

Yoga-Tattva Upanishad

Translated by K. Narayanasvami Aiyar

Om !

May He protect us both together; may He nourish us both together;

May we work conjointly with great energy,

May our study be vigorous and effective;

May we not mutually dispute (or may we not hate any).

Om !

Let there be Peace in me !

Let there be Peace in my environment !

Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me !

1. I shall now describe Yoga-Tattva (Yoga-Truth) for the benefit of Yogins who are freed from all sins through the hearing and the studying of it.
2. The supreme Purusha called Vishnu, who is the great Yogin, the great being and the great Tapasvin, is seen as a lamp in the path of the truth.
3. The Grandfather (Brahma) having saluted the Lord of the universe (Vishnu) and having paid Him due respects, asked Him (thus): “Pray, explain to us the truth of Yoga which includes in it the eight subservients.”
4. To which Hrisiksha (the Lord of the senses or Vishnu) replied thus: “Listen. I shall explain its truth. All souls are immersed in happiness and sorrow through the snare of Maya.
- 5-6. Kaivalya, the supreme seat, is the path which gives them emancipation, which rends asunder the snare of Maya, which is the destroyer of birth, old age and disease and which enables one to overcome death. There are no other paths to salvation. Those who go round the net of Shastras are deluded by that knowledge.
7. It is impossible even for the Devas to describe that indescribable state. How can that which is self-shining be illuminated by the Shastras ?
8. That only which is without parts and stains and which is quiescent beyond all and free from decay becomes the Jiva (self) on account of the results of past virtues and sins.
9. How did that which is the seat of Paramatman, is eternal and above the state of all existing things and is of the form of wisdom and without stains attain the state of Jiva ?
10. A bubble arose in it as in water and in this (bubble) arose Ahankara. To it arose a ball (of body) made of the five (elements) and bound by Dhatus.
11. Know that to be Jiva which is associated with happiness and misery and hence is the term Jiva applied to Paramatman which is pure.
- 12-13. That Jiva is considered to be the Kevala (alone) which is freed from the stains of passion, anger, fear, delusion, greed, pride, lust, birth, death, miserliness, swoon, giddiness, hunger, thirst, ambition, shame, fright, heart-burning, grief and gladness.
14. So I shall tell you the means of destroying (these) sins. How could Jnana capable of giving Moksha arise certainly without Yoga ?
15. And even Yoga becomes powerless in (securing) Moksha when it is devoid of Jnana. So the

aspirant after emancipation should practise (firmly) both Yoga and Jnana.

16. The cycle of births and deaths comes only through Jnana and perishes only through Jnana. Jnana alone was originally. It should be known as the only means (of salvation).

17-18(a). That is Jnana through which one cognises (in himself) the real nature of Kaivalya as the supreme seat, the stainless, the partless and of the nature of Sachchidananda without birth, existence and death and without motion and Jnana.

18(b)-19. Now I shall proceed to describe Yoga to you: Yoga is divided into many kinds on account of its actions: (viz.,) Mantra-Yoga, Laya-Yoga, Hatha-Yoga and Raja-Yoga.

20. There are four states common to all these: (viz.,) Arambha, Ghata, Parichaya and Nishpatti.

21. O Brahma, I shall describe these to you. Listen attentively. One should practise the Mantra along with its Matrikas (proper intonations of the sounds) and others for a period of twelve years;

22. Then he gradually obtains wisdom along with the Siddhis, (such as) Anima, etc. Persons of weak intellect who are the least qualified for Yoga practise this.

23-24(a). The (second) Laya-Yoga tends towards the absorption of the Chitta and is described in myriads of ways; (one of which is) – one should contemplate upon the Lord who is without parts (even) while walking, sitting, sleeping, or eating. This is called Laya-Yoga.

24(b)-25. Now hear (the description of) Hatha-Yoga. This Yoga is said to possess (the following) eight subservients, Yama (forbearance), Niyama (religious observance), Asana (posture), Pranayama (suppression of breath), Pratyahara (subjugation of the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana, the contemplation on Hari in the middle of the eyebrows and Samadhi that is the state of equality.

