChakra*. This is scattered in various small energy units. But when guru initiates *Kundalini Shakti* this flow is reversed going upwards as one concentrated form of energy through the spine. When a guru initiates the *Kundalini Shakti* he initiates the dormant face of the Shakti. He directs the outwardly engaged energy to the base of the spine at the beginning of *Sushumna* energy meridian. This energy then sequentially makes its way going through the three main energy centres i.e. six *chakras* and then finally reaches *Sahasrara*. In *Sahasrara*(apex of the brain cortex) this energy unites with the supreme cosmic energy. This union is also known as the union of Shiva and Shakti or is also known as the union of Radha and Krishna.

*Kundalini Shakti* comes across many obstacles on the path to reach *Sahasrara*. These obstacles are impressions and desires accumulated over many lives. The desires are karmic impressions which the Shakti burns off during penance and meditation. These impressions and desires are accumulated over many lives and hence pose a strong resistance. Hence *Kundalini Shakti* does not reach Shiva or *Sahasrara* straight away.

The blockage of the pathway is similar to that in any pipe. If a person wishes to smoke a pipe he needs to clean it from time to time. If not, there will be blockages in the pipe and the drag would not yield any pleasure. Hence to smoke properly cleaning is necessary using a metal shaft or a cleaner. Similarly *Sushumna* energy meridian is clogged with impressions and desires from past

lives. When *Kundalini Shakti* rises she removes all the impressions and desires from the past life. Therefore when *Kundalini Shakti* enters *MooladharaChakra* there is congestion of air which causes tremors or jerks in the body. It is also reported that many Yogis perform dance when they are in deep meditation. In truth this is flow and circulation of energy that is taking place which makes their bodies move. The following verses are taken from the *Yogashikhopanisada*

आधारवातरोधेन शरीरं कंपते सदा ।

आधारवातरोधेन योगी नृत्यति सर्वदा ॥२८॥

The above verses mean that when there is an obstruction in the upward flow of energy in the body it experiences jerks or tremors. Such an obstruction can also make yogis dance and sway in happiness. Other reported symptoms are sudden unconsciousness performing *asnas*, *mudras* or doing *pranayama* without prior knowledge of it. These physical happenings help the energy flow upwards in to the *Sahasrara* and remove obstructions in the pathway. When the pathway is cleared i.e. *Sushumna* energy meridian is cleared the Shakti reaches *Sahasrara* speedily and unites with Shiva. Union with Shiva means union of individual consciousness (Shakti) to supreme consciousness (Shiva). This is the state where one experiences *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. A person who has *Sushumna* energy meridian clear in the first place might attain *Samadhi* as soon as *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened.

*Kundalini Shakti* empowers all mantras. Now you must have understood even when such energy is initiated, a person might experience jerks or tremors in his body but even then one does not attain *Samadhi* straight away.

Student: O' great Master can you please elaborate on what is meant by union of Shiva and Shakti or union of Radha and Krishna.

Guru: I shall be telling you the meaning of union of Radha-Krishna and Shiva-Shakti from a yogic standpoint. It is noted in the science of yoga that Lord Shri Krishna (i.e. Lord Vishnu) is seated in a thousand petal lotus in the *Sahasrara*. He is said to be

the *Sadchidananda Swaroop*<sup>32</sup>.

ईश्वरः परमः कृष्णः सच्चिदानंदविग्रहः ।

अनादिरादिगोविन्दः सर्वकारणकारणम् ॥

The above verses mean that Lord Krishna is the cause of all causes. He is the primordial cause of all existence. Radha is the *Chitta-shakti* i.e. his energy. She is the undifferentiated form of energy which resides in absolute unison with him. When this energy is in unison with Lord Krishna there is no manifestation. To rejuvenate eternal bliss (*ananda*), Lord Krishna manifests his Shakti which we know as the manifested world today (*Leela*). In reality they are absolute but duality causes them to know the nature of unity. Radha is said to be the happiness (*ananda*) of Lord Krishna. She is the manifestation and hence is the energy that drives the world. The following verses are from *Chaitanya Charitra* which describe the form and nature of energy i.e. Radha.

एकई चिच्छक्ति तार धरे तीनि रूप ।  
आनंदांशे आल्हादिनी सदंशे संधिनी ॥  
चिदंशे संवित् यारे ज्ञान करि मानी ।  
सीधि नीर सार अंश शुद्धसतव नाम ॥  
भगवानेर सत्ता हय याहाते विश्राम ।  
आल्हादिनीर सार प्रेम प्रेमसार भाव ॥  
भाबेर परम काष्ठा नाम महाभाव ।  
महाभावस्वरूपा श्रीराधा ठकुराणी ॥  
सर्व गुणखानि कृष्णकांताशिरोमणी ।  
किंवा प्रेमरसमय कृष्णेर स्वरूप ॥  
तार शक्ति तार सह हय एकरूप ।  
कृष्णावांछापूरतिरूप कर आराधने ॥

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32. *Sadchidananda Swaroop*: ever pervading eternal happiness.

अत एव राधिका नाम पुराने वाखाने ।  
राधा पूर्णशक्ती कृष्ण पूर्णशक्ती जान ॥  
दुई वस्तु भेद नाई शास्त्र परिमाण ॥

This unique energy manifests in three forms.

By first part she manifests as happiness or eternal bliss (*alhadini*), by second part as eternal existence (*sandhini*) and by third part as cognizance (*samvitta*). The reality of *samvitta* is also called *shuddha satva*, i.e. pure equilibrium. The potential of the almighty resides in this form. The gist of *alhadini* is love and compassion, the gist of love is devotion. The ultimate level of devotion generates is *mahabhav*<sup>33</sup>. Radha who is indulged in Mahabhava to Lord Shri Krishna is called *Thakuraani*. Shri Krishna who is source of all feelings and emotions is known as *Kantashiromani*. This divine form of Shri Krishna is highly enchanting and is called *Premarasamayi*. Together they (Lord Shri Krishna and Radha) manifest as the absolute truth. By penance Lord Shri Krishna can fulfil anyone's wishes. (But any wish is manifestation of energy). Radha is Lord Shri Krishna's energy (Shakti); she complies with his will, and hence Lord Shri Krishna is almighty. The very will of Lord Krishna is Radha. They are not different from one another. They are one and the same.

Energy flows down from the brain (*Sahasrara*) to the rest of the body by which the body carries out its functions necessary for survival. This flow of energy is known as *Dhara*. *Dhara* is a Sanskrit word for flow. By gurus divine grace when *Kundalini Shakti* is initiated this *Dhara* flows back to *Sahasrara* which according to the *Vaishnavas* is the abode of *Lord Shri Krishna*. In the literal sense even if we invert the word *Dhara* it becomes Radha.

Dha + ra → Ra + dha

A similar principle of energy flow can also be seen in natural cycles. For instance the water cycle. All water on this earth originates in the sea. We get usable water from freshwater sources.

33. Mahabhav: The ultimate feeling for surrender or devotion.

Water comes down from the sky as rain drops or snow. They fall to the earth and flow down forming streams and rivers. Rivers flow down to the sea and hence water reaches to its original source in the sea. Individual droplets of water lose their individuality and become one with the sea. Similarly when Shakti or energy unites with the cosmos loses individuality and becomes one with the supreme. Individuality (*ahankaar*) or singular quantum of energy is the nature of manifestation. Variation and variety in creation is how *maya* exists. Hence rituals, penance and *sadhana* are forms of worship which exist only till *maya* or manifestation exists. Beyond manifestation there is only the realization of the absolute. We define every object by a name. But everything is made of matter or energy. Hence every name is nothing but a description of energy. There is nothing in the manifested universe that is independent of energy. Therefore one cannot attain enlightenment without studying the nature of energy or Shakti. The supreme almighty is formless and one cannot study the formless when one is confound to form. Thence complete surrender to Shakti by *sadhana* is a requisite on the path to enlightenment.

Ripples form on a calm water surface. They are indifferent from the mass of the rest of the water body. They are formed momentarily and they merge with the water body again. Similarly manifestations of energy are like ripples on the surface of all pervading almighty. Therefore when a person's *sadhana* reaches its apex his *Kundalini Shakti* merges with the supreme in *Brahmarandhra*. Once merged with the supreme there is no individuality left as Shakti (energy) merges with the formless omnipresent almighty. This formless abode is also known as *Sadchidananda*. This is the phase where Sadhak (student or seeker) unites with the almighty. This is enlightenment. Student's realm of ignorance and lack of knowledge ends here and he becomes one with the divine bliss. It is said that when Krishna Avatar came to an end all the *Gopis*<sup>34</sup> also lost their form. With their love and

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34. Gopi: female devotee of Shri Krishna from Vrindavan.

devotion for Shree Krishna they could see him everywhere and in everything. Their devotion eventually reached a level where they realized themselves as Shree Krishna.

I shall explain the union of *Shiva-Shakti* using the analogy of worship of Goddess Durga (*Dashabhuj*<sup>35</sup>) who is a form of Shakti. *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as Goddess Durga. In all directions she is the one who manifests and brings about creation. All the ten directions are like her ten arms. Her vehicle is the lion and symbolizes power. Power in this context is knowledge and hence the knowledge of Vedas is implied in this context. For the same reason Goddess Durga is also called the *Simhavahini* (Goddess that rides on a lion). *Yogasadhana* purifies ones mind and body (*Chittashuddhi*) and then one can understand the true formless (*nirakar*) saguna (*akar*) also nature of Shakti.

Goddess Durga is said to be the source of all knowledge, wisdom, power and wealth. It is said that divine Ma has two sons and two daughters. The sons are Lord Ganesh and Lord Kartikeya. Lord Ganesh is lord of all wisdom and *Siddhis*<sup>36</sup> whereas Lord Kartikeya is the lord of power and might. The two daughters are *Goddess Saraswati* and *Goddess Laxmi*. *Goddess Saraswati* is the source of all knowledge and goddess *Laxmi* is the source of all wealth. Hence a devotee of *Goddess Durga* has no shortage of wealth, wisdom and power. As the sons and daughters of Ma are never away from her, by praying to Ma Durga one is blessed with all that he needs in life. It is said that the best time to worship goddess is in the *Sharada Rutu*<sup>37</sup> and *Vasanta Rutu*<sup>38</sup> i.e. during autumn and spring. These times are recommended for doing *Yogasadhana*. If one is a devotee of goddess Durga to be able to perform worship with utmost surrender one needs to awaken the *Kundalini Shakti*.

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This will awaken and instate Goddess Durga in his mind and

35. Dashabhuj: Goddess with ten hands.

36. Siddhis: Spiritual powers.

37. Sharada Rutu: Autumn or winter

38. Vasanta Rutu: Spring.

body. This ritual of awakening is analogous to *Ma Durga's* worship. The ritual is done in a particular sequence. Initially there is an awakening done known as *Jagruti*<sup>39</sup>. Then there is a seven day ceremony which is similar to the ascension of *Kundalini Shakti* in human body. It is said that *Kundalini Shakti* passes through seven *chakras* and 3 energy centres. The three energy centres are *Bramhagranthi*, *Vishnugranthi* and *Rudragranthi*. After the *Jagruti* there is a seven day prayer which corresponds to ascension of the *Shakti* through seven *Chakras* and then *Kundalini Shakti* pierces through the *Bramhagranthi* which is an energy centre in the stomach. On the eighth day (*ashtami*) there is a ritual which corresponds to *Kundalini Shakti's* conquest over the *Vishnugranthi*. *Vishnugranthi* is located in the cardiac plexus in the heart (*Anahata Chakra*). On the ninth day (*Navami*) there is a prayer which demonstrates *Kundalini Shakti* rising over the *Rudragranthi*. *Rudragranthi* is located in between the eye brows. This energy centre is also known as *Adnyachakra* or the third eye. This is said to be the final abode of material worship. Above this point *Kundalini Shakti* merges with the *Parama Shiva* and enters the realm of the formless (*Nirakar*). This is signified by the 10<sup>th</sup> day ritual known as *dashmi*. Hence by divine grace of Guru, *Kundalini Shakti* rises over all six *chakras* (energy plexus) and three energy centres (*granthi*), and unites with the *Parama Shiva* in the *Brahmarandhra*. This is when individual consciousness (*Jeev-Atman*) merges with the supreme divine consciousness (*Paramatman*). Even when the person's conscious descends back to individuality he still experiences the divine bliss. There is a special Sanskrit phrase for this state and is known as "*Sarvam Brahmamayam Jagat*"<sup>40</sup>. This means a person realizes everything is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is everything. This way a person loves everyone and everything in this manifested universe.

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39. *Jagruti*: Sanskrit word for invoking or awakening.

40. *Sarva Bramhyam Jagat*: To experience *Brahman* in everything. To incessantly realize the cosmic consciousness.

This is where a person's penance or *Sadhana* comes to an end and the person's mind can dwell in unity with the divine abode. This is the apex of all *sadhana* and is known as *Bramhasthiti*.

The verses below are from 'Yoga Kundalini' and iterate the above explanation of *Kundalini Shakti*'s ascension through the *Chakras* and Energy centres in the body.

ज्वलनाघातपवनाघातैरुन्निद्रितो हि राट् ॥  
ब्रह्मग्रंथिं ततो भित्वा विष्णुग्रंथिं भिनत्यतः ॥८५॥  
रुद्रग्रंथिं च भित्त्वैव कमलानि भिनत्ति षट् ॥  
सहस्रकमले शक्तिं शिवेन सह मोदते ॥८६॥  
सैवावस्था परा ज्ञेया सैव निवृत्तिकारिणी । (अध्याय १)

Yogic penance ignites a divine flame in the body. This flame purifies the *Pranavayu* (breath / air element attached to the life force). Once *Pranavayu* is purified it invokes the *Kundalini Shakti* also known as the serpent power (due to the serpentine shape) from the *Mooladhara Chakra*. *Kundalini Shakti* rises sequentially. Firstly it rises above the solar plexus in the stomach which is known as the *Bramhagranthi*. It then rises through the cardiac plexus known as the *Vishnugranthi*, and then through the Cerebral plexus known as the *Rudragranthi*. This energy pierces through all the six energy centres and unites with the Parama Shiva in Sahasrara Chakra which is the highest energy centre. This causes a person to experience divine bliss. This point is the peak of *Yogasadhana*. At this point a person loses all his material attachment (*nivrutti*<sup>41</sup>) and desires. He experiences contemplation and bliss.

There are no words which can describe this experience. This state can only be experienced. That is the reason on the tenth day of the holy ritual of Durga Pooja there is a tradition to give a hug (*alingan*: signifying divine union). When Shakti is differentiated from Shiva she resides in *Mooladhara Charka*. When a person

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41. Nivrutti: detachment from all mundane desires.

worships Shakti he is worshipping a manifested form of Shakti (energy) this is the worship of *saguna*. Worship of the manifested form is also known as *dwaita*<sup>42</sup>. When Shakti reaches the abode of Shiva she merges with him in a divine embrace (*alingan*) and is no longer separate from him. When a sadhak will see his deity inside himself there will be no worship left. The duality between achiever and achievement will come to an end for the achiever and the achievement will be united as one. *Adnyachakra* or the *Rudragranthi* is the last energy centre where any focused or intentional worship is possible. Here Shakti can be perceived as a unique godhead. Such definite form of energy is known as *Saguna*<sup>43</sup>. Above this is the *Brahmarandhra*. Beyond this point once consciousness expands and unites with the universal oneness. This realisation of the oneness is the worship of the formless abode known as the *adwaita*<sup>44</sup>. Hence *Saguna* is *dwaita* and *nirguna* is *adwaita*. This is the abode of the formless divine known as the *Nirguna*. This formless nature is also called as *Sadchidananda swaroop*. This formless existence can only be realised when the energy reaches *Sahasrara Chakra*.

Student: O master, your guidance has clarified many of my doubts. I am highly curious about Mother Goddess Kali and her significance in Yoga. Can you please enlighten me about her significance in Yoga?

Master: Ma Kali is no different than *Kundalini Shakti*. She is the source of all power and energy (*Adya Shakti*) and is the divine love of lord Shiva. She is the power who resides in *Mooladhara Chakra*. There is a description about this in the book *Devi Geeta* and is as follows.

तद्धूर्वं तु शिखाकारा कुण्डली रक्तविग्रहा ।

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42. Dwaita: worship of the manifested form; form is definite and clear differentiation in deity and devotee.
  43. Saguna: Sanskrit word formed from two words Sa: which means 'with' and Guna means 'properties'
  44. Adwaita: union with the supreme, the formless abode where there is no differentiation in deity and devotee.

देव्यात्मिका तु सा प्रोक्ता मदभिन्ना नगाधिप ॥

This means that *Kundalini Shakti* is the grand consort of Lord Shiva and resides in the *MooladharaChakra* at the base of the spine. She is blood red in colour (*Raktavarna*) and is on the tip of the blazing peak of a *linga*<sup>45</sup> based in the mooladhara chakra. Hence *Kundalini Shakti* is the same as *Ma Kali*.

इच्छा क्रिया तथा ज्ञानं गौरी ब्राह्मी तु वैष्णवी ।

त्रिधा शक्तिः स्थिता यत्र तत्परं ज्योतिरोमिति ॥

ज्ञानं गौरी शक्तिरिच्छा ब्राह्मीशक्तिः ।

क्रिया वैष्णवी शक्तिरिति त्रिप्रकारा ॥

The above verses describe the nature of Shakti. They describe her as manifested form and the godhead which governs the manifestation. Manifestation is said to be in three types viz. (1) as knowledge known as goddess *Gauri* or *Maheshwari*, (2) as pure energy or power called *Bramhi Shakti* and (3) the power of functionality which can only be yielded through natural resources or wealth is known as *Vaishnavi* or *Laxmi*. Apart from these forms of manifestation the divine energy or pure consciousness is known as *Bramhajyoti* or *Brmahasthan*.

ऊर्ध्वशक्तिर्भवेत् कंठं अधोशक्तिर्भवेत् गुदः ।

मध्यशक्तीर्भवेन्नाभिः शक्त्यतीतं निरंजनम् ॥

The above verse classifies manifested energy and their function and location in the human body. From *Mooladharachakra* i.e. the base of the spine to the belly button in the stomach is the realm of the *Bramhashakti*. From the stomach to the throat is the realm of *Vishnushakti* and from the throat to the centre of the eye brows is the realm of *Shivashakti* and is also known as *Urdhvasakti*. Beyond this is the abode of *Nirguna Brahma* i.e. the abode of the formless existence.

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45. Linga: an ovate stone like structure which is symbolic form of Lord Shiva.

It is said that power and powerful are only differentiated by manifestation. Therefore when Shakti merges with the *Nirgunabramha* that is she merges with the formless abode and there is no manifestation. This state is known as *Satswaroopa Adwaita Brahma*. When Shakti pierces through all the six energy centres and stabilizes in the *Brahamrandhra* a disciple experiences *Satswaroopa Adwaita Brahma*. This state is also called the *Nirvikalpaavastha*.

In such a state there is no will, desire nor is there any action and hence it is beyond comprehensible knowledge and reason. This is also known as the *Pralaya Avastha* as all manifestation and causes to manifestation are being destroyed. When the creator is in the trance of Samadhi all creation and manifestation is destroyed. This is the primordial form, all manifestation is sourced from this absolute and dissolves in this absolute.

This is the state where unity (being one or single) of consciousness is realised that it is one and decided to converge in to many. This unity is the primordial consciousness which led to the formation of manifestation of various life forms. This existence further divided in three main parts viz. will, action and manifestation. This primordial energy when set in action is known as *adikaran* or *sarvakaran*<sup>46</sup>. This is the form where manifestation has not yet begun. This is primordial un-manifested pure conscious sate. When manifestation evolves from this primordial consciousness it is known as *Saguna Brahma*. *Adnya Chakra* is the realm to realize *Saguna Bramha*. Realization of this consciousness is known as *Savikalpa Samadhi*.

