

## The Vibhutipada

The origins of Yoga are unknown, however, researchers date the *Vibhutipada*'s composition to around the second century CE (Rodrigues 201). Some scholars believe the great grammarian Patanjali can be credited for writing it, however, it is sometimes thought a different man by the same name created the metaphysical text (Rodrigues 202). This text is contained within the *Yoga Sutras*, which is one of the most influential systems on yoga. Yoga is just one of the orthodox systems within Hindu philosophy; yoga is a psycho-physical practice of attaining unification with absolute reality (Brahman). The word Yoga stems from the Sanskrit word, *yuj*, "to unite" (Rodrigues 202), which "implies union or unification of the body, mind, spirit, and divine" (Feuerstein 35) and Sutra means "aphoristic verses" (Rodrigues 565). Therefore, the *Yoga Sutras* contain rules or guiding principles to ultimately liberation (*moksa*) through uniting "a spiritual path to self realization and the goal" (Rodrigues 570).

The *Yoga Sutras* consists of four chapters (*padas*). The first being called *Samadhipada* (a chapter on concentration), the second *Sahanapada* (a chapter on practices), the third *Vibhutipada* (a chapter on supernatural powers), and the forth *pada* is called the *Kaivalyapada* (a chapter on liberation). These four chapters are collections of aphorisms or formulas in the form of a manual to guide one's journey to self-realization. [For more information on the Yoga Sutra and the other *padas*, see *The Yoga Sutras* by Patanjali].

The *Vibhutipada* is a text regarding "marvelous powers" and contains fifty-five Sutras (Eliade 13). This pada starts with the "last three sutras of the Eight-Faceted Path (Asthaanga Yoga): *Dharna* (contemplation), *Dhanya* (meditation), and *Samadhi* (union

with Divine Consciousness)” and are known as *Samyama* (fusion)(Devi 249). *Samyama* allows one to find knowledge of the divine self (Devi 249) and believed to channel our conscious thoughts to spiritual powers. Spiritual powers are believed to be gained through none other than “the hard way of sacrifice, of trial, of renunciation, of selfless self conquest and genuine devotion” (Johnston 90). When considering these spiritual powers, there are things that must be first understood and kept in mind (Johnston 26). These powers are believed not to be gained until the first and second books are fully attained. “When the commandments have been kept, the Rules faithfully followed, and the experiences which are described have been passed through,” is it then that marvelous powers are mastered (Johnston 87). This means to fully obtain powers, one must ultimately understand *citta* (thoughts), and how *vritti* has the inclination to stop the mind from finding one’s true nature. This is included in the first chapter *samadhipada*, where it also establishes a means to have power over the mind and circumvent diversions. It helps to “distinguish between the mental process of prediction, and observation, induction or testimony (Johnston 13) that is thought to facilitate in finding one’s self and one’s thoughts.

The *Vithutipada* is claimed to relate to techniques to control the conscious mind. This can be done through concentration, which “is attainable when all the modifications of the mind-stuff are set at rest is called *Asamprajnata* (super-conscious)” (Gopalananda 2). Staal (1975) relates that the *Vithutipada* contains information about various powers such as *sidhi* or *vibhuti*, and how to attain a high state of concentration known as *samprajnata samadhi*. However, *asamprajnata* is considered the highest state of yogic attainment (Feuerstein 96). Nevertheless, the *Vibhutipada* concentrates on techniques to

learn concentration (*samadhi*), which include both *asamprajnata* and *samprajnata Samadhi* (Gopalananda 3)

Knowledge of the *Vibhutipada* is required to fully gain understanding of the second Sutra. The *sadhanapada* is the “practical way” and is concerned with spiritual training, which “like every true system of spiritual teaching, rests on this broad and firm foundation of honesty, truth, cleanness, obedience” (Johnston 44). These teachings are explored through the eight limbs of yoga, which ultimately leads to the acquisition of *siddhi* (supernatural powers). Once the first two padas are attained then one is entitled to the *Vibhutipada* chapter and what it holds. The *Vibhutipada* explores meditation (*dhyana*), concentration (*dharana*) and Samadhi (contemplative union), collectively known as Samyama (attention, awareness, and energy). [For more information on the eight limbs of yoga, see Development of Psychic Powers in Yoga]

Dhyana (meditation) is the idea of attaining an unbroken, steady flow of awareness. This awareness is trying to go beyond reflexive thinking, to a profound state of relaxation, which will lead one to self-realization. In other words, it is attempting, through self-regulation, a special form of insight. The technique of *Dharana* (concentration) includes the idea of attaining one-pointedness of focus (Rodrigues 206). This can be reached through acts of sacred utterances (*mantras*), breath control, icons, diagrams and or prayer beads (*mala*) (Rodrigues 182). *Samadhi* is also an essential system in the *Vibhutipada*, and it opens up the ideas around contemplative absorption and insight into the nature of awareness (Rodrigues 206).

Johnston (127) also makes it evident that unity is the reality, and the closer one comes to reality the closer one finds unity of the heart. This results in feelings such as

sympathy, compassion, and kindness. Knowledge and power are also gained through concentration and some of these powers include, “divine power of intuition, and the hearing, the touch, the vision, the taste and the power of smell” (Johnston 127), as well as, learning languages of animals, reading thoughts, and levitation. However, Nischala Joy Devi points out that “these are not practices in themselves; rather, they are progressive internal “states” that evolve through the influence of conscious living and the other practices, which preceded them (Devi 264). They allow oneself to fully encompass the pathway to love, which is accomplished through reaching the full essence of all senses (Devi 264). Supernatural powers and spiritual progress are deemed to then be attainable.

Ultimately, the mind and body become one, and once one has conquered these techniques, liberation can be reached. Moksa (liberation) “is freedom from sorrow and suffering and their twins, sensuous pleasure and happiness, and the one pair is never without the other” (Chennakesavan 129), and is the goal of the fourth chapter of the *Yoga Sutra*. The *Kaivalyapada* is believed to give one the abilities to become free from bondage, pure awareness, and finally liberation, yoga’s ultimate goal.

## **REFERENCES**

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## **RELATED TOPICS AND TERMS**

Yoga Sutras

*Samadhipada*

Sadhanapada

*Kaivalyapada*

*Patanjali*

Moksa

Samyama

Eight Limbs of Yoga

## **RECOMMENDED WEBSITES**

[http://jeff.gaia.com/blog/2006/5/development\\_of\\_psychic\\_powers\\_in\\_yoga](http://jeff.gaia.com/blog/2006/5/development_of_psychic_powers_in_yoga)

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/yogasutr.htm>

<http://www.exoticindiaart.com/article/yoga>

<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2526/pg2526.html>

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