

## CHAPTER 1

### MEDITATION IS INTEGRAL TO YOGA

#### 1. Worldly Pleasure vs. Spiritual Well-Being

Yoga, meditation and *sādhana* (spiritual practice) are practically synonymous terms. By properly understanding their meanings, forms, uses and purposes, there is every possibility of resolving a seeker's problems about spiritual progress.

Wise men and women have identified the path of worldly pleasures as the path of *bhoga* (pleasure-seeking) and the path of spiritual elevation as the one of *yoga* (union with God). The former path is meant for the worldly person aspiring for material well-being and the latter one is meant for the renunciate aspiring for spiritual well-being.

Only that person who has detached himself from all worldly concerns is capable of treading the path of *yoga*.

Does this mean that *yoga* is meant only for the renunciate? Can a worldly person have access to it?

The path of spiritual well-being is, no doubt, a universal one, so in order to make progress one has to acquire fitness.

A human being is born, lives and dies in society. As a result, he is influenced by the environment of worldly enjoyments. Until that influence vanishes or until his longing for worldly pleasures cease, respect and receptivity for the spiritual path are not generated in him.

After many years of worldly enjoyments when he is not able to find eternal happiness, peace and bliss, he may resort to the spiritual path. Even a worldly seeker can walk along the path of spirituality, but his journey remains incomplete, for his major goal is the attainment of wealth and the satisfaction of desires. Only a pious or religious person can tread the path of liberation.

Human efforts are of four types since there are four ends or objectives of life, viz., *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (desire), *dharma* (religion), and *mokṣa* (liberation). The first two drag one towards worldly things while the last two lead one towards God. The first two result in one's downfall and ignorance whereas the last two culminate in one's upliftment and knowledge.

## 2. *Sanātana Yoga* (Eternal Yoga)

Man has the general experience of pain and pleasure born of bondage and freedom. When he experiences this duality of pain and pleasure in his conscious state, he associates himself with the sensuous world. During sleep this contact breaks and he feels the absence of pain and pleasure. This is his constant experience and out of this is born a complete faith that only introversion or looking within is the royal panacea for begetting real happiness, peace and liberation.

In the *Yoga-Sutra*, the great sage *Patanjali* embodied the language and meaning of *yoga*. He has stated, “controlling, disciplining and sublimating all the contents of mind is *yoga*.” The sage *Vyāsa* defines *yoga* in his Commentary on *Yoga-Sutra* as *Samādhi* (the state of super consciousness and perfect bliss).

There are three states of an ordinary human mind: the conscious one, the dream-state and the state of sleep. Beyond these three is the one *yogīs* call *turīyā*; this is also known as *samādhi*.

The mind gets dirtied by coming into contact with the objects of senses and becomes pure only when it gives up and detaches itself from the sensuous world. The impure mind becomes the cause and culture of bondage as it is full of worldly desires. When it is emptied of all such desires, it becomes the cause and condition of *mukti* (liberation).

Purification of mind and the merging of the purified mind into its true self is *yoga* or *samādhi*. This *samādhi* is the final result of all *yoga* practices.

God is eternal and everlasting and such is the road to God-realization.

Lord *Śiva* in the *Śiva Samhitā* expresses his personal opinion on *yoga*: “I have studied with all precision all the sacred books of philosophy and have pondered over them. In the end, I have come to the conclusion that ‘*Yoga Śāstra*’ is the best of all scriptures.”

The *Garuda Purāna* instructs: “*Yoga* is the only medicine for the miserable person burning in the fires of worldliness.”

## 3. Varieties of *Yoga* Originated From Differences in Temperament

*Yoga* is, and can only be, one. Yet, there are three main, and many secondary types of *yoga*. The chief reason for all these varieties is the difference of temperament among seekers.

*Prakṛti* or nature is composed of three different essential qualities or forces. Each person has in them one or the other predominating, while one or two of the remaining three qualities are in small or great measure. The qualities are *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (activity), and *tamas* (inertia).

Hence, among the seekers, some may be *sāttvic*, some may be *rājasic* and some others may be *tāmasic*. Owing to these differences a seeker with a rational bent of mind practices *Jñāna Yoga* (Yoga of knowledge); the one of an emotional nature practices *Bhakti Yoga* (Yoga of devotion); and a man of action takes to *Karma Yoga* (Yoga of action).

Lord *Kṛṣṇa*, addressing the blessed *Uddhava* says, “I have preached the three paths, knowledge, devotion, and action, for all aspirants of God-realisation. There is no other way except these to merge with Me (the Universal God or *Brahma*).”

The *Yogavāsistha* says: “The bird of *Yoga* has two wings, *jñāna* and *bhakti* (knowledge and devotion); without them it cannot fly high in the heavens. *Karma* and *bhakti* without *jñāna* or *bhakti* and *jñāna* without *karma* or *jñāna* and *karma* without *bhakti* bear no fruits.

One following the path of knowledge attaches primary importance only to knowledge and considers devotion and action as subsidiary. To the one following the path of action, action alone is of supreme importance and knowledge and devotion are subsidiary. The devotee places devotion above knowledge and action. Explicitly this means that in *Jñāna Yoga*, knowledge is commander-in-chief and action and devotion are soldiers. Similarly in *Karma Yoga*, the commander-in-chief is action and the soldiers are knowledge and devotion; while in *Bhakti Yoga*, devotion is the chief and knowledge and action are the soldiers.

#### **4. Various Yogas Originated Out of the Differences in Techniques**

*Yoga* practice can be started with intellect, mind or body. An intellectual seeker begins by diving repeatedly into the ocean of reasoning and thereby obtains many jewels in the form of true knowledge. This being so he can then make the final decision to enter spiritual life. Thus a knowledge oriented seeker after taking complete recourse to true reason, begins action and then becomes emotionally absorbed in it. A seeker who considers himself to be knowledge oriented or intellectual but is unable to come to any decision after years of reasoning, can be said to be doing faulty reasoning. Such faulty reasoning does not allow a seeker to remain firm on any decision, whereas right reasoning establishes him in a firm decision. This firm decision itself is known as faith among devotees. Faith alone is the source of love, surrender and worship. The knowledge oriented seeker is called a philosopher. He does not believe in God but believes in the existence of gross and subtle elements.

An emotion oriented seeker begins by diving repeatedly into the ocean of emotion and obtains precious jewels in the form of good feelings; only then do they start acting. Thus an emotion oriented devotee first takes support of good feelings and then having begun to act, gradually obtains right reasoning. One considering themselves to be emotion oriented, but failing to remain stable on any one-liking after years of efforts, can be said to be lacking faith. The absence of good feelings does not permit a seeker to have firm faith, while existence of good feelings invariably makes their faith unshakeable. This firm faith is known as decision or discrimination by the reason oriented seeker. Such discrimination is the source of devotion, self-surrender, and absorption. The emotion-oriented seeker is called a devotee. He does believe in God but is not interested in discussing the elements.

An action oriented seeker is by nature a scientist. He neither accepts nor rejects the existence of God but remains a neutral observer. Since this approach is scientific, he makes minute observations of his body, organs, *prāna* (vital air), mind, the intellect, etc. and comes to a decision only after making experiments. One chooses to act only after taking into consideration various viewpoints of the sciences, including anatomy, psychology, *yoga*, health and hygiene, etc. Thus an action oriented seeker begins his action with the body and through proper experiments understands the significance of emotion and reason. One who considers himself to be action oriented or scientific, but does not make experiments, cannot master that science of *yoga*. The neutrality of a scientist vanishes only after the realisation of truth. One who lacks neutrality is biased and unfit for realising the truth. Science derived out of proper experiments is called discrimination by the reason oriented seeker. This science alone is the source of confidence, total dedication and service. The action oriented seeker, being a scientist is not much interested in emotion or reason as in experimentation.

*Sanātana* (eternal) *Yoga* is one, but its orientations are two: reason and action. The third, love or emotion is included in reason and action. Hence it is not shown separately.

Though there is only one *yoga*, seekers choose different techniques because of the differences in their age, education, condition, ability, liking, aspiration, readiness, etc. Due to the variety of techniques, different labels or names are given to the same *yoga*.

*Bhakti Yoga* is also called: *Karma-Samarpana Yoga*, *Cetana Samādhi*, *Mahābhāva*, *Śaranāgati Yoga*, *Prema Yoga*, *Prapatti Īśwara-pranidhāna*, *Anugraha Yoga*, *Mantra Yoga*, *Nāda Yoga*, *Laya Yoga*, *Japa Yoga* and others.

*Karma Yoga* is also known as: *Sānyāsa Yoga*, *Buddhi Yoga*, *Samprajnāta Yoga*, *Sabīja Yoga*, *Savikalpa Yoga*, *Hatha Yoga*, *Hamsa Yoga*, *Siddha Yoga*, *Tāraka Yoga*, *Prānopāsanā*, *Sahaja Yoga*, *Śaktipāta*, *Bindu Yoga*, *Śiva Yoga*, *Śakti*

*Yoga, Kundalinī Yoga; Pāśupata Yoga, Niskāma Karma Yoga, Mahā Yoga, and others.*

*Jñāna Yoga, or knowledge oriented Yoga can also be called: Brahma Yoga, Akṣara Brahma Yoga, Śabda Yoga, Sāmkhya Yoga, Rāja Yoga, Pūrṇa Yoga, Astāṅga Yoga, Amanaska Yoga, Asamprajñāta Yoga, Nirbīja Yoga, Nirvikalpa Yoga, etc.*

*Yogic traditions such as Vedānta, Yoga, Mantra, Tantra, Bhakti, etc. which have come from ancient times still exist among us. Religion dominated the life of people in ancient times; but thereafter there had been a decline in the importance and value attached to religion, and an increasingly prevalent importance attributed to wealth. The empire of wealth is already fully established in modern times.*

### **A. Vedānta Yoga or Jñāna Yoga**

An aspirant for the attainment of *Vedānta Yoga* or *Jñāna Yoga* first has to master the fourfold means of attaining it. They are *viveka* (discrimination), *vairāgya* (non-attachment or renunciation), *satsampatti*<sup>1</sup> (the six divine qualities), and *mumukśutā* (spiritual aspiration).

