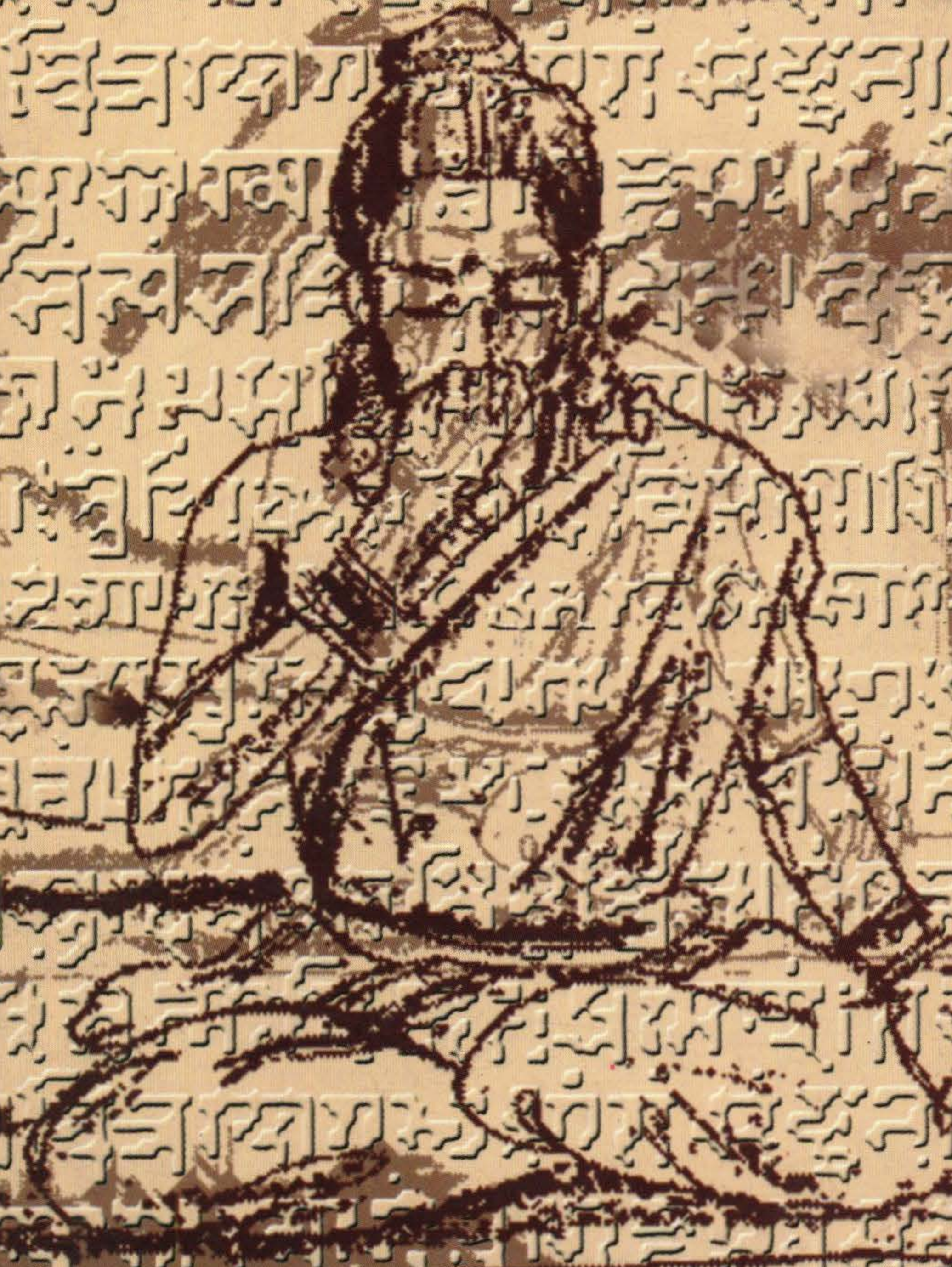


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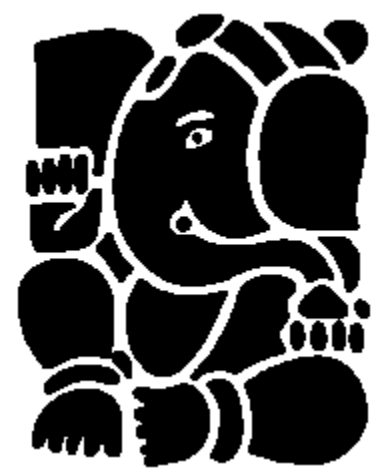


Translated by **A.G. Mohan**

Yoga-Yajnavalkya

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A. G. Mohan

Edited by
John. J. Ely Ph.D.



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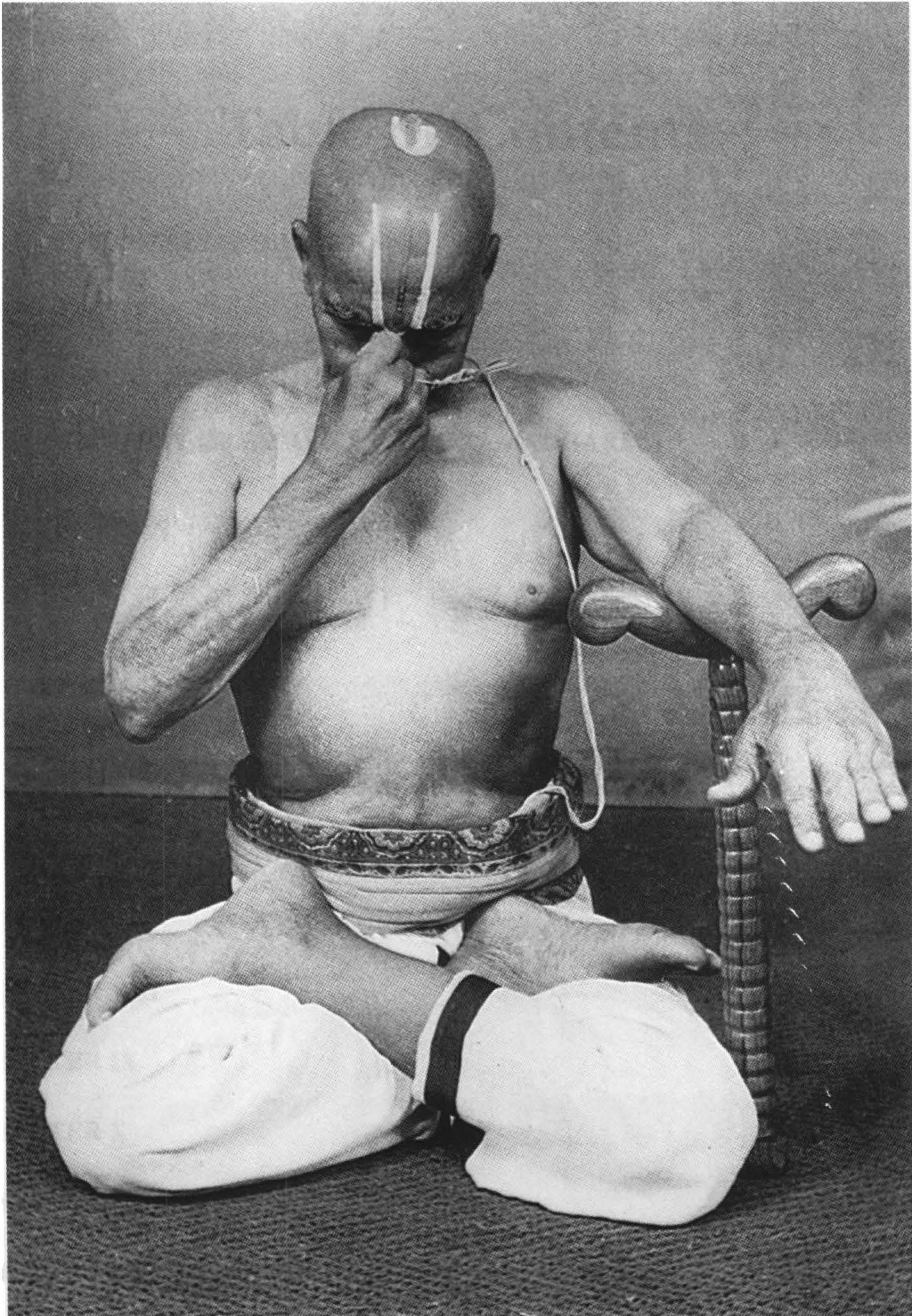
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Dedicated to
Yogacharya T. Krishnamacharya
1888-1989

Table of Contents

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION	1
INTRODUCTION	3
UNIQUE FEATURES OF THIS TEXT	19
THE VEDIC WAY OF LIFE - VARNASHRAMADHARMA	23
CHAPTER I	31
CHAPTER II	43
CHAPTER III	49
CHAPTER IV	55
CHAPTER V	69
CHAPTER VI	75
CHAPTER VII	91
CHAPTER VIII	99
CHAPTER IX	107
CHAPTER X	115
CHAPTER XI	121
CHAPTER XII	127
APPENDIX I	135

Translator's Introduction

In 1975, I began study of the Yoga Yajnavalkya, a very ancient, comprehensive, authentic and logical exposition of the practice of Yoga, with my teacher, Sri T. Krishnamacharya. Although there are many other, better-known texts on Yoga, such as the Hathayogapradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Siva Samhita, Yoga Kundalini Upanishad, and Yogatattvopaniṣad, he regarded this as one of the most important yoga text. This is partly because all of these later texts have borrowed slokas (verses) from the Yoga Yajnavalkya. As I studied this text, over years, reflecting on it, continuing to practice and teach yoga, the depths of its practical teachings began to unfold. For example, I have found the Pranayama techniques discussed in this text to be very useful in my teaching. I have translated this book primarily from the point of view of a yoga teacher and practitioner. Some sections of this text were not clear to me, especially in the area of Kundalini. However, my studies in the last decade on other areas of Vedic sciences like Ayurveda, Saktatantra etc. helped to clear some of these doubts. This translation is based on the BBRA Society Monograph, No.3, Bombay, 1954. The BBRA publication contains 506 verses and has been collated from 16 ancient manuscripts. (Refer Appendix I for other details)

Furthermore, as outlined later, there are several features which are unique to this text. From a practical point of view, the most striking feature of this text is the detailed explanation of the spiritual and the therapeutic applications of Pranayama, the science of controlling the vital currents by way of breath control. Western readers may find several aspects of the Vedic tradition implicitly assumed or explicitly discussed herein somewhat difficult to follow. For example, the chapter on meditation (Dhyana) describes the imaging of the Divine as "with form" (saguna) for meditative purposes. This practice is derived directly from the Vedic tradition, which prescribes meditation on a particular form of the Divine (saguna Brahman; for example, Siva or Vishnu) as a method to reach the transcendent, formless Deity (nirguna Brahman; or the Godhead, in Western theology). Also, the text places rather great importance on the Vedic concept of varnashramadharma, the division of labor in traditional Vedic society and the corresponding four stages of life. Although I have tried to briefly explain the significance of varnashramadharma and its centrality in the Vedic tradition, I realize that the fuller discussion necessary to do it justice is beyond the scope of this book. The reader should bear in mind, however, that the yoga teachings described herein can, then as now, only be fully appreciated and realized within the context of an entire way of life.

I have intended for a long time to translate this text. But it has only become a reality thanks to the efforts of my daughter, Nitya, and my son, Ganesh, an Ayurvedic medical student, both of whom assisted in the translation and tirelessly typed at the computer, proofreading and making corrections. I thank my wife, Indra, for the drawings and for her assistance and valuable suggestions as a yoga teacher. I also thank Sri R. Krishnamurthy Sastrigal, Principal of the Sanskrit College, Madras, India, for his assistance in the comparative study of the various readings of the manuscripts before translation. Many thanks are also due to John J. Ely, whose patient editing of the English Introduction, Appendix, and chapter summaries in this text has helped make it possible for this classic work on yoga to reach a wider audience.

I humbly place this book at the feet of my acarya, Sri T. Krishnamacharya.

Introduction

All human beings, regardless of race, sex, caste, creed or nationality, have one common goal: to become happy and remain that way always. We all orient our actions to attain this goal. One of the earliest known non-Vedic Indian philosophies echoed this desire in its teaching, “Let us eat, drink and be merry”. The version of this materialistic philosophy which existed during Vedic days was called “Carvaka.” As per this viewpoint, the so-called soul is merely a conscious body, enjoyment is the only purpose of human life, and death is liberation. Sankhya philosophy, probably the oldest of the six Darsanas (“views” or schools) of Vedic wisdom to be discussed in more detail later, challenged these conclusions of the Materialist school by questioning its very foundations. Sankhya, a word derived from a Sanskrit root meaning “right knowledge,” means “enquiry.” An enquiry into the nature of the world and its constituents reveals that everything, all living beings, inanimate objects, and every potential source of sensory pleasure or displeasure, undergo change. Our interactions with the external world can produce pleasure at one time but pain at another time. But it is not simply that different people, situations or objects produce pain (or pleasure) the same way every time. The same person, object or activity maybe agreeable at one time but disagreeable or annoying at another. For example, a cold drink on a hot day can be quite refreshing, but a dozen cold drinks would lose their taste or make our sinuses ache. Likewise, a woollen jacket may be quite cozy in winter but unbearably hot in summer. And so also with persons: A newlywed spouse may be an angel at 20 yet become a demon at 30, even as she becomes an angel for someone else! These seeming changes are due to the ceaseless flux of our minds. In addition, natural calamities may interfere with our pleasure, for example, our dream home in the Sierra Nevadas might be destroyed in a mud slide without insurance for water damage, or a typhoon might hit Bangladesh, destroy everything in its path and cause widespread human suffering. Everything in the world changes ceaselessly and it is this very impermanence which seems to be at the root of all our disturbances, disappointments and heartbreaks. However, we can occasionally glimpse an entity within us which observes events yet remains apart and unchanged by fluctuation in our mind or in the external world. This entity seems to endure beyond change. Sankhya philosophy taught that change, in the form of the decay of a desirable situation, or the failure of a better situation to materialize, lies at the root of our unhappiness and our problems. The Sankhya solution is to search within ourselves to find and comprehend this entity, the changeless Seer. To remain as this changeless Seer constitutes the state of total freedom. This is what all of us are looking for. All other desires ultimately stem from this desire to be free from the contingencies of external circumstances. Even our quest for money or power can be seen as an expression of this desire to be free.

The Vedas proposed the means to reach that state of total freedom. The Vedas also proposed how to live harmoniously at the individual level and how to live with honour in the larger society. They suggested that all actions have consequences, for the individual as well as for society. As something happens within one, the other is affected. Therefore the Vedic seers laid down the code of conduct in the form of varnashramadharma, which allowed proper interpersonal relationship and also provided yoga as a means for personal freedom. In other words, the Vedas provided the means to attain personal freedom with proper interpersonal relationship.

To understand clearly what the Vedas propose, it is first essential to understand the nature of several philosophical entities discussed in the Vedic viewpoints and the relationships between them. These entities were inferred from attempts to answer questions that face a sincere seeker of truth, questions such as “Who am I”, “Where did this world come from” and “What happens to me and this world after death” and so on. The Vedas suggested answers to these questions by positing three fundamental

entities in the universe: the Seer, the Seen, and the Divine. The six Darśanas (“views” or schools) of Vedic wisdom not only use different names for these entities, but they also view the relationships between these entities quite differently. For example, Sāṅkhya used the terms “Puruṣa” and “Prakṛti” for the seer and the seen respectively, while Yoga uses the words “drashta” and “drśyam.” For our purposes, we will use the word “Seer” to denote the changeless observer (known variously as jiva, atman, or Puruṣa), and “Seen” for the changing world of the mind, matter and senses (also known as Prakṛti or Maya), and the Divine to denote God both without form (nirguṇa, or the Godhead) and with form (saguṇa, or God in a personalized form, like Siva or Viṣṇu). The following discussion is an overview intended for a general understanding of the concepts and entities involved in Vedic thought and discussed in the Yoga Yajñavalkya, and should not be mistaken for an in-depth critique or analysis of the different philosophies¹.

Seen

The Seen consists of the external world of the senses and also includes the mind. In Vedic thought, the Seen consists of the three qualities or guṇas: sattva or purity, rajas or passion, and tamas or dullness. Our mind is unsteady, changing from moment to moment as it becomes attracted and attached to various sensory or mental objects, one after the other. Because we mistakenly identify ourselves with our mind, we continually shift along with it, from one sense object, thought or desire to another. This constant motion among external sense objects results in either pleasure or pain, depending on whether our desires or aversions for sensory objects are temporarily satisfied or not. Continual oscillation is normal so long as we are completely enveloped by the mind. During sleep, the mind recedes and we are completely lost to the world. Yet the moment we awaken, the mind returns and we begin the process of mistaken identification with it all over again. The fact that we continued to exist while we were asleep, even though our mind was absent, suggests there must be an entity other than the mind, continuously underlying our varied experience.

Seer

This entity which is continuously present, whether we are awake or asleep, thinking, dreaming or sleeping, is the Seer. Unlike the Seen, which consists of the three Guṇas and undergoes constant change, the Seer is beyond the Guṇas and does not change. The Seer is simply an eternal observer which perceives the world through the mind and its senses, while itself remaining unaffected and unchanged. During sleep, when the mind, the senses, and the external world are absent, the Seer alone remains. To remain serenely detached from the world as the Seer is our natural state, the state of freedom. But through our mistaken identification with the mind, its objects and its senses, the Seer becomes bound by the Seen, thus leading to a state of bondage to the external world of time and circumstance.

Divine

The third entity is God, the Divine, the Absolute. The Divine is perfect and complete, unblemished by the world and hence eternally free, and can therefore set other beings free. The Divine is beyond the flux of the three guṇas. Not all the six Darśanas accept the Divine and, even among those which do accept the Divine, there are considerable differences of opinion with regard to the qualities attributed to it. In several places, the Brahman is used. This is a word of neuter gender which can therefore be worshiped in either male or female forms. The Divine is transcendent, what Western intellectuals call the Godhead. But the Divine can also be worshipped in a particular form, for example, as Lord

¹ The interested reader may refer to any variety of books at different levels on this topic, including: R.C. Zaehner, *Hinduism*, C. Sharma, *A Critical Survey on Indian Philosophy*; H. Zimmer, *Philosophies of India*, S. Radhakrishnan’s 2-volume, *Indian Philosophy*, or Dasgupta’s 5-volume opus, *Indian Philosophy*.

Krishna of the Bhagavad Gita or Jesus Christ of the Gospels, in order to realize the transcendent unity. As Sankaracharya stated in his commentary (bhashya) to the Brahmasutras (I.I.20), "...a limitation of powers is only for the purpose of meditation (upasana). The highest Lord may, in order to gratify his devout worshippers, assume through the power of Maya, any form he likes."

The Relationship between the Seer, Seen and the Divine

The words, "Seer" and "Seen" are derived from the same Sanskrit root which means "to see". Though the Seer and the Seen are quite different in character, one does not exist without the other. In fact, they normally appear to be the same because of our mistaken identification with the mind. This confusion is considered a form of bondage, because it sullies the clarity of our eternal Self with the ceaseless flux of the world of forms. However it is possible to attain freedom through overcoming this misidentification of our true self with the limited mind. The goal of Yoga practice is to reach this state of freedom. As the Yogasutras state, this goal is possible either by our own efforts of practice (abhyasa) and detachment (vairagya) (YS-I.12) or by surrender to the Divine (Iswarapranidhana) (YS-I.23). The Divine, who is already free can release another in bondage. Therefore, cultivating a relationship of devotion and surrender to the Divine is essential for liberation. Furthermore, although the Divine is eternally free, the Seen is considered a manifestation of the Divine by some schools. Hence, a person can attain freedom through the grace of the Divine, because it is the Seen which has bound the Seer and Divine grace can allow release.

Once we realize that mistaken identification with the Seen is the root cause of the problem of our suffering and dissatisfaction and understand that the path to freedom lies in separating ourselves from the mind, we can then make efforts to detach ourselves from the fluctuations of our mind. Theoretically, it is possible to withdraw from the Seen by sheer will and personal effort, to push it away and stand alone as the Seer. This effort is an inward or return movement rather than an outward or external movement. This is the methodology proposed by the Sankhya darsana. In it, the personal center of operation or vantage point is shifted such that we remain as the Seer. The essence of this process is to detach our sense of self from the events occurring in our own mind.

Yet we do not have even a clue what our mind really is, nor about its origin, existence or functioning because we are completely enmeshed in our identification with our mind. Moreover, when we first begin this Sankhya practice, we are aware only of our mind; the existence of the Seer is only an inference or an article of faith. We can visualize these entities in the diagram or perhaps imagine ourselves as an eternal Seer, but in practice we continue to identify ourselves with our mind. How can we use our mind to detach our mind from our true self? How can the mind or ego annihilate itself? We do not know the origins of the "I" thought, which is the cause of all our bondage. Yet with the thought of "I" arises the whole world each morning the moment we awake. A host of these and related difficult questions will face a sincere seeker on the Sankhya path of wisdom.

Consequently, the yoga darsana recognized the Divine as another, higher means to detach our mind from the Seen. The Divine should not be construed as an additional entity separate from the rest of creation, for the very existence of the Seer and the Seen is possible only because of the Divine. Thus, non-dual Vedanta philosophy strove to demonstrate the truth that the Divine, the manifest world (the Seen) and the individual soul (the Seer) were non-different. Thus, the Divine is always within us and always with us. Our realization of this eternal truth is only a question of time, dedication and devotion to our practice.

With these basics in mind, let us now return to our discussion of Sankhya, Yoga and Vedanta.

Sankhya Philosophy

The founder of Sankhya philosophy is Kapila. The original Sankhya Sutras have not survived but the Sankhya Karika, in the form of verses of Isvara Krishna (5th c. CE) are available. The Sankhya theory of the evolution of the material universe is accepted by the other schools of Vedic thought, as well as by the medical science of Ayurveda. Though based upon the Vedas, Sankhya philosophy is atheistic. It is considered one of the six Vedic darsanas because it accepts the authority of the Vedas and it proposes a solution to the problem of impermanence, change and liberation.

The Sankhya darsana discusses the elements which constitute the world, the nature of these constituents and how they evolve in the changing world. Sankhya divided the universe into 25 categories, 24 of which concerned the Seen and the 25th of which was Purusha, the Seer. The conclusion of Sankhya's analysis is that the Seen will continue to change, and we have no control over it. But by identifying with, and remaining as, the unchanging Seer, we need not continue to mistakenly identify ourselves with the Seen and its ceaseless flux which generates all sorrow. The method proposed by the Sankhya philosophy to remain as the Seer is enquiry (Jijnasa) into the nature of the Seer and the seen. Sankhya suggests that, by practice (abhyasa) of "I am not the seen" and detachment (vairagya) from the Seen, it is possible to achieve the state of freedom. The seen, being comprised of the three gunas (sattva, rajas and tamas), is impermanent and forever changing. Sankhya analyzes the problems that arise because of the misidentification of the Seer with the Seen, but it does not analyze their origins nor other metaphysical topics such as what happens after death. In this regard, Sankhya is like Buddhism which negated the value of metaphysical topics, instead sticking closely to experience and concentrating on practical techniques to eliminate suffering.

Yoga Philosophy

The Yoga Darshana, the next school of Vedic thought, was synthesized from the Vedas by Patanjali in the form of the Yogasutras. Yoga accepts the basics of the Seer and Seen, as proposed by Sankhya, but with the important difference of the introduction of Iswara, the Divine. Thus, in addition to the Sankhyan solution of practice and detachment, the Yogasutras state (I.23) that freedom from the Seen can also be achieved by surrender to the Divine. Therefore, we can develop a relationship with the Divine, then surrender to that Divinity and thereby attain freedom from entrapment in Prakriti, the world of matter and mind. In the Yogasutras, Iswara (the Divine) is accepted with qualification: Ishwara is considered a special kind of Purusha or Seer, the first among all teachers, beyond time and the cycle of action (Karma) and Bondage (Klesa). Much like Sankhya, Yoga does not address metaphysical questions on the origins of the Seen and the Seer.

Vedanta Philosophy

The Vedanta was synthesized by Vyasa (sometimes identified as Badarayana) in the form of the "Brahma sutras." The Brahma sutras is a dense aphoristic work which logically analyzed and systematized the sometimes seemingly contradictory thought of the Upanishads. These sutras address issues on the origin of the Seer and the Seen, the role of the Divine and other topics in ontology and metaphysics. Within Vedanta as a whole, there are many different schools of thought, most of which are based on different interpretations of the Brahma Sutras. The most well-known school of Vedanta in the West, Advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy, is often mistakenly identified with the whole of Vedanta. Still, the influence of this school is so widespread that even the Sakta/Saiva tantras have connections to non-dual, Advaita philosophy.

The Practice of Yoga

Though the other Vedic Darshanas do not completely accept the philosophy of the Yoga darshana all of them, including the non-vedic schools of Buddhism, use the practice of yoga in one form or another. The word “Yogah” in Sanskrit can be derived from two roots: Yujir Yoge and Yuja Samadhau. The first root means “to join, to yoke” and the second means “to stay, to be absorbed.” The first root implies movement and the second root stay. Thus, movement away from the world and the mind is Yoga. And to stay as the Seer and remain with the Divine is also Yoga. In some texts, Yoga is defined as a means (or movement) and in others texts it is defined as the end (or staying). In the Yoga Yajnavalkya, Yoga is defined as “jivatmaparamatmasamyogah,” a union of the Self and the Divine. Union with the Divine is freedom, because the Divine is eternally free. Thus, to join and stay with the Divine is Yoga. Attainment of this state of freedom, of union with the Divine, requires an inner movement, for the Divine is within us. The Divine is not the object of any search, but the very subjectivity of the search. It is only because the Divine is present within that the very search is possible. Yoga is a means to return to the Divine, the abode of the Self, and to stay there. It is a means to return home and stay home, which is the state of freedom.

The Connection between Advaita Vedanta and Saiva/Sakta Doctrines.

The Vedas and Upanishads declare that there exists only One. The word Brahman is used in many places to denote it. In Sanskrit, the word Bramhan is of neuter gender. It is similar in meaning to the English word, “universe.” We call this world a universe, but what we see and experience is a multiverse. That is, we see not One but many. The Divine is One and to see the world as one, we must relate to the Divine. This relationship to the Divine is possible once the Divine is personalized with a specific name and form. If we attempt to contemplate the Divine without name and form, we cannot establish a personal relationship. God will remain an abstraction. The Divine is transcendent, but in order to realize the Divine’s transcendence, it is easier to work with a particular, immanent form. We can choose one form from the many forms of the Deity known. We can then, through the practice of yoga, concentrate on this chosen Deity and allow It to develop within us. Our practice, faithfully and carefully cultivated over a long period of time, allows us to realize that the apparent multiverse is, in reality, only One. The proper practice with the chosen Deity enables us to use form to move beyond form. Thus, despite the considerable diversity in external forms and particular practices of worship in so-called “Hindu polytheism,” the correct, individually-tailored practice of Yoga will lead us to unity. Indeed, the six darshanas of Vedic thought, not to mention the heterodox Buddhist traditions, offer many different explanations of how this Unity comes to be perceived and experienced as a world of diversity.

In Vedic theology, pure consciousness is represented by a masculine deity, typically Siva, or Vishnu. Schools that worship Siva or Vishnu are known as Saivism and Vaishnavism, respectively. For example, the Bhagavad Gita discusses the attainment of freedom through surrender to Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu. And Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, is also understood as an incarnation of Vishnu. In whichever form He is worshipped, His power (Sakthi) is represented as a goddess who, in her formless self, is one with him. The two are inseparable. This concept is expressed graphically in images of Ardhanariswara (“the Lord who is half woman”), or by Srinivasa (Mahavishnu with Lakshmi depicted as a black spot on his chest), or by Umamahesvara (Lord Shiva as supreme [Maha] lord [Iswara], with his consort, Parvati (Uma) seated next to him or on his knee). Consciousness, represented by the male deity, is considered static or potential energy. The Goddess, sometimes called Prakriti (Nature; from the Sanskrit, pra kri, “to produce”) is considered kinetic energy, the active power of the male deity, which is directly responsible for creation. The male and female aspects should not be understood as

different, for they are always together and inseparable. By the power (shakti) of ultimate pure consciousness (Siva), mind and matter (the Seen) evolve. This mutually interpenetrating relationship is symbolically represented by Ardhanariswara, Srinivasa, and Umamahesvara. All these Vedic traditions give equal importance and respect to both God and Goddess. Thus, those who choose to worship the masculine form of God never disregard the feminine forms. For it is said that, if you want to approach your father, it is easier to go through your mother, because she is always kind and compassionate. Thus Shankaracharya, the great Indian philosopher often considered an incarnation of Lord Shiva, who is well known as the foremost exponent of the Advaita (non-dualistic) philosophy, also composed the Saundaryalahari, a Sanskrit verse of great poetic beauty in praise of the Mother Goddess.

In schools which consider Shiva as pure consciousness and His power as Sakti, upasana (worship, from the Sanskrit “to move near or become one with”) is twofold. One school worships predominantly the masculine or right side of Ardhanariswara; they form the Saiva school. Kashmiri Saivism is one such school¹. Another school worships the left side (Devi) as the Mother Goddess. They are the Sakta school. Srividya upasana, which is still prevalent in South India, is a part of the Sakta upasana. They correspondingly give more importance to the feminine form (Sakthi), for She is the power of Siva. She is called the Mother because the universe sprung from Her womb; thus, the whole world is Her manifestation. The Seen, including the Maya or illusion which binds the Seer to the Seen, comes from Her. Therefore only She can lift the veil of ignorance to go beyond the world of forms. She is also called Kundalini. Both She and Her power of maya are referred to as Kundalini, since the power and the form of the power cannot be separated. Texts like the Bhagavad Gita do not mention kundalini because it teaches the removal of maya or avidya (illusion or ignorance) by devotion and prayer to Lord Krishna, a masculine deity. Thus Krishna says (B.G. VII.14), “Those who Surrender to Me alone go beyond maya.” Since the Goddess is part of Him, we do not find Kundalini yoga or shakti upasana among the 18 chapters of the Bhagavad Gita.

The Gita, the Yoga sutras and other texts emphasize the need to control the activities of the mind, to focus the mind, in order to become absorbed in the Divine. Whatever label of yoga is used, the mind is still considered the primary tool in our efforts toward liberation. Yet later Yoga texts, including the Hatayogapradipika and other works on Tantra and kundalini, speak primarily in terms of the control and focus of prana during practice. Consequently, it is important to understand the concept of prana and its relationship to the mind.

The Concept of Prana

Each culture has intuited or inferred the existence of a force which, although intangible to the senses, enables life to exist. In India, the vital force intuited by the ancient rishis and cultivated in yoga is called prana. The two syllables of the Sanskrit word, “Prana,” connote very good movement, that is, the good movement of energy. If prana is absent, then there is no motion, no flow of energy. That state is called death.

prana is that which makes all things possible. While writing this text, ideas emerge, blend with other ideas, focus into clearer thoughts, and finally are transformed into sentences. prana makes all of this possible. Without prana flowing through the body, there is death. prana is more than breath, for it maintains the very integrity of the body. It holds the mind, senses, physiology, and every other aspect of a person together as a coherent whole. Yet, by itself, it cannot be perceived directly by any of the senses.

¹ See, for example, *Self Realization in Kashmir Shaivism*, J. Hughes, Albany, SUNY Press, 1994.

This important point is illustrated by a simple story from the Prasnopanishad. There was once a man whose five senses and prana each thought they were the most important parts of his body and therefore deserved to be King of the bodily kingdom. The sense of smell claimed supremacy. But the sense of touch refuted it, pointing out the importance of touch to the development of all living creatures. The sense of taste then argued for its own superiority, followed by the sense of sight. The sense of hearing then stated that it, being the most subtle of the five senses and corresponding to the fine mahabhuta of space, it was therefore the most important. As they continued to argue, they would turn to prana and say: "And as for you, we know that you are DEFINITELY not the King. Why, we can't even see you!" prana thereupon interrupted their arguments to suggest that each sense leave the body one by one so the others could experience the deprivation and so determine which should be King. Smell left first, and the others certainly noticed the loss, but found they could still carry on. Then smell returned and touch left. Then touch returned and taste left. Then it was sight's turn, and then hearing. Each time, the others experienced a certain deprivation and it was no easy matter to determine which sense was most important. As they resumed their arguments again, they hardly noticed when prana began to leave. But quite suddenly the whole body was thrown into turmoil. The senses became disordered and confused by their own deranged activity. The whole quality of the universe seemed to change as the body unexpectedly began to die. "Come back!" cried the five senses in desperation. Smilingly, prana quietly returned to the body and with it, peace returned to the bodily kingdom. "Oh Prana" said the five senses, "We are sorry we thought of ourselves so highly. Now we know that we are dispensable, but you are not, for you are the source of life itself. You are indeed King, and we your loyal servants." And the five senses bowed humbly. The moral is that, though imperceptible to the senses, prana the life force makes all other faculties, including the senses, possible.

Prana and Mind

Prana is the power of the Seer and is responsible for the functioning of the mind, for the Seer only operates through prana. The return movement of Yoga begins when we focus and turn our mind inward, when the Seer withdraws from the Seen. This inward movement of our mind is described by different schools or sects in different ways, as:

1. the focussing or converging of prana;
2. turning the mind around to its own source;
3. returning home to remain as the Seer;
4. reversing the evolutionary process by guiding prana, with the seer, back to its home in the Sahasrara;
5. the Self mounted on prana ascending to rejoin the Divine.

However, just because it is imperceptible, some schools do not mention prana at all, but focus instead on its manifestations. For example, the Vedanta Sutras, the Yoga Sutras, and the Bhagavad Gita only discuss the mind. This focus on the mind has a practical basis, too: All possible spiritual practices must utilize the mind, for we can control our mind but we have no direct control over prana. Controlling and altering the flow of prana happens through the practice of the various limbs of yoga:

Yama and Niyama (proper discipline and personal habits) as a foundation;

Asana (physical posture) to center and stabilize the body;

Pranayama (breath control) to focus the breath;

Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) to center the mind, thereby altering the flow of prana resulting in Samadhi (absorption)

Prana, Breath, and Mind

We have no direct control over prana. However, the flow of prana in the body can be changed by altering the posture of the body. It is also possible to change the flow of prana by changing the pattern of breathing or mental focus, because, as noted earlier, prana and mind are closely connected. Furthermore, breath is also an expression of prana. Therefore, when we change the activities of our mind, the posture of our body, or the pattern of our breathing, we alter the flow of prana. Thus, breath, mind and prana are all interrelated:

prana <—> breath <—> mind

Whether one wants to focus the mind or to alter the flow of prana, the breathing techniques of pranayama are essential. For this reason, the Yogasutras (II.53) say that the mind becomes fit for dharana (focus) through pranayama. Conversely, when prana is dispersed, there is a need to focus prana and reduce mental dispersion by practicing pranayama. The present text discusses nadisuddhi (the purification of the nadis, or subtle channels of energy) by Nadishodana pranayama for proper flow and focus of prana. It is not possible to converge prana without nadisuddhi. It is worth emphasizing that the practice of pranayama assumes the foundation of proper asana practice, as well as a firm grounding in Yama and Niyama.

Relationship between Dispersion of Prana and Mental State

If we are, in some sense, scattered, then our prana is also scattered. In the Yoga Yajnavalkya, this scattering is expressed in terms of the relationship between the dimensions of the body and location or distribution of prana. Every human being is 96 angulas (four angulas measured as the width of that persons' four fingers¹) in height. Prana is figuratively explained as dispersed upto 108 angulas (Ch IV-7). The objective of the practice of Yoga is to make it equal to or below 96 angulas (Ch IV-9). In other words, for any person normally the dispersion of Prana is upto 108 angulas, whereas in the state of yoga it is 96 angulas or below 96.

Now, the distribution of a person's prana will vary according to his/her psychological state, since prana and mind are related. The Yogasutras identify five states of mind: agitated, dull, distracted, focussed, and absorbed. Each of these five states relates to a certain distribution of prana.

The flow of prana (into Susuhumna) representing the focused (Ekagra) and absorbed (Nirodah) states of mind, is explained as the converging of prana upto 96 angulas or below 96 angulas.

The flow of Prana (into Ida and Pingala) representing agitated, (kshiptam) dull (moodam) or distracted (vikshiptam) states is explained here as dispersion of prana upto 108 angulas.

In general, any disturbance of the Seen (mind, body or senses) can be related to dispersal of the prana. The intentional action of returning to the center (the Seer) constitutes the practice of Yoga. This can also be described as the return of prana to its source of 96 angulas or below 96 angulas. To transform the typical multi-directional scatter of our minds, characterized by agitation, clouded perception and confusion, requires us to recollect ourselves and rein in our prana from its dispersed condition. Of course, the conversion of a dispersed mind and scattered prana is a gradual process requiring effort, practice and patience. This is what the Yogasutras refer to as removing avidya (ignorance, or the coloring of the mind) and returning both mind and prana to a focussed, unidirectional condition. Consequently, the foundations of a sound yoga practice are first laid when a person begins to transform their diet and patterns of eating, their social interactions and personal and mental habits. That is, we must begin our work with the Yamas (self-restraints) and the Niyamas (observances). This foundation

¹ Note that four angulas equals three Chinese cun.

complements later work with Asanas and Pranayama, where one practices altering the flow of prana, focusing the mind, and removing its colorings. The yogic process of returning to the Seer brings the scattered prana to 96 angulas. Later, in the highest state of samadhi described in the Yogasutras, prana may be brought in still further. to occupy less than 96 angulas.

The Flow of Prana

When we describe a person as scattered, how does that relate to the scattering of the prana? prana is a flow of energy through the body, along subtle channels or conduits called Nadis. Some Yoga texts state that there are 72,000 of these channels. Of these, 14 nadis are considered important, and three of these 14 are the most important. These three are the Ida, the Pingala, and the Sushumna. If we look at the torso of a human, then the left hand side describes the Ida nadi, and the right hand side the Pingala nadi. We can further denote the left hand side with the word “Ha” and the right hand side with “Tha.”

The prana normally flows only through the Ida and Pingala, where it is distributed throughout the 72,000 nadis, and it does not flow through the central Sushumna. prana will continue to flow through these nadis so long as the nadis remain clear. However, if impurities enter the body through poor nutrition, irregular or shallow breathing, scattered thoughts, improper body position or infection by pathogens, then impurities will accumulate in the nadis and the flow of Prana is disturbed. This can result in illhealth. These impurities are the mental colorings (klesas –avidya).By returning to the Seer, we will not be affected by these external influences and so they will cease to be impurities. Thus the Yogasutras (II.28) describe Yoga as the removal of impurities (avidya) which makes the return movement possible.

Sickness results from a substantial impairment of prana flow. The result can be internal organ dysfunction or physical and psychological injury. Thus the restoration of physical health involves the removal of impurities, a kind of internal cleansing (nadi-suddhi) which allows prana to resume its normal flow throughout the body (Yogasutras IV.3). This cleansing process involves the removal of increasingly subtle impurities, which continue to affect us due to our mistaken identification of our true self with our body, mind, senses, and external world. Thus the cleansing process actually begins with work on all eight limbs of Yoga, by observing Yama and Niyama and practicing Asana, Pranayama, and Dhyana. The most important nadi of all is the Sushumna. Whereas Ida and Pingala belong to the world of time, the Sushumna is beyond time. Prana in Sushumna represents Samadhi the state of timelessness. Before the dispersal of prana into the Ida and Pingala and the initial descent into the mind, there is timelessness. To describe how the Sushumna nadi is related to the Seer and the Seen, let us briefly discuss two subjects which will help clarify the subtle yogic physiology of the Sushumna. These two are the Vayus (air) and Agni (fire).

The Vayus

The five major Vayus are prana (which we shall refer to in the lower case, to differentiate it from the prana already described), apana, udana, vyana, and samana. We will limit our discussion here to the first two vayus, prana and apana. The prana vayu is located in the area above the diaphragm.

It refers to the respiratory center. Thus, prana is the vayu synonymous with breathing. The lower abdominal area is the seat of apana vayu. This is the region where dirt or impurities, which are also called as apana, settle. Hence the function of the apana vayu is the excretion of these impurities (coinciding with the function and location of the organs of excretion).

The prana and apana vayus work in opposite but complementary directions in the cycle of breath. Inhalation and retention after inhalation have downward effects, sending prana vayu further down into the body. Exhalation and suspension after exhalation have upward effects, raising impurities up out of

the body. The tendency of the prana vayu is to go up, and for the apana vayu to go down. Thus, they need to be balanced so one does not dominate the other, leading to complications. For example, a stronger tendency in the upward movement of prana vayu can lead to coughing, while a bias toward the downward movement of apana vayu may lead to diarrhea or menstrual problems. The dynamic relationship between prana vayu and apana vayu is a primary determinant of total bodily health.

The Concept of Agni

We cannot consider prana without considering Agni as well, for warmth is necessary for life, just as consciousness may be inferred from heat in the body. Thus prana and Agni always go together. Indeed, Agni is sometimes referred to as Vayu Sakha or “friend of air”. It is commonplace knowledge that air is needed for fire. One cannot burn a candle in a vacuum. This suggests that Agni can be defined as “heat” or “fire,” which indeed is the customary definition. Yet Agni has many inter-related meanings. Just as the English word, “fire,” can refer to an actual “three alarm fire,” as well as to the alchemist’s purifying fire, so there are many Agnis, from the metaphoric to the metabolic. We will consider some of these meanings briefly in turn.

Theologically, Agni can be considered as the Divine, as exemplified by the Vedic prayers addressed to Agni. Another sense is jnana agni, “that which reduces everything to its final form” (Bhagavad Gita). This passage is a reference to burning the dross of ignorance in the fire of knowledge, the Divine fire which burns down our ego.¹ And within every human being is agni as the “fire of life” which generates metabolic heat. This other main sense of Agni is suggested by Krishna later in the Bhagavad Gita (XV.14), when He says: “I am inside all human beings, holding the body together. Holding the prana and the apana in balance, I digest the food.” Just as ignorance is considered one of the greatest impurities, according to the ancient texts, so is the ingestion of improper food which causes physical impurities to accumulate in the body. Just as the Yoga Sutras do not distinguish between mental and physical impurities, neither should we draw neat distinctions between Jnana Agni (purifying fire) and the Agni which gives us the power to metabolize our food (metabolic fire). Agni is not metabolism itself, though it is said that Agni cooks the food. When Agni is impaired, the metabolism is affected, thereby lowering our resistance to disease and typically leading to a deterioration in overall health. When food is cooked properly, the body can assimilate it efficiently, absorbing what is useful and excreting what is not. The medical science of Ayurveda stresses that Agni must be kept in proper condition to maintain good health. Otherwise, undigested food and the enterotoxins secreted by the bacteria which thrive upon it (jointly referred to as ama, the cause of all diseases), will accumulate in the body, with toxic effects.

The relationship between Agni and breath also has important health consequences². Agni resides in the abdomen, near the navel. Above it is the prana vayu. Below it is the apana vayu. Food suitable for one’s unique bodily constitution and properly prepared can be “cooked” by Agni, the products assimilated by the body and the waste removed by a proper balance between prana vayu and apana vayu. Clearly, according to the perspective of Ayurveda, breath (prana and apana) is crucial in maintaining physical health and preventing disease. Breath also has a unique role in cleansing the nadis (nadi suddhi) and controlling prana, which is the goal of all yoga practice. Indeed, the focus on pranayama and its many practical applications is the great strength and unique contribution of the Yoga Yajnavalkya, and is the primary reason for its singular importance in the science and art of yoga. Through the right practice of Pranayama, the prana (accompanied by Agni) burns the Kundalini, thereby paving the way for prana and Agni to ascend to the Brahmarandhra (opening or door to the Brahman). However, further discussion of the system of kundalini first requires a discussion of the chakra system of the Tantric school.

