

## Yogic Potentials and Capacities (Siddhis)

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### Article

#### Yogic Potentials and Capacities, or *siddhis*, in Hindu-Buddhist Psychology

Note: A *siddhi* perceived as a revelation of ultimate truth or reality is termed a *vibhuti*; perceived as fully actualized abilities, sometimes they are known collectively as *aisvarya*, spiritual wealth and glory.

A. *Monosiddhi, cittasiddhi*. Extrasensory perceptions; extraordinary mental capacities.

B. *Kayasiddhi, dehasiddhi*. Bodily powers and perfections.

C. *Jnanasiddhi, brahmasiddhi*. Transpersonal Being-cognitions, including knowledge of Brahman, Atman, Dharma, Purusha, etc.

D. *Anandasiddhi, lilasiddhi*. Yogic beatitudes born of extraordinary self-integration or psychocosmic integration.

### MANOSIDDHI, CITTASIDDHI

#### Extrasensory perceptions; extraordinary mental powers

1. Subtle knowledge of distant stars and other heavenly bodies, their interrelations and configurations.
2. Knowledge of other planes of existence (lokas).
3. *Paracitta-jnanas*. Telepathic knowledge of the minds of other people.
4. *Citta-samvit*. Knowledge of the workings of one's own mind.
5. *Tathata-jnana, visista-jnana*. Knowledge of individual things and beings in respect of their suchness or being-ness (also called *Nama-Rupa-Jnana*).
6. *Kayavyuha-jnana*. Knowledge of one's internal organs, physiological processes, anatomical structures, energy centers, nervous and cerebrospinal systems.
7. *Jatismarate, Purvajnama-jnana*. Remembrance of one's past lives or incarnations.

8. *Adrasta-jnana, Bhavitavya-jnana*. Pre-cognition of coming events, as well as of one's future destiny. Precognition of the exact time, place, and circumstances of one's own death.

9. *Sphota-jnana*. Knowledge of the revealing light (sphota) inherent in spoken or written words of people, or in the sounds made by animals, birds, and other living things. This enables the yogi to understand the precise significance of human language and the language of animals, birds, trees, flowers.

10. *Akasa-vani-sravana, Daiva-vani*. Supernatural auditory knowledge of ethereal records representing the accumulated knowledge of humankind. The tapping of these sources may provide glimpses of the future.

11. *Siddha-darsana, or Siddha-sravana*. Seeing the sights or hearing the voices of the world's master minds, whether contracted through living communication or through activation of their wisdom deposited in the records of the *Vinanja loka*.

12. *Viprakrista jnana*. Experience of normally invisible processes of nature, or very remote obscure things and treasures, e.g. objects hidden in far-off caves or ocean bottoms.

13. *Alaukika Vedana*. Registering in one's emotional sensibility the feelings of other people, animals, birds, and even tiny insects.

14. *Alaukika Asvada*. The ability to enjoy the flavors of distant delicacies.

15. *Alaukika Vata*. The ability to enjoy the fragrance of distant and hidden perfumes, flowers, incenses, etc.

## KAYASIDDHI, DEHASIDDI

Bodily powers and perfections.

(Among the various psychic powers discussed in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the eight *mahasiddhis* or perfections of the body are probably the best known. They are the first eight in the section below.)

1. *Anima*. The ability to reduce the body (or the center of consciousness) to the size of atom.

2. *Mahima*. The ability to expand one's body (or consciousness) to an enormous size.

3. *Laghima*. To make the body as light as a feather.

4. *Garima*. To make the body enormously heavy, like a mountain.

5. *Prapti*. The power to reach the moon (or any object in remote space) and grasp it or touch it with the tip of one's finger.