Intense practice of this four-fold means comprises *Samprajñāta Yoga*, the *yoga* in which there is self-consciousness when mind-stuff meditates on one object. Through this kind of *yogic* practice *rajoguna* (the qualities or forces of the active state of mind), and *tamoguna* (the qualities or forces of the darkness or inertia of mind) are diminished. At the same time there is an increasing growth of *sattvaguna* (the quality of purity of mind). Besides this, one obtains the highest knowledge filled with truth or flawless intuition and wisdom and the *aparavairāgya* (non- attachment of the lower stage.)

At this stage, faith in *karma* ends and the faith in knowledge is deepened and developed. Only after attainment of this state, i.e. the removal of physical and mental impurities, and distraction and false coverings of illusion which hide the real knowledge, can one become, worthy of taking up *Vedānta Yoga*. Thereafter nothing remains of *karma*. In the *Upanisads*, *Brahmasūtras* and other scriptures there is a discussion of *Vedānta Yoga* in the sections on *jñāna*.

*Jñāna Yoga* is nothing but *Nirvikalpa*, the changeless *Samādhi*.

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<sup>1</sup> Satsampatti—the six divine qualities: 1. Śāma: conciliatory conduct; 2. Dāma: self-restraint; 3. Uparati: in difference to carnal pleasures; 4. Titikṣā: endurance or forbearance; 5. Śraddhā: faith; 6. Samādhāna: dissolution of all doubts.

## B. Yoga

The term *yoga* is inclusive of all kinds of *yogas*. Yet, *Astānga Yoga*, the *yoga* of eight-fold steps is another name for *Rāja Yoga*.

*Sanātana Yoga* the eternal and universal *yoga* is the most ancient as authenticated by the *Vedas*. After mastering it, *Maharsi Patanjali* wrote the *Yogadarśana*, also known as *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*.

*Yogadarśana* follows the *Sāmkhya* system of philosophy and hence it is a scripture concerning knowledge. It deals with the existence of God by giving ample testimony for Him. It is also called the scripture of *bhakti* and the scripture of *yoga* because it teaches the eight-fold steps to *yoga*. These eight-fold steps are:

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|-----------------------|--|
| (1) <i>Yama</i>       | restraints such as non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-possession          |
| (2) <i>Niyama</i>     | observances including cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study of truth, and self-surrender to God |
| (3) <i>Āsana</i>      | postures   |
| (4) <i>Prānāyāma</i>  | control of breath  |
| (5) <i>Pratyāhāra</i> | withdrawal of the mind from the sense objects  |
| (6) <i>Dhāranā</i>    | focusing or fixing the mind  |
| (7) <i>Dhyāna</i>     | complete concentration of mind   |
| (8) <i>Samādhi</i>    | the state of super-consciousness and perfect bliss   |

There are two disciplines of this *yoga*, the external and the internal. The external discipline in *yoga* includes *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra*; this is known as *Hatha Yoga*. The internal discipline includes *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*; this is known as *Rāja Yoga*.

Control of the sense organs and the nerve centres is to be mastered in *Hatha Yoga*; hence, the body is the field of work. Through *Raja Yoga*, control of the mind is to be mastered, and so the mind is the area of operation.



*Hatha Yoga* is also called *Karma Yoga* because through it the organs of action or the senses by which actions are performed are controlled. Likewise, *Rāja Yoga* is called *Jñāna Yoga* because through it the mind gets controlled.

The trio of *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi* is called *samyama* in *Yogadarśana*. When *samyama* is fully achieved, it is called *sabīja samādhi*, wherein the mind which is the seed of desire yet remains. This state is also called *savikalpa samādhi* (the state of meditation having subject-object or knower-known distinction) and *samprajñāta samādhi* (*samādhi* with thought or reasoning). Even this trio of *samyama* is considered to be the lower state as compared to *nirbīja samādhi*, in which the mind becomes non-mind and hence the seed of desire no longer exists.

*Karma Yoga* is preached in many *Upanisads* such as *Śāndilya*, *Mandalbrāhmaṇa*, *Varāḥ*, *Jābāl*, *Dhyānabindū*, *Yogacūdāmaṇi*, *Yogaśikhopaniṣad*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Saubhāgyalakṣmi*, *Yogakundalī*, etc. There are books treating only *Karma Yoga*: *Yogiyājñavalkya*, *Gherandasamhitā*, *Śivasamhitā*, *Gorakṣapaddhati*, *Hathayogapradīpikā*, *Siddha-Siddhantapaddhati*, *Yogabīja*, *Amanaskayoga*, etc.

*Jñāna Yoga* is discussed in the *Upanisads* establishing the importance of *jñāna*. *Jñāna Yoga* itself means *nirbīja*, *asamprajñāta*, or *nirvikalpa samādhi*, all indicating the highest stage of *samādhi*. *Jñāna Yoga* is preached in many *Upanisad*, such as: *Īśāvāsyā*, *Kena*, *Katha*, *Praśna*, *Mundaka*, *Māndūkya*, *Aitareya*, *Taitarīya*, *Chāndogya*, *Śvetāśvatara*, etc.

The *Upanisads* establishing the importance of *upāsana* (worship) discuss *Bhakti Yoga* at length. This *Upāsana Yoga* or *Bhakti Yoga* itself is *sabīja*, *samprajñāta* or *savikalpa samādhi*.

As the actions are performed with devotion and in a detached manner for the love of God in *Bhakti Yoga*, so also are the actions in *Karma Yoga* performed in a detached way. Hence, the *Upanisads* on *Karma Yoga* are also the ones on *Bhakti Yoga*.

*Bhakti Yoga* is *Seśvarasāmkhya* or *Īśvaravāda*, based on the doctrine of God's existence. *Yogadarśana* supports the *Sāmkhya* philosophy based on the existence of God, and therefore it is called the scripture dealing with *Seśvarasāmkhya*.

All the eighteen *Purānas* also follow this system. These *Purānas* deal with all three kinds of *yoga*.

### **C. Mantra Yoga**

*Mantra Yoga* is a well known branch of *Bhakti Yoga*. This *Yoga* is meant for those worldly householders who tread the path of worldly achievements and use religious efforts for this purpose. All efforts directed through *Mantra Yoga* bear fruits. It is but natural that the pleasure loving people of this world expect to obtain wealth and fulfillment of desires through the practice of this *Yoga*.

The basis of *Mantra Yoga* is *Hatha Yoga*, *Hamsa Yoga* or the *sāadhanā* of *prāna*. *Prāna* creates *nāda* (spontaneous sound) which in turn produces *mantra*, the sacred formula which when repeated under proper condition produces extraordinary powers.

When the spiritual seeker undergoes the experience of spontaneous sound, *mantra* (Vedic, etc.), dance and *mudrā*, he feels completely satisfied and happy.

*Mantras* are linked with various Gods; hence, in order to obtain different powers, one worships different Gods through the medium of *mantras*.

*Mantra Yoga* has sixteen embodiments. They are: *bhakti*, *śuddhi* (purification), *āsana*, *pañcāṅgasevana* (worship with five limbs), *ācāra* (conduct), *dhāranā*, *divyadeśasevana* (worship of the celestial bodies), *prānakriyā* (activation of *prāna* energy), *mudrā*, *tarpana* (oblation), *havana* (sacred fire), *bali* (sacrificial offering), *yāga*, *japa* (recitation of mantra), *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

Each branch of *yoga* has accepted *mantra* because it is a divine means of *yoga*.

### **D. Tantra Yoga**

The basis of the *yoga* is also *Hatha Yoga*, *Hamsa Yoga* or *prānopāsanā*. It is a branch of the *Vedas*. *Tantra Yoga* also forms a branch of the other Indian religions such as Jainism, Buddhism, etc. There are also independent books on *Tantra Yoga*. *Śiva-Śakti*, the universal male-female powers are worshipped in *Tantra Yoga* as they are considered to be the presiding deities in it. At one time the empire of *Tantra Yoga* spread all over India.

The special feature of *Tantra Yoga* is that it neither considers worldly enjoyments as something to be shunned nor is final liberation solely accepted. It accepts both of them equally.

Knowledge can only dawn in a man with a pure body and a pure mind. This is the primary principle of this *yoga*.



An adept of **Tantra Yoga** is *ūrdvaretā* (a perfect celibate whose sexual fluid is sublimated), omniscient, and one possessing a divine body.

### **E. Bhakti Yoga**

There are two main different kinds of *bhakti*. The *vaidhī bhakti*, involving ceremonial worship and the *rāgātmikā bhakti* involving total identification of the self with the deity.

*Vaidhī bhakti*, is meant for the average person while *rāgātmikā bhakti* is meant for the detached devotee at a high level.