The primordial consciousness predates light and has a dark orientation so is also known as *Kaliya*. The un-manifested form of consciousness is also known as *Adi-Tamas*. There is no form of manifestation in this state so for a cognitive mind this is the abode of darkness. This form does not have any colour hence is understood

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46 . Adikaran or Sarvakaran: the cause of all causes or the source of all causes.

to be dark. Therefore, this form is also known as *Tamoroopa Krishna Varna*(which means dark complexion like Lord Krishna).

Disciple: I have now understood the concept of manifestation and its source clearly.

Master: Now you must carefully understand the nature of manifestation or Shakti. Shakti is the same as Goddess Kali or Goddess Durga. The description below is a symbolical understanding of Goddess Kali and her properties. Ma or Goddess has four hands. Her top right hand bears a gesture of blessing to those who follow the path of *dharma*. Now one might ask what *Dharma* is that, and the right understanding for that is the path of righteousness and morality. To reiterate the same fact God Shri Krishna has said in the Bhawadgeeta:

स्वल्पमप्यम्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ।

The above verse means a person who follows a morally correct path need not be afraid of anything for I (Shree Krishna) shall always stand by him. The lower right hand of Goddess Kali holds a pot of wealth. Wealth in this context is not only money but is the power to satisfy the basic needs of life with the right resources. It symbolizes that the goddess will care for her devotees and will grant them a satisfactory and content life with their material needs.

Again this is confirmed in the Bhagwadgeeta where God Shree Krishna says:

अनन्याश्चित्तयंतो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।

तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

Lord Krishna says to Arjuna that when a person devotes all his desires, aspirations and achievements to me I grant him with the divine knowledge of Yoga. The crux of all functionality of manifestation is regulated by me (*Yogakshema*). (Lord Shri Krishna says “I am the cause of all causes and hence am the cause of all knowledge and yoga”). *Yoga* in this context is understood as requisites of life and *kshema* is understood to have stability in sufficing those requisites. To protect and maintain what is earned

by such a righteous path is 'Kshema'. Therefore a person who follows the path of the right Dharma (righteous path) as suggested by the Bhagwad Geeta will never face any difficulties earning his basic needs of survival. The basic needs like food, clothing and shelter of such a person will always be taken care of by the divine mother (Ma Kali). Thence one of Ma Kali's hands signifies assurance to her devotees. Whenever a devotee needs something, this boon of assurance suffices the requirement. Hence to reiterate the same fact goddess Kali states that a person who follows a righteous path will always be blessed by her. The lower left hand of Goddess Kali symbolizes material desires and aspiration.

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ ॥ गीता ७॥११॥

When a devotee of Ma Kali aspires for something, in an astonishing way Ma will suffice his aspirations. Eventually after a person's desire has been fulfilled he will slowly lose interest in it and eventually will become detached from it. This way when a person cleanses himself his mind is totally free of any aspirations and desires. The upper left hand bears a scythe which symbolizes that the Goddess helps her devotees to realize the truth and cuts off their material ties. The lower left hand bears a chopped head of a *Rakshas* or demon which in this case is a symbol for material desires. It also signifies the end of greed, lust and hence of bad *karma* (sins). Hence all in all Goddess Kaali has four hands one holds the scythe which signifies her nature to destroy the evils, sins and rid a person of his bad *karmas*. Another hand bearing a chopped head signifies end of material desires and greed. With one hand Ma blesses her children who follow the path of Dharma and with the other she assures them with her protection and provides them with all the comforts they need in their life. Many great devotees of Goddess Kaali have written poems and divine chants describing her greatness.

The following lines are from a poem by a devotee named Ramprasad:

आय मन वेडाते जावी ।

काली कल्पतरु मूले रे मन चारि फल कुडये खावी ॥

In the above lines the devotee is convincing his mind not to be fickle and unstable. He says to the mind that if it cannot help its fickle nature it should refuge to the feet of Goddess Kaali. At the feet of the goddess one finds all that one desires. He describes Goddess Kaali to be like a *Kalpavruksha*<sup>47</sup>, tree which grants every wish of the person who sits below it. The poet says to his mind that at the feet of the goddess shall you find completeness of life, for she grants all the four foundations of life i.e. *dharma* (righteous path), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desires) and *moksha* (liberation).

Our Ma (Goddess Kaali) is a symbol of freedom. Her untied hair signifies her free nature. She is the source of all life and all manifestation. She is the source of all sound and hence is the source of all *mantras*, *stotras*, words and hence knowledge. The garland of heads in her neck is a sign of wisdom and her power and control over the material world.

Another devotee of Ma Kaali has composed poetry on Ma which is as follows.

आदिभूता सनातनी शून्यरूपा शशिभाली ।

ब्रह्मांडछिले ना जखन मुण्डमाला तुइ कोथा पेली ॥

In the lines above, the devotee praises the Goddess. He asks her that she is the source of everything that exists then where was she before the primordial existence. Hence he says there

Our Ma Kaali has a very fierce face. She has sharp teeth and signifies her power of *Pralaya*. She has created the world and at the time of *Pralaya*<sup>48</sup> everything will merge back into her. In the form of *Brahmandi Shakti* she creates the world. In the form of *Vaishnavi Shakti* she protects and takes care of it and in the form

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47. Kalpavruksha: A magical tree commonly described in mythological tales that grants a wish to every person who sits below it.

48. Pralaya: the concept of mass destruction or the end of an age where everything dissolves and new creation commences.

of *Rudrani Shakti* she destroys all manifestation.

A similar accord of the divine abode is iterated in the Mahabharata. Lord Shri Krishna enlightened Arjuna on the *Kurukshetra* (Battle field). This is when Arjuna requested Lord Shree Krishna to show him his true godhead form. Lord Shree Krishna gifted Arjuna with divine vision to see the complete godhead form. Looking at the immense Godhead Arjuna was scared and he started praising the Lord.

He said that looking at your immense teeth and jaws which remind me of mass destruction I have lost my senses and orientation. O lord, please heed to my call. I see that all the sons of Dhritarashtra (*Kauravas*), Bhishma, Dronacharya, Karna and all the warriors even from our side are being consumed in your mouth. There are so many dead corpses in your teeth. I am looking at a horrible sight. He said, all he sees is that all the world and people getting consumed in this immense Godhead. He saw people flowing to their final destiny like rivers flowing towards the sea. He saw many dead people being consumed by the fierce godhead. He said, you, O almighty are consuming everyone and everything. Just the way insects are attracted to fire and they enter the flame similarly everything is attracted to you. O divine Lord your divine light (*tej*) shall heat up this manifested world.

To this Lord Krishna in the godhead form said that I am the devourer of all manifestation. (I am time (*Kaal*) i.e. I am eternal). All that is created finishes in me. I live in every living being as *Prana Shakti*. Life and life forms originate in me and I am the one who consumes them.

This same account is written in the Chandogya Upanishad where the Godhead says to Arjuna that everything that manifests or exists is because of me. All manifestation is my food. From a dead dog on the street to a comet in the sky, all finishes in me. This very principle is seen in nature, that one animal is the food of the other. In truth it is the *Prana Shakti* in every living being that is manifesting in form of a body and is being slowly consumed. The

*Prana Shakti* creates a body, maintains it and becomes the cause of its destruction. This consumption is always done through the mouth and hence mouth represents the source of *Pralaya* (mass destruction). Mouth and tongue represent desire and expression. Hence a person who controls his mouth controls his desires and hence his expressions. Therefore Ma Kaali shows a red tongue from her mouth showing a fierce form. This form of hers shows that she kills all evil mercilessly. There is no pride in her acts so her actions can never be bound by karma. She does not create the world with any intention. Creativity is her nature. She does not will that the creation should lead in particular way. Hence, one who realizes this realizes the principle of detachment. Living in the mundane world a person can live a detached life if he realizes this fact. Hence a devotee of Ma Kaali never gets entwined with material desires.

न मां कर्माणि लिपन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।  
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥

॥ गी.अ. ४.१४ ॥

(Bhagwad Geeta: Chapter 4 Verse 6)

The above lines from the Bhagwad Geeta reiterates the same fact. In the above verse Lord Shree Krishna tells Arjuna that no karma can bind him (Lord Krishna) as the lord does not desire anything. (He takes care of the manifestation unconditionally). Hence a person who realizes this truth of the almighty never gets entwined in *maya* or material reality.

Ripples form on calm water surface similarly manifestation or material reality as we know is just a form of the formless divine (*Nirguna*). Just the way a wave exists momentarily and then merges with the sea similarly material reality is momentary form of the divine energy (*Shakti*). It is just a momentary bonding on the formless *chaitanya*. It is also important to understand that Shiva-Shakti together create, maintain and destroy the world. Without the presence of Shakti, Shiva cannot even move a leaf. Just like

heat in the fire, light in the sun eventhe formless ever pervading Shiva is in the domain of Shakti. Just the way clouds form various shapes on the skyline energy (*Shakti*) manifests objectively on the formless (*Nirguna*) divine abode. Hence to realize these facts and to worship goddess Kaali one must awaken the *Kundalini Shakti*. Under the guidance of a Guru *Kundalini Shakti* initiated and it rises through all the energy plexus (*Chakras*) in the body. Hence in the form of goddess Kaali we see Ma standing and stepping of the chest of Lord Shiva.

Hence when a person awakens *Kundalini Shakti* he aspires to raise his consciousness above the manifested i.e. he dissolves all his material desires. His Shakti rises through all the *Chakras* and gains union with Shiva in the *Brahmarandhra*. At this stage the disciple loses all his individuality. He loses all his aspirations and realizes the purpose of his existence which also gets dissolved. He realizes the formless divine abode. This is the union of Shiva-Shakti where there is no manifestation and there is pure oneness. This is the same phase where mind unites with the Atman.

संकल्पजाले गलिते स्वरूपमवशिष्यते ॥ ५३ महोपनिषद् प्र. ४  
(Mahopanishada Chapter 4)

The true nature of energy is the same as *chaitanya*. Devotees of Lord Shiva (*Shaiva*) call this *Shiva sthitee*, devotees of Lord Vishnu (*Vaishnavas*) call this as *Vishnu sthitee* and worshipers of Shakti (*Shakta*) realise this state as *Sachidanandamayi maata*. The thousand petal energy centre also known as Sahasraara in Brahmarandhra is where this state (energy plane) is realised. Therefore this is the centre for worship for all *Yogis*, *Shakta*, *Shaivas* and *Vaishnavas*. (Hence it might be worship of Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu or any other deity the bottom line is that all worship is worship of energy i.e. *Shakti* or *Chaitanya*).

शिवस्थानं शैवाः परमपुरुषं वैष्णवगणाः  
लषन्तीति प्रायो हरिहरपदं केचिदपरे॥

पदं देव्याः देवीचरणयुगलानन्दरसिकाः

मुनीन्द्रा अप्यन्ये प्रकृतिपुरुषस्थानममलम् ॥४४॥

As above stated various devotees describe this state with various names but finally this is the state of realization of the *Atman*.

Disciple: When we all have just two eyes why is Ma described as *trinayana* (having three eyes)?

Guru: In truth every Guru has a third eye. Third eye is divine vision. This vision is the vision of knowledge. A person can open his third eye by his guru's grace. Normal eyes see material reality. This vision is confounded to material manifestation. But divine vision gives the understanding of complete truth. Complete truth is more than perception of material manifestation. Lord Shree Krishna has confirmed the same fact in the Bhagwad Geeta.

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्वचक्षुषा ।

दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य मे योगमैश्वरम् ॥ (गीता अ११.८)

(Bhagwad Geeta Chapter 11. 8)

In the above verse Lord Shree Krishna tells Arjuna that he cannot see him with normal eyes. He needs divine vision to see him in the true form.

When a disciple progresses in his *Sadhana* his *Kundalini Shakti* can stabilize in *Sahasrara* (temporal energy plexus in the head). In this state his consciousness attains *Savikalpa Samadhi* and the person gains divine vision. With this vision a person can gain knowledge of *chaitanya* (pure energy) and hence can gain knowledge of the microcosm (*sookshma*). A person can have vision of deities and might be able to perceive divine godhead. Third eye or divine vision can help a disciple on his path but the divine mother (Goddess Kaali) already has this vision as she herself is the source of all knowledge. Her third eye is in the centre of her eye brows and is a symbol of divine knowledge and hence Ma is also called *trinayana*.

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## Chapter -4

Disciple: O' kind Master, your guidance has enriched me and my happiness knows no bounds. I am now eager to practise *yogasadhana*. Can you please tell me who all are allowed and eligible to follow this path?

I have understood that there are various paths like *Mantra Yoga*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Raja Yoga* and *Laya Yoga*. Which one in your opinion would be the best for me to follow?

Guru: I will recommend the path of *Siddha Yoga*. This path can be followed by anyone; the person may be old, young, male or female. Any person who wills enlightenment can follow this path.

युवा वृद्धोऽतिवृद्धो वा व्याधितो दुर्बलोऽपि वा ।  
अभ्यासात् सिद्धिमाप्नोति सर्वयोगेष्यतन्द्रितः ॥

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika)

The above lines are from an ancient text known as *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. The verses mean that any person he might be old, young or disabled can gain enlightenment by *Mantra Yoga* and *Hatha Yoga*. To clarify about which path one should follow the simple answer is that all the paths are necessary on the way to enlightenment. I shall explain all of them individually but also how they are interconnected.

Firstly one must understand that all the paths are sub-branches of Yoga itself. One can understand this by a simple illustration that various subjects are taught in a school. But the school is one. They are all taught under the same roof. The school does not change because the subject has changed. Similarly, *Mantra Yoga*, *Raja Yoga* or *Hatha Yoga* are various phases to reach the ultimate goal of enlightenment. They are all branches of the same Yoga.

This same fact is explained in the verses below from the book *Yogashikhopanishada*.

मंत्रो लयो हठो राजयोगोन्तर्भूमिका क्रमात् ।  
एक एव चतुर्धाऽयं महायोगोऽभिधीयते ॥

The lines mean that *Mantra, Laya, Hatha* and *Raja Yoga* are branches of the same Yoga. The path of *Siddha Yoga* encompasses attributes of all the mentioned branches and leads a person on the path of enlightenment.

Once initiated on the path of *Siddha Yoga* one does not need to separately follow the mentioned paths individually. All the attributes of all the mentioned branches will happen to the disciple in his *Yogasadhana*. Once the disciple is initiated (i.e. his *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened) he will perform *Mantra japa* in his *Sadhana*. Once *Mantra Yoga* is established in his *sadhana* the disciple will then perform *asana, pranayama* and *mudra*. Hence he will follow the path of *Hatha Yoga*. By performing *pranayama* the person will progress on the path of *Laya Yoga*. By establishing *Laya Yoga* he will attain focus (i.e. *dhyana*) and will learn to meditate in the real sense. Only when a person attains absolute focus his consciousness can attain *Savikalpa Samadhi*. After attaining *Savikalpa Samadhi* one needs to maintain his focus and then he can attain *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. I will now elucidate in brief the details of every branch so that you can understand their significance ).

## 1. Mantra Yoga:

मंत्रजपान्मनोलयो मंत्रयोगः ।

*Mantra yoga* is practised by chanting a mantra. The mantra could be *Omkar* or any specific mantra given to a disciple by his Guru. Reciting a mantra which dissolves all thoughts from the mind is *Mantra Yoga*.

## 2. Hatha Yog:

हकारः कीर्तितः सूर्यः ठकारश्चंद्र उच्यते ।

सूर्याचन्द्रमसोर्योगाद्धठयोगो निगद्यते ॥ (सिद्धसिद्धांतपद्धती)

(Siddhasiddhanta Paddhati)

(There are three main energy meridians (energy circulation pathways) in the body. *Sushumna* is the central energy meridian).

There is a Sun meridian and is also known as the *Soorya Nadi* or *Pingala*. There is a Moon meridian or the lunar meridian is known as the *Chandra Nadi* or *Ida*. The solar energy meridian is also known as the '*Ha-kaar*' and the lunar energy meridian is known as the '*Tha-kaar*'. Ha-tha Yoga means coherent circulation of energy (Prana-Shakti) through the Solar and Lunar energy meridians.

### 3. Laya Yoga:

प्रनष्टश्वासनिःश्वासः प्रध्वस्तविषयग्रहः ।

निश्चेष्टो निर्विकारश्च लयो जयति योगिनाम् ॥३॥

(हठयोग प्र. उपदे. ४)

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika Up: 4)

Breath is what keeps us alive. Breathing involves two parts inhalation (*shvas*) and exhalation (*nishvas*). *Laya* is a Sanskrit word which means to dissolve. Hence when a person achieves control over his breath he reaches a point where inhaling (*shvas*) and exhaling (*nishvas*) reach a perfect equilibrium. When a person attains this state his bodily functions reduce to an utter minimum. Such a body does not have any desires and its basic functioning is reduced to a level just to keep it alive. This is a phase where a person gains utter focus. In such a focus a person absolutely forgets his bodily existence.

### 4. Raja Yoga:

कुम्भकप्राणरोधान्ते कुर्याच्चित्तं निराश्रयम् ।

एवमभ्यासयोगेन राजयोगपदं व्रजेत् ॥७७॥

(हठयोग प्र. उप. २)

(Hatha Yoga Pradipika Up: 2)

The above verse describes the method used in Raja Yoga technique to clear the mind of all desires, aspirations, thoughts

and impressions. Raja Yoga technique focusses on breath control to stabilize *Prana*, and hence the mind. It is based on performing *Kumbhak*<sup>49</sup>.

When *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened at an internal plane (inside the body) *Kumbhak* takes place which directs the *Pranavayu* to the entrance of the *Sushumna* energy meridian. Once the *Pranavayu* enters the *Sushumna* energy meridian it stimulates a point in the centre of the eyebrows. This point is also known as the *Niravalambana sthan*. This causes a person to focus his attention at this point and meditate. By this, the mind focusses on this point and does not attach to any material thought or reality. This spot in particular is of importance, as the mind needs to be free from the attachment or self-identification with the body. If this is established one experiences a feeling of universal oneness and his consciousness expands. The duality in the inner and outer space fades and the person experiences divine bliss. All material attachments of the mind fade away and the person feels free which brings a sense of ecstasy. At such a time breath is confined to nasal region only. Such a state is known as *Raja Yoga avastha*. Using this technique for long periods of time Yogis focus their mind and gain stability. By this they can control all their senses and hence their desires.

Thence a person who can control his senses, mind and intellect and has gotten over desires, fear and anger is free (*mukta*) in the real sense.

In Hatha Yoga Pradipika Chapter 4, following has been mentioned.

राजयोगस्य माहात्म्यं को वा जानाति तत्त्वतः ।  
ज्ञानं मुक्तिः स्थितिः सिद्धिर्गुरुवाक्येन लभ्यते ॥

By the teachings and guidance of a Guru one can walk the

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49. *Kumbhak*: withholding breath in the body for various intervals. A technique commonly used in Yoga to direct Prana through various parts of the body.

path of *Rajayoga* and can progress to realization. By this a person also obtains spiritual powers and divine knowledge. In other words this path also leads to the union of *Jiva* (Individual consciousness) and *Brahman* (universal or cosmic consciousness). It should however be noted that to reach this state there is a sequence that needs to be followed. One cannot progress on the path of Raja Yog without being established in Mantra Yoga. If a person has to master any skill he needs to repeatedly perform actions related to the skill. Similarly a person needs to stabilize his mind by *mantra japa*<sup>50</sup> only then can he progress on the path of Raja Yoga. To gain higher forms of knowledge one needs transcendental consciousness. To have transcendental consciousness one needs to have a calm, stable and focussed mind. Mind is fickle by nature. It constantly self identifies itself with the body and senses. Hence it is very important to separate it from body consciousness. Only then can it have knowledge of higher spiritual realms.

Lord Shree Krishna has said in the Bhagwad Geeta that without cleansing the mind one cannot focus clearly on his actions. Such a person is attached to all his actions and hence is attached to Karma whereas the final goal of every soul is to be detached from it. If one wishes to follow the path of renunciation i.e. wishes to become a *Sanyasi* he must realize this truth. Without realizing this one cannot be successful in following the path of an ascetic and hence cannot attain liberation or enlightenment.