6. *Prakamya*. The yogic power of instant wish-fulfillment. The ordinary will power is a function of the mind, a phenomenon of time. In ordinary life there is always a greater or lesser time gap between an effort of will power or the formation of a definite wish and its fulfillment in the realm of actuality. But an advanced yogi, when he becomes united with the timeless creative energy of Being (*Paraprakriti* or *Braham-Sakti*) is believed to become a master of time, considerably reducing the gap between his focused will-force and actual accomplishment. He attains what is known in Tibetan Buddhism as *Amoghasiddhi*, power in the field of action.

7. *Isatva*. Creative lordship.

a. The power of materialization, i.e. producing visible material things or invisible physical sensations (food, smell, color, etc.) out of the raw material of subtle energy.

b. The power of physical transformation, e.g. transforming water into wine, iron into gold, etc.

c. *Rupanirmana*. The power to assume different forms and project entirely divergent images of oneself. This is also known as *Bahurupitva*.

d. *Cittanirmana*. The power of creating different minds as variously effective means of gaining different perspectives and different means of knowledge and self-expression.

e. *Atmarupantara*. The power of transforming the physical, instinctual and mental aspects of personality into channels of expression for spiritual values.

f. *Pararupantara*. The ability to transform other people into what they essentially are, namely images of the Divine.

g. *Yugasristi*, or *Navayugapravartana*. The ability to create a new order of civilization, a new era of cultural efflorescence, a new life style, a new system of values. This enables one to function as a figure of history or a person of destiny.

8. *Vasitva*. Control and mastery over nature, both external and internal, physical and mental. Such control may assume various forms, such as:

a. Control over one's internal bodily organs, endocrine glands, energy centers, autonomic nervous system. This enormously increases one's power of resistance to disease, decay, and degenerative processes. One gains access to the secrets of rejuvenation and physical charm, vitality and longevity. One attains what is known as *Ichhamrityu*, i.e., the ability to die or leave body at will.

b. The ability to control the mind and behavior patterns of other people by projecting powerful suggestions into bioenergetic existence-field.

c. The ability to subdue the savage impulse, wrathfulness and aggressiveness of other living beings, human or animal. This is known as *aridaman*.

d. Mastery over one's own instinctual drives and urges, passions and motivations. This is known as *Atmasamyama*.

9. *Saktipata*. The ability to transmit spiritual energy of the power of illumined existence to others who are sufficiently receptive or ready in their personal growth. This is also known as *Gurukripa*, *Saktisancara*, or *Diksai*.e. spiritual initiation. People can be spiritually initiated and awakened in various ways, e.g. by the Guru's compassionate look, touch, loving embrace, or by spiritual formula or sound-symbol.

10. *Vyakhinasa, Rogavimochana*. Spiritual healing by transmitting harmonizing vital energy or illuminating psychic energy, or by opening the inner being of a person in suffering to the free current of the universal life force.

11. *Vayubhaksana*. The ability to draw nourishment from air by turning the elemental forces of nature into food.

12. *Amritasevana*. The ability to drink the heavenly ambrosia or nectar of immortality. This happens

when the awakened psychonuclear energy goes up to the highest energy center at the top of the skull. Out of this union flows a stream of joy and rapture flooding the entire organism. This stream of blissful energy, which has a revitalizing and rejuvenating effect, is known as the nectar of immortality (*amrita*). Also known as *sanjivani suddha*.

13. *Punarujjivana*. The power to bring a newly deceased body back to life.

14. *Indrajal vistara*. Power of mass hypnosis such as climbing up a rope, assumption of illusory forms of angels, animals or other persons, etc.

15. *Indra Sakti*. The power of rational will or organized purposive energy carried to the highest limit of development.

16. *Rudra Sakti, Kundalini Sakti, Kalimahima*. The most powerful cerebrospinal energy, dark yet luminous, like flashes of lightning in dark clouds, originally beyond all control of the rational will.

17. *Brahmajyoti*. Attainment of the self-shining light. In the Kena Upanishad, Indra receives this Being-cognition by the grace of Uma, the golden goddess, the self-revealing power of Being.