The *Srīmad Bhāgavata* has accepted nine different types of *bhakti*. They are: *śravaṇa* (listening), *kīrtana* (devotional singing) *smarana* (remembering God's name) *padasevana* (worshipping the feet of God), *arcana* (applying sandalwood paste on the forehead), *vandana* (bowing down), *dāśya* (servantship to God), *sakhya* (friendship of God) and *ātmanivedana* (self-surrender to God). These are different ways in which devotion and intense love for God is manifested. The first six types come under *vaidhī bhakti*. The last three, chiefly based on love, are included in *rāgātmikā bhakti*.

Devotees who accept a personal God invest godliness in a symbol or idol and worship it.

*Rāgātmikā bhakti* has two main forms; *aparā*, the lower, and *parā*, the higher. Through *aparā bhakti*, the devotee visualizes the Universal Form of God and the divine play of His different incarnations. At the end, through *parā bhakti*, he becomes one with *Brahman* (absolute cosmic reality) and merges into it. Thus, he experiences both the personal and the non-personal God and feels happily satisfied.

As long as a devotee intoxicated with love does not accept total submission through self-surrender, he cannot enter the precincts of *parā bhakti*.

### **F. Siddha Yoga**

*Siddha Yoga* means the *Yoga* of the adepts. Its other name is *Hatha Yoga* to which *prāṇa samyama* (control and mastery over *prāṇa*) is fundamental. There are many ways of awakening the *kundalinī śakti*, but the best course is that of *prāṇāyāma*.

*Prāṇa* (the vital force) is the factor which differentiates the living being from the corpse. Hence it is evident that *prāṇa* is the central link between the soul and the body.

Each of the different *yogic* paths has its own techniques. Yet, control and discipline of *prāna* is directly or indirectly involved in all of them. The sense-organs and the mind are controlled and disciplined only through the control of *prāna*.

Therefore, the key to the science of *Yoga* is *prāna*. The great men and women who have completely mastered *Yoga* know all the techniques. So they guide the disciple to adopt a particular technique suitable to him depending on his fitness. If the seeker proceeds on the path shown by the master, he goes on experiencing spiritual development and as a result his enthusiasm is kept up until he attains *samādhi*.

Adept *yogīs* of ancient times would arouse *kundalinī śakti* only in the seeker of a high order by initiating them through *śaktipāta* (the transmission of the spiritual energy). Modern day non-adept *yogīs* initiate a seeker through *śaktipāta* irrespective of fitness. This situation which seems to have been prompted by God could only be meant for the welfare of the society.

Lord Śiva has said: "I have created the *Yoga* known as *Mahāyoga*." There are four well known *Mahā* (great) *Yogas*, *Mantra Yoga*, *Laya Yoga* (the *Yoga* of complete union with the Universal Self), *Hatha Yoga* and *Rāja Yoga*. Essentially there are not four different types of *yoga*, but four stages of one and same *Yoga*. This *Mahā Yoga* itself is called *Siddha Yoga*.

*Anāhata nāda* (spontaneous sound) is created through the practice of *prānāyāmas* or *Hatha Yoga*. This is called *Nāda Yoga*. Through it originated first *Mantra Yoga*, then at the end, *Laya Yoga*.

When the *citta* (mind stuff), the *prānāpāna* (the five vital airs), the *kundalinī śakti*, and the *vrittis* (waves of thought), are completely destroyed, *Laya Yoga* is mastered. The last stage of *Laya Yoga* is *Rāja Yoga*.

## 5. *Dhyāna* (Meditation)

Here ends the discussion of the term 'yoga.' Now we shall examine the other synonymous term *dhyāna* (meditation).

One school of *yoga* gives most importance to meditation only, so much so that they consider meditation itself to be *yoga* and call it *Dhyāna Yoga*. Not only that but they confidently declare that *Dhyāna Yoga* is the best among all kinds of *yoga*, because they all are part and parcel of *Dhyāna Yoga*.

This statement on their part is not incorrect. One meaning of *yoga* (union with God) is *samādhi*, which is an extraordinary state of *citta* (mind stuff). Attainment of this state is dependent on proper practice of meditation.

It is but natural that those who give importance to *citta* (mind stuff) only, consider the body, the sense organs and *prāna* to be subsidiary. However, it should not be forgotten that there are other schools of *yogīs* whose statements, too, are equally correct.

Truth is only one, but the ways of realising it are many.

Other schools of *yogīs* consider meditation to be only an important embodiment of *yoga* and not the complete *yoga*. Of course, they too accept that because of the chief role played by meditation, *samādhi* can be mastered only through it. However, the best quality meditation cannot be achieved immediately. For that, one has to make efforts for many years.

Because of the contacts of the sense organs with external sense objects, there occur thoughts, contemplations, decisions, etc. They also occur because of the past mental impressions. Even with these occurrences meditation does take place to some extent. But such meditation does not last long due to the abundance of these thoughts.

There are two areas of meditation: external and internal. When it occurs in the external area, it can be called extroversion and when it occurs in the internal area it can be called introversion. Even during the extroverted type of meditation, the mind remains more related to introversion.

There are six *cakras* (nerve centers or plexuses) in the body. They can be called the steps of the ladder of meditation. Until *prāna* and *apāna* (two of the five major vital airs) do not remain stable in the lower *cakra*, they do not develop fully. The development of a *cakra* means the purification of the bodily region of that *cakra*. Unstable *prāna* and *apāna* signify physical impurities and their stability signifies purification. *Citta* (mind stuff) is located in the *ājñā* chakra (nerve center between the eye brows). Therefore, the best meditation does not occur until that *cakra* is fully developed. For this reason only, *dhyāna* is considered to be the seventh embodiment of the eight-fold path of *yoga*; the order being: *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prānāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāranā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

In order to protect *yoga*, adherence to *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (observances) becomes essential. Though these two are separate from the other six constituents, they are included in the eight embodiments of *yoga* because they are like an impenetrable fort of *yoga*. Therefore, it is customary to begin *yoga* by practising *āsanas* (postures), along with the observance of *yama* and *niyama*. Of course, it is not always necessary to begin *yoga* with the practice of *āsanas*. It can be started even with *prānāyāma* (breath control), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of mind), *dhāranā* (focusing of mind) or *dhyāna* (concentration of mind or meditation). One can do an ordinary kind of meditation by resorting to any of these.

When a *guru* gives *śaktipāta* initiation to a disciple, he usually has him do meditation. Through the initiation the *prāna* energy is released in the disciple's body and various *āsanas*, *mudrās*, *prāṇāyāmas* and other *yogic* processes occur spontaneously. All such spontaneous processes are included in *cala* (dynamic or active) meditation. When this *cala* meditation becomes mature and assumes the form of *acala* (steady or inactive) meditation, it can be said to be the beginning of real *dhyāna*, the seventh step of the eight-fold path of *yoga*. The prior stage of *cala* (active) meditation is included in *pratyāhāra* and *dhāranā*. That is why other schools of *yogīs* consider *dhyāna* to be a very special embodiment of *yoga* rather than just *yoga* itself.

Control of physical senses is achieved through *cala* meditation, while that of the mind is attained by means of *acala* meditation. In this latter meditation there is concentration of mind and hence the existence of mind. The mature state of *dhyāna* (concentration) is called *samādhi* (state of super-consciousness and bliss), that state in which the mind gets dissolved into *prakṛti* (nature).

Milk can be converted into curd which can be further converted into butter and finally into ghee (clarified butter), but this last one cannot be reconverted into butter, curd or milk. In the same way the mind dissolved into nature becomes non-mind, devoid of any deterioration or change. This changeless state ensures eternal happiness, peace and bliss. It is free from the duality of pleasure and pain and is called the final relief from all miseries or salvation or liberation. This is the end product of *yoga*.

## **6. *Sādhana* (spiritual practice)**

Another synonymous term for *yoga* and *dhyāna* is *sādhana* (spiritual practice). It means the discipline for accomplishing liberation. Disciplining is practising the same *kriya* (activity) repeatedly. It can also be called formal practice or continuity in daily performance. Regular or methodical practice of any one of the various embodiments of *yoga* is *yoga sādhana*.

## **7. The First Step to Yoga: *Yama***

First a seeker must purify his body and mind through *yoga* practice. This alone is not enough, for when he seriously starts this uphill task he has to be constantly on the alert to see that no new impurities creep in.

*Yama* and *niyama* (restraints and observances) are aids to purification. They help to make the *sādhana* simpler. If they are neglected, many hurdles crop up during *sādhana* and it takes a very long time to uproot these evils. To save time and energy, it is necessary that one must resort to *yama* and *niyama*.

*Yama* and *niyama* build up an impregnable fort for *sādhana*. A seeker has to erect a wall of *yama* in order that forbidden acts may not enter one's life.

*Yama* is designated as a *mahāvratā*, a great vow. It does not recognise any bounds of race, country or time. Therefore, it can be practised at any stage.

There are five disciplines of *Yama* described in *Patanjali's Yogadarśana*. They are: i) *ahimsā*, non-violence. ii) *satya*, truth. iii) *asteya*, non-stealing. iv) *brahmacarya*, celibacy. v) *aparigraha*, non-possession.

**i) Ahimsā (non-violence)** This means not harming any living being by speech, thought or action. Not only must a seeker, if possible, live in solitude, but he must also try to shape an environment which does not generate any violence. If through excitement a man becomes violent, he must calm his mind with love. Violence is hatred, non-violence is love. Love is a great power to subdue the whole universe.