¹ Here, the Divine means omnipresence beyond separation; not an object of search but the source which makes the search possible. As the Brahma Sutras state, one cannot know the Divine if one does not know the Seer.

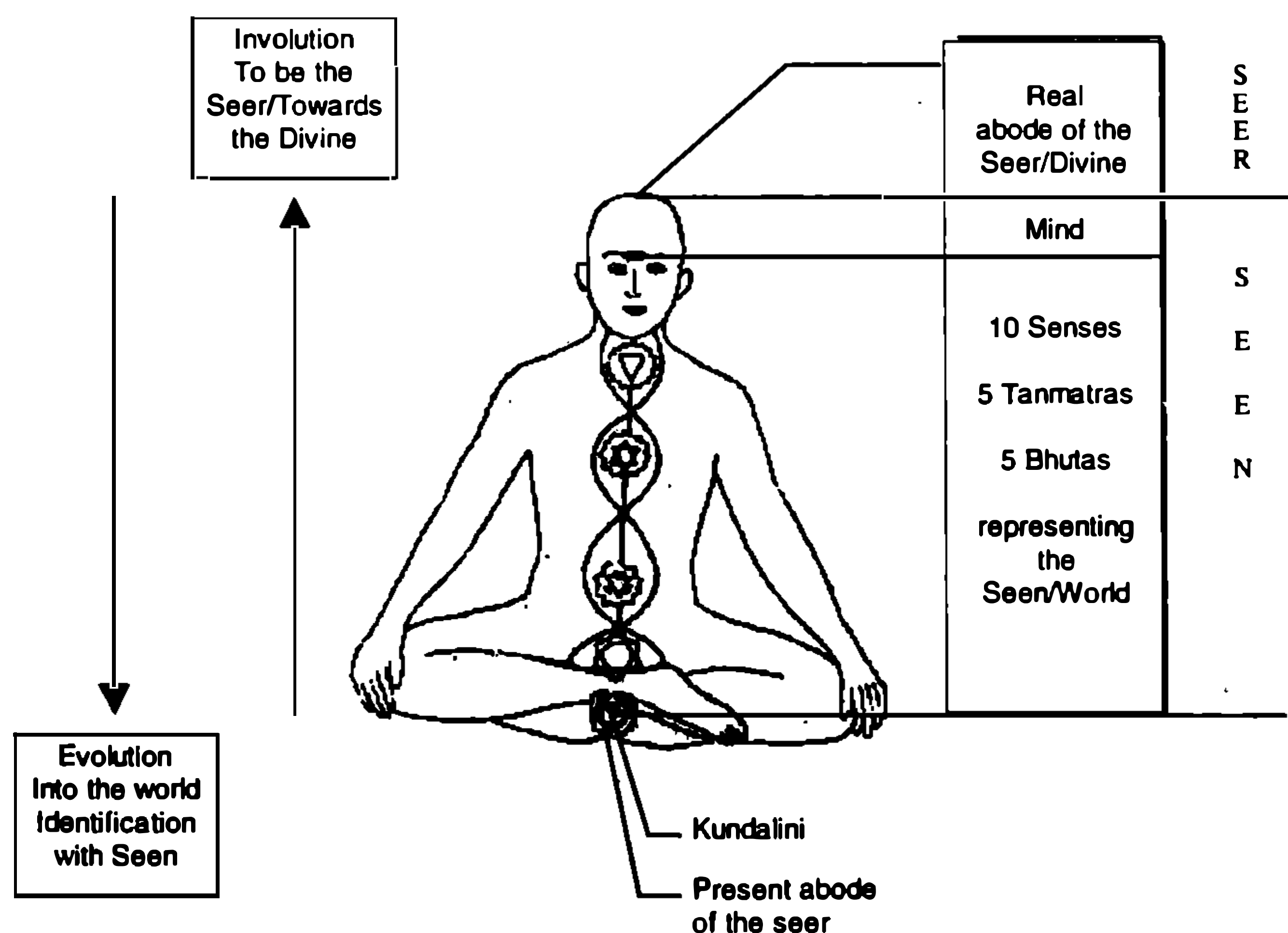
² The relationship between Agni and breath was discussed in my earlier work, *Yoga for body, breath and mind*. The relationship between yoga and Ayurveda will be discussed in a future work.

Cakras

According to tantra there are seven centres or cakras in the human system. The lower five Cakras correspond to the five forms of matter, in successive order of refinement from lower to higher Cakras. Thus, the Muladhara chakra corresponds to the Earth element, and the Svadistana chakra above it corresponds to Water. The Manipura chakra corresponds to Fire; Anahata to Air, and Vishuddhi to Space. The sixth (Ajna) and seventh (Sahasrara) Cakras are the centers for intelligence and consciousness, respectively. Each chakra is associated with a particular emotion, which again range from the gross to the subtle. For example, Muladhara corresponds to Himsa (violence), whereas Sahasrara corresponds to Ahimsa (love). More than enough has already been written about the Cakras to make further elaboration here on the subject largely unnecessary². What is important for our purposes is the relationship of the Cakras to the Seer and the Seen.

From the Muladhara chakra at the base of the spine to the Ajna chakra in the forehead, the six lower Cakras represent the abode of the Seen. They correspond to the mahabhutas, which are the five forms of differentiated matter present in the macrocosm and with corollaries in the microcosm, including the mind itself (the Ajna chakra). The real abode of the Seer is the seventh (Sahasrara) chakra.

The process of evolution, whereby the Seer first becomes identified with the Seen, occurs in a downward direction through the Cakras as the Seer descends to the Muladhara chakra at the base of the spine. In the course of this descent, prana is distributed throughout the 72,000 nadis and the opening of the



¹ There are no descriptions of Cakras in the Yoga Yajnavalkya. See, however, the Introduction to the BBRA monograph, reprinted here as Appendix I. For a viewpoint from Western psychology, see S. Shandasan, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1996. The work includes Carl Jung's essay on kundalini.

² See, for example, S. Radha, *Kundalini Yoga for the West* (Boston, Shambala, 1978) for the point of view of a Western practitioner trained in India, and L. Silburn, *Kundalini: Energy of the Depths* (Albany, SUNY Press, 1988), for a more intellectual account. Perhaps the most influential text on kundalini yoga in the West was the *Sat-chakra-nirupana* ("Description of the Six Centers"), translated with a long commentary in *The Serpent Power* (New York, Dover, 1974) by Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe). This is the work on yoga studied by C.G. Jung; see Shandasan, loc cit, 1996, which also includes the *Satchakranirupana* as Appendix 4.

Sushumna is then closed by the kundalini. Thus the door to the Divine (freedom) is closed by ignorance (avidya) represented by Kundalini. By contrast, the process of involution occurs through the practice of Yoga: scattered prana is recollected, the state of ignorance caused by misidentification of the Seer with the Seen is removed, and the entrance to the Sushumna is opened, thus sending the Seer, mounted on the prana, up the Sushumna nadi and back to his true abode in the Sahasrara (referred to as Brahmarandhra in this text).

Thus it is fitting that the Brahmarandhra (the opening to Brahman) as described as located at the crown of the head. When the Seer identifies with the Seen, the kingdom of God is lost and one is no longer a king but becomes slave to body, mind and senses. We can only regain our kingdom by forsaking enslavement to the passions represented in the lower Chakras and returning to the crown.

Kundalini Yoga

The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word, kundalini, is “circular, winding or coiling,” like a serpent. The word is of feminine gender and connotes the Mother Goddess and Her power, Shakti. Her power is responsible for the three-fold activity of the Divinity: creation, sustenance and destruction. As prana Devata, the Goddess of prana, all forces are within Her and she can cause evolution or involution to occur. Kundalini is the power of the Seen. As used in the Yoga Sutras, kundalini is the cause of ignorance, avidya, whereby we mistakenly identify and are caught up in the ever-changing world of the Seen. Kundalini is discussed in greater detail, in the sixth chapter of the Yoga Yajnavalkya. This discussion is key for our understanding of the meaning of the Kundalini power, for all later yoga texts have borrowed slokas extensively from this text. As with the Chakras, so much has been written about kundalini that the result has been more confusion than clarity. For now, let us focus our attention on the following image: Kundalini, the creative force which controls avidya, blocks the opening of the Sushumna nadi, which leads to Brahmarandhra (the place of union with the Divine). Some texts say that Kundalini, the serpent, guards the entrance of the door to the Divine by coiling three and a half times around the Siva lingam located at the Muladhara and blocking the opening of the Sushumna with Her mouth. Thus, prana cannot enter the Sushumna unless the Kundalini is moved. To move the Kundalini is to remove the veil of ignorance (avidya) or illusion (maya). This comes about through the grace of the Mother, since She controls the world of illusion. The process of involution occurs when the Seen, the feminine aspect embodied by the Kundalini in the muladhara, is withdrawn from the base of the Sushumna and the Seer, presently entrapped in the Nabhi chakra, located above the Muladhara, is able to rise to His true abode and reunite with the Divine, the male aspect of consciousness in the Sahasrara. This is jivatmaparamatmasamyogah, that is, Yoga is defined as the union between the individual soul (jivatma) and the Divine (paramatma). As the Seen withdraws, the Seer becomes the master. This is also figuratively represented as the union between the Shakti and Shiva.

We have already noted that the purpose of any Yoga practice is freedom from the colourings of the mind (klesas). In the case of Kundalini Yoga, this is attempted and attained through a practice including a prayer to the Mother Goddess. Such a practice is called Kundalini Yoga since it is through Her grace that the veil of illusion - Maya or Avidya - can be lifted or destroyed. Of all the labels of Yoga, it is this one which has had the most mysticism conferred upon it. This situation is compounded by many apparently contradictory statements about kundalini in some other texts. For example, it is said:

1. Kundalini goes up
2. Kundalini is destroyed or removed
3. Prana goes up.

The following explanation is from the Yoga Yajnavalkya, based on Vedic tradition. The texts on Sakta Tantra explain the same with a different emphasis.

Kundalini goes up

The process of the kundalini going up symbolises the process of involution. This means withdrawal of the individual from the world to join the Divine in the microcosm. This is done by the return movement of Prana (that is, the absorption of the mind) and thus the return movement of Seer. Tantric texts also symbolise this process as the Shakti moving up to meet Shiva at the macrocosm level. Both metaphors represent the movement of the Jiva (the individual self or soul) towards the Divine, freed from bondage to the Seen (Prakriti). The Kundalini rising indicates the Laya (process of involution) for that particular person, for it is through the involution of Prakriti (Seen) that the return movement of the Seer is possible. Some call this process as Laya Yoga.

Kundalini is destroyed or removed

The removal or destruction of kundalini refers to removing the veil of avidya or ignorance. Only in this way is freedom possible. The texts refer to kundalini as blocking the door to freedom (HYP, ch. III), describing it figuratively as a serpent guarding the entrance of the door to the Divine (representing freedom) and blocking the opening of the Sushumna with Her mouth. The Goddess holds the key to the door of freedom. The same concept is found in the non-dualistic Advaita philosophy, where Iswara Prasadam or Divine Grace is considered essential for the removal of Maya. Lord Krishna says the same in the Bhagavad Gita (XVIII.58).

Prana goes up

Agni and prana destroy the kundalini, thus freeing the Seer to ascend to his abode. However, prana must first be focused and centered, and this is only possible through focusing the mind. The upward movement of prana symbolizes the return movement of Yoga, the mental movement away from the Seen. Movement of the prana is the movement of the individual soul (Jivatma) mounted on the Prana (Ch-IV-20) returning to the Divine (paramatma) leading to a state known as jivatmaparamatmasamyogah, the union of the Self and the Divine.

During a seminar participants asked the following questions about kundalini.

Q. Is Kundalini Yoga a part of Tantric practices? Does it have any connection to Advaita since Sankaracharya has authored Anandalahari which also contains the description of Sri Cakra?

A. Kundalini is a part of the Tantric practices, and many Vedic scholars may not give importance to it. The worship of the Mother Goddess as the Divine as Kundalini, is called Tantropanasana. In the past, there were two divisions of the Tantra, the right-handed and left-handed practices. The sects that followed left-handed tantric practices worshipped the womb of women externally, and also indulged in meat eating, drinking alcohol, and sexual practices for realization. It is easy to see why the Vedic scholars rejected this.

As for Sankaracharya, he is widely known for his Advaita or Non-dualistic philosophy. He was responsible for the revival of the Vedic tradition, which is now called Hinduism. He has written commentaries on the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita, apart from a number of other original works.

According to the Vedas, the Divine is transcendent and one. To realize and experience this, it can be related to in any form. Prior to the time of Sankaracharya, there were many diverse philosophies and methods of worship. But it was Sankaracharya who synthesized and proposed six from the many methods of worship of the Divine in an immanent form. Of these, the worship of the Divine as the

Mother Goddess is called the Sakta school. Sankaracharya restored the Samayachara tantra, the right tantric practice through Sakta upasana.

Let us confine ourselves to the discussion of the Sakta Upasana - the worship of the Divine as the Mother Goddess, since this is related to Kundalini Yoga. Upasana comprises "Upa", meaning "near", and "as" meaning "to sit". **Upasana therefore means to sit near something. The Vedas contain many upasanas. The purpose of Upasana is to move near something, sit or stay with it and to become one with it through total absorption.** This, too, is done in yoga: we choose an immanent form, like Vishnu or Siva or Sakthi, focus our mind on it, stay with it and become one with it. Sakta upasana is done with the focus on the Mother Goddess considered as the supreme power or sakti, representing the energy of the whole universe.

The ultimate goal of any yoga practice is to annihilate or dissolve the ego, desire etc. which are the klesas of the mind. The Yoga sutras call the source of these avidya. Vedanta calls it Maya. There are some conceptual differences between these two, but we can say that their removal is essential for freedom. Since the Divine is a means, we choose a form of the Divine for upasana. This form can be a yantra or idol. We then internalize it. The form and our relationship to it will help remove the colourings of our mind (avidya or maya) and reach a state of union with the Divine.

I will present you a short summary of the fundamental unity and differences between the Advaita and sakta schools of philosophy for the purpose of understanding kundalini yoga.

i) Advaita

Advaita is one of the schools of the Vedanta philosophy. Advaita means 'not two'. Advaita also says that the SEEN (world) is manifest DIVINE (Brahman). An enlightened person sees everything as Divine (Brahman), while normal people like us perceive it as the Seen (world).

Advaita says that the Seer in us is a part of that Divine (Brahman). The clothing (Maya/Avidya) we wear makes us look different. If there is no Maya/Avidya, we will realize this truth. We can illustrate this as follows. The Divine is like the pure external space and we are like the space inside a pot (body). By character both are space, but due to constriction or bondage we call one a pot and the other space. Or take the example of a rope and a snake. The rope is mistaken for a snake in twilight. When there is light we will realize that it is only a rope and not a snake. What exists is only the rope (Brahman) while we see it as a snake (world). The projection of the snake on the rope is said to be due to Maya.

The word Maya is usually translated as illusion. 'Illusion' gives the meaning that what is perceived does not exist, like a mirage. Advaita does not say that the world does not exist, like one of the schools of Buddhism, but that what truly exists is the Brahman (Divine). In the above example, the rope exists after the projection of the snake is dispelled.

The word "Ma" in "Maya" means "to measure". In many languages we use the word "Ma" for mother, because it is she who measures the growth of the child. The word Maya means that "what you measure is beyond measurement". What we measure, what we see as the world, is beyond measurement (the Divine, or Brahman). According to Advaita, Maya exists only for a person caught up in time (mind). For an enlightened person, beyond time, it does not exist. It is therefore meaningless to ask where Maya came from, as Maya does not exist on realisation. We cannot get an answer to the origin of Maya staying within the framework of time.

There can be other points of view and questions, but let us proceed with Kundalini Yoga. Brahman (Divine), according to Advaita philosophy is attributeless (Nirguna). We cannot pray to it and relate to it. We need to reject all the other things (Seen) and realize their impermanence to realize it (Brahman).

ii) Sakta Philosophy

While Advaita brushes aside the question of Maya as projection (vivarta vadam), the Sakta philosophy says that the reflection of the Bramhan (Divine) appear as the seer and the seen (abhasavadam). According to Sakta philosophy, Maya is due to the energy (Sakti) of the Bramhan. She, the Parasakti or supreme energy, is the base or support for Maya, responsible for everything - Creation, Sustenance and Destruction. She is not to be confused with the consort of Siva or Vishnu. We can attain freedom through Her grace.

Sankaracharya in his Advaita philosophy categorically says that Maya or Avidya is responsible for bondage and is to be destroyed/removed in order to attain freedom. Maya or Avidya is the sole cause for bondage. This is to be done through our own efforts. Divine grace is not directly sought, though Advaita also acknowledges the importance of the helping hand of the Divine in order to reach such a state of enlightenment. The ego, after all, is like a hand. It can strike another. Can it strike itself?

The same Maya that is to be brushed aside only through our effort, according to Advaita philosophy, is praised as the Mother Goddess in Sakta Upasana because She holds the key to freedom. Being the energy for everything, she is also the Prana devata - the Goddess of Prana. She and her power (Maya) are both referred to as Kundalini. Therefore when it is said that the Kundalini energy moves up, it also refers to the movement of the Prana.

Sankaracharya also composed hundred verses on the worship of the Mother Goddess. It is called Soundaryalahari, the first part of which is called Anandalahari. This is the text that was earlier referred to. The word ananda means ecstasy or bliss (the sat, cit, ananda of the Upanishads). The word lahari means a wave. Anandalahari can be called the wave of bliss.

In the Soundaryalahari, the emphasis is on relating to the Mother Goddess and seeking her grace to attain freedom. The first 41 verses (Anandalahari) contain the descriptions of the Yantras and Mantras, and in the latter 59, the Mother Goddess is described so that she can be prayed and surrendered to for realization.

In the Anandalahari, for each verse, there is a yantra and a posture for the worshipper apart from the yamas and the niyamas to be followed. There are a lot of rules and regulations regarding the procedures .

Q. I have read that as the Kundalini rises there is Shatcakra bhedana or piercing of the cakras. What does it mean?

A. The six cakras represents the five forms of matter and our mind. Bheda means to sever break our connection with it. When we say the Muladhara cakra is severed due to kundalini rising, it means overcoming the state where a person is dominated by, and attracted to, the earth element, and the associated sense organ that goes with it. Sankaracharya says in a poem that animals and insects are lost by one sense. The bee, for example, is lost by smell, and an elephant by the sense of touch. What about the poor human with five senses? Normally we are a slave to all our senses. We are identified with the seen and bound. As we sever connection with the Cakras, we are released from this bondage to each of the senses associated with each cakra. When the sixth cakra represented by the mind is severed, the person becomes a master of his mind. He attains freedom from his mind. He remains as the seer.

Q: How do I really find out if my Kundalini has risen?

A: When we speak of the kundalini rising, we are referring to the process of involution where the seer, caught up with identification with the seen, at the base in the Nabhicakra below the Muladhara, gradually withdraws and is less bound by the seen.

Check, then, how much control you have gained over the senses and the mind. Do you direct the senses? Or are you directed by them? Do you use your mind or are you used by it?

Q: What are the signs of the Kundalini having reached the Sahasrara?

A: Each of the seven cakras is related to a particular emotion. The Muladhara is related to Himsa or violence. The Sahasrara, the topmost Cakra, is related to Ahimsa or non-violence. Non-violence does not merely mean an absence of violence. Rather, it is the replacement of violence with love. It represents unity.

The Sahasrara is also the abode of the Divine. Therefore, if the seer has returned to his abode, it means that the person will radiate Divinity. In that person's presence, all forms of life give up their enmity towards each other.

Q: What is your explanation of the Tantric sex practices for raising the Kundalini, since we also find references to such practices in Tantric texts as well as the Hatha Yoga Pradipika?

A: These practices have no authenticity in the Vedas. We have been talking about the Mother Goddess being responsible for creation. The womb, of course, represents creation. At some stage in the past a sect began, which worshipped the womb of the woman externally. These types of practices are called left-handed tantric practices (vamacara) and have been condemned.

The HYP is a text of recent origin. A careful reading will reveal many contradictions in this text. Some try to justify these practices as a means to distance pleasure and maintain balance with the proximity of the object. It is like leaving an alcoholic alone with a whisky bottle and ask him to practice distancing himself from the drinking habit. **Invariably these practices will end up reinforcing our memories and fantasies about our sense pleasures.** There are safer and better methods to practice self control.

Unique Features of this Text

- 1) The Yoga Yajnavalkya is an ancient text. Its origin has been traced to the period between the second century B.C.E. and fourth century C.E. Its very age lends credibility to the authenticity of the views on yoga expounded therein. Furthermore, its high regard during Vedic times as an authentic yoga text is readily apparent from the fact that many well-known yoga texts of later times, including the well-known *Hatayogapradapika* of Svatmarama, the *Yoga Kundali* and *Yoga Tattva Upanishads*, and so on, either quote extensively or make frequent references to the Yoga Yajnavalkya. Clearly, the Yoga Yajnavalkya not only preceded those and many others later texts, but it was also either the original source or the inspiration for many concepts, practices and passages. (Detailed references of extensive later borrowings were compiled by Sri P. C. Divanji in his 1954 BBRA monograph, which has been abstracted and rewritten here as Appendix 1.)
- 2) The method of Yoga described in this text is both comprehensive and universally applicable. Age, sex, race, caste and occupation pose no hurdles for the sincere practitioner. Modifications to the basic yogic practices are suggested to suit various individual cases and are discussed in detail. For example, the Yoga Yajnavalkya clearly states in several places that “OM” is not a generic mantra meant for everyone. It was only prescribed for the first three divisions of Vedic society, while other mantras, like “Namah,” were prescribed for the fourth division.
- 3) This text clearly establishes that Sanyasa, in the strictest sense of or becoming a renunciate monk, is not a prerequisite for the achievement of freedom (moksha). Indeed, it is well-known that many ancient Vedic rshis, including Yajnavalkya himself, were householders. In contrast to other Indian schools of spiritual liberation which both emphasized and were based upon an abstinent monastic class, the focus on house-holders is one of the most wonderful and unique facet of Vedic wisdom. The clear message, echoed in the *Bhagavad Gita*, is that one can attain freedom through the practice of Yoga while following the *Varnashramadharna*, that is, while living in society, maintaining a job, raising a family, and attending to numerous worldly responsibilities. The Yoga Yajnavalkya demonstrates that we do not need to give up the world. We can be in the world, but not of the world, by giving up our mind and its bundle of habits and karmic tendencies (*Vasanas*).
- 4) Partly as a consequence or illustration of the last point, the text takes the form of a conversation between a husband and wife. Yajnavalkya explains the principles and practice of Yoga, the path to freedom, to Gargi, his wife. This didactic structure itself dispels the false notion that, during Vedic times, Yoga and other spiritual practices were followed only by men and not by women. The Yoga Yajnavalkya demonstrates that Vedic culture provided women with equal opportunities and encouragement for their spiritual pursuits to attain freedom.
- 5) This book dispels much of the aura of mystery surrounding the concept of Kundalini, by explaining it logically and relating it to other terms and concepts in Vedic thought, such as Agni, Prana, the nadis, and so on.
- 6) Likewise, the various concepts and methods of yoga are presented in a coherent, orderly and very logical manner in this text. The eight limbs of Yoga are discussed in detail and in sequence, each in a separate chapter, with the preparation, performance and the results described in sequence. This orderly presentation facilitates the comprehension of these concepts and the application of the practices.

- 7) The concept of Prana and its various divisions and their functions are explained clearly. as are the origin, function, position and the connections between the primary Nadis.
- 8) A highly prominent feature of this text, which clearly sets it apart from other texts on yoga, is the comprehensive discussion of Pranayama. Up to a hundred slokas are devoted to elucidating the various techniques, applications and results of Pranayama. The text also discusses the use of Pranayama as a therapeutic tool, its role in Ayurveda, and methods for incorporating Pranayama with Pratyahara, Dharana and the other limbs of Patanjali yoga.
- 9) An important feature of the Yoga proposed here is that it takes the form of a “Samuccayam,” that is, a combination of Karma (the actions prescribed according to the Varnasramadharmas) and Jnana (Yoga). According to Yajnavalkya and the Vedic tradition, Yoga is to be practiced within the overall context of a proper lifestyle. The repeated emphasis on the performance of “nityakarma” (daily rituals) and “vaidika dharma” (actions as prescribed by the Vedas) is a closely related feature of the text. For example, each chapter concludes with Yajnavalkya advice to his wife, Gargi, to perform nityakarma and vaidika dharma along with the practice of Yoga.
- 10) This book provides insight into the various forms of meditation practiced during the Vedic period. Perhaps most importantly, it addresses the issue of how we can use form (Saguna Brahman, or God with form) to go beyond form (Nirguna Brahman, or the Godhead). The distinction between these two aspects of the Deity and their relationships is crucial because worship of a Deity with form (Saguna) was so often mistaken for mere idol worship. However, the voluntary limitation of God’s omnipotence for purposes of worship and meditation by His believers, in order to realize the transcendent, is absolutely fundamental to Vedic thought and indeed forms the root of so-called “Hindu Polytheism.”



The Vedic Way of Life - VARNASHRAMADHARMA¹

A means for effecting a division of labour is essential for the orderly functioning and regulation of any complex society. In the Vedic tradition, four major divisions were present. First are the intelligentsia or brain power. Then come the defence forces (military and police), the executive and the judiciary, all of whom are responsible for the protection of the citizens, defense against external threats, and the implementation of legal measures to maintain internal order. Third are industries including banking, manufacturing, trade and commerce. The fourth division includes those in what we now call the service sector. These four segments are like four limbs or pillars supporting the smooth functioning of the body politic. These divisions date back several thousand years, right to the inception of the Vedic period at the first incursion of the Aryan people onto the Indian subcontinent. The Brahmins were the intelligentsia of the society. They were also advisors to the kings of the Kshatriya caste, which also included the judiciary, the executive and the defence forces. The Vaishyas carried on the trade and commerce representing the industries. The fourth division were the people in service, including physical labour.

The names assigned to the four categories are significant to their meaning. Brahmins, the intelligentsia, were also called Sarma, which meant they were to utilize their knowledge and intelligence for the welfare and betterment of society. The Kshatriyas were called Varma, which means "armour." Whether as police, military or government workers, they maintained internal and external order. The Vaishyas were called Gupta, which means "secret." They were supposed to stockpile food and other essential provisions and release them in times of need like famines. The Fourth division, Dasa, embraced those people engaged in service and labor.

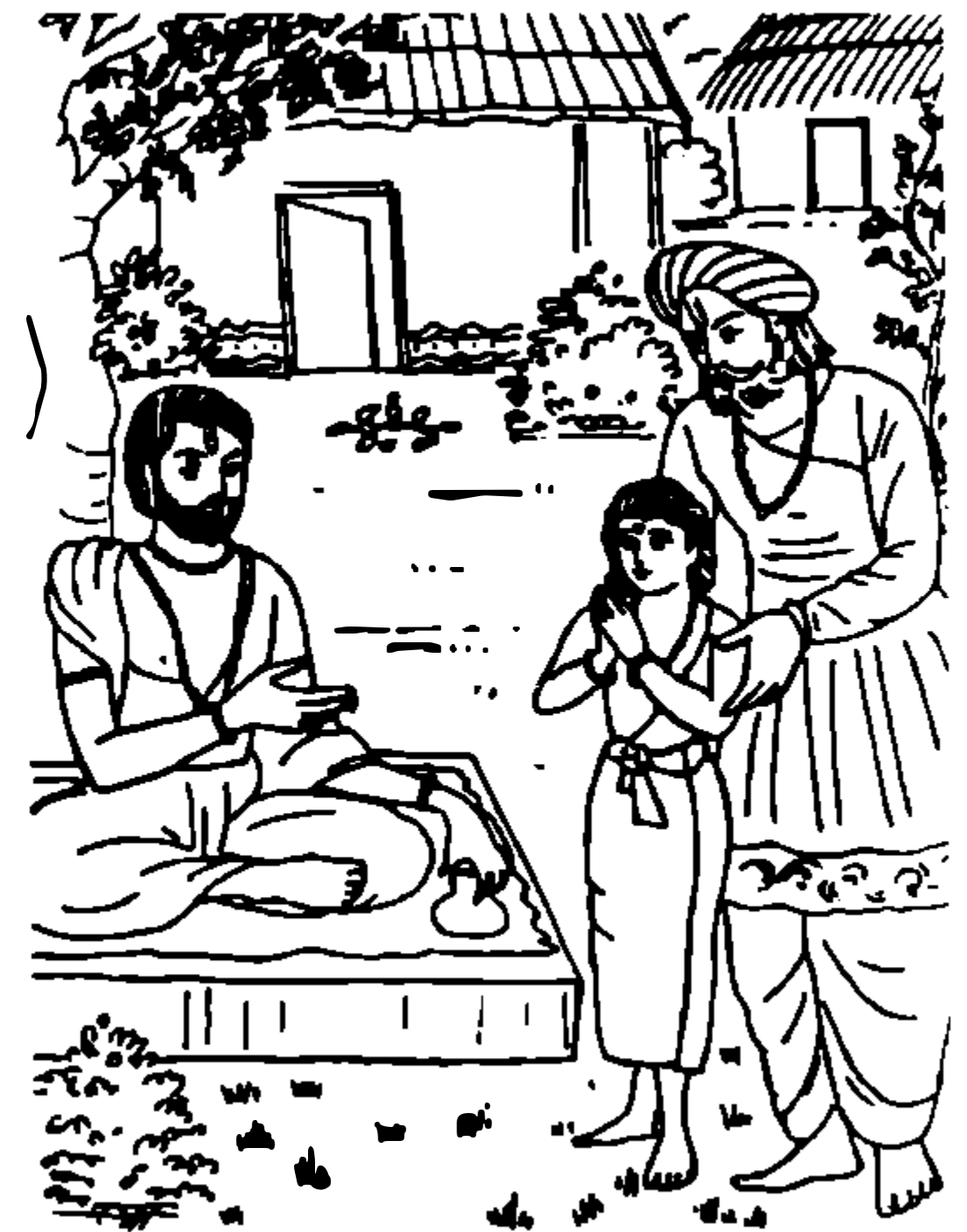
In one of the passages of the Vedas called the Purushasukta of the Vedas, these 4 categories are described as parts or limbs of the Divine, who was portrayed in human form. The anthropomorphic metaphor belies the fact that, in Vedic wisdom, the entire world is simply a manifestation of the Divine. Consequently, the four limbs of Vedic society corresponded to parts of the Divine body. Thus the Brahmins were said to be the face of the Divine, because the five senses of knowledge (Jnana indriyas) are present on the face. These senses provide data from the external world to the mind, which is the basis of our thinking and our actions. The Kshatriyas were called the arms or shoulders of the Divine, because the body's strength or power is centered in the arms and shoulders. To wield weapons, carry a load, or to flex or extend our arms, all rely upon and demonstrate our source of strength. The third segment, the Vaishyas, were said to be the thighs of the Divine. Today, we know that the greatest reservoir of fat cells in the body is in the thighs. Since the Vaishyas were supposed to hoard stocks, for the welfare of the society, they were compared to the thighs. The fourth division were considered to be the feet of the Divine, because to render service, to move things or to transport ourselves, our feet are most important. Therefore, the Fourth Division was considered to be the feet of the Divine.

¹ The word "varna" means "colour." Here it refers to the divisions of society. "Ashrama" means "stage in life." "Dharma" means the "duties", or the actions of each person. Varnashramadharma, in short, refers to the duties or actions that must be done by each person, considering his stage in life, and his profession or the division to which he or she belongs.

These parallels hold good in other aspects, too. For the proper functioning of the human body, organic unity is essential. And the orderly integration of bodily functions is not possible without cooperation from all centres. If one organ or limb is impaired, the body becomes dysfunctional. Similarly in society, if any one aspect becomes dysfunctional, society cannot function well as a whole, let alone progress. It is disabled¹.

Ideally, the division of labour is based on two factors: Guna, the character or nature of the person, and karma, the action to be performed. If these two aspects are well matched, the result is harmony between the individual and society. Therefore, in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, "*Gunakarmavibhagayoh*," that is, the division should be based on nature (Guna) and action (Karma). The smooth and proper functioning of society requires a match between the interests and talents of an individual, and the needs and priorities of society. In the normal functioning of Vedic society, professions were passed on from generation to generation, from father to son. Yet an individual's nature, aspirations and character must also be considered. This was accomplished through provisions by which a person could switch from one occupation to another. However, there was little need to do so because, from the perspective of karma yoga, "job satisfaction" is uniform by profession because one's happiness and well-being does not depend upon one's job but upon the attitude with which one conducts one's responsibilities. Yet the main reason why this system functioned so well in the Vedic period was that, except for the king, there was little or no economic disparity between the four categories. And the King's privileges were not questioned because the King had great responsibilities, including regulating the flow of income and taxes, overseeing defence of the kingdom, dealing with external powers, and so on. The political and economic system did not support a highly stratified society: all four categories were well provided for economically, and there was little difference in wealth or status. A Brahmin who led a rigorous and spiritually disciplined life, chanting the Vedas and conducting rituals, lived in the same kind of dwelling as a person in service. Everyone's needs were met with considerable ease as they trod their own path in life.

The Varnashramadharma is directly related to the Indian search for freedom from conditioning and to the Vedic solution in particular. The Vedic seers understood that everyone, while still alive, must perform actions. No one can live without action. Likewise, we all have desires, for possessions or money or sensory pleasures. Indeed, while we engage our lives in an endless search for money prestige or power, we overlook the fact that our real motivation is for freedom. Money can give us economical freedom. And the power we seek is not actually control over others, but to facilitate more freedom for ourselves. The higher up we are in some hierarchy, or the wealthier we are, the less we are bound, answerable or indebted to another person. Thus our actual pursuit is freedom. The Vedic Seers realized this and, therefore, freedom (moksham) was the common goal for all four divisions of society. Furthermore, everyone's actions were



¹ As Joseph Campbell, the great student of comparative religion and mythology put it: "Suppose the moon were to say one morning, 'I'd like to be the sun.' Or suppose the sun one day were to think, 'I'd like to get up a little later this morning.' The whole universe would go out of gear. The Indian idea of the social order is that all of us are just as tightly fixed to our ways and laws of life as the sun and moon." Ref: Joseph Campbell, "Hinduism," in Basic Beliefs: A Simple Presentation of the Religious Philosophies of Mankind. J.E. Fairchild, ed., 1959. This essay was reprinted as Appendix A in J. Campbell, Baksheesh and Brahman: Indian Journal 1954-1955, R. Larsen, S. Larsen and A. V. Couvering, eds., New York, HarperCollins, 1995. This essay is also an excellent overview of Indian philosophy in general and of yoga philosophy in particular. Joseph Campbell's book-long insights into post-Colonial India during his year-long tenure there are superb. -Editor

oriented toward this goal by way of karma yoga, the yoga of action and devotion. Toward this goal, everyone in Vedic society, from a Brahmin to a member of the Fourth division, was given a Mantra which, with time, practice and devotion, provided powerful internal support on the path to freedom.

Moreover, the Vedic seers realized that, as we grow through the different stages of life, our desires and interests also change. Thus, things that interest an 8-year old are different from the interests of someone at age 28 or again at age 68. Therefore, the course of life was divided into four different stages. This is how the Ashramadharma, or stages of life, evolved. The first stage, called Brahmacharyashrama, was the period of study while staying with a (Guru) teacher. The second stage, called Grihasthashrama, consisted of married life and being a householder. The third stage, where the husband and wife retired to the forest, was called Vanaprasthashrama or retirement. And the fourth stage was called Sanyasashrama, the stage of retiring from the world and becoming a hermit. The gradual progression through these four stages ensured the fulfillment of all the needs of an individual, traditionally conceived as fourfold: dharma (duty), artha (wealth), kama (love) and moksha (release). During the course of life, each individual was guided in the development of strong psychological and emotional support systems. These supports were both external, through being raised properly in a loving and supportive family with a sound education and upbringing, and internal, through initiation with a Mantra and a personal deity. Consequently, a person's vocation did not have the almost overwhelming significance which it has acquired in the contemporary world. This is because it was not what one did for a living, but the spirit in which one performed one's actions, that was most relevant both to personal satisfaction and to final liberation. Thus, each person trod his or her own path through life, and the life course was divided into stages designed ultimately to lead them to freedom. There are hundreds of examples of fully realized individuals from Indian history who came from various professions and walks of life. For example, Kabir, the great Bhakti poet-saint of 15th century Varanasi, was a weaver. Yet his achievement of a completely self-realized state was non-different from that of Sankaracharya, the great proponent of Advaita Vedanta, who was also a Brahmin.

Without question, the actions performed by members of different castes and the way they led their life differed, because the very substance of their way of life was different. For example, a Brahmin was expected to lead a spiritual and religious life, chanting the Vedas and observing strict disciplines; he was not permitted to eat meat nor drink alcohol. In contrast, Kshatriyas were allowed to eat meat because their responsibilities of fighting or defending the peace required them to build and maintain their strength. They could not be expected to survive on fruits and roots like Brahmins. And Kshatriyas were allowed to take alcohol because, during wartimes, they were deeply wounded in battle, alcohol was used as a kind of anesthetic to help treat their wounds. Thus, "the life rules became more and more demanding as one proceeded up the social scale...[and] the restrictions become less and less demanding as one goes down the scale...."¹.



¹ J. Campbell, loc cit, p. 268.

Regardless of caste, the two-fold goal of all action was clear: action should facilitate the proper functioning of society, and they should lead an individual toward freedom. In this way, action which is beneficial to society can simultaneously cleanse one's mind, uplifting and purifying it of passions and leading that person to freedom. Any action that fulfills these two goals is ideal, and such actions were incorporated into the daily life of each individual. Today, however, this system has degenerated. Even by the time of the Mahabharata (3rd-4th century, B.C.E.), this change must have begun, for when Nahusha asks Yudhishtira, "On what basis do you call a person a Brahmin or any other division?" Yudhishtira replies, "Each person will do what is akin to his own nature. The one who is inclined towards a spiritual life, who is by nature very calm, sattvic is a Brahmin. The one who is brave and courageous, who wishes to stand up to his enemies is a Kshatriya. Similarly one inclined towards business is a Vaishya and one who wishes to be in service is the Fourth division."

Codes of conduct were articulated for each division of society in the Laws of Manu. Given a good match between one's occupation and one's nature, there was little need or incentive to break these codes. And since these codes themselves led both to the proper functioning of society and to individual freedom, everyone and everything functioned harmoniously, leading to a balanced and peaceful society with contented and fulfilled individuals.

This was the Vedic way life, "the wonder that was India." However, in the drastic changes that have swept through India, from the Muslim invasions beginning in the 12th century, through 300 years of British colonial rule and accelerating since independence and the concomitant drive toward industrialization, commercialization and "development," the system of Varnashramadharma has completely broken down. Only a shattered and contorted version of it, called the "caste system," remains in evidence today. It is beyond the scope of this book to examine the reasons why the system has degenerated. However, the essence of Varnashramadharma has been presented here to help illuminate the spirit behind Vedic civilisation, as illustrated in its division of labor and of the stages of life.

Summary of the Text

Chapter I

The text begins with a description of the qualities of Yajnavalkya and his wife Gargi, who live in a hermitage with many other great sages. In an assembly of such sages, Gargi requests Yajnavalkya to teach her the essence of Yoga. Yajnavalkya consents with happiness. He meditates on the Divine (Narayana), and then begins his discourse. He describes how he approached Bramha to learn the highest truth - the way to freedom. Bramha graciously explains to him the means to freedom. He says that doing one's duties, as prescribed in the Varnashramadharma, (Refer Vedic way of life) with knowledge and without desire, is the path to freedom. Doing the same actions, but with desire is sure to lead one to further bondage. Then Bramha goes on to describe the manner in which one should lead one's life according to the Varnashramadharma. Concluding with this, Bramha himself recedes into the state of Yoga. Gargi hears this exposition of the means to freedom as said by Bramha to Yajnavalkya, and then requests Yajnavalkya to elaborate upon it further. Yajnavalkya now explains the Yoga that one should practice, along with the actions prescribed by the Varnashramadharma, to attain freedom. He defines Yoga as the union of the Jivatma (self) and the Paramatma (Divine). This Yoga has eight limbs - Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi. Then Yajnavalkya lists the number of types of each limb, and explains in detail the first limb - Yama. The ten Yamas - ahimsa, satya, asteya, bramhacarya, daya, arjava, kshama, dhrti, mitahara, and souca - are then explained in detail. This concludes the first chapter.

Chapter II

The second chapter deals with the observances (Niyamas), the second limb of Patanjali's astanga Yoga. The ten Niyamas are Tapas, Santosam, Astikyam, Danam, Iswarapujanam, Siddhantashravanam, Hri, Mati, Japam and Vratam. Yajnavalkya lists the ten Niyamas, and then defines each one of them. He explains in detail the various grades of recitation of mantra (Japam).

Chapter III

Yajnavalkya describes certain selected asanas in this chapter. He begins with a list of the eight asanas which he is going to describe: Svastikasana, Gomukhasana, Padmasana, Virasana, Simhasana, Bhadrasana, Muktasana and Mayurasana. He then describes these asanas in the above mentioned order. He gives two variations of Svastikasana and Muktasana only. Then he says that all diseases are destroyed by the practice of Asanas along with Yama and Niyama. He concludes the chapter instructing Gargi to practice Pranayama, along with Yama, Niyama and Asana, after purifying the Nadis.

Chapter IV

This chapter begins with Gargi requesting Yajnavalkya to explain in detail the method of purification of the nadis, along with their position, origin and termination, as well as the position, function and movement of the vayus. Yajnavalkya begins with the concept of dispersion of Prana and then emphasizes the importance of centering the Prana. Then the shape and position of the center of the body (dehamadhyam), and the kandasthanam in humans, animals and birds are given in order. Then follows a description of the abode of the jiva - the cakra at the navel (nabhicakra), the kundalini and their respective positions in the body. Then the awakening of the kundalini and the upward movement of the prana are described. Next, Yajnavalkya speaks of the nadis. He lists the fourteen important nadis, and describes the sushumna nadi as the most important one. Then he describes the ida and pingala nadis, and the relative position of the remaining eleven nadis. He gives further details

on the origin and termination of each of the nadis. Yajnavalkya then lists the ten life forces (vayus) and their functions. He describes the position of the most important vayu in the body, the prana vayu, then describes the location of the apana vayu, the other three important vayus (vyana, udana and samana vayus), as well as the remaining five vayus. Then he discusses the role of prana vayu in the digestion and assimilation of food. Finally, he describes clearly the principal function of each of the ten vayus. He concludes by instructing Gargi to perform Nadisodhana in the prescribed manner, after having understood everything explained so far.

Chapter V

In this chapter, Yajnavalkya discusses the preparations and practice of purifying the Nadis (Nadishodana). He first describes the qualities that an ideal aspirant should possess before attempting to purify the Nadis. Then the ideal environment and daily routine for the practice are described. Following this, he describes an alternative opinion, proposed by some other great sages. The preparations for the practice of Nadishodana, the technique of the practice, and the daily routine and duration of the practice, in accordance with this second opinion, are given in detail. Yajnavalkya concludes the chapter describing the results of such a practice.

Chapter VI

This chapter discusses in detail the various types of Pranayama, the procedures of practising them and their benefits. Yajnavalkya begins by defining Pranayama as balancing prana and apana. He relates the three components of Pranayama (inhalation, holding and exhalation) to the three syllables of Om, thus saying that Pranayama is simply another form of Om (Pranava). He proposes two procedures of pranayama, involving different ratios of inhalation, holding and exhalation. The first three divisions of society may use the Gayatri or the pranava, while the fourth division and women should use other mantras, such as Namah. Then three grades of Pranayama are described. Yajnavalkya describes the type of pranayama that leads to lightness of the body and absorption of the mind, as the best one. He then explains the concept and practice of kevala kumbhakam and sahita kumbhakam.