26-27. Maha-Mudra, Maha-Bandha and Khechari, Jalandhara, Uddiyana and Mula-Bandha, uttering without intermission Pranava (OM) for a long time and hearing the exposition of the supreme truths, Vajroli, Amaroli and Sahajoli, which form a triad – all these separately I shall give a true description of.

28-29(a). O four-faced one (Brahma), among (the duties of) Yama moderate eating – and not others – forms the principal factor; and non-injury is most important in Niyama.

29(b). (The chief postures are) four (viz.,) Siddha, Padma, Simha and Bhadra.

30-31. During the early stages of practice the following obstacles take place, O four-faced one, (viz.,) laziness, idle talk, association with bad characters, acquisition of Mantras, etc., playing with metals (alchemy) and woman, etc., and mirage. A wise man having found out these should abandon them by the force of his virtues.

32. Then assuming Padma posture, he should practise Pranayama. He should erect a beautiful monastery with a very small opening and with no crevices.

33. It should be well pasted with cow-dung or with white cement. It should be carefully freed from bugs, mosquitoes and lice.

34. It should be swept well every day with a broom. It should be perfumed with good odours; and fragrant resins should burn in it.

35-36(a). Having taken his seat neither too high nor too low on a cloth, deer-skin and Kusa grass spread, one over the other, the wise man should assume the Padma posture and keeping his body erect and his hands folded in respect, should salute his tutelary deity.

36(b)-40. Then closing the right nostril with his right thumb, he should gradually draw in the air through the left nostril. Having restrained it as long as possible, he should again expel it through the right nostril slowly and not very fast. Then filling the stomach through the right nostril, he should retain it as long as he can and then expel it through the left nostril. Drawing the air through that nostril by which he expels, he should continue this in uninterrupted succession. The time taken in making a round of the knee with the palm of the hand, neither very slowly nor vary rapidly and snapping the fingers once is called a Matra.

41-44. Drawing the air through the left nostril for about sixteen Matras and having retained it (within) for about sixty-four Matras, one should expel it again through the right nostril for about thirty-two Matras. Again fill the right nostril as before (and continue the rest). Practise cessation of breath four times daily (viz.,) at sunrise, noon, sunset and midnight, till eighty (times are reached). By a continual practice for about three months, the purification of the Nadis takes place. When the Nadis have become purified, certain external signs appear on the body of the Yogin.

45-46(a). I shall proceed to describe them. (They are) lightness of the body, brilliancy of complexion, increase of the gastric fire, leanness of the body and along with these, absence of restlessness in the body.

46(b)-49. The proficient in Yoga should abandon the food detrimental to the practice of Yoga. He should give up salt, mustard; things sour, hot, pungent, or bitter vegetables; asafoetida, etc., worship of fire, women, walking, bathing at sunrise, emaciation of the body by fasts, etc. During the early stages of practice, food of milk and ghee is ordained; also food consisting of wheat, green pulse and red rice are said to favour the progress. Then he will be able to retain his breath as long as he likes.

50-53. By thus retaining the breath as long as he likes, Kevala Kumbhaka (cessation of breath without inspiration and expiration) is attained. When Kevala Kumbhaka is attained by one and thus expiration and inspiration are dispensed with, there is nothing unattainable in the three worlds to him. In the commencement (of his practice), sweat is given out; he should wipe it off. Even after that, owing to the retaining of the breath, the person practising it gets phlegm. Then by an increased practice of Dharana, sweat arises.

54. As a frog moves by leaps, so the Yogin sitting in the Padma posture moves on the earth. With a (further) increased practice, he is able to rise from the ground.

55. He, while seated in Padma posture, levitates. There arises to him the power to perform extraordinary feats.

56. He does (or should) not disclose to others his feats of great powers (in the path). Any pain small or great, does not affect the Yogin.