**ii) Satya (truth)** Truth is defined as the quality which considers the inherent good of all beings and in which there is no tinge of falsehood.

It is not possible to put into practice by a single effort the entire truth in its primal form. It is therefore necessary for the seeker to continue to practice truth according to his own capacity. He should observe silence and solitude as much as he can: Where it is absolutely necessary he should speak, but speak briefly, sweetly and only the truth.

**iii) Asteya (non-stealing)** This means never desiring to possess by mind or speech either outwardly or secretly, the wealth of another. Accordingly one should not take anything valuable or trifling belonging to others without their knowledge.

**iv) Brahmacharya (celibacy)** Celibacy is giving up all sexual acts by thought, deed, and word.

The young male and the young female, having attained their puberty find it very difficult to conserve their sexual fluids because after puberty they have great sexual desires. As a result of this their vigour flows out. The personality of both the sexes goes on developing by the accumulation of sexual fluids and to achieve a full growth of a being, one has to resort to *yoga*. By practising *yoga*, the *yogī* becomes *ūrdvaretā*, one whose sexual fluid is sublimated and flowing eternally upwards. To observe total celibacy is an uphill task, and therefore, one has to suffer many an undesired discharge, whether they like it or not. Modern physiological science boldly asserts that there can never be total celibacy. At a certain time discharge does occur and it is but natural, they say. This statement

might be true, yet the *yogi* does become *ūrdvaretās* through *yogic* transformation or sublimation of sexual fluids.

It is but natural that from the beginning of childhood to its end, this vigour continues to accumulate effortlessly and naturally in the body of a male or a female child. If one can again attain that stage, then the similar process of preservation of that vigour will naturally start taking place once again. That natural stage is called *Sahaja Yoga*. Having worldly pleasure is quite a contrary position to that of *Sahaja Yoga*.

As with the help of physical science an airplane, several tons in weight can be flown high in the skies, so one can observe complete and undisturbed celibacy with the help of the science of *yoga*. *Nārada*, *Śuka*, *Sunaka* and other *munis*, Lord *Śiva*, Lord *Kṛṣṇa* are but a few who did this and who were *ūrdvaretās*.

In the common person, one who has a constant round of daily duties, sexual desires awaken only at a particular time and under certain conditions. The seeker, who stays in solitude and who constantly remains absorbed in *yoga* practice, frequently experiences sexual desires. The reason for this is that the center of enjoyment in the body is the same as the center of *yoga*. Just as a ladder is a means of going up, as well as going down, so is sexual passion a ladder for upliftment as well as degeneration. Even today in this world full of indiscipline, we come across hundreds of *brahmacāris* (those practising celibacy). Yet it is difficult to come across an *ūrdvaretās yogī* (one who has mastered total celibacy). Society gets a chance to see a person of that caliber only once every five hundred to a thousand years.

**v) Aparigraha (Non-possession)** As long as life lasts, there always exists needs, great or small. So the seeker has to possess something. Yet one who possesses only the bare necessary things of life is the seeker with the great vow of *aparigraha*. The above five disciplines are described in *Yogadarśana*. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā* there are ten disciplines: *ahimsā*, non-violence; *satya*, truth; *asteya*, non-stealing; *brahmacarya*, celibacy; *kṣamā*, forgiveness; *dhṛti*, steadfastness; *dayā*, compassion; *āṛjava*, straightforwardness; and *śauca*, cleanliness. We have discussed non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy and non-possession. Now we shall briefly define the remaining disciplines.

**vi) Kṣamā (forgiveness and forbearance)** Neither loving nor hating persons who do good or harm is *Kṣamā*. Neutrally forbearing both feelings of attraction and aversion the mind remains tranquil.

**vii) Dhṛti (steadfastness)** Steadfastness is the daughter of forbearance. By pursuing the path of *yoga*, the mind, senses and *prāṇa* keep steady in



performing the prescribed action; this is *sattva dhṛti* (purity and steadfastness), the highest form of steadfastness. Fickleness is a sign of non-forebearance.

**viii) Dayā (compassion)** The genuine concern for eradicating or mitigating the miseries of others is *dayā*. Compassion springs from *sāttvic* virtues. In the *rajoguna* (activity) and *tamoguna* (inertia) one does not easily find compassion. Compassion is born of non-violence and cruelty is the outcome of violence. Cruelty causes pain. Compassion engenders happiness.

**ix) Ārjava (simplicity)** A simple and upright attitude in performing activities for self or others. This humble attitude pervades body, senses and *antahkarana*<sup>2</sup>.

**x) Mitāhāra (temperance in eating)** Eating a digestible and tasty meal for the love of God while leaving the stomach one-fourth empty constitutes *mitāhāra*. One has to take food for the objective of mastering *yoga* and not merely for the pleasure of eating. Overeating repels one from *sādhana* (spiritual practice). Fasting with proper worship and observances does purify both the body and the mind, but the results are not permanent. Furthermore, it increases weakness so that one is unable to practice *sādhana* in its proper form. He who practises *mitāhāra* with discrimination is forever on a proper fast.

**xi) Śauca (purification)** Purification is two-fold; internal and external. Cleaning a body with soap and water is the external form of purification. Cleaning the *antahkarana*<sup>3</sup> by penance, knowledge, etc. is the internal form of purification. When the mind is cleaned, action is automatically purified. Consequently, both the body and speech start getting purified. One can remove evil thoughts in the mind by keeping company with saintly people, listening to scriptures, and doing spiritual practices.

These are the disciplines of *yama*. By pursuing them one can keep away the ordinary ailments of the body as well as the common worries and conflicts in the mind.

## 8. The Second Step to Yoga: Niyama

The seeker who wants to pursue peacefully the course of *sādhana* should give up violence, non-truthfulness, stealing, promiscuity, hoarding, jealousy, impatience, cruelty, overeating and other impurities. All these must be avoided

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<sup>2</sup> The *citta* (mind stuff), *manas* (mind), *buddhi* (intellect), and *ahamkāra* (egoism) formulate *antahkarana*.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

and abandoned or there will always be distractions and disturbances in performing *sādhana*. So that the disturbances may be avoided, the *Yamas* are made imperative. Now in the section on *Niyama*, certain actions to be performed are ordained.

The following five commandments are given in the *Yogadarśana*:

**i) Śauca (purification)** We have already discussed this in the previous section.

**ii) Santosa (contentment)** The toleration of all mental agonies is contentment. To feel happy with whatever you get through the will of God in the form of food, clothing, etc. is also contentment. Neither to desire nor expect more than the necessary requirements constitute contentment.

Discontentment creates several desires which disturb the mind, while contentment keeps the mind steady and does not allow any disturbing waves of desire to arise. Contentment is happiness and discontentment is unhappiness.

**iii) Svādhyāya (self-study)** To listen, meditate and to think continuously of the scriptures pointed out by the teacher and to study regularly and faithfully all the eight-fold steps to *yoga* is *svādhyāya*. This also includes *japa* (repetition of mantra), worshipping and surrendering to God.

**iv) Īśhvarapranidhāna (to dedicate to God all that one does, in body, mind, and speech)**

**v) Tapa (penance, mortification or austerity)** The body and mind become purified through penance and thus one gains the ability to endure the dualities of life. While performing *tapa*, one should see that there is no harm done to the bodily health and that the cheerfulness of mind does not diminish.

The *Yājñavalkya Samhitā* has mentioned ten rules to be followed. They are: *tapa*, *santosa*, *āstikya*, *dāna*, *īśvarapūjana*, *siddhāntavākyaśravaṇa*, *hri*, *mati*, *japa*, and *homa*. We have discussed *santosa* and *tapa*. Now we shall discuss as *āstikya* and the six other observances.

**vi) Āstikya (faith)** Faith comes through experience. Even the great scholars get confused in deciding what is action or non-action or wrong action. But once the seeker has his *prāṇa* released, they are not at all troubled by this confusion because they have an unshakable faith in knowledge determined by the *guru* and the scriptures.

The seeker receives through correct *sāadhanā* divine experiences which are mentioned by the *guru* as well as the scriptures. Thus by the coordination of these three, the seeker's faith is nourished. The knowledge acquired by *yogic* experience possesses divine power. This divine power does not allow a seeker to deviate from the blessed path.

**vii) *Dāna* (charity)** Giving away wealth earned by justifiable means to a deserving person is *dāna*. To an aspirant, *sāadhanā* is everything and thus he never hesitates to give away unneeded possessions. Most of all he must give himself to *sāadhanā*. Without this *dāna*, his *sāadhanā* never yields any result for he does not have God dwelling in his heart.

**viii) *Īśvarapūjana* (worship of God)** One should worship the divine with love according to one's abilities. Since God cannot be directly perceived through sense organs, one worships His symbols. The religious symbol or idol is God's *Samketa* or secret sign. These are not mere symbols but embodiments of undying *yogic* experience. Through them one realizes truth.

**ix) *Siddhāntaśravaṇa* (listening to the doctrines)** The doctrines of *Vedānta* Scripture are based on the experience of great sages. Thoroughly listening to them, the seeker can test these doctrines with his own experience. By comparing one's spiritual experiences with scriptural doctrine one becomes established in knowledge.

**x) *Hri* (shame)** Having acted improperly while pursuing the worldly or spiritual course, one feels ashamed in his heart. This shame is a healthy sign of his good intentions.

The spiritual aspirant is usually far beyond the bondage of worldly life. Yet to get to the truth one has to accept the bondages of the spiritual life. This spiritual bond which frees one from all bindings is not a bond at all, it itself is freedom. The agitation in one's heart comes because one has broken out of these bonds.