Guru: There are two types of minds. One is a pure or clean mind and the other is an impure mind. A mind full of desires, lust and greed is an impure mind whereas a calm, stable and focussed mind is a pure mind. Such a mind is free from ego, greed and any mundane attachment. Mind becomes unstable because of its insecure nature. This insecurity comes because of worldly aspirations and desires. Thence a mind which is free from worldly

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50. Mantra japa: reciting a mantra repeatedly and completely focusing mind on it.

aspirations, turns inwards and unites with the *Brahman*. Such a mind understands the real nature of *Chaitanya*, as the true form of energy is within and all worldly manifestations is nothing but *maya*. Hence when a mind turns inwards only then can a person understand the nature of energy (*chaitanya*).

Disciple: To this context can you please explain what are the *Ashta Siddhis* (spiritual powers)? How are they achieved and what are their properties?

Guru: Your question is obvious and I shall answer it briefly. However, I must caution you that do not get involved or aspire for these spiritual powers as they can be a form of attachment too. (Always remember that the final focus of *sadhana* is to attain liberation i.e. enlightenment (*Mukti* or *Moksha*). Do not get deviated from the path to realize the *atma-tatva*<sup>51</sup>). Nevertheless I shall explain the nature of these powers. (As the word suggests the spiritual powers are known as *Ashta-siddhi* which means there are eight main spiritual powers).

1. **Anima:** This is the ability to make your body very small. Small as in smaller than the micro-cosmos (*sookshma*). Gods, sages and saints use this ability for astral travel.
2. **Laghima:** This power enables a person to make his body very light. This ability can also make a person fly in the air.
3. **Mahima:** This is an ability by which a person can make his body huge, large and heavy.
4. **Garima:** This is the ability to summon any object at will.
5. **Prakamya:** this power enables a person to live and relive any experience or feeling at will.
6. **Ishitva:** This power is to have a godly experience or dwell in the divine abode. By this a person can control anything anywhere.
7. **Vashitva:** This is the ability to control any object or any

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51. Atma Tatva: Being one or having a union with the nature of atman; same as liberation or enlightenment.

person at will.

8. **Prapti:** This is the power to be at one place and to summon any object from any place.

It should also be understood that such powers are of two types viz. *Kalpita siddhi* and *Akalpita siddhi*. If a person acquires such powers by performing rituals or by consuming medicinal herbs they are known as *Kalpita Siddhi*. Such powers are occult in nature and last for a very short time. But when a person gains spiritual powers by doing *sadhana* and penance for long years he understands the very fundamental nature of energy and manifestation. Such the person's consciousness (*Jeeva*) unites with will of the almighty (*Ishvara*). Spiritual powers gained like this are known as *Akalpita Siddhi*. Such a Siddhi once gained is permanent and never leaves the disciple.

The first chapter of Yogashikhopanishada describes about Siddhis in detail. It clearly mentions that occult powers gained by performing rituals last only till the cause, aim or purpose for which they are used exists. Once their purpose is over they wane away. Such powers can only yield material gains and are temporary. On the other hand a person who does intense *sadhana* gains union with *chaitanya*. His consciousness unites with pure energy hence he understands the functionality of energy. Therefore such powers are innate and a yogi acquires them permanently.

Disciple: O' great Master by your guidance I have now come to realize that awakening the *Kundalini Shakti* leads us to the path of enlightenment. I have also understood that the progress is sequential i.e. from *Mantra Yoga* to *Raja Yoga*. Can you please explain to me how many years does one need to achieve enlightenment?

Guru: Time needed to attain enlightenment depends on how a student is. There are four types of students.

1. *Mrudu Sadhak*<sup>52</sup>
2. *Madhyam Sadhak*<sup>53</sup>

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52. Mrudu Sadhak: Mrudu in the literal sense of translation means eased, laid back or relaxed.

53. Madhyam Sadhak: Madhyam in this context means mediocre or 0 moderately devoted or committed.

3. *Adhimatra Sadhak*<sup>54</sup>

4. *Adhimatratam Sadhak*<sup>55</sup>

Students are so categorized according to their ability and devotion to gain and grasp knowledge.

### **1. *Mrudu Sadhak:***

Such a person is not very enthusiastic about spiritual progress. He falls for material desires. Such a person has bad food habits and might have physical relation with many women. A person like this is likely not to follow his guru's instructions and the rules of the lineage and might be materialistic. If such a person makes sincere efforts he might attain enlightenment in twelve years.

### **2. *Madhyam Sadhak:***

*Madhyam Sadhak* is a disciple who is enthusiastic about his spiritual development. Such a person is keen on doing good deeds and follows a righteous path. If such a person makes a sincere effort might attain enlightenment in nine years.

### **3. *Adhimatra Sadhak:***

*Adhimatra Sadhak* is a person who is always stable and focused in his thought. He is highly committed to spiritual progress and *Yogasadhana*. Such a person always views his actions from a third persons perspective and is very careful and informed about his actions. Such a person always respects his guru and is never afraid to perform penance and intense hard work. Such a person always strives to do *Yogasadhana* and is the only thing he is attached to. If such a person makes a sincere effort he can attain enlightenment in six years.

### **4. *Adhimatratama Sadhak:***

Such a person is highly stable, focused and knowledgeable. He has conquered all of his senses and is emotionally stable. He should be forgiving, kind, witty, and should have conquered all

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54. *Adhimatra Sadhak*: *Adhimatra* is sincere and devoted

55. *Adhimatratam Sadhak*: Highly committed, extremely devoted and focused.

his desires. He should have a good reasoning ability and faith. He should be brave, noble, and humble and should have practised absolute celibacy (*Bramhacharya* in thought and practice). If such a person makes a sincere effort, can reach enlightenment in three years.

Guru: You must understand that having enthusiasm for spiritual progress is highly essential. Even an authoritarian knowledgeable person cannot progress unless he has the motivation to attain enlightenment. Such a person must respect his Guru and should follow instructions given by him intricately and meticulously. The following verses are from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Hathayoga Pradipika and illustrate the above notion in detail.

क्रियायुक्तस्य सिद्धिः स्यादक्रियस्य कथं भवेत् ।  
 न शास्त्रपाठमात्रेण योगसिद्धिः प्रजायते ॥६५॥  
 न वेषधारणं सिद्धेः कारणं न च तत्कथाः ।  
 क्रियैव कारणं सिद्धेः सत्यमेतन्न संशयः ॥६६॥

A disciple must perform 'yoga-kriyas'<sup>56</sup> as directed by his guru. Without absolute dedication and focus attaining enlightenment is not possible. (Realisation or enlightenment is just a different state of the *kriya* {practise or *sadhana*}. Just the way in cause-effect relation effect is just a different state of the cause; realisation is just a different state of *sadhana* {*yoga-kriya*}. While performing *Yoga-kriya* the disciple's consciousness is elevated, this eventually helps him attain an enlightened state). One cannot attain enlightenment by just speaking about yoga or merely knowing facts about it, one needs to practise *sadhan* only then can he attain enlightenment. This can be illustrated by a tale of wisdom which is as follows.

Once upon a time a person went to a *Sanyasi*<sup>57</sup> and asked him for the clothes (saffron robes) of a *Sanyasi*. To this the saint

56 . Yoga-Kriya: sadhana or a yogic practice as instructed by the guru.

57. Sanyasi: A person who has renounced material world, sage, saint or an ascetic.

replied that a man does not become a *Sanyasi* just by wearing saffron robes. Just the way a person does not become a woman even if he dresses like one, similarly one cannot become a Yogi or *Sanyasi* just by wearing saffron robes.

Disciple: Master, for following the path of Yoga are there any rules that need to be followed?

Guru: Yes indeed. There are rules that need to be abided by. These rules are of 2 types and are known as *yama*<sup>58</sup> (prohibitions) and *niyama*<sup>59</sup> (daily practices and recommendations).

An ill person requires medication to get better but he also needs to abide by prescribed diet and exercises. Similarly to progress on the path of Yoga one needs to abide by prohibitions and should do his daily practices meticulously as prescribed by his guru.

There are five prohibitions (*yamapanchak*) and five recommended practises (*niyamapanchak*).

The following are *Yamapanchak* (five prohibitions):

### **1. Ahimsa: (Non-violence, peace)**

*Ahimsa* means one should not mentally, physically or vocally hurt anyone. This means one should not think badly about anyone. Love and compassion for all is *ahimsa*. This rule also has a limitation of space and time. For instance, a fisherman needs to kill fish as it earns him his living but he should not harm any other animal or sea life just for the fun of it. Then such a practise is limited to his profession. Another example would be that of a soldier. A soldier might need to fight on the battlefield but apart from that he should not fight in his normal course of life. Hence the act of a soldier is space specific. If a person follows the principle of Ahimsa only on specific auspicious days then such an act will be time specific. But for a Yoga practitioner one should not inflict harm on anyone for any reason. (Such a person needs to abide by the principle of Ahimsa irrespective of space, profession and time).

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58. Yama: prohibitions, taboos

59. Niyama: recommended practices and regulations.

## 2. *Satya*: (truth)

Truth is the absolution of speech and mind. One should only speak what he has learnt to be true. One should only speak on what his senses comprehend to be true and should not speak anything that is unreal to his comprehension. A person should speak only that what is of benefit to all and should not inflict any fallacies on the listener.

## 3. *Asteya*: (avoiding possessiveness and greed)

One should not steal or snatch other person's money or belongings. One should not even think of such an act in his thoughts and should think of everyone's betterment.

## 4. *Bramhacharya* (celibacy):

*Bramhacharya* is absolute control over reproductive organs and such thoughts. One should not think, act or speak lustfully. One should abstain from having sexual thoughts and hence abstain from the act of sex itself.

स्मरणं कीर्तनं केलिः स्पर्शनं गुह्यभाषणम् ।

संकल्पो व्यवसायश्च क्रियानिवृत्तिरेव च ॥

One should not aspire for an act of lust nor should plan or support it. One should not meet a person of opposite sex alone and should abstain from any physical proximity.

The above verses mean one should not think lustfully or have any aspirations of having sexual union with a person of opposite sex. One should remain a staunch celibate in thought and in actions.

Disciple: Master, but how can a person who is married abide by this rule?

Guru: A person who has taken a vow of celibacy or *Sanyasashrama* should strictly abide by this rule. A person who is married can follow *Bramhacharya* in a different way.

ऋतावृतौ स्वदारेषु संगतिर्या विधानतः ।

ब्रह्मचर्यं तदेवोक्तं गृहस्थाश्रमवासिनाम् ॥

*Bramhacharya* for householders is suggested in *Yogasutras* to be followed in the following manner. A person can commence a sexual union with his wife, if he aspires to bear a child with her. One should avoid the following days to have a physical union with his wife.

अमावास्यामष्टमीं च पौर्णिमासीं चतुर्दशीम् ।  
ब्रह्मचारी भवेन्नित्यमप्यृतौ स्नातको द्विजः ॥

The above verses mean that one should not have a physical union with his wife during her menstrual cycles. One should not have a physical union on *Ashtami* (8<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar cycle), *Chaturthi* (fourth day of the lunar cycle), *Amavasya* (new moon day) and the *Poornima* (full moon day). A menstrual cycle lasts for sixteen days, hence one should avoid a union on first four days. If one aspires for a good progeny he is advised to commence a union on 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> day keeping in mind the lunar chart and prohibitions.

### 5. *Aparigraha*:

One should renounce interest from worldly matters and subjects. One should not get passionate about worldly matters and argue over mundane reality.

I shall now explain about the *Niyamapanchak* i.e. five daily practices.

1. *Shaucha*: *Shaucha* refers to physical and mental cleanliness. A person needs to empty his bowels daily in a disciplined way. This keeps the body clean and free from disease. This is the cleanliness on a physical level. One should also have a clean mind, free from desires and greed. One should have a clear conscience which is to have a clean mental state.
2. *Santosha*: *Santosha* means being content and self-satisfied. One should be content with what grace has given him and should not be greedy for more.
3. *Tapasya*: *Tapasya* means *sadhana* or penance. Penance

brings discipline and tolerance to the body. One should have the ability to give up material desires and discipline the mind. Doing fasts on holy days, keeping silence (*mauna*), avoiding speech for long hours and *Dhyana* (meditation) are all taken to be different forms of *tapasya*. This reduces mind's self-identification with the body and increases will power.

4. *Svadhya*: To learn about the science of liberation (Mokshashastra), reading the Geeta, Yogawasishtha or Upanishada etc. or doing meditation using *pranava-mantra* is known as *svadhya*. *Pranavamantra* in this context means a mantra suggested by the guru, or the mantra used for meditation.
5. *Ishwarapranidhan*: *Ishwarapranidhan* is absolute faith and surrender to the almighty. This means that one should surrender all of his acts (*karmas*) which might be achievements or any act of day-to-day life to the lord and think of it as His will. One must dissolve his ego and pride and surrender everything at the feet of the almighty.

Disciple: How can one surrender everything (all his acts and actions) to the almighty?

Guru: To surrender everything is to surrender the ego. One's material possessions or sense of possession is attached to his ego. Hence, when one surrenders his ego he realizes that all that happens is due to the divine grace. One can surrender the ego by not identifying himself as the doer. When one realizes this he sees his bodily existence as an instrument or a tool of the divine. He sees all his achievements as a grace of god and offers it to his feet. Every army fights for its king. Every soldier realizes that he is to follow orders and becomes an instrument for his king's victory; similarly one should be an instrument of the divine grace.

Disciple: What does one achieve by following rules like non-violence?

Guru: By following rules like non-violence one gains many spiritual powers (*siddhis*). I shall now explain the logic behind this.

### अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः ।

Once a person takes an oath of non-violence, his mentality, and temperament calms down. With this event even the people around him tend to become calm and content. The overall thought of hatred and anger reduces. Such a person brings in vibrations of stability and peace wherever he goes.

### सत्यं प्रतिष्ठायां क्रियाफलाश्रयत्वम् ।

When a person speaks truth, and truth alone his words and reality find a union. He speaks the truth, and what he speak turns out a truth. Hence the speech of such a person materializes to reality.

### अस्तेयं प्रतिष्ठायां सर्वरत्नोपस्थानम् ।

Once a person is completely established in being content without greed he gains a power to summon even the rarest of the jewels or gems.

### ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः ॥३८॥

A person, when follows staunch celibacy gains immense strength, and can yield the power of life force in his semen. His body delays age offsetting and makes him immensely powerful mentally and physically. He eventually gains the power to initiate other people's *Kundalini Shakti*.

### अपरिग्रहस्थैर्यं जन्मकथान्ताः सम्बोधः ॥३९॥

When one is stable in self-contemplation he is detached from all the material world and mundane matters. This is when a person can gain knowledge about his past lives. He can know the purpose of his existence and can also know how and where he will be born in future.

Guru: When one follows *yamas* (prohibitions) he gains powers over the material reality and gains supernatural abilities. On the

other hand when a person follows *Niyamas* (i.e. follows daily practices) he gains spiritual knowledge and spiritual powers, known as *Siddhis*.

### शौचात् स्वांगजुगुप्सा परैरसंसर्गः ॥४०॥

Cleansing of the body makes a person realize that he becomes more and more pure. His attachment to his body reduces. As the person is not attached to his own body, attraction to someone else's body is out of question. This is when a person gains complete control over his body and hence his senses. He controls all his desires and attains union with the *Atman*.

### संतोषादनुत्तमः सुखलाभः ॥४२॥

Merely by being content, one can gain immense happiness. By being content all the desires come to an end. There are no expectations, hence there is no grief of losing or gaining anything. One of the Vedic references in this context mentions, that a person gains such immense happiness that all the pleasures from the earth or the heavens put together would not be one sixteenth of this happiness. Such a peace is beyond earthly or celestial plane and is just pure divine bliss.

### कार्येन्द्रियसिद्धिरशुद्धिक्षयात् ॥४३॥

A person gains complete control over his body by meditation and *Tapasya*. *Tapasya* in this context means rigorous training and mind control. When a disciple gains such controls he gains the ability to manifest spiritual powers. Such spiritual powers comprise of the ability of distant hearing and distant vision.

### स्वाध्यायादिष्टदेवतासम्प्रयोगः ॥४४॥

A person when practices his daily rituals and *sadhana* meticulously, he can gain divine vision and can see his beloved deity. The deity will appear in front of such a devotee and bestow divine grace on him. Such a pure and divine person can see celestial beings, saints, sages, rishis and gods. Such people are guided by divine spirits.

## समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् ॥४५॥

When a person is completely engrossed in devotion to the almighty he attains *Samadhi*. Such a person offers all his *karmas* to the almighty and becomes pure. His mind becomes kind, forgiving and tender. Eventually he becomes one with the divine godhead and gains eternal peace.



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## Chapter -5

Disciple: O divine master, please tell me by what means can a person reach the path of Yoga?

Guru: A person really strives for enlightenment when he loses interest in the material world and realizes its fallacies. Such a person has suffered a lot of pain and has realized the fickle nature of mundane reality and walks his final journey towards spiritual enlightenment.

Such a person should pay respects at the feet of an enlightened guru and should follow the path of *Yogasadhana* as directed by his guru. Eventually that a person will be enlightened and will be free from the tangles of the material world.

A guru in reality is the human form of the divine almighty. A disciple should always be at his guru's service. A disciple should focus his mind and body to serve his guru in the utmost capacity. Without service to his Guru one cannot expect progress on the spiritual path. All ancient *puranas*<sup>60</sup> illustrate the importance of service to guru. A person who does not respect his guru, who lies for material gains, is harsh to others, is egoistic and is passionate about material subjects can never progress on the path of *Yogasadhana*. A person should be committed to his *Yogasadhana* and should be committed to his guru. Absolute faith, surrender and devotion are the base of all spiritual powers. To have faith in the lineage and path suggested by the guru is a primary sign of *Siddhi*.

While performing intensive *Yogasadhana* a disciple should avoid eating sour foods like bitter lemons and citrus. Peanuts, chick peas and pulses which are very dry should also be avoided. Mustard seeds, mustard oil and bitter-lemon are not advisable for times of

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60. Puranas: Sanskrit texts describing wisdom tales as mythological stories. This also comprises of Vedas and Vedic wisdom.

intensive *Yogasadhana*. One can eat small ripe lemons (*Kagadi Limbu*). A disciple should avoid meeting many people and should not be chatty or talkative. A disciple should not have a bath after sunrise, avoid fasting, and should not have a body massage. A person should not indulge in lustful, passionate and material thoughts. One should refrain from thoughts of material likes and dislikes.

Disciple: But master, if a person wishes to do a traditional fast on *Ekadashi*<sup>61</sup> what must he do? Secondly if a married person does not have passionate thoughts about his wife how will he have children?

Guru: Heavy fasting can be harmful for doing *Yogasadhana*. Lunar cycles bring about many changes in the human body. New moon day, full moon day and eleventh day in the lunar cycle are known to cause extremes of energy in the body. Bodily secretions are naturally high on these days. Hence fasting is recommended on these days. But for a *Yoga* practitioner there is naturally high body metabolism due to Yogic practices. Hence there is a constant cleansing mechanism set in action. Secondly a Yogi's body is highly influenced by the air and water elements in the body. Hence by fasting there is a chance of dehydration and acidity therefore fasting is prohibited for a *Yoga* practitioner. Fasting is a good form of *Tapasya* but *pranayama* is the best form of *tapasya*. Performing *pranayama* makes the body physically healthy but also burns sins (karmic impressions). Hence *pranayama* brings about purification on physical and spiritual level. If one action can bring about so many effects there is no point in doing separate exercise for individual effects. Thence it can be understood that fasting is recommended for a person who is not following the path of *Yoga*.

To answer your other question, one can have a physical union with his wife for gaining a child. One can do so as recommended by the Vedic scriptures. Such a person must follow the laws of the marital institution and only have a physical union on recommended

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61. Ekadashi: 11th day of the lunar cycle; highly auspicious.

days. If one follows this, his *Bramhacharya* is maintained and he does not lose focus. If a person does not abide by these rules, he loses a lot of energy through his *Veerya* (semen). This inturn causes his breath (*Prana*) to be unstable which inturn causes his mind to be unstable and insecure. *Ojas* is the main source of energy for brain functioning. Loss of sperm semen causes loss of *Ojas* and renders the nervous system rigid causing neural functioning disorders. Such a body loses its vitality and becomes prone to diseases and eventually withers off to death. Therefore maintaining this vital force by preserving semen (*veerya*) is highly essential.