Then we are given another definition of Pranayama: pranayama means retaining the prana within the body. Yajnavalkya gives, in detail, two means to master the prana: one using the Shanmukhi mudra, and the other, an alternative involving asana and pranava. He also describes the results of focussing the prana at various places in the body, and how diseases are destroyed by such a practice, which illustrates the therapeutic applications of pranayama. Yajnavalkya also deals comprehensively with the mantras to be used by each of the four divisions of society during pranayama practice. He then goes on to describe the movement of the prana to the crown of the head (Brahmarandhram) and the sound (nada) that arises during the upward movement of the prana. The role of pranayama in the destruction of the kundalini and the removal of ignorance (avidya) is also described. The chapter concludes by stressing the importance of the practice of pranayama and daily rituals (nityakarma) to achieve the union of the self with the Divine.

Chapter VII

The first four limbs of Yoga were described in the preceding 6 chapters. Here, Yajnavalkya begins explanation of Pratyahara, the fifth limb of Yoga. Five different forms of Pratyahara are suggested. The fourth and perhaps most important form is defined as “Having drawn the prana from point to point, holding it in the 18 vital points (Marmasthanas)”. These eighteen vital points are then listed and the distance between each of them is given in order. Following this, the method of drawing and focussing the prana in each of these points is explained in detail, and then the benefits of such a practice are also discussed. Finally, Yajnavalkya explains the fifth form of Pratyahara, and how one can reach freedom by focussing the prana in certain vital points.

Chapter VIII

Yajnavalkya explains the five types of mental focus (Dharana) in this chapter. Dharana is defined as the absorption of the mind in the self. The five types of Dharana are distinguished by their focus on the five deities in the region of the corresponding element in the body. The region of each of the forms of matter in the body is described. Following this, the procedure, duration, and results of Dharana on each of the deities in the appropriate region of the body are discussed. Then the process of involution, which is the objective of the practice of Dharana using the above deities, is explained. Then follows another method to bring about this involution through the use of the Pranava. Yajnavalkya says that, for those absorbed in Yoga, the three doshas can be balanced by the practice of Pranayama with Dharana. He states that all the diseases caused by the imbalance of the doshas are removed by the practice of Dharana. Finally, he concludes the chapter by again emphasising the importance of the practice of one's daily duties (in accordance with the Vedas) and the previous limbs Yama, Niyama etc.

Chapter IX

In this chapter, Yajnavalkya describes the various methods of Dhyana. Dhyana is the cause for the bondage or freedom of all beings. Dhyana is to realize the self using the mind. It is of two types: With attributes (Saguna), and without attributes (Nirguna). Then various forms of Dhyana (both with and without attributes) are described by Yajnavalkya. The benefits of Dhyana are said to be such that one who does Dhyana as suggested can attain freedom in one year. Then Yajnavalkya instructs Gargi to do her duties in accordance with the Vedas, and to do Dhyana always. He concludes emphasizing that all great Seers have attained freedom through Dhyana.

Chapter X

Yajnavalkya speaks about Samadhi in this chapter. Samadhi is the state of union of the self and the Divine. Whatever one does Dhyana upon, one attains Samadhi or oneness with that. Surrendering to an entity also leads to Samadhi with that deity. Then the prerequisites for the attainment of Samadhi are described. Following this is a detailed description of the methodology by which a Yogi gives up his body at the time of death and attains freedom. One must leave the body thinking of that on which one has focussed during the practice of Yoga, because one becomes what one thinks of at the time of death. Yajnavalkya again emphasizes that freedom is assured for one who follows the actions laid down in the Vedas without desire. Finally, Yajnavalkya concludes the chapter saying that the path of Karnayogasamuccayam, which is a combination of action (Karma) and knowledge (Jnana) has now been expounded by him and again advises Gargi to reach freedom by the practice of Yoga.

Chapter XI

This chapter begins with Gargi asking Yajnavalkya to explain how a person in a state of Yoga (Samadhi) will perform the actions prescribed in the Vedas, and if he cannot do it, what is the (Prayascittam) purification for non performance. Yajnavalkya replies that one in a state of Yoga (Samadhi) need not do any of the Vedic duties. But when one comes out of Samadhi, when the self is not united with the Divine, one must perform all the Vedic duties. If a Yogi does not perform these duties, with the attitude that they cause sorrow, then he will suffer for it, for no living being can remain without performing any actions. Yajnavalkya then instructs Gargi to perform all her Vedic duties and attain freedom through the practice of Yoga. Then he requests all the sages present there to return to their respective hermitages. All the sages return to their hermitages after honouring and worshipping Yajnavalkya. After they have all left, Gargi again asks Yajnavalkya to explain the path of Yoga in a brief manner. Yajnavalkya benevolently accedes to her request.

Chapter XII

This chapter contains the essence of the entire book. In this chapter Yajnavalkya describes the yogic path to freedom in a concise manner. The progression towards freedom outlined here can be divided into a series of seven orderly steps or stages. These steps have been detailed in tantric texts :

1st stage: Checking the downward flow of apana (prana) and directing it towards the fire, thereby fanning its flames and vitalising it. The benefits, or signs of progress due to this practice, are detailed here.

2nd stage: The burning of the kundalini by the flames of the fire, leading to its awakening. When the Kundalini is awakened, the nadis are uncovered and the prana begins to flow in the Sushumna.

3rd stage: Movement of the prana and the fire upwards to the heart-lotus through the Sushumna and the awakening or blooming of the heart lotus. The manifestation of various signs, internal and external, as a result of this practice.

4th stage: Further upward movement of the prana, meditation using pranava and visualization of the disc of the moon in the forehead.

5th stage: The concentration of the prana, and the absorption of the mind, with meditation on the inner self, between the eyebrows, enabling one to see in oneself an effulgent Lingam, like a pillar. Various signs like a trembling in the head, appearance of visions of celestial gardens, the moon, the stars etc. indicate one's progress.

6th stage: Meditation on the Divine (Vishnu) in his abode, in the middle of the eyebrows. This is a state said to be very close to the attainment of freedom.

7th stage: The attainment of freedom, and the splitting of the crown of the head, following the advice of one's Guru.

Yajnavalkya reiterates the benefits of Yoga practice, and concludes his discourse, again emphasizing the importance of the practice of one's daily duties according to the Vedas. Then Yajnavalkya recedes into samadhi in solitude and Gargi, having understood the essence of yoga, worships Yajnavalkya and does the same. The text concludes with a verse in praise of Vasudeva (the Divine) and a verse to the effect that Yajnavalkya and Gargi, are always present, seeing the Divine within themselves.

Chapter I

Outline

- 1-5: The qualities of Sage Yajnavalkya
- 6-8: Gargi's request to Yajnavalkya to teach her the essence of Yoga
- 9-19: Yajnavalkya meditates on the Divine, (Narayana) and describes how he approached the Creator (Brahma), to learn the highest truth
- 19-27: The path to freedom (*Nivartaka*) and the path to bondage (*Pravartaka*), as explained by Brahma
- 27-29: The three debts of mankind and the means to overcome them
- 29-40: Brahma explains how one should lead one's life in accordance with Varnashramadharma. After explaining the essence of Yoga, Brahma Himself recedes into a state of Yoga
- 41-42: Gargi's request to Yajnavalkya to further explain the knowledge (*Jnana*) that should go along with one's actions to attain freedom
- 43-44: Yajnavalkya's reply that knowledge is nothing but Yoga. Definition of Yoga as the union of the Self (*Jivatma*) and the Divine (*Paramatma*)
- 45-50: The eight limbs of Yoga and the number of divisions in each limb
- 50-70: Detailed explanation of the ten divisions of the first limb (*Yama*)

प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

1.5 The qualities of Sage Yajnavalkya.

याज्ञवल्क्यं मुनिश्रेष्ठं सर्वज्ञं ज्ञाननिर्मलम् ।
सर्वशास्त्रार्थतत्त्वज्ञं सदा ध्यानपरायणम् ॥१॥

वेदवेदांगतत्त्वज्ञं योगेषु परिनिष्ठितम् ।
जितेन्द्रियं जितक्रोधं जिताहारं जितामयम् ॥२॥

तपस्विनं जितामित्रं ब्रह्मण्यं ब्राह्मणप्रियम् ।
तपोवनगतं सौम्यं संध्योपासनतत्परम् ॥३॥

ब्रह्मविद्भिर्महाभागैर्ब्राह्मणैश्च समावृतम् ।
सर्वभूतसमं शान्तं सत्यसन्धं गतक्लमम् ॥४॥

गुणज्ञं सर्वभूतेषु परार्थैकप्रयोजनम् ।
ब्रुवन्तं परमात्मानमृषीणामुग्रतेजसाम् ॥५॥

Yajnavalkya, the doyen among sages, who is all knowing and whose knowledge is pure and unsullied, who has realized the essence of all the Vedic scriptures, (Sastras) who is always in a meditative state, who has understood the essence of the Vedas and Vedangas¹, who has absolute mastery over the

¹ The Vedas and the Vedangas. The Vedas are the expressions of eternal truths. They are Apaurusheya, or not man-made scriptures. They have always been in existence. If we were to envision the Divine in a human form, we could say that the Vedas are the "breath of the Divine," since for humans, the breath is inseparable. The Vedas are infinite, but four of them are presently available. They are Rg Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda.

In order to understand the Vedas, the study of the Vedangas are considered essential. The word Anga means a limb. Vedangas are like the limbs of the Vedas and are six in number. They are:

1. Siksha - The science of Vedic phonetics
2. Vyakarana - Grammar
3. Nirukta - Etymological explanations of the Vedic words
4. Jyotisha - Astronomy
5. Kalpa - Details on the performance of Vedic rituals
6. Chandas - The science of prosody, the various meters of composition.

These six form the six limbs of the body of the Vedas. These limbs can be figuratively represented in the form of a human, where the first limb, Siksha, forms the nose, Vyakarana forms the face or mouth, Kalpa the hands, Nirukta the ears, Chandas the feet and Jyotisha the eyes.

This representation is significant. The first limb, Siksha or Vedic phonetics, is called the nose. This is significant not from the point of view of smell but from the most important function of breath, which sustains our life. In this sense, the Siksha is like the life sustaining breath force of the Vedic Mantras.

The second Anga is Vyakarana or Vedic grammar, which is considered to be the face or mouth. Since the mouth is critical for speaking any language, grammar forms the mouth.

The third Anga, Nirukta, is the dictionary for the Vedas and the Vedic language. This deals with the derivation of all words, their roots and meanings, their decomposition into letters and their origins and meaning. This is the etymology of the Vedic language. Since it details the meaning and usage of each word, why the word is used in particular contexts, and so on, it is referred to as the ears, because understanding the meaning of any language is of utmost importance for otherwise, words fall on deaf ears. Therefore, the Nirukta that explains the meaning of the words thereby provides the hearing for the comprehension of the Vedas.

The fourth limb, Jyotisha or the science of astronomy, has been compared to the eyes. Our eyes aid us in perceiving things both close or distant. The science of astronomy help us to look into the past or the future.

The fifth limb Kalpa has been called the hands. The hands are instrumental in performing an action. Kalpa is that science that tells us how to perform the Vedic rituals based on the knowledge of the 5 other limbs.

The sixth Anga, the Chandas or the art of prosody, forms the feet. The Vedas are mostly written in the form of poetry. Poetry requires meters. The Vedas contain various poetic meters in which the various Mantras are recited.

different aspects of Yoga along with a complete control over his senses and food¹, who is devoid of anger and free from all diseases, who is always in deep penance, who has overcome all his enemies², who resides in a hermitage in the forest, who is respected and revered by Brahmins³ who perform all the duties prescribed in the Vedas, who is gentle, who pays great attention to the regular practice of Sandhyavandana⁴, who is surrounded by many great Brahmins who have realized the ultimate truth, who treats all beings equally, who is always at peace with himself, always aware, who is the embodiment of truth, who teaches the essence of the highest truth to many revered sages, who recognizes and appreciates the good qualities in all beings, whose sole aim is the welfare of others.

6-8: Gargi's request to Yajnavalkya to teach her the essence of Yoga.

तमेवं गुणसंपन्नं नारीणामुत्तमा वधुः ।
मैत्रेयी च महाभागा गार्गी च ब्रह्मविद्वरा ॥६॥

सभामध्यगता चेयमृषीणामुग्रतेजसाम् ।
प्रणम्य दण्डवद्भूमौ गार्ग्येतद्वाक्यमब्रवीत् ॥७॥

गार्ग्यवाच—

भगवन्सर्वशास्त्रज्ञ सर्वभूतहिते रत ।
योगतत्त्वं मम ब्रूहि साङ्गोपाङ्गं विधानतः ॥८॥

In the assembly of great sages, the wife of Yajnavalkya, also known as Gargi, endowed with unparalleled qualities, who has attained the realization of the highest truth, fell at his feet⁵ and spoke as follows. Gargi said “One who is fit to be worshipped, who has studied and realized the essence of the Sastras, who is concerned about the Welfare of all Beings, please teach me the essence of Yoga with all its branches and sub-branches⁶.”

¹ According to Ayurveda, the major cause of disease is Ama, or undigested food which leads to toxins. This is called Ama Dosha. Mentally, actions performed without due reflection lead to a state where one is unable to proceed or withdraw. This can be considered Ama at the psychological level. Jita means 'the one who has conquered.' Therefore Jitamayam refers to one who has gone beyond both mental and physical Ama.

² The enemies referred to here are internal. They are also called the “shadurmis” or six waves. They are Kama (desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (arrogance or ego) and Matsarya (jealousy or envy). These are the incessant waves that drag us deeper into the ocean of bondage.

³ A Brahmin is one who has realized the highest truth. It can also refer to one who wishes to realize the highest and makes a constant endeavor in that direction.

⁴ Sandhyavandana is the ritual done thrice a day - in the morning, afternoon and evening (in the three Sandhis). Meditation on the Gayatri Mantra and the practice of Pranayama form an important part of this ritual, which is repeatedly referred to in this text. For example, see Chapter Six.

⁵ The Sanskrit word for the act of prostration is “namaskara”. The two syllables, na and ma, mean “not mine.” “Kara” is derived from the root “kr”- to do. Thus the act of prostration indicates an attitude of surrender and trust in the Guru.

⁶ **Sangopangam.** The word “sa” means “with”. Sangopangam means to study the Vedas with all its limbs (Angas) and auxiliary limbs (Upangas). Details of the Vedas and Vedangas were explained earlier (cf. footnote 1 of the present chapter). The first 4 are the 4 Vedas. Then come the 6 Vedangas, making 10 aspects of the Sangopangam. There are four Upangas: Vedic ritual (Mimamsa), logic (Nyaya), a collection of holy texts (Puranas) and treatises on conduct and morality (Dharmasastras). Mimamsa deals in detail with the performance of Vedic rituals. Nyaya is the Vedic science of logic. The Puranas are a collection of stories of the gods and related holy texts. The Dharmasastras lay down the codes of conduct for a balanced society and individuals. The Itihasas and Puranas details the lives of kings or incarnated deities who lived according to the Vedas, written as examples for humans to follow.

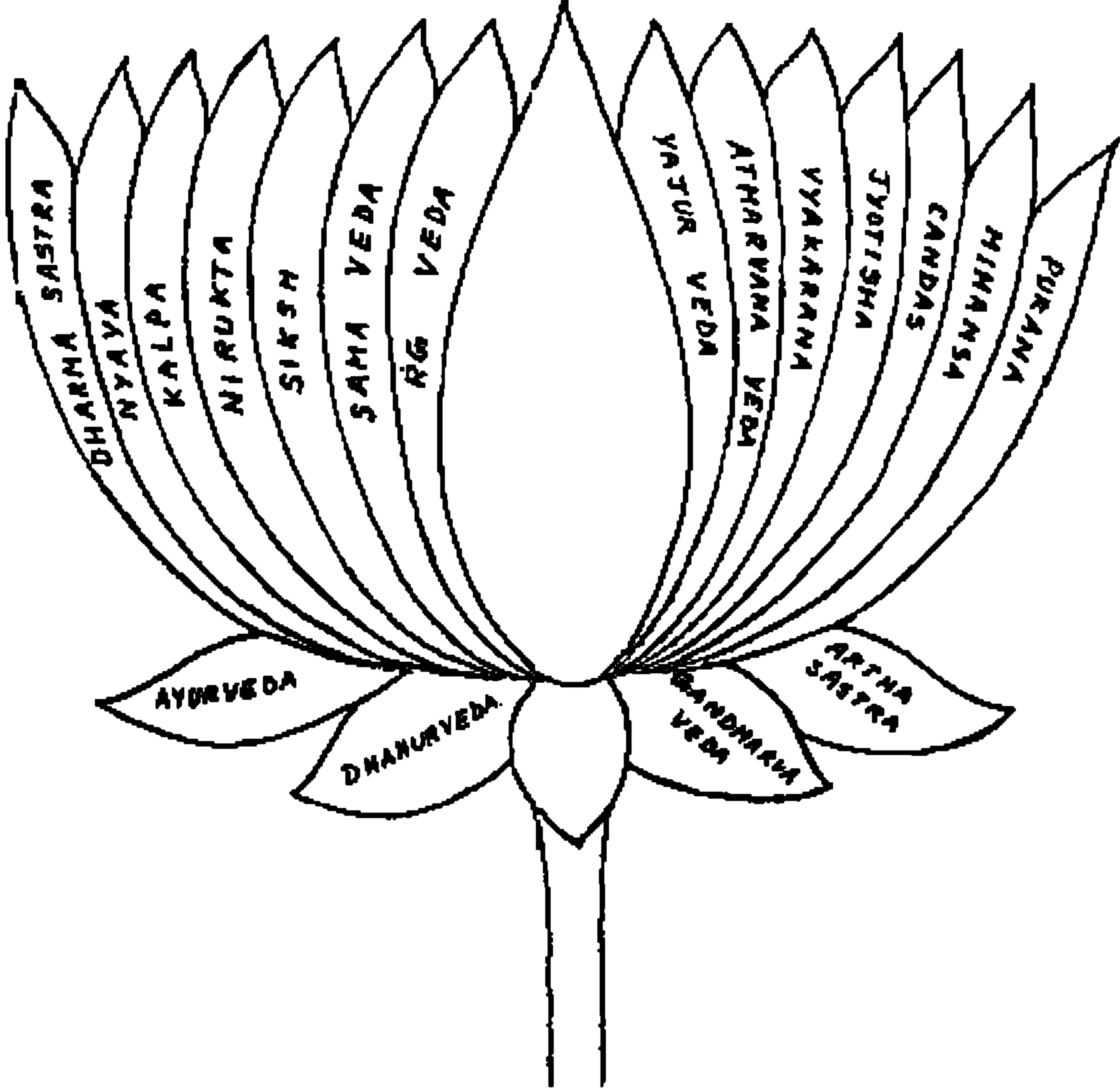
9-19: Yajnavalkya meditates on the Divine, (Narayana) and describes how he approached the Creator (Brahma) to learn the highest truth.

एवं पृष्टः स भगवान्सभामध्ये स्त्रिया तया ।
ऋषीनालोक्य नेत्राभ्यां वाक्यमेतदभाषत ॥९॥

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भद्रं ते गागि ब्रह्मविदां वरे ।
वक्ष्यामि योगसर्वस्वं ब्रह्मणा कीर्तितं पुरा ॥१०॥

समाहितमना गागि शृणु त्वं गदतो मम ।
इत्युक्त्वा ब्रह्मविच्छ्रेष्ठो याज्ञवल्क्यस्तपोनिधिः ॥११॥



In addition to these four, there are also four Upavedas or auxiliary Vedas which are also systems of knowledge. They are the Vedic science of health (Ayurveda), economics and politics (Arthashastra), weaponry (Dhanurveda), and music and dance (Gandharvaveda).

नारायणं जगन्नाथं सर्वभूतहृदि स्थितम् ।
वासुदेवं जगद्योनिं योगिध्येयं निरञ्जनम् ॥१२॥

आनन्दममृतं नित्यं परमात्मानमीश्वरम् ।
ध्यायन्हृदि हृषीकेशं मनसा सुसमाहितः ॥१३॥

नेत्राभ्यां तां समालोक्य कृपया वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।
एह्येहि गार्गी सर्वज्ञे सर्वशास्त्रविशारदे ॥१४॥

योगं वक्ष्यामि विधिवद्वात्रोक्तं परमेष्ठिना ।
मुनयः श्रूयतामत्र गार्गी सह समाहिताः ॥१५॥

पद्मासने समासीनं चतुराननमव्ययम् ।
चराचराणां स्रष्टारं ब्रह्माणं परमेष्ठिनम् ॥१६॥

कदाचित्तत्र गत्वाहं स्तुत्वा स्तोत्रैः प्रणम्य च ।
पृष्टवानिममेवार्थं यन्मां त्वं परिपृच्छसि ॥१७॥

देवदेव जगन्नाथ चतुर्मुख पितामह ।
येनाहं यामि निर्वाणं कर्मणा मोक्षमव्ययम् ॥१८॥

ज्ञानं च परमं गुह्यं यथावद्ब्रूहि मे प्रभो ।

Requested thus, Yajnavalkya, who is worthy of being worshipped, viewed all the assembled sages and spoke as follows. Yajnavalkya said, "Gargi, Best among those who have Realized the Ultimate Truth¹, arise. May all be well with you. I will tell you all about the essence of Yoga which was taught [to me] by the Creator (Brahma). Gargi, when I teach you, listen to me with a focussed mind." So saying, meditating in his heart, with one-pointed concentration upon the Lord of the universe, (Narayana) who resides in the heart of all beings, who is the support for the existence of all forms of life in all the worlds, who is the source of this universe, who is fit to be meditated upon by Yogis, who is unattached, who is always in a state of bliss, who is immortal, eternal, omnipresent, who is the ruler of senses, Yajnavalkya, whose wealth is his penance and austerity and who is the greatest among the realized souls, beholding her (Gargi) with compassion, said "O Gargi, Realized One, Who is Proficient in all the Sastras, come forward. I will explain the principles of Yoga which were taught to me by Brahma known as Parameshti. Sages who are assembled here listen to me with total concentration along with Gargi.

¹ There is a mistaken notion today that women were the victims of discrimination during the Vedic period. However, it is apparent from various ancient texts that women were well-read back then and that they also practiced Yoga. For example, in the Ramayana, there is reference to Kausalya, Rama's mother, practicing Pranayama. In the present text, Yajnavalkya consistently refers to Gargi as one who has realized the highest truth, thereby acknowledging her own deep wisdom.

Once I went to Brahma who sits on a lotus flower, who has four faces, who is imperishable, eternal, who is the creator of the world with all the animate and inanimate objects, who is known as Parameshti, and after singing his praise and prostrating before him with reverence, I asked him about the same subject about which you ask me now.

O Lord! Protector of the Universe, One who has Four Faces, Who is like the Paternal Grandfather of all Humanity, please teach me means by which I can attain supreme bliss and eternal freedom, and also the supreme knowledge which is a closely guarded secret.

19-27: The path to freedom (Nivartaka) and the path to bondage (Pravartaka), as explained by Brahma.

मयैवमुक्तो द्रुहिणः स्वयभूर्लोकनायकः ॥१९॥

मामालोक्य प्रसन्नात्मा ज्ञानकर्मण्यभाषत ।
ज्ञानस्य द्विविधौ ज्ञेयौ पन्थानौ वेदचोदितौ ॥२०॥

अनुष्ठितौ तौ विद्वद्भिः प्रवर्तकनिवर्तकौ ।
वर्णाश्रमोक्तं यत्कर्म कामसंकल्पपूर्वकम् ॥२१॥

प्रवर्तकं भवेदेतत्पुनरावृत्तिहेतुकम् ।
कर्तव्यमिति विध्युक्तं कर्म कामविवर्जितम् ॥२२॥

येन यत्क्रियते सम्यक् ज्ञानयुक्तं निवर्तकम् ।
निवर्तकं हि पुरुषं निवर्तयति जन्मतः ॥२३॥

प्रवर्तकं हि सर्वत्र पुनरावृत्तिहेतुकम् ।
वर्णाश्रमोक्तं कर्मैव विध्युक्तं कामवर्जितम् ॥२४॥

विधिवत्कुर्वन्तस्तस्य मुक्तिर्गाङ्गि करे स्थिता ।
वर्णाश्रमोक्तं कर्मैव विधिवत्कामपूर्वकम् ॥२५॥

येन यत्क्रियते तस्य गर्भवासः करे स्थितः ।
संसारभीरुभिस्तस्माद्विध्युक्तं कामवर्जितम् ॥२६॥

विधिवत्कर्म कर्तव्यं ज्ञानेन सह सर्वदा ।
जाताश्च त्रिषु लोकेषु आनुलोम्येन मानवाः ॥२७॥

Having been asked by me, Brahma, the master and the guide of the universe beheld me with a gracious mind and explained the means to knowledge: "Doing the actions said in the

Varnashramadharm¹ with desire is Pravartaka, which is the cause for rebirth. Doing the actions, as prescribed in the Vedas, properly, as one's duty, devoid of desire, with knowledge (Jnana), is Nivartaka. It is Nivartaka which releases one from rebirth. It is Pravartaka which is always the cause for rebirth. Gargi! Freedom is in the hand of (is sure to be attained by) one doing the actions according to the Varnashramadharm, devoid of desire, as said in the Vedas, . Life in the womb is in the hand of one who does the actions as said in the Varnashramadharm, as said in the Vedas, with desire. Thus the actions prescribed in the Vedas must be done always, without desire, with knowledge (Jnana) by those who fear this bondage (Samsara).

27-29: The three debts of mankind and the means to overcome them.

विधिवत्कर्म कर्तव्यं ज्ञानेन सह सर्वदा ।
जाताश्च त्रिषु लोकेषु आनुलोम्येन मानवाः ॥२७॥
ते देवानामृषीणां च पितृणामृणिनस्तथा ।
ऋषिभ्यो ब्रह्मचर्येण पितृभ्यश्च सुतस्तथा ॥२८॥
कुर्याद्यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः स्वाश्रमं धर्ममाचरन् ।

Human beings, born in all the three worlds, are naturally indebted to the Devas, sages (Rishis) and ancestors. By learning and reciting the Vedas, [one can free oneself] from the debts of the sages; by progeny, from the debts of one's ancestors; by performing sacrificial rites while following the duties of one's stage in life, (Ashrama) from the Devas².

29-40: Brahma explains how one should lead one's life in accordance with Varnashramadharm. After explaining the essence of Yoga, Brahma Himself recedes into a state of Yoga.

चत्वारो ब्राह्मणस्योक्ता आश्रमाः श्रुतिचोदिताः ॥२९॥
क्षत्रियस्य त्रयः प्रोक्ता द्वावेकौ वैश्यशूद्रयोः ।
अधीत्य वेदं वेदार्थं साङ्गोपांगं विधानतः ॥३०॥
स्नायाद्विध्युक्तमार्गेण ब्रह्मचर्यव्रतं चरन् ।
संस्कृतायां सवर्णायां पुत्रमुत्पादयेत्ततः ॥३१॥
यजेदग्नौ तु विधिवत्भार्यया सह वा विना ।
कान्तारे विजने देशे फलमूलोदकान्विते ॥३२॥

¹ This is explained in detail in the appendix to this chapter.

² Throughout our lives, our actions are primarily oriented towards attaining some object or achieving some goal. In contrast, in order to attain true freedom, we must direct our actions towards giving rather than receiving. Consequently, many rites or rituals are proposed in the Vedas, including the concept of our indebtedness to our ancestors, earlier sages, and so on. However, it is beyond the scope of this work to discuss the significance of this attitude toward ritual and its profound relevance for our times.

तपश्चरन्वसेन्नित्यं साग्निहोत्रः समाहितः ।
आत्मन्यग्नीन्समारोप्य संन्यसेद्विधिना ततः ॥३३॥

संन्यासाश्रमसंयुक्तो नित्यं कर्म समाचरन् ।
यावत्क्षेत्री भवेत्तावद्यजेदात्मानमात्मनि ॥३४॥

क्षत्रियश्च चरेदेवमासंन्यासाश्रमात्सदा ।
वानप्रस्थाश्रमादेवं चरेद्वैश्यः समाहितः ॥३५॥

शूद्रः शुश्रूषया नित्यं गृहस्थाश्रममाचरेत् ।
शूद्रस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं च मुनिभिः कैश्चिदिष्यते ॥३६॥

आनुलोम्यप्रसूतानां त्रयाणामाश्रमास्त्रयः ।
शूद्रवच्छूद्रजातानामाचारः कीर्तितो बुधैः ॥३७॥

चतुर्णामाश्रमस्थानामहन्यहनि नित्यशः ।
विध्युक्तं कर्म कर्तव्यं कामसंकल्पवर्जितम् ॥३८॥

तस्मात्त्वमपि योगीन्द्र स्वाश्रमं धर्ममाचरन् ।

श्रद्धया विधिवत्सम्यक् ज्ञानकर्म समाचर ॥३९॥

इति मे कर्मसर्वस्वं योगरूपं च तत्त्वतः ।
उपदिश्य ततो ब्रह्मा योगनिष्ठोऽभवत्स्वयम् ॥४०॥

According to the Vedas, four stages are laid down for a Brahmin, three stages for a Kshatriya, two stages for a Vaishya, and one stage for the fourth division. Having learnt the Vedas (in the Brahmacharya ashrama), with all its branches and sub-branches, in the proper manner, one must leave the Brahmacharya ashrama, in the prescribed manner, following the vows of Brahmacharya ashrama during the transition, and must [marry and] beget children of a chaste girl of the same division. Then he must perform the rituals with the [three] fires as prescribed in the Vedas. With or without his wife [in Vanaprasthashrama], he must live in a secluded place in the forest, which has sufficient fruits, roots and water, doing penance (tapas) and a Vedic ritual (Agnihotra) performed everyday, with a focussed mind. He must then take Sanyasa in the proper manner, having [symbolically] merged the [three] fires with his self. Following Sanyasashrama, doing his duty always, as long as he possesses a body (till the end of his life), he must dissolve the mind in the self. The actions prescribed by the Vedas must be done everyday, always, without the motivation of desire, by those belonging to all the four stages in life (ashramas).

The Kshatriyas too must always observe the stages except Sanyasa similarly. A Vaishya too must, with concentration, observe the stages other than Vanaprasthashrama and Sanyasashrama. The fourth division must always observe Grihastashrama, and according to some sages, Brahmacharyashrama also.

Therefore, you too, Master of Yogis, performing the duties of your Ashrama, properly, with sincerity, in the prescribed manner do the action that will lead you to realization.” Having thus explained the essence of Karma and yoga to me, Brahma himself receded into a state of yoga.”

41-42: Gargi's request to Yajnavalkya to further explain the knowledge (*Jnana*) that should go along with one's actions to attain freedom.

श्रुत्वैतद्याज्ञवल्क्योक्तं वाक्यं गार्गी मुदान्विता ।
पुनः प्राह मुनिश्रेष्ठमृषिमध्ये वरानना ॥४१॥

गार्ग्युवाच—

ज्ञानेन सहयोगीन्द्र विध्युक्तं कर्म कुर्वतः ।
त्वयोक्तं मुक्तिरस्तीति तयोर्ज्ञानं वद प्रभो ॥४२॥

Having heard with great happiness the words of Yajnavalkya, Gargi, the one with a beautiful countenance, again spoke thus in the midst of the great sages, to the greatest among sages (Yajnavalkya). Gargi said, “ O greatest of Yogis! It was said by you that there is freedom for one who does the actions (karma) prescribed in the Vedas with knowledge (Jnana). O Master, between the two (action and knowledge) tell us about the knowledge.

43-44: Yajnavalkya's reply that knowledge is nothing but Yoga. Definition of Yoga as the union of Jivatma and Paramatma

भार्यया त्वेवमुक्तस्तु याज्ञवल्क्यस्तपोनिधिः ।
तां समालोक्य कृपया ज्ञानरूपमभाषत ॥४३॥

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

ज्ञानं योगात्मकं विद्धि योगश्चाष्टाङ्गसंयुतः ।
संयोगो योग उत्पुक्तो जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ॥४४॥

Yajnavalkya, thus requested by his wife, looked at her with compassion and explained the essence of the (ultimate) knowledge - “Understand knowledge to be of the form of yoga, and yoga as having eight limbs. The union of the individual self (Jivatma) and the Supreme soul, Divine (Paramatma) is said to be yoga. I will explain to you the limbs, properly, as they were heard by me earlier. O Gargi! Listen to me with a focussed mind along with the sages.”

45-50: The eight limbs of Yoga and the number of divisions in each limb.

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi - O Gargi, one with a beautiful countenance! These are the limbs. Yama and Niyama are of ten types each. Eight Asanas are important and among them, three are most important. Pranayama is said to be of three types and

वक्ष्याम्यङ्गानि ते सम्यग्यथा पूर्वं मया श्रुतम् ।
समाहितमना गार्गी ऋषिभिः सह संश्रुणु ॥४५॥

यमश्च नियमश्चैव आसनं च तथैव च ।
प्राणायामस्तथा गार्गी प्रत्याहारश्च धारणा ॥४६॥

ध्यानं समाधिरेतानि योगाङ्गानि वरानने ।
यमश्च नियमश्चैव दशधा संप्रकीर्तितः ॥४७॥

आसनान्युत्तमान्यष्टौ त्रयं तेषूत्तमोत्तमम् ।
प्राणायामस्त्रिधा प्रोक्तः प्रत्याहारश्च पंचधा ॥४८॥

धारणा पंचधा प्रोक्ता ध्यानं षोढा प्रकीर्तितम् ।
त्रयं तेषूत्तमं प्रोक्तं समाधिस्त्वेकरूपकः ॥४९॥

बहुधा केचिदिच्छन्ति विस्तरेण पृथक् शृणु ।

Pratyahara of five types. Dharana is said to be of five types. Dhyana is of six types. Among them, three are said to be more important. Samadhi is one, [but] some think it to be of many divisions.

50-70: Detailed explanation of the ten divisions of (Yama) the first limb.

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं दयार्जवम् ॥५०॥

क्षमाधृतिमिताहारः शौचं त्वेते यमा दश ।
कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वभूतेषु सर्वदा ॥५१॥

अक्लेशजननं प्रोक्तमहिंसात्वेन योगिभिः ।
विध्युक्तं चेदाहिंसा स्यात्क्लेशजन्मैव जन्तुषु ॥५२॥

वेदेनोक्तेऽपि हिंसास्यादभिचारादि कर्म यत् ।
सत्यं भूतहितं प्रोक्तं न यथार्थाभिभाषणम् ॥५३॥

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा परद्रव्येषु निःस्पृहा ।
अस्तेयमिति सा प्रोक्ता ऋषिभिस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥५४॥

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वावस्थासु सर्वदा ।
सर्वत्र मैथुनत्यागो ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रचक्षते ॥५५॥

ब्रह्मचर्याश्रमस्थानां यतीनां नैष्टिकस्य च ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तु तत्प्रोक्तं तथैवारण्यवासिनाम् ॥५६॥

ऋतावृत्तो स्वदारेषु संगतिर्या विधानतः ।
ब्रह्मचर्यं तु तत्प्रोक्तं गृहस्थाश्रमवासिनाम् ॥५७॥

राज्ञश्चैव गृहस्थस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रकीर्तितम् ।
विशां वृत्तवतां चैव केचिदिच्छन्ति पण्डिताः ॥५८॥

शुश्रूषं तु शूद्रस्य ब्रह्मचर्यं प्रकीर्तितम् ।
शुश्रूषा वा गुरोर्नित्यं ब्रह्मचर्यमुदाहृतम् ॥५९॥

गुरवः पंच सर्वेषां चतुर्णां श्रुतिचोदिताः ।
माता पिता तथाचार्यो मातुलः श्वशुरस्तथा ॥६०॥

एषु मुख्यास्त्रयः प्रोक्ता आचार्यः पितरौ तथा ।
एषु मुख्यतमस्त्वेक आचार्यः परमार्थवित् ॥६१॥

तमेवं ब्रह्मविच्छेष्टं नित्यकर्मपरायणम् ।
शुश्रूषयार्चयेन्नित्यं तुष्टोऽभूद्येन वा गुरुः ॥६२॥

दया च सर्वभूतेषु सर्वत्रानुग्रहः स्मृतः ।
विहितेषु तदन्येषु मनोवाक्कायकर्मणाम् ॥६३॥

प्रवृत्तौ वा निवृत्तौ वा एकरूपत्वमार्जवम् ।
प्रियाप्रियेषु सर्वेषु समत्वं यच्छरीरिणाम् ॥६४॥

क्षमा संवेति विद्वद्भिर्गदिता वेदवादिभिः ।
अर्यहानौ च बन्धूनां वियोगेष्वपि सम्पदाम् ॥६५॥

तयोः प्राप्तौ च सर्वत्र चित्तस्य स्थापनं धृतिः ।
अष्टौ ग्रासा मुनेर्भक्ष्याः षोडशारण्यवासिनाम् ॥६६॥

द्वात्रिंशच्च गृहस्थानां यथेष्टं ब्रह्मचारिणाम् ।
एषामयं मिताहारो ह्यन्येषामल्पभोजनम् ॥६७॥

शौचं तु द्विविधं प्रोक्तं बाह्यमाभ्यन्तरं तथा ।
मृज्जलाभ्यां स्मृतं बाह्यं मनःशुद्धिस्तथान्तरम् ॥६८॥

मनःशुद्धिश्च विज्ञेया धर्मेणाध्यात्मविद्यया ।
आत्मविद्या च धर्मश्च पित्राचार्येण वानघे ॥६९॥

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु सर्वेनिःश्रेयसार्थिभिः ।
गुरवः श्रुतसम्पन्ना मान्या वाङ्मनसादिभिः ॥७०॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये प्रथमोऽध्यायः ॥

Listen about each one with attention. Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, Daya, Arjava, Kshama, Dhrti, Mitahara, and Saucha are the ten Yamas. Not causing harm to all beings, always, by thought, word or deed is said to be Ahimsa by yogis. Even that [action] which causes harm to other beings is Ahimsa if it is prescribed by the Vedas. An action, like those done with the intention of harming a foe (exorcising etc.) is Himsa, even if the means for the same are provided by the Vedas.

Satya is not just speaking the plain truth, [but to say] that which is beneficial to all beings. According to sages who have realised the truth, absence of desire for others' possessions is said to be Asteya.

Renunciation of conjunction by thought, word, or deed, with the opposite sex, at all times, in all places and in all states is considered Brahmacharya. This is said to be Brahmacharya for persons in the Brahmacharyashrama, for Sanyasins, for those who have resolved to adhere to Brahmacharya throughout their lives, and for those who are in the Vanaprasthashrama (the third stage in life when one retires to the forest). For householders, conjunction with their wives, in the prescribed period, in the proper manner, is considered as Brahmacharya. This Brahmacharya is prescribed for Kshatriyas who are in the Grihasthashrama, and by some scholars to Vaishyas of good conduct also. For the fourth division, serving one's teacher (Guru) is said to be Brahmacharya. For everyone, serving one's teacher at all times is said to be Brahmacharya.

For all divisions, five Gurus are stated in the Vedas - one's mother, father, teacher (Acarya), [maternal] uncle and father-in-law. Among them, three are said to be more important - one's teacher and parents. Among them, one is most important - the teacher who has realized the highest truth. One must always worship the same teacher who is the best among those who have known the Brahman, who is absorbed in the performance of his daily duties, by performing the service by which one's teacher will be pleased.

Daya is to be kind to all beings everywhere. Equality towards all things, favourable and unfavourable is said to be Kshama for humans by scholars well versed in the Vedas. During the loss of wealth and separation from one's dear ones, or attainment of both, steadiness of mind everywhere (in all states) is Dhrti.

Eight mouthfuls of food are to be eaten by a Sanyasi, sixteen by those in Vanaprasthashrama, thirty-two by a Grihastha, and as much as they wish by students. This is Mitahara for them, and for others it is eating less.

Sauca (purity) is said to be of two types - external and internal. External purity is [brought about] by cleansing agents like water and [a kind of fragrant] earth. Internal purity is the purity of the mind. Purity of the mind is to be known by the pious life [led by a person] and the quest for knowledge of the Supreme Spirit. This quest for the knowledge of the self, or the pious life can be initiated only by the father or the teacher, One free from Faults! Hence people who desire to attain freedom, must at all times, through thought, word and deed, worship the great sages and teachers who have realized the eternal truths declared in the Vedas.”

CHAPTER II

Outline

- 1-2: List of the ten Niyamas
- 2-3: Definition of Tapas
- 4: Definition of Astikya
- 5: Definition of Dana
- 6-7: Definition of Isvarapujana
- 8-10: Description of Siddhantashravana for each division of society
- 10-11: Hri
- 11: Mati
- 12-18: Detailed description of Japa
- 19: Definition of Vrata

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

1-2: List of the ten Niyamas.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

तपः संतोष आस्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम् ।
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं चैव ह्रीर्मतिश्च जपो व्रतम् ॥१॥

एते तु नियमाः प्रोक्तास्तांश्च सर्वान्पृथक् शृणु ।

Tapas, Santosha, Astikya, Dana, Isvarapujana, Siddhantashravana, Hri, Mati, Japa and Vrata. These are the Niyamas. Listen to all of these separately (one by one).

2-3: Definition of Tapas.

विधिनोक्तेन मार्गेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः ॥२॥

शरीरशोषणं प्राहुस्तापसास्तप उत्तमम् ।

Those who are well versed in Tapas say that drying the body, following Krichram, Chandrayanam¹ etc., in accordance with the Vedas, is the best Tapas.

3-4: Definition of Santosha.

यदृच्छालाभतो नित्यमलं पुंसो भवेदिति ॥३॥

या घीस्तामृषयः प्राहुः संतोषं सुखलक्षणम् ।

Sages say that the attitude that what a person gets by chance is enough is Santosha, the sign of happiness.

¹ Krichram and Chandrayanam are procedures for fasting. The fasting referred to here is not merely starving oneself. The word "fasting" used here is referred to in Sanskrit by the word "Upavasam." "Upa" means "near" and "Vas" means "to stay," or "to live." Thus, staying close to the Divine (to one's self) is Upavasam. Refraining from taking food facilitates the attainment of this goal. A light stomach, free from heaviness and dullness, aids both Pranayama and meditation and is instrumental in focussing the mind. Mere fasting, devoid of this spiritual attitude, is not Tapas, though it may help remove physical impurities and restore physical health. However, the practice of Pranayama and meditation on a mantra is essential to dispel mental impurities (the klesas - refer PYS II-3) and lead to the fulfillment of spiritual goals. Thus, fasting performed with such spiritual intention is Tapas.

Many procedures are given for this fasting. For example, a regular fast is suggested on the eleventh day (Ekadasi) of the cycle of the moon. The type of fasting suggested here, Chandrayanam, is another example. This extends for a longer duration, in an orderly manner and can be done in two ways, both based on the waxing and waning of the moon. The first type is as follows - One starts the fast on a full moon day, taking fifteen measures of food that day. On the next day, that is, the fourteenth day, one should take fourteen measures of food. Continuing similarly, everyday one must take one measure of food less than the preceding day, until the new moon day, when one must fast totally. Then, beginning from the first day after the new moon, the same procedure is repeated, but in reverse, taking everyday, one measure of food more than the preceding day, until the full moon day, when one must take fifteen measures of food, as at the beginning of the fast. This ends the cycle.