**xi) *Mati* (will or intelligence)** Strong desire to perform acts ordained by the scriptures is will. Everyone resorts to activities in which one has faith. The previous happy experiences create faith and the earlier unhappy experiences breed doubts. A seeker develops faith in those ordained actions of their earlier impressions, ideas, experiences, previous births, etc. The *buddhi* (discriminative faculty) of the *antahkarana*<sup>4</sup> is also called *mati*.

**xii) *Japa* (incantation)** To repeat a *mantra* (sacred formula) uncreated by man after receiving it with proper ceremonies from a *guru*. After the *prāṇa*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

is released, the *anāhata nāda* (spontaneous sound) reverberates and in it one finds the *japa* of *Rama* or *Om* automatically being carried on. This *anāhata nāda* may be either musical or non-musical.

Through the *japa* of this musical *anāhata nāda*, *prāna* is controlled and comes to have regular rhythm and with that the seeker gets the power to master his or her sexual passions.

*Japa* is indeed a great *tapa*. It destroys the sins of the seeker and lands one at the feet of the Lord.

## 9. The Third Step to Yoga: Āsana

The body is the first means of spiritual well-being. If the body is diseased, the mind naturally will be full of diseases. The seeker should study and practice the various *āsanas* (postures) in order to make his body and mind healthy.

Through regular practice of various *āsanas* (postures), fat is destroyed and the body becomes thin, radiant and healthy. Finally, after all the *nādīs* (body passages) get purified, the seeker enters the stage of meditation where they become stable. The purification of body has an impact on the mind which also in its turn becomes pure.

It says in the *Yogadarśana*: “By performing various *āsanas*, the seeker is able to arouse the sleeping *kundalinī śakti* whose power does not allow the dualities like pleasure-pain, heat-cold, etc. to afflict him.”<sup>5</sup>

The *Śandilya Upanisad* says: “He who has mastered the *āsanas* has conquered the three worlds.”

*Patanjali* states that through the practice of *āsana* the potential powers of the body emerge and as a result the dual forces of nature no longer harass the *yogī*.

It is mentioned in the *Gherandasamhitā*: “There are as many *āsanas* as there are living creatures, small and big in the universe.”<sup>6</sup>

Since the *sakāma* (with desire) seekers wish to get only wealth and sex through spiritual practice, they should select and practice some twenty-five to fifty *āsanas* or as many as they can.<sup>7</sup> The seekers, who already have *prānotthāna* (the release of prana or vital air) through the grace of God or *guru*, have not to learn any one of the *yoga* techniques such as *āsana*, *mudrā*, *prānāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*,

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<sup>5</sup> *Samādhipāda*, Verse 48

<sup>6</sup> II-Verse 1

<sup>7</sup> See *Āsana and Mudrā* by *Swāmī Kripālvānanda* for a thorough description of the most important and useful *āsanas*.

etc. These components come to them automatically at the right time in proper measure and in correct form.

## 10. *Kundalinī* (Spiritual Serpentine Power)

One who is not a seeker of worldly enjoyments, but a seeker of spiritual well-being has to awaken *kundalinī śakti* (the serpentine power usually lying dormant). Unless the seeker does this he will not reach his objective because the mainstay of *yoga* is *kundalinī*. It is the very entrance to *yoga*. Without it all means are meaningless. It is impossible to obtain true knowledge through other means. This alone is the royal road to *jñāna*.

In the center of the closed doors of *mokṣa* (liberation) hangs a curious lock which cannot be opened without a key. And that key is not available to just anyone. That key is *kundalinī*. This serpent *kundalinī* is coiled up asleep blocking the path of the *suśumna* (median nerve passage) in the *mūlādhāra padma*, (lotus at the base of the spinal column.) Hence, no one is able to traverse that path. Worldly beings with its dormant state indulge in mundane pleasures and as result they remain in bondage. The *sanyāsīns* (renunciates) with awakened state practice *yoga* and as a consequence they obtain *mukti* (liberation).

It is a rare *yogī* who can arouse the *kundalinī*. Aspirants of some *siddhis*, unable to arouse it, simply bow and turn away from it. There will be thousands of persons who claim that they know *kundalinī* and that their *kundalinī* is awakened, but not one among them has ever known what *kundalinī* is. Only the one who knows *kundalinī* knows *yoga*.

Acquainting a non-*yogī* with the *kundalinī* is many times more difficult than acquainting a person blind from birth with the colors or a completely deaf person with musical notes. *Kundalinī* is believed to have more than one form. Yet its two basic forms subtle and gross, are inclusive of all. The place of gross *kundalinī* lies in the region of the *mūlādhāra* and *svāddhisthāna cakras*. In modern physiological terms, this region covers the reproductive excretory systems. With the help of the gross *kundalinī* one is able to attain *sabīja samādhi*. The subtle *kundalinī* is the form of *śakti* (energy) or *prāna* through which *nirbīja samādhi* (the higher state of *samādhi* in which the mind dissolves or becomes non-mind) is realized. Those who know *yoga*, propitiate Lord *Śiva* in the gross *kundalinī* form and *śakti* in the subtle *kundalinī* form. It is because of this that their conjoined forms known as *ardhanārīśvara* (half male, half female God).

The existence of passion is the cause of birth and death. The death of passion is the cause of immortality. In other words, it can be said that discharge of sexual fluids means *bhoga* (sensual pleasure) and sublimation of sexual fluids means *yoga*.

When through the *guru's* grace *kundalinī* is aroused, the *cakras* (nerve centers) and the *granthis* (tangle of nerves) get pierced.

## 11. *Susumnā* (Median Nerve Passage)

According to the science of *yoga* there are seventy-two thousand *nādīs* (body passages), out of which *īdā*, *pingalā* and *susumnā* are the three main ones. *Susumnā* is the main *nādī* among them.

*Susumnā* is known under various names such as: *śunyapadavī*, *brahmarandhra*, *mahāpatha*, *smaśāna*, *śāmbhavī*, *madhyamārga*, etc. Only with the help of this *nādī* can a *yogī* achieve the highest state. The sleeping serpentine *kundalinī* lies coiled at the mouth of the *susumnā nādī*.

*īdā*, *pingalā*, and *susumnā*, these three *nādīs* have their openings turned downwards. *īdā* is believed to have the form of the moon; the *pingalā*, the form of the sun and *susumnā*, the form of *agni* (fire).

As long as *kundalinī* does not move up from the mouth of *susumnā*, the *yogī* cannot become *ūrdhvaretā*. First, *kundalinī* must be aroused. Then it has to be made uptrended.

Only after the *kundalinī* becomes uptrended does it move away from the mouth of the *susumnā*. The *susumnā's* doorway at the base of the spine is also known as *brahmadvāra*, *brahmarandhra*, or *haridvāra*. The tenth doorway is also called *brahmarandhra* and the last gate of *susumnā* located in the *sahasradalapadma* (thousand-petalled lotus) at the crown of the head, too, is called *brahmarandhra*.

The *jīva* (being) comes into a body by way of the *susumnā* and therefore it has to take this same course to move up. When the all-merciful *guru* blesses his or her faithful and true disciple with the technique of *yoga*, the latter awakens the *kundalinī* by means of *Jñāna*, *Karma* or *Bhakti Yoga* and makes it uptrended. It is easy to awaken *kundalinī*, but it is extremely difficult to make it uptrended. This requires penance of many births to accomplish. There are different means of awakening *kundalinī*, yet all of these are directly or indirectly linked with *Hatha Yoga*. Because of differences in individual natures, some develop faith in the means of *Jñāna Yoga*, others in *Karma Yoga* and some others in the means of *Bhakti*.

*Susumnā* is a very important *nādī* in the body. It is situated in the central part of the body. *īdā* lies on the left part of the body and *pingalā* on the right. *īdā* and *pingalā* conjoin themselves in the middle and assume the form of a third *nādī* which itself is called *susumnā*. As long as the *prāna* does not become powerful enough to convert the *apāna vāyu* to flow upward, the *sādhaka-yogī* is unable to become disinterested in the fruits of his or her actions. When *pratyāhāra* is fully



mastered, the *prāna* becomes extremely powerful and it impels the *apāna vāyu* to move upwards. When this *apāna* enters the *susumnā nādī* and begins to move up, all the *cakras* and *granthis* are pierced and developed. As a consequence the *susumnā* path becomes unobstructed. As the *vāyus* moving up the *susumnā* become strong, the mind of the *sādhaka-yogī* gains in concentration. Finally he achieves the state of non-mind and merges into the Lord. *Prāna* and *apāna* in that state dissolve into a single entity.

## 12. Cakras (Nerve Centers)

There are six *cakras* (psychic nerve centers situated in the *susumnā*): *mūlādhāra*, *svādhīsthāna*, *manipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha*, and *ājñā*. *Mūlādhāra* is at the lower end of the spinal cord near the anus. *Svādhīsthāna* is behind the base of the sex organ. *Manipura* is in the navel. *Anāhata* is in the heart. *Viśuddha* is in the throat and *ājñā* at the mid-point between the two eyebrows. Above these six is the *sahasrāra cakra*, (the thousand-petalled lotus) wherein dwells the untainted God, who is beyond all duality.