Disciple: What is an ideal diet for a yoga practitioner? What kind of diet is recommended and what foods should be avoided?

Guru: One can have rice and pulses (*udid*, *moong*, and chickpea). It should be noted that pulses and rice should be taken without husk. One can also eat corn and wheat without husk. Eating preparations from wheat and corn flour is also fine. Eating bananas, stem and flower of banana plant, tomatoes, brinjal, corn, spinach and fenugreek is recommended. Drinking milk is highly advisable but it should be avoided after sunset.

One should avoid eating onions and garlic or any foods which have a very pungent odour. Eating oily and heavy foods should be avoided. One should also avoid eating stale and cold food. Eating other peoples left overs (*Ushte*) should be avoided at any cost. The only exception to this rule is the food touched by your guru.

A guru is highly energised being. Every object he touches is blessed by divine energy. Finger tips bring about electrical circulation in the body. Finger tips have sensory nodes that emit electrical impulses hence the food touched by guru is energized by divine grace. In fact food touched by guru is same as holy offering and brings about increase in energy in the disciple who eats it. Therefore, disciples are encouraged to eat food touched or handled by their Guru.

Disciple: I have understood that diet can be instrumental in increasing or decreasing excitement (*tamas*, *guna*) and anxiety (*rajas guna*) therefore good quality controlled diet should be

consumed to inculcate calm and balanced nature (*satvik guna*). Also can you please tell me if eating non-vegetarian diet is permissible? Guru: To have holy food (*Satvik ahar*) is an important part of spiritual life. Eating holy food is only permitted hence eating non-vegetarian food is not permissible. Health is the bottom line of everything. One cannot progress in anything without good health. Non-vegetarian food is only permissible in life threatening situations or if it is prescribed by a doctor for any medicinal purposes.

(But one cannot eat non-vegetarian food just because it is tasty. One must remember food is the key to good health and hence one should be cautious about consuming the right foods. What we eat is what we become, hence from a Yogic point of view eating non-vegetarian food is not permissible.)

### धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां आरोग्यं मूलमुत्तमम् ।

To sustain life, food and nutrition is of utmost importance. Good health is fundamental to any kind of progress. Progress may be monetary, social or spiritual. If mind or body is not healthy one cannot succeed in anything. Hence maintaining good mental and physical health is important. The key to good health is good food. Good food from a Yogic perspective is holy and nutritious food.

**Disciple:** Is there any rule or recommendation as to what quantity of food should one consume?

Guru: Every student of yoga should have a controlled and measured diet.

मिताहारं विना यस्तु योगारम्भं तु कारयेत् ।

नाना रोगा भवेत्तस्य कश्चित् योगो न सिध्यति ॥

The above verses mean that people who don't have a controlled diet and start practising *Yogasadhana* cannot have any progress. On the contrary there is a chance they might have stomach problems and body ache.

It is suggested in the Sixteenth chapter of the Bhagwad Geeta that balance is the key to progress on the path of Yoga. Too much

sleep or no sleep at all, or too much food or no food at all are all extremities. One cannot progress on the path of Yoga with such extremities.

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥

This is a verse from the Bhagwad Geeta where Lord Shree Krishna tells Arjuna that balanced living is the key to speedy progress on the path of Yoga. Balanced diet, controlled yet adequate sleep and adequacy in overall living is the foundation of Yoga.

Disciple: What is controlled or proper manner to consume food?

Guru: One should thank the almighty before consuming food. One should treat food as a holy offering to the deity and then consume it. Eating a nutritious diet is very important. One must not eat until he is completely full. There should always be space for more. This space is important for air circulation. One should always have one quarter of his stomach empty. If a person eats till he is absolutely full then his body becomes weak and he feels lazy and lethargic. Ideally a Yogi should not have a meal more than once a day. It is also important to note that Yogic practices should not be done immediately after a meal and one should not do any Yogic practice when he is immensely hungry. If a person is very hungry he must first eat something and then practise *yogasadhana*. Performing *yogasadhana* on an empty stomach can have disastrous effects. (A person cannot have a stable mind on an empty stomach and it can cause physical problems.)

Breath controls the energy circulation in the body. It is important to observe the breath and hence energy circulation when we eat food. When the breath is active through the right nostril the solar energy meridian (*Pingala*) is active. When the solar meridian is active it is the day in the microcosm of the body. When the solar energy meridian is active the body produces many enzymes, digestive juices and hormones. This is the best time to consume

food. When the lunar energy meridian (*Ida*) is active it is the night of the bodily microcosms. Hence food consumed at such a time is hard to digest.

Disciple: What must a person do if the breath is not active through the right nostril?

Guru: One should always check which energy meridian is active by checking the breath. If the solar energy meridian is not active one can activate it by the following exercise. One must take a pillow in the right arm and lie down on the left side for a while. Then by manually closing the right nostril one must breathe in through the left nostril and breathe out through the right nostril. This re-regulates and changes the breathing pattern. Another method to change the breath circulation is by holding the left thigh close to the chest and pressing the lower surface of the left foot by hands. Eventually by this method the breathing changes over in about twenty minutes. After sometime the breathing path way changes and the person can have food.

Disciple: For how many days must a person follow these rules?

Guru: These rules are instrumental for progress. See, a *Yogi* and a *Rogi* (diseased) are similar in some ways. An ill person needs to take medication till he gets better. He needs to abide by a diet prescribed by the doctor. Similarly a *Yogi* needs to do *sadhana* and abide by the rules as directed by his guru till he does not reach his goal (enlightenment). A disciple needs to meticulously follow the daily practices and respect the prohibitions. This eventually transcends his consciousness and the disciple knows the nature of *chaitanya*. But, till the time the disciple does not attain enlightenment following the rules is mandatory. This can be illustrated by the example of young buds. When a seed sprouts one must take utter care of it and protect it from pests and insects. Then, as the sapling grows one needs to protect it by providing fencing around it but when the sapling grows into a large tree it becomes strong and stable and grows out of the fencing. Similarly once a disciple's mind becomes stable and gains union with the *atman* he no longer needs to abide by these rules. ■

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## Chapter -6

Disciple: O' divine master please tell me how can a person perform *Yogasadhana*? What kind of place should be chosen for *Yogasadhana*? What posture should one sit in and what kind of *asan*<sup>62</sup> (sitting mat) should a person use? What time of the day should a person choose for *sadhana*?

Guru: One should use a separate room for performing *sadhana* and should not keep anything else other than things related to *yogasadhana* in it. It should be a centre for worship and worship alone. It is highly advisable that the floor should be laid with cow dung and one should put incense sticks in the room. One can put pictures of sages, saints or his beloved deity or masters of the lineage. The images can be a motivation to the disciple during *sadhana*. The master's excellence would always encourage the disciple to perform *sadhana* more meticulously.

One should always strive hard to maintain the purity and sanctity of this room. If the room is purely used for worship and *yogasadhana* then the room will eventually be full of spiritual energy. There would be a significant difference that a person would feel when he would enter this room. One would feel the divine presence and the mind would automatically turn inward and start performing *Japa*. When a yogi performs *sadhana* in this place the place is purified by his spiritual vibrations. For a normal person such a place is no less than a temple. Such places where sages have performed *sadhana* are temples.

Disciple: If a person does not have a separate place for *sadhana* what must he do?

Guru: If a person does not have a separate room for *sadhana* he must designate a specific place for it and use the place only for

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62. Asan: *asan* in this context means the sitting mat on which the yogi sits and perform *sadhana*.

*sadhana*. No one should be allowed in the room when he is performing *sadhana*. He must be alone and should perform *sadhana* as directed by his guru.

*Asan* is highly important while performing *sadhan*. It should be made from cotton cloth or from *darbha*<sup>63</sup> grass. The *asan* should be slightly elevated from the ground. One can also use deer skin. There should be another larger cloth over this layer if any animal skin is used. No one else should be allowed to sit on the *asan* except for the practitioner (*sadhaka*) himself. The *asan* should not be used for any other purposes other than worship and *yogasadhana*. One should not sit on the *asan* to do any mundane or material matters. This would maintain the sanctity of the *asan*.

One can perform *sadhana* during early morning, afternoon and evening. One can however do *sadhan* in early morning at around three o'clock. One can decide anytime convenient to him but he should consistently follow that time. After a few days one can realize that if a person is doing something else as soon as it is time for his *sadhana* his body will give him severe indications and he will be drawn to perform *sadhana*. If a person follows this instinct and performs his *sadhana* he will gain immense peace. A beginner should perform *sadhana* all four times a day. If a person cannot do *sadhana* in the afternoon he should do it early in the morning then once after sunrise and then once in the evening.

Disciple: Why is it necessary to have an *asana* made from *darbha* grass or animals skin?

Guru: There is a scientific reasoning to this. When a person performs *sadhana* his consciousness is highly focussed. There is an increase in the electrical activity of the brain. Electrical charges are discharged all throughout the body. Electricity can pass through metals and through the earth. Hence if these charges are lost to the earth the effect of doing meditation will be lost. Animal skin or *darbha* grass acts as insulation and does not allow the electrical

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63. *Darbha*-*asan*: special type of grass which is known to have purifying properties. Used in all Hindu rituals. Botanicalname *Eragrostis cynosuroides* or *Eragrostis tenella*.

charges to be grounded. Therefore one should not sit on bare earth or on any sitting mattress made from metals or metallic components.

Disciple: O' master please guide me as to how a person should sit for *sadhan*";;a?

Guru: Your *sadhana* itself is robust and will yield you spiritual experiences. There is no need to sit in any particular posture or *asan*. Sit in a posture that is most comfortable to you. There is no need to forcibly sit in *padmasana* or any particular *asan*. To sit and to be stable in one posture is defined as *asan* in *Yogashastra*. Hence one should choose a posture that suits him the most. One should remember his guru before commencing *sadhana* and should say the following prayer,

ब्रह्मानन्दं परमसुखदं केवलं ज्ञानमूर्तिं ।  
द्वन्द्वातीतं गगनसदृशं तत्त्वमस्यादिलक्ष्यम् ।  
एकं नित्यं विमलमचलं सर्वधीःसाक्षिभूतं ।  
भावातीतं त्रिगुणरहितं सद्गुरुं तं नमामि ॥  
गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।  
गुरुरेव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ।  
अखण्डमण्डलाकारं व्याप्तं येन चराचरम् ।  
तत्पदं दर्शितं येन तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः ॥

Guru: A guru should be understood as an incarnation of the formless almighty (*Parabramha*). Only when a person has such an absolute respect for his guru can he gain divine knowledge. After paying respects to the guru, one must start *japa* or *pranayama* as directed by the guru.

After this, one must be an absolute observer to all the happenings. One might feel jerks in the body, or the breathing rate might increase or decrease but one should not restrict any happenings and should be an observer to the whole process. One should do such *sadhana* daily. A sincere and sensitive disciple will eventually attain Samadhi. It is very important that one should

do *japa* with every breath and be an observer to all that happens.

Disciple: How can a person do *japa* while observing his breath?

Guru: When we exhale there is a subtle sound of 'Ham' and when we inhale there is a sound of 'Sa'. This mantra which is ongoing with every breath is known as 'Hamsa' mantra. A person may or may not be conscious of this fact but he is performing *japa* of this mantra. Hence this process is also called as *Ajapa-Japa*.

प्रणवाज्जायते हंसो हंसः सोऽहंपरो भवेत् ।

हकारः शम्भुरूपः स्यात् सकारः शक्तिरुच्यते ॥

The above verses are from the book *Yogeshwara-udaya* and mean that 'Hamsa' mantra is originated from *Omkar*. According to the text, *Ham* represents Shiva and *Sa* represents Shakti. Hence when the duality of inhaling and exhaling is gone i.e. when the duality of *Ham* and *Sa*, or *So* and *Ham* is gone one can hear the divine *Omkar*.

It is said that one can perceive *Omkar* from the *Anahata chakra* (i.e. heart *chakra* or cardiac plexus) and one can be in an absolute union with the *Omkarin* the *Adnya Chakra*. These experiences happen to highly accomplished yogis. Therefore till the time a disciple cannot get these experiences he should perform *japa* of the mantra as directed by his guru. One must be an observer to all his actions and can perform the *japa* anytime. This way a person's daily life itself can become a *sadhana*.

Disciple: Should a person do *dhyana* (focussed meditation) with *Japa*? How can a person do *dhyana*?

Guru: it is not necessary to remember any godly idol and meditate on it. The *japa* that you do is of the deity and thence the deity itself resides within you in the form of energy. The deity is the *atman*. One can do *japa* of any deity. May it be Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiva or Lord Vishnu, in truth they are the names of the same *atman*. We see variation in names and forms of deity because of our lack of knowledge. In reality there is only one truth that is everything is *chaitanya* and *chaitanya* is everything.

A text from *shruti* says “ “**ध्यानं निर्विषयं मनः**” ”This means that true mediation means not to think of anything which in other words is to clear the mind of everything.

Sunlight when refracted through a magnifying glass can concentrate heat on one point and can ignite a fire. Similarly, a thought free mind can achieve absolute focus and can concentrate divine knowledge. Sunlight normally is scattered and falls on all tress, leaves and grass but it does not burn anything. However, when the same sunlight passes through a magnifying glass it is concentrated and has the power to burn. Similarly, the focus of the mind is always scattered in worldly desires and the innate power of the *atman* is never expressed. (Normally the mind is so pre-occupied and attached to mundane things that the real form of *atman* is concealed by *maya*). By *sadhana* as suggested by the guru mind becomes focused, the ego dissolves and the possessive nature of mind wanes away. Once the individualistic ego dissolves one can realize the true nature of the almighty.

Doing *japa* should not be confounded to *sadhana* alone. One must do *japa* even during performing daily activities. One should be able to perform *japa* in his mind simultaneously with all other activities. When such devotion grips the mind a person attains an unshakable focus.

सुमिरन में मन लाइये, जैसे कीट भिरंग ।

कबीरा बिसरे आपको, हो जावे तेहि रंग ॥

The above verses are written by saint Kabir and speak of losing oneself in the devotion to the almighty. He says only when a person loses his individuality in devotion to god can he be united with the divine in the complete sense.

Disciple: It is commonly said that meditating on various *chakras* can give various results.

What *Chakra* or point of the body should a person meditate on?

Guru: One does not need to meditate on any specific point. Just observe the breath and do the *Japa* as directed by the guru.

Let the *Prana Shakti* take its course. Eventually *Prana Shakti* will stabilize at a certain point, and your mind will stabilize there by itself. Follow the course and let the *Kundalini Shakti* take complete control of your body. Surrender to the force and it will guide you on the right path. The awakened energy is like the presence of the guru in your body. Let the force lead you and you will be blessed with divine joy and peace. It is very important to understand that don't do anything forcefully in *sadhana*. 'Let it happen'. One will be astonished to see how *Shakti* progresses. Even if there are no immediate experiences do not lose faith, be patient and perform *sadhana*.

Disciple: Performing *sadhana* is a very joyous and highly enriching experience, but there are times when one feels lazy from within or the mind cannot focus on the *japa*. How can a disciple overcome such problems?

Guru: A disciple will encounter such hurdles on the path of progress but for physical convenience it would be a folly to be deviated from the path to enlightenment.

व्याधिस्त्यानसंशयप्रमादालस्या -

विरतिभ्रान्तिदर्शनालब्धभूमिकत्वा -

नवस्थितत्वादिचित्तविक्षेपास्तेन्तरायाः । (पातंजलयोगसूत्र १ : २६)

(Patanjalyogasutra 1:26)

The above lines are from *Patanjal Yogasutra* and describe nine hurdles a disciple might face on the path of *Yogasadhana*.

(1) Disease (2) doubt (3) laziness (4) day dreaming (5) rigidity of body (6) unstable mind (7) lack of focus (8) illusion (*bhranti darshan*)(9) not attaining stable Samadhi.

Human body is made from mundane elements and compounds. It is facilitated by the nutrition it derives from consumed (solid and liquid) foods. This many times results in malfunctioning of interactions within these elements causing imbalance in working of senses (*Indriyasamuha*). This impediment is also known as *Vyadhi*. The torpors nature of mind is known as *styana*. Uncertainty

about something is doubt and is known as *Samshaya*. The inability to attain Samadhi is known as *Pramada*. The lethargic and lazy nature of mind and body is known as *alasa*. To confuse one thing for the other is known as *bhrantidarshana*. The incapacity to find peace and a mental plane for attaining Samadhi is known as *alabdha-bhumikatva*. One cannot say that Samadhi is achieved till he cannot stabilize his consciousness in that state.

When a person commences *Yogasadhana* he might have symptoms like cough, sinusitis and might also have a seminal discharge. But one should not be afraid of such symptoms; this is just a cleansing mechanism of the body. This mechanism eliminates all the toxins and purifies the body. If a person has any prolonged illnesses this might be cured by *Yogasadhana*. Such small hurdles will be eminent in the initial phase of *sadhana* but one should not deviate from the path or stop doing *sadhana*. If one is facing many obstacles he should concentrate on his stomach (naval; belly button) and should do meditation (*dhyana*). He should chant the mantra given by his guru.

प्रणवं प्रजपेत् दीर्घं विघ्नानां नाशहेतवे ।

(Shivasamhita)

The above sentence means that to remove the obstacles during meditation one should do Japa of *Pranava mantra*. A person who cannot attain focus using *Pranava mantra* should practise using the mantra that he likes. This way a person can attain focus relatively easily. Once a person gains focus he must perform *sadhana* as directed by his guru.

Disciple: Many people gain experiences like kriyas, asana, mudras, *pranayama*, swaying of body, unconsciousness etc. when their *Kundalini Shakti* is initiated, whereas for others such experiences happen only after a few days of rigorous meditation. Why is this so?

Guru: Every person has a different past hence has different *Karmas* and *Karmic* bonds. This is what makes every individual unique. *Karmic* bondages transcend through lives. Therefore, a

guru bestows me and the same divine grace over his disciples but every student has a different reception of it. This can be better illustrated by the examples of trees in a forest. Sunlight is the same for all trees in a forest but different trees bloom and bear fruits at different times of the year. Similarly every person gains spiritual experiences by his own capacity.

One can understand mind to be like water and guru's grace as the sunlight. When sunlight reaches a water front it can reach great depths if the water is calm, clear and clean. Similarly, a student having a calm, clear, stable mind and conscience will have great experiences when guru bestows his divine grace. It is this understanding that decides the receptivity of a student. Every person looks different and has different capabilities which are so because of his past life karmas. This is what makes everyone unique or else everyone would have been the same. Hence the spiritual journey of every student is different. On the whole every student follows one of the three paths. The paths are classified according to the speed of their progress which is (1) the path of the ant (2) the path of the monkey (3) the path of the bird.

A beginner follows a slow and steady path like an ant. An ant starts at the root of the tree and slowly makes its way up the stem and reaches its desired fruit at the top of the tree. Similarly a new beginner does not get any experiences in his initial phase of the *sadhana* but by sincere faith and practice he gains experiences and performs *kriyas*, *pranayama* and *mudras* and eventually attains *Samadhi*.

The second path is known as the path of the monkey. This is an analogy used for a disciple moderately advanced on his spiritual path which means this is a person who has performed *Yogasadhana* in his previous lives. A monkey jumps from one branch to the other and reaches the top of the tree to get the fruit. Similarly such a student is faster to attain his goal from his experience in *sadhana* from his previous lives. When such a student receives initiation from his guru he experiences *kriyas* and *mudras* straightaway and

progresses on his path to enlightenment.

The third path is known as the path of the bird. This analogy is used for a very fast progressing student. Just the way a bird can fly and immediately grabs the desired fruit, a student with his past life experiences can gain *Samadhi* soon after his initiation.