18. *Purnajnana Sakti*. This is what Sri Aurobindo calls the supra-mental power (*Atimanasa Sakti, Ritacit Sakti*), in which all the powers of consciousness are integrated.

## BRAHMASIDDHI, JNANASIDDHI

### Transpersonal Being-cognitions

1. *Virat Jnana*. Synoptic vision of Being in its visible manifestation, i.e. knowledge of Being manifesting itself in and through the phenomenal world and color, sound and rhythm. In the Bhagavadgita, Arjuna had the cosmic vision known as *Viswarupa Darsana*, the vision of Krishna as all the forms of the visible world.

2. *Suksma Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as the unmanifest background, or as the invisible all-sustaining medium of subtle forces and vibrations. The ordinary world is the visible manifestation of this invisible energy matrix. (The unmanifest energy matrix is also known as the cosmic seed, the golden egg, the *Hiranyagrabha*).

3. *Karana Brahma Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as the original undifferentiated cosmic energy from which the cosmic manifold springs into existence, in which it abides and endures, and in which it dissolved again. At this level the infinite Being-Energy (*Mahasakti*) is not yet differentiated into distinct forms but holds within itself endless diversity as the cosmic seed capable of sprouting and blossoming into the varieties of name and form (*nama-rupa*). (Spinoza's *Natura Naturans?*)

4. *Nirguna Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of Being as infinite, indefinable, indeterminable, unfathomable Mystery. In other worlds, knowledge of ultimate reality in its transrational, unspeakable, numinous aspect. The same kind of experiential knowledge is described in Buddhism as knowledge of the absolute void or emptiness (*sunyata*). Christian mystics have variously described it as “the dazzling darkness,” “the absolute nudity of pure Being” or “the dark night.” *Bhuma jnana, Taraka jnana, Turiyatita* are other Sanskrit words for awareness of pure transcendence.

5. *Purna Brahma Jnana*. Integral knowledge of Being as the indivisible unity of the temporal and the nontemporal dimensions of the universe - the evolutionary and nonevolutionary aspects, the

multitudinous and the absolutely nondual aspects of the real. One implication of this all-comprehensive understanding is that the nontemporal and transcendental aspect of the universe must not be metaphysically converted or reified into an eternally self-existent substance, absolute Idea, absolute Spirit, all powerful God, universal Mind, or absolute Suchness.

6. *Dharma Jnana*. Knowledge of the cosmic law which controls all operations of Nature and guides destinies of human history and civilization. It is the law that sustains the cosmic whole as an energy-conserving, balance-maintaining, self-adjusting, self-recuperative, creative-destructive, evolving-devolving system of energy.

7. *Tattva Jnana*. Knowledge of the fundamental structural principles of the universe, the archetypal masculine principle (Siva, Purusa, Yang, Logos, Yab), the archetypal feminine principle (Sakti, Prakriti, Yin, Eros, Yum), the ontological relation of dual-nonduality, or bipolar unity (*Dvaitadvaita*), the dynamic interplay of opposites (Lila), the laws of identity-in-diversity and diversity-in-identity (*akhanda vaicitrya*), the psychocosmic correspondence (*deha-citta-abhinnata*), the circular movement of creation-destruction as the rhythm of the cosmic process (*Sristi-Samhara Cakra*), the cosmic law of dynamic harmony (*sasvata dharma*), the natural law of the equality of action and reaction (*kriya-pratikriya samatva*), the ethical law of the recoil of all moral actions (Karma phalatva), the psychoevolutionary law of energy mobilization (*Urdhagami tapahsakti*), the creativity of the union of opposites (*milana-nihita sristi rahasya*). Metaphysics as the science of first principles consists of this kind of knowledge.

8. *Jati Jnana, Samanya Jnana*. Knowledge of eternal forms, essences, ideas, class differentia.

9. *Pradhana Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality (Being) as the primordial neutral energy or matrix of the world.

10. *Anna Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality (Brahman, Being) as universal matter, or cosmic physical energy.