Some assert that there are nine *cakras* and that is also true. They are: *mūlādhāra*, *svādhīsthāna*, *manipura*, *anāhata*, *viśuddha*, *tālu* (palate), *bhrū* (between eyebrows), *nirvāna* (brain), and *ākāśa* (crown). These are placed in the spinal column but their area extends to the front side of the body. *Manipura cakra* is located in the back part of the body but it spreads forward to the stomach. There is a similar spreading out of the other *cakras*.

A *cakra* can be interpreted as a circle or a boundary. The excretory mechanism and the reproductive mechanism of the modern science of physiology correspond to the *mūlādhāra cakra* and the *svādhīsthāna cakra* of the ancient science of *yoga*. The digestive mechanism of modern physiology corresponds to the *manipura cakra*. The breathing mechanism of modern physiology corresponds to the *anāhata cakra*. The knowing or cognitive mechanism of modern physiology corresponds to the *ājñā cakra* and *sahasrāra cakra*. Just as modern science gives importance to sense organs and their functions; likewise the ancient science of *yoga* gives importance to *prāna* and its various functions in the *cakras*.

Doctors are the discoverers of physiological functions. *Yogīs* are the discoverers of the *cakras*.

Just as the trunk of a tree, its branches, leaves, flowers and fruits are not visible in the seed, so are the *cakras* not visible in the body of a non-*yogī*. They do exist in a subtle form in the body of every human being, but only after *kundalinī* is awakened is one able to experience their existence directly.

## 13. Granthi

A *granthi* is a tangle of nerves. In the science of ancient *yoga* there are three such *granthis*: *brahmagranthi*, *vishnugranthi*, and *rudragranthi*. These three *granthis* are said to be the mother of the three qualities of nature, *sattvas* (purity), *rajas* (activity), and *tamas* (inertia). A seeker must untangle these three *granthis* or he cannot go beyond the three qualities of nature to realize *ātman* (soul).

#### **a) *Brahmagranthi***

The *Brahmagranthi* is a great center of *rajo guna* (state of activity). The *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā* states: “Know *rajas* (activity) to be the nature of passion, springing from craving and attachment; it binds fast, O' son of *Kuntī* (Arjuna), the embodied one by attachment to action.”<sup>8</sup>

The *brahmagranthi* is situated in the *svādhīsthāna cakra*. Sometimes it is identified with the reproductive organ. However its boundary includes the entire reproductive system and the excretory system. The *yogī* after obtaining God's grace attacks the impregnable fort of the *brahmagranthi* and forcibly arouses the sleeping *kundalinī*. As a consequence, this awakened *kundalinī* immediately starts eating the seven elementary substances of the body (secretion, blood, flesh, fat, marrow, bone, and sexual fluids). At this time the *yogī* becomes very pale, spiritless and almost insane, yet he is not in the least frightened of the fearful form of *kundalinī*. Finally the *yogī* wins *kundalinī* over, the *rajo guna* is destroyed and he eventually obtains a divine body. This body is untouched by death, disease or old age because it has been purified by the *yogic* fire.

#### **b) *Visnugranthi***

The second *granthi* is the *vishnugranthi* which is located in the *viśuddha cakra*. Sometimes the tongue is called *vishnugranthi*. Once the act of piercing the *brahmagranthi* begins, *kundalinī* propelled by *prāna* moves upward. At a later stage it touches the *viśuddha cakra* after having pierced through *svādhīsthāna*, *manipura* and *anāhata cakras*. But if the *prāna* has not become strong enough to stabilize itself in these *cakras*, it slips down. Whenever it does move up, it tries to pierce the *vishnugranthi*.

In the beginning, the attachment under the tongue, called the sublingual gland, gets pierced by the heat of *prāṇāyāma*. Within six to eight months, the tongue, through actions of *cālana* (moving) and *dohana* (milking), gets detached from the attachment underneath. Having undergone these actions, the tongue impelled by *prāna* is drawn upward and then struggles to enter into the cavity behind the uvula. The cavity behind the nose, under the forehead and behind the eyebrows is called *kapālahuhara* or *bhammaraguhā*. The *vishnugranthi* is the star center of *sattva guna*. The

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter XIV, Verse 7

*Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā* declares: “Of these, *sattva* being pure causes illumination and health and binds, O' Sinless One, by attachment to happiness and knowledge.”<sup>9</sup> When this taintless *sattva guna* becomes powerful in an individual passions and anger come under control. As a result, the seeker obtains health, knowledge, renunciation and mental stability. One also gains the power to subdue vicious actions.

### c) *Rudragranthi*

The *rudragranthi* is the third nerve tangle situated in the region of *ājñā cakra* in the forehead. Near that *granthi* there is an aperture that is called the tenth gate by *yogins*. However some persons identify it with what modern anatomy calls the uvula.

The *yogī* who proceeds on the front path of *susumnā* or the incomplete path does not have the attachment under the tongue detached by the force of *prāṇāyāma*. Therefore, one does not have the tip of their tongue turned upward in the cavity of the tenth gate. Yet in one's own acquired stage he goes on sucking the nectar-like juice through the power of meditation. Through this juice, the *yogī* becomes luminous and very intelligent, but is not able to attain a divine body.

This *granthi* is a great center of *tamo guna* and it is pierced by *anāhata nāda* (inner sound). The *Bhagavad-Gītā* says: “And know *taṃas* to be born of ignorance, deluding all embodied beings; it binds fast, O' Descendant of *Bharata*, by negligence, indolence and sleep.”<sup>10</sup>

When the person has *tamo guna* becoming powerful in him, he has no tendency to be engaged in any activity. Heavy eating, long hours of sleep, sexual indulgence, looking after one's own interest, never considering the welfare of others, frequent quarrelling, never beginning the necessary work at the right time or lacking the desire to complete work, are the results born of *tamo guna*. When these are on the increase in an individual, he turns from a man into a devil.

The practice of *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, and *prāṇāyāma* diminish the power of *tamo guna*. Thereafter *rajo guna* predominates. However no sooner than the process of penetration of the *brahmagranthi* begins than the *rajo guna* goes on diminishing and *sattva* goes on increasing. After the *brahmagranthi* is completely pierced, the *rajo guna* is conquered and the *sattva guna* predominates. With the piercing and final clearing of the *vishnugranthi*, the *yogī* becomes free from all the bonds of *prakṛti* (nature)

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<sup>9</sup> Chapter XIV, Verse 6

<sup>10</sup> Chapter XIV, Verse 8

and enters the region of *ātman*. At last one becomes one with *Brahman* (Absolute Reality).

### 13. *Mudrās*

*Mudrās* are the developed forms of *āsanas*. In the *āsanas*, bodily organs have the primary place and *prāna* takes a subsidiary one. In *mudrās* it is quite the opposite. *Prāna* has the primary place and the bodily organs have the subsidiary one. One *mudrā* can be practised in several *āsanas*. This proves that *āsana* is subsidiary and *mudrā* with its subtle process of *prāna* primary. There are countless *āsanas* and *mudrās*. Yet the ancient teachers have given predominance to only ten. They are *mūlabandha*, *uddiyānabandha*, *jālandharabandha*, *mahāmudrā*, *mahāvedha*, *mahābandha*, *viparītakarāṇī*, *vajrolī*, *śakticālana* and *khecarī*.<sup>11</sup> These ten *mudrās* are the immortal experiences of *Kriyā Yoga*. A true *yogī* will certainly realize them through proper *yoga sādhanā*.

“The seeker who practises these *mudrās* daily and regularly will not have any fear of old age, death, fire, water or wind.”<sup>12</sup>

### 14. *Satkarmas*

Many teachers of *yoga* are of the opinion that the seeker who is congested with phlegm and fat must carry out these acts of purification (*satkarmas*). These cleansing processes also can occur as an action of *prāna* automatically in meditation. The six main *satkarmas* and their functions are:

- 1) *Dhauti*: to rid the body of phlegm and fat.
- 2) *Bastī*: for purgation of lower intestines.
- 3) *Neti*: to cleanse the nostrils and air passages.
- 4) *Trātaka*: to strengthen the eyes.
- 5) *Nauli*: for abdominal purification.
- 6) *Kapālabhātī*: for clearing the breathing passages.

### 15. *Pranayama*

When the soul departs from the body, breath also departs simultaneously. Soul and breath have a very deep friendship and that is why among the techniques and sub-techniques of *yoga*, *prāṇāyāma* is believed to be the main one. *Prāṇāyāma*, the fourth limb of the eight limbs of *yoga*, is very important. If any *yoga* rejects *prāṇāyāma*, it will cease to be *yoga*. This means that wherever *yoga* is being practiced, *prāṇāyāma* is also being practiced, directly or indirectly.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> *Gherandasamhitā*, III, Verse 93.

Without the practice of *prānāyāma* the spiritual development, the attainment of God, soul, happiness, peace, knowledge or joy is impossible. *Prānāyāma* is the soul of *yoga*. It is *yoga* itself. Whoever has relied on breath has obtained the key to *yoga* and has taken a good path. So if one wants to become strong, intelligent and brilliant and if one wants to come out of the sea of insignificance, one should practice *prānāyāma* after learning it methodically from an experienced *guru*.

The great *yogīs* of ancient times never gave *śaktipāta* (transmission of spiritual energy) initiation to anyone immediately. In this way the *guru* expressed fondness for the disciple. In order to assist the disciple the *guru* would lead him on the path of *prānāyāma*. The *prāna* within a disciple can actually be activated in a few minutes through *śaktipāta* initiation. But if the disciple's *prāna* is not strong they have to spend many years in spiritual practice. For this reason, a proper study and practice of *prānāyāma* is very useful. There are many kinds of *prānāyāma* but because of the differences of individual natures they are not of equal use to everyone. One which is useful to all is the *anuloma-viloma prānāyāma* (alternate nostril breathing). It is the *prānāyāma* for purifying the *nāḍīs*.

There are eight other major *prānāyāmas* besides *anuloma-viloma* (alternate nostril breathing). They are: 1) *sūrya bhedana*; 2) *ujjāyī*; 3) *sītkārī*; 4) *śītalī*; 5) *bhastrikā*; 6) *bhrāmarī*; 7) *mūrchā*; 8) *plāvinī*.<sup>13</sup>

## 16. The Vayus (vital airs)<sup>14</sup>

The *Yoga* scriptures mention five *prānas*: *prāna*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *udāna*, and *vyāna*. The following is a brief summary of them.

1) *Prāna* resides in the heart, the *anāhata cakra*. It is yellow in color and it operates the breathing mechanism.

2) *Apāna* stays in the sphere of the anus, the *mūlādhāra* and *svādhīsthāna cakras*. It is red-orange in color and it operates the excretory and generative systems.

3) *Samāna* is located in the navel, the *manipura cakra*. It is green in color and operates the digestive system.

4) *Udāna* is situated in the throat, the *viśuddha cakra*. Its color is blue-violet. It helps the digestive system and attends to the work of swallowing.

5) *Vyāna* pervades the whole body. Its center is in the *svādhīsthāna cakra*. It is pink in color and operates the system of blood circulation.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

There are also five sub- *prānas*:

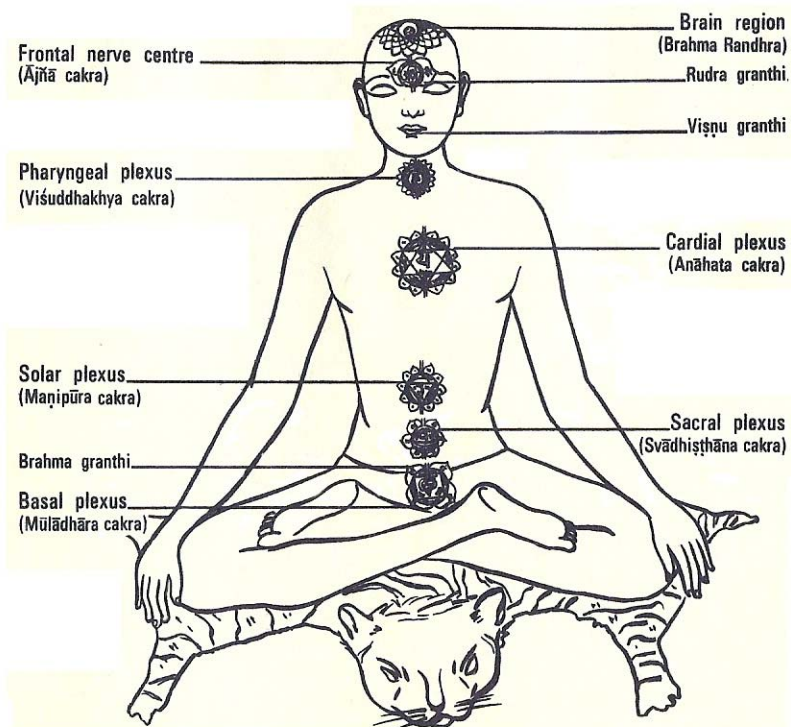
- 1) *Nāga*: opens and closes the wind pipe.
- 2) *Kūrma*: closes and opens the eyes.
- 3) *Krkkala*: activates hunger and thirst.
- 4) *Devadatta*: induces yawning and separates the body from its subtle form.
- 5) *Dhananjaya*: breaks up or decomposes.



## **CAKRA SECTION**

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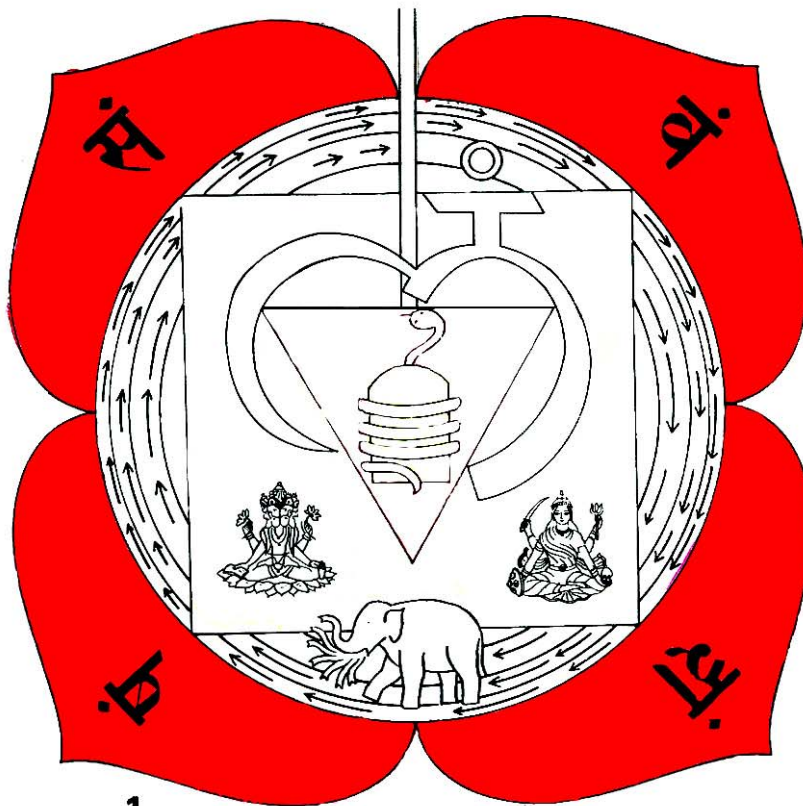
- 1 Granthis and cakras
- 2 Utthit Kuṇḍlinī
- 3 Mūlādhār cakra
- 4 Svādhiṣṭhān cakra
- 5 Manipur cakra
- 6 Anāhat cakra
- 7 Viśuddhākhyā cakra
- 8 Ajñā cakra
- 9 Sahasradal cakra



## GRANTHIS AND CAKRAS



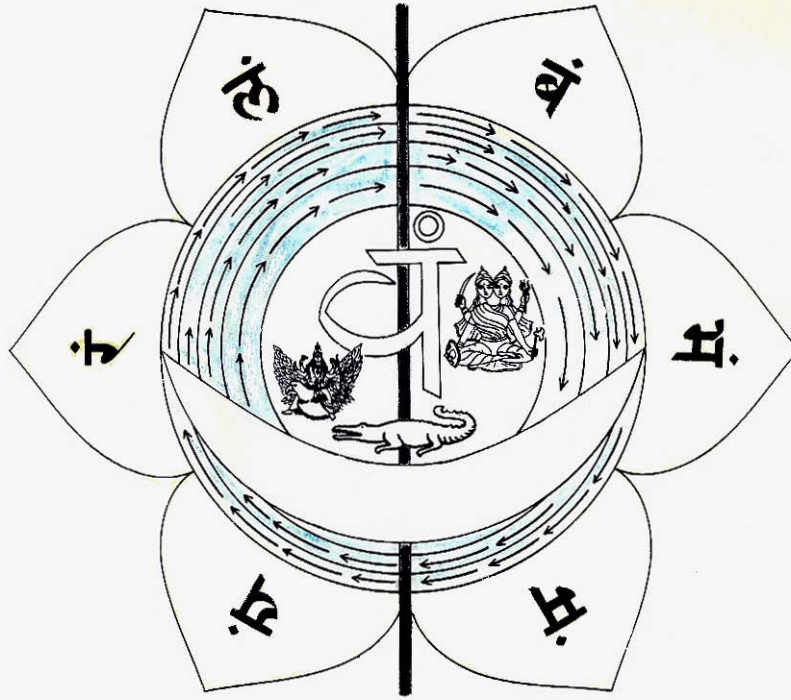
UTTHIT KUNḌALINĪ



1

## MŪLĀDHĀRA CAKRA

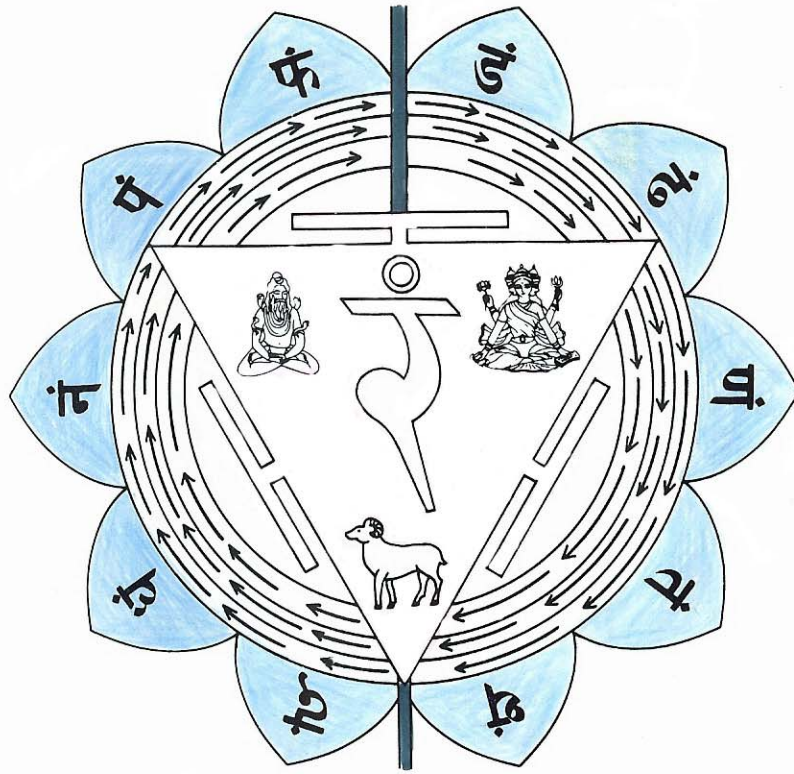
Location	perineum
Petals	four
Color	blood-red
Region	first world or Earth (Bhūr)
Syllables	vam to sam
Element	earthy
Elemental syllable	lam
Elemental color	yellow
Elemental property	odor
Vehicle	Indra's elephant
Presiding deity	Brahmā
Goddess	Dākinī
Mystical diagram	square
Organ of action	anus
Sense organ	nose