*Sadhana* and the study of yoga is a journey that transcends through lives. One gains experiences depending upon where he is on his journey. For example, if three people leave from Calcutta to Varanasi and all of them halt in three different villages for a night stay they will not start the journey from the same place the next day. Similarly every student resumes his present journey where he had left it.

Disciple: It is seen many times that initially a person gains many experiences and has speedy progress, but as time passes his experiences reduce and he loses enthusiasm. What is the reason for this?

Guru: Every disciple is different and progress of every student depends on what life he is in. There is no compulsion that everyone will and must attain enlightenment in one life. If one does not perform *sadhan* he will be far from the goal. The more committed a disciple is, the faster will he attain *Samadhi* and experience eternal bliss. If a student is in his final life he will gain *siddhi* and enlightenment, but how enthusiastically does he will for spiritual enlightenment is his own will.



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## Chapter -7

Disciple: Kundalini initiation is such a rare opportunity. If it was so easily available there is a scope to doubt that is this real initiation or is it some sort of hypnotism?

Guru: There is a nice tale of wisdom in *Yogawasishtha* that could answer your doubt. There was once a man who wanted to have a magical crystal stone known as *chintamani*. He started performing penance to please the almighty. After doing penance for a few days the Lord granted him the heavenly stone. To this the man thought this is just too good to be true. He thought and intellectualized the reality to conclude that the stone he had received was not the real *chintamani* as he had got it so easily. So he put aside the stone and started performing more penance and the stone disappeared going back to God.

After a few days some children playing close by, threw a piece of glass close to the person and he thought he had received the heavenly stone he desired. So from this we should understand that we must check what we have received. This can only be done by testing the truth of what we have received. So in this case the person had to check if he had really received the precious stone he desired or is it a piece of glass?

So the moral of the story is that just because you gained something precious without doing too much effort does not mean the precious thing is unreal. Therefore the only way one can know if the initiation is real is by his own experiences. I have also mentioned earlier that anything that is accepted as a reality should be consistent in three factors, firstly the verdict of the guru, secondly what *shastra* or science reports and finally your own first-hand experience.

If a fact is consistent in all the three mentioned dimensions only then should it be accepted to be real. A person should be

completely convinced in this fact and only then should he commence *sadhana*. If a person has faith in his *sadhana* and his guru, nothing can stop him from attaining enlightenment. Doubt is the greatest of all demons; it can rob a person of his success. One should always be free from doubt. There is a tale from Ramayana which can illustrate this point better. During the war with the demon Ahirawana, King Bibhishan asked Lord Rama and Laxmana to stay in a secure room. King Bibhishan asked Hanuman to protect the room and not to let anyone in. Ahirawana was searching for Lord Rama as he wanted to kill him and sacrifice him in hell. Ahirawana came disguised as an old man and asked Hanuman for permission to see Lord Rama. Hanuman denied and Ahirawana had to go back. Then, Ahirawana came disguised as King Dashratha i.e. Lord Rama's father and Hanuman realized that the person is an imposter as King Dashratha was in Ayodhya. Finally Ahirawana came disguised as King Bibhishan and this is where Hanuman's doubt betrayed his mind. He thought King Bibhishan is back and he let him inside. Ahirawana saw Lord Rama and Lord Laxmana were asleep and kidnapped them. Hanuman regretted his mistake and understood how much damage a small doubt would make. He had to strive really hard to get Lord Rama and Laxmana back. So tell me what was the moral of the story?

Disciple: I understand that the room is an analogy of our body; Lord Rama and Lord Laxmana are the symbols of faith and devotion. King Bibhishan is the symbol of Guru and Hanuman is the disciple. Now I realize how gravely dangerous a doubt can become. O, kind master please bless me that I would never doubt my guru.

Guru: I am glad that you realize the depth of the concept and you understand how dangerous even a small doubt can be.

Disciple: O Master, please bless me that I shall never have such a doubt in my mind.

Guru: I am glad that you have understood what I meant and have realised its seriousness.

Disciple: O master my mind was very calm and appeased at

the time of initiation<sup>64</sup>. But, now I feel anxiety and I feel very unstable, how can I gain control over my mind?

Guru: *Kundalini Shakti* resides in *MooladharaChakra*. The karmic impressions (*Sanskara*<sup>65</sup>) from past lives and present life are stored (saturated) in the *Mooladharachakra*. (When *Kundalini Shakti* is dormant it is said that she is bonded by the karmic impressions. It is said that she has three and a half coil turns and is sleeping head down like a serpent). *Kundalini Shakti* is sourced from these karmic past life impressions. Karmic impressions (*Sanskara*) are of three types viz. *satvik*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It's the pressure or the weight of these impressions that make the *Kundalini Shakti* coiled.

Once this *Shakti* is awakened she becomes straight and strives to move in an upward direction. This stirs up all the past impressions and a person can feel anxiety. One should try his level best to keep doing *sadhana* and eventually the mind settles down as one achieves clarity in thought and becomes detached from these impressions. Let me illustrate the nature of the mind by a tale of wisdom.

There was once a man who wanted to earn a lot of wealth by using *Bhoota Vidya*<sup>66</sup>. He decided to find a guru who can teach him this witchcraft. He found a guru who had the knowledge of this and told him his wish. The guru cautioned him that this was not a good idea as ghosts can be very temperamental and such crafts have ill effects of their own and can be very dangerous. The man did not listen and insisted on gaining the knowledge. The guru eventually taught him the ritual. The man was happy and he started performing *sadhana* to summon a ghost. After a few days of *sadhana* a powerful ghost was summoned. The ghost asked the man the reason for his summoning and the man told this ghost his will for being rich and wealthy. The ghost agreed to grant the man's

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64. Initiation: initiation in this context is when guru is awakening the *Kundalini Shakti* in the disciple.

65. *Sanskara*: means impressions, feelings or blocks in the mind.

66. *Bhoota Vidya*: the ritual of enslaving ghosts to work.

wish and agreed to help him become rich but it put a condition that it should always be kept busy. If it was not kept busy it would destroy everything including the man himself. The man told the ghost that he had so much work that he could keep it busy for a life time. The man initially asked the ghost to build him a beautiful house. The ghost did it quickly; the man was astonished to see the speed at which it would work. Then the man asked it to make a garden around the house. Even that was attained quickly. So eventually the man realised that he could not keep the ghost busy and was running short of ideas. He was afraid that the ghost would kill him so he ran to his Guru to protect him from the ghost. The guru told him that he had warned him about such a situation, but still agreed to help him and told him a trick. He told his disciple to build a pole in his house-garden and ask the ghost to climb up and down the pole till it was not asked to stop. The man did the same and eventually the ghost got tired of doing this and asked the man to free it from its word. The man freed the ghost from the promise and the ghost went away.

The moral of the story is that our mind is like the ghost. It constantly needs to be occupied by something. Hence while doing *sadhana* when a person tries to focus his mind it finds all possible ways to distract him. The garden and the pole are analogies of our body and the spinal cord (*Sushumna* energy meridian) respectively. One should be an observer looking at the energy going up and down this column. One should focus his mind on this. Eventually the mind gives in and leaves all the desires. Once the mind is free one will gain the divine experience of the *atman*. It is important not be too bothered about the fickle nature of the mind, else this thought in itself will make it more unstable. It is in the capacity of the student to practise, but attaining success is something that happens in time. One should keep on doing *sadhana* without expectation and eventually mind settles down.

Disciple: I shall indeed follow your advice and I do realize that mind can betray me but I sincerely try to gain control over it.

Guru: It is important even to understand the concept of *Anugraha*<sup>67</sup> or initiation. The word *Anugraha* is made from two Sanskrit words *Anu* which means 'later', and *graha* which comes from the word '*grahan*' and means accept. This means that the guru initiates the disciple for the quest of ultimate truth within. That is, this quest is powered and authenticated by guru's will which helps the student progress on a spiritual path. Hence, in totality it means the quest of the self and the final truth, which is enlightenment.

Disciple: So as I understand it, a person who does *sadhana* meticulously and follows all the rules of the lineage will be enlightened. As for a person who wants speedy progress he should do *naama japa* as much as possible and make his life itself a *sadhana*.

Guru: I bless you that you shall soon progress on *Siddhamarga* and attain enlightenment.

Disciple: There is something else that I wish to ask you, why is it that everyday *sadhana* does not happen in a consistent way? Some days mind can focus very well and quickly whereas there are days when it takes a lot of time to focus. What might be the reason for this?

Guru: One's mental and physical state changes every day and hence affects his *sadhana*. These differences and inconsistencies are felt till the time a person does not realize the nature of *atman*. One does not learn to walk in a day. Treat pleasures and pains of life without any differentiation and perform your *sadhana* daily. When a person learns to accept happiness, sadness or stress in an unreserved way he will know the nature of *atman*. Eventually when difference in all these feelings does not affect him anymore, he will know the nature of *atman*. With this in time his soul will experience peace.

Disciple: After doing *sadhana* for many days the body feels

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67. Anugraha: Sanskrit word for initiation, awakening the Kundalini Shakti. This word is commonly used in context of initiating a person in a lineage as well.

weak but there is a lot of enthusiasm, why does this happen?

Guru: Soil becomes moist and soft in the rains and becomes hard in a dry summer. Similarly body is made up of earthly materials. *Sadhana* develops a new energy in the body. It re-forges the body in the *Yogagni*<sup>68</sup>. This reform is highly essential and is a very important concept in *Hatha Yoga*. Only when a body is pure and can perform *Yogasadhana* does a person achieve spiritual powers (Hatha Siddhis).

Disciple: What is Hatha Siddhi? What kind of reforms does a body undergo with such fluctuations?

Guru:

वपुकृशत्वं वदने प्रसन्नता नादस्फुटत्वं नयने सुनिर्मले ।  
अरोगता बिन्दुजयोऽग्निदीपनं नाडीविशुद्धिर्हठयोग-  
लक्षणम् ॥७८॥

By accomplishing Hatha yoga a person's body becomes highly agile, flexible yet strong, and his face gets a charm of peace, his eyes show calmness. His face gets a glow of sanctity and calmness. His seminal discharge stops completely and he attains absolute focus. His body show signs of purification and cleansing of the nervous system and hence of the energy meridians. This happens due to the blaze of the fire within.

By the science of yoga this happens sequentially, firstly the body becomes agile and fast, then it rids itself of diseases, then his skin receives a glow and his speech becomes clear and very accurate. The person becomes very peaceful and his body emits a sweet smell. The excreta and urination of such a person reduces and his body gains a distinct aroma.

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68. Yoga-agni: The power of Yoga Practice. Also understood as power of penance or *sadhana*.

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## Chapter -8

Guru: Today you can tell me about your experiences. You can also ask any doubts or questions you have. Let me remind you that truth is only what is consistent with the verdict of the guru, the verdict of science and your own experience.

Disciple: O' master by your kind grace I had many divine experiences at the time of initiation. I felt many jerks and tremors in the body. I had a severe sensation of flow of electricity through my body. A few days later when I sat for my *sadhana* I felt as though there is a hollow pipe in my spine. I felt as though *Prana Shakti* is rising through this hollow pipe, I could feel a sensation of immense joy and peace when this happened. I just felt pure peace and could not even feel the breath in my nose.

Guru: Such an experience clearly suggests that you have many good deeds in your past. Such an experience is a very high quality experience and suggests that you have been on the path of Yoga from previous lives. The hollow 'pipe-like' sensation is the *Sushumna* energy meridian. The sensation of rising energy is the *Kundalini Shakti* or *Prana Shakti*. This energy ascension that powers the life cannot be realised by the nostrils hence you could not feel the breath in your nose. This is the energy that powers life and hence becomes independent of breathing and hence breath cannot be felt for some time.

Disciple: Once when I sat for *sadhana* I felt my body swaying. I sang and danced in divine ecstasy.

Guru: A similar instance is noted about a devotee named Ramprasad. He even composed a beautiful song in this divine trance.

The song goes as follows:

डोले डोले रे आनंदमयी करालवदनी ।

अमारा हृत्कमलमंचे डोले दिवसरजनी ॥

इडा पिंगला नामा सुषुम्ना मनोरमा ।  
 तारमध्ये नाचे शामा ब्रह्मसनातनी ॥  
 अबिर कुंकुम पाय किंवा शोभा हये छे ताय ।  
 कामादि मोहयाय होरिले अमनी ॥  
 जे देखे छे मायेर दील शे पेये छे मायेर कोल ।  
 द्विज रामप्रसादेर बोल दोल मा भवानी ॥

Disciple: sometimes during *sadhana* there was a tickling sensation around the spinal cord. It felt as though ants were crawling through my spinal cord. There was an immense urge to scratch. What is this sensation?

Guru: *Kundalini Shakti* ascends through the *Sushumna* energy meridian which exactly corresponds to the location of the spinal column. This ascension of Shakti is known as *Piplikagati* which means ascension like an ant. *Kundalini Shakti* ascends at four speeds i.e. like an ant, frog, snake and bird. At proper time you shall sequentially go through all the phases.

Disciple: *Naam* or the power of word and thought is infinite. I have realized that the mantra, the cosmos and the conscious all become one to form the almighty. Please bless me with your kind words that I shall always have my faith and devotion to your holy feet.

Guru: In all forms of worship (rituals, penance) *japa* is understood to be the greatest one. *Yadnya* (ritual of fire ceremony) is a traditional form of worship but even that relies on sacrifices. Killing any animal or plant has a sin attached to it; hence this sort of ritualism is taken to be *Pashvachar* in tantric *shastra*. But doing *Japa* as directed in yoga does not harm anyone. It is the worship of the formless in the real sense. In fact it is the love of the formless with nothing but devotion and surrender to the almighty. Without the presence of a guru all this cannot be attained.

### Significance of a Guru:

The real need of a guru is to enhance a student's *Sadhana*.

The guru empowers a *japa* and the student follows it. One might argue that reading a mantra is easily possible from a book then what is the necessity of a guru? Many people also believe that by studying the constellation systems one can initiate a mantra, but realistically guru is an enlightened being who has gained absolute union with the *chaitanya* (absolute pure energy) and hence with the mantra. Therefore only guru has the complete authority to initiate *Kundalini Shakti* i.e. *Mantra Shakti*.

We all have *Prana Shakti* within us. The entire manifested world has *Prana Shakti* including the syllables of a mantra but only guru has the power to invoke the energy within them. *Vaishnavas* call this *Radha-Raanikripa*<sup>69</sup>. Without initiation or divine intervention *Prana Shakti* cannot be invoked. When a student sits for meditation (*dhyana* or *japa*) he gets many divine experiences due to this energy, hence it is also called as *mantra chaitanya*.

The following tale is from a book known as *Chaitanya Charitra* which is the autobiography of *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*. Shree Prakashananda Saraswati asked *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, why does he sing devotional songs and dance with students? *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* was a *Sanyasi* and according to the rules of *Sanyasashramaa* *Sanyasi* must devote most of his time in meditation and understanding the Vedanta. Shree Prakashanada said such devotional practices are a way of the students and non-realized beings. *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* was a realized being and was as good as incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself.

To this, *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* answered that my guru thought I was an idiot. My guru said to me "O stupid man you don't have the right to study Vedanta. You must only do *Japa* of Lord Krishna". In this Kali Yug *Naam Japa* is the optimal way of worship. So I by-hearted the mantra which is as follows

हरेर्नाम हरेर्नाम हरेर्नामैव केवलम् ।

कलौ नास्त्येव नास्त्येव नास्त्येव गतिरन्यथा ॥

69. Kripa: Sanskrit word for grace.

I thought of its meaning and realised that the gist of all life and consciousness is Lord Vishnu. In this Kali Yug there is no one but Lord Vishnu who can take us towards enlightenment. Realizing this I entered a deep trance and lost myself in it. I sang, danced, cried swayed and rejoiced in divine ecstasy. I could feel shrills in my body and I felt the divine presence all around me.

Even Shree Vijaykrishna Goswami had such an experience with his guru *Brahmananda* Paramahansa at the city of Gaya. Even Shree Ramakrishna Paramahansa would call upon goddess Kaali like a little child and would indulge in divine Samadhi.

Disciple: Gurudev, I have had similar experiences in *sadhana*. I have danced in a divine trance. Laughing and crying simultaneously is something even I have experienced in *sadhana*. Sometimes my body would sweat. I had a feeling that such great power resides in all these great people and now even a sinner like me is given an opportunity to progress towards enlightenment.

Guru: All such experiences are signs of awakened energy. All these happenings occur to the disciple off their own accord during his *sadhana*. This form of *sadhana* is not new and has been followed for many centuries and has been the heritage of guru-shishya *parampara*<sup>70</sup> (tradition). The student of Chaitanyaprabhu Shree Roopa Goswami has written a book known as *Bhaktirasamruta*. The book details about such symptoms of awakening. It says that such experiences are emotional discharges of suppressed feelings. The book reports that a person might sing, dance, scream loudly, laugh, cry or might roll and wriggle on the floor. There might also be other symptoms like high amount of salivation, bending of body, hiccups, swaying, feeling cold, stamping of limbs and yawning. Some other symptoms include sweating, shrills, jerks, tremors, feeling sleepy and shedding tears, and are known as *bhavavikruti*<sup>71</sup>. There are other symptoms

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70. Parampara: tradition.

71. Satvik bhava vikruti: Symptoms of divine joy or bliss.

wherein the body might become erect as a pole and might become heavy. All these are symptoms of emotional discharges and are known as *Satvik bhava vikruti* and are totally eight in number.

Disciple: Why do these symptoms like sweating, shedding tears etc surface due to *Naama Japa*?

Guru: Shree Roopagoswami explains the reason for such happenings in the following verses.

चत्वारि क्षयभूतानि प्राणो जात्ववलम्बते ।  
कदाचित् स्वप्रभावेन देहे चरति सर्वतः ॥  
स्तम्भभूमिस्थितः प्राणस्तनोत्यश्रुं जलाश्रयः ।  
तेजस्थः स्वेदवैवर्ण्यं प्रलयं वियदाश्रितः ॥  
स्वस्थ एव क्रमान्मदः मध्यतीव्र त्वभेदभाक् ।  
रोमांचकंपवैवर्ण्याण्यत्र त्रीणि तनोत्यसौ ॥

*Prana* in the body is dependent on the four elements in the body i.e. earth, water, and light or space. It circulates throughout the body due to its dependence on one of the elements. When *Prana* is attached to the earth element, it mobilizes the water element and a person gets tears. When *Prana* is attached to the fire element, it dehydrates the body by sweat. Attaching to sky or space element it causes a person to have deep sleep, drowsiness or unconsciousness. When *Prana* stabilizes in the form of air element it causes static shrills. These shrills can be mild, mediocre or intense.

Every *chakra* in the human body represents an element. For example *Mooladharachakra* represents earth element, *Svadhishthana chakra* represents water element, *Manipura Chakra* represents fire (teja or light), *Anahata Chakra* represents air (circulation) and *Vishuddha Chakra* regulates space or sky element. Hence when *Prana* stabilizes in various *chakras* it shows symptoms related to that *chakra*.

Therefore meditation done by this technique also fulfils the motive of meditation done purposefully for any specific effect.

Linga Purana speaks of *Pranayama* and reports it in detail. According to this book *Pranayama* happens in three ways (1) *Adham* (2) *Madhyam* (3) *Uttam*. The following verses describe stages of *Pranayama*.

नीचो द्वादशमात्रस्तु उद्गातो द्वादश स्मृतः ।  
 मध्यमा तद्विरुद्धाऽतश्चतुर्विंशतिमात्रकः ॥  
 मुख्यस्तु यस्त्रिरुद्गातः षट्त्रिंशन्मात्र उच्यते ।  
 प्रस्वेदकंपनोत्थानजनकश्च यथाक्रमम् ॥  
 आनंदोद्भवयोगो हि निद्राघूर्णिस्तथैव च ।  
 रोमांचध्वनिसंविज्ञस्वांगमोटनकम्पनम् ॥  
 भ्रमणं स्वेदजं न्यासं संवित् मूर्च्छा भवेद्यदा ।  
 तदोत्तमोत्तमः प्रोक्तः प्राणायामः सुशोभनः ॥

Low (*neecha*), medium (*madhyam*) and high (*uttam*) are three stages in *Pranayama*. Low (*neecha*) *pranayama* consists of twelve breaths in one set. Medium (*madhyam*) *pranayama* consists of twenty-four breaths in one periodic interval and high (*uttam*) *pranayama* consists of thirty six breaths in one periodic set. A person sequentially experiences sweat, tremors and rising up (standing up) as the *pranayama* progresses from *neecha* to *uttam*. A *pranayama* that is higher than *uttampranayama* is a kind of transcendental *pranayama*. It is in this state that the yogi's consciousness transcends to higher states and the yogi experiences divine bliss. In this state the yogi can hear divine sounds, also see colours and can experience deep sleep (*yoga nidra*) or experience divine ecstasy.