The other type of Chandrayanam too is similar, the difference being that one starts the cycle on the day after the new moon, taking one measure of food. Then one gradually increases the quantity of food consumed to fifteen measures, and then decreases it to one measure again, following the same procedure as outlined in the previous type of Chandrayanam. It is important to note that these procedures vary for each individual based on his (Varnam) profession and (Ashrama) stage in life. For example, a student may be exempted from any fasting because of his growing age.

4: Definition of Astikya.

धर्माधर्मेषु विश्वासो यस्तदास्तिक्यमुच्यते ॥४॥

Trust in Dharma and Adharma (that which is prescribed and proscribed according to the Vedas) is Astikya.

5: Definition of Dana.

न्यायार्जितं धनं चान्नमन्यद्वा यत्प्रदीयते ।
अर्थिभ्यः श्रद्धया युक्तं दानमेतदुदाहृतम् ॥५॥

Giving wealth, food or other possessions that one has rightfully earned, to those in need, with sincerity (with the right attitude) is said to be Dana¹.



¹ In Dana, as in any of the other Niyamas, one's attitude is all-important. The Bhagavad Gita (XVII.20-22) classifies Dana into three types based on the gunas. Satvika Dana is to give a deserving person the right thing, at the right time, at the right place, with the right attitude that "This is not mine." Something that is given in order to gain a favour, with expectation of results or in the wrong frame of mind, is called Rajasa Dana. That which is given at the wrong time to an unworthy person with the wrong attitude, and in an insulting manner is Tamasic Dana.

6-7: Definition of Isvarapujana.

यत्प्रसन्नस्वभावेन विष्णुं वा ऽप्यन्यमेव वा ।
यथाशक्त्यर्चनं भक्त्या ह्येतदीश्वरपूजनम् ॥६॥

रागाद्यपेतं हृदयं वागदुष्टानृतादिना ।
हिंसादिरहितः काय एतदीश्वरपूजनम् ॥७॥

Worship of Vishnu or other deities to the extent of one's capability, with a pure mind, with devotion is Isvarapujana. A mind devoid of desire, speech unsullied by lies and a body that does no harm [to others] - this is Isvarapujana.



8-10: Description of Siddhantashravana for each division of society.

सिद्धान्तश्रवणं प्रोक्तं वेदान्तश्रवणं बुधैः ।
द्विजवत्क्षत्रियस्योक्तं सिद्धान्तश्रवणं बुधैः ॥८॥

विशां च केचिदिच्छन्ति शीलवृत्तवतां सताम् ।
शूद्राणां च स्त्रियाश्चैव स्वधर्मस्थितपस्विनाम् ॥९॥

सिद्धान्तश्रवणं प्रोक्तं पुराणश्रवणं बुधैः ।

Listening to the the ultimate truth that is expressed in the Vedas (Vedanta) is said to be Siddhantashravana by the wise. For the Kshatriyas, Siddhantashravana is said to be the same as for Brahmins, and some say the same for Vaishyas who are good and are possessed of good character and conduct. For the fourth division and women, who perform their duties and do Tapas, listening to the (Puranas) other sacred texts is said to be Siddhantashravana by the wise¹.

¹ The essential teaching of the Vedas were also given in the form of other texts called the Itihasas and the Puranas. The Itihasas, such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, represent the essence of the Vedas. The Ramayana is an expansion of the message of the Vedas. The Mahabharata is called the fifth Veda. The Bhagavata, which is a Purana, is said to be the fruit of the Vedas.

10-11: Hri.

वेदलौकिकमार्गेषु कुत्सितं कर्म यद्भवेत् ॥१०॥

तस्मिन्भवति या लज्जा न्हीस्तु सैवेति कीर्तिता ।

The shame that one feels at doing actions that are considered despicable by the Vedas and by the ways of the world is called Hri¹.

11: Mati.

विहितेषु च सर्वेषु श्रद्धा या सा मतिर्भवेत् ॥११॥

Faith in all the duties laid down in the Vedas is Mati.

12-18: Detailed description of Japa.

गुरुणा चोपदिष्टोऽपि वेदबाह्यविवर्जितः ।
विधिनोक्तेन मार्गेण मन्त्राभ्यासो जपः स्मृतः ॥१२॥

अधीत्य वेदं सूत्रं वा पुराणं सेतिहासकम् ।
एतेष्वभ्यसनं यच्च तदभ्यासो जपः स्मृतः ॥१३॥

जपश्च द्विविधः प्रोक्तो वाचिको मानसस्तथा ।
वाचिक उपांशुरुच्चैश्च द्विविधः परिकीर्तितः ॥१४॥

मानसो मननध्यानभेदाद् द्वैविध्यमास्थितः ।
उच्चैर्जपादुपांशुश्च सहस्रगुण उच्यते ॥१५॥

मानसस्तु तयोपांशोः सहस्रगुण उच्यते ।
मानसाच्च तथा ध्यानं सहस्रगुणमुच्यते ॥१६॥

उच्चैर्जपस्तु सर्वेषां यथोक्तफलदो भवेत् ।
नीचैः श्रुतो न चेत्सोऽपि श्रुतश्चेन्निष्फलो भवेत् ॥१७॥

ऋषिं छन्दोऽधिदैवं च ध्यायन्मन्त्रं च सर्वदा ।
यस्तु मन्त्रजपो गार्गी स एव हि फलप्रदः ॥१८॥

Repeating in the proper manner the Mantra into which one has been initiated by the Guru, and which is not in contradiction to the Vedas, is considered Japa. or constantly reading, reflecting (Abhyasa) upon the Vedas, Puranas, Itihasas or Sutras after studying them - such a practice is called Japa. Japa is of two types: verbal and mental.

¹ Hri includes a sense of clarity or conscience to distinguish between what shall, and what shall not, be done.

Verbal japa is said to be of two types: aloud and soft. Mental japa is classified into two types: repeated mental reflection (Manana) and continuous meditation (Dhyana).

Soft verbal Japa is said to be thousand times more beneficial than the Verbal Japa done aloud. Manana is said to be thousand times more beneficial than the soft verbal Japa. Dhyana, is said to be thousand times more beneficial than Manana.

Loud recitation gives the appropriate (desired) results for everybody, if not heard by those of low mentality, but if heard [by them], it becomes fruitless. The japa on a mantra (mantrajapa) in which one pays attention to the meter (Chandas), the Seer of the Mantra (Rishi), and the God depicted by it (Devata), and the mantra [itself] - such a mantrajapa alone, O Gargi, will yield the benefits.

19: Definition of Vrata.

प्रसन्नगुरुणा पूर्वमुपदिष्टं त्वनुज्ञया ।
धर्मार्थमात्मसिद्धयर्थमुपायग्रहणं व्रतम् ॥१९॥

इति श्रीयोगयान्नवल्क्ये द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ॥

Following the path permitted and initiated into previously, by a compassionate Guru in order to attain freedom and worldly benefits is Vrata.

CHAPTER III

Outline

- 1-2: List of the eight asanas
- 3: Svastikasana
- 4-5: Variation of Svastikasana
- 5-6: Gomukhasana
- 6-7: Padmasana
- 8: Virasana
- 9-11: Simhasana
- 11-12: Bhadrasana
- 13: Muktasana
- 14: Variation of Muktasana
- 15-16: Mayurasana
- 17-18: Diseases are destroyed due to Yama, Niyama and Asana. Instruction to Gargi to do Pranayama after purifying the Nadis.

तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

1-2: List of the eight asanas to be discussed in this chapter.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

आसनान्यघुना वक्ष्ये शृणु गार्गी तपोधने ।
स्वस्तिकं गोमुखं पद्मं वीरं सिंहासनं तथा ॥१॥

भद्रं मुक्तासनं चैव मयूरासनमेव च ।
तथैतेषां वरारोहे पृथग्वक्ष्यामि लक्षणम् ॥२॥

Yajnavalkya said:

Now, I will describe the Asanas. Gargi, One whose Wealth is Penance, listen to me. Svastikasana, Gomukhasana, Padmasana, Virasana, Simhasana, Bhadrasana, Muktasana and Mayurasana. I will describe the characters of these one by one.

3: Svastikasana.

जानोर्वोरन्तरे सम्यक्कृत्वा पादतले उभे ।
ऋजुकायः सुखासीनः स्वस्तिकं तत्प्रचक्षते ॥३॥



Having correctly placed the soles of both the feet between the thighs and knees, one should sit (comfortably) balanced and straight-bodied. This is called Svastikasana.¹

4-5: Variation of Svastikasana.

सीधन्यास्त्वात्मनः पार्श्वे गुल्फौ निक्षिप्य पादयोः ।
सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु दक्षिणे दक्षिणेतरम् ॥४॥

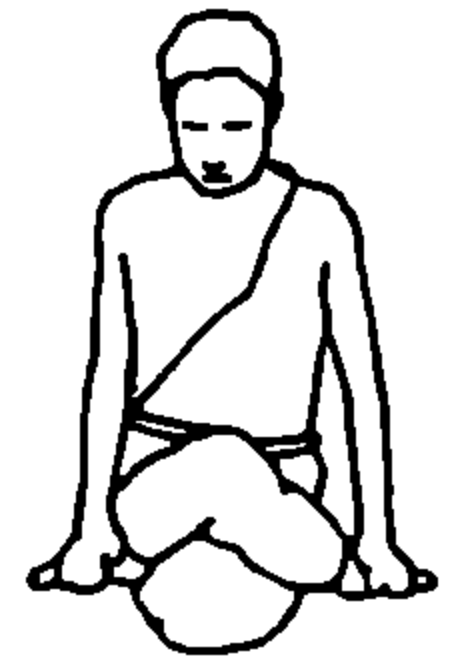
एतच्च स्वस्तिकं प्रोक्तं सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ।

The ankles must be placed on either side of the perineum, the left ankle on the right side and the right ankle on the left side. This too is known as Svastikasana and it destroys all impurities.

5-6: Gomukhasana.

सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु पृष्ठपार्श्वे नियोजयेत् ॥५॥

दक्षिणेऽपि तथा सव्यं गोमुखं गोमुखं यथा ।



Place the right ankle beside the buttock, on the left, and the left [ankle] at the right. This is Gomukhasana, resembling the face of a cow.²

¹ The same descriptions are used by later Yoga texts. See, for example: Hathayogapradipika (I.19), Gheranda Samhita (II.13), and the Siva Samhita (III.95).

² For similar descriptions, refer to HYP (I.20) and the Gheranda Samhita (II.16).

6-7: Padmasana.

अंगुष्ठौ च निबध्नीयाद्वस्ताभ्यां व्युत्क्रमेण
उर्वोरपरि विप्रेन्द्रे कृत्वा पादतले उभे ।
पद्मासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वेषामपि पूजितम् ॥७॥



The big toes must be held from behind and the feet should be placed on the (opposite) thighs. This is Padmasana which is revered by all.

8: Virasana.

एकं पादमथैकस्मिन्विन्यस्योरुणि संस्थितम् ।
इतरस्मिस्तथा चोरुं वीरासनमुदाहृतम् ॥८॥

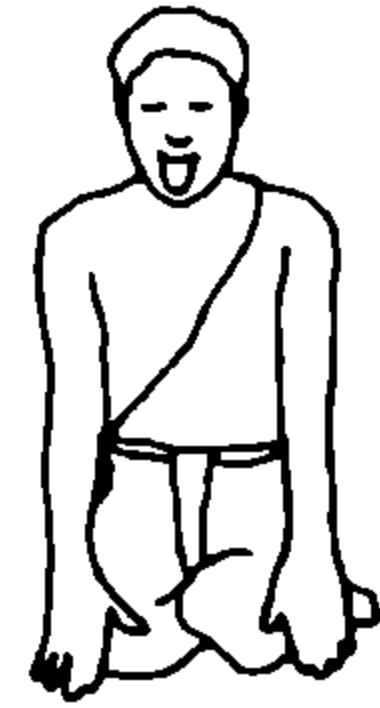


Place one foot firmly on the one thigh and the [other] thigh on the other foot. This is called Virasana¹.

9-11: Simhasana.

गुल्फौ च वृषणस्याधः सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।
दक्षिणं सव्यगुल्फेन दक्षिणेन तथेतरम् ॥९॥

हस्तौ च जान्वोः संस्थाप्य स्वांगुलीश्च प्रसार्य च ।
व्यात्तवक्त्रो निरीक्षेत नासाग्रं सुसमाहितः ॥१०॥



सिंहासनं भवेदेतत्पूजितं योगिभिः सदा ।

Place the ankles below the scrotum, on the sides of the perineum, the left ankle on the right and the right ankle on the other side (left). Place the palms upon the knees and spread out the fingers. With an opened mouth look at the tip of the nose with a concentrated mind. This is Simhasana² always held in high esteem by Yogis.

11-12: Bhadrasana.

गुल्फौ च वृषणस्याधः सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ॥
पार्श्वपादौ च पाणिभ्यां दृढं बद्ध्वा सुनिश्चलम् ।
भद्रासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वव्याधिविषापहम् ॥१२॥



Hold firmly with the hands the feet which are on their sides and remain motionless. This is Bhadrasana, which destroys all diseases and toxins.

Refer HYP (I.21) for a similar description.

² Refer HYP I.50-52 for similar descriptions.

13: Muktasana.

संपीड्य सीवनीं सूक्ष्मां गुल्फेनैव तु सव्यतः ।
सव्यं दक्षिणगुल्फेन मुक्तासनमितीरितम् ॥१३॥

Having pressed the perineum by the ankle from the left by the right ankle - this is known as Muktasana.



14: Variation of Muktasana.

मेढ्रादुपरि निक्षिप्य सव्यं गुल्फं तथोपरि ।
गुल्फान्तरं च निक्षिप्य मुक्तासनमिदं तु वा ॥१४॥

Placing the left ankle above the generative organ and placing the other ankle above it is Muktasana.

15-16: Mayurasana.

अवष्टभ्य धरां सम्यक् तलाभ्यां तु करद्वयोः
हस्तयोः कूर्परौ चापि स्थापयन्नाभिपार्श्वयोः ॥१५॥

समुन्नतशिरःपादो दण्डवद्व्योम्नि संस्थितः ।
मयूरासनमेतत्तु सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥१६॥



Placing the palms of the hands firmly on the ground and keeping the elbows at the side of the navel with the head and legs raised, staying in space [in an elevated position] - this is Mayurasana which destroys all impurities.

17-18: Instruction to Gargi.

सर्वे घाम्यन्तरा रोगा विनश्यन्ति विषाणि च ।
यमैश्च नियमैश्चैव आसनैश्च सुसंयुता ॥१७॥

नाडीशुद्धिं च कृत्वा तु प्राणायामं ततः कुरु ॥१८॥

इति श्रीयोगयान्नवल्क्ये तृतीयोऽध्यायः ।

All internal diseases and toxins are destroyed [by the practice of Asana]. Together with Yama, Niyama and Asanas, after purifying the Nadis, do Pranayama.

Appendix – to Chapter III

Different texts on yoga quote different numbers of asanas. For example, the DhyanaBindu Upanishad says “There are as many asanas as there are varieties of beings.” The HYP (I.33) says there are 84 asanas. Gheranda Samhita (II.1) says there are 84 lakh asanas but, of these, 84 are the best and, of these, 32 are described (II.2). The Siva Samhita (III.84) says there are 84 asanas and out of these four are described. The same asanas are described by different texts under different names. All these later texts on yoga have borrowed the descriptions of these asanas from this text of Yajnavalkya (see Appendix I), who is regarded as one of the ancient sages. This is evident from the HYP (I.18) which says “I proceed to describe some of the asanas accepted by such sages as Vasishta and yogins such as Matsyendra.” Brahmananda, the commentator says the asanas described here are approved by Vasishta and Yajnavalkya. Similarly if we refer to the HYP (II.37) it says “Some teachers say that all impurities (of the nadis) are removed by Pranayama alone and other acts (kriyas - cleansing techniques like neti, dauti, etc) are not accepted by great sages.” The commentator Brahmananda again refers to the name of Yajnavalkya in this context.

In this chapter, Yajnavalkya describes eight asanas with variations for two of them. Of these three are considered most important. The chapter ends with a note that proper practice of postures (asanas) along with yama and niyama destroy diseases. A very important fact to be noted by all students of yoga is that all these texts describe only the final, classical posture and not any of the intermediate or preparatory postures. This is because, in Vedic times, the practice of asanas was learned under the personal guidance and supervision of a teacher. These asanas were taught on an individual basis, with a strong emphasis on careful observation of the students aptitudes and abilities, and adaptation of the posture to the student by the teacher. Indeed, it was the teacher’s role to adapt the postures to suit the needs and capabilities of each student. (See Yoga for Body, Breath and Mind by the same author for more details.)

It is also worth noting that Yajnavalkya mentions the absence or disappearance of internal diseases as one benefit of asana practice. The phrase, “absence of internal diseases,” does not merely mean absence of bodily, physical ailments. It also implies a greater stability and quietness of the mind. This, for example, is evident from HYP (I.17) which says “The practice of asanas leads to lightness of the body, firmness and health”. The commentary then explains “firmness” as calmness of mind due to the reduction of the guna of activity (Rajas), and lightness of the body as coming about by the reduction of the guna of inertia, darkness and heaviness (Tamas). “Health” is explained in the commentary as the absence of disturbances in the mind. The disturbances of the mind referred to here are nine in number, as also mentioned in the Yogasutras (I.30). The Yogasutras (II.48) also state that the practice of asana leads to a state of being unaffected by the pairs of opposites (pleasure or pain, happiness or sorrow).

Thus it is clear that, in ancient times, asana practice was primarily considered a spiritual practice, leading to greater physical and mental stability **necessary** for spiritual pursuits.

CHAPTER IV

Outline

- 1-6: Gargi's request to learn about Nadis, their position, Prana, their functions and purification of the Nadis (Nadisuddhi)
- 6-8: Concept of Prana and its dispersion
- 9-10: The importance of centering the Prana
- 11-15: Description and location of the seat of the internal fire in the body (Dehamadhya)
- 16-17: Position, shape and size of the Kandasthana
- 18-20: Position and description of the abode of the Prana and the Jiva (Nabhicakra)
- 21-23: Position and nature of the Kundalini
- 23-24: Kundalini and Prana - the awakening of the Kundalini
- 25-28: The fourteen important Nadis, and the most important ones among these fourteen
- 29-31: The location and features of Sushumna Nadi
- 31-34: The relative position and features of Ida and Pingala Nadis
- 35-38: The relative position of the remaining Nadis
- 39-46: The origin and termination of the Nadis
- 47-49: The ten Vayus - Prana to Dhananjaya
- 50-51: The abode of Prana
- 52-53: The abode of apana
- 54: The abode of Vyana
- 55: The abode of udana
- 55-57: The abode of samana
- 58: The other 5 Vayus
- 58-66: The process of digestion and assimilation of food and the role of the Vayus in this process
- 67-71: The function of each of the 10 Vayus
- 71-72: Instruction to Gargi to perform Nadisodhana pranayama

चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ॥

1-6: Gargi's request to learn about Nadis and their position, Vayus and their functions and purification of the Nadis (Nadisuddhi).

श्रुत्वा तद्भाषितं वाक्यं याज्ञवल्क्यस्य धीमतः ।
पुनः प्राह महाभागा सभामध्ये तपस्विनी ॥१॥

गार्ग्युवाच—

भगवन्ब्रूहि मे स्वामिन्नाडीशुद्धिं विधानतः ।
केनोपायेन शुद्धाः स्युर्नाडयः सर्वदेहिनाम् ॥२॥

उत्पत्तिं चापि नाडीनां चारणं च यथाविधि ।
कन्दं च कीदृशं प्रोक्तं कति तिष्ठन्ति वायवः ॥३॥

स्थानानि चैव वायूनां कर्माणि च पृथक्पृथक् ।
विज्ञातव्यानि यान्यस्मिन्देहे देहभृतां वर ॥४॥

वक्तुमर्हसि तत्सर्वं त्वत्तो वेत्ता न विद्यते ।
इत्युक्तो भार्यया तत्र सम्यक् तद्गतमानसः ॥५॥

गार्गी तां सुसमालोक्य तत्सर्वं समभाषत ।

Having listened to the words of the wise Yajnavalkya, in the assembly of sages, the blessed ascetic, Gargi spoke again. Gargi said, "My Lord and Master, tell me in an orderly manner about the purification of the Nadis.¹ By what means the Nadis of all beings can be purified, the origin of the Nadis and their movement, in the proper manner, of what nature the Kandasthana is said to be, the number of Vayus present [in the body], the positions of the Vayus and their functions, one by one - whatever is to be known in this body, you, Highest among Beings, are fit to tell us about all of them. There is no one as knowledgeable as you." Having thus been spoken to by his wife, with a mind absorbed totally in it (in her question), looking at Gargi, he told her about all that [she had asked about].

6-8: Concept of Prana and its dispersion.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

शरीरं तावदेवं हि षण्णवत्यङ्गुलात्मकम् ॥६॥

विद्वयेतत्सर्वजन्तूनां स्वाङ्गुलीभिरिति प्रिये ।
शरीरादधिकः प्राणो द्वादशाङ्गुलमानतः ॥७॥

चतुर्दशाङ्गुलं केचिद्वदन्ति मुनिसत्तमाः ।
द्वादशाङ्गुल एवेति वदन्ति ज्ञानिनो नराः ॥८॥

¹ We have retained the Sanskrit term, Nadi, for lack of an appropriate English equivalent. Nadis are subtle channels along which Prana, the life-force or energy, flows.

Yajnavalkya said, "My Beloved! Know that the body is exactly ninety six angulas¹ for all beings by their own fingers. The Prana is greater than the body by twelve Angulas. Some venerable sages say [that it is] fourteen Angulas. [But] the realized ones say [that it is] only twelve Angulas.

9-10: The importance of centering the Prana.

आत्मस्थमनिलं विद्वानात्मस्थेनैव वह्निना ।
योगाभ्यासेन यः कुर्यात्समं वा न्यूनमेव वा ॥९॥

स एव ब्रह्मविच्छेष्टः स सम्पूज्यो नरोत्तमः ।
आत्मस्थवह्निनैव त्वं योगजेन द्विजोत्तमे ॥१०॥

The learned person who, by the practice of Yoga, with the help of the fire² equalizes or reduces the Prana, that is within oneself, is the greatest among those who have realized the Brahman. He is the best among men and is fit to be worshipped. You, Best among the Twice-Born, with the help of the fire born out of Yoga, master the Prana that is within oneself by the practice of Yoga.

11-15: Description and location of the seat of the internal fire in the body Dehamadhyā.

आत्मस्थं मातरिश्वानं योगाभ्यासेन निर्जय ।
देहमध्ये शिखिस्थानं तप्तजाम्बूनदप्रभम् ॥११॥

त्रिकोणं मनुजानां च चतुरस्रं चतुष्पदाम् ।
मण्डलं तत्पतंगानां सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ॥१२॥

तन्मध्ये तु शिखा तन्वी सदा तिष्ठति पावकी ।
देहमध्यं च कुत्रेति श्रोतुमिच्छसि चेच्छुणु ॥१३॥

गुदात्तु द्वयङ्गुलादूर्ध्वमघो मेढ्राच्च द्वयङ्गुलात् ।
देहमध्यं तयोर्मध्यं मनुष्याणामितीरितम् ॥१४॥

¹ An "angula" is a measurement of length based on the width of the fingers. The width (cross section) of four fingers, excluding the thumb, is four angulas. Clearly, the span of four fingers which measures four angulas is different for each individual. For example, stand against a wall and mark out your height. Now measure that height by four fingerwidths. You will find that your height will be twenty four times the span of four fingerwidths, that is, ninety six angulas, as measured by your own fingerwidth.

The distances between the different important centres in the body has been stated in terms of angulas, as will be noticed later in this chapter. The distances between the vital points of the body (Marmasthanas) detailed in the Chapter VII have also been stated in terms of angulas. Later texts on Yoga also give the distances between the cakras in terms of angulas.

It is interesting to note the similarity between the Chinese and the Vedic measurements: four angulas is equivalent to three Chinese cuns. The measurement of the body in Chinese terms is seventy two cuns, which is three-fourths of ninety six angulas.

² The word, *Agni* (translated here as "fire") may be derived from *Agram Nayati Iti Agnih*, or "that which leads everything to its end or final form." That is, Agni is that which burns and reduces everything to ash, which cannot be burnt further. In Vedic thought, Agni symbolizes the Divine (Paramatma). Just as Agni burns impurities, the Divine can burn the impurities within us, the Klesas or impurities of ignorance and ego, which leads us to our ultimate, true form as the Seer. Hence, the Agni referred to here should not be understood as mere physical fire. Yajnavalkya also refers to meditation on the Divine in the form of Agni, as Vaisvanaragni – (see Chapter IX-18-24). Refer also to the introduction for a more detailed discussion on Agni.

चतुष्पदां तु हृन्मध्यं तिरश्चां तुन्दमध्यमम् ।
द्विजानां तु वरारोहे तुन्दमध्यमितीरितम् ॥१५॥

In the centre of the body is the abode of the fire, glowing like melted gold, [in the shape of] a triangle in humans, a square in animals and a circle in birds. This is the truth which I say to you. In the midst of this there is always present a fine flame. If you wish to know where the center of the body (Dehamadhya) is, listen. In humans, it is said to be two angulas above the anus and two angulas below the generative organ, [being] situated in between them. In quadrupeds, it is the centre of the heart (Hridaya), and for other animals it is the centre of the belly. For birds, Beautiful One, it is said to be the middle of the belly.

16-17: Position, shape and size of the Kandasthana.

कन्दस्थानं मनुष्याणां देहमध्यान्नवाङ्गुलम् ।
चतुरङ्गुलमुत्सेधमायामश्च तथाविधः ॥१६॥
अण्डाकृतिवदाकारं भूषितं तत्त्वगादिभिः ।
चतुष्पदां तिरश्चां च द्विजानां तुन्दमध्यमे ॥१७॥

The Kandasthana of humans is nine angulas from the Dehamadhya. It is four angulas in height and similarly in width, it's form is similar to the shape of an egg and is ornamented (surrounded) by the five elements of creation and sustenance (*Tattvas*). In quadrupeds, birds and other beings, it is in the centre of the belly (the Kandasthana).

18-20: Position and description of the abode of the Prana and the Jiva (Nabhicakra).

तन्मध्यं नाभिरित्युक्तं नाभौ चक्रसमुद्भवः ।
द्वादशारयुतं तच्च तेन देहः प्रतिष्ठितः ॥१८॥
चक्रेऽस्मिन्भ्रमते जीवः पापपुण्यप्रचोदितः ।
तन्तुपंजरमध्यस्था यथा भ्रमति लूतिका ॥१९॥
जीवस्य मूलचक्रेऽस्मिन्नघः प्राणश्चरत्यसौ ।
प्राणारूढो भवेज्जीवः सर्वभूतेषु सर्वदा ॥२०॥

The middle of this (the Kandasthana) is called the Nabhi. In the Nabhi arises a cakra. That [cakra] has twelve spokes and it is by this that the body is held¹. Just as a spider moves around in its [self-spun] cage of thread² (web), the self (Jiva), instigated by his good and bad deeds moves around in this Cakra. In the lower part of this Cakra, which is the base for the self (Jiva), this Prana moves. The Jiva is mounted on the Prana at all times in all beings.

¹ The cakra at the navel is the center for the origin of all the Nadis. Therefore, Patanjali (Yogasutras III.29) says "Nabhicakre Kayavyuha Jnanam," that is, by Samyama on the Nabhicakra, one can understand the Vyuham or the arrangement of the various structures of the body.

² The web of the spider is self-spun, as is the web of our own past actions. Our past actions have conditioned us, and this conditioning is responsible for our bondage. References to this concept are also found in the Mundakopanishad.

21-23: Position and nature of the Kundalini.

तस्योर्ध्वं कुण्डलीस्थानं नाभेस्तिर्यग्धोर्ध्वतः ।
अष्टप्रकृतिरूपा सा अष्टधा कुण्डलीकृता ॥२१॥

यथावद्वायुसंचारं जलान्नादीनि नित्यशः ।
परितः कन्दपाश्वेषु निरुद्धयैव सदा स्थिता ॥२२॥

मुखेनैव समावेष्टय ब्रह्मरन्ध्रमुखं तथा ।

Above this (the Nabhicakra) is the location of the Kundalini, above and below the Nabhi in an oblique direction. Her¹ character is the eight aspects of the Seen² and her form is spiral. Obstructing the proper movement of the Prana, water, food, etc. from all directions, from all sides of the Kandasthana, at all times the Kundalini is present covering the opening of the the door to freedom with her own mouth.³ (Brahmarandhra).

23-24: Kundalini and Prana - the awakening of the Kundalini.

योगकाले त्वपानेन प्रबोधं याति साग्निना ॥२३॥

स्फुरन्ती हृदयाकाशे नागरूपा महोज्ज्वला ।
वायुर्वायुसखेनैव ततो याति सुषुम्णया ॥२४॥

It is awakened during the practice of Yoga by the Apana[vayu] along with the fire, throbbing, shining brightly in the form of a snake in the internal space (*hrdayakasha*). Then the Prana with (by the help of ⁴) Agni goes [up] by the Sushumna.

25-28: The 14 important Nadis, and the most important ones among these 14.

कन्दमध्ये स्थिता नाडी सुषुम्णेति प्रकीर्तिता ।
तिष्ठन्ति परितः सर्वाश्चक्रेऽस्मिन्नाडोसंज्ञकाः ॥२५॥

नाडीनामपि सर्वासां मुख्यास्त्वेताश्चतुर्दश ।
इडा च पिंगला चैव सुषुम्णा च सरस्वती ॥२६॥

¹ The word "Kundalini" is of feminine gender. Kundalini represents the Mother Goddess and Her power. She is called Sakti, or power, for She holds power over Seen (Prakrti). The literal meaning of the word Kundalini is "spiral" or "winding in shape."

² The eight aspects of Seen (Prakrti) are the five forms of matter (earth, water, fire, air and space), the mind, the intellect, and the ego. The same eight aspects of Prakrti are listed in the Bhagavadgita (VII-4).

³ Kundalini blocking or covering the opening to the Brahmarandhram,(the door to freedom) at the bottom of the Sushumna Nadi, refers to the Seen (Prakrti), binding the Seer and blocking his way to freedom. Bound to the Seen, the Seer is unable to ascend to his true abode at the Brahmarandram. The Brahmarandhram is the abode of the seer, and of the Divine. The abode of the Seer and the Divine are considered the same since realizing one's self is the same as union with the Divine. Therefore, Yajnavalkya states that yoga is the union of the Self and the Divine, while the Yogasutras state that Yoga is to remain as the seer (the self) - fundamentally both mean the same. When the Seer arises to its abode it means that it reaches the abode of the Divine.

⁴ Refer to VI.69-71, where Yajnavalkya mentions the role of the Agni in arousing the Kundalini.

वारुणी चैव पूषा च हस्तिजिह्वा यशस्विनी ।
विश्वोदरा कुहूश्चैव शंखिनो च पयस्विनी ॥२७॥

अलम्बुषा च गान्धारी मुख्याश्चैताश्चतुर्दश ।
आसां मुख्यतमास्तिस्त्रस्तिसृष्वेकोत्तमोत्तमा ॥२८॥

The Nadi situated in the middle of the Kandasthana is called Sushumna. In this [Nabhi]cakra, on all the sides are present all the Nadis. Among all the Nadis the important ones are these fourteen. Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Sarasvati, Varuni, Pusha, Hastijihva, Yashasvini, Visvodara, Kuhu, Shankhini, Payasvini, Alambusha and Gandhari - these are the fourteen important ones. Among these, three are most important and among the three, one is the greatest.

29-31: The location and features of Sushumna Nadi.

मुक्तिमार्गेति सा प्रोक्ता सुषुम्णा विश्वधारिणी ।
कन्दस्य मध्यमे गार्गि सुषुम्णा सुप्रतिष्ठिता ॥२९॥

पृष्ठमध्ये स्थिता नाडी सा हि मूर्ध्नि व्यवस्थिता ।
मुक्तिमार्गः सुषुम्णा सा ब्रह्मरन्ध्रेति कीर्तिता ॥३०॥

अव्यक्ता सैव विज्ञेया सूक्ष्मा सा वैष्णवी स्मृता ।

Gargi, that Sushumna which supports everything is known as the way to freedom. Gargi! The sushumna is firmly established in the middle of the Kandasthana. That Nadi is situated in the [centre of the] posterior region and ends in the top of the head. That Sushumna is the path to freedom and is called Brahmrandhra. It should be known as being unmanifest, subtle, and is spoken of as Vaishnavi.

31-34: The relative position and features of Ida and Pingala Nadis.

इडा च पिंगला चैव तस्याः सव्ये च दक्षिणे ॥३१॥

इडा तस्याः स्थिता सव्ये दक्षिणे पिंगला स्थिता ।
इडायां पिंगलायां च चरतश्चन्द्रभास्करौ ॥३२॥

इडायां चन्द्रमा ज्ञेयः पिंगलायां रविः स्मृतः ।
चन्द्रस्तामस इत्युक्तः सूर्यो राजस उच्यते ॥३३॥

विषभागो रवेर्भागः सोमभागोऽमृतं स्मृतम् ।
तावेव घतः सकलं कालं रात्रिदिवात्मकम् ॥३४॥

Ida and Pingala are on its left and right. The Ida is situated on its left and the Pingala on the right. The moon and sun move in the Ida and Pingala. The moon must be known [as being] in Ida. The

sun is said to be in Pingala. The moon is said to be Tamasic and the sun is said to be Rajasic. The poisonous part is the part of the sun. The part of the moon is said to be nectar (*Amrta*¹). These two cause all time in the form of night and day.

35-38: The relative position of the remaining Nadis.

भोक्त्री सुषुम्णा कालस्य गुह्यमेतदुदाहृतम् ।
सरस्वती कुहश्चैव सुषुम्णापार्श्वयोः स्थिते ॥३५॥

गान्धारी हस्तिजिह्वा च इडायाः पृष्ठपार्श्वयोः ।
कुहोश्च हस्तिजिह्वाया मध्ये विश्वोदरा स्थिता ॥३६॥

यशस्विन्याः कुहोर्मध्ये वारुणी च प्रतिष्ठिता ।
पूषायाश्च सरस्वत्याः स्थिता मध्ये पयस्विनी ॥३७॥

गान्धार्याश्च सरस्वत्याः स्थिता मध्ये च शंखिनी ।
अलम्बुषा च विप्रेन्द्रे कन्दमध्यादधः स्थिता ॥३८॥

Sushumna engulfs time². This is said to be a secret. Sarasvati and Kuhu are situated along the sides of the Sushumna. Gandhari and Hastijihva are at the back and side of Ida. Visvodara is situated between Kuhu and Hastijihva. Varuni is situated between Yashasvini and Kuhu. Payasvini is situated between Pusha and Sarasvati. In between Gandhari and Sarasvati is situated Shankhini. Alambusha is situated below the centre of the Kandasthana, Illustrious among Brahmin Women.

39-46: The origin and termination of the Nadis.

पूर्वभाग सुषुम्णाया आमृद्धान्त कुहूः स्थिता ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च कुण्डल्या वारुणी सर्वगामिनी ॥३९॥

यशस्विनी च याम्यस्था पादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ।
पिंगला चोर्ध्वगा याम्ये नासान्तं विद्धि मे प्रिये ॥४०॥

¹ These comparisons to the sun and the moon reflect the isomorphism between the macrocosm and the microcosm: As above, so below. The sun in the macrocosm is associated with the removal of all toxins and impurities. It removes and degrades waste products. Similarly in the microcosm, the Pingala Nadi is responsible for removal of poisons and toxins from the body. Likewise, the moon is considered the king of herbs, and the Ida Nadi helps retain the essence of what is needed by the body. Thus, the Sun (Pingala) removes that which is not required or is harmful to the body, while the moon (Ida) helps retain what is necessary for the body. Thus the macrocosm is figuratively likened to the microcosm, as Ida and Pingala.

The association of these two Nadis with the three Gunas is significant. The sun is related to Rajas and the moon to Tamas. Just as both the functions of removal and retention are essential, both Rajas and Tamas, are also needed. Tamas, represented by the moon, is essential for sound sleep and Rajas, represented by the sun, is essential for activity.

² Time is a creation of the mind. The flow of Prana into Ida and Pingala represent a scattered, dispersed mind. Prana remaining within the Sushumna represents Samadhi - a state of absorption of mind where time does not exist. Samadhi occurs when time ceases. Therefore, the Sushumna is described as engulfing time or being beyond time.

याम्ये पूषा च नेत्रान्तं पिङ्गलायास्तु पृष्ठतः ।
पयस्विनी तथा गार्गी याम्यकर्णान्तिमिष्यते ॥४१॥

सरस्वती तथा चोर्ध्वमाजिह्वायाः प्रतिष्ठिता ।
आसव्यकर्णाद्विप्रेन्द्रे शंङ्खिनी चोर्ध्वगा मता ॥४२॥

गान्धारी सव्यनेत्रान्तमिडायाः पृष्ठतः स्थिता ।
इडा च सव्यनासान्तं सव्यभागे व्यवस्थिता ॥४३॥

हस्तिजिह्वा तथा सव्यपादाङ्गुष्ठान्तमिष्यते ।
विश्वोदरा तु या नाडी तुन्दमध्ये व्यवस्थिता ॥४४॥

अलम्बुषा महाभागे पायुमूलादधोगता ।
एतास्त्वन्याः समुत्पन्नाः शिराश्चान्याश्च तास्वपि ॥४५॥

यथाश्वत्थदले तद्वदब्जपत्रेषु वा शिराः ।
नाडीष्वेतासु सर्वासु विज्ञातव्यास्तपोधने ॥४६॥

Kuhu is present in the front region of the Sushumna, upto the end of the generative organ. Varuni which spreads everywhere is above and below the Kundalini. Yashasvini is considered to be on the right side upto the tip of the big toe. Know that Pingala goes upwards upto the nose on the right side, my beloved! Pusha extends on the right upto the eye, at the back of the Pingala. Payasvini is considered to extend upto the right ear, Gargi! Sarasvati is situated upwards, upto the tongue, Illustrious among Women! Shankhini is said to go upwards upto the left ear. Gandhari extends upto the left eye and is situated behind the Ida. Ida is present in the left side, upto the tip of the left nose. Hastijihva is said to extend down to the tip of the big toe of the left foot. The Nadi Visvodara is situated in the middle of the belly, Fortunate One! Alambusha goes downwards to the base of the anus region. The above-said Nadis and the various other channels that originate from them are similar to the [pattern of the] veins on the leaf of a pupil tree or a lotus plant. All these Nadis and the interconnecting channels are to be known, the One whose Wealth is Penance!

47-49: The ten Vayus - Prana to Dhananjaya.

प्राणोऽपानःसमानश्च उदानो व्यान एव च ।
नागः कूर्मोऽथ कृकरो देवदत्तो धनंजयः ॥४७॥

एते नाडीषु सर्वासु चरन्ति दश वायवः ।
एतेषु वायवः पंच मुख्याः प्राणादयः स्मृताः ॥४८॥

तेषु मुख्यतमावेतौ प्राणापानौ नरोत्तमे ।
प्राण एवेतयोर्मुख्यः सर्वप्राणभृतां सदा ॥४९॥

Prana, Apana, Samana, Udana, Vyana, Naga, Kurma, Krkara, Devadatta, Dhananjaya. These ten Vayus (life forces) flow in all these [above said] Nadis. Among these, the five Vayus, beginning with Prana

are considered important. Among those, these two, Prana and Apana, are most important, Best among Women! Of these two, Prana alone is [more] important for all living beings always.

50-51: The abode of Prana.

आस्यनासिकयोर्मध्ये हृन्मध्ये नाभिमध्यमे ।
प्राणालय इति प्राहुः पादाङ्गुष्ठेऽपि केचन ॥५०॥

अधश्चोर्ध्वं च कुण्डल्याः परीतः प्राणसंज्ञकः ।
तिष्ठन्नेतेषु सर्वेषु प्रकाशयति दीपवत् ॥५१॥

Between the nose and the mouth, in the centre of the Hridaya, in the centre of the navel and by some in the big toe is said to be the abode of the Prana. Present below and above and surrounding the Kundalini, this one (vayu) known as Prana illuminates the rest of them like a lamp.

52-53: The abode of apana.

अपाननिलयं केचिद् गुदमेढोरुजानुषु ।
उदरे वृषणे कट्यां जङ्घेनाभौ वदन्ति हि ॥५२॥

गुदाग्न्यागारयोस्तिष्ठन्मध्येऽपानः प्रभञ्जनः ।
अधश्चोर्ध्वं च कुण्डल्याः प्रकाशयति दीपवत् ॥५३॥

Some say that the abode of the Apana is in the anus, generative organ, thighs, knees, stomach, testicles, hip, the shanks and in the navel. Situated between the anus and the abode of the fire, the vayu apana glows above and below the Kundalini like a lamp.

54: The abode of Vyana.

व्यानः श्रोत्राक्षिमध्ये च कृकट्यां गुल्फयोरपि ।
घ्राणे गले स्फिजोर्देशे तिष्ठत्यत्र न संशयः ॥५४॥

There is no doubt that Vyana is situated in the centre of the ear and the eyes in the sides of the neck, in the ankles, nose, throat and posterior region.

55: The abode of udana.

उदानः सर्वसन्धिस्थः पादयोर्हस्तयोरपि ।

Udana is present in all joints, in both the legs and hands also.

55-57: The abode of samana.

समानः सर्वगात्रेषु सर्व व्याप्य व्यवस्थितः ॥५५॥

भुक्तं सर्वरसं गात्रे व्यापयन्वह्निना सह ।
द्विसप्ततिसहस्रेषु नाडीमार्गेषु संचरेत् ॥५६॥

समानवायुरेवैकः साग्निर्व्याप्य व्यवस्थितः ।
अग्निभिः सह सर्वत्र साङ्गोपांगकलेवरे ॥५७॥

The Samana is present in the whole body, pervading everywhere, distributing the essence of what is eaten in the body, along with the fire, it moves in the seventy two thousand pathways of the Nadis. Only the Samana Vayu is present with the fire, along with which it pervades the whole of the body with all its limbs.

58: The abode of the other 5 Vayus.

नागादि वायवः पंच त्वगस्थ्यादिषु संस्थिताः ।

The 5 Vayus starting with Naga, Kurma etc. are present in the skin, bones etc.

58-66: The process of digestion and assimilation of food and the role of the Vayus in this process.

तुन्दस्थं जलमन्नं च रसानि च समीकृतम् ॥५८॥

तुन्दमध्यगतः प्राणस्तानि कुर्यात्पृथक्पृथक् ।
पुनरग्नौ जलं स्थाप्य त्वन्नादीनि जलोपरि ॥५९॥

स्वयं ह्यपानं संप्राप्य तेनैव सह मारुतः ।
प्रवाति ज्वलनं तत्र देहमध्यगतं पुनः ॥६०॥

वायुना वातितो वह्निरपानेन शनैः शनैः ।
तदा ज्वलति विप्रेन्द्रे स्वकुले देहमध्यमे ॥६१॥

ज्वालाभिर्ज्वलनस्तत्र प्राणेन प्रेरितस्ततः ।
जलमत्युष्णमकरोत्कोष्ठमध्यगतं तदा ॥६२॥

अन्नं व्यञ्जनसंयुक्तं जलोपरि समर्पितम् ।
ततः सुपक्वमकरोद्वह्निः सन्तप्तवारिणा ॥६३॥

स्वेदमूत्रे जलं स्यातां वीर्यरूपं रसो भवेत् ।
पूरीषमन्नं स्याद्गार्गि प्राणः कुर्यात्पृथक्पृथक् ॥६४॥

समानवायुना सार्धं रसं सर्वासु नाडीषु ।
व्यापयञ्छ्वासरूपेण देहे चरति मारुतः ॥६५॥

व्योमरन्ध्रैश्च नवभिः विष्णुत्रादिविसर्जनम् ।
कुर्वन्ति वायवः सर्वे शरीरेषु निरन्तरम् ॥६६॥

The Prana in the middle of the belly separates the food, water and essence which are together in the belly. Then again, placing the water in the fire and the food on the water, itself [Prana]becoming (joining) the Apana, along with it, this Vayu kindles the fire in the Dehamadhya. The fire fanned slowly by the Prana Vayu then burns in its own abode - the Dehamadhya, Illustrious among Women! There the fire kindled by the Prana, by its flames makes the water in the middle of the belly very hot. The fire through the heated water, cooks the food along with the other intaken ingredients, that have been placed on the water. The Prana converts the water into sweat and urine, the essence of the food (*Rasa*) becomes semen (*Sukra*), and the solid waste is excreted in the form of faeces, Gargi! The Prana, along with the Samana Vayu spreading the *Rasa* in all the Nadis, flows in the body in the form of breath. The Vayus continuously undertake excretion of waste products, urine etc., in the entire body, through the roots of the hairs and the nine openings.