11. *Prana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the universal life force, the élan vital.

12. *Mano Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic mind, or world of Ideas.

13. *Vijnana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the universal gnosis.

14. *Sabda Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic Sound, the primordial Word, the Music of the Spheres, the symphony of original vibrations.

15. *Sphota Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of articulate sound structure composed of intelligently organized symbols. Sphota is the luminous potency of words and propositions to reveal the eternal verities of existence. So language conceived as truth-revealing light is perceived as the essence of the ultimate.

16. *Prema Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as absolute love.

17. *Sakti Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as supreme and absolute power. Supreme power may be conceived as the cosmic will to power, as unchallenged social or economico-political power, or as all-good, all-loving cosmic creative energy (*Mahasakti*).

18. *Ananda Brahman Jnana*. Immediate and intuitive awareness of the ultimate as indescribable and unfathomable bliss.

19. *Atma Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as non-different from the boundless light

of pure consciousness that shines at the inmost center of every human's own individual being. This gives rise to the experience of perfect self-sufficiency and everlasting nontemporal self-existence (*Kaivalya*, or the *Atma Pratistha* of Raja Yoga).

20. *Ksana Brahman Jnana*. Knowledge of the ultimate as the eternal Now. Knowledge of the entire expanse of time with its three dimensions of past, present and future simultaneously present to the knower in a flash of intuition.

21. *Mahakala Jnana*. Knowledge of ultimate reality as the cosmic process, as the beginningless and endless creative advance of Time. The Dancing Shiva (*Nataraja*) whose dance manifests the rhythm of the multidimensional cosmic process. The cosmic dance of Kali, dancing in self-oblivion on the tranquil bosom of Siva, the radiance of eternity.

22. *Loka Jnana, Bhuvana Jnana*. Knowledge of the different planes of existence-consciousness or psycho-cosmic spheres established by the creative evolutionary dance of Time (*Mahakali, Nataraja*).

23. *Parabindu Jnana*. Knowledge of the ultimate as the indivisible sound-light-seed-energy. Here vision, audition, and tactual are rolled into one supreme experience. This shows how our divergent sensations are differentiations of the same indivisible nondual reality.

24. *Satya dristi*. The vision of the Supreme Being as Truth which is inseparable from the supreme Good and the supreme Beauty (*Satya-Siva-Sundara*). Which means that the direct knowledge of the ultimate is simultaneous fulfillment of the deepest longing of our intellectual, volitional, and emotional nature.

25. *Kundalini or Kali Darsana*. Awareness of the awakening of the dormant psycho-nuclear cerebo-spinal energy.

26. *Adrista Jnana, Divya Adesha Sravana*. Audition of the Divine Command, the categorical imperative of the Supreme.

27. *Visyakalyana Jnana, Sarvamangala Jnana*. Vision of the cosmic welfare, or of the ultimate good of humanity evolving earth. Such vision of the summum bonum of the terrestrial process is born of the integral experience of the indivisible unity of the timeless transcendence and the creative advance of time in and through planetary evolution. Such a vision is reflected in ideals of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

28. *Akhanda Sattajnana*. Undivided awareness of the physical, the physical and the spiritual, the subjective, the objective and the transcendental aspects of the universe. Ancient Vedic sages of India laid special emphasis upon such integrated knowledge of reality. Agni was for them simultaneously the physical fire, the psychological fire, and the spiritual or numinous fire of transpersonal Being.

## ANANDASIDDHI LILASIDDHI

1. *Visoka, Klesanasa-ananda*. The joy born of elimination of mental disturbances, sensory distraction or deprivation, emotional agitation or fluctuation.

2. *Swatahsphurta-ananda*. The delight of spontaneous self-expression without any hindrance, inhibition or obstruction.