Such a *pranayama* might happen naturally or one might practise it intentionally. In either of the ways eventually these symptoms will be seen. Therefore when the same result can be acquired by a natural process why follow an enforced route?

In reality when *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened all the above symptoms surface as *Kundalini Shakti* is the root of all energy.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika reports that a disciple might follow any path but he will attain divine experiences only when the *Kundalini Shakti* is awakened, else without this awakening the person will always be distanced from *siddhis*<sup>72</sup>.

An enlightened Guru can initiate *Kundalini Shakti* at will then what is the point of forcibly doing all the exercises individually? Thence a disciple who has been graced by the guru need not follow such enforced measures to attain enlightenment.

By good deeds in your past life you have been graced by a guru and your *Kundalini Shakti* has been awakened. Practise *yogasadhana* and you shall enjoy the divine pleasures and attain enlightenment. *Kularnava Tantra* describes a conversation between Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Shiva says to Ma Parvati that finding a Guru who can initiate *Kundalini Shakti* is very rare. Once the *Kundalini Shakti* is initiated it will naturally lead a person to progress on the path of yoga, there is no need to follow a path which enforces various practices of *Yogasadhana*. Merely by devotion to the guru and chanting the mantra given by him can lead a person to enlightenment. Finding such a guru is not the destiny of a common man. One needs to strive really hard to find such a person.

People get a complex about Yoga just by a superficial understanding. Path of Siddha yoga leads a person safely and speedily to enlightenment. In this path the guru is within the person. All the phases such as *pranayama*, *mudra* and *asana* happen automatically and the person merely needs to be an observer to all that he is experiencing. Devotion and faith is the foundation of this path. From faith comes devotion. Devotion and perseverance is the key to speedy progress on the path of yoga. And from Yoga comes realization or enlightenment. With enlightenment one knows the nature of atman and this is the ultimate goal of every being.

Disciple: O master your grace has given me many yogic

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72. Siddhis: in this context means higher forms of understanding and proximity to the absolute truth.

experiences like *mudra*, *asana* and *pranayama*. Can you please explain to me what they mean and what is their significance?

Guru: It is really great that you have such divine experiences, please describe the experience and I shall tell you what it means.

Disciple: Often during *sadhana* I had the urge of placing my right leg over my left leg and such that the right leg was placed over the left thigh and left leg was placed over the right thigh. I would then cross my hands behind the back and holding the toes of the legs on either side. What is this posture?

Guru: To have cross legs over the thighs is known as *mukta padmasana*, and then to lock your hand holding the toes the way you have described is known as *baddha padmasana*. By practising *padmasana* body becomes flexible and agile.

Disciple: Sometimes I would place my left heel below the testicular sack exactly at the base of the crotch. I would place my right leg such that it clasped the testicular sack in the ankles locking my legs, my head would bend and my chin would touch the chest and my eyes would be closed concentrating on the centre of the eyebrows and in my mind I would perform the *japa*.

Guru: This posture is known as *Siddhasana*. This *asana* is considered to be the best of all *asana*. Many sages have meditated in this *asana* and attained enlightenment. This *asana* can help achieve *Moolabandha*, *Uddiyanabandha* and *Jalandharbandha*. This *asana* can also help a yogi attain *Unmanavastha* i.e. absolute focus.

Disciple: At times I would just sit cross legged such that my feet would be under my thighs and I would sit in an erect posture doing *Japa*.

Guru: This *asana* is also known as *Swastikasana* or *Sukhasana*. This posture relaxes the body and helps easy air circulation.

Disciple: At times I would sit putting my legs ahead my body. I would then hold my toes and touch my head to the knees and perform *japa*.

Guru: This posture is known as *Pashchimottanasana* or

*Ugrasana*. This increases the metabolic activity in the stomach. A person can easily lose weight doing this *asana*. This posture also increases air circulation in the body and stretching releases stress from the body as this helps *Pranashakti* to enter the *Sushumna* energy meridian from the anterior region of the body (understood as the west of the body i.e. *pashchima*) this posture is known as *Pashchimottanasana*.

Disciple: Once I sat in a position where I put my one leg over the other such that my feet were nearly behind the body and my thighs crossed over one another.

Guru: This posture is known as *Veerasana*. This posture helps resolve gastric problems as well as resolves problems with gonads.

Disciple: Once during meditation I found myself in a posture where I was lying face forward on the floor. Then my body rose up from the ground such that it was balanced by my hands. The body was only raised till the belly like a snake.

Guru: This *asana* is known as *Bhujanagasana*. This posture helps awaken *Kundalini Shakti* quickly. This also increases gastric secretions and resolves digestive problems.

Disciple: At times I would just lie down like a dead body and do *japa*. This was highly relaxing.

Guru: This *asana* is known as *Shavasana*. This rids a person from all sorts of stresses. A person's body might feel some amount of stress by performing yogic postures; even such stresses are eliminated by *Shavasana*.

Disciple: At times due to the pressure from my heels my uterus and scrotal sac would contract. I felt as though there was a contractive stretch from within my stomach (*apana vayu*). What is this sensation?

Guru: This is a kind of *Mudra* and is known as *Moolabandha Mudra*. By this *mudra* a *sadhak* can completely control the air circulation (circulation of *Prana Shakti*) in the body. This *mudra* causes the union of *Prana Vayu* and *Apana Vayu* and by this one can attain absolute focus of mind. While doing this a person might

do *Padmasana* and might hop like a frog.

Disciple: At times I would completely exhale and my stomach would be empty. Then I felt a contracting sensation behind my naval. My stomach would retract and I felt as though there was an air gap in my stomach and I felt a pull of the air below the naval and felt as though the air is being pulled upwards.

Guru: This Mudra is known as the *Uddiyana Mudra*. This mudra symbolizes the conflict of life and death. This mudra is highly instrumental in cleansing the nervous system and hence the energy meridians. This improves oxygenation in the body and also helps calm the mind.

Disciple: At times I would retract my throat and place my chin over my chest and perform *japa*.

Guru: This mudra is known as *Jalandhar Mudra*. For smooth functioning of the body there are number of essential fluids that flow from the brain to the stomach i.e. in Yogic terms from Lunar plexus to the Solar plexus. This mudra brings about a cut off of the flow of these fluids. This mudra can also help a person gain an unconscious state.

Disciple: Sometimes during *Sadhana* I would fold one leg and place the heel below the scrotal sac. I would stretch the other leg ahead and hold the toes of the stretched leg with my hands and place my head on the knee and do *japa*. The same would happen with the other leg.

Guru: This mudra is known as the *Maha Mudra*. It is said that this mudra teases or instigates the *Kundalini Shakti* towards the *Sushumna* energy meridian. The stretching causes circulation of *Prana Shakti* and improves electrical signalling in the wholebody. This in turn causes redirection of all electrical impulses towards the brain. This mudra also improves a person's control over his senses and reduces seminal discharge. This mudra is known to delay age offsetting of the body. Practising this Mudra improves skin quality and reduces white hair. This mudra also resolves digestive and gastric disorders.

Disciple: Once I performed the *Maha Mudra* and then folded in my stretched leg and inhaled. This way my stomach was full of air and then I performed the *Jalandhar Mudra* and then performed a *Kumbhak* and started doing *Japa*. Then slowly as my mind got stabilised in *Japa* I started breathing normally.

Guru: This mudra is known as *Mahabandha mudra*. Practising this mudra improves food assimilation and also improves calcification of bones.

Disciple: After this mudra I did the *Mahabandha mudra* and exhaled completely. Then without inhaling I could do the *Uddiyana Bandha* and could accomplish a *BahihKumbhak*<sup>73</sup>.

This time I also felt like stretching the muscles on my chest.

Guru: This is known as *Mahabandha*. Due to this *bandha* *Prana* completely moves from the *Ida* (lunar energy meridian) and *Pingala* (Solar energy meridian) and enters the *Sushumna* energy meridian.

Disciple: Sometimes I would lie down on the ground and place my head on my palms. I would then raise my lower body from the waist and perform a *Kumbhak*.

Guru: This posture is known as *Viparitarani Mudra*. This increases the metabolic activity in the stomach and is also known to reduce wrinkles on the face. There are many bodily fluids that run from the head to the stomach which are responsible for the aging of the body. This *asana* can be instrumental in delaying aging.

Disciple: At times I would do the *viparitarani mudra* and then balance my body and head on my hands.

Guru: This is known as *Vajra Mudra*. This mudra can help in developing control over seminal discharge and hence is very important in attaining focus.

Disciple: At times during *Sadhana* I would inhale through my mouth. I would then raise my tongue and inhale again. Then after some time I would make my lips circular and make mouth like a crow's beak and inhale in a way that all the inhaled air would pass over my tongue.

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73. Bahaya Kumbhak: Locking air outside the body.

Guru: The first action is known as *Bhujangini*. This is important for the water balance in the body and is also like a disinfectant for the oesophageal track. The second action is known as *Nabhomudra*. Even this action helps in cleansing the trachea. The last action is known as *Kaaki Mudra* or *Sheetali Mudra*. This Mudra is highly useful against blood diseases and cleanses blood of any infection.

Disciple: Sometimes during meditation I have experienced severe headache, my eyes would close and I had a feeling as though they were being pulled to the centre of my forehead between the eye brows. But eventually I felt a highly relaxed feeling.

Guru: This mudra is known as *Shambhavi Mudra* and is an important step towards attaining an absolute focus of mind. This mudra leads a disciple towards understanding the nature of *chaitanya* and hence to understanding the *atman*.

Disciple: Sometimes during doing *japa* I would place my hands on my face such that my thumbs would close the ears, my index finger closed the eyes, middle fingers closed the nostrils and ring finger and little finger closed my lips. What is this mudra?

Guru: Saints and sages call this as Yoga Mudra. It is said that one can hear the ever-pervading cosmic sound (*anahata naad*) by practising this mudra. This is one of the very important bench marks on the way to self-realisation. Eventually after this state one is close to knowing the nature of the atman. Once a person realizes the nature of the atman all his sins are burnt off and he is enlightened.

Disciple: O kind master please bless me that I would always do my *sadhana* and would not go astray from my path.

Guru: I have opened the divine gates in your body, the more *sadhana* you do the more enriched you shall be. If you stay focussed on your *sadhana* you shall definitely attain enlightenment. Never give up *Naam sadhana*. Imagine that you are in a boat and rowing through the sea of *maya*. The meticulous rowing is the *naam japa*. On your journey you will see many wonderful things but look at them and move on, do not get indulged in them. Don't stop rowing,

remember your guru is always with you and have faith in him.

Disciple: There are a few more *asanas* and *mudras* that I have experienced, please do tell me what they are and what is their significance.

1. Sometimes I would be in *Mukta Padamasana* and would fall back on my back or I would bend face forward and perform my *japa*.
2. At times I would lie on my belly and then hold my toes with my hands and would raise my head.
3. Sometimes I would sit in a leg spread position and would place my chin on my chest and would perform my *japa*. Or on other times I would just lie on either of the sides and would perform *japa*.
4. I would also lie down and hold the toes of my feet and would do *japa*. Many such kind of postures would happen when I was performing *Japa*.

Guru: There are eighty four lakh species and all of them resemble some sort of posture which has a corresponding *asana*. All of them have some significance and importance. Whatever happens in the natural accord of things is important and let it happen. As far as the happening is peaceful, it is necessary and nature is getting it done through your body. All *kriyas* and *asanas* make your body strong, flexible and agile.

*Kundalini Shakti* might be awakened by three means firstly by performing *yogasana* and *pranayama*, Secondly by grace of guru and lastly by penance and devotion through lifetimes. For people who do not gain an initiation by the grace of guru or by dedication (*Bhakti*) needs to follow the path of Hatha Yoga. A person who gains an initiation by meticulously following the rules and practising *Yogasana* is known as '*Sadhana-siddha-sadhak*'. A person who gains initiation by the grace of guru is known as '*krupa-siddha-sadhak*' and a person who gains an initiation by his devotion through lives to the supreme is known as '*daiva-siddha-sadhak*'.



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## Chapter -9

Disciple: In my *sadhana* I have observed various kinds of breathing patterns, taking place. Can you please tell me why do they occur ?

Guru: These breathing patterns are known as *Pranayama*. *Pranayama* is of three types *Poorak*, *Rechak* and *Kumbhak*. These various breathing patterns facilitate stabilisation of *Prana* and hence of the mind. Stabilisation of mind in turn causes stabilisation in breathing. *Kumbhak* stabilizes *Prana* and helps in detoxification of the nervous system. Benefits of *pranayama* are on physical as well as mental level. Cleansing of the nervous system facilitates optimal oxygen circulation to the brain and entire body which causes mind to be stable. Once the mind is stable, excitement and anxiety reduces and one can think and focus clearly.

Once established in *Pranayama* Yogi's logical intellect (*vivekadnyana*) that is the ability to differentiate between real and unreal sharpens. Just like an illusion (*Maya*) hides reality, the veil of material objectivity hides the true nature of energy. Hence by gaining focus a person can see through this veil. Only when focus is achieved can life be enlightened with the light of *atman*. *Pranayama* reduces this covering of *maya* and one can perceive the light of the life force within. There is no greater penance or *sadhana* than *pranayama*.

Disciple: While performing *sadhana* there is a lot of physical exertion which causes perspiration. Should one wipe off such sweat?

Guru: The sweat caused because of *sadhana* should be rubbed off back into the skin. This makes the body strong and agile.

Disciple: Till today I was of the opinion that one needs to practise *pranayama* by closing or blocking the nostrils manually,

but it seems that there is no such need. *Pranayama* can occur without any manual effort. This will certainly ease the breathing process and will avoid suffocation or breathless sensation.

Guru: I have told you in the beginning that once *Kundalini Shakti* initiates there is no need of doing anything, all the Yogic practices will take place by themselves. (All one needs to do is to be an observer to all the events). Only a person who is not destined to find a guru needs to forcibly do *pranayama* by closing his nostrils manually. Please describe to me how your *pranayama* takes place and I shall tell you its significance.

Disciple: Sometimes I perform *Kaaki Mudra* and inhale through my mouth and then I perform a *Kumbhak* and would exhale through the nose.

Guru: This is known as *Sheetali Kumbhak* and is very effective against cough and acidity.

Disciple: Sometimes I would breathe very heavily and my breath would sound like the wind bellows of a black smith.

Guru: This is known as *Bhasrakumbhak*. This causes aeration in all cells. It also improves digestion and assimilation of food. This also improves immunity and disease-combating-mechanism of the body. Hatha-yoga Pradipika mentions that *Kumbhak* is one of the most important stepping stones of invoking the *Kundalini Shakti*. There are many toxins around the *Brahmanadi*<sup>74</sup> which is the beginning of the *Sushumna nadi*. Thence practising *Bhasrakumbhak* removes all the toxins around this region and *Kundalini Shakti* can enter the *Sushumna* energy meridian easily. *Bramha*, *Vishnu* and *Rudragranthi*<sup>75</sup> are energy centres in *Sushumna* energy meridian. *Bhasrakumbhak* aids the *Kundalini Shakti* to pierce through all the energy centres.

Disciple: At times, I would inhale from my mouth but making a slit in the lips and dragging the air through the spaces close to

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74. *Brahmanaadi*: Energy meridian (pathway) inside the *Sushumna* energy meridian which conducts the *Kundalini Shakti* towards the *Sahasrara*.

75. *Granthi*: is an energy center; commonly having a dense network of nerves and hence energy meridians.

the tongue. There was a distinct sound 'seet' while doing so and I would exhale through the nose.

Guru: This *Kumbhak* is known as the *Seetkaari Kumbhak* and is known to bring about reduction in laziness and thirst in the body. This *Kumbhak* also improves skin quality.

Disciple: During *japa* I would suddenly start breathing very fast and my breath made a loud noise. I felt highly relaxed by this.

Guru: This *Kumbhak* is known as *Bhramari Kumbhak*.

Disciple: At times my eyes would be completely closed and my breathing rate would increase. The breath also had a certain rhythm. The drag of inhalation would make a certain noise which would start from the nasal cavity and then would come from the throat. Then slowly the speed of breath would reduce.

Guru: This *Kumbhak* is known as *Ujjayi Kumbhak*. This *Kumbhak* clears the oesophageal tract. This also increases the energy production in the body as the blood is supplied with high amounts of oxygen. This *pranayama* is highly useful against stomach disorders like diarrhoea.

Disciple: At times I would inhale through my mouth or nose and perform a *Kumbhak*, but while exhaling I would slowly release the breath with my nose. At such time I felt my eyes have stabilised in the centre between the eyebrows and I felt surges of immense happiness and joy.

Guru: This *Kumbhak* is known as *Moorcha Kumbhak*.

Disciple: At times I would exhale all the air from my body and respiration would be completely stopped.

Guru: This is known as *Bahya*<sup>76</sup> *Kumbhak*. Energy can rise sequentially piercing all the *chakras* by practising *BahyaKumbhak*. By practising *BahyaKumbhak* energy rises sequentially from *Mooladhara* to *Sahasrarachakra*.

Disciple: At times during *sadhana* (while doing *japa*) I felt immense stability, there were no kriyas, mudras or *pranayama*. I just felt pure peace which is beyond any description.

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76. Bahayya: Sanskrit word for outside or external.

Guru: *Kumbhak* which happens during exhaling i.e. while *Rechak Kumbhak* is in process is known as *Keval Kumbhak*. This is said to be the best in all known types of *Kumbhak*. With the grace of the Guru, the *Pranavayu* enters Sushumna energy meridian and *Keval kumbhak* takes place repeatedly. *Yadnyavalkya samhita* reports this to be the most important *Kumbhak*. Once *Keval kumbhak* is established there is nothing impossible that cannot be achieved. By *sadhana* and practise this *Kumbhak* is retained over long periods of time. The *pranavayu* leaves *Ida* and *Pingala* energy meridians and enters the Sushumna energy meridian. By this all the senses (*indriyas*) are diffused and the *Prana* stabilizes in the highest abode of energy and leads the consciousness to attain *Samadhi*. Therefore *Keval Kumbhak* is an important mile stone in attaining *Samadhi*.

Disciple: Please allow me to share some more experiences from my *sadhana*. Sometimes I would hear sounds of temple bells, also sometimes whispers or some specific words.

Guru: Such sounds are known as *anahata naada* as they are heard and created without any material friction. The exact meaning of *anahata naad* is frictionless sound.

These sounds are known to prevail in ten forms which are described in the verses below:

चिणीति प्रथमः । चिंचिणीति द्वितीयः ।  
घंटानादः तृतीयः । शंखनादश्चतुर्थः ।  
पंचमस्तंभीनादः । षष्ठः तालनादः ।  
सप्तमो वेणूनादः । अष्टमो मृदंगनादः ।  
नवमो भेरीनादः । दशमो मेघनादः ।

*Yogashikhopanishada* reports that there is no energy greater than sound. Some people attain *Samadhi* purely by listening to the divine sounds.

Disciple: At times during *sadhana*, I saw the Sun, moon and many astral constellations. Sometimes I could see pure energy

charge, crystals, gems and at times just clouds and fog.

Guru: Just the way there is a world outside us (space i.e. *Akash*) there is space within us. When the mind turns inwards, one sees the Sun, moon and the astral constellations within himself. Chandogya Upanishad reports that heavens and celestial planes are located in between the inner and the outer space. I must however warn you about this. Don't get entwined in these realities as they are not the final goal. Enlightenment, *Mukti* or liberation is the final goal and one should keep on doing *sadhana* till he attains it. To know the nature of atman is the final and the only objective.

