

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the study's approach to literary research, giving details of the source texts like *Yoga Śāstra*, *Yoga Upaniṣads* and *Yoga Tantras*. Details of the methods are contained in Chapter Five, Methodology, while the *siddhis* identified in the texts are mostly described in Chapter Six, Results. However, details of *siddhis* found in the Śrīmada Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna, and those manifested by important characters in the Rāmāyaṇā and Mahābhārata are given in section 2.3. Some had *siddhis* given to them, or possessed them from birth, or acquired them by their efforts through yoga, *aushadhi* or *tapas*. '*Siddhis are born of birth, herbs, mantras, tapas or samādhi.*' PYS 4.1 (Saraswati, 2006). Section 2.3 presents *siddhis* mentioned in Patañjali Yoga Sūtra in Table 2.1. Section 2.4 lists important quotes eulogizing the magnificence of *siddhis* by several prominent personalities of east and west.

2.2 LITERARY RESEARCH

All academic research requires prior review of academic literature, i.e. Literary Research. In general it usually starts with (i) a problem to be solved, or otherwise considered; (ii) a body of evidence composed of facts and expert opinions, many requiring independent assessment; (iii) analysis of such aspects of the evidence vis-à-vis the problem; leading to (iv) logical organisation of that body of evidence so as to indicate strategies to find a solution or set of solutions to the problem; and hopefully, (v) a definite conclusion(s) on how to solve the problem or decrease its impact. (Khan, 2013). This study is in itself literary research, taking as its

problem: How to include phenomena of *siddhis* into the scientific paradigm, and its Body of Evidence, *siddhis* listed in the Sanskrit literature or modern scientific investigations.

The source texts for study of Yoga *Śāstras*, Yoga *Upaniṣads* and Yoga *Tantras* were selected after discussing with experts in the field. Two texts were chosen under Yoga *Śāstras* – Bhagavada Gītā (Chidbhananda, 1972) and Patañjali Yoga Sūtra (Saraswati, 2006; Shearer, 1982). The twenty Yoga *Upaniṣads* (Vidyalankar, 2018; Ayyangar, 1938) from Muktikā Upaniṣad are included, while four texts were chosen from Yoga *Tantras* viz., Haṭha Yoga Pradipikā (Muktibodhananda, 2008), Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā (Saraswati, 2012), Śiva Saṁhitā (Vasu, 1914) and Haṭharatnāvalī (Gharote et al, 2009).

2.3 REVIEW OF ANCIENT LITERATURE ON *SIDDHIS*

In the Śrīmadā Bhāgvata Mahāpurāna (Goswami, 1972), Sri Shukadeva, son of Veda Vyasa, recounts the life of Lord Krishna, naming eighteen *siddhis*. Of these, eight, the *aṣṭa siddhi*, are major, while ten are minor. The eight major *siddhis* are:

1. *Aṇimā* – reducing one’s body to the size of an atom.
2. *Mahimā* – magnifying one’s body to a gigantic size.
3. *Laghimā* – extreme lightness of body.
4. *Prāpti* – establishing contact with the senses of the entire creation in the form of the deities presiding over those senses.
5. *Prākāmya* – capacity to enjoy pleasures heard of (through the scriptures as enjoyable in the other world alone) and capable of being seen (though enjoyed only in subterranean regions).
6. *Isītvā* – capacity to impel Maya and other subordinate potencies to function (according to one’s will).

7. *Vaśitvā* – absence of attachment to the pleasures of sense.
8. *Kamavasāyitā* – able to enjoy in the highest measure whatever pleasure one seeks to enjoy.
- *Garimā* – extreme heaviness, listed in Haṭha Yoga Pradipikā, is only a ‘minor’ *siddhi* here.

The ten minor *siddhis* are:

- i. Insight into past, present and future.
- ii. Absence of hunger and thirst, old age, etc. in this body.
- iii. Capacity to see from large distances.
- iv. Capacity to hear at an unusual distance.
- v. Locomotion at a speed that can be increased according to one’s will.
- vi. Taking any form at will.
- vii. Leaving one’s own body and entering any other untenanted body.
- viii. Participation in the past times of Gods (with the *apsaras* or celestial nymphs).
- ix. Attainment of one’s desired ends.
- x. Exercising authority unobstructed everywhere.

Rāmāyaṇā (Achleshwar, 2014): Shri Hanumanji was blessed with immense powers from birth.

In *Hanuman Chalisa*, we learn that he was bestowed with the power to grant others *aṣṭa siddhi*.

He used his *siddhis* to cross over the sea to Lanka. He also used them to become the size of an atom, and then a huge giant to overcome obstacles on the way. He could also make himself very heavy, and very light. He carried the Sanjeevani mountain to save the life of Shri Laxmana. The same text describes the *siddhis* that Ravana acquired by *tapas*.

Mahābhārata (Vyas, 2015): The Mahābhārata tells how Sanjaya was blessed by Maharshi Veda Vyasa with *Divya-drishti*, the ability to see far-off events. He was thus able to recount events on the battlefield of Kurukshetra where the Pandavas fought the Kauravas to the blind King Dhritarashtra. We also learn how Arjuna’s austerities in exile gained boons from *Īśvara* in the form of weapons, and increased strength and energy.

Patañjali Yoga Sūtra: The most celebrated, authoritative text describes *siddhis* and their means of attainment. Fifteen abilities detailed in *Pādā* II may be regarded as perfections of mind, i.e. *siddhis*. *Pādā* III first explains *Saṁnyamā*, and then devotes thirty *sūtra* enumerating the main bulk of *siddhis*, stating how each *siddhi* may be developed through its use. (See Table 2.1)

TABLE 2.1: SIDDHIS IN PATAÑJALI YOGA SŪTRA			
PĀDĀ II – SĀDHANĀ PĀDĀ			
Sr. No.	P.Y.S. No.	Practice	Siddhi
1	2.35	<i>Ahiṁsā</i> – Non-Violence	Abandonment of hostility in vicinity
2	2.36	<i>Satya</i> – Truthfulness	Actions achieve their fruits
3	2.37	<i>Asteya</i> – Honesty	All wealth present themselves
4	2.38	<i>Brahmacarya</i>	Subtle energies are gained
5	2.39	<i>Aparigraha</i> – Non-Possessiveness	Realization of purpose of one’s life
6	2.40	<i>Śaucā</i> – Cleanliness (Physical)	Indifference towards body and non-attachment to others
7	2.41	<i>Śaucā</i> – Mental Purity	Purity, cheerfulness, one-pointedness, mastery over organs of sense and action, and readiness for self-