3. *Sadananda*. The kind of delight which is intrinsic to being and wells up from the depths without any extraneous cause.
4. *Cidananda*. The delight of pure undifferentiated consciousness which abides in the midst of all changing emotional moods such as sadness and cheerfulness.
5. *Vivekananda*. The delight inherent in fundamental value distinctions.
6. *Nirvananda*. The joy born of the liquidation of the empirical ego-self.
7. *Bhumananda*. The delight of immediate contact with the depth dimension of existence, the ultimate ground all that is.
8. *Gunatita-ananda*. The delight arising from nature-transcendence, abiding in the midst of all changes and reverses of fortune.
9. *Mahanada*. The delight of glimpsing the cosmic energy which originating, sustaining, and consummating all things, beings, events, and processes.
10. *Kalinrityananda*. The delight born of the dance or rhythmical movement of the awakened spiritual energy within one's own being resulting in the circulation of light (*prabhamandala*).
11. *Sarvatma-ananda*. The delight of perceiving the whole universe within one's own Self, and the Self within the universe.
12. *Sristi-ananda*. The delight of illumined creativity.
13. *Amritananda*. The delight of union of the energy aspect and the consciousness aspect of our being - the union of Sakti and Siva, Yin and Yang, Prakriti and Purusa, Eros and Logos, Yam and Yab.
14. *Rasananda*. The all-pervasive delight of perceiving the infinite variations of existence as crystallized expressions of the One.
15. *Lilananda*. The delight of entering into different kinds of rapturous communion with, or dynamic togetherness with, the Supreme Being.
  - a. *Salokya*. The delight of dwelling in the same place of consciousness with God.
  - b. *Samipya*. The delight of existing perpetually in the immediate presence of the Divine
  - c. *Sarupya*. The delight of acquiring the divine form or appearance.
  - d. *Sdrisya*. The delight of growing steadily into the likeness of God.
  - e. *Sadharmya*. The delight of living in accord with the divine law of action.
  - f. *Sarsti*. The delight of acquiring the supernatural powers of God.
  - g. *Sayujya*. The delight of being absorbed in the abysmal depths of divine existence.
  - h. *Seva*. The delight of placing the service of the supreme Godhead above even the soul's deepest and most secret personal longing-the longing for complete liberation.
16. *Mahamaya Lila*. The delight of worldly affairs in the spirit of sportsmanship or divine

playmanship which is born of perfect liberation (*moksa*).

17. *Rasalila*. The delight of dancing and singing together with kindred souls in the spirit of common dedication, and total self-giving.

18. *Yajna Lila*. *Atmotsarga Lila*. The delight of unconditional self-giving and joyful sharing with other people out of genuine love for man and God.

a. *Sampattidan Yajna*. The beatitude of sharing one's earthly possessions with other people out of altruistic love or compassion.

b. *Atmadan Yajna*. The beatitude of sacrificing personal comforts and pleasure with a view to serving the Divine Presence in the social have-nots and untouchables, in the poor and down-trodden.

c. *Jivandan Yajna*. The beatitude of sacrificing one's own life for the manifestation of divine glory in human society - for the freedom of one's own country, for the elimination of ignorance and injustice, for the restoration of the moral balance of the world.

d. *Kamadan Yajna*, *Brahmacharya*, *Tapasya*. The beatitude of sacrificing ego drives and desires, impulses and motivations with a view to awakening the Divine Energy (*Sakti*) which lies dormant in the human psychophysical system.

19. *Bodhisattva Lila*. The beatitude of dedicating oneself, even after the attainment of full enlightenment, to the service of the entire living creation toward the collective liberation of all.

20. *Dharma Lila*, *Jivanmukti Lila*. The beatitude of dedicating oneself to worldly activities with a view to maintaining the ethical order of the world (*Lokasamgraha*), regardless of the fruits of action.

21. *Jugantar Lila*. Inspired by the vision of new and better world order, an enlightened person may engage in revolutionary action for the ultimate good of humanity in utter indifference to personal, communal, racial, or parochial vested interest.

22. *Navayuga Lila*. The beatitude of participating in planetary evolution in tune with the superconscient energy of Being.

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