To attain *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and to dissolve individual consciousness is what every yogi should aim for. There are four hurdles while attaining this aim and they are *Laya*, *Vikshepa*, *Kashaya*, *Rasavada*.

Disciple: Master, what is the meaning of *Laya*, *Vikshepa*, *Kashaya*, *Rasavada*? What can one do to overcome these obstacles?

Guru: Now carefully understand the nature of these obstacles and the remedies over them.

*Layanamak Vighna*: While attaining Samadhi if the mind falls asleep one can lose consciousness. Such an obstacle is known as *Layanamak Vighna* and easy solution to this is to stand up for some time and do *japa*.

*Vikshepanamak Vighna*: While doing *sadhana* if your mind does not turn inward and does not intend to study the nature of *atman*, instead gets attached to something mundane, then such a happening is known as *Vikshepanamak Vighna*. At such times one must sternly redirect focus towards *sadhana* and concentrate on the mantra.

*Kashayanamak Vighna*: Diversion of mind from *sadhana* towards emotions and feelings is known as *Kashayanamak Vighna*. At such times one should stop *sadhana* and chant some mantras or stotras.

*Rasavadadi Vighna*: During *sadhana* a person might achieve

good focus. This causes experience of immense joy and peace. This joy itself can distract a person at times. At such times one must tell himself that the joy of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* is far greater than this and hence more concentrated *sadhana* towards it is essential.

A person who attains such an eternal joy and peace naturally thinks happiness coming from heavens, earth or wealth or from spiritual powers is not delightful. He only wants to stay immersed in the divine ecstasy.

Disciple: Once during *sadhana* I saw myself, as though I am looking at the mirror. I opened my eyes and closed them again and then the image was gone.

Guru: This is known as *Svapratik Darshan*. Shivasamhita reports that this causes self-purification. After these experiences you don't need to do anything just keep doing *sadhana* and the *Shakti* will guide you towards enlightenment. It says that if a person looks at his own shadow and then looks in the sun or bright sky again he can see his own image in it. If once practices this daily he can become immensely powerful, and can practically have the power to question the natural elements.

Disciple: Master, your divine knowledge has changed my life forever. It has led me to eternal peace. It is said in the *Upanishadas* that a student cannot progress without his guru's grace. A disciple cannot learn about penance or sacrifice without the teachings of his master, nor can he gain control over his body and senses.

Guru: This is a universal truth beyond any doubt.

Disciple: Master, if one receives a mantra during his *sadhana* should he practise the new mantra or should he continue with the mantra given to him by his guru?

Guru: Please describe to me how did you receive a mantra during *sadhana*?

Disciple: Once I was doing *sadhana* early in the morning around four o' clock. I went in *Yoga nidra* (yogic sleep). I saw a dream where I saw a sky clad sage standing in front of me. He had

a very divine presence. He stood smiling at me. Then, he came close to me and placed his hand on my head and chanted a mantra. I felt peace and tranquillity which cannot be described in words. I felt a surge of energy rising through my backbone and reaching the top of my brain in the *Sahasrarachakra*. I felt a divine flame the size of my thumb leaving my body and rising. It went through the sky and beyond the solar system. I felt absolute union with this flame. I reached a place where there was no light and no darkness. I felt as though if I proceed ahead I shall lose my individuality. I felt scared and the fear woke me up. I was awake but the dream had left a deep impression on my mind. I could not think of anything else till noon. At noon when I had something to eat I felt normal again.

Another instance was when I was doing my *sadhana*; I fell on my side and suddenly *japa* started and I went into a transcendental state. This is when I had a vision of a divine sage standing in front of me. He was tall, fair and had long strong arms which reached his knees (*ajanubahu*<sup>77</sup>). He was speaking something with me and then he came close to me and uttered a *beeja mantra*<sup>78</sup> in my right ear. I felt pure peace and happiness. Slowly there was a surge of energy that I felt rising. It increased immensely to the level that I could not handle it any more. I felt as though my head was about to break and as though something wanted to leave my body. I could not bear that energy and moved my head backward and this is what woke me up.

Guru: This is clearly a very good sign. You are truly devoted to your guru and so *Jagad guru*<sup>79</sup> himself bestowed grace on you in the form of a *Sadhu*. Remember a *sadhu*, a guru and God are the

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77. Ajanubahu: *Ajanu* is a Sanskrit word means long, reaching from shoulder to knees, and *bahu* means arms. This is a peculiar property described of many saints and sages.

78. Beeja Mantra: primordial or basic mantra which when practiced can help a disciple gain immense power. The exact translation of the word *beeja* is seed.

79. Jagad Guru: Almighty; Lord Gurudev Dutta; incarnation of Lord Duttatreya.

same. Keep the mantra that you received in your meditation a secret. Don't tell it or disclose it to anyone. However during *sadhana*, practise the mantra which your guru has given you. This mantra is your basic path towards enlightenment and is the reason you got all these experiences. If you feel like, you can chant the mantra given to you by the divine guru a hundred and eight times, but do it apart from your *sadhan* mantra. The flame that you have described in your dream is your *atman*. *Kathopanishad* mentions that flame of *atman* is the size of the thumb and resides inside the *Prana*. The flame is also known as the *Paramatman*.

Disciple: Once when I was in *sadhana* I felt as though my body is emitting light like the morning sun. I felt rays of light all around myself. Initially I felt as though the self is enlightened but as this ego waned I realized that the source of light is almighty *atman*. Just like in the sun, every ray is a part of the sun every *Jeeva* is sourced from the almighty. Hence the *Jeev-atman* and *Param-atman* is one and the same.

Guru: This is really a divine experience. Always remember this fact that you have learnt and do *sadhana*. In fact everything is *Brahman* and *Brahman* is everything, he pervades in cosmic and individual consciousness. There are various ways to reach him but finally He is the only and absolute reality. If there is a difference, there is a difference in perception and not in the reality.

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## Chapter -10

Disciple: Master, I would like to request you to please tell me about our bodily existence (*deha tatva*).

Guru: For any student of yoga who aspires to study the nature of *atman*, should know about human body and its functioning. One should know about the energy centres, *chakras*, nervous systems and the energy meridians (*nadi*) associated with it.

When we speak about the body (*deha*) we only speak about the physical body (*sthoola deha*). But physical body is not the only body that governs our existence. Shree Shankaracharya has given a detailed account of how the physical body is formed from earthly elements and compounds. When a person dies, his body is offered to fire and all the earthly matter burns away, but all that burns is only mundane matter. Our existence is associated with the *atman*. Fire cannot burn *atman*, in fact it is indestructible.

### नैनं दहति पावकः ।

Apart from this, physical body we have a microcosmic body also known as astral body or *Sookshma Deha*. A physical existence is like slow burning and has an end but a cosmic existence is permanent. Mind is associated with the physical body but astral body is associated with the consciousness. Hence it is an intermediate state between consciousness and physical body. The physical and the astral body are both perishable, but pure consciousness or the *atman* is immortal. Hence both gross body and astral body are known as *Shareer* or *Deha*.

### शीर्यते इति शरीरम् ।

Mind, body and senses are all interrelated and hence are called as *adhyatma*. The obstacles in their coherent functioning are known as *adhyatmic taap*. Such hurdles are of two types (1) physical and

(2) mental.

Troubles like acidity, cold, fever are examples of physical hurdles where as emotional imbalances causing anger, sadness, jealousy are mental hurdles also known as *Manasic taap*.

The word *Bhoota* means earthly or mundane which is the earthly plane. Hence any harm that is caused from earthly sources like animals and plants are known as *adhibhautik taap*. The harms caused by demons and demi gods are known as *adhidaivik taap*.

*Sookshma deha* (astral body) has seventeen functional organs i.e. five *dyanaendriyas*, five *karmendriyas*, five *Pranas* (*pancha prana*), mind and intellect (conscience and *buddhi*). Conscience and mind are interrelated, and brain and ego are interrelated hence are not accounted separately.

Five *Dnyanindriyas* are eyes, nose, ears, tongue and skin. Various deities govern various organs. Eyes and eye sight is governed by Sun god. Goddess *Disha* controls ears and hearing. Nose and the sense of smell is governed by God *Ashwinikumar*, tongue and sense of taste is governed by *Varunadev* and skin and sense of touch is governed by *Vayudev*.

Five *Karmendriyas* are organs of speech, hands, legs, reproductive and excretory organs. Speech and sound box (larynx), heart, brain, lips and supra brain cortex is governed by *Agni dev*. Lord *Indra* governs hands whereas *Upendradev* govern the legs and *Yamadev* governs pelvic organs. God *Prajapati* governs the uterus and reproductive organs.

The *Pancha Prana* includes *Prana*, *Apana*, *Udana*, *Samana* and *Vyana*. *Prana* is located in the heart, *Apana* in the pelvic region *Samana* behind the belly button *Udana* in the throat and *Vyana* is circulating throughout the body. All the *Pancha Prana* have a distinct directional flow.

1. *Prana Vayu* in the form of breath shuttles in and out of the body.
2. *Udaana Vayu* flows upwards.
3. *Samana Vayu* circulates in the body and is responsible

for bodily processes like digestion and, assimilation of food etc. and is located in the stomach.

4. *Apana Vayu* flows downwards from the head towards the stomach.
5. *Vyana Vayu* keeps shifting in the body and is responsible for translocation of nutrients

Apart from these there are other kinds of *Vayu* in the body like the *Kurma Vayu* which bring about involuntary actions like blinking of eyes or reflex actions. *Krukara vayu* is formed when a person spits. *Devdutta Vayu* is formed because of yawning and *Nagavayu* regulates gastric gasses by burps and hiccups. *Dhananjay Vayu* is responsible for nutrient absorption and assimilation in the body. Hence with the five main forms of *Vayu* there are five sub-forms of *vayu* in the body.

Apart from physical and astral body there is another body known as *Karana Deha* or causal body.

Disciple: Master can you please clarify the difference between the gross body (*Sthoola Deha*), astral body (*Sookshma Dehu*) and Causal Body (*Karana Deha*)elaborately?

Guru: All the bodies have a fundamental requisites or *Kosha*<sup>80</sup> (domain) for functioning. These requisites or domains are *Annamaya Kosha* (food) *Pranamaya Kosh* (oxygen and breath), *Manomaya Kosha* (mind), *Vidnyanamaya Kosha* (intellect or moral instinct) and *Anandamaya Kosha* (peace, joy and happiness).

1. The gross body or *sthoola deha* is dependent on food and nutrition i.e. *Annamaya Kosha* for survival. The body of a foetus is formed from nutrition derived from parents. Nutritional inputs (*anna*) and *Prana* (*oxygen*) are fundamental in creating the human body.
2. *Pranamaya Kosha* is formed from five *Karmendriyas* and *Panchaprana* (*Prana, apana, vyana, udana* and *samana*). (The *Pranamaya Kosh* becomes functional as soon as a baby is born and physically separated from

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80. Kosha: Kosha is a Sanskrit word which means set, or domain.

it's mother's body).

3. The *Pancha dnyanaindriyas* (five senses) and the mind together form *Manomaya Kosha*. The power of will and desire is initiated from the *Manyo maya Kosh*.
4. The five *dnyanaindriyas* and the intellect (*buddhi*) make up the *Vidnyanamaya Kosha*. Sense of pain, pleasure, enjoyment, honour, culture, ethics, respect and pride are attributes of *Vidnyanamaya Kosha*.
5. This domain is also the source of ego. Peace joy, contentment, contemplation are attributes of the *Anandamaya Kosha*. This domain or energy sphere is known as Causal body or *Karana Deha*.

Ignorance and lack of knowledge of *Brahman* is the reason why physical and astral bodies exist. The physical world is made from the three dimensional reality (*trigunatmak*). Individual consciousness gives rise to manifestation. If there would pervade a feeling of oneness there would be no individual manifestation hence nature of self-identifying with the body is the main cause of existence of causal, astral and gross body. The presence of atman nourishes all the bodies. The causal body is the cause of differentiation of objects (bonded matter) and energy. This in a way creates a veil of individual differentiation.

Energy is confounded in various forms (*samashiti*). Hence the physical body and the astral body perceive various forms and fail to see the unanimous energy within. This difference is due to the lack of knowledge and ignorance. This energy which is hidden by the veil of differentiation is the ultimate almighty or God. This energy is the basis of all life and existence.

Lack of knowledge is based on two fundamentals viz. individuality (*avarana*; coating of energy bound as matter and hence individual identification of objects), and differentiation (*vikshepa*). The real nature of *atman* is hidden creating an illusion of manifestation. *Maya* or this veil of differentiation hides the true nature of *atman* and thence the cosmic consciousness tries to self-

identify itself with the individual body form. Then it perceives pain, pleasure, happiness, sadness, joy and suffering. Because of these problems one gets more and more entwined in *maya* and hence in the individual form and distances himself from the truth.

All the material manifestation is made from five fundamental elements earth, fire, wind, water and space. The physical and astral body are also made from these five elements. However the only reason they can function is because of the *Prana*. *Prana* is the source of all functionality. All the other elements just exist uniquely (individually) in the exclusion of *Pranashakti*. Hence without *Prana* the existence of any other element does not bear any significance. When *Prana* is directed in the *Sushumna* energy meridian by *Yogasadhana*, a person gains knowledge about *Chaitanya* and *Atman*. Apart from *Sushumna* there are other energy meridians in the body known as *Bhagavahini Samuha*. *SushumnaNadi* passes through six major energy centres in the body. The other energy meridians make a petal like formation at the energy centres. These energy centres are compared to a lotus and is a symbolical understanding. As *Kundalini Shakti* ascends through these energy plexus it activates the centre and it blossoms like a lotus. There are many energy meridians in the body. Some people believe that there are three lakh seventy-five thousand and some people believe that there are seventy-two thousand energy meridians. Of these the important ones are *Sushumna, Ida, Pingala, Gandhari, Hasti-Jivha, Kuhu, Saraswati, Pusha, Shura, Alumbhusha, Varuni, Vishvodari, Raka or Yashaswini, Shankhini* and *Chitra*.

From a Yogic perspective the first three (*Sushumna, Ida* and *Pingala*) are of utmost importance. Out of these three *Sushumna* meridian is the most important as when *Shakti* passes through this meridian one attains enlightenment.

*SushumnaNadi* is in the spinal cord and runs from *Mooladhara Chakra* to *Sahasrarar Chakra (Sahasradala Padma)*. This energy meridian signifies three *gunas* viz. *Satva, Rajas* and *Tamas*.

Awakening of this meridian is commonly compared to blossoming of a *dhatura* flower. (There are other energy meridians within the *Sushumna* energy meridian like concentric pipes within a larger pipe). *Vajra nadi* is a meridian within *Sushumna*. *Vajra nadi* begins in *Svadishtana Chakra* (sacral plexus) and runs to the *Shivasthana* in the *Sahasrara* (apex of the cerebral cortex). It is said that this *nadi* shines like a flame of a burning lamp. Inside *Vajranadi* is the *Chitranadi*. This *nadi* is very thin like the string of a spider's web. It is said that this energy meridian shines with the divine eternal cosmic light and extends through the infinity of manifestation. This *nadi* also hosts the *shatpadmagranthi*<sup>81</sup>. One can only know the nature of this meridian by accomplishing himself in Yoga. Inside the *Chitranadi* is the *Brahmanadi*. *Brahmanadi* runs from the *linga*<sup>82</sup> in *Mooldhara Chakra* to *Sahasrara*. The nectar of life flows down from *Sahasrara* through *Brahmanadi*.

*Ida* and *Pingalnadi* originate from *MooladharChakra* and pass through the left and right side of the spinal cord respectively. *Ida* and *Pingala* encircle every energy centre (*chakra*) and cross each other at every energy centre. They form a complex network in either halves of the brain. *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* separate in *MooladharChakra*. This point of separation is close to the pelvis and is known as *Muktatriveni teerth*. All the three meridians unite again in the brain and is known as *Yuktatriveni teertha*. Yogis understand the body to be a micro-cosmos. The *Pingalanadi* is also understood as the solar energy meridian whereas the *Idanadi* is understood to be the lunar energy meridian of this bodily microcosm. When energy flows through *Ida* it is understood to be night in this micro cosmos and when energy flows through *Pingala* it is understood as the day in the micro-cosmos. The night represents

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81. *Shatpadmagranthi*: *Shat*: Sanskrit word for six; *Padma*: lotus petal; hence energy center resembling a six petal lotus.
82. *Linga*: In this context is the cosmic seed of life located in *MooladharaChakra* around which the Kundalini Shakti sits in a dormant form. *Linga* is also understood to be an ovoid shaped stone which is a symbolic of lord Shiva. This is commonly used in rituals to pray lord Shiva.

*tamas guna* (that is jealousy) and the day represents *Rajas guna* (i.e. pride). The time when the day and night have a confluence is early in the morning or in the evening. *Rajas* and *Tamas gunas* influence the mind with the changing times of the day. Hence the best times for *sadhana* is in the early morning or in the evening. When the energy flow from *Ida* and *Pingala* is reduced only then it flows from the *Sushumna*. Early morning and evening are the times when the energy flow is regulated towards *Sushumnanadi* and hence are designated for doing *Sadhana*.

The other important nerves for energy circulation are as follows; there are two *nadis* which are located in the *Nabhichakra* (*Manipura chakra* which is same as the stomach) and are known as *Gandhari* and *Hasti-Jivha*. There are two *nadis* in the eyes known as *Pusha* and *Alambhusha*. The two ears have *nadis* known as *Shura* that extends till the nasal cavity. Digestion and assimilation of food is brought about by *Vishodhari* energy meridian. *Saraswati* energy meridian starts in the stomach and extends till the tip of the tongue. Speech and hence knowledge transfer is brought about by *Saraswati nadi*. *Raka nadi* is located in the nasal cavity and is slightly moist and brings about filtering of breath. It also brings about cleansing of nose and facial osmoregulation by regulating sneezing. *Shankhini* energy meridian starts in the throat and extends in two directions i.e. towards the brain and towards the stomach. This *nadi* transports nutrients from the stomach to the brain. This nutritional input aids smooth functioning of the brain. There are twenty other energy meridians that originate in the stomach. *Kuhu* and *Chitranadi* originate behind the belly button and extend to the genito-urinary organs. *Kuhu nadi* is responsible for urination and *Chitra nadi* for sperm ejaculation.

I shall now explain the various energy plexus (*chakras*) and the energies associated with them. *Pranashakti* passes through all the *chakras* and brings about changes in the human body. A mind stabilizes in various *chakras* enabling various powers. It is known

that there are six main *chakras* but there are a few secret *chakras* as well. In total there are nine *chakras* apart from *Sahasrara* which is the highest abode of energy. Ascension of energy in the *Sahasrara* is the final goal of *Yogasadhana*.

### **Mooladhara Chakra:**

This *chakra* is located in the pelvic region. To be precise it is at a distance of two fingers above the anus and two fingers behind the urethra column (on the perineum). There are four sections or four petals to this *chakra* and is blood red in colour. This *chakra* is the home (*adhaar*) of the *Kundalini Shakti* which is the primordial energy that powers the universe. Hence this *Chakra* is known *MooladharaChakra*. The construction of this *chakra* is such that at the centre of the *chakra* is the opening of the *Vajranadi*. This point is said to have a triangular plane and has a glow like pure electrical charge. In this triangular arrangement the right corner marks the origin of *Pingalanadi* and the left corner marks the origin of *Ida nadi*. In the centre of the triangle is the origin of *Sushumna nadi*. At the tip of the *Sushumnanadi* is a *linga* which is said to have a glow of a million suns. This *Chakra* is also known as the *Kamaroopa Peetha*.

