

## समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात् ॥४५॥

### II.45 samādhisiddhiḥ Īśvarapraṇidhānāt

<i>samādhi</i>	absorption, profound meditation, superconsciousness
<i>siddhiḥ</i>	accomplishment, success
<i>Īśvara</i>	God
<i>praṇidhānāt</i>	by surrender, by resignation, by application

*Surrender to God brings perfection in samādhi.*

*Samādhi* is attained through clarity of intelligence and intensity in thought to surrender to God. The power of *samādhi* comes to him who takes refuge in God.

Surrender to God releases the *sādhaka* from the bondage of earthly desires, leads to the renunciation of sensuous desires, and nurtures in him the most intense form of application (see I.16 and IV.29).

## स्थिरसुखासनम् ॥४६॥

### II.46 sthira sukham āsanam

<i>sthira</i>	firm, fixed, steady, steadfast, lasting
<i>sukham</i>	happiness, delight
<i>āsanam</i>	postures, poses

*Āsana is perfect firmness of body, steadiness of intelligence and benevolence of spirit.*

Sūtras II.46–48 define *āsana* and the effects of its practice.

The definition of *āsana* is given as follows: whatever *āsana* is performed, it should be done with a feeling of firmness, steadiness and endurance in the body; goodwill in the intelligence of the head, and awareness and delight in the intelligence of the heart. This is how each *āsana* should be understood, practised and experienced. Performance of the *āsana* should be nourishing and illuminative.

Some have taken this *sūtra* to mean that any comfortable posture is suitable. If that were so, these would be *āsanas* of pleasure (*bhogāsanas*) not *yogāsanas*. This *sūtra* defines the perfected *āsana*. From the very first *sūtra* Patañjali demands the highest quality of attention to perfection. This discipline and attention must be applied to the practice of each *āsana*, to penetrate to its very depths in the remotest parts of the body. Even the meditational *āsana* has to be cultivated by the fibres, cells, joints and muscles in cooperation with the mind. If *āsanas* are not performed in this way they become stale and the performer becomes diseased (a *rogi*) rather than a yogi.

Nor does *āsana* refer exclusively to the sitting poses used for meditation. Some divide *āsanas* into those which cultivate the body and those which are used in meditation. But in any *āsana* the body has to be toned and the mind tuned so that one can stay longer with a firm body and a serene mind. *Āsanās* should be performed without creating aggressiveness in the muscle spindles or the skin cells. Space must be created between muscle and skin so that the skin receives the actions of the muscles, joints and ligaments. The skin then sends messages to the brain, mind and intelligence which judge the appropriateness of those actions. In this way, the principles of *yama* and *niyama* are involved and action and reflection harmonize. In addition the practice of a variety of *āsanas* clears the nervous system, causes the energy to flow in the system without obstruction and ensures an even distribution of that energy during *prāṇāyāma*.

Usually the mind is closer to the body and to the organs of action and perception than to the soul. As *āsanas* are refined they automatically become meditative as the intelligence is made to penetrate towards the core of being.

Each *āsana* has five functions to perform. These are conative, cognitive, mental, intellectual and spiritual. Conative action is the exertion of the organs of action. Cognitive action is the perception of the results of that action. When the two are fused together the discriminative faculty of the mind acts to guide the organs of action and perception to perform the *āsanas* more correctly; the rhythmic flow of energy and awareness is experienced evenly and without interruption both centripetally and centrifugally throughout the channels of the body. A pure state of joy is felt in the cells and the mind. The body, mind and soul are one. This is the manifestation of *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* in the practice of an *āsana*.

Patañjali's explanation of *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* in *sūtras* III.1–2 beautifully describes the correct performance of an *āsana*. He says 'the focusing of attention on a chosen point or area within the body as well as outside is concentration (*dhāraṇā*). Maintaining this intensity of awareness leads from one-pointed attention to non-specific attentiveness. When the attentive awareness between the consciousness of the practitioner and his practice is

unbroken, this is *dhyāna*.' In II.48, when Patañjali says that the pairs of opposites do not exist in the correct performance of an *āsana* he clearly implies the involvement of *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*.

(See I.20 and also *Light on Yoga* for further details.)

### प्रयत्नशैथिल्यानन्तसमापत्तिभ्याम् ।४७।

II.47 prayatna śaithilya ananta samāpattibhyām

<i>prayatna</i>	persevering effort, continued exertion, endeavour
<i>śaithilya</i>	laxity, relaxation
<i>ananta</i>	endless, boundless, eternal, infinite
<i>samāpattibhyām</i>	assuming original form, completion, conclusion

*Perfection in an āsana is achieved when the effort to perform it becomes effortless and the infinite being within is reached.*

Perfection in *āsana* is reached only when effort ceases, instilling infinite poise and allowing the finite vehicle, the body, to merge in the seer.

The *sādhaka* can be considered firm in his postures when persevering effort is no longer needed. In this stability, he grasps the physiology of each *āsana* and penetrates within, reaching the minutest parts of the body. Then he gains the art of relaxation, maintaining the firmness and extension of the body and consciousness. In this way he develops a sensitive mind. With this sensitivity, he trains his thinking faculty to read, study and penetrate the infinite. He is immersed in the boundless state of oneness which is indivisible and universal.

Some say that it is possible to acquire mastery of *āsana* merely by surrendering to God. How can this be so? In yoga we are on a razor's edge and in *āsana* perfection must be attained through perseverance, alertness and insight. Without these we remain dull and make no progress. Surrender to God alone does not make us perfect, although it helps us to forget the stresses of life and of our efforts, and guides us towards humility even when perfection in *āsana* has been attained.

When the *sādhaka* has reached that state of balance, attention, extension, diffusion and relaxation take place simultaneously in body and intelligence, and they merge in the seat of the soul. This is a sign of release from the

dualities of pleasure and pain, contraction and extension, heat and cold, honour and dishonour, etc.

Perfection in *āsana* brings unalloyed happiness, blessedness and beatitude.

### ततो द्वन्द्वानभिघातः ॥४८॥

II.48 tataḥ dvandvāḥ anabhīghātaḥ

<i>tataḥ</i>	from that, then
<i>dvandvāḥ</i>	dualities, opposites
<i>anabhīghātaḥ</i>	cessation of disturbance

*From then on, the sādḥaka is undisturbed by dualities.*

The effect of *āsana* is to put an end to the dualities or differentiation between the body and mind, mind and soul. None of the pairs of opposites can exist for the *sādḥaka* who is one with body, mind and soul.

When body, mind and soul unite in a perfect posture, the *sādḥaka* is in a state of beatitude. In that exalted position, the mind, which is at the root of dualistic perception, loses its identity and ceases to disturb him. Unity is achieved between body and mind and mind and soul. There is no longer joy or sorrow, heat or cold, honour or dishonour, pain or pleasure. This is perfection in action and freedom in consciousness.

### तस्मिन्सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोगतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः ॥४९॥

II.49 tasmin satiśvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ  
prāṇāyāmaḥ

<i>tasmin</i>	on this
<i>sati</i>	being accomplished
<i>śvāsa</i>	inbreath, inhalation
<i>praśvāsayoḥ</i>	outbreath, exhalation