67-71: The function of each Vayu.

निःश्वासोच्छ्वासकासाश्च प्राणकर्मैति कीर्त्यते ।
अपानवायोः कर्मैतद्विष्णुत्रादिविसर्जनम् ॥६७॥

हानोपादानचेष्टादि व्यानकर्मैति चेप्यते ।
उदानकर्म तत्प्रोक्तं देहस्योन्नयनादि यत् ॥६८॥

पोषणादि समानस्य शरीरे कर्म कीर्तितम् ।
उद्गारादि गुणो यस्तु नागकर्मैति कीर्त्यते ॥६९॥

निमीलनादि कूर्मस्य क्षुतं वै कृकरस्य च ।
देवदत्तस्य विप्रेन्द्रे तन्द्रीकर्मैति कीर्तितम् ॥७०॥

घनंजयस्य शोफादि सर्वं कर्म प्रकीर्तितम् ।

Inhalation, exhalation, coughing are said to be the functions of the Prana. Excretion of urine, faeces etc. is the function of the Apana Vayu. Actions such as taking, giving are considered as functions of Vyana. Raising of the body etc. are said to be functions of Udana. Nutrition is said to be the function of Samana in the body. Belching etc. are said to be functions of Naga. Blinking, closing of the eyes etc. is Kurma's function, sneezing is Krkara's and drowsiness is said to be the function of Devadatta, Illustrious among Women! Swelling etc. are all said to be the function of Dhananjaya.

71-72: Instruction to Gargi to perform Nadisodhana.

ज्ञात्वैवं नाडीसंस्थानं वायूनां स्थानकर्मणी ॥७१॥

विधिनोक्तेन मार्गेण नाडीसंशोधनं कुरु ॥७२॥

इति श्री योगयाज्ञवल्क्ये चतुर्थोऽध्यायः ।

After thus knowing the position of the Nadis and the position and function of the Vayus, undertake the purification of the Nadis in the prescribed manner.

VAYU	LOCATION	FUNCTIONS
1. Prana	Between nose & jaws, centre of the heart, centre of navel, big toe, surrounding kundalini.	Inhalation, exhalation, coughing, sneezing etc. Separates food, rasa etc.
2. Apana	Anus, generative organ, thighs, knees, stomach, testicles, kneecap, hip, navel.	Excretion.
3. Vyana	Between the ear and eyes, sides of the neck, ankles, nose throat, posterior region.	Taking in and giving out.
4. Udana	All joints, in legs and hands also.	Rising, bending etc.
5. Samana	Whole body.	Nutrition / growth of the body.
6. Naga	.....	Belching, vomitting etc.
7. Kurma	.....	Opening and closing of the eyes.
8. Krkara	.....	Sneezing.
9. Devadatta	.....	Drowsiness, sleepiness.
10. Dhananjaya	.....	Swelling etc.

*some of these locations and functions differ with Ayurvedic texts.

NAME OF THE NADI	POSITION OF THE NADI	REGION OF THE NADI
1. Sushumna	In the middle of the Kandasthana	Extends upto the top of the head
2. Ida	On the left of the Sushumna	Extends upto the tip of the left nose on the left side
3. Pingala	On the right of the Sushumna	Extends upto the tip of the nose on the right side
4. Sarasvati	On the side of the Sushumna	Extends upwards upto the tongue
5. Kuhu	On the side of the Sushumna	From the front region of the Sushumna upto the end of the generative organ
6. Gandhari	Back of Ida	Extends upto the left eye.
7. Hastijihva	Side of Ida	Extends upto the tip of the big toe of the left foot.
8. Visvodara	Between Kuhu and Hastijihva	In the middle of the the belly
9. Varuni	Between Yasasvini and Kuhu	Spreads everywhere and is above and below the Kundalini
10. Yasasvini	.....	Extends on the right side upto the tip of the toe
11. Payasvini	Between Pusha and Sarasvati	Extends upto the right ear
12. Pusha	At the back of the Pingala	Extends on the right upto the eye
13. Shankhini	Between Gandhari and Sarasvati.	Extends upwards upto the left ear.
14. Alambusha	Below the centre of the Kandasthana	Extends downwards to the bottom of the anus region.

CHAPTER V

Outline

- 1-2: Gargi's request and Yajñvalkyā's assent to teach the method of purification of the Nadis
- 3-9: The qualities of the aspirant, pre-requisites, ideal environment and daily routine for the practice of yoga
- 10-17: The view of some other sages on the environment, life style, and procedure of practice
- 17-20: The actual technique of Nadisodhana and the duration of practice
- 21-22: Results of such a practice

1-2: Gargi's request and Yajnavalkya's assent to teach the method of purification of the Nadis.

गार्ग्यवाच—

भगवन्ब्रह्मविच्छेष्ट सर्वशास्त्रविशारद ।
केनोपायेन शुद्धाः स्युर्नाडयो मे त्वं वद प्रभो ॥१॥

इत्युक्तो ब्रह्मवादिन्या ब्रह्मविद्ब्राह्मणस्तदा ।
तां समालोक्य कृपया नाडीशुद्धिमभाषत ॥२॥

Gargi said, "One who is Fit to be Worshipped, who is the greatest among the ones who have realized the Brahman, who has mastered all the sastras, please explain to me the method by which the Nadis should be purified. Thus asked by the one who seeks the Brahman [Gargi], the one who has realized the highest [Yajnavalkya], looked upon her with compassion and spoke about [the method for] the purification of the Nadis.

3-9: The qualities of the aspirant, pre-requisites, ideal environment and daily routine for the practice of yoga.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

विध्युक्तकर्मसंयुक्तः कामसंकल्पवर्जितः ।
यमैश्च नियमैर्युक्तः सर्वसङ्गविवर्जितः ॥३॥

कृतविद्यो जितक्रोधः सत्यधर्मपरायणः ।
गुरुशुश्रूषणरतः पितृमातृपरायणः ॥४॥

स्वाश्रमस्थः सदाचारः विद्वद्भिश्च सुशिक्षितः ।
तपोवनं सुसम्प्राप्य फलमूलोदकान्वितम् ॥५॥

तत्र रम्ये शुची देशे ब्रह्मघोषसमन्विते ।
स्वधर्मनिरतैः शान्तैर्ब्रह्मविद्भिः समावृते ॥६॥

वारिभिश्च सुसम्पूर्णं पुष्पैर्नानाविधैर्युते ।
फलमूलैश्च सम्पूर्णं सर्वकामफलप्रदे ॥७॥

देवालये वा नद्यां वा ग्रामे वा नगरेऽथवा ।
सुशोभनं मठं कृत्वा सर्वरक्षासमन्वितम् ॥८॥

त्रिकालस्नानसंयुक्तः स्वधर्मनिरतः सदा ।
वेदान्तश्रवणं कुर्वन्तस्मिन्योगं समभ्यसेत् ॥९॥

Yajnavalkya said: One who performs all the actions advocated by the Vedas¹, is devoid of desire, who is endowed with all the Yamas and Niyamas², who is uninvolved in worldly affairs, who has completed his studies [of the Sastras or scriptures], who has overcome anger³, who is devoted to the performance of his duty and to truth, who dutifully serves his Guru⁴, who is devoted to his parents⁵, who adheres to [the duties of] his stage in life (Ashrama), according to Varnashramadharmas, who is of good conduct [and character] and who has been well educated by great scholars⁶, after going to a grove suitable for spiritual pursuits which has plenty of fruits, roots and good water, in that pleasing pure place which resounds with the chanting of the Vedas, surrounded by tranquil Vedic scholars who are devoted to their duty, who have realised the Brahman, having built a beautiful, well-protected Matha⁷ near a temple or a flowing river, in a village or a city⁸, abounding in water, filled with fruit and roots, and with flowers of different varieties, the entire surroundings being capable of bestowing all desired results, [in that Matha,] the aspirant should bathe thrice a day⁹, always be devoted to his duty (according to Varnashramadharmas), listen to Vedanta¹⁰ and practise the path of Yoga.



¹ Yajnavalkya continually emphasizes the necessity to abide by the Vedas and follow the path of Yoga. This is repeated in all the chapters.

² The ten Yamas and the ten Niyamas were discussed in detail in Chapters I and II.

³ This refers to even those aspirants who attempt to overcome anger. The various degrees to which practises such as non-violence etc. are to be adhered to by different divisions of society has been clearly explained in the Vedas, in the Varnashramadharmas. This is also outlined in Chapter I.

⁴ Serving the Guru or teacher is considered an important prerequisite and is also mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita (chapter IV-34).

⁵ Devotion to one's parents implies that the person has a proper social support system. A stable basis of psychological and emotional support is essential before any spiritual practice can hope to succeed.

⁶ One should be educated by the greatest scholars. The word "scholar" used here to translate "Vidvan" should not be misunderstood as mere intellectual knowledge. Instead, it refers to someone who has directly experienced and realized whatever he or she has studied.

⁷ A Matha is not to be mistaken for a monastery where monks (sanyasis) resided. Traditionally, a Matha was quite safe, for the king of the land typically provided complete protection. For example, see the many references to Rama's kingly protection of various rishis and their Mathas in the Ramayana.

⁸ Similar descriptions can be found in the Hathayogapradipika. For example, Chapter I, verses 12-14 read follows:

"The Matha should be established in a well-governed, well-ruled prosperous kingdom ruled by a righteous king. The place should be unaffected by water, fire or rocks to the extent of a bow's length. (The measure of a bow's length referred to here is the span of the arms stretched out width wise. This amount of space spherically is sufficient to maintain absolute physical fitness.) The place should be free from disturbances and in solitude. The actual construction of the Matha has also been explained. The Matha should not be too high or too low. It should have a small door and no holes. It should be free from insects and clean, smeared with cow dung. The appearance from outside should be attractive with a hall, a raised seat, a well and a surrounding wall."

⁹ This does not refer to mere bathing, but means that (Sandhyavandanam) meditation and pranayama should be practised three times everyday.

¹⁰ Anta means "end." Thus, Vedanta means "the end (essence) of the Vedas." The Vedas have 4 parts: the Samhita, Brahmana, Aranyaka and the Upanishads. The last part (the end) of the Vedas, the Upanishads, are considered the Vedanta. The essence of the Upanishads has been presented in the form of the Brahmasutras by Vyasa. The Brahmasutras are also referred to as Vedanta. It is not proper to diminish the parts apart from Upanishadic texts as of lesser relevance to Vedic philosophy, as all four parts of the Vedas are quite significant to Vedic thought and lifestyle.

10-17: The view of some other sages on the environment, life style, and procedure of practice.

केचिद्वदन्ति मुनयस्तपःस्वाध्यायसंयुताः ।
स्वधर्मनिरताः शान्तास्तन्त्रेषु च सदा रताः ॥१०॥

निर्जने निलये रम्ये वातातपविवर्जिते ।
विध्युक्तकर्मसंयुक्तः शुचिभूत्वा समाहितः ॥११॥

मन्त्रैर्न्यस्ततनुर्धोरः सितभस्मधरः सदा ।
मृद्वासनोपरि कुशान्समास्तीर्य ततोऽजिनम् ॥१२॥

विनायकं सुसम्पूज्य फलमूलोदकादिभिः ।
इष्टदेवं गुरुं नत्वा तत आरुह्य चासनम् ॥१३॥

प्राङ्मुखोदङ्मुखो वापि जितासनगतः स्वयम् ।
समग्रीवशिरःकायः संवृतास्यः सुनिश्चलः ॥१४॥

नासाग्रदृक् सदा सम्यक् सव्ये न्यस्येतरं करम् ।
नासाग्रे शशभृद्बिम्बं ज्योत्स्नाजालवितानितम् ॥१५॥

सप्तमस्य तु वगंस्य चतुर्थं बिन्दुसंयुतम् ।
स्रवन्तममृतं पश्यन्नेत्राभ्यां सुसमाहितः ॥१६॥

इडया वायुमारोप्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।

Some sages who are endowed with austerities¹ (Tapas) and self-study² (Svadyaya) and are devoted to their Varnashramadharma, who are peaceful, who are devoted to the study of the tantrasastras say. "In an uninhabited pleasant abode, without [excess of] heat or wind, performing the deeds said in the Vedas, after becoming pure and focussed, the aspirant who is strong, persevering, with a body controlled with the help of Mantras, always wearing the white sacred ash³, having placed tender special grass and then deer skin⁴ (especially of a black antelope) having worshipped the remover of obstacles (Lord Vinayaka), with fruits, roots etc., after saluting his personal deity and his Guru, then after ascending the seat facing east or north, assuming a comfortable and steady posture by himself keeping his neck, head and body erect in alignment with his mouth closed, remaining steady (without any movement).

¹ The root of this word, Tapas, is Tap meaning "to burn." Here it refers to the reduction or removal of the klesas.

² Svadyaya: the word can be split and understood as Sva, "self," Adhi, "near," and Ayanam, "to go." Thus, an attempt to approach or go near one's self is Svadyaya.

³ The daily rituals prescribed in the Vedas involve worshipping the Divine using fire. These rituals are to be performed by both those in the Brahmacharya Ashrama and householders. The ashes left after performing these ceremonies are the "sacred ashes" referred to here, and are smeared on the body. This is also mentioned in Chapter I.

⁴ A similar description can be found in the Bhagavad Gita (VI-11), where the preparation of the seat for the practice is described. The place should be pure and clean. The seat should be neither too high nor too low. It should be firmly and comfortably prepared with Kusa grass, a deerskin and a cloth, one placed over the other.

focussing his attention well on the tip of his nose¹ always, placing on his left [hand] his other hand (right hand), seeing by his eyes, with concentration, the moon with its cool rays with the flow of nectar from the tip of the head representing the Turiya Avastha².

17-20: The actual technique of Nadisodhana and the duration of practice.

ततोऽग्निं देहमध्यस्थं ध्यायन्ज्वालावलीयुतम् ॥१७॥

रेफं च बिन्दुसंयुक्तमग्निमण्डलसंस्थितम् ।
ध्यायन्निवरेचयेत्पश्चान्मन्दं पिंगलया पुनः ॥१८॥

पुनः पिंगलयापूर्यं प्राणं दक्षिणतः सुधीः ।
पुनर्विरेचयेद्धीमानिडया तु शनैः शनैः ॥१९॥

त्रिचतुर्वत्सरं वाथ त्रिचतुर्मासमेव वा ।
षट्कृत्व आचरेन्नित्यं रहस्येवं त्रिसन्धिषु ॥२०॥

Having inhaled the air through the left nostril filling up [the chest and abdomen], then meditating on the fire in the belly with its flames in the Dehamadhya and meditating on the seed letter of fire (“Ram”), which is established in the region of fire he must exhale afterwards slowly through the right nostril. Then one who is determined and wise, inhaling the air through the right nostril, must again exhale slowly through the left nostril³. One should practice this in solitude six times everyday at the three Sandhis (in the morning, afternoon and evening) for three to four months or three to four years.

21-22: Results of such a practice.

नाडीशुद्धिमवाप्नोति पृथक्चिह्नोपलक्षिताम् ।
शरीरलघुता दीप्तिर्वह्नेर्जठरवर्तिनः ॥२१॥

नादाभिव्यक्तिरित्येते चिह्नं तत्सिद्धिसूचकम् ।
यावदेतानि सम्पश्यैत्तावदेव समाचरेत् ॥२२॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये पंचमोऽध्यायः ।

¹ A strikingly similar procedure is detailed in the Bhagavad Gita (VI.13-17). The aspirant should be free from desire for fruits of actions, free from motivations, should have control over himself and should be in solitude. The seat for the practice should be prepared with Kusha grass, deerskin and a cloth in a clean place, firmly fixed, neither too high nor too low. Sitting on that seat, he should focus his mind totally, having controlled the senses and practice Yoga. He should hold his body, neck and head still and erect, focussing his gaze on the tip of his nose, without being distracted. He should be tranquil and calm, fearless, control his mind and meditate upon the Divine.

² Turiya is usually understood as the fourth state of consciousness, beyond the three normal states of waking, deep sleep and dreaming.

³ Note that one nostril should be fully closed, and the other partially closed, in order to facilitate smooth and long exhalation and inhalation.

One attains Nadisuddhi, which is characterised by certain distinct indications. Lightness of the body, enhancement of the fire in the stomach (Jatharagni) improvement in the voice¹ (Nada). These changes are indicative of its attainment (of the Nadis being purified). One should continue to practice thus until these [above mentioned changes] are experienced.

¹ The HYP also describes similar benefits (II.19-20). When the Nadis are cleansed, certain outward external changes can be observed, including lightness in the body, lustre, control over the breath, enhanced Agni in the stomach and an improvement in the voice.

CHAPTER VI

Outline

- 1: Yajnavalkya begins his discourse on Pranayama
- 2-3: Definition of Pranayama
- 4-7: One type of Pranayama
- 8-10: Another type of Pranayama
- 11-15: Mantras to be used by a Brahmin during Pranayama
- 16-23: Mantras to be used by others and the benefits of such a Pranayama practice
- 24-25: Definition of inhalation, holding and exhalation
- 25-35: The three grades of Pranayama
- 35-38: The method to attain mastery over Prana and the benefits of such mastery
- 39-49: Benefits of focussing the Prana at various places in the body and the therapeutic applications of Pranayama
- 50-53: Another means to master the Prana (Shanmukhi Mudra)
- 54-58: Pranayama and Nada
- 59-64: Another means to master the Prana (an alternative to the Shanmukhi Mudra)
- 65-75: Pranayama and Kundalini - The burning and awakening of the Kundalini and the ascending of the Prana to the Brahmarandhra
- 75-78: Pranayama practice for union with the Divine
- 79-82: The virtues of Pranayama and the importance of its practice

षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥

1: Yajnavalkya begins his discourse on Pranayama.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

प्राणायाममथेदानीं प्रवक्ष्यामि विधानतः ।
समाहितमनास्त्वं च शृणु गार्गी वरानने ॥१॥

Yajnavalkya said, "Now¹, I am now going to speak about Pranayama in an orderly manner. Gargi, One with a Beautiful Countenance, listen to me with a focussed mind.

2-3: Definition of Pranayama.

प्राणापानसमायोगः प्राणायाम इतीरितः ।
प्राणायाम इति प्रोक्तो रेचपूरककुम्भकैः ॥२॥

वर्णत्रयात्मका ह्येते रेचपूरककुम्भकाः ।
स एषः प्रणवः प्रोक्तः प्राणायामश्च तन्मयः ॥३॥

Balancing Prana and Apana together² is said to be Pranayama. Pranayama is said to consist of exhale (Recaka), inhale (Puraka) and holding (Kumbhaka)³. These three components of Pranayama namely exhale, inhale and holding are of the nature of three syllables (A, U, M). [Thereby] Pranayama is of the form of the Pranava (Om)⁴.

¹ Many Vedic texts begin with the Sanskrit word, "Atha," which is commonly translated as "Now." For example, the Yogasutras begin with "Atha Yoganusasanam" and the Brahmasutras begin with "Athatho Brahmajijnasa." This word is considered to be auspicious. since "Atha" and "Om" are said to have originated from the throat of Brahma the Creator. Importantly, it means that the student is now ready to receive the teachings. In this context, it means that the person has fulfilled the requirements laid out in the previous chapters:

Adherence to the Yamas and Niyamas (Chapters I and II);

Mastery of the Asana for the practice of Pranayama (Chapter III). (Note that Vyasa, in his commentary on Patanjali's Sutra on Pranayama (YS II.49) expresses the same opinion. He says "Sati Asana Jaye," which means "Having mastered asana..." However, it is important to note that no particular posture is specified.);

Clear knowledge of the position of the Nadis, the Vayus and their functions (Chapter IV).

Attainment of purity of the Nadis (Chapter V).

² "Union" here means balancing. It refers to Prana and Apana remaining in their respective places and functioning properly together. The Prana is in the chest area; Apana is in the abdominal area. Imbalance in the functioning of Prana or Apana is the cause of many diseases.

³ The order in which the three components are mentioned here is very significant: Rechakam (exhale), Purakam (inhale) and Kumbhaka (holding). In practice, it is very important to begin by extending the exhalation and then move on to master inhalation, followed by holding. This same order is specified in the Yogasutras (II.50), and the Bhagavad Gita (IV.29) also says "Apane Juhvati Pranam...", meaning "Begin with exhale."

⁴ The equation of Pranayama with Om is significant in the context of the connection between the microcosm and macrocosm. In the microcosm, Prana is the life force and the basis for all 3 bodily functions: creation, sustenance and destruction. Likewise in the macrocosm, Om represents the Divine and the three letters of Om A, U and M symbolize creation, sustenance and destruction, respectively. Pranayama will later be defined in terms of the Gayatri mantra, which is used as a meter for measuring the length of inhale, exhale and hold. The use of Gayatri with Pranayama is described in verses 4-10 from the alternate recension at the end of this chapter.

4-7: One type of Pranayama.

इडया वायुमारोप्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
शनैः षोडशभिर्मात्रैरकारं तत्र संस्मरेत् ॥४॥

धारयेत्पूरितं पश्चाच्चतुःषष्ठ्या तु मात्रया ।
उकारमूर्तिमत्रापि संस्मरन्प्रणवं जपेत् ॥५॥

यावद्वा शक्यते तावद्धारणं जपसंयुतम् ।
पूरितं रेचयेत्पश्चात्प्राणं बाह्यानि लान्वितम् ॥६॥

शनैः पिंगलया गार्गि द्वात्रिंशन्मात्रया पुनः ।
मकारमूर्तिमत्रापि संस्मरन्प्रणवं जपेत् ॥७॥

Inhaling the air slowly for sixteen units (matras) through the left nostril, filling the belly (chest and abdomen) one must meditate on [the diety represented by] “A”¹. Then one must retain the inhaled air for sixty four units thinking of [the diety represented by] “U” and meditate on the Pranava. Otherwise, retain the breath for as long as possible along with repetition of the mantra (Japa). Then exhale slowly² the inhaled air for thirty two units to join the air outside through the right nostril (Pingala). Here too, thinking of [the deity represented by] “M” meditate on the Pranava, Gargi.

8-10: Another type of Pranayama.

प्राणायामो भवेदेषः पुनश्चैवं समभ्यसेत् ।
ततः पिंगलयापूर्य मात्रैः षोडशभिस्तथा ॥८॥

उकारमूर्तिमत्रापि संस्मरन्सुसमाहितः ।
पूरितं धारयेत्प्राणं प्रणवं विशतिद्वयम् ॥९॥

जपेदत्र स्मरन्मूर्ति मकाराख्यं महेश्वरम् ।
यावद्वा शक्यते पश्चाद्रेचयेदिडयानिलम् ॥१०॥

This is Pranayama. One must do this again (repeatedly). Inhaling through the right nostril for sixteen units thinking of [the diety represented by] “U” here too, with a focussed mind, one must hold the inhaled air, thinking of “M” representing Mahesvara³ repeating forty times or for as long as possible and then one must exhale the air through the left nostril.

¹ Various mental attitudes (Bhavanas) are possible during the practice. One has to learn them from a competent Guru. According to one of these interpretations, A represents Vishnu or God, U represents Lakshmi or the Mother Goddess, and M represents the self (Jiva). In this scheme, U the Mother Goddess, can be thought of as the link between the self (M) and the Divine (A).

² The practitioner must first master slow and smooth exhalation. Thus many texts say that exhale should not be fast. For example, the HYP (II-9) says “exhale slowly, not fast.” Holding should not affect the exhalation.

³ According to the Vedas, the word, “Brahman,” is of neuter gender. As a consequence, one can relate to Brahman, the Godhead, as either masculine or feminine. Various mental attitudes may be used during the practice of Pranayama. This manuscript refers to Mahesvara, the Supreme God, while yet another version refers to Maheswari, the Great Goddess, who is the Mother of the Universe. However, as already mentioned, the masculine and feminine aspects are inseparable. One must learn the proper methodology from a teacher.

11-15: Mantras to be used by a Brahmin during Pranayama.

एवमेव पुनः कुर्यादिडयापूर्य पूर्ववत् ।
नाड्या प्राणं समारोप्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ॥११॥

प्रणवेन सुसंयुक्तां व्याहृतीभिश्च संयुताम् ।
गायत्रीं च जपेद्विप्रः प्राणसंयमने त्रयः ॥१२॥

पुनश्चैवं त्रिभिः कुर्यात्पुनश्चैव त्रिसन्धिषु ।
यद्वा समभ्यसेन्नित्यं वैदिकं लौकिकं तु वा ॥१३॥

प्राणसंयमने विद्वान्जपेत्तद्विंशतिद्वयम् ।
ब्राह्मणः श्रुतसम्पन्नः स्वधर्मनिरतः सदा ॥१४॥

स वैदिकं जपेन्मन्त्रं लौकिकं न कदाचन ।
केचिद्भूतहितार्थाय जपमिच्छन्ति लौकिकम् ॥१५॥

One must do this again (repeatedly). Inhaling as before through left nostril, taking the air in, having filled the belly (chest and abdomen), a Brahmin should repeat the Gayatri Mantra three times accompanied by Om and the Vyahrtis¹ during Pranayama. One must do thus three times during the three Sandhis (morning, afternoon and evening). Or, the learned one should, everyday, during Pranayama, do forty repetitions of Mantras, Vaidika or Laukika². A Brahmin who has studied the Vedas, who is devoted to the performance of his duty (according to the Varnashramadharm) should always do Japa of only Vaidika Mantras, never Laukika Mantras. There are some who consider that Japa with Laukika mantras can be done for the welfare of living beings.

16-23: Mantras to be used by others and the benefits of such a Pranayama practice.

द्विजवत्क्षात्रयस्याक्तः प्राणसंयमन जपः ।
वैश्यानां धर्मयुक्तानां स्त्रीशूद्राणां तपस्विनाम् ॥१६॥

प्राणसंयमने गागि मन्त्रं प्रणववजितम् ।
नमोन्तं शिवमन्त्रं वा वैष्णवं वेप्यते बुधैः ॥१७॥

यद्वा समभ्यसेच्छूद्रो लौकिकं विधिपूर्वकम् ।
प्राणसंयमने स्त्री च जपेत्तद्विंशतिद्वयम् ॥१८॥

न वैदिकं जपेच्छूद्रः स्त्रियश्च न कदाचन ।
स्वाश्रमस्थस्य वैश्यस्य केचिदिच्छन्ति वैदिकम् ॥१९॥

¹ The Vyahrtis here refer to the words "Bhuh, "Bhuvah" and "Suvah" which are found in the Gayatri mantra.

² A Mantra used to gain realization (Jnanam) is Vaidika. A Mantra used to gain worldly benefits is Laukika.

सन्ध्ययोरुभयोनित्यं गायत्र्या प्रणवेन वा ।
प्राणसंयमनं कुर्याद्ब्राह्मणो वेदपारगः ॥२०॥

नित्यमेवं प्रकुर्वीत प्राणायामास्तु षोडश ।

अपि भ्रूणहनं मासात्पुनन्त्यहरहः कृताः ॥२१॥

ऋतुत्रयात्पुनन्त्येनं जन्मान्तरकृतादघात् ।
वत्सराद्ब्रह्महा शुद्ध्येत्तस्मान्नित्यं समभ्यसेत् ॥२२॥

योगाभ्यासरतास्त्वेवं स्वधर्मनिरताश्च ये ।
प्राणसंयमनेनैव सर्वे मुक्ता भवन्ति हि ॥२३॥

Japa during Pranayama is said for Kshatriyas to be the same as for Brahmins. For Vaishyas, women and the fourth division who are devoted to their duty and are endowed with austerities (Tapas), during Pranayama, Mantras without the pranava, ending with Namah¹, relating to Siva or Vishnu are recommended by the wise. Otherwise, women and the fourth division must do Japa on Laukika Mantras (other than from the Vedas), in the proper manner forty times, during [the practice of] Pranayama. Women and the fourth division are not to do Japa on Vaidika mantras². Some say that Vaishyas who follow the duties of their Ashrama can use Vaidika mantras. A Brahmin who has mastered the Vedas must do Pranayama with the Gayatri or Pranava every morning and evening. One must always practice Pranayama thus sixteen times. Done [day after day] for a month, [Pranayama] purifies even one who has committed [the crime of] abortion. In six months, it purifies the sins of earlier births. In a year even one who had killed a Brahmin will be purified³. Those who are devoted to their duty (according to the Varnashramadharm) and who are devoted to the practice of Yoga, will all be freed through [the practice of] Pranayama itself. Therefore one must practice [Pranayama] everyday.

24-25: Definition of inhalation, holding and exhalation.

बाह्यादापूरणं वायोरुदरे पूरको हि सः ।
सम्पूर्णकुम्भवद्वायोर्धारणं कुम्भको भवेत् ॥२४॥

बहिर्यद्रेचनं वायोरुदराद्रेचकः स्मृतः ।

Taking in the air from outside and filling the abdomen is inhale, retaining the air [in the chest and abdomen] like a filled pot is retention. Expelling the air out from the chest and abdomen is called exhale.

The word, "Namah," signifies surrender. "Na" means "Not" and "Mah" means "Mine," thus "Namah" means "Not mine." The essence of any Mantra is surrender to the Divine. Hence most Mantras begin or end with Namah, for example "Sivaya Namah" (surrendering to the deity Shiva) or "Vishnave Namah" (surrendering to the deity Vishnu).

² In the Vedic tradition, women and members of the fourth division were not initiated into the Vedas. Therefore, Mantras or verses from other texts (like the Vishnusahasranama) were prescribed for them. Though they were not initiated into the Vedas, they were entitled to practice Pranayama. For example, in the Ramayana, Kausalya, the mother of Rama, was practicing Pranayama and meditating on Lord Vishnu (Janardhana) when Rama came to seek her blessings before leaving for the forest. Though the Mantras suggested were different, the goal of freedom (Moksha) was the same. That is, those initiated into the Vedas used Vedic Mantras, while others used equivalent Mantras from other texts.

The Vedas are called "Sruiti," from the root, "Sru," meaning "to hear." The Vedas were never written down, but were memorized and transmitted orally. The Brahmins were the repository of all the Vedic knowledge and wisdom. Therefore, killing a Brahmin was considered a grave offense as it amounted to the destruction of knowledge.

25-35: The three grades of Pranayama. Explanation of Kevala Kumbhaka and Sahita Kumbhaka, and the benefits thereof.

प्रस्वेदजनको यस्तु प्राणायामेषु सोऽधमः ॥२५॥

कम्पको मध्यमः प्रोक्त उत्थानश्चोत्तमो भवेत् ।

पूर्वं पूर्वं प्रकुर्वीत यावदुत्तमसम्भवः ॥२६॥

सम्भवत्युत्तमे गार्गि प्राणायामे सुखी भवेत् ।

प्राणो लयति तेनैव देहस्यान्तस्ततोऽधिकः ॥२७॥

देहश्चोत्तिष्ठते तेन कृतासनपरिग्रहः ।

निःश्वासोच्छ्वासकौ तस्य न विद्येते कथंचन ॥२८॥

देहे यद्यपि तौ स्यातां स्वाभाविकगुणावुभौ ।

तथापि नश्यतस्तेन प्राणायामोत्तमेन हि ॥२९॥

तयोर्नाशे समर्थः स्यात्कर्तुं केवलकुम्भकम् ।

रेचकं पूरकं मुक्त्वा सुखं यद्वायुधारणम् ॥३०॥

प्राणायामोऽयमित्युक्तः स वै केवलकुम्भकः ।

रेच्य चापूर्य यः कुर्यात्स वै सहितकुम्भकः ॥३१॥

सहितं केवलं चाथ कुम्भकं नित्यमभ्यसेत् ।

यावत्केवलसिद्धिः स्यात्तावत्सहितमभ्यसेत् ॥३२॥

केवले कुम्भके सिद्धे रेचपूरणवर्जिते ।

न तस्य दुर्लभं किञ्चित्त्रिषु लोकेषु विद्यते ॥३३॥

मनोजवत्वं लभते पलितादि च नश्यति ।

मुक्तेरयं महामार्गो मकाराख्यान्तरात्मनः ॥३४॥

नादं चोत्पादयत्येषः कुम्भकः प्राणसंयमः ।

That Pranayama which produces excessive perspiration is the lowest among the types of Pranayama. The one which causes trembling [in the body] is said to be mediocre. The one that makes the body [feel light enough to] rise up is the best Pranayama¹. Each preceding one (Pranayama) must be done until the best one comes about. When the highest Pranayama comes about (is attained), one reaches a state of comfort and joy. The Prana that was scattered re-enters Sushumna through this Pranayama². One's body, firmly seated in Asana, rises by this [Pranayama]. Inhale and exhale do not exist for him anymore. Although they both exist as inherent qualities in the body, nevertheless, by that highest Pranayama, they perish. When these two perish, one becomes fit to practice Kevala Kumbhaka. The Pranayama where the breath is held inside relinquishing (without active regulation of) inhale and exhale, effortlessly

¹ The stages in Pranayama are explained similarly in the HYP (II.12).

² This centering of the Prana is explained in detail in Chapter IV of this text. The centering or reentry of the Prana (into the body), through the practice of Pranayama, is indicative of the focussing of the mental activities as mentioned in the Yogasutras. Therefore the Yogasutras (II-53) say that as a result of pranayama the mind becomes fit for Dharana.

is said to be Kevala Kumbhaka¹. The one (Pranayama) done by inhaling and exhaling is Sahita Kumbhaka. Sahita Kumbhaka and Kevala Kumbhaka must be practiced. Sahita Kumbhaka must be practiced till Kevala Kumbhaka is attained completely. When Kevala Kumbhaka, without [active regulation of] inhale and exhale is attained, for him, there is nothing that is unattainable in the three worlds. One acquires total control over the mind, and old age vanishes (the aging process slows down). This path is the highest one leading to the liberation of the Self (Jivatma) signified by [the seed letter] M.

35-38: The method to attain mastery over the Prana and the benefits of such mastery.

प्राणसंयमनं नाम देहे प्राणस्य धारणम् ॥३५॥

एषः प्राणजयोपायः सर्वमृत्युपघातकः ।
किञ्चित्प्राणजयोपायं तव वक्ष्यामि तत्त्वतः ॥३६॥

बाह्यात्प्राणं समाकृष्य पूरयित्त्वोदरस्थितम् ।
नाभिमध्ये च नासाग्रे पादाङ्गुष्ठे च यत्नतः ॥३७॥

धारयेन्मनसा प्राणं सन्ध्याकालेषु सर्वदा ।
सर्वरोगविनिर्मुक्तो जीवेद्योगी गतक्लमः ॥३८॥



Kumbhaka Pranayama, causes the appearance of Nada². Retaining the Prana within the body is called Pranayama. This leads to mastery over the Prana (Kevala Kumbhaka), leads to absence of disease and death³. I will tell you, in the proper manner, the methodology to attain mastery over Prana to a certain degree. Having inhaled the air from outside and filled the chest and abdomen, one must endeavour to retain the Prana, through the mind, in the navel, tip of the nose and the big toes during the Sandhya (morning, afternoon and evening) always. The practitioner lives free from all diseases, free from fatigue.

39-49: Benefits of focussing the Prana at various places in the body and the therapeutic applications of Pranayama.

नासाग्रे धारणं गार्गि वायोविजयकारणम् ।
सर्वरोगविनाशः स्यान्नाभिमध्ये च धारणात् ॥३९॥

शरीरं लघुतां याति पादाङ्गुष्ठे च धारणात् ।
रसनावायुमाकृष्य यः पिबेत्सततं नरः ॥४०॥

¹ Kevala Kumbhaka is the state where the movement of the breath is not influenced by the state of mind. In such a case, the person becomes a master of Prana and a master of his mind. Mastery of the Prana is the same as the mastery of the mind spoken of in the Yogasutras. Thus, the same word, Vrtti, which is used in the context of "Cittavrttinirodhah" in PYS (I.2) is also used in PYS(II.50) while defining Pranayama. As a practice it involves Krama pranayama where inhale and exhale are done in steps with retention.

² Nada is heard when the Nadis are cleansed by the practice of Pranayama. (Nadanusandhanam). Mental focus through sound is explained in detail in the HYP (Chapter IV).

³ Proper practice of Pranayama leads to absence of disease. "Absence of death" here means that the person realizes his or her true, eternal self which is beyond time, birth and death.

श्रमदाहौ न तस्यास्तां नश्यन्ति व्याधयस्तथा ।
सन्ध्ययोर्ब्रह्मिकाले वा वायुमाकृष्य यः पिबेत्

त्रिमासात्तस्य कल्याणि जायते वाक्सरस्वती ।
षण्मासाभ्यासयोगेन महारोगैः प्रमुच्यते ॥४२॥

आत्मन्यात्मानमारोप्य कुण्डल्यां यस्तु धारयेत् ।
क्षयरोगादयस्तस्य नश्यन्तीत्यपरे विदुः ॥४३॥

जिह्वया वायुमानीय जिह्वामूले निरोधयन् ।
यः पिबेदमृतं विद्वान्सकलं भद्रमश्नुते ॥४४॥

आत्मन्यात्मानमिडया समानीय भ्रुवोन्तरे ।
पिबेद्यस्त्रिदशाहारं व्याधिभिः स विमुच्यते ॥४५॥

नाडीभ्यां वायुमारोप्य नाभौ वा तुन्दपार्श्वयोः ।
घटिकैकां वहेद्यस्तु व्याधिभिः सोऽभिमुच्यते ॥४६॥

मासमेकं त्रिसन्ध्यायां जिह्वयारोप्य मारुतम् ।
पिबेद्यस्त्रिदशाहारं धारयेत्तुन्दमध्येमे ॥४७॥

गुल्माष्ठीला प्लीहा चान्ये त्रिदोषजनितास्तथा ।
तुन्दमध्येगता रोगाः सर्वे नश्यन्ति तस्य वै ॥४८॥

ज्वराः सर्वे विनश्यन्ति विषाणि विविधानि च ।
बहुनोक्तेन किं गार्गि पलितादि च नश्यति ॥४९॥

Gargi, focussing [the Prana] at the tip of the nose, is the means to mastery over Prana. By focussing on the navel all diseases are removed. The body attains lightness by focussing on the big toes¹. For the person who inhales the air through the tongue constantly² there is no fatigue, and heat and diseases perish. One who inhales air (practises Pranayama) thus during the Sandhis (morning, afternoon and evening) or before sunrise (Brahmamuhurta) for three months acquires proficiency in speech One Who Is Blessed! (Gargi). By practising for six months one is freed from all diseases. Some others opine that if one turns the mind inward and focusses on the Kundalini, diseases related to degeneration, decay etc. are destroyed. The learned one who inhales the air through the tongue, retains it at the base

¹ In explaining the various types of Pranayama to overcome disease and stay healthy, Yajnavalkya emphasizes the effect of mental focus (Bhavana) in Pranayama. That is, the results of Pranayama vary depending on where the mind is focussed.

² This type of Pranayama is called Sitali Pranayama. This is praised as useful for many debilitating diseases like Asthma, Diabetes etc. (maharaogas)

of the tongue, and drinks the nectar, attains all benefits¹. The one who controls and focusses the mind, inhaling through the left nostril, focussing [on the space] between the eyebrows and drinks nectar is freed from diseases. One who inhales through both nostrils focussing [the Prana] on the navel or either sides of the belly, [and continues the cycle] for twenty four minutes (24 times holding one minute after inhale) is quickly relieved from diseases. For one who inhales through the tongue and drinks the nectar, focussing on the belly, during the three Sandhis (morning, afternoon and evening) for one month, is freed of all diseases of the spleen, and other diseases. All diseases caused by the three Doshas² and diseases of the stomach too are all destroyed. All fevers and various toxins in the system are destroyed. Why say more Gargi, even old age is destroyed.

50-53: Another means to master the Prana (Shanmukhi Mudra).

एवं वायुजयोपायः प्राणस्य तु वरानने ।
शक्यमासनमास्थाय समाहितमनास्तथा ॥५०॥

करणानि वशीकृत्य विषयेभ्यो बलात्सुधीः ।
अपानमूर्ध्वमाकृष्य प्रणवेन समाहितः ॥५१॥

हस्ताभ्यां बन्धयेत्सम्यक्कर्णादि करणानि च ।
अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यामुभे श्रोत्रे तर्जनीभ्यां च चक्षुषी ॥५२॥

नासापुटौ मध्यमाभ्यां प्रच्छाद्य करणानि वै ।
आनन्दानुभवं यावत्तावन्मूर्द्धनि धारयेत् ॥५३॥

Thus is the means for mastery over Prana, One with a Beautiful Countenance (Gargi)! Having assumed a posture that one is capable of [staying in], with a focussed mind, then having drawn by force the senses away from sensory objects and completely controlled them, the wise one, pulling the apana upwards, having controlled the mind using the Pranava (meditating on the Pranava), restrain the ears and the other senses with the hands. Close the two ears with the thumbs, the eyes with the pointers, and the nostrils with the middle fingers³, [and having thus restrained all the senses,] focus on the crown of the head, till the state of bliss (Ananda) is experienced.

54-58: Pranayama and Nada.

प्राणः प्रयात्यनेनैव ततस्त्वायुर्विघातकृत् ।
ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे सुषुम्णायां मृणालान्तरसूत्रवत् ॥५४॥

¹ This Pranayama includes Jihva Bandha. Attention focussed at the root of the tongue leads to an increased sharpness of the senses. In terms of mental process, due to complete focus and absorption of the mind into the self, the energy of the mind is not dispersed but is unified and its external flow is stopped, thus bringing the mind under total control.

² In Ayurveda, the 3 doshas are Vata, Pitta and Kapha.

³ This is called "Shanmukhi Mudra" and it must be practised with the Bandhas, under the guidance of a competent Guru.

नादोत्पत्तिस्त्वनेनैव शुद्धस्फटिकसन्निभा ।
आमूर्ध्नो वतंत नादो वीणादण्डवद्रुत्थितः ॥५५॥

शंखध्वनिनिभस्त्वादौ मध्ये मेघध्वनिर्यथा ।
व्योमरन्ध्रे गते नादे गिरिप्रस्रवणं यथा ॥५६॥

व्योमरन्ध्रे गते वायौ चित्ते चात्मनि संस्थिते ।
तदानन्दी भवेद्देही वायुस्तेन जितो भवेत् ॥५७॥

योगिनस्त्वपरे ह्यत्र वदन्ति समचेतसः ।
प्राणायामपराः पूता रेचपूरणवर्जिताः ॥५८॥

By this practice the Prana which causes reduction of the life span (when it is dispersed), [is centered and] moves into the Brahmarandhra, through the Sushumna Nadi, like a fibre inside a lotus stalk. The appearance of pure and crystalline (Nada) sound, present up to the top of the head like the sound produced by the Danda of a Veena¹, is due to this [movement]. At first, the sound produced by a conch, then sounds of thunder and when the Nada reaches the, crown of head (Brahmarandhra), a sound similar to [that heard in] a mountain waterfall [is heard]². When the Prana Vayu reaches the Brahmarandra, and the mind is absorbed in the self, the practitioner becomes blissful and Prana is conquered by him. Other yogis who are dedicated to the practice of Pranayama, who are pure, and who have gone beyond inhale and exhale, having similar views on this, also say so.