*Kundalini Shakti* like a dormant serpent resides coiled around this *Linga*. It is said that the *Shakti* looks like a serpent and has three and a half coils and sleeps with her head on top of the *linga*. She is the energy that drives the world and her divine glow enlightens the world and hence powers life and living. *Kundalini Shakti* is the source of all life, knowledge and wealth. When a guru bestows his grace on a student this power is awakened and leads a disciple on the path of eternal fulfilment. In a dormant state this *chakra* is inactive like a closed lotus but when the *Shakti* is invoked this *chakra* is activated and it blossoms. This *chakra* is the gateway of enlightenment for every disciple of *Yogasadhana*. When this *chakra* is completely active it shows the student where he is in his life in the real and complete sense. He realizes the difference in spiritual and material world and begins his journey

towards enlightenment. Such a disciple respects his guru and gains the power to know and appreciate his guru's kind grace. This *chakra* also represents earthly or terrestrial plane.

### **Svadishtana Chakra:**

Above *Mooladhara Chakra* right behind the genitals is the *Svadishtana Chakra*. This *chakra* is red in colour and has an electric florescence. It is inside the *Chitranadi* in the *Sushumna* energy meridian. This *chakra* has six petals and is said to be governed by Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu has four hands and has an oceanic blue colour. Lord Vishnu is the steward of the universe and is responsible to maintain it. He is the guardian and is the father of all life. With him is Goddess *Rakini*. A person who can stabilize his mind on this *chakra* can be completely free from ego. This *chakra* is also known as *bhuvanloka*.

### **Manipura Chakra:**

Above *Svadishtana Chakra* behind the naval is the *Manipura Chakra*. It is said to have ten petals and has a distinct shade of blue. This *chakra* is commonly compared to a blue lotus and controlled by Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva is described to have a diffused reddish complexion and has stripes of ashes all over his body. He has three eyes (*trinetra*). In this form he has an aged look and is the lord of destruction. This can also be understood as consumption, as this energy plexus is in the stomach where all food is consumed and assimilated. He destroys darkness with his divine light of knowledge. He has two hands, one bearing a sickle and the other hand gestures blessing. With him is Goddess *Lakini*. She has a blue colour of the sky and is his power. People who meditate on this *Chakra* follow a righteous path. Goddess Saraswati blesses such people with knowledge and art. This *chakra* also holds an important energy centre known as the *Brahmagranthi*. When *Kundalini Shakti* rises she unleashes the powers of the *Brahmagranthi* and ascends to higher *chakras*. When this ascension takes place there is possibility that the person might have stomach

aches and might become weak. At such times one should not take any medication and should concentrate on this *chakra* doing *sadhana*. Merely by *sadhana* and practising the mantra the pains will stop and the mind will attain stability. A person's digestion improves by meditating on this *chakra*. This *chakra* is based on *agni* i.e. fire element in the body. Meditating on this *chakra* can enable a person to hear divine sounds. This *chakra* also represents the heaven.

### ***Anahata Chakra:***

Above *Manipura Chakra* is the *Anahata Chakra* and corresponds to the location of the heart. This *chakra* has twelve petals and is reddish in colour, and is controlled by Lord *Ishaan* who is a form of Lord Shiva. Lord *Ishaan* is fair and has a white glow like the moon. His wife is Goddess *Kakini*. She is a divine mother and blesses all Yogis. She is a form of Goddess Parvati and wears a garland of heads (*Kapalamala*).

This *chakra* holds a golden *Shiva Linga* which has a serene golden glow. This *linga* has a crescent moon above it and is a symbol of self-respect. This realization of self-identification, which is the same as ego is what stimulates feelings of pain, pleasure, honour, sadness, joy and peace. A disciple who can stabilize his mind in this *chakra* rises over all the desires. He goes beyond all attachment and bondage. One can experience the divine flame of life known as *Vishoka* in this *chakra*.

This *chakra* is also compared to the *Kalpavriksha*. A person who is a devotee of the *Saguna* (form or defined manifestation) can gain anything if he stabilizes his mind in this *chakra*. *Anahata chakra* gets its name from *Anahata Naad* which is sourced from this *Chakra*. *Anahata naad* means frictionless sound. Hence this *chakra* is understood as the source of *Anahata naad* which is the same as *Shabda Brahma*. This is also the source of *Omkar*.

This *Chakra* also holds an important energy centre known as *Vishnugranthi*. Ascension of energy through this centre can be painful. This energy centre is known as *Maharlok* and *Poorna*

*Gurupeeth*. When *Kundalini Shakti* ascends through this *Chakra* its potential is unleashed and the disciple is granted a spiritual power known as *Vaakasiddhi*. A disciple gains the power to create, protect and destroy when the energy advances through this *Chakra* and energy centre. Such a person can become the best of the Yogis and is granted with many spiritual powers.

### **Vishuddha Chakra:**

Above *Anahata Chakra* in the throat is the *Vishuddha Chakra*. It is said to have a smoky appearance. It has sixteen petals and has a spiral arrangement like the solar system. In the centre of this system is a seed that resembles a quartz or transparent crystal. *Akash* (space element) is the governing deity of this centre. It is said that the deity of this *Chakra* sits on a shining white elephant and is a form of Lord Shiva. This deity is said to have four hands and is white in colour.

The petals of this energy centre are governed by Lord Shiva. In this form Lord Shiva has three heads and ten hands. It is said that every head has three eyes. Lord Shiva is dressed in tiger skin and is with a form of Shakti known as *Shakhini*. This form of Lord Shiva is also known as *Ardhanarishwara*. In this form Lord Shiva is dressed in yellow robes and has a glow like the sanctity of the pure white moon. This is from where the divine nectar of life flows to the rest of the body.

This *chakra* symbolizes peace and contentment. This *chakra* is also an energy centre symbolising the lunar system and has a glow like the soothing moonlight. This symbolizes a pure mind. Such a pure mind is the doorway for liberation. When mind stabilizes in such a state it becomes vast and ever pervading like the sky. Hence this energy centre is known as *Vishuddha Chakra*.

A yogi when gets angry holds the power to destroy worlds, but when concentrates on this *Chakra* becomes calm and content. When a person concentrates on this *chakra* he becomes harmonious and peaceful. Such a person can become a singer, musician or poet whose harmony can give peace to the world. This *Chakra* is

also known as *Jaalandharpeeth*.

### ***Lalana Chakra:***

*Lalana Chakara* is located at the rear apex of the Cerebrum. This *Chakra* is red in colour and has twelve petals. This *chakra* is the source of Nectar of life. The twelve petals represent faith, contentment, love, mercy, respect, doubt, remorse, sadness, redemption, compassion, control and purity. Meditating on this *chakra* frees a person from pain, misery and disease.

### ***Adnya Chakra:***

This *chakra* is located in the centre of eyebrows. Meditating on this *chakra* gives the power of divine vision and divine speech. The colour of this *chakra* is bright white and is the main point of focus for every Yogi. This *chakra* has two properties known as *Pravritti* and *Nivritti*. *Pravritti* is defined as nature of known or definite attributes of energy and its manifestation, and *nivritti* is formless energy (non-manifested energy). This *chakra* is the abode of a Goddess known as *Hakini* (form of *Adishakti* or *Parvati*). Goddess *Hakini* is known to have four hands and holds a *damaru* (beat instrument). *Damaru* symbolizes divine sounds and hence divine knowledge. This *Chakra* has three petals and every petal has a unique governing deity. One petal is governed by God Brahma, the other by God Vishnu and God Shiva. At the centre of the *Chakra* there is *Shiva Linga*. A disciple who meditates on this *Chakra* gains immense will power, knowledge and attains enlightenment. This is also known to be the abode of the *Paramatman*. A person who can stabilise his mind on this *Chakra* gains the power to create, manifest and destroy. This is said to be the most powerful of all the *Chakras*.

This *Chakra* holds *Rudragranthi* which is the last energy centre. *Kundalini Shakti* passes through this energy centre and activates it. Once this is done a disciple experiences reduction in hunger and appetite. This in turn reduces excretion. Reduction in appetite does not make a person weak in fact it makes his body light and agile. It improves the texture of his skin (makes his bones and

muscles strong). After passing through this *chakra* *Kundalini Shakti* reaches *Sahasrara* and gains union with *Parama Shiva*.

At this stage a student might feel immense pain in his head, one might feel that the head is throbbing and someone is hitting the head with a metal rod and it might burst. The body performs many *Kriyas* at such a time.

People think heart is in the chest but in truth it is controlled by the *Adnyachakra*. At this point the energy from all the energy meridians (*Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna*) combines.

This represents the confluence of rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati which is analogous to the confluence of three energy meridians i.e. *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushumna* respectively. This point is known as *triveni* or *teerthraj*. This energy abode is also known as *Tapa Loka*.

### ***Manas chakra:***

Just little above *Adnyachakra* is *Manaschakra*. This is said to be the final abode of the mind and the atman. God Bramha is the ruler of this *Chakra*. At the apex of this *chakra* is a small point which shines like a star. This point is said to be a *Naad linga*. *Manaschakra* is known to have six petals. This represents *shabda* (word), *sparsha* (touch), *roopa* (form), *rasa* (flow), *gandha* (smell) and a dream state. Some petals of this *chakra* are said to be red while others are white and yellow. When mind stabilizes in any petal like the hands of a clock point at a number it dissolves and purifies it.

### ***Somachakra:***

Above *Manaschakra* is *Somachakra*. This *chakra* is made of sixteen petals. These petals are symbols of the following attributes; grace, kindness, courage, renunciation, speed, vibration, shrill, joy, politeness, focus, stability, sincerity, creativity, detachment, generosity and concentration.

This *chakra* is known as *Niravalambapuri* or *Shunyasthanana*. In this *chakra* one can perceive the formless ever pervading

almighty. This is also known as *Uddyanakha*. Once mind stabilizes in this *chakra* one loses complete body consciousness the mind dissolves and there is a feeling of vastness and bliss.

### ***Sahasrara Padma:***

*Kundalini Shakti* rises from the *Mooladharachakra* and rises through all the *chakras* as mentioned. Finally *Shakti* rises and unites with *Parama Shiva* in *SahasraraChakra*. This is where a person attains *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. This is known as *Samadhi Yoga* or *Advaita Vedanta*. *Advaita* means undifferentiated. There remains no difference between the disciple and the supreme. The 'me and him' differentiation dissolves. This causes all the individuality to dissolve and one gains immense joy and bliss.

Devotees of Lord Shiva call this *Shivasthan* and devotees of Lord Vishnu call this *Harasthan*. Devotees of Goddess (*Devi*) call this *Shaktisthan* and rishis call this *Purusha-Prakriti Milan*. This is where the best of fifteen arts dissolve and reach the apex of creativity. This is where the divine peace pervades with its sixteen attributes and fifteen arts. This is the source of all creativity and also the end of it.

It is important to note that just because *Kundalini Shakti* has reached *Sahasrara* does not mean one has attained enlightenment. Knowledge is endless beyond this point and one attains it but one needs to be stable with it. The formless abode has infinite possibilities and with every possibility is the source of new creativity. Even the stupidest of a person can become a scholar when this point is attained. Any material science would be incompetent to reach the intellect of a person who has attained this state. Such a person can see everybody's *atman* and can interact with the universal energy. At this point a person develops divine intuition known as *Pradnya*. This intuition can touch the heart and soul of every person around and can help others progress.

With every breath a person can hear divine *Anahata Omkar*. Its serenity, beauty and tranquillity cannot be expressed in words. In this state the *Kundalini Shakti* resides with the divine hymn of

the *Omkar*. Shakti unites with the formless abode of Parama Shiva. This is where *Sadhak* (seeker), *Sadhana* (penance or the path) and *Sadhya* (goal or destination) becomes one. This is the *Nirguna Brahma*. This form puts an end to the endless birth death cycles and the yogi becomes one with the eternal existence.

Shree Ganesh Dattagurubhyonamah.

Twam gunatrayatitah, twam dehatrayatitah, twam kalatrayatitah, twam mooladharasthitosi nityam, twam shaktitrayatmakah, twam yoginodhyayanti nityam.

- हरिः ॐ तत् सत् -

॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥



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## Glossary and Definitions

<b>Agni</b>	Fire
<b>Ahamkara</b>	Ego
<b>Aishvarya</b>	(Material or spiritual) wealth
<b>Adnya-Chakra</b>	Cavernous plexus (placed in between the eye brows)
<b>Akasha</b>	Ether, space, sky
<b>Alasya</b>	Lethargy, inertia
<b>Anahata</b>	Frictionless
<b>AnahataNaad</b>	Frictionless sound; cardiac plexus
<b>Anima</b>	Subtlety, reducing body in size
<b>Apana</b>	Vital energy functioning in excretion
<b>Asana</b>	Bodily position, posture
<b>Asura</b>	Demon, evil tendency in man
<b>Atman</b>	Divine soul in man, the Supreme Self
<b>Avastha</b>	State; condition
<b>Bandha</b>	A lock in Yogic posture
<b>Bhakta</b>	Devotee
<b>Bhakti</b>	Devotion
<b>Bhasrika</b>	Bellows (a kind of Pranayama)
<b>Bhava</b>	(Devotional) attitude
<b>Bheda</b>	Difference, splitting
<b>Bija</b>	Seed, source
<b>Bijakshara</b>	Seed-letter containing latent power of Mantra
<b>Beejamantra</b>	Basic mantra; resonating with the primordial seed
<b>Brahmachari</b>	Celibate, student of scriptures
<b>Brahmanda</b>	Macrocosm, Brahma's egg; universe
<b>Brahmagranthi</b>	Energy knot (nerves and phsyhic centre in stomach)
<b>Brahmarandhra</b>	Head fontanelle at the top of head

<b>Buddhi</b>	Intellect, understanding, reason
<b>Chakra</b>	Wheel, plexus
<b>Chit</b>	Consciousness
<b>Chitta</b>	Mind-stuff, subconscious mind
<b>Daivi</b>	Divine
<b>Dama</b>	Control of outer senses
<b>Devata/Deva</b>	Deity
<b>Devi</b>	Goddess
<b>Dharma</b>	Duty, virtue, righteous way of living
<b>Dhyana</b>	Deep meditation; focus
<b>Granthi</b>	Knot (of nerves or psychic energy)
<b>Grihastha</b>	Householder
<b>Hamsa</b>	Swan, Divine Self; <b>Hamsa mantra</b> ; breath sound
<b>Hiranyagarbha</b>	Cosmic intelligence, cosmic mind, Brahma
<b>Ida</b>	Psychic nerve-current flowing through nostril; lunar energy meridian
<b>Indriya</b>	Sense of perception whether physical ( <b>Karma Indriya</b> ) or internal current ( <b>Dnyana Indriya</b> ) (five senses).
<b>Japa</b>	Repetition of a Mantra
<b>Jivanmukti</b>	Liberation while still in body, the state of <b>Jnana</b> or Knowledge, Wisdom of Brahman
<b>Jivatman</b>	Individual soul
<b>Kamala</b>	Lotus
<b>Karma</b>	Action (Sanchita: accumulated; Prarabdha: to be worked out in this life; Agami: being freshly formed)
<b>Karana</b>	Cause, causal

<b>Karanadeha</b>	Causal body
<b>Kevala Kumbhaka</b>	Cessation of breath spontaneously
<b>Kriya</b>	Action
<b>Kumbhaka</b>	Period between in-and-outgoing breath
<b>Kundalini</b>	Serpent-power coiled up at the Muladhara Chakra
<b>Madhyama</b>	Pranayama with 32 Matras
<b>Mahima</b>	Siddhi of making oneself huge
<b>Manas</b>	Mind
<b>Matra</b>	A second, time-measure
<b>Moksha</b>	Liberation, realisation, salvation
<b>Mudra</b>	Symbolic hand-position; also yogic locks in body
<b>Mukti</b>	Liberation
<b>Mumukshutva</b>	longing for liberation
<b>Nadi</b>	Astral vein carrying Prana
<b>Nirvikalpa</b>	Without any affirmed will; thought free
<b>Nishkama</b>	Selfless, unselfish
<b>Padma</b>	Lotus
<b>Para</b>	Super, higher, (highest); beyond material
<b>Parama</b>	Supreme
<b>Paramahansa</b>	The highest class of Sannyasins
<b>Pingala</b>	Psychic nerve-current in right nostril, solar energy meridian
<b>Pralaya</b>	Dissolution of the cosmos
<b>Prana</b>	Vital energy, life-breath, life-force
<b>Pranava</b>	The breath mantra.
<b>Pranayama</b>	Breath-control
<b>Prithvi</b>	Element of earth with density and fragrance characteristic to it
<b>Puja</b>	Worship

<b>Rudra</b>	Shiva
<b>Rudragranthi</b>	Psychic energy centre in temporal region.
<b>Sadhaka</b>	Spiritual aspirant; disciple
<b>Sadhana</b>	Spiritual practice
<b>Sahaja</b>	Natural, true, native
<b>Sahasrara</b>	1000 petalled lotus as the crown of head.(beneath the skull)
<b>Shakti</b>	Power
<b>Shama</b>	Control of mind, tranquillity
<b>Samadhi</b>	State of super-consciousness, perfect absorption of mind in Yoga
<b>Samsara</b>	Life through repeated births and deaths, process of worldly life.
<b>Shatapadmaganthi:</b>	knot of nerves, energy meridians having a thousand petals (symbolic).
<b>Samskara</b>	Impression, prenatal tendency
<b>Sandhya</b>	short period at dawn and dusk, also a ritual performed then.
<b>Sanyasa</b>	Renunciation of social ties, 4th mode of Hindu life
<b>Shanti</b>	Peace, quietness
<b>Shastra</b>	Scripture, word of authority
<b>Shatchakras</b>	The six Chakras or nerve-plexuses
<b>Shraddha</b>	Faith
<b>Sthula</b>	Gross
<b>Shuddhi</b>	Purity; purification
<b>Sukshma</b>	Fine, subtle, indivisible
<b>Surya</b>	Sun
<b>Sushumna</b>	Central Energy meridian through which Kundalini Shakti advance.
<b>Tamas</b>	Darkness, inertia, dullness
<b>Udan</b>	Vital force near the throat
<b>Upanishad</b>	Vedantic scriptures, gist of Vedas

<b>Vairagya</b>	Indifference, detachment from mundane reality.
<b>Vajra</b>	Firmness, thunderbolt
<b>Vasana</b>	Subtle desire
<b>Vayu</b>	Wind, vital air, Prana
<b>Virya</b>	Seminal fluid
<b>Vishnugranthi</b>	Energy knot (nerves and psychic centre)
<b>Visuddha</b>	Laryngeal plexus
<b>Viveka</b>	Discrimination between real and unreal.
<b>Vritti</b>	Thought-wave; tendency
<b>Vyana</b>	All-pervading Prana
<b>Vyavahara</b>	Worldly activity, phenomenal, relative world
<b>Yama</b>	prohibition; periodic time
<b>Yajna</b>	fire ceremony
<b>Yoga</b>	Union with God; union with self (atman)



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In my view within each reader is a God who is helping the bodily self to realize. This book highlights a discussion between a disciple and an enlightened Guru and answers many questions. These questions are not of any one person but are those of everyone who seek enlightenment. So every person in this life or next will ask these questions. When I read the original works (Siddhyayoga-upadesha) by Shree Gulawani Maharaj I was overwhelmed with the amount of knowledge that it provided. This inspired me to translate his works so that it can reach English readers. In my opinion enlightenment does not happen in one day, and does not come in one person, it is a phenomenon which is ever happening. I thought and prayed to my guru to let me be a little instrument of this divine happening.

From my personal career I am Ph.D. student and a scientist studying Ecosystem Dynamics in space and time. I was inspired to work on this translation as I see that a change within is only reflected outside and makes a perception of reality. So, from a purely scientific point of view, I see Yoga as the optimal means which can help mankind to reach the supreme. Hence, I believe that any science or discipline is just a way to understand fundamental and absolute truth. There is saying in Sanskrit “ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti” which means that a wise person can see the same truth from various angles. Therefore I see this work as an opportunity to bridge sciences and perceive the ultimate truth.

I wish to tell all the readers that I am no more than an instrument of this work. All the knowledge is by the kind grace of Ma Kundalini Shakti and Lord Dattatreya. Please consider this work as a medium of surrender to the divine grace of Gurutattva.

**Rohan Shetti**