

# Introduction to Yoga Philosophy

## 6: Key Doctrines of Yoga (3)

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### Yogasutra Part Three: Synopsis

Of the eight limbs of Yoga, the last three are treated first: *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*. [1-3] Together called 'samyaama'; they are to be practiced successively, each on the perfection of the former. [4-5] They are interior (*antar anga*) aids to *sabija samadhi*, and exterior (*bahir anga*) to the *nirbija* one. [6-8]

Miraculous powers: Exposition of the modifications of mind changing in respect of properties, time and states as a prelude to the topic of miraculous powers. [9-15] Such powers, though considered achievements in worldly life, are obstacles in the development of meditation. [37] Detachment from these powers and ignoring of the temptations from divine beings leads to the annihilation of *kleshas* and eventually to *kaivalya* (liberation). [50-51]

Subject Focused on	Power Accessed
Threefold modification	Knowledge of the past and the future [16]
Mutual distinction between the aspects of language	Understanding of the speech of all animals [17]
Impressions of the past lives	Knowledge of the past lives [18]
Knowledge	Knowledge of another man's mind. [19-20]
Perceptible form of body	Disappearance at will [21]
Past action	Prior knowledge of death & impending dangers [22]
Outlook of friendship etc ( <i>maitri, karuna, mudita</i> )	Strength of making others happy etc [23]
Strength of elephant etc	Strength of elephant etc
Mode of light of the mind	Knowledge of subtle, hidden & distant objects [25]
Sun	Knowledge of the entire world [26] (Ancient map of the world)
Moon	System of stars [27]
North Star	Movements of stars [28]
Navel depression	System of the body [29]
Pipe of the throat	Cessation of hunger and thirst [30]
Turtle vein/artery	Firmness [31]
Light of the skull	Vision of the divine beings [32]
Pre-final vision	Omniscience [33]

Heart	Knowledge of mind [34]
Subjective cognition	Understanding of <i>purusha</i> [35]
	Perception of divine sound, touch etc [36]
Loosening of bond of mind, veins/arteries, stationing of the mind out irrespective of the body	Ability to enter others' bodies [38, 43]
<i>Udana</i> breath	Walking over the ground [39]
<i>Samana</i> breath	Burning/inflaming [40]
Contact of the space and ears	Divine ability of hearing [41]
Contact of the space and the body	Lightness: moving in the sky, on water [42]
Elements in five aspects:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Control over the elements [44]</li> <li>2. Powers such as becoming atomic, light (eight super powers); immunity from the normal effects of the elements, physical excellences [45]</li> <li>3. Excellences defined [46]</li> <li>4. Movement of the body with the speed of mind unrestricted operations of the organs [47]</li> <li>5. Control over the entire domain of the [48]</li> </ol>
Vision of the distinction of the intellect and the <i>purusha</i>	Ability of unrestricted knowledge and action [49]

Discriminatory knowledge arises when the Yogin focuses on the fact of the moment and its sequence. Present moment is the reality. [52] This knowledge is untainted by such distinctions as genus, characteristics, position. [53] It is, therefore, spontaneous, all-covering, all-time, and unsequential. [54] It results in total purity of the *purusha* and consequently in liberation. [55]

This part of *Yogasutra* deals mainly with the miraculous powers derived from Yogic practice as it develops. More than thirty such powers are enlisted with the warning that, for one who is genuinely interested in the ultimate objective of the Yoga, they are obstacles in the sense that they divert the practitioner's attention from the real objective. The general mechanism of these powers is that the practitioner acquires a particular power as he focuses his mind on the proper object. In explanation of this process of focusing, the initial *sutras* define the last three of the eight aids of Yoga (taken up for exposition in part two), together called *samyama* (focus).

The rationale of this exposition is that as one develops the strength of one's mind to visualise the essential nature of factors which make the world, one is freed from the restrictions of the physical world. This freedom endows the practitioner

with abilities which, though logical from the traditional outlook, appear as miracles to a man of the world. For most of us, these powers are but a matter of belief or disbelief. Even if looked at with disbelief, they can be justified on the ground that no man is normally prepared to adopt a hard course unless it promises him rewards that can attract him.

Though incidental to the main exposition, the exposition by Vyasa of what is a language made of is shows his insight in this subject. Language, he says, is identification – mutual superimposition – of sounds, senses and cognition. Analytically, these are different; but we are seldom aware of this reality, with the result that, for the common man, words are as much a fact as are the objects they signify. We are delighted as well as depressed by words; honoured as well as insulted; loved as well as hated. Another observation he has made is that every single word has the potentiality of a complete sentence. There are many more points in this discussion that may interest a linguist.

Another interesting point Vyasa has discussed is what is the reality of a substance viewed as possessing properties, existing in a time and undergoing various states, and concludes that the substance is the reality, the rest being aspects of the substance. The discussion reflects his insights into basic philosophical issues.

It may be interesting to go through the details of Vyasa's commentary on *sutra* [26] for an idea of what the world is according to Indian mythology. Briefly, it consists of seven tiers above, and seven below, – the earth being the first of the upper seven, – one over/below the other and covering the domains of heaven and hell. The earth consists of seven 'islands' – *dvipas*, one surrounding the inner and each surrounded by a sea of different composition, – salty water, sugarcane juice, liquor and so on. This portion can offer rich information to a student of mythology.