59-64: Another means to master the Prana (an alternative to the Shanmukhi Mudra). The mantras to be used by the four divisions during the practice.

दक्षिणेतरगुल्फेन सीवनीं पीडयेत्शिराम् ।
अधस्तादण्डयोः सूक्ष्मां सव्योपरि च दक्षिणम् ॥५९॥

जंघोर्वोरन्तरं गागि निश्छिद्रं बन्धयेद्दृढम् ।
समग्रीवशिरस्कन्धः समपृष्ठः समोदरः ॥६०॥

नेत्राभ्यां दक्षिणं गुल्फं लोकयन्नुपरिस्थितम् ।
धारयन्मनसा सार्धं व्याहरन्प्रणवाक्षरम् ॥६१॥

¹ The human spine is comparable to the Veena, an ancient Indian string instrument, the vertebrae of the spine being likened the nodes of the Veena. The practice of Mula Bandha tightens the base of the spine, similar to the tightening of the Veena at its base. Only when the strings are properly tightened and in proper tension, is the sound (Nada) from the Veena proper. Similarly, the practice of the Bandhas are considered essential for proper Nada.

² The fourth chapter of the HYP deals extensively with Nadanusandhanam and the sounds described therein are similar.

आसने नान्यधीरास्ते द्विजो रहसि नित्यशः ।
क्षत्रियश्च वरारोहे व्याहरन्प्रणवाक्षरम् ॥६२॥

आसने नान्यधीरास्ते रहस्येव जितेन्द्रियः ।
वैश्याः शूद्राः स्त्रियश्चान्ये योगाभ्यासरताः नराः ॥६३॥

शैवं वा वैष्णवं वाय व्याहरन्नन्यमेव वा ।
आसने नान्यधीरास्ते दीपं हस्ते विलोकयन् ॥६४॥

On the right, press the perineum, beneath the generative organ by the left ankle and place the right ankle on top of the left. Close the thighs and the knees together firmly, without a gap in between. A Brahmin, keeping the neck, head, shoulders and the back and belly straight, looking at the right ankle which is on top with the eyes, mentally focussing and reciting the Pranava [extended by half a matra], must sit in Asana, in solitude, without distraction everyday¹. A Kshatriya must sit in the [above] asana in solitude everyday without distraction and total focus, repeating the Pranava with complete control over the senses. Vaishyas, women, the fourth division and others who are keen on practising Yoga must sit in Asana repeating mantras on Shiva or Vishnu or other mantras without distraction, gazing at a lamp [held] in their hands.

65-75: Pranayama and Kundalini - The burning and awakening of the Kundalini and the ascending of the Prana to the Brahmarandhra.

आयुर्विघातकृत्प्राणस्त्वनेनाग्निकुलं गतः ।
घूमध्वजजयं यावन्नान्यधीरेवमभ्यसेत् ॥६५॥

धारणं कुर्वतस्तस्य शक्तिः स्यादिष्टभोजने ।
देहश्च लघुतां याति जठराग्निश्च वर्धते ॥६६॥

दृष्टचिह्नस्ततस्तस्मान्मनसारोप्य मारुतम् ।
मन्त्रमुच्चारयन्दीर्घं नाभिमध्ये निरोधयेत् ॥६७॥

यावन्मनो लयत्यस्मिन्नाभौ सवितृमण्डले ।
तावत्समभ्यसेद्विद्वान्नियतो नियतासनः ॥६८॥

एतेन नाभिमध्यस्थधारणेनैव मारुतः ।
कुण्डलीं याति वह्निश्च दहत्यत्र न संशयः ॥६९॥

सन्तप्ता वह्निना तत्र वायुना चालिता स्वयम् ।
प्रसार्यं फणभृद्भोगं प्रबोधं याति सा तदा ॥७०॥

प्रबुद्धे संसरत्यस्मिन्नाभिमूले तु चक्रिणि ।
ब्रह्मरन्ध्रे सुषुम्णायां प्रयाति प्राणसंज्ञकः ॥७१॥

सम्प्राप्ते मारुते तस्मिन्सुषुम्णायां वरानने ।
मन्त्रमुच्चार्य मनसा हृन्मध्ये धारयेत्पुनः ॥७२॥

हृदयात्कण्ठकूपे च भ्रुवोर्मध्ये च धारयेत् ।
तस्मादारोप्य मनसा साग्निं प्राणमनन्यधीः ॥७३॥

धारयेद्ध्योम्नि विप्रेन्द्रे व्याहरन्प्रणवाक्षरम् ।
वायुना पूरिते व्योम्नि साङ्गोपाङ्गे कलेवरे ॥७४॥

तदात्मा राजते तत्र यथा व्योम्नि विकर्तनः ।

By this, Prana, which [on being dispersed] reduces the life span, reaches the abode of Agni. Until one gains mastery over Agni, one must continue to practice thus without any distraction. One who does this Dharana will have the strength to digest whatever is eaten. Jatharagni is enhanced and the body becomes light. After having experienced the above signs, taking the Prana upwards, by the mind, hold it in the middle of the belly for a long time, reciting the Mantra. The learned one must sit in the [prescribed] posture properly, with discipline (observing all the prerequisites mentioned earlier) and do the [above] practice till the mind is totally absorbed in the abode of the Self (Savitrmandala¹) of the navel region. Undoubtedly by this focus (Dharana) in the navel, the Prana reaches the Kundalini and the Agni burns it (the Kundalini). There is no doubt about this. Burnt by the fire, fanned by the Vayu, she (the Kundalini) then, spreads her hood by herself and awakens. When she is awakened, the Prana moves in this Cakra at the base of the Nabhi and moves in the Sushumna towards the Brahmarandhra. One with a Beautiful Countenance! (Gargi), as the Prana reaches (moves through) that Sushumna, one must recite the Mantra² mentally and hold it (Prana) again in the center of the heart (Hridaya). Then, from the heart (Hridaya), one must hold the Prana in the neck pit and in the point between the eyebrows. From there one must raise the Prana along with the Agni, retain it in the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra), while reciting the Pranava without distraction. Best among Brahmin Women! (Gargi). when the Prana permeates (reaches) the Brahmarandhra, the self shines throughout the entire body like the sun in the sky.

75-78: Pranayama practice for union with the Divine.

शरीरं विसुसृक्षुश्चेदेवं सम्यक् समाचरन् ॥७५॥

एकाक्षरं परं ब्रह्म ध्यायन्प्रणवमीश्वरम् ।
संमिथ मनसा मूर्ध्नि ब्रह्मरन्ध्रं सवायुना ॥७६॥

¹ The word "savitrmandalam" usually refers to the disc of the sun, which is thought of as the abode of the Divine. Here it refers to the abode of the Jiva or self.

² A Mantra is the link to the Divine. Recitation of the Mantra, as the Prana moves up, can lead us to a state of freedom and union with the Divine.

प्राणमुन्मोचयेत्पश्चान्महाप्राणे स्वमध्यमे ।
देहातीते जगत्प्राणे शून्ये नित्ये ध्रुवे पदे ॥७७॥

आकाशे परमानन्दे स्वात्मानं योजयेद्विया ।
ब्रह्मैवासी भवेद्गार्गि न पुनर्जन्मभाग्भवेत् ॥७८॥

One who desires to leave the body¹, then, practicing this (the above said) properly, meditating on Isvara, the Cosmic Consciousness (Parabrahman), [who is represented by] the Pranava², opening the Brahmarandhra in the crown of the head by the mind along with the Prana, must then unite the Prana with the Mahaprana³, which supports the entire world, which is [represented by] space, which is beyond attributes, which is eternal and everlasting. Unite the Self with that space which is the ultimate bliss (the Paramatma), with determination. Such a person becomes one with the Cosmic Consciousness (Brahman) and does not take birth again (transcends the cycle of birth and death).

79-82: The virtues of Pranayama and the importance of its practice.

तस्मात्त्वं च वरारोहे नित्यं कर्म समाचर ।
सन्ध्याकालेषु वा नित्यं प्राणसंयमनं कुरु ॥७९॥

प्राणायामपराः सर्वे प्राणायामपरायणाः ।
प्राणायामविशुद्धा ये ते यान्ति परमां गतिम् ॥८०॥

प्राणायामादृते नान्यत्तारकं नरकादपि ।
संसारार्णवमग्नानां तारकः प्राणसंयमः ॥८१॥

तस्मात्त्वं विधिमार्गेण नित्यं कर्म समाचर ।
विधिनोक्तेन मार्गेण प्राणसंयमनं कुरु ॥८२॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये षष्ठोऽध्यायः ॥

Therefore, you too, One with a Beautiful Countenance! (Gargi), adhere to your daily duties (actions in accordance with the Vedas). Always or during the three Sandhis (morning, afternoon and evening), practice the control of Prana. All those who practice Pranayama regularly who regard Pranayama as their goal and who have been purified through Pranayama, attain liberation⁴. There is no other means except Pranayama to save a person from bondage. Pranayama is the means for people who are bound in the ocean of bondage (samsara) to cross over.

¹ This does not refer to death in the normal sense, but to remaining as the self- Seer.

² The Pranava is considered as a means to address Isvara , the Divine (see YS I.27).

³ When the Prana is said to join the Mahaprana, it should be understood as the (Jivatma) or Seer, who is mounted on the Prana, joins the (Paramatma) Divine.

⁴ "Tapo na param pranaayamat..." (there is no Tapas superior to the practice of Pranayama), said Manu. The same point is mentioned by Vyasa and by Sankaracharya in the commentary on the PYS (II-52), while describing the benefits of the practice of Pranayama. Yajnavalkya here stresses the same.

Therefore you do in the prescribed manner your daily duties (as prescribed by the Vedas) and practice Pranayama in the prescribed manner.

The following verses were found in various alternate recensions of the Yoga Yajnavalkya by Sri Divanji, the editor of the Sanskrit critical edition (see Appendix). These slokas had no counterparts in the original manuscript which he used to compile and compare the various recensions. In some of those recensions, the following verses were placed under sloka number 4 of the present chapter.

Outline¹

1-3. Meditation on Siva / Iswara

नासाग्रे दृक् सदा सम्यक् सव्ये न्यस्येतरं करम् ।
नासाग्रे शशभृद्विम्बे ज्योत्स्नाजालवितानके ॥१॥

अम्बोमा सहितं शुभ्रं सोमसूर्याग्निलोचनम् ।
पंचवक्त्रं महादेवं चन्द्रशेखरमीश्वरम् ॥२॥

नन्दिवाहनसंयुक्तं सर्वदेवसमन्वितम् ।
प्रसन्नं सर्ववरदं ध्यायेत्सर्वायुधं शिवम् ॥३॥

1-3. Always gazing well at the tip of the nose, placing the right hand on the left, one must meditate at the tip of the nose, in the disc of the moon surrounded by its rays, on Isvara, or Siva, with eyes radiating like the sun, moon and fire, who has five faces, who is the greatest among the devas, who is pure white, and bears the moon on his head, who is along with Uma, the mother of all, who is along with his mount Nandi, who is surrounded by all the Devas, who is gracious, who bestows all boons, and who bears all weapons.

4-10. Meditation on Divine (Paramatma) represented by Pranava and Gayatri Mantra

यो वेदादी स्वरः प्रोक्तो वेदान्ते च प्रतिष्ठितः ।
अकारमूर्तिरेतेषां रक्तांगी हंसवाहिनी ॥४॥

दण्डहस्ता सती बाला गायत्रीत्यवधार्यताम् ।
उकारमूर्तिरेतेषां कृष्णांगी वृषवाहनी ॥५॥

चक्रहस्ता सती चैव सावित्रीत्यवधार्यताम् ।

¹ The relevance of these verses is as follows. Yajnavalkya has said that the three components of Pranayama are related to Om, or Pranava, which is the essence of the Vedas. Before linking the components of Om (A, U, M) with the components of Pranayama (exhale, hold and inhale), Yajnavalkya first explains in detail how to meditate on the three aspects of Om using the Gayatri mantra during Sandhyavandana, a daily ritual.

मकारमूर्तिरेतेषां श्वेतांगी ताक्ष्यवाहिनी ॥६॥

शूलानन्दमयी वृद्धा सरस्वत्यवधार्यताम् ।
माहेश्वरीति सा प्राज्ञैः पश्चिमा परिकीर्तिता ॥७॥

सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकालाद्या मकारोऽप्यन्तकात्मकः ।
अक्षरत्रयमेवैतत्कारणत्रयमिष्यते ॥८॥

त्रयाणां कारणं ब्रह्म सद्रूपं सर्वकारणम् ।
एकाक्षरं परं ज्योतिस्तमाहुः प्रणवं बुधाः ॥९॥

एवं ज्ञात्वा विधानेन प्रणवेन समन्वितम् ।
प्राणायामं ततः कुर्याद्वेचपूरककुम्भकैः ॥१०॥

4-10. [Meditate upon] the Divine (Paramatma) who is portrayed by the Pranava (Omkara) at the very beginning and end of the Vedas and is established [as the highest] in the Vedanta¹. Among these seed letters (Bija Aksharas) constituting the Pranava, the form of “A” is to be known as a young girl, whose hue is red, who is mounted upon a swan, who holds a stick in her hand, who is the real existent truth, and who is [called] Gayatri. Among these seed letters (Bija Aksharas) constituting Om, the form of “U” is to be known as one with a black hue, who bears a discus (Cakra) in one hand, who is the real existent truth, and who is [called] Savitri. Among the three seed letters (Bija Aksharas) A, U and M constituting Om, the form of “M” is to be known as an aged lady, of a white hue, mounted upon an eagle (Garuda), who bears the three-speared weapon (Trishula), who is the personification of bliss, and who is [called] Sarasvati. She is praised as Mahesvari by the wise². [Among] creation, sustenance and destruction, “M” represents destruction. These three Bija Aksharas (seed letters, A,U and M) are considered as the three causes (creation, sustenance and destruction). The cause for the three is the Brahman which is the eternally existent truth, the cause for everything, self-illuminated, that is spoken of as the Pranava by the realized ones. Having known this, thus, practice Pranayama with exhale, inhale and holding (Rechaka, Puraka and Kumbhaka,) in the orderly manner along with Pranava.

Refer the Narayana Valli of the Taittiriya Upanishad for the same description.

The practice of the everyday ritual of Sandhyavandana includes prayers to the Goddess Gayatri in the morning, Savitri in the afternoon and Sarasvati in the evening. These verses which describe the three forms of the Goddess are similar to those used in Sandhyavandana.

Chapter VII

Outline

- 1: Yajnavalkya begins to speak on Pratyahara - the fifth limb of Yoga
- 2-7: Four different definitions of Pratyahara
- 8-11: A list of the eighteen vital points (Marmasthanas)
- 12-20: The distance between each of the vital points
- 20-21: The Prana must be focussed and held in the vital points
- 22-30: Detailed description of the procedure of drawing the Prana from one vital point to another
- 30-31: The importance of this form of Pratyahara and the benefits attained by its practice
- 32-37: The means to freedom by drawing and focussing the Prana at some vital points
- 4-7: One type of Pranayama.

सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥

1: Yajnavalkya begins to speak on Pratyahara - the fifth limb of Yoga.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच--

उक्तान्येतानि चत्वारि योगाङ्गानि द्विजोत्तमे ।
प्रत्याहारादि चत्वारि शृणुष्वभ्यन्तराणि च ॥१॥

These four angas (Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama) have been explained, Best among Brahmin Women! (Gargi). Listen to the [remaining] four [limbs] beginning with Pratyahara which are internal [practices]¹.

2-7: Four different definitions of Pratyahara.

इन्द्रियाणां विचरतां विषयेषु स्वभावतः ।
बलादाहरणं तेषां प्रत्याहारः स उच्यते ॥२॥

यद्यत्पश्यसि तत्सर्वं पश्येदात्मवदात्मनि ।
प्रत्याहारः स च प्रोक्तो योगविद्भिर्महात्मभिः ॥३॥

कर्माणि यानि नित्यानि विहितानि शरीरिणाम् ।
तेषामात्मन्यनुष्ठानं मनसा यद्विहिता ॥४॥

प्रत्याहारो भवेत्सोऽपि योगसाधनमुत्तमम् ।
प्रत्याहारः प्रशस्तोऽयं सेवितो योगिभिः सदा ॥५॥

अष्टादशसु यद्वायोर्मर्मस्थानेषु धारणम् ।
स्थानात्स्थानात्समाकृष्य प्रत्याहारो निगद्यते ॥६॥

अश्विनौ च तथा ब्रूतां गार्गी देवभिषग्वरौ ।
मर्मस्थानानि सिद्धयर्थं शरीरे योगमोक्षयोः ॥७॥

¹ The eight limbs of Yoga have been classified as (Bahya) external or gross and (Abyantara) internal or subtle and are here presented in order, gross to subtle. The first four limbs involve our behaviour, personal discipline, the body and breathing. These limbs are more external (Bahya). The last four limbs involve control of the senses and the mind, and are more internal (Abhyantara). These eight have been called limbs, for we can not separate the body, breath, mind and the senses. They influence one another greatly and are always together.

The difference between Yoga Yajnavalkya and Patanjali yoga darsana with respect to Pratyahara is as follows. Patanjali defines Pratyahara simply as a result and he describes no specific practices. In contrast, Yajnavalkya regards pratyahara as a means and proposes specific practices. Secondly, Yajnavalkya classifies the first four limbs as external and the latter four as internal, while Yogasutras classify the first five as external and the last three as internal. The second chapter of the Yogasutras (Sadhana Pada) ends with the fifth limb, (Pratyahara). The third chapter (Vibhuti Pada) begins with the internal practices. Therefore, the commentator Vyasa says "The five gross limbs have been explained. Now Dharana, the internal limb, is to spoken of." However, the Yogasutras clearly explain that this classification of gross and subtle, or external and internal, is relative. For example, while the last three angas are internal in relation to the first five angas, they are external or gross in comparison to Nirbija Samadhi (YS III.7,8).

[conscious] effort¹ is said to be Pratyahara. Whatever you see, look upon all of it as [being] in the self, and as the self. This is also called Pratyahara by great people who have realized [the essence of] Yoga. For all beings, the mental practice of the daily duties that are prescribed (by the Vedas), through the mind, devoid of external actions - this is also said to be Pratyahara. This Pratyahara is the greatest Yogic practice and is praised and followed by Yogis always. Having drawn the Prana from one point to another, holding it in the 18 vital points (Marmasthanas) is spoken of as Pratyahara. The Ashvini Kumaras who are the best among the physicians of the celestials (Devas) have spoken thus of the vital points in the body, for the attainment of liberation through Yoga.

8-11: A list of the eighteen vital points (Marmasthanas).

तानि सर्वाणि वक्ष्यामि यथावच्छृणु सुव्रते ।
पादाङ्गुष्ठी च गुल्फौ च जङ्घामध्ये तथैव च ॥८॥

चित्तोर्मूलं च जान्वोश्च मध्ये चोरुद्वयस्य च ।
पायुमूलं ततः पश्चाद्देहमध्यं च मेढ्रकम् ॥९॥

नाभिश्च हृदयं गर्गि कण्ठकूपस्तथैव च ।
तालुमूलं च नासाया मूलं चाक्षणोश्च मण्डले ॥१०॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्यं ललाटं च मूर्धा च मुनिसत्तमे ।
मर्मस्थानानि चैतानि मानं तेषां पृथक् शृणु ॥११॥

I shall explain all of them in an orderly manner. Listen, One who adheres to the Vedas! (Gargi) The big toes, the ankles and in the mid-shanks, the root of the calves, the knees, middle of the thighs, the root of the anus, then the center of the body (Dehamadhya), generative organ, the navel, the heart (Hridaya) and neck pit, Gargi. Then, the root of the palate, the root of the nose, circular orb of the eyes, the middle of (the point between) the eyebrows, the forehead, and crown of the head. Best among Sages! (Gargi), these are the vital points. Listen to their measurement one by one.

12-20: The distance between each of the vital points.

पादान्मानं तु गुल्फस्य सार्धाङ्गुलचतुष्टयम् ।
गुल्फाज्जङ्घस्य मध्यं तु विज्ञेयं तद्दशाङ्गुलम् ॥१२॥

जङ्घमध्याच्चित्तोर्मूलं यत्तदेकादशाङ्गुलम् ।
चित्तोर्मूलाद्वरारोहे जानुः स्यादङ्गुलिद्वयम् ॥१३॥

जान्वोर्नवाङ्गुलं प्राहुरुरुमध्यं मुनीश्वराः ।
ऊरुमध्यात्तथा गर्गि पायुमूलं नवाङ्गुलम् ॥१४॥

¹ The word used here is "Balat," which signifies intelligent effort rather than forceful suppression. That is, realizing the wavering nature of the senses, they are intelligently brought under control.

देहमध्यं तथा पायोर्मूलादर्धाङ्गुलद्वयम् ।
देहमध्यात्तथा मेढ्रं तद्वत्सार्धाङ्गुलद्वयम् ॥१५॥

मेढ्रान्नाभिश्च विज्ञेया गार्गि सार्धदशाङ्गुलम् ।
चतुर्दशाङ्गुलं नाभेर्हृन्मध्यं च वरानने ॥१६॥

षडङ्गुलं तु हृन्मध्यात्कण्ठकूपं तथैव च ।
कण्ठकूपाच्च जिह्वाया मूलं स्याच्चतुरङ्गुलम् ॥१७॥

नासामूलं तु जिह्वाया मूलाच्च चतुरङ्गुलम् ।
नेत्रस्थानं तु तन्मूलादर्धाङ्गुलमितीष्यते ॥१८॥

तस्मादर्धाङ्गुलं विद्धि भ्रुवोरन्तरमात्मनः ।
ललाटाख्यं भ्रुवोर्मध्याद्दूर्ध्वं स्यादङ्गुलद्वयम् ॥१९॥

ललाटाद्व्योमसंज्ञं स्यादङ्गुलित्रयमेव हि ।

From the big toe the measure to the ankle is four and a half angulas. From the ankle to mid-shank, it is known as ten angulas. From mid-shank to the root of the calf - that [distance] is eleven angulas. One with a Beautiful Countenance, from the root of the calf the knee is two angulas. The greatest sages say that from the knee the mid-thigh is nine angulas. From the mid-thigh, the root of the anus is nine angulas. The center of the body (Dehamadhya) is two and a half angulas from the root of the anus. Similarly, from the center of the body (Dehamadhya) the generative organ is two and a half angulas. The navel is to be known as being ten and a half angulas [from the generative organ], Gargi! The center of the heart (Hridaya) is fourteen angulas from the navel, One with a Beautiful Countenance! In the same manner the neck pit is six angulas from the center of the heart (Hridaya). From the neck pit the root of the tongue will be four angulas. From the root of the tongue, the root of the nose is four angulas. From that root [of the nose], the place of the eye is said to be half an angula. From there know the middle of the eyebrows to be half an angula. From the middle of the eyebrows, the forehead will be two angulas upwards. From the forehead, the crown of the head will be three angulas only.

20-21: The Prana must be focussed and held in the vital points.

स्थानेष्वेतेषु मनसा वायुमारोप्य धारयेत् ॥२०॥

स्थानात्स्थानात्समाकृष्य प्रत्याहारं प्रकुर्वतः ।
सर्वे रोगा विनश्यन्ति योगाः सिद्धयन्ति तस्य वै ॥२१॥

One must focus and retain the Prana, by the mind, (with the help of the mind) in these vital points. For one who does Pratyahara, drawing the Prana from one point to another, all diseases are destroyed. For him Yoga attains fruition.

22-30: Detailed description of the procedure of drawing the Prana from one vital point to another.

वदन्ति योगिनः केचिद्योगेषु कुशला नराः ।
प्रत्याहारं वरारोहे शृणु त्वं तद्वदाम्यहम् ॥२२॥

सम्पूर्णकुम्भवद्वायुमङ्गुष्ठान्मूर्धमध्यतः ।
धारयेदनिलं बुद्ध्या प्राणायामप्रचोदितः ॥२३॥

व्योमरन्ध्रात्समाकृष्य ललाटे धारयेत्पुनः ।
ललाटाद्वायुमाकृष्य भ्रुवोर्मध्ये निरोधयेत् ॥२४॥

भ्रुवोर्मध्यात्समाकृष्य नेत्रमध्ये निरोधयेत् ।

नेत्रात्प्राणं समाकृष्य नासामूले निरोधयेत् ॥२५॥

नासामूलात्तु जिह्वाया मूले प्राणं निरोधयेत् ।
जिह्वामूलात्समाकृष्य कण्ठमूले निरोधयेत् ॥२६॥

कण्ठमूलात्तु हृन्मध्ये हृदयान्नाभिमध्यमे ।
नाभिमध्यात्पुनर्मूढे मेढ्राद्बहून्यालये ततः ॥२७॥

देहमध्याद्गुदे गार्गि गुदादेवोरुमूलके ।
ऊरुमूलात्तयोर्मध्ये तस्माज्जान्वोनिरोधयेत् ॥२८॥

चित्तिमूले ततस्तस्माज्जङ्घयोर्मध्यमे तथा ।
जङ्घामध्यात्समाकृष्य वायुं गुल्फे निरोधयेत् ॥२९॥

गुल्फादङ्गुष्ठयोर्गार्गि पादयोस्तन्निरोधयेत् ।
स्थानात्स्थानात्समाकृष्य यस्त्वेवं धारयेत्सुधीः ॥३०॥

Some Yogis, who are experts in Yoga, speak of [another] Pratyahara. Listen, One with a Beautiful Countenance, (Gargi), I will tell you [about] that. During the practice of Pranayama, the Prana must be held by the mind from the big toe to the crown of the head, like a totally filled pot. Drawing [the Prana] from the crown of the head, one must focus it in the forehead. Again, drawing the Prana from the forehead, one must focus it between the eyebrows. Drawing [the Prana] from the centre of the eyebrows one must focus it in centre of the eyes. Drawing the Prana from the eyes, one must focus it in the root of the nose. From the root of the nose, one must focus the Prana in the root of the tongue. Drawing [the Prana] from the root of the tongue, one must focus it in the base of the throat (neck pit). Drawing the Prana from the neck pit, one must focus it in center of the Hridaya, from the center of Hridaya in the center of the navel, again from the centre of the navel in the generative organ and then from the generative organ in the abode of fire (Dehamadhya), from the Dehamadhya, Gargi, in the root of the anus and from the root of the anus in the [mid-]thighs, then from the mid-thigh in the centre of the

knees. Then, [from the knee] one must focus the Prana in the root of the calf, from there in the middle of the shank, and drawing [the Prana] from the middle of the shank in the ankle. From the ankle, Gargi, one must focus it (the Prana) in the big toes of the feet.

30-31: The importance of this form of Pratyahara and the benefits attained by its practice.

स्थानात्स्थानात्समाकृष्य यस्त्वेवं धारयेत्सुधीः ॥३०॥

सर्वपापविशुद्धात्मा जीवेदाचन्द्रतारकम् ।
एतत्तु योगसिद्ध्यर्थमगस्त्येनापि कीर्तितम् ॥३१॥

The wise one who, drawing the Prana from point to point, focusses it in the above said manner, will be freed from all bondage and will live as long as the moon and the stars exist (will attain liberation). This [Pratyahara] is praised as the means for the fruition of Yoga even by Agastya, one of the great sages. Among the Pratyaharas, this one is considered as the best by yogis¹.

32-37: The means to freedom by drawing and focussing the Prana at some vital points.

प्रत्याहारेषु सर्वेषु प्रशस्तमिति योगिभिः ।
नाडीभ्यां वायुमापूर्यं कुण्डल्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ॥३२॥

धारयेद्युगपत्सोऽपि भवरोगाद्विमुच्यते ।
पूर्वंवद्वायुमारोप्य हृदयव्योम्नि धारयेत् ॥३३॥

सोऽपि याति वरारोहे परमात्मपदं नरः ।
व्याघयः किं पुनस्तस्य बाह्याभ्यन्तरवर्तिनः ॥३४॥

नासाभ्यां वायुमारोप्य पूरयित्वोदरस्थितम् ।
भ्रुवोर्मध्याद्दृशोः पश्चात्समारोप्य समाहितः ॥३५॥

धारयेत्क्षणमात्रं वा सोऽपि याति परां गतिम्
किं पुनर्बहुनोक्तेन नित्यं कर्म समाचरन् ॥३६॥

आत्मनः प्राणमारोप्य भ्रुवोर्मध्ये सुषुम्णया ।
यावन्मनो लयत्यस्मिस्तावत्संयमनं कुरु ॥३७॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये सप्तमोऽध्यायः ॥

¹ This is called "Vayu Pratyahara." Pratyahara, combined with the practice of Pranayama, is explained here as involving the techniques of stepped exhale and suspension after exhalation. This practice is used while practicing Nadisodana pranayama in Sandhyavandanam, a ritual performed three times a day. Therefore, Vayu Pratyahara is considered of utmost importance. Some of the other types of Pratyahara are more strictly a mental practice. Thus, there are two different methods of the practice of Pratyahara, either with or without Pranayama.

Inhaling the air through the Nadis, one must focus the Prana on the sides of the Kundalini simultaneously and retain [it there]. He (one who does so) is freed from bondage. One who, as said before, draws and focusses the Prana in the internal space of the heart, he too, One with a Beautiful Countenance, reaches the highest state. What then are diseases, external and internal, to him? [The one who,] inhaling the air through both nostrils, filling the belly (chest and abdomen), and then, drawing it from the centre of the eyebrows, to the back of the eyes, with a focussed mind, retains [it there] even for a second, he too attains the highest state. Why say more? Doing all your daily duties, focussing the Prana, through the Sushumna in the center of the eyebrows, control it there till the mind is totally absorbed.

MARMA STHANAS - VITAL POINTS		
FROM	TO	DISTANCE (In Angulas)
Big toe	Ankle	4.5
Ankle	Mid shank	10
Mid shank	Root of calf	11
Root of calf	Knee	2
Knee	Mid thigh	9
Mid thigh	Root of anus	9
Root of anus	Center of body	2.5
Center of body	Generative organ	2.5
Generative organ	Navel	10.5
Navel	Heart	14
Heart	Neck pit	6
Neck pit	Root of tongue	4
Root of tongue	Root of nose	4
Root of nose	Eye	0.5
Eye	Middle of eyebrows	0.5
Middle of eyebrows	Forehead	2
Forehead	Crown of the head	3

Chapter VIII

Outline

- 1: Yajnavalkya begins to explain the five types of Dharana
- 2-4: Two different definitions of Dharana
- 5-6: The five types of Dharana
- 6-8: The regions of the five forms of matter in the body
- 9-13: Another opinion on the region of the five forms of matter in the body
- 14-15: The Deities to be meditated upon in each of the five regions
- 15-25: Procedure, duration, and results of the five Dharanas
- 26-27: Dissolution of effects by tracing them back to their respective causes
- 28-30: Another opinion - that the Pranava alone can be used to bring about this involution
- 30-31: Yajnavalkya instructs Gargi to personally experience this involution using the Pranava and the practice of Pranayama
- 32-35: The three Doshas attain balance by the practice of Pranayama itself
- 36-39: All diseases, arising from the imbalance of any of the Doshas, are cured by the practice of Dharana (using Pranayama)
- 39-40: Instruction to Gargi to practise Dharana along with her daily duties

अष्टमोऽध्यायः ॥

1: Yajnavalkya begins to explain the five types of Dharana.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

अथेदानीं प्रवक्ष्यामि धारणाः पंच तत्त्वतः ।
समाहितमनास्त्वं च शृणु गार्गी तपोधने ॥१॥

Yajnavalkya said, “Now, I shall explain the five types of Dharana in essence. Gargi, One whose Wealth is Penance, you too listen with a focussed mind.

2-4: Two different definitions of Dharana.

यमादिगुणयुक्तस्य मनसः स्थितिरात्मनि ।
धारणेत्युच्यते सद्भिः शास्त्रतात्पर्यवेदिभिः ॥२॥

अस्मिन्ब्रह्मपुरे गार्गी यदिदं हृदयाम्बुजम् ।
तस्मिन्नेवान्तराकाशे यद्ब्रह्माकाशधारणम् ॥३॥

एषा च धारणेत्युक्ता योगशास्त्रविशारदैः ।
तान्त्रिकैर्योगशास्त्रज्ञैर्विद्वद्भिश्च सुशिक्षितैः ॥४॥

The absorption of the mind (in the self), of one endowed with the qualities of Yama etc.¹ is said to be Dharana² by those who have known the essence of the scriptures. Gargi, the heart lotus contains all the space that is outside³. Gargi, in this [body, which is the] abode of the Brahman, in that subtle, internal space in the heart lotus, the external space arises. The above said is said to be Dharana by the ones conversant in the Yogic scriptures, by the ones who follow the Tantras, the ones who have realized the essence of the Yogic scriptures, and by the experts and scholars.

5-6: The five types of Dharana.

धारणाः पंचधा प्रोक्तास्ताश्च सर्वाः पृथक् शृणु ।
भूमिरापस्तथा तेजो वायुराकाशमेव च ॥५॥

एतेषु पंचदेवानां धारणं पंचधोच्यते ।

¹. Only when all the previously described limbs, from Yama to Pratyahara, are practised, will the Nadis be cleansed and the practitioner attain the ability to focus the Prana. Without the requisite preparation, both the practice and results of Dharana may turn out to be mere imagination.

². Here, Dharana is not defined as focussing the mind on anything external or internal, as in the Yogasutras, but as absorption in the self or Atman.

³. This concept of the external space arising from the internal space can be understood through our experience as we awake. Every morning, as we awake from sleep, the first thought is the “I” thought. Then follow “mine” and all the other associated memories. Our perception of the world is based on these thoughts. Our cognizance of the outside world, which we are not aware of during sleep, arises from some space within us. This is referred to as the internal space from which thoughts arise. This same concept is discussed in many Upanishads, such as the Chandogya Upanishad and the Taittiriya Upanishad.

Dharana is said to be of five types. Listen to all of them separately (one by one). The Dharana on the five deities (Devas), five forms of the the Divine in (the regions of) earth, water, fire, air and space are said to be the five types.

6-8: The regions of the five forms of matter in the body.

पादादिजानुपर्यन्तं पृथिवीस्थानमुच्यते ॥६॥

आजानोः पायुपर्यन्तमपां स्थानं प्रकीर्तितम् ।
आपायोर्हृदयान्तं यद्वह्निस्थानं तदुच्यते ॥७॥

आहृन्मध्याद्भ्रुवोर्मध्यं यावद्वायुकुलं स्मृतम् ।
आभ्रूमध्यात्तु मूर्धान्तमाकाशमिति चोच्यते ॥८॥

From the feet to the knees is said to be the region of Earth. From the knees to the anus is spoken of as the region of Water. The region from the anus to the heart, it is said to be that of Fire. From the centre of the heart to [the point] between the eyebrows is thought of as the region of Air. From the centre of the eyebrows to the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra), it is said to be [the region] of Space.

9-13: Another opinion on the region of the five forms of matter in the body. Refutation of this opinion.

अत्र केचिद्वदन्त्यन्ये योगपण्डितमानिनः ।
आजानोर्नाभिपर्यन्तमपांस्थानमिति द्विजाः ॥९॥

नाभिमध्याद्गलान्तं यद्वह्निस्थानं तदुच्यते ।
आगलात्तु ललाटान्तं वायुस्थानमितीरितम् ॥१०॥

ललाटाद्ब्रह्मपर्यन्तमाकाशस्थानमुच्यते ।
अयुक्तमेतदित्युक्तं शास्त्रतात्पर्यवेदिभिः ॥११॥

यदि स्याज्ज्वलनस्थानं देहमध्ये वरानने ।
अयुक्ता कारणे वह्नौ कार्यरूपस्य संस्थितिः ॥१२॥

कार्यकारणसंयोगे कार्यहानिः कथं भवेत् ।
दृष्टं तत्कार्यरूपेषु मृदात्मकघटादिषु ॥१३॥

On this subject, some other Brahmins who think themselves to be Yogic scholars say that from the knees to the navel is the region of Water. [The region] from the navel to the neck is said to be the region of Fire. From the neck to the forehead is said to be the region of Air. From the forehead to the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra) is said to be the region of Space. But it is said by the ones who have known the essence of the Sastras that this [opinion] is not proper. If the region of fire is in the center of the body (Dehamadhya), One with a Beautiful Countenance(Gargi), the manifestation of the effect, in fire which is the cause, is not right. In the union of cause and effect, how can there occur a loss of the effect? This is seen in effects like pots made of mud etc.¹

¹The elements are linked by cause and effect relationship. Here the effect will be in the place of the cause.

14-15: The Deities to be meditated upon in each of the five regions.

पृथिव्यां धारयेद्गार्गि ब्रह्माणं परमेष्ठिनम् ।
विष्णुमप्स्वनले रुद्रमीश्वरं वायुमण्डले ॥१४॥

सदाशिव तथा व्योम्नि धारयेत्सुसमाहितः ।

Gargi, in [the region of] Earth, one must meditate on Brahma or an epithet of Brahma, (Parameshti) in the region of Water on Vishnu, in the region of Fire on Rudra, in the region of Air on Isvara. In the region of Space, one must meditate on Sadashiva (an epithet of Shiva) with a focussed mind.

15-25: Procedure, duration, and results of the 5 Dharanas.

पृथिव्यां वायुमास्थाय लकारेण समन्वितम् ॥१५॥

ध्यायंश्चतुर्भुजाकारं ब्रह्माणं सृष्टिकारणम् ।
धारयेत्पंच घटिकाः पृथिवीजयमाप्नुयात् ॥१६॥

वारुणे वायुमारोप्य वकारेण समन्वितम् ।
स्मरन्नारायणं सौम्यं चतुर्बाहुं किरीटिनम् ॥१७॥

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं पीतवाससमच्युतम् ।
धारयेत्पंच घटिकाः सर्वरोगैः प्रमुच्यते ॥१८॥

वह्नी चानिलमारोप्य रेफाक्षरसमन्वितम् ।
त्र्यक्षं वरप्रदं रुद्रं तरुणादित्यसन्निभम् ॥१९॥

भस्मोद्धूलितसर्वांगं सुप्रसन्नमनुस्मरन् ।
धारयेत्पंच घटिकाः वह्निनासौ न दह्यते ॥२०॥

मारुत मारुतस्थाने यकारेण समन्वितम् ।
धारयेत्पंच घटिकाः वायुवद्व्योमगो भवेत् ॥२१॥

आकाशे वायुमारोप्य हकारोपरि शकरम् ।
बिन्दुरूपं महादेवं व्योमाकारं सदाशिवम् ॥२२॥

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं बालेन्दुघृतमौलिनम् ।
पंच वक्त्रयुतं सौम्यं दशबाहुं त्रिलोचनम् ॥२३॥

सर्वायुधोद्यतकरं सर्वाभरणभूषितम् ।
उमार्धदेहं वरदं सर्वकारणकारणम् ॥२४॥

मनसा चिन्तयन्त्यस्तु मुहूर्तमपि धारयेत् ।
स एव मुक्त इत्युक्तस्तान्त्रिकेषु सुशिक्षितैः ॥२५॥

The one who focusses the Prana in [the region of] Earth, with the Bija “Lam”, meditating upon Brahma the Creator, portrayed with four hands, and retains it (the prana) for two hours (five Ghatikas) attains mastery over Earth.

The one who focusses the Prana in the region of Water, with the Bija “Vam,” meditating on Narayana who has four hands and a crown, who is pleasing whose hue is like that of a pure crystal, who wears a yellow garment, who is beyond change, and retains it (the Prana) for two hours becomes free from all diseases.

The one who focusses the Prana in the region of Fire, with the Bija “Ram,” meditating upon Rudra who grants boons, who has three eyes, whose hue is like that of the rising sun, whose entire body is smeared with holy ash, who is gracious, and retains it (the Prana) for two hours is not burnt or affected by Fire.

The one who focusses the Prana in the region of Air, with the Bija “Yam,” meditating on Ardhanarishvara¹, who is adorned with all the various kinds of ornaments, who bears all weapons in his hand, who is the primeval cause for everything, who grants boons, and retains it (the Prana) for two hours, can move in space, like air [moves in space].

The one who focusses the Prana in the region of Space, with the Bija “Ham,” meditating, using the mind, on Sankara (an epithet of Shiva), who is always auspicious, who is in the form of a Bindu, who is the greatest of the Devas, who is represented by Space, whose hue is like that of a pure crystal, who bears the crescent moon on his head, who has ten arms, five heads and three eyes, who is pleasing, and retains it (the prana) even for 90 minutes (one Muhurtam) - such a person alone is said to have attained freedom by those well versed in the Tantric scriptures.

26-27: Dissolution of effects by tracing them back to their respective causes.

एतदुक्तं भवत्यत्र गार्गी ब्रह्मविदां वरे ।
ब्रह्मादिकार्यरूपाणि स्वे स्वे संहृत्य कारणे ॥२६॥

तस्मिन्सदाशिवे प्राणं चित्तं चानीय कारणे ।
युक्तचित्तस्तदात्मानं योजयेत्परमेश्वरे ॥२७॥

Gargi! Best among those who have Realized the Brahman! This is [the essence of] what is said here. Dissolving the manifestations, like the forms such as Brahma etc. in their respective causes, absorbing the Prana and the mind in that Sadashiva who is the cause [for everything], with a concentrated mind, one must unite the self with the Divine.

28-30: Another opinion - that the Pranava alone can be used to bring about this involution.

अस्मिन्नर्थे वदन्त्यन्ये योगिनो ब्रह्मविद्वराः ।
प्रणवेनैव कार्याणि स्वे स्वे संहृत्य कारणे ॥२८॥

¹Ardhanarishvara is a conjoint figure of Shiva and Parvati, with the male form on the right side and female form on the left.

प्रणवस्य तु नादान्ते परमानन्दविग्रहम् ।
ऋतं सत्यं परं ब्रह्म पुरुषं कृष्णपिंगलम् ॥२९॥

चेतसा संप्रपश्यन्ति सन्तः संसारभेषजम् ।

In this matter, other Yogis who are the greatest among those who have realized the Brahman, say that “Dissolving the manifestations in their respective causes [by] using the Pranava itself, the realized people with a clear mind, at the end of the sound of the Pranava, perceive the Self, the eternal, unchanging Brahman, which is the personification of bliss and which is the cure for bondage¹, in a hue of red and black.”

30-31: Yajnavalkya instructs Gargi to personally experience this involution using the Pranava and the practice of Pranayama.

त्वं तस्मात्प्रणवेनैव प्राणायामैस्त्रिभिस्त्रिभिः ॥३०॥

ब्रह्मादि कार्यरूपाणि स्वे स्वे संहृत्य कारणे ।
विशुद्धचेतसा पश्य नादान्ते परमेश्वरम् ॥३१॥

Therefore, you too perceive the Divine, by practicing Pranayama in threes and threes², dissolving the manifestations like the forms such as Brahma etc., in their respective causes [by] using the Pranava itself, with a clear mind, at the end of the sound [of the Pranava].

32-35: The three Doshas attain balance by the practice of Pranayama itself.