2

## SVĀDHIṢṬHĀNA CAKRA

Location	genitals
Petals	six
Color	vermillion
Region	second world (Bhuvā)
Syllables	baṁ to laṁ
Element	watery
Elemental syllable	vaṁ
Elemental color	white
Elemental property	taste
Vehicle	crocodile
Presiding deity	Viṣṇu
Goddess	Rākinī
Mystical diagram	crescent
Organ of action	generative organ
Sense organ	tongue

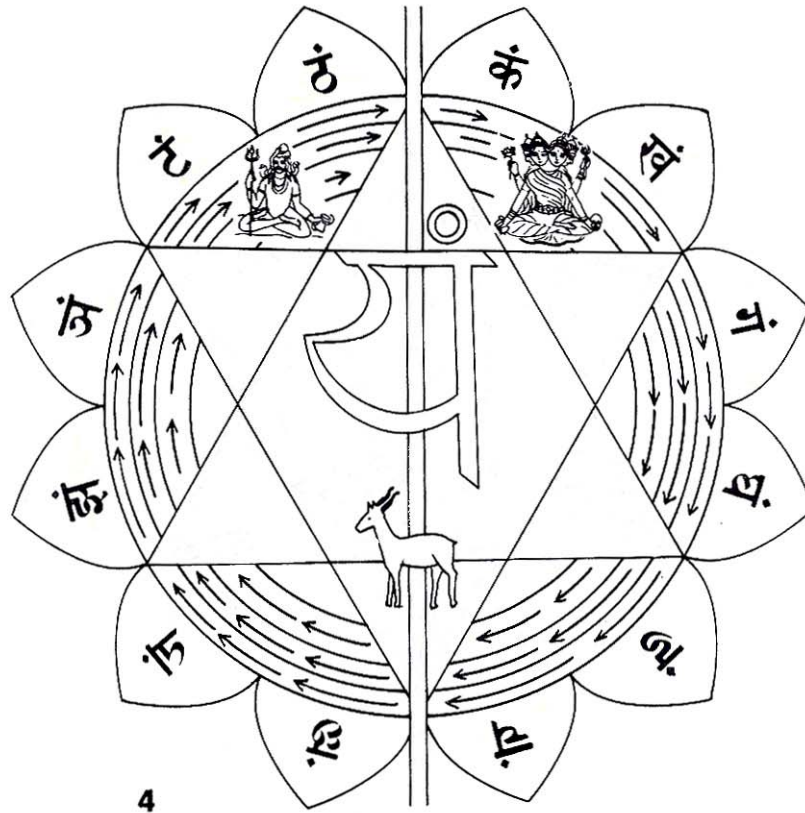


3

### MANIPURA CAKRA

Location	navel
Petals	ten
Color	green
Region	third world or heaven (svar)
Syllables	ḥriṃ to ḥriṃ
Element	fiery
Elemental syllable	ṛiṃ
Elemental color	blood-red
Elemental property	sight
Vehicle	ram
Presiding deity	Old Rudra
Goddess	Lākinī
Mystical diagram	triangle
Organ of action	feet
Sense organ	eyes

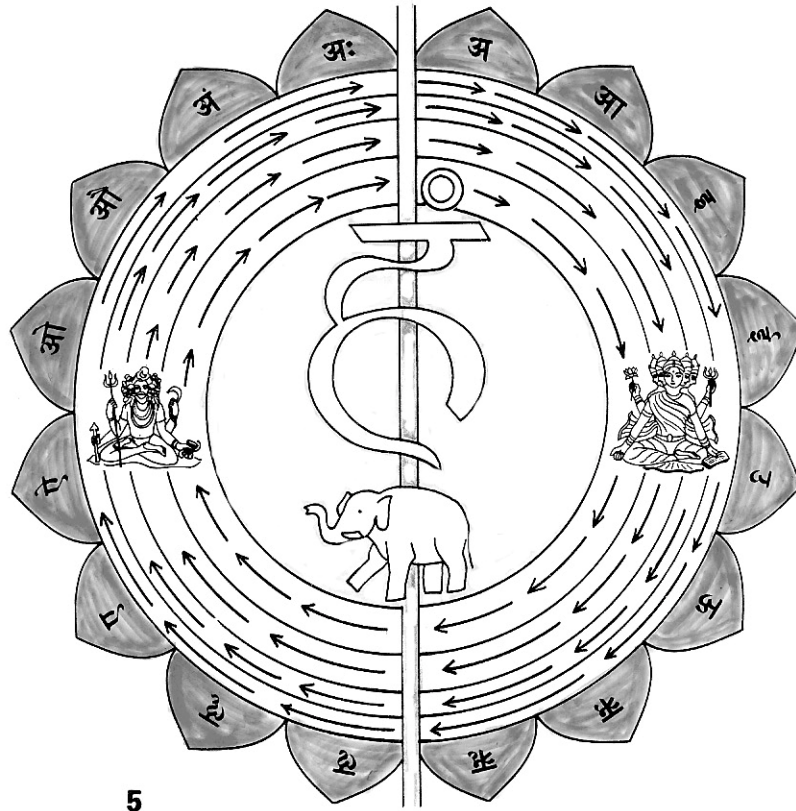




4

#### ANĀHATA CAKRA

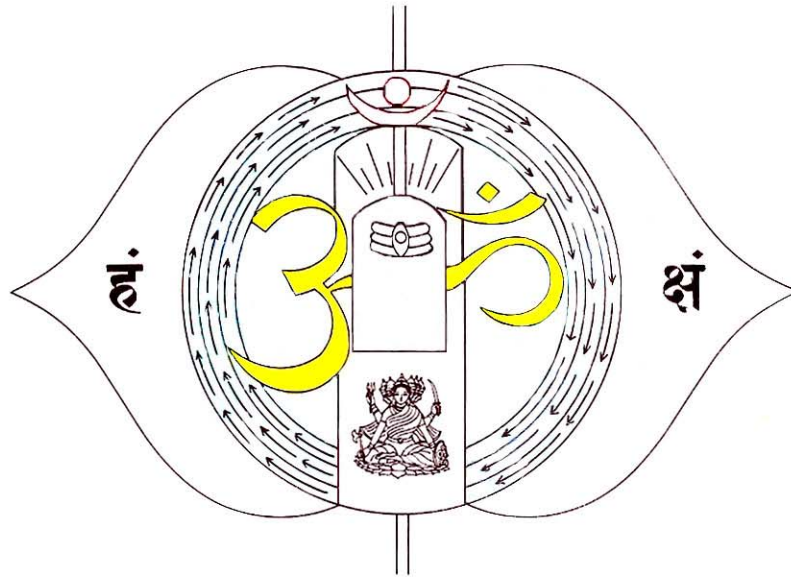
Location	heart
Petals	twelve
Color	golden
Region	fourth world (Mahar)
Syllables	kam to tham
Element	airy
Elemental syllable	yam
Elemental color	smoky
Elemental property	touch
Vehicle	antelope
Presiding deity	Isāna Rudra
Goddess	Kākinī
Mystical diagram	hexagon
Organ of action	hands
Sense organ	skin



5

### VIŚUDDHĀKHYA CAKRA

Location	throat
Petals	sixteen
Color	smoky
Region	fifth world (Janas)
Syllables	a to ah
Element	ethereal
Elemental syllable	ham
Elemental color	green
Elemental property	sound
Vehicle	elephant
Presiding deity	Pancavaktra
Goddess	Śākinī
Mystical diagram	spherical
Organ of action	tongue
Sense organ	ears



## 6

### ĀJÑĀ CAKRA

Location	frontal region
Petals	two
Color	white
Region	sixth world (Tapas)
Syllables	ham to kṣam
Element	highest element
Elemental syllable	aum
Elemental color	beyond color
Elemental property	will power
Vehicle	subtle sound
Presiding deity	Śiva
Goddess	Hākinī
Mystical diagram	phallic
Organ of action	beyond organs
Sense organ	beyond sense organs



## 7

### SAHASRADAL CAKRA

Location	crown of the head
Petals	thousand
Color	—
Region	seventh world (Satya)
Syllables	a to kṣā
Element	beyond elements
Elemental syllable	visarga
Elemental color	beyond color
Elemental property	beyond properties
Vehicle	dot of aum̐
Presiding deity	unmanifest Brahman
Goddess	Mahāśakti
Mystical diagram	circle
Organ of action	beyond organs
Sense organ	beyond sense organs