57. Then excretions and sleep are diminished; tears, rheum in the eye, salivary flow, sweat and bad smell in the mouth do not arise in him.

58-60. With a still further practice, he acquires great strength by which he attains Bhuchara Siddhi, which enables him to bring under his control all the creatures that tread this earth; tigers, Sarabhas (an animal with eight legs), elephants, with bulls or lions die on being struck by the palm of the Yogin. He becomes as beautiful as the god of love himself.

61-62. All females being taken up with the beauty of his person will desire to have intercourse with him. If he so keeps connection, his virility will be lost; so abandoning all copulation with women, he should continue his practice with great assiduity. By the preservation of the semen, a good odour pervades the body of the Yogin.

63. Then sitting in a secluded place, he should repeat Pranava (OM) with three Pluta-Matras (or prolonged intonation) for the destruction of his former sins.

64. The Mantra, Pranava (OM) destroys all obstacles and all sins. By practising thus he attains the Arambha (beginning or first) state.

65-66. Then follows the Ghata (second State) – one which is acquired by constantly practising suppression of breath. When a perfect union takes place between Prana and Apana, Manas and Buddhi, or Jivatma and Paramatman without opposition, it is called the Ghata state. I shall describe its signs.

67. He may now practise only for about one-fourth of the period prescribed for practice before. By day and evening, let him practise only for a Yama (3 hours).

68-69(a). Let him practise Kevala Kumbhaka once a day. Drawing away completely the organs from the objects of sense during cessation of breath is called Pratyahara.

69(b). Whatever he sees with his eyes, let him consider as Atman.

70. Whatever he hears with his ears, let him consider as Atman. Whatever he smells with his nose, let him consider as Atman.

71. Whatever he tastes with his tongue, let him consider as Atman. Whatever the Yogin touches with his skin, let him consider as Atman.

72. The Yogin should thus unwearied gratify his organs of sense for a period of one Yama every day with great effort.

73-74. Then various wonderful powers are attained by the Yogin, such as clairvoyance, clair-audience, ability to transport himself to great distances within a moment, great power of speech, ability to take any form, ability to become invisible and the transmutation of iron into gold when the former is smeared over with his excretion.

75-76. That Yogin who is constantly practising Yoga attains the power to levitate. Then should the wise Yogin think that these powers are great obstacles to the attainment of Yoga and so he should never take delight in them. The king of Yogins should not exercise his powers before any person whatsoever.

77. He should live in the world as a fool, an idiot, or a deaf man, in order to keep his powers concealed.

78-79. His disciples would, without doubt, request him to show his powers for the gratification of their own desires. One who is actively engaged in one's duties forgets to practise (Yoga); so he should practise day and night Yoga without forgetting the words of the Guru. Thus passes the Ghata state to one who is constantly engaged in Yoga practice.

80. To one nothing is gained by useless company, since thereby he does not practise Yoga. So one

should with great effort practise Yoga.

81-83(a). Then by this constant practice is gained the Parichaya state (the third state). Vayu (or breath) through arduous practice pierces along with Agni the Kundalini through thought and enters the Susumna uninterrupted. When one's Chitta enters Susumna along with Prana, it reaches the high seat (of the head probably) along with Prana.

83(b). There are the five elements: Prithvi, Apas, Agni, Vayu and Akasa.

84-87(a). To the body of the five elements, there is the fivefold Dharana. From the feet to the knees is said to be the region of Prithvi, is four-sided in shape, is yellow in colour and has the Varna (or letter) 'La'. Carrying the breath with the letter 'La' along the region of earth (viz., from the foot to the knees) and contemplating upon Brahma with four faces and four mouths and of a golden colour, one should perform Dharana there for a period of two hours. He then attains mastery over the earth. Death does not trouble him, since he has obtained mastery over the earth element.

87(b)-90. The region of Apas is said to extend from the knees to the anus. Apas is semi-lunar in shape and white in colour and has 'Va' for its Bija (seed) letter. Carrying up the breath with the letter 'Va' along the regions of Apas, he should contemplate on the God Narayana having four arms and a crowned head, as being of the colour of pure crystal, as dressed in orange clothes and as decayless; and practising Dharana there for a period of two hours, he is freed from all sins. Then there is no fear for him from water and he does not meet his death in water.

91. From the anus to the heart is said to be the region of Agni. Agni is triangular in shape, of red colour and has the letter 'Ra' for its (Bija) seed.

92-93(a). Raising the breath made resplendent through the letter 'Ra' along the region of fire, he should contemplate on Rudra, who has three eyes, who grants all wishes, who is of the colour of the midday sun, who is daubed all over with holy ashes and who is of a pleased countenance.

93(b)-94(a). Practising Dharana there for a period of two hours, he is not burnt by fire even though his body enters the fire-pit.

94(b)-96. From the heart to the middle of the eyebrows is said to be the region of Vayu. Vayu is hexangular in shape, black in colour and shines with the letter 'Ya'. Carrying the breath along the region of Vayu, he should contemplate on Ishvara, the Omniscient, as possessing faces on all sides; and practising Dharana there for two hours, he enters Vayu and then Akasa.

97-98(a). The Yogin does not meet his death through the fear of Vayu. From the centre of the eyebrows to the top of the head is said to be the region of Akasa, is circular in the shape, smoky in colour and shining with letter 'Ha'.

98(b)-101(a). Raising the breath along the region of Akasa, he should contemplate on Sadashiva in the following manner, as producing happiness, as of the shape of Bindu, as the great Deva, as having the shape of Akasa, as shining like pure crystal, as wearing the rising crescent of moon on his head, as having five faces, ten hands and three eyes, as being of a pleased countenance, as armed with all weapons, as adorned with all ornaments, as having Uma (the goddess) in one-half of his body, as ready to grant favours and as the cause of all the causes.

101(b). By practising Dharana in the region of Akasa, he obtains certainly the power of levitating in the Akasa (ether).

102. Wherever he stays, he enjoys supreme bliss. The proficient in Yoga should practise these five

Dharanas.

103. Then his body becomes strong and he does not know death. That great-minded man does not die even during the deluge of Brahma.

104-105. Then he should practise Dharana for a period of six Ghatikas (2 hours, 24 minutes). Restraining the breath in (the region of) Akasa and contemplating on the deity who grants his wishes – this is said to be Saguna Dhyana capable of giving (the Siddhis) Anima, etc. One who is engaged in Nirguna Dhyana attains the stage of Samadhi.

106. Within twelve days at least, he attains the stage of Samadhi. Restraining his breath, the wise one becomes an emancipated person.

107. Samadhi is that state in which the Jivatman (lower self) and the Paramatman (higher Self) are differenceless (or of equal state). If he desires to lay aside his body, he can do so.

108-109(a). He will become absorbed in Parabrahman and does not require Utkranti (going out or up). But if he does not so desire and if his body is dear to him, he lives in all the worlds possessing the Siddhis of Anima, etc.

109(b)-110. Sometimes he becomes a Deva and lives honoured in Svarga; or he becomes a man or an Yaksha through his will. He can also take the form of a lion, tiger, elephant, or horse through his own will.

111. The Yogin becoming the great Lord can live as long as he likes. There is difference only in the modes of procedure but the result is the same.

112-115(a). Place the left heel pressed on the Anus, stretch the right leg and hold it firmly with both hands. Place the head on the breast and inhale the air slowly. Restrain the breath as long as you can and then slowly breathe out. After practising it with the left foot, practise it with the right. Place the foot that was stretched before on the thigh. This is Maha-Bandha and should be practised on both sides.

115(b)-117(a). The Yogin sitting in Maha-Bandha and having inhaled the air with intent mind, should stop the course of Vayu (inside) by means of the throat Mudra and occupying the two sides (of the throat) with speed. This is called Mahavedha and is frequently practised by the Siddhas.

117(b)-118(a). With the tongue thrust into the interior cavity of the head (or throat) and with the eyes intent on the spot between the eyebrows, this is called Khechari-Mudra.

118(b)-119(a). Contracting the muscles of the neck and placing the head with a firm will on the breast, this is called the Jalandhara (Bandha); and is a lion to the elephant of death.

119(b)-120(a). That Bandha by which Prana flies through Susumna is called Uddiyana Bandha by the Yogins.

120(b)-121(a). Pressing the heel firmly against the anus, contracting the anus and drawing up the Apana, this is said to be Yoni-Bandha.

121(b)-122(a). Through Mula-Bandha, Prana and Apana as well as nada and Bindu are united and gives success in Yoga; there is no doubt about this.

122(b)-124(a). The one practising in a reversed manner (or on both sides) which destroys all

diseases, the gastric fire is increased. Therefore a practitioner should collect a large quantity of provisions, (for) if he takes a small quantity of food, the fire (within) will consume his body in a moment.

124(b)-125. On the first day, he should stand on his head with the feet raised up for a moment. He should increase this period gradually every day. Wrinkles and greyness of hair will disappear within three months.

126. He who practises only for a period of a Yama (twenty-four minutes) every day conquers time. He who practises Vajroli becomes a Yogin and the repository of all Siddhis.

127-128. If the Yoga Siddhis are ever to be attained, he only has them within his reach. He knows the past and the future and certainly moves in the air. He who drinks of the nectar thus is rendered immortal day by day. He should daily practise Vajroli. Then it is called Amaroli.

129-131(a). Then he obtains the Raja-Yoga and certainly he does not meet with obstacles. When a Yogin fulfils his action by Raja-Yoga, then he certainly obtains discrimination and indifference to objects. Vishnu, the great Yogin, the grand one of great austerities and the most excellent Purusha is seen as a lamp in the path of truth.

131(b)-134(a). That breast from which one suckled before (in his previous birth) he now presses (in love) and obtains pleasure. He enjoys the same genital organ from which he was born before. She who was once his mother will now be wife and she who is now wife is (or will be) verily mother. He who is now father will be again son and he who is now son will be again father. Thus are the egos of this world wandering in the womb of birth and death like a bucket in the wheel of a well and enjoying the worlds.

134(b)-136(a). There are the three worlds, three Vedas, three Sandhyas (morning, noon and evening), three Svaras (sounds), three Agnis and Gunas, and all these are placed in the three letters (OM). He who understands that which is indestructible and is the meaning of the three (OM) – by him are all these worlds strung. This is the Truth, the supreme seat.

136(b)-138(a). As the smell in the flower, as the ghee in the milk, as the oil in the gingelly seed and as the gold in the quartz, so is the lotus situated in the heart. Its face is downwards and its stem upwards. Its Bindu is downwards and in its centre is situated Manas.

138(b)-139(a). By the letter 'A', the lotus becomes expanded; by the letter 'U', it becomes split (or opened). By the letter 'M', it obtains Nada; and the Ardha-Matra (half-metre) is silence.

139(b)-140(a). The person engaged in Yoga obtains the supreme seat, which is like a pure crystal, which is without parts and which destroys all sins.

140(b)-141. As a tortoise draws its hands and head within itself, so drawing in air thus and expelling it through the nine holes of the body, he breathes upwards and forwards.

142. Like a lamp in an air-tight jar which is motionless, so that which is seen motionless through the process of Yoga in the heart and which is free from turmoil, after having been drawn from the nine holes, is said to be Atman alone.”

Om !

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May we work conjointly with great energy,

May our study be vigorous and effective;

May we not mutually dispute (or may we not hate any).

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Let there be Peace in my environment !

Let there be Peace in the forces that act on me !

Here ends the Yogatattva Upanishad belonging to the Krishna-Yajur-Veda.