अस्मिन्नर्थे वदन्त्यन्ये योगिनो ब्रह्मविद्वराः ।
भिषग्वरा वरारोहे योगेषु परिनिष्ठिताः ॥३२॥

शरीरं तावदेवं तु पंचभूतात्मकं खलु ।
तदेतत्तु वरारोहे वातपित्तकफात्मकम् ॥३३॥

वातात्मकानां सर्वेषां योगेष्वभिरतात्मनाम् ।
प्राणसंयमनेनैव शोषं याति कलेवरम् ॥३४॥

पित्तात्मकानां त्वचिरान्न शुष्यति कलेवरम् ।
कफात्मकानां कायश्च सम्पूर्णस्त्वचिराद्भवेत् ॥३५॥

One with a Beautiful Countenance! (Gargi) In this matter, other Yogis, who are the greatest among those who have realized the Brahman, who are the greatest physicians, and who are experts on Yoga say [thus]. The body is made up of the five forms of matter is it not, one with a Beautiful Countenance(Gargi)? That body also has the three Doshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha).

¹ Up to this point, Yajnavalkya has described Dharana on deities with form (Saguna) and other attributes. Now, Dharana devoid of attributes (Nirguna)and using Om is described.

² This refers to three rounds of 6 breaths each, practised three times a day (in the morning, afternoon and evening).

For those in whom Vata is dominant, who are absorbed in [the practice of] Yoga, the body dries up by the practice of Pranayama itself. For those in whom Pitta is dominant, the body does not dry up easily and the body of those in whom Kapha is dominant becomes complete (well nourished) quickly.

36-39: All diseases, arising from the imbalance of any of the Doshas, are cured by the practice of Dharana (using Pranayama).

धारणं कुर्वतस्त्वग्नौ सर्वे नश्यन्ति वातजाः ।
पार्थिवांशे जलांशे च धारणं कुर्वतः सदा ॥३६॥
नश्यन्ति श्लेष्मजा रोगा वातजाश्चाचिरात्तथा ।
व्योमांशे मारुतांशे च धारणं कुर्वतः सदा ॥३७॥
त्रिदोषजनिता रोगा विनश्यन्ति न संशयः ।
अस्मिन्नर्थे तथाब्रूतामश्विनौ च भिषग्वरौ ॥३८॥
प्राणसंयमनेनैव त्रिदोषशमनं नृणाम् ।

For one who does Dharana on Fire, all [diseases] caused by Vata perish. For one who always does Dharana on the aspects of Earth and Water, diseases arising from Kapha and Vata perish soon¹. For one who always does Dharana on the aspects of space and air, diseases arising from any of the three doshas are destroyed. In this matter, the Ashvini who are the best among physicians say thus².

39-40: Instruction to Gargi to practise Dharana along with her daily duties.

तस्मात्त्वं च वरारोहे नित्यं कर्म समाचर ॥३९॥
यमादिभिश्च संयुक्ता विधिवद्धारणं कुरु ॥४०॥
इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये अष्टमोऽध्यायः ।

Only through the control of Prana is there a balancing of the three Doshas in [all] humans. Therefore you too, One with a Beautiful Countenance,(Gargi) do your daily duties (in accordance with the Vedas). Do Dharana in a proper manner, observing all the Yamas etc. (all the preceding limbs of Yoga).

¹ Another recension reads here: "those caused by Vata and Pitta perish."

² The imbalance of the three doshas can be corrected, and diseases can be cured using the practice of Dharana, by focussing the mind on the regions of the five elements in the body, along with the practice of pranayama. Learn the relationship between different types of pranayama and the doshas from a teacher.

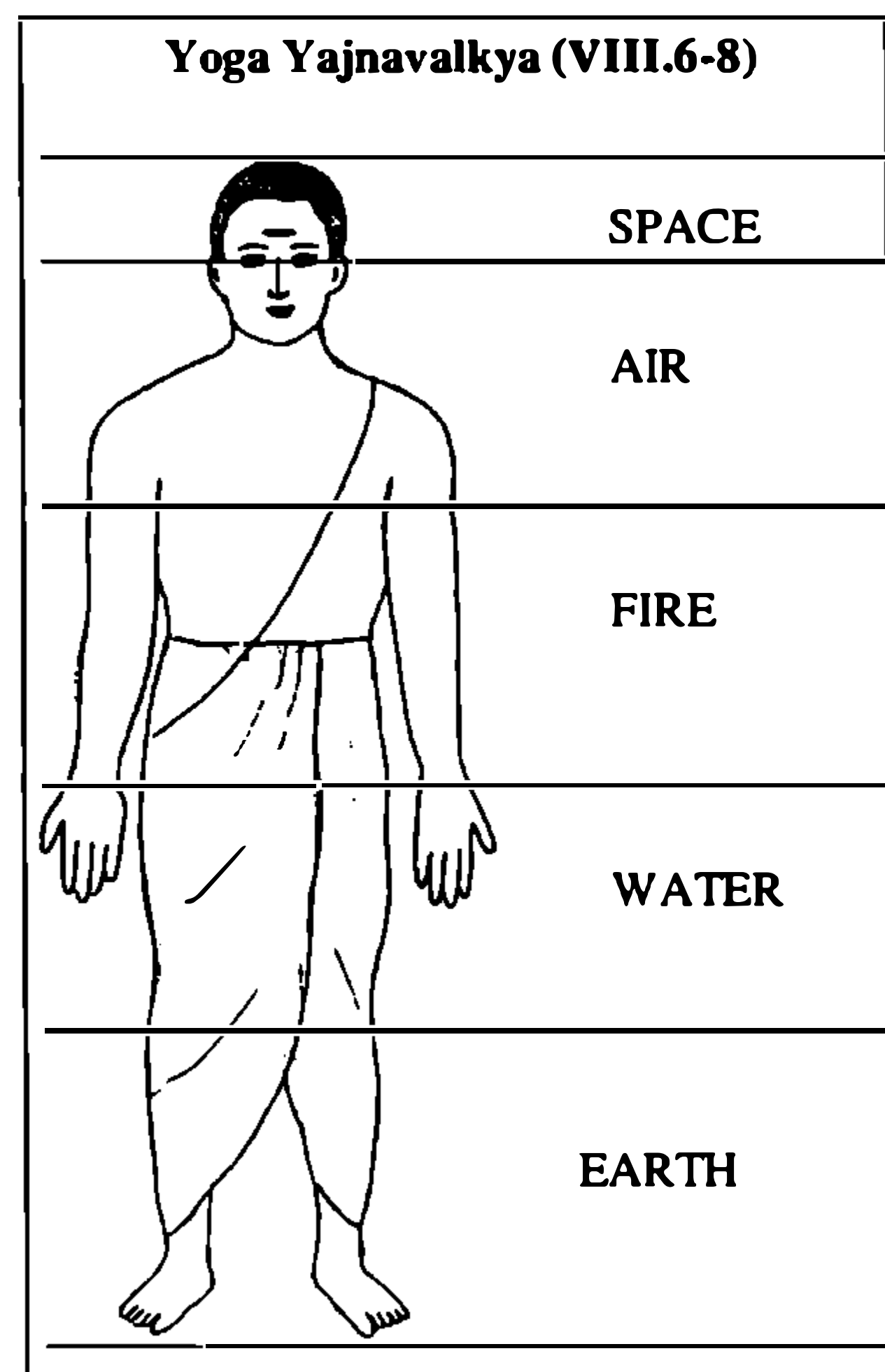
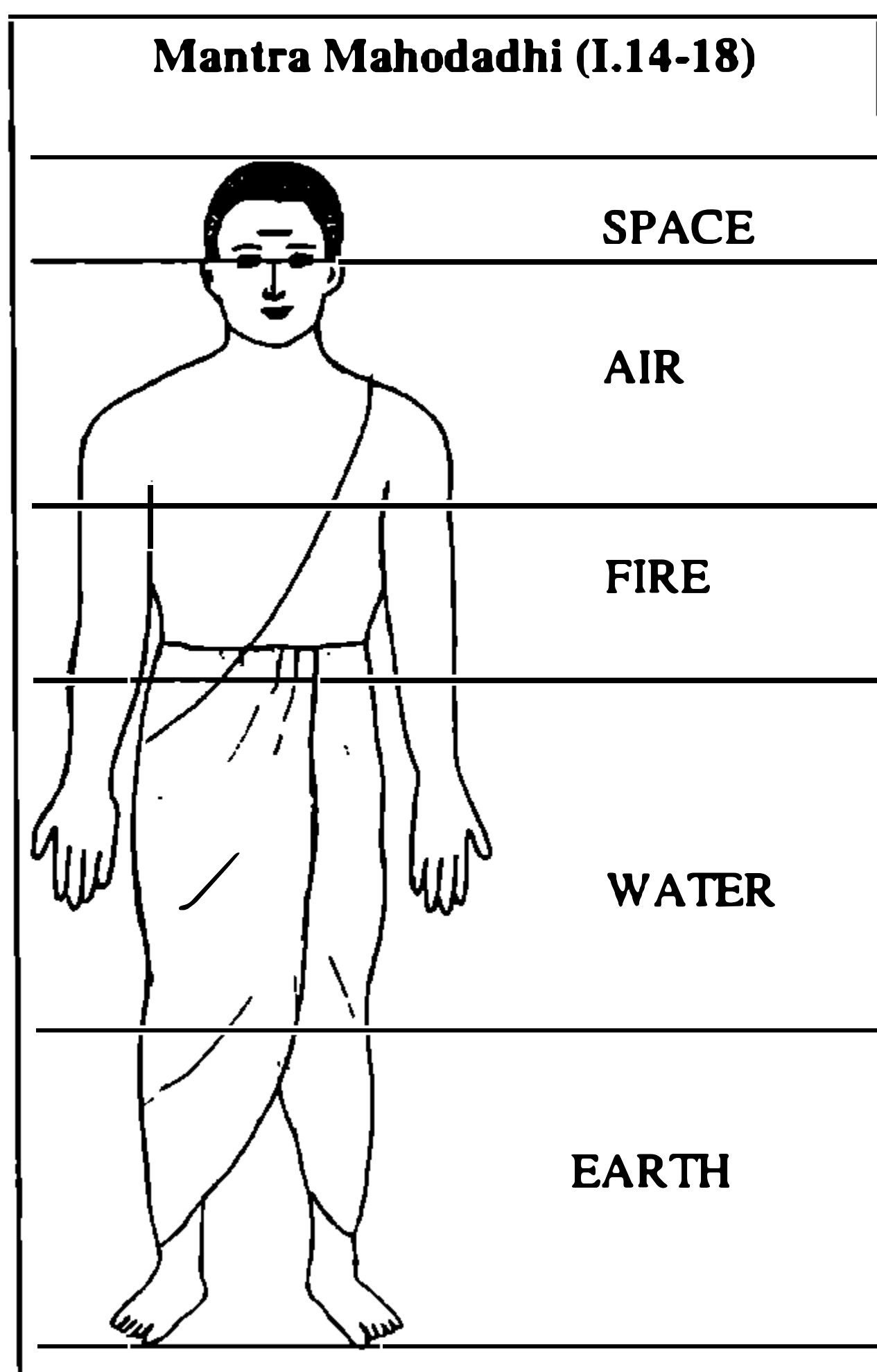
Division of Body into Various Regions Representing Forms of Matter and the Seed letter mantras

Yoga Yajnavalkya, Chapter VIII (6-8)

REGION	FORM OF MATTER	MANTRA
Feet to knees	Earth	Lam
Knees to generative organ	Water	Vam
Generative organ to heart	Fire	Ram
Heart to center of eyebrows	Air	Yam
Center of eyebrows to crown of the head	Space	Ham

**Mantra Mahodadhi I-Pranayamavidhi (14-18)
(The ocean of Mantras – Pranayama procedure)**

REGION	FORM OF MATTER	MANTRA
Feet to knees	Earth	Lam
Knees to navel	Water	Vam
Navel to heart	Fire	Ram
Heart to center of eyebrows	Air	Yam
Center of eyebrows to crown of the head	Space	Ham



Chapter IX

Outline

- 1: Yajnavalkya begins his discourse on Dhyana
- 2: Definition of Dhyana. The two types of Dhyana: with attributes (Saguna dhyana) and without attributes (Nirguna dhyana)
- 3: The number of types in each form of Dhyana
- 4: The prerequisites for performance of Dhyana
- 5-9: Description of Dhyana without attributes (Nirguna dhyana)
- 10-11: Another similar form of Dhyana without attributes (Nirguna dhyana)
- 12-18: Dhyana with attributes (Saguna dhyana) on the Divine in the form of Narayana
- 18-24: Dhyana with attributes (Saguna dhyana) on the Divine in the form of Vaisvanara Agni in one's own body
- 25-30: Dhyana with attributes (Saguna dhyana) on the Divine in the disc of the sun
- 30-32: Dhyana on one's self
- 32-34: Dhyana on the Divine in the space between the eyebrows
- 35-39: Another form of Dhyana with attributes (Saguna dhyana) on one's own self in the heart-lotus
- 40-41: Benefits of the performance of Dhyana
- 42-44: Instruction to Gargi to practice Dhyana, along with her daily duties

नवमोऽध्यायः ॥

1: Yajnavalkya begins his discourse on Dhyana.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच--

अथ ध्यानं प्रवक्ष्यामि शृणु गार्गी वरानने ।
ध्यानमेव हि जन्तूनां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ॥१॥

Now, I will explain Dhyana. Gargi, One with a Beautiful Countenance, listen to me. Dhyana alone is the cause for bondage or freedom of all beings¹.

2: Definition of Dhyana. The two types of Dhyana: Saguna (with attributes) and Nirguna (without attributes).

ध्यानमात्मस्वरूपस्य वेदनं मनसा खलु ।
सगुणं निर्गुणं तच्च सगुणं बहुशः स्मृतम् ॥२॥

Dhyana is to know (realize) the self through the mind². Dhyana may be devoid of qualities or attributes (Nirguna) or with qualities or attributes (Saguna). Dhyana with qualities or attributes (Saguna) is further thought to be of several types.

3: The number of types in each form of Dhyana.

पंचोत्तमानि तेष्वहर्वेदिकानि द्विजोत्तमाः ।
त्रीणि मुख्यतमान्येषामेकमेव हि निर्गुणम् ॥३॥

Among these, the best among Brahmins say that five [types] which are in accordance with the Vedas, are important. Among them, three are most important, and Dhyana devoid of attributes, (Nirguna) is only one.

4: The prerequisites for performance of Dhyana.

मर्मस्थानानि नाडीनां संस्थानं च पृथक्पृथक् ।
वायूनां स्थानकर्माणि ज्ञात्वा कुर्वात्मवेदनम् ॥४॥

After knowing properly the Marmasthanas, the position of the Nadis and the position and function of the Vayus³, undertake the realization of the self.

¹ It is important to note that meditation can lead to bondage, since we become what we think.

² The same concept is voiced in the Bhagavad Gita VI.5.

³ Yajnavalkya again emphasizes that, if Dhyana is to succeed, one must be well versed in all the practices discussed in the previous chapters.

5-9: Description of Dhyana without attributes (Nirguna).

एक ज्योतिर्मय शुद्धं सर्वगं व्योमवद्दृढम् ।
अव्यक्तमचलं नित्यमादिमध्यान्तवर्जितम् ॥५॥

स्थूलं सूक्ष्ममनाकारमसंपृश्यमचाक्षुषम् ।
न रसं न च गन्धाख्यमप्रमेयमनौपमम् ॥६॥

आनन्दमजरं नित्यं सदसत्सर्वकारणम् ।
सर्वाधारं जगद्रूपममूर्तमजमव्ययम् ॥७॥

अदृश्यं दृश्यमन्तःस्थं बहिःस्थं सर्वतोमुखम् ।
सर्वदृक्सर्वतःपादं सर्वस्पृक् सर्वतःशिरः ॥८॥

ब्रह्म ब्रह्ममयोऽहं स्यामिति यद्वेदनं भवेत् ।
तदेतन्निर्गुणं ध्यानमिति ब्रह्मविदो विदुः ॥९॥

Explanation of Dhyana without attributes (Nirguna Dhyana). I am the Brahman which is effulgent, pure, firm, and all pervading like space, which is unmanifest, steady and eternal, which has no beginning, middle or end (which is not subject to the cycle of birth, existence and death), which is gross and subtle, formless, which can not be touched or seen by the eyes, which is beyond taste and smell, which cannot be perceived by any means, which is unequalled, which is blissful, imperishable, eternal, which is the cause for all, both manifest and unmanifest, which is the basis for everything, pervading the entire world, which is formless, which has no birth and is devoid of change, which is imperceptible and perceptible, which is present inside and outside, which exists in all forms and is all-pervading, and which is omnipresent and omnipotent¹. Such realization is known to be Dhyana without attributes, (Nirguna) by those who have realized the Brahman.

10-11: Another similar form of Dhyana without attributes (Nirguna).

अथवा परमात्मानं परमानन्दविग्रहम् ।
गुरूपदेशाद्विज्ञाय पुरुषं कृष्णपिङ्गलम् ॥१०॥

ब्रह्म ब्रह्मपुरे चास्मिन्दहराम्बुजमध्यमे ।
अभ्यासात्सम्प्रपश्यन्ति सन्तः संसारभेषजम् ॥११॥

Otherwise, through initiation from a Guru, having understood the Divine, who is the personification of bliss, in a red and black form², in this residence of the Brahman (in this body), Seers clearly realize the Brahman, which is the cure for bondage, in the centre of the heart-lotus through continuous practice.

The same concept is expressed in the Bhagavad Gita in many verses, for example, XII.13,14

All these descriptions have significance in the Vedic tradition.

12-18: Dhyana with attributes (Saguna) on the Divine in the form of Narayana.

हृत्पद्मेऽष्टदलोपेते कन्दमध्यात्समुत्थिते ।
द्वादशाङ्गुलनालेऽस्मिश्चतुरङ्गुलमुन्मुखे ॥१२॥

प्राणायामैर्विकसिते केसरान्वितकर्णिके ।
वासुदेवं जगन्नाथं नारायणमजं हरिम् ॥१३॥

चतुर्भुजमुदारान्गं शङ्खचक्रगदाधरम् ।
किरीटकेयूरधरं पद्मपत्रनिभेक्षणम् ॥१४॥

श्रीवत्सवक्षसं विष्णुं पूर्णचन्द्रनिभाननम् ।
पद्मोदरदलाभोष्ठं सुप्रसन्नं शुचिस्मितम् ॥१५॥

शुद्धस्फटिकसंकाशं पीतवाससमच्युतम् ।
पद्मच्छविपदद्वन्द्वं परमात्मानमव्ययम् ॥१६॥

प्रभाभिर्भासयद्रूपं परितः पुरुषोत्तमम् ।
मनसालोक्य देवेशं सर्वभूतहृदि स्थितम् ॥१७॥

सोऽहमात्मेति विज्ञानं सगुणं ध्यानमुच्यते ।

Description of Dhyana with attributes (Saguna). In the heart lotus with eight petals, rising from the centre of the Kandasthana with a stalk of twelve angulas and facing four more angulas upwards, with filaments and pericarp, which has bloomed due to [the practice of] Pranayama¹, [who is known as] Narayana, Vasudeva, Hari, Vishnu, Achyuta (epithets), who is beyond birth, who is the Lord of the universe, who has four arms, whose form is pleasing, who bears a conch, discus and mace, who is adorned by armlets and a crown, whose eyes are like the petals of a lotus, who has the mole called Srivatsa² on his chest, with a face which has the beauty of the full moon, who has lips like the petals of a lotus, who is gracious, who has a charming smile, whose hue is like that of a pure crystal, who wears a yellow garment, whose feet have the beauty of a lotus, who is unchanging, who is the Divine, who by his effulgence illuminates everything around him, who is the Supreme Being and is the Lord of the celestials, who is present in the heart of all beings - seeing him with the mind, with the realization that "He is I (the self)" or (I am your servant) is said to be Dhyana with attributes(Saguna).



¹ Note the continued importance placed upon the practice of Pranayama.

² This represents the Goddess Lakshmi, as in the Vedic tradition the masculine and feminine aspects of the Divine are inseparable.

18-24: Dhyana with attributes on the Divine (Saguna) in the form of Vaisvanara Agni in one's own body.

हृत्सरोरुहमध्येऽस्मिन्प्रकृत्यात्मककर्णिके ॥१८॥

अष्टैश्वर्यदलोपेते विद्याकेसरसंयुते ।
ज्ञाननाले बृहत्कन्दे प्राणायामप्रबोधिते ॥१९॥

विश्वार्चिषं महावह्निं ज्वलन्तं विश्वतोमुखम् ।
वैश्वानरं जगद्योनिं शिखातन्विनमीश्वरम् ॥२०॥

तापयन्तं स्वकं देहमापादतलमस्तकम् ।
निर्वातदीपवत्तस्मिन्दीपितं हव्यवाहनम् ॥२१॥

दृष्ट्वा तस्य शिखामध्ये परमात्मानमक्षरम् ।
नीलतोयदमध्यस्थविद्युल्लेखेव भास्वरम् ॥२२॥

नीवारशुकवद्रूपं पीताभं सर्वकारणम् ।
ज्ञात्वा वैश्वानरं देवं सोऽहमात्मेति या मतिः ॥२३॥

सगुणेषूत्तमं ह्येतद्ध्यानं योगविदो विदुः ।
वैश्वानरत्वं सम्प्राप्य मुक्तिं तेनैव गच्छति ॥२४॥

In the center of the heart-lotus, which has the Seen (Prakrti) as its pericarp, the eight Siddhis as its petals, and Knowledge (Jnanam) as its filament, whose stalk is realization, which has the Divine (Paramatma) as its base of origin, which has bloomed due to [the practice of] Pranayama¹. By whose effulgence, the entire world is luminescent, the great fire of knowledge which annihilates the ego, the one who is present everywhere, who is the cause of the world, who is effulgent, who is known as Vaishvanara, present in the form of a flame, whose form is luminescent from head to toe, whose flame is as steady as that of a lamp shining in a place without wind, who shines like fire, after seeing and knowing in the middle of the fine flame, the Divine (Paramatma), who is imperishable, resplendent like a bolt of lightning in the middle of a blue sea, whose hue is yellow and form is as slender as the tip of a grain of rice, who is the source of everything, the lord who is also known as Vaishvanara, having known thus, the realization that "He is I (the self), is the best among all qualities and this is Dhyana according to those well versed in Yoga. By this Dhyana itself, one attains unity with the Divine² (Vaishvanara Agni) and becomes liberated³.

¹ Note again the importance given to Pranayama.

² In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna refers to himself being present in one and all as the Vaishvanara Agni (XVI.14).

³ The same concept has been expressed in the Narayanavalli of the Taittiriya Upanishad. In fact, the words used are strikingly similar.

25-30: Dhyana with attributes (Saguna dhyana) on the Divine in the disc of the sun.

अथवा मण्डले पश्येदादित्यस्य महाद्युतेः ।
आत्मानं सर्वजगतः पुरुषं हेमरूपिणम् ॥२५॥

हिरण्यश्मश्रुकेशं च हिरण्मयनखं हरिम् ।
कनकाम्बुजवद्वक्त्रं सृष्टिस्थित्यन्तकारणम् ॥२६॥

पद्मासनस्थितं सौम्यं प्रबुद्धाब्जनिभाननम् ।
पद्मोदरदलाभाक्षं सर्वलोकाभयप्रदम् ॥२७॥

जानन्तं सर्वदा सर्वमुन्नयन्तं च धार्मिकान् ।
भासयन्तं जगत्सर्वं दृष्ट्वा लोकैकसाक्षिणम् ॥२८॥

सोऽहमस्मीति या बुद्धिः सा च ध्यानेषु शस्यते ।
एष एव तु मोक्षस्य महामार्गस्तपोधने ॥२९॥

ध्यानेनानेन सौरेण मुक्तिं यास्यन्ति सूरयः ।

Another form of dhyana with attributes (Saguna Dhyana). Otherwise, one must see in the disc of the luminous sun, Hari (an epithet of Vishnu) who is the Self (Atma) of [all beings in] the whole world, who is golden in form, with golden hair, moustache and nails, who removes all sins, whose face is like a golden lotus, who is the basis for creation, sustenance and destruction, who is seated in Padmasana and is peaceful, whose face has the beauty of a fully bloomed lotus, whose eyes are like the leaves of a lotus, who is the protector of all the worlds, who is all-knowing at all times, who uplifts those who do their Dharma¹, who is illuminating the entire world, and who is a witness to all that goes on in the world. After seeing him, the realization that “He is I” or “I am your servant” is most praiseworthy among the various forms of Dhyana. This is the best way to freedom, One whose Wealth is Penance (Gargi)!

30-32: Dhyana on one's self.

श्रुवोर्मध्येऽन्तरात्मानं भारूपं सर्वकारणम् ॥३०॥

स्थाणुवन्मूर्धपर्यन्तं मध्यदेहात्समुत्थितम् ।
जगत्कारणमव्यक्तं ज्वलन्तममितौजसम् ॥३१॥

मनसालोक्य सोऽहं स्यामित्येतद्ध्यानमुत्तमम् ।

Wise men attain freedom by this Dhyana on the Divine in the sun. Seeing with the mind in the middle of the eyebrows, the Divine (Antaratma), which is effulgent, is the source of everything, which arises from the centre of the body and extends up to the head like a pillar, which is the basis of the world, which is causeless, which is effulgent, which is possessed of immeasurable splendour, the meditation that “He is I” is the best form of Dhyana.

¹ Actions in accordance with the Vedas. (Varnashrama dharma)

32-34: Dhyana on the Divine in the space between the eyebrows.

अथवा बद्धपर्यङ्के शिथिलीकृतविग्रहे ॥३२॥

शिव एव स्वयं भूत्वा नासाग्रारोपितेक्षणः ।
निर्विकारं परं शान्तं परमात्मानमीश्वरम् ॥३३॥

भारूपममृतं ध्यायेद्भ्रुवोर्मध्ये वरानने ।
सोऽहमेवेति या बुद्धिः सा च ध्यानेषु शस्यते ॥३४॥

Otherwise, seated firmly in Padmasana, with the body relaxed, with the intention of uniting with Lord Shiva (one form of the Divine), gazing as the tip of the nose, one must meditate upon the Divine in the middle of the eyebrows, who is beyond any change, who is peaceful, who is the Lord, who is effulgent and imperishable. The realization that “He is I” is the most praiseworthy among the various forms of Dhyana, One with a Beautiful Countenance (Gargi)!



35-39: Another form of Saguna Dhyana on one's own self in the heart-lotus.

अथवाष्टदलोपेते कर्णिकाकेसरान्विते ।
उन्निद्रहृदयाम्भोजे सोममण्डलमध्यमे ॥३५॥

स्वात्मानमर्भकाकारं भोक्तूरूपिणमव्ययम् ।
सुधारसं विमुञ्चद्भिः शशिरश्मभिरावृतम् ॥३६॥

षोडशच्छदसंयुक्तशिरःपद्मादधोमुखात् ।
निर्गतामृतधाराभिः सहस्राभिः समन्ततः ॥३७॥

प्लावितं पुरुषं तत्र चिन्तयित्वा समाहितः ।
तेनामृतरसेनैव साङ्गोपाङ्गकलेवरे ॥३८॥

अहमेव परं ब्रह्म परमात्माहमव्ययः ।
एवं यद्वेदनं तच्च सगुणं ध्यानमुच्यते ॥३९॥

Otherwise, in the fully bloomed heart lotus, having eight petals, and pericarp and filament, [visualizing it to be] the centre of the disc of the moon, thinking of one's own self which is unchanging, in a minute form, surrounded by the rays of the moon which emanate nectar, surrounded on all sides by the thousands of rays of nectar emanating from his head which is in the form of an inverted lotus with sixteen petals, surrounded by those nectar rays itself, in this body with all its limbs, with a totally focussed mind, the realization that “I am the the Divine (Brahman),. I am eternal and unchanging.” is said to be Saguna Dhyana.

40-41: Benefits of the performance of Dhyana.

एवं ध्यानामृतं कुर्वन् षण्मासान्मृत्युजिद्भवेत् ।
वत्सरान्मुक्त एव स्याज्जीवन्नेव न संशयः ॥४०॥

जीवन्मुक्तस्य न क्वापि दुःखावाप्तिः कथंचन ।
किं पुनर्नित्यमुक्तस्य मुक्तिरेव हि दुर्लभा ॥४१॥

One who does Dhyana thus (in any one of the above said manners) for six months, vanquishes death. In one year, he undoubtedly becomes liberated, even when alive. One who has attained freedom is never afflicted by sorrow anywhere. Then why speak of the yogi who has realized his Self and is eternally free?

42-44: Instruction to Gargi to practice Dhyana, along with her daily duties.

तस्मात्त्वं च वरारोहे फलं त्यक्त्वैव नित्यशः ।
विधिवत्कर्म कुर्वाणा ध्यानमेव सदा कुरु ॥४२॥

अन्यानपि बहून्याहुर्ध्यानानि मुनिसत्तमाः ।
मुख्यान्युक्तानि चैतेभ्यो जघन्यानीतराणि तु ॥४३॥

सगुणं गुणहीनं वा विज्ञायात्मानमात्मनि ।
सन्तः समाधिं कुर्वन्ति त्वमप्येवं सदा कुरु ॥४४॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये नवमोऽध्यायः ॥

Therefore, you too, Oh! one with a beautiful countenance! (Gargi), doing all your prescribed actions, having relinquished the desire for the results, do Dhyana at all times.

Great sages have spoken of many other types of Dhyana. But the most important ones have been described above and the others are not as important. Whether with attributes (Saguna) or without attributes (Nirguna), great Seers realize the self within themselves leading to Samadhi. You too always do thus.

Chapter X

Outline

- 1: Yajnavalkya begins to speak on Samadhi, which destroys all bondage
- 2: Samadhi is defined as the state of union of the self and the Divine
- 3-5: One attains Samadhi (becomes one) with the object on which one does Dhyana. Dhyana culminates in Samadhi. Surrender also leads to Samadhi
- 6-9: The prerequisites for the attainment of Samadhi
- 9-18: The process by which a Yogi attains Samadhi and leaves his body
- 18-19: One should leave one's body thinking of that upon which one has focussed during the practice of Yoga
- 19-20: One becomes that which one thinks of during the time of death
- 20-21: Instructions to Gargi on the manner of leaving the body
- 21-22: Freedom is assured for one who follows the actions laid down in the Vedas without desire
- 22-24: Yajnavalkya concludes his explanation of the path of Yoga

दशमोऽध्यायः

1: Yajnavalkya begins to speak on Samadhi, which destroys all bondage.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

समाधिमधुना वक्ष्ये भवपाशविनाशनम् ।
भवपाशनिबद्धस्य यथावच्छ्रोतुमर्हसि ॥१॥

Yajnavalkya said “I will now speak about Samadhi which destroys all the ties of worldly bondage of one who is bound by worldly ties. Listen in the proper manner.

2: Samadhi is defined as the state of union of the self and the Divine.

समाधिः समतावस्था जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ।
ब्रह्मण्येव स्थितिर्या सा समाधिः प्रत्यगात्मनः ॥२॥

The state of unity of the Self and the Divine is Samadhi. The state [of absorption] of the self in the Brahman is Samadhi.

3-5: One attains Samadhi (becomes one) with the object on which one does Dhyana. Dhyana culminates in Samadhi. Surrender also leads to Samadhi.

ध्यायेद्यथा यथात्मानं तत्समाधिस्तथा तथा ।
ध्यात्वैवात्मनि संस्थाप्यो नान्यथात्मा यथा भवेत् ॥३॥

एवमेव तु सर्वत्र यत्प्रपन्नस्तु यो नरः ।
तदात्मा सोऽपि तत्रैव समाधिं समवाप्नुयात् ॥४॥

सरित्पतौ निविष्टाम्बु यथाभिन्नतयान्वियात् ।
तथात्माभिन्न एवात्र समाधिं समवाप्नुयात् ॥५॥

In whichever way one does Dhyana on whatever object that culminates into Samadhi. Therefore one must meditate on the self, so that one realizes the self. Similarly, the person who, in all places, has surrendered to a certain object and is absorbed in that object, he too attains a state of Samadhi. Just as the water which enters the sea (from the rivers) attains oneness (totally merges) [with the sea], similarly, one attains oneness with the self and reaches [the state of] Samadhi.

6-9: The prerequisites for the attainment of Samadhi.

एतदुक्तं भवत्यत्र गार्गी ब्रह्मविदां वरे ।
कर्मेव विधिवत्कुर्वन्कामसंकल्पवर्जितम् ॥६॥

वेदान्तेष्वथ शास्त्रेषु सुशिक्षितमनाः सदा ।
गुरुणा तूपदिष्टार्थं युक्त्युपेतं वरानने ॥७॥

विद्वद्भिर्धर्मशास्त्रज्ञैर्विचार्यं च पुनः पुनः ।
तस्मिन्सुनिश्चितार्थेषु सुशिक्षितमनाः सदा ॥८॥

योगमेवाभ्यसेन्नित्यं जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ।

Gargi! Greatest among those who have Realized the Brahman! One with a Beautiful Countenance! This is [the essence] said here. Doing all the actions laid down in the Vedas, without the motivation of desire, with a mind well trained in all the scriptures including Vedanta, with intellegent reflection on that into which one has been initiated by the Guru, having deeply reflected repeatedly with scholars and those proficient in the Vedic scriptures which lay down the proper way of life, and having imbibed deeply in one's mind the essence of these, one must always strive for the union of the self and the Divine.

9-18: The process by which a Yogi attains Samadhi and leaves his body.

ततस्त्वाभ्यन्तरेश्चिन्हैर्बाह्यैर्वा कालसूचकैः ॥९॥

विनिश्चित्यात्मनः कालमन्यैर्वा परमार्थं वित् ।
निर्भयः सुप्रसन्नात्मा मर्त्यस्तु विजितेन्द्रियः ॥१०॥

स्वकर्मनिरतः शान्तः सर्वभूतहिते रतः ।
प्रदाय विद्यां पुत्रस्य मन्त्रं च विधिपूर्वकम् ॥११॥

संस्कारमात्मनः सर्वमुपदिश्य तदानघे ।
पुण्यक्षेत्रे शुचौ देशे विद्वद्भिश्च समावृते ॥१२॥

भूमौ कुशान्समास्तीर्य कृष्णाजिनमथापि वा ।
तस्मिन्सुबद्धपर्यङ्को मन्त्रैर्बद्धकलेवरः ॥१३॥

आसने नान्यधीरास्ते प्राङ्मुखो वाप्युदङ्मुखः ।
नवद्वाराणि संयम्य गार्ग्यस्मिन्ब्रह्मणः पुरे ॥१४॥

उन्निद्रहृदयाम्भोजे प्राणायामैः प्रबोधिते ।
व्योम्नि तस्मिन्प्रभारूपे स्वरूपे सर्वकारणे ॥१५॥

मनोवृत्तिं सुसंयम्य परमात्मनि पण्डितः ।
मूर्ध्न्याधायान्मनः प्राणं भ्रुवोर्मध्येऽथवानघे ॥१६॥

कारणे परमानन्दे आस्थितो योगधारणाम् ।
ओमित्येकाक्षरं बुद्ध्या व्याहरन्सुसमाहितः ॥१७॥

Then, by signs internal, external or otherwise, signifying the approach of death, having clearly determined [the time of] death, the person, who has realized the Highest truth, being free from fear, with a pleasant disposition, who has conquered all the senses, and is devoted to the performance of his duties, who is

totally peaceful and interested in the welfare of all beings, after imparting his knowledge and Mantra to his son (or student) in the prescribed manner, and after initiating him into the means for purification of oneself, then, Unsullied One (Gargi), in an auspicious place, in a clean environment, surrounded by learned men, spreading Kusa grass (a special variety of grass) or deerskin on the ground, sitting firmly in Padmasana, having controlled his body by the use of Mantras, with a mind that is not distracted, facing east or north, having closed the nine openings [of the body] (exits of the Prana), Gargi, in this [body which is the] abode of the Brahman, in the fully bloomed heart-lotus, awakened by Pranayama, directing the activities of the mind on the luminous form of the Divine who is the cause for everything, who is one's self, in that space [of the heart-lotus], the learned one, drawing his Prana (during suspension after exhale) to the crown of the head, or in between his eyebrows, Unsullied One (Gargi), with a mind focussed through the practice of Yoga, in that which is the cause [for everything], which is [the personification of] bliss, mentally saying the single syllable "Om", the learned person should give up his body. [Such a person,] the most illustrious among men, becomes one with the Self.

18-19: One should leave one's body thinking of that upon which one has focussed during the practice of Yoga.

शरीरं संत्यजेद्विद्वानात्मैवाभून्नरोत्तमः ।
यस्मिन्समभ्यसेद्विद्वान्योगेनैवात्मदर्शनम् ॥१८॥
तदेव संस्मरन्विद्वान्स्त्यजेदन्ते कलेवरम् ।

He should give up the body, thinking of that upon which he has focussed during the practice of Yoga, and attained the knowledge of the self.

19-20: One becomes that which one thinks of during the time of death.

यं यं सम्यक्स्मरन्भावं त्यजत्यन्ते कलेवरम् ॥१९॥
तं तमेवैत्यसौ भावमिति योगविदो विदुः ।

Whatever a person thinks of at the time of leaving his body (death), he becomes that. Thus say the ones who have known the essence of Yoga¹.

20-21: Instructions to Gargi on the manner of leaving the body.

त्वं चैवं योगमास्थाय ध्यायन्स्वात्मानमात्मनि ॥२०॥
स्वधर्मनिरता शान्ता त्यजान्ते देहमात्मनः ।

You too, firmly established in the practice of Yoga, meditating upon the self in you, performing all your duties in accordance with the Vedas, remaining totally peaceful, leave your body finally.

21-22: Freedom is assured for one who follows the actions laid down in the Vedas without desire.

ज्ञानेनैव सहैतेन नित्यकर्माणि कुर्वतः ॥२१॥
निवृत्तफलसङ्गस्य मुक्तिर्गांगि करे स्थिता ।

¹ The same concept is explained in the Bhagavad Gita (VIII.6) in virtually the same words.

Gargi! Freedom is in his hands of the one who continues to perform all his daily duties, along with such realization, and who has relinquished the desire for the fruits [of the actions].

22-24: Yajnavalkya concludes his explanation of the path of Yoga.

यदुक्तं ब्रह्मणा पूर्वं कर्मयोगसमुच्चयम् ॥२२॥

तदेतत्कीर्तितं सर्वं साङ्गोपाङ्गं विधानतः ।
त्वं चैव योगमभ्यस्य यमाद्यष्टाङ्गसंयुतम् ॥२३॥

निर्वाणं पदमासाद्य प्रपञ्चं संपरित्यज ॥२४॥
इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये दशमोऽध्यायः ॥

The link between Action (Karma) and Knowledge (Yoga, Jnana) which was mentioned by Brahma earlier¹, has been expounded in the proper manner, with all its limbs and auxiliary limbs. You too, thus practicing Yoga, with the eight limbs starting from Yama, attain the state of freedom (Nirvana), and completely give up the world.

¹ Yajnavalkya here refers to his earlier conversation with Brahma (see I.27). The actual words that signify the authenticity of this text as a combination of action and knowledge are found at this point in this text. The word used here is "Karmayogasamuccayam," "a unification of Karma (action) and Yoga (knowledge)." (Refer also to "The Unique Features of this Text")

Chapter XI

Outline

- 1-2: Gargi requests Yajnavalkya to explain the purification for not having performed the Vedic duties (Prayashcitta) when in a state of Yoga (Samadhi)
- 3-6: Yajnavalkya's reply that when one is in Yoga (Samadhi), there is no purification for not having performed the Vedic duties (Prayaschitta)
- 6-9: When not in a state of Yoga (Samadhi), even a realized person must to do all the Vedic duties
- 9-12: Instruction to Gargi to attain freedom through the practice of Yoga. Yajnavalkya's request to all the sages to return to their respective hermitages
- 12-16: Return of the various sages to their respective hermitages, after duly worshipping Yajnavalkya
- 16-19: Gargi's request to Yajanvalkya to explain the whole of Yoga with all its eight limbs concisely
- 20-22: Yajnavalkya's consent to explain the path of Yoga concisely

एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥

1-2: Gargi requests Yajnavalkya to explain the purification for not having performed the Vedic duties (Prayashcitta) when in a state of Yoga (Samadhi).

इत्येवमुक्ता मुनिना याज्ञवल्क्येन धीमता ।
ऋषिमध्ये वरारोहा वाक्यमेतदभाषत ॥१॥

गार्ग्युवाच--

योगयुक्तो नरः स्वामिन्सन्ध्ययोर्वाथवा सदा ।
वैधं कर्म कथं कुर्यान्निष्कृतिः का त्वकुर्वतः ॥२॥

Told thus by the wise sage Yajnavalkya, the one with a beautiful countenance (Gargi), spoke as follows in the midst of the sages: Gargi said, "My master, how will a person who is involved in the practice of Yoga do the actions prescribed by the Vedas during the Sandhis or always? What is the Prayaschitta (an action of purification for not having performed the prescribed Vedic duties) for one who does not do them?

3-6: Yajnavalkya's reply that when one is in Yoga (Samadhi), there is no purification for not doing Vedic or other duties (Prayaschitta).

इत्युक्तो ब्रह्मवादिन्या ब्रह्मविद्ब्राह्मणस्तदा ।
तां समालोक्य भगवानिदमाह नरोत्तमः ॥३॥

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच-

योगयुक्तमनुष्यस्य सन्ध्ययोर्वाथवा निशि ।
यत्कर्तव्यं वरारोहे योगेन खलु तत्कृतम् ॥४॥

आत्माग्निहोत्रवह्नी तु प्राणायामैर्विधिते ।
विशुद्धचित्तहविषा विध्युक्तं कर्म जुह्वतः ॥५॥

निष्कृतिस्तस्य किं बाले कृतकृत्यस्तदा खलु ।

Thus spoken to by One who enquires into the Brahman (Gargi), Yajnavalkya, the greatest among men, who has realized the Brahman, looked at her and said as follows: Yajnavalkya said, "For the person who is absorbed in Yoga (Samadhi) that which must be done at the two Sandhis or at night, is done (fulfilled) by Yoga (Samadhi) itself¹, One with a Beautiful Countenance! Gargi, how can there be any (Prayaschitta) purification for one who fulfills his duties by offering his pure mind in the holy fire of the self, which is kindled by the practice of Pranayama? He is then one who has done everything that is to be done, is it not?

¹ Bhagavad Gita (III-5) described a similar concept.

6-9: When not in a state of Yoga (Samadhi), even a realized person must to do all the Vedic duties.

वियोगे सति सम्प्राप्ते जीवात्मपरमात्मनोः ॥६॥
विध्युक्तं कर्म कर्तव्यं ब्रह्मविद्भिश्च नित्यशः ।
वियोगकाले योगी च दुःखमित्येव यस्त्यजेत् ॥७॥
कर्माणि तस्य निलयः निरयः परिकीर्तितः ।
न देहिनां यतः शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्माण्यशेषतः ॥८॥
तस्मादामरणाद्वैधं कर्तव्यं योगिभिः सदा ।

When there is a separation between the self and the Divine, the actions laid down in the Vedas must be done, even by those who have realized the Brahman. At that time of separation (when not in Samadhi), the Yogi who gives up [the performance of] these actions thinking that they cause discomfort, his dwelling place will be one of suffering. No one who has (is identified with) a body (no living being) can ever give up actions completely. Therefore the actions prescribed by the Vedas should be performed by all Yogis always until the time of death.

9-12: Instruction to Gargi to attain freedom through the practice of Yoga. Yajnavalkya's request to all the sages to return to their respective hermitages.

त्वं चैव मात्यया गार्गी वैधं कर्म समाचर ॥९॥
योगेन परमात्मानं यजंस्त्यज कलेवरम् ।
इत्येव मुक्त्वा भगवान्याज्ञवल्क्यस्तपोनिधिः ॥१०॥
ऋषीनालोक्य नेत्राभ्यां वाक्यमेतदभाषत ।
सन्ध्यामुपास्य विधिवत्पश्चिमां सुसमाहिताः ॥११॥
गच्छन्तु साम्प्रतं सर्वे ऋषयः स्वाश्रमं प्रति ।

Gargi, you too do not slip. Perform all the actions said by the Vedas. Worshipping the Divine (Paramatma), through the practice of Yoga, give up your body. Having spoken thus [to Gargi], Yajnavalkya, the one fit to be worshipped, the repository of penance, looked at the sages and spoke [again] as follows: Having performed in the proper manner the daily ritual (Sandhyavandana) to be done in the evening, with a focussed mind, let all the sages now proceed to their hermitages.

12-16: Return of the various sages to their respective hermitages, after duly worshipping Yajnavalkya.

इत्येवमुक्त्वा मुनिना मुनयः संश्रितव्रताः ॥१२॥
विश्वामित्रो वसिष्ठश्च गौतमश्चाङ्गिरास्तथा ।
अगस्त्यो नारदश्चैव वाल्मीकिर्बादिरायणिः ॥१३॥

पैङ्गिर्दीर्घतमा व्यासः शौनकश्च तपोधनः ।
भार्गवः काश्यपश्चैव भरद्वाजस्तथैव च ॥१४॥

तपस्विनस्तथा चान्ये वेदवेदाङ्गवेदिनः ।
याज्ञवल्क्यं सुसम्पूज्य गीभिराशीभिरुत्तमैः ॥१५॥

ते यान्ति मुनयः सर्वे स्वाश्रमेषु यथागतम् ।

Having thus been told by the sage [Yajnavalkya], the sages, Vishvamitra, Vasishtha, Gautama, Angira, Agastya, Narada, Valmiki and Shuka, Paingidirghatama, Vyaasa, Shaunaka, whose wealth is penance, Bhargava, Kashyapa, Bharadwaja and the others, who are absorbed in their austerities, who have known the essence of the Vedas and the Vedangas, having worshipped Yajnavalkya in a befitting manner, with auspicious chants [from the Vedas], return to their respective hermitages in the manner they arrived.

16-19: Gargi's request to Yajnavalkya to explain the whole of Yoga with all its eight limbs concisely.

गतेषु स्वाश्रमेष्वेषु तापसेषु तपोधना ॥१६॥

प्रणम्य दण्डवद्भूमौ वाक्यमेतदभाषत ।

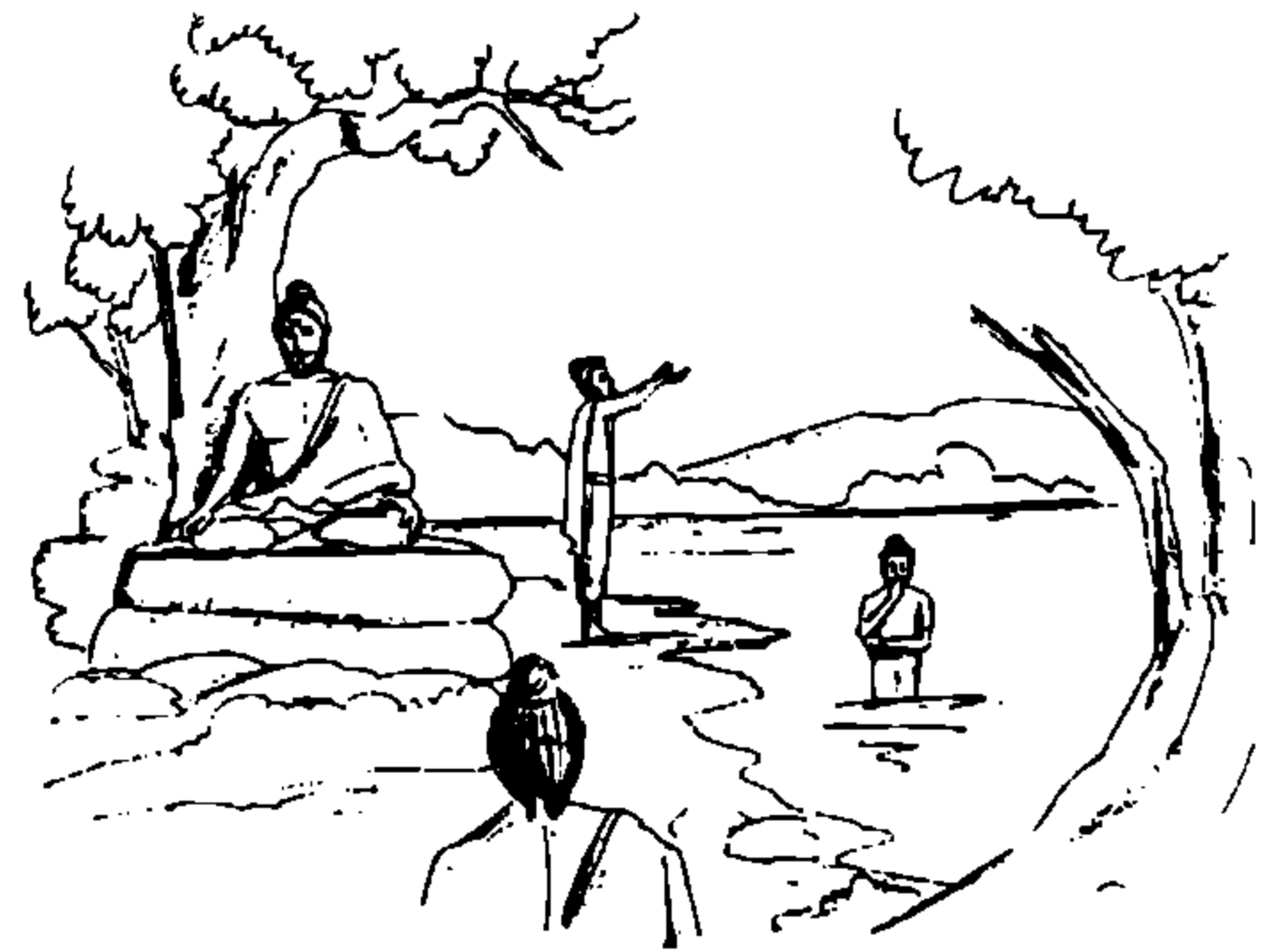
गार्ग्युवाच—

भगवन्सर्वशास्त्रज्ञ सर्वभूतहिते रत ॥१७॥

भवमोक्षाय योगीन्द्र भवद्भिर्भाषितं तु यत् ।
यमाद्यष्टाङ्गसहितो योगो मुक्तेस्तु साधनम् ॥१८॥

तदेतद्विस्मृतं सर्वं सर्वज्ञ तव सन्निधौ ।
योगं ममोपदिश्याद्य साङ्गं संक्षेपरूपतः ॥१९॥

When the sages returned to their respective hermitages, the one whose wealth is penance (Gargi), prostrated on the ground like a stick and spoke as follows. Gargi said," Bhagavan¹ ! One who has known (realized the essence of) all the scriptures, who is interested in the welfare of all beings, the foremost among the Yogis! The Yoga with eight limbs, starting from Yama, which was explained by you as a means for freedom, has been completely forgotten [by me] in your presence itself. Therefore, One who is All Knowing! Protect me from the ocean of birth and bondage by explaining to me Yoga with its limbs in a concise form.



¹ The word "Bhagavan" is usually used to address the Divine. However, it can also be used to address one who has attained freedom.

20-22: Yajnavalkya's consent to explain the path of Yoga concisely.

त्रातुमर्हसि सर्वज्ञ जन्मसंसारसागरात् ।
इत्युक्तो ब्रह्मवादिन्या ब्रह्मविद्ब्राह्मणस्तदा ॥२०॥

आलोक्य कृपया दीनां स्मितपूर्वमभाषत ।
उत्तिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ किं शेषे भूमौ गार्गी वरानने ॥२१॥

वक्ष्यामि ते समासेन योगं सम्प्रति तं शृणु ॥२२॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये एकादशोऽध्यायः ॥

Having thus been told by the One who is Desirous of Realizing the Brahman [Gargi], the one who has realized the Brahman [Yajnavalkya], the illustrious Brahmin, looking at the humble Gargi and, smiling benevolently, said: "Arise Gargi! Why do you prostrate thus on the ground? One with a Beautiful Countenance, I shall now explain Yoga to you concisely. Listen to it.

Chapter XII

Outline

This single chapter contains the essence of the entire book. Yajnavalkya explains here the Yogic path to freedom, in a concise manner. For the purpose of understanding, the Slokas can be divided into sections describing seven stages of progression along this path. Some of these steps are detailed in Tantric texts. I have therefore not explained them here.

- 1-7: First stage - kindling of the Agni by Prana
- 8-13: Second stage - awakening of Kundalini
- 14-20: Third stage - the movement of the Prana to the heart-lotus, through the Sushumna Nadi
- 21: Fourth stage - further ascent of Prana
- 22-26: Fifth stage - the focussing of Prana in the centre of the eyebrows
- 27-29: Sixth stage - continued absorption of the mind and Prana in the center of the eyebrows
- 30-35: Seventh stage - attainment of freedom
- 36-40: The benefits of such a Yoga practice
- 41: Importance of daily duties (Nityakarma) along with the practice of Yoga
- 42: Yajnavalkya recedes into solitude and Samadhi after explaining the greatest secret
- 43-44: Gargi worships Yajnavalkya, having understood the essence of Yoga and recedes into solitude with total happiness
- 45: Praise of Vasudeva, the Divine
- 46: Yajnavalkya and Gargi are always present, beholding the Divine in themselves

द्वादशोऽध्यायः

1-7: First stage - kindling of the Agni by Prana.

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच—

सव्येन गुल्फेन गुदं निपीड्य सव्येतरेणैव निपीड्य सन्धिम् ।
सव्येतरं न्यस्य करेतरस्मिन्शिखां समालोक्य पावकस्य ॥१॥

आयुर्विघातकृत्प्राणो निरुद्धस्त्वासनेन वै ।
याति गार्गि तदापानात्कुलं वह्नेः शनैः शनैः ॥२॥

वायुना वातितो वह्निरपानेन शनैः शनैः ।
ततो ज्वलति सर्वेषां स्वकुले देहमध्यमे ॥३॥

प्रातःकाले प्रदोषे च निशीथे च समाहितः ।
मुहूर्तमभ्यसेदेवं यावत्पंचदिनद्वयम् ॥४॥

ततस्त्वात्मनि विप्रेन्द्रे प्रत्ययाश्च पृथक्पृथक् ।
सम्भवन्ति तदा तस्य जितो येन समीरणः ॥५॥

शरीरलघुता दीप्तिर्वह्नेर्जठरवर्तिनः ।
नादाभिव्यक्तिरित्येते चिह्नान्यादौ भवन्ति हि ॥६॥

अल्पमूत्रपुरीषः स्यात्षण्मासे वत्सरेऽपि वा ।
आसने वाहने पश्चान्न भेतव्यं त्रिवत्सरात् ॥७॥

Yajnavalkya said, "Pressing the anus with the left ankle and the perineum with the right ankle, placing the right palm on the left, see (meditate on) the flames of the fire. Then, the Prana which reduces the life span [when it is dispersed], is blocked and slowly moves from bottom (Apana) to the abode of fire, Gargi. The fire which is fanned slowly by the Apana vayu glows in its abode in the centre of the body, in all beings. In the morning, evening and midnight, with a focussed and balanced mind, one should practice this for 10 days for a duration of 90 minutes (1 Muhurta). Illustrious among Brahmin Women! Various experiences then come about for one who has conquered the Prana. Lightness in the body, increased brightness of the abdominal fire, and improvement in the voice and appearance of Nada are the first indications. In 6 months or one year, there is reduction of the urine and faeces, and after 3 years, one need not have fear.

8-13: Second stage - awakening of Kundalini.

ततोऽनिलं वायुसखेन सार्धं घिया समारोप्य निरोधयेत्तम् ।
ध्यायन्सदा चक्रिणमप्रबुद्धं नाभौ सदा कुण्डलिनीनिविष्टम् ॥८॥

शिरां समावेष्ट्य मुखेन मध्यामन्याश्च भोगेन शिरास्तथैव ।
स्वपुच्छमास्येन निगृह्य सम्यक्पथश्च संयम्य मरुद्गणानाम् ॥९॥

प्रसुप्तनागेन्द्रवदुच्छवसन्ती सदा प्रबुधदा प्रभया ज्वलन्ती ।
नाभौ सदा तिष्ठति कुण्डली सा तिर्यक्सु देहेषु तथेतरेषु ॥१०॥

वायुना विहृतवह्निशिखाभिः कन्दमध्यगतनाडिषु संस्थाम् ।
कुण्डलीं दहति यस्त्वहिरूपां संस्मरन्नरवरस्तु स एव ॥११॥

सन्तप्ता वह्निना तत्र वायुना च प्रचालिता ।
प्रसार्य फणभृद्भोगं प्रबोधं याति सा तदा ॥१२॥

बोधं गते चक्रिणि नाभिमध्ये प्राणाः सुसम्भूय कलेवरेऽस्मिन् ।
चरन्ति सर्वे सह वह्निनैव यथा पटे तन्तुगतिस्तथैव ॥१३॥

Then, drawing the Prana inside, along with the fire, using the mind, focus it in the unawakened Kundalini, in the navel. Covering the Sushumna by her mouth and the other Nadis by her hood, holding her own tail by her mouth, blocking the path of the Prana, breathing like a sleeping snake, yet always awake, shining by her own lustre, the Kundalini resides always in the navel region (Nabhi) in the bodies of all beings. The one who, with total concentration, burns the Kundalini, which is in the form of a snake in the Nadis in the middle of the Kandasthana (which blocks the flow of Prana in the Nadis), by the flames of the fire which are fanned by the Prana, is the most illustrious among men. Kundalini, which is in the form of a snake, burnt by the fire, and shaken/moved by the Vayu, spreads its hood and awakens. When the Kundalini in the centre of the Nabhi is awakened, the Vayus in the body join together and move [unitedly], along with the fire, like the strands of thread in a cloth.

14-20: Third stage - the movement of the Prana to the heart-lotus, through the Sushumna Nadi.

जित्वैवं चक्रिणः स्थानं सदा ध्यानपरायणः ।
ततो नयेदपानं तु नाभेरूर्ध्वमिदं स्मरन् ॥१४॥

वायुर्यथा वायुसखेन सार्धं नाभिं त्वतिक्रम्य गतः शरीरे ।
रोगाश्च नश्यन्ति बलाभिवृद्धिः कान्तिस्तदानीमभवत्प्रबुद्धे ॥१५॥

ब्रह्मरन्ध्रमुखमत्र वायवः पावकेन सह यान्ति समूह्य ।
केनचिदिह वदामि तवाहं वीक्षणाद्हृदि सुदीपशिखायाः ॥१६॥

निरोधितः स्याद्हृदि तेन वायुः मध्ये यदा वायुसखेन सार्धम् ।
सहस्रपत्रस्य मुखं प्रविश्य कुर्यात्पुनस्तूर्ध्वमुखं द्विजेन्द्रे ॥१७॥

प्रबुद्धहृदयाम्भोजे गार्ग्यस्मिन्ब्रह्मणः पुरे ।
बालार्कश्रेणिवद्व्योम्नि विरराज समीरणः ॥१८॥

हृन्मध्यात्तु सुषुम्णायां संस्थितो हुतभुक्तदा ।
सजलाम्बुदमालासु विद्युल्लेखेव राजते ॥१९॥

प्रबुद्धहृत्पद्मानि संस्थितेऽग्नौ प्राणे च तस्मिन्निवेशिते च ।
चिह्नानि बाह्यानि तथान्तराणि दीपादि दृश्याणि भवन्ति तस्य ॥२०॥

Having thus conquered the seat of the Kundalini, always absorbed in Dhyana, one must then lead the Apana Vayu towards the region above the Nabhi. When the Prana along with the fire in the body moves beyond the Nabhi, all diseases are destroyed, strength increases, and the body becomes lustrous. Now the Vayus, joining together, along with the fire, move to the opening in the crown of the head (Brahmarandhra). I shall tell you a certain means for this. [The means is] seeing (meditating) on the bright flames [of the fire] in the heart. By this, when the Vayu along with the Agni is stopped in the centre of the heart, it enters the opening of the thousand-petalled heart-lotus and must be made to face (move) upwards again. Gargi, in this abode of the Brahman (in this body), in the fully blossomed lotus of the heart, the Prana shines in that space like the rising sun. Then the fire, shines like a streak of lightning in a range of clouds, from the centre of the Heart in the Sushumna. When the fire is established in the bloomed (awakened) heart-lotus, and the Prana has been made to enter into it, various signs, both external and internal come about like the vision of a flame.

21: Fourth stage - further ascent of Prana.

वायुमुन्नय ततस्तु सर्वाङ्गं व्याहरन्प्रणवमत्र सविन्दुम् ।
बालचन्द्रसदृशे तु ललाटे बालचन्द्रमवलोकय बुद्ध्या ॥२१॥

Then, raising the Prana along with the fire, reciting the Pranava, meditate upon the disc of the rising moon in the forehead.

22-26: Fifth stage - the focussing of Prana in the centre of the eyebrows.

सर्वाङ्गं वायुमारोप्य भ्रुवोर्मध्ये धिया तदा ।
ध्यायेदनन्यधीः पश्चादन्तरात्मानमन्तरे ॥२२॥

मध्यमेऽपि हृदये च ललाटे स्थाणुवज्ज्वलति लिङ्गमदृश्यम् ।
अस्ति गार्गी परमार्थमिदं त्वं पश्य पश्य मनसा रुचिरूपम् ॥२३॥

ललाटमध्ये हृदयाम्बुजे च यः पश्यति ज्ञानमयीं प्रभां तु ।
शक्तिं सदा दीपवदुज्ज्वलन्तीं स पश्यति ब्रह्मविदेकदृष्टया ॥२४॥

मनो लयं यदा याति भ्रूमध्ये योगिनां नृणाम् ।
जिह्वामूलेऽमृतस्रावो भ्रूमध्ये चात्मदर्शनम् ॥२५॥

कम्पनं च तथा मूर्ध्नो मनसैवात्मदर्शनम् ।
देवोद्यानानि रम्याणि नक्षत्राणि च चन्द्रमाः ॥
ऋषयः सिद्धगन्धर्वाः प्रकाशं यान्ति योगिनाम् ॥२६॥

Then, drawing and holding the Prana along with the fire at the centre of the eyebrows, mentally, with total concentration, one must meditate on one's self within. In the middle of the body, the heart and the forehead, like a pillar, shines an imperceptible Linga. This is truly the greatest to be attained, Gargi. You too behold that beautiful form with your mind. The one who sees with an unfaltering gaze, in the centre of the forehead and the heart-lotus, the glow that shines like a lamp, which is the embodiment of knowledge and power- he is the one who has realized the Brahman. When the mind of the Yogi is totally absorbed in the centre of the eyebrows, then nectar flows from the base of the tongue, and the

self is seen at the centre of the eyebrows. A trembling [sensation] of the head, the perception of the self through the mind, beautiful celestial gardens, stars and the moon, the Rishis, Siddhas and Gandharvas — all appear to the Yogis.

27-29: Sixth stage - continued absorption of the mind and Prana in the center of the eyebrows - the abode of Vishnu.

भ्रुवोन्तरे विष्णुपदे ऋचौ तु मनो लयं यावदियात्प्रबुद्धे ।
तावत्समभ्यस्य पुनः खमध्ये सुखं सदा संस्मर पूर्णरूपम् ॥२७॥

समीरणे विष्णुपदे निविष्टे जीवे च तस्मिन्नमृते च संस्थे ।
तस्मिस्तदा याति मनो लयं चेन्मुक्तेः समीपं तदिति ब्रुवन्ति ॥२८॥

समीरणे विष्णुपदे निविष्टे विशुद्धबुद्धौ च तदात्मनिष्ठे ।
आनन्दमत्यद्भुतमस्ति सत्यं त्वं गार्गी पश्याद्य विशुद्धबुद्ध्या ॥२९॥

Practice this till the mind is absorbed in the centre of the eyebrows, in the abode of Vishnu, and then again meditate in that space on that which is complete, and which is the embodiment of bliss. When the Prana Vayu has reached the abode of Vishnu, and the self is established in that bliss, if the mind becomes absorbed, that leads to a state very close to freedom. When the Prana Vayu has reached the abode of Vishnu, and when the intellect is clear and is established in the Seer, there is indescribable bliss. Gargi! Behold it now with a clear intellect.

30-35: Seventh stage - attainment of freedom.

एवं समभ्यस्य सुदीर्घकालं यमादिभिर्युक्ततनुमिताशीः ।
आत्मानमासाद्य गुहां प्रविष्टं मुक्तिं व्रज ब्रह्मपुरे पुनस्त्वम् ॥३०॥

भूतानि यस्मात्प्रभवन्ति गार्गी येनैव जीवन्ति चराचराणि ।
जातानि यस्मिन्विलयं प्रयान्ति तद्ब्रह्म विद्धीति वदन्ति सर्वे ॥३१॥

हृत्पङ्कजे व्योम्नि यदेकरूपं सत्यं सदानन्दमयं सुसूक्ष्मम् ।
तद्ब्रह्म निर्भासिमयं गुहायामिति श्रुतिश्चेति समामनन्ति ॥३२॥

अणोरणीयान्महतो महीयानात्मा गुहायां निहितोऽस्य जन्तोः ।
तमक्रतुं पश्य विशुद्धबुद्ध्या प्रयाणकाले च विहीनशोका ॥३३॥

प्रभंजनं मूर्ध्नगतं सर्वाङ्गं धिया समासाद्य गुरूपदेशात् ।
मूर्धनिमुद्भिद्य पुनः खमध्ये प्राणांस्त्यजोङ्कारमनुस्मरंस्त्वम् ॥३४॥

ईप्सया यदि शरीरविसर्गं ज्ञातुमिच्छसि सखे तव वक्ष्ये ।
व्याहरन्प्रणवमुन्नय मूर्ध्नि भिद्य योजय तमात्मनिकायम् ॥३५॥

Having practiced thus for a long time, with a regulated food intake, observing Yama and the other limbs, having realized the self which is in the cave/recess, attain freedom in this abode of the Brahman (in this body). That from which all beings originate, by which (whose support) everything, living and non-living, is sustained, and into which [all the above] dissolve, know that to be the Brahman. So says all [who has realized the Brahman]. That which is one, which is true, which is always the personification of bliss, which is very subtle, which is the epitome of effulgence, and which is present in a cave, in the space of the heart-lotus- that is the Brahman. Thus say the Vedas too. The subtlest of the subtle, the greatest of the great, the self is present in the internal space of all beings. See that [self], which is devoid of desire, at the time of death, without sorrow, with a clear mind.

Having controlled the Prana, which has reached the crown of the head along with the fire, using the intellect, by initiation from one's Guru, meditating on Om, split open the crown of the head and give up the Prana in that space. My friend¹, if you wish to know how to leave the body as per your wish, I will tell you. Reciting the Pranava mentally, drawing the Prana to the crown of the head, splitting [the crown of the head], unite it (the Prana) with the self.

36-40: The benefits of such a Yoga practice.

एतत्पवित्रं परमं योगमष्टाङ्गसंयुतम् ।
ज्ञानं गुह्यतमं पुण्यं कीर्तितं ते वरानने ॥३६॥

य इदं शृणुयान्नित्यं योगाख्यानं नरोत्तमः ।
सर्वपापविनिर्मुक्तः सम्यग्ज्ञानी भविष्यति ॥३७॥

यस्त्वेतच्छ्रावयेद्विद्वान्नित्यं भक्तिसमन्वितः ।
एकजन्मकृतं पापं दिनेनैकेन नश्यति ॥३८॥

शृणुयाद्यः सकृद्वापि योगाख्यानमिदं नरः ।
अज्ञानजनितं पापं सर्वं तस्य प्रणश्यति ॥३९॥

अनुतिष्ठन्ति ये नित्यमात्मज्ञानसमन्वितम् ।
नित्यकर्मणि तान्दृष्ट्वा देवाश्च प्रणमन्ति हि ॥४०॥

Yoga with its eight limbs, which is holy, and is the purest, greatest and most secret among all knowledge, has been explained to you, One with the Beautiful Countenance (Gargi). The illustrious one who always listens to (and practises according to) this exposition of Yoga is freed from all bondage and will become a realized person. For the learned person, who expounds this [Yoga] always, with devotion and reverence, all the bondage caused in one lifetime is destroyed in one day. All the bondage caused due to ignorance perishes for the person who listens to this exposition on Yoga even once. Even the celestials bow on seeing the ones who always perform all their daily duties [in accordance with the Vedas] along with realization of the Self.

¹ Here Yajnavalkya addresses his wife, Gargi, as "Sakha" meaning "My friend". A wife is considered the best friend of her husband and vice versa. Even in the sections of the Vedas which speak of the rituals for marriage (the Ekagni Kanda), the same is said. Sankaracharya also says, "The wife is the best friend of the husband."

41: Importance of daily duties (Nityakarma) along with the practice of Yoga.

तस्माज्ज्ञानेन देहान्तं नित्यं कर्म यथाविधि ।
कर्तव्यं देहिभिर्गार्गी योगश्च भवभीरुभिः ॥४१॥

Therefore, as long as one lives, daily duties (in accordance with the Vedas) along with knowledge, and Yoga too must be done in the prescribed manner by all beings who fear bondage.

42: Yājñavalkya recedes into solitude and Samadhi after explaining the greatest secret.

इत्येवमुक्त्वा भगवान्रहस्ये रहस्यजं मुक्तिकरं तु तस्याः ।
योगामृतं बन्धविनाशहेतुं समाधिमास्ते रहसि द्विजेन्द्रः ॥४२॥

Having thus explained in solitude, the nectar of Yoga, which was born in solitude (through secluded practice), which is the cause for destruction of all bondage and which leads to freedom, to her [Gargi], [Yajnavalkya], the one fit to be worshipped, greatest among Brahmins, went into Samadhi in solitude.

43-44: Gargi worships Yajnavalkya, having understood the essence of Yoga and recedes into solitude with total happiness.

सा तं तु सम्पूज्य मुनिं ब्रुवन्तं विद्यानिधिं ब्रह्मविदां वरिष्ठम् ।
गीर्भिः प्रणामैश्च सतां वरिष्ठं सदा मुदं प्राप वरां विशुद्धाम् ॥४३॥

योगं सुसंगृह्य तदा रहस्ये रहस्यजं मुक्तिकरं च जन्तोः ।
संसारमुत्सृज्य सदा मुदान्विता वने रहस्यावसथे विवेश ॥४४॥

Having worshipped with chants and prostrations the sage who is the storehouse of all learning (Yajnavalkya), who is greatest among the ones who have realized the Brahman, who is the greatest among Seers, and who had spoken thus, that Gargi, the pure one, attained the greatest and purest happiness forever. Then, in solitude, having clearly understood Yoga which is born in solitude, which is the cause for freedom of all beings, and having given up worldly bondage, [Gargi] entered a solitary place in the forest with total happiness.

45: Praise of Vasudeva, the Divine.

येन प्रपञ्चं परिपूर्णमेतद्येनैव विश्वं प्रतिभाति सर्वम् ।
तं वासुदेवं श्रुतिमूर्ध्नि जातं पश्यन्सदास्ते हृदि मूर्ध्नि चान्वहम् ॥४५॥

She remained always seeing in the crown of the head and in the heart, that Vasudeva, by whom this entire world is complete, by whom everything is radiant, and who is spoken of by the Vedas.



46: Yajnavalkya and Gargi are always present, beholding the Divine in themselves.

यदेकमव्यक्तमनन्तमच्युतं प्रपञ्चजन्मादिकृदप्रमेयम् ।
तं वासुदेवं श्रुतिमूर्ध्नि जातं पश्यन्सदास्ते हृदि मूर्ध्नि चान्वहम् ॥४६॥

इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये द्वादशोऽध्यायः ॥
समाप्तमिदं योगशास्त्रम् ॥

Seeing always in the heart and the crown of the head, that Vasudeva, who is One, immeasurable, unmanifest, endless, beyond change, and who is responsible for the creation, sustenance and destruction of the world, Yajnavalkya and Gargi are always present.

Appendix I

Sri Divanji's Introduction to the Yoga Yanjavalkya.

Note: This Appendix has been abstracted and revised from the "Introduction" of Yoga Yajnavalkya, BBRA Society Monograph No. 3, Bombay, 1954, pp. 96-113, edited by Sri Prahlad C. Divanji, M.A., LL.M. I have attempted both to summarize and to clarify Sri Divanji's intentions, as I have understood them. I have attempted this by rewriting the arcane and sometimes rather tortured English of the original in my own words. I should point out that I am neither an Indologist nor a scholar of Indian philosophy, nor do I read Sanskrit. I am an anthropologist by training, and a student of yoga as taught by Sri A.G. Mohan. I have attempted throughout to articulate the subject matter presented here, as it is known to me from my readings in Yoga, Vedanta and from Sri A.G. Mohan's teachings, which I have been most fortunate to receive. I have attempted to restrict my own views, comments and explanations to the footnotes and, in this way, relate faithfully Sri Divanji's Introduction.

Textual Sources

Sixteen ancient manuscripts were used to ascertain the actual reading of the text, as it is presented here. These manuscripts fall into 4 classes, according to the script into which they were transcribed: Devanagari (8 mss.), Grantha (6 mss.), Telugu (1 ms.) and Kannada (1 ms.) These manuscripts, collected from institutions all over India, were written on hand-made or machine-made paper, or stenciled onto palm leaves, all had names such as "Yoga Yajnavalkya," "Yoga Yajnavalkya Smriti," "Yoga Yajnavalkyagita," "Yajnavalkya Samhita" and "Yoga Yajnavalkyagitopanisadah." In addition, 5 previously printed editions (all published in India between 1893-1938) were consulted when no satisfactory consensus reading of the original could be inferred from the extant older manuscripts. Most such ambiguities seemed to arise from divergent readings of the same Sanskrit syllables and presumably from transcription errors by the scribes of these old manuscripts. In the interests of compiling a critical, scholarly edition of the Yoga Yajnavalkya, Sri Divanji described these sources in some detail to facilitate their identification by subsequent scholars. (For details, the reader is referred to Sri Divanji's 1954 publication, pp. 96-100.)

The Work and its Date

Several facts indicate the complete uniformity between this manuscript and the 5 previously printed editions. First, the work as a whole always takes the form of a dialogue between the sage, Yajnavalkya and his wife, Gargi (also known as Maitreyi). Secondly, the topic is astanga (or eight-limbed) yoga, as described in Patanjali's Yogasutras. Thirdly, Yajnavalkya's exposition is made at the request of his wife, Gargi, to summarize the teachings he had received from Brahma, the Creator God. Furthermore, Yajnavalkya's discourse explains the relationship of this yoga to religious observances prescribed in the Vedas, in the form of a "Samuccaya" (combination) of "Jnana" (discriminating wisdom, described herein as the essence of yoga) and "Vaidham Karma," a term whose exact meaning is not explained anywhere in the work¹. Fourthly, the work is always divided into 12 chapters, the first 11 delivered in the presence of several sages, while the last (Rahasya) chapter summarizes the preceding discourse to Gargi alone, after the sages had departed Yajnavalkya's hermitage. Finally, the topic of each chapter is generally the same. The main differences among the different versions of the manuscript are in the number of stanzas, with some manuscripts having more stanzas, and some less, than other versions.

¹ But see Translator's explanation in the verse 1.42 of the YY. Ref. also to footnote 2 under Ch X.

Date of the Yoga Yajnavalkya

Sixteen manuscripts were utilized in assembling this critical edition¹. The earliest dated manuscript is No. 3 in the list of Devanagari manuscripts, which was borrowed from the Oriental Institute in Baroda. The condition of that manuscript, dated on March of 1628 CE, was described² as “old but well-preserved.” That manuscript showed clearly on the last page³ that it had been copied from an earlier manuscript in 1627-1628 CE. Moreover, sections of the Grantha manuscripts written on palm leaves may well be nearly 500 years old, and the manuscript on which the printed edition published in Trivandrum in 1938 was based was, in the judgment of its editor, at least 500 years old.

The age of the original manuscript can be inferred by comparison to the many manuscripts of known date which contain slokas so similar to the Yoga Yajnavalkya that they must have been borrowed from it. For example, the Jabala Darsana, Trisikhi-Bramhana, Yogakundalini and Yogatattva Upanishads all contain far too many stanzas almost identical to those occurring in the present work to have occurred by chance. The Sandilya Upanisad incorporates in prose the exact words which occur in the corresponding stanzas of this work, and the Vasudevopanisad contains similarly identifiable passages in 2 or 3 places. In itself, this is enough evidence to infer that the authors of these later works borrowed these common passages from the present work. The Hathayogapradipika of Svatmarama also relies rather extensively upon the Yoga Yajnavalkya for some of its stanzas. Furthermore, the Hatayogapradapika refers (II.37) to a sect of Hathayogis who disapproved of the Satkarma, Neti, Dhauti and so on, and achieved the same objectives by practicing different forms of Pranayama, which is precisely the unique feature of Yoga Yajnavalkya. Sankara’s bhashya (commentary) on the Svetasvataropanisad also contains numerous quotations (in sections II.7 & II.9) from a work he attributed to Yajnavalkya, which can be traced to chapters IV to VII of the Yoga Yajnavalkya. This alone clearly dates the present work to the 8th century CE, the time of Sankara. Mummadideva, in his comments on the smaller Yogavasistha (VI 9.65 and 9.71) also quotes this work. The Yoga Yajnavalkya was also specified as an authority on the Samuccayavada (combination of karma and jnana for freedom) in Anandavardhana’s commentary on the Bhagavad Gita.

Finally, the author of the Yajnavalkya Smrti recommends (in III.110) a study “of the Yogasastra promulgated by me” to those who desire to achieve Yoga (union with the Divine). That Yogasastra must be the present Yoga Yajnavalkya and not the Yogi Yajnavalkya, which is a work on Sandhyavandana (a ritual done thrice everyday), which does not use material objects but relies only on the use of Mantras with known esoteric meanings. The Brhad-Yogi Yajnavalkya Smrti, published in 1951 by the Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla, is an enlarged edition of this Sandhyavandana⁴. This identity (of “the Yogasastra promulgated by me” with the present Yoga Yajnavalkya) is further corroborated by the views of the Ayurvedic writers, including Agastya and the Asvins (in VII.7, 30; VIII.33, 39), which date this work to the age of Caraka. Caraka’s Samhita (I.1.4-5 and 8.32) indicates that the medical science of Ayurveda originated from the necessity of discovering the origins of disease in order to eradicate it, because physical dysfunction obstructed the pursuit of humankind’s highest objective, namely Moksa (release). Caraka’s Ayurvedic Samhita also describes the lineage of teachers and students

¹ Sri Divanji’s method for assembling a critical edition is described on pp. 100-103 of his 1954 BBRA monograph. He also published a detailed description of his method, along with some of his tables used to ascertain the archetypal text and its variant recensions, in the Journal of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, Vol. II, pp. 31-40, 1952.

² Described by Sri. Divanji himself, that is.

³ A facsimile of the last page of the Devanagari No. 3 manuscript was reproduced between pages 102 and 103 in Sri Divanji’s 1954 BBRA monograph.

⁴ See “Brhad-Yogi Yajnavalkya and Yoga Yajnavalkya” by Sri P.C. Divanji, Annals of the B.O.R Institute of Poona, Volume XXXIV, pp. 1-29, 1954.

transmitted up until the time of Agnivesa (whose first Ayurvedic work was called a Tantra or scientific treatise). The tradition described in Caraka's Samhita (which consisted of the contributions of the sages Caraka and Drdhabala), the names of the Asvins occur early in the lineage and of Agastya later in the lineage. Ayurveda-Dipika, the commentary on Caraka's Samhita by Cakrapani Dutta, quotes the Kaya-cikitsa-tantra, regarding how even the "kalamrtyu" is conquered by Mahatmas who have attained perfection in "Rasayana"¹, "Tapas" and "Japayoga." Now, the present Yoga Yajnavalkya (especially chapters VI to VIII) contain numerous references to the practice of Pranayama for eradication of specific diseases and for acquiring control over the vital airs (vayus), especially Apana, which is described as Ayurvighatakrt ("the destroyer of the duration of life" Ch.XII-2). The time of Caraka, a contemporary of Kaniska (born roughly 80 CE²), falls within the period determined for the Yajnavalkya Smrti by oriental scholars, such as Drs. Buhler and Kane, namely between 200-100 BCE to 200-300 CE. The date of the present work, which we have argued was written by the same author of the Yajnavalkya Smrti (or which at least describes the same kind of yoga) can thus be traced to a period between the 2nd c. B.C.E. and the 4th c. CE. This estimate is consistent with the previous existence of the classical Yogadarsana of Patanjali³, from which the eight limbs were almost certainly borrowed.

Objections to the authenticity of this work might be based on an assumed identity of the Yajnavalkya with Maitreyi and Janaka in the Brhadaranyakopanisad. This cannot be taken seriously because both Maitreyi and Janaka lived several centuries prior to the period established for the Yoga Yajnavalkya. Thus the Yajnavalkya of the Brhadaranyakopanisad must be another sage of the same name. Sri P.C. Devanji (in the Annals of the B.O.R.I., Poona) published several papers described details about the life of our Yajnavalkya, wherein he demonstrated that our Yajnavalkya must have lived in the 2nd century CE⁴.

Yajnavalkya's Yoga

In any case, the important point is the nature of the Yoga expounded herein. If this yoga is consistent with the views of Yajnavalkya, as expounded in the Upanishads of the Sukla Yajur Veda, then there can be no reasonable objection to viewing this work as promulgating the yogic method of realization of the identity of the individual soul (atman) with the Supreme soul (brahman). This yoga was first asserted with confidence by the Yajnavalkya of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad in the court of Janaka Videhi, where he insisted upon the continued performance of action right up to the time of realization. This is in accordance with the advice of the sage of the Isopanisad, which forms the 40th chapter of the Samhita of the Sukla Yajur Veda compiled by him. Unfortunately, there is a limited amount of space to discuss in detail the parallel passages between the two well-known Upanishads of Sukla Yajur Veda school and the present Yoga Yajnavalkya. However, special attention is drawn to the following parallel

¹ According to M. Eliade, rasayana is a kind of medical alchemy. See *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958, p. 278).

² Kanishka is dated at 100-200 C.E. by G.J. Larson and R.S. Bhattacharya (*Samkhya: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1987).

³ Patanjali is variously thought to have lived in the 2nd c. B.C.E. or in the 5th c. C.E., depending on whether he is identified with Patanjali the Sanskrit grammarian, or if he lived late enough to respond to the 5th c. Vijñānavada school of Buddhism. The debate appears to revolve around the age of the fourth book, the Kaivalya Pada, and especially whether sloka IV.16 is part of the original Yogasutras or was added later, for example, interpolated by Vyasa in his commentary as an anti-Buddhist polemic in the 7th-8th c. CE. See M. Eliade, *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1958, pp. 8-9 and 370-372.

⁴ Sri P.C. Devanji inferred details of our Yajnavalkya based on the life story given in the Nagarakhanda of the Skanda Purana. He apparently lived during the 2nd c. C.E., first at Puskar near Ajmer, later migrating to Hatakesvaraksetra in the Anartadesa. See the papers by Sri P.C. Devanji, published in the Annals of the B.O.R.I., Poona (full reference not specified), and his "Sena Kings of Anarta in their Historic Setting," *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society*, Bombay, April 1952.

passages: Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (Br) II.4-5. IV.2-4. Isa Upanishad (Isa) 4-8. and the Yoga Yajnavalkya (YY) I.43, VI.77-80. IX.2, 9, 17-18, 23-24, 29, 30-32, 34, 39, XII.23-35 for the realization of the identity [of atman and brahman]; Isa 1-3, 9-18 and YY I.26, 38-39, 41, X.20-22, XI.2-9 for the “Jnana-Karma-Samuccaya” in which Jnana stands for, or has as its essence, Yoga, as explained clearly in I.43 (of the Yoga Yajnavalkya).

Although the yoga expounded here consists of the eight limbs of Patanjali’s yoga (Yama, Niyama, Asana, etc.), the two works differ in their descriptions of those limbs. Likewise, although its recommendation of various techniques of Pranayama and Vayuvijaya mark it as a work of Hatha Yoga, the Yoga Yajnavalkya differs considerably from the several Yoga Upanishads and the treatises composed by the Nada Yogis of later dates, specifically by the absence of any reference to the Satcakras (the 7 Cakras), by its description of the Ajna (heart center) as an eight-petalled lotus, and so on. These differences are not detailed here. Suffice it to say that the Yoga Yajnavalkya was based on the doctrine that realization of the identity of the individual soul with the Supreme soul, as established in the Vedanta, and that this cannot occur except by following the course of Yoga expounded herein. And, so long as final release is not realized, it is positively harmful to abandon performance of the prescribed acts, a perspective which recalls the teaching of the Yajnavalkya of the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. Realization occurs when one rouses the Kundalini (and the accompanying heat inherent in the triangular space between the two lower organs), which normally obstructs the passage of the vital breath, into the Susumna nadi (which extends from the Kanda or bulb below the navel through the spinal cord, to the opening at the root of the palate). At that point, the mind ceases to think of any object whatsoever and becomes completely steady. Achievement of this goal requires various devices, but once complete realization occurs, it is immaterial whether one retains the connection between the vital breath and one’s physical body or severs it by an act of will. Finally, there are no restrictions in this Yoga as to age, sex, caste, station in life and so on. Yajnavalkya’s yoga can be practiced by anyone who makes up their mind to do so and takes the time to become acquainted with the techniques. That is, this is the earliest available text on Hathayoga for the common person.

QUOTATIONS FROM
AND REFERENCES TO THIS WORK
IN OTHER WORKS

1. Sankara's Bhasya (Commentary) on the Svetasvatara Upanishad (II.8) contains quotations which are identifiable with YY IV.48-49; V.12-15, 17-22; VI.2-3, 5-8; VII.24/1-2 (Anandasram Sanskrit Series No. 17, pp.28-29, 42-44).
2. Commentary of Mummadideva on Gauda Abhinanda's Abridgement of the Yogavasista VI.9.65, 71 corresponding with YY XII.1, IV.20-21, VII.10.
3. Sarvadarsanasangraha of Sayana-Madhava, Patanjala Yogadarsana contains quotations at four places from a work of Yajnavalkya out of which the definition of Yoga and of Samadhi is traceable to Y.Y. I, that of Tapas to Y.Y. II, and that of Padmasana to Y.Y. III.
4. Hathayogapradipika II contains definitions of Asanas which agree with those in Y.Y.III
5. Introductory remarks in Anandavardhana's Commentary on the Bhagavad Gita (known as the jnana-karmasamuccaya) lists the names of earlier authorities on the jnanakarmasamuccaya-Vada, one of which is the Yoga Yajnavalkya.
6. The Jabala Darsana Upanishad, chapters I-X, contain passages too numerous to be cited which are, word-for-word, identical to those in the corresponding portions of the YY (I-X). This Upanishad contains much additional matter, indicating it was composed later than the YY.
7. The Sandilya Upanishad, written in prose, with only occasional quotations in verse, several of which can be traced to Y.Y. (III-VI) paraphrases the Y.Y. (I-IX). Yet it also has so much new material that it is revealed to be a later work. There are also another 3 or 4 Upanishads with verses resembling those found in the Y.Y.

Above all, the author of the Yajnavalkya Smrti referred (in III.110) to a "Yoga Sastra promulgated by me," which can be none other than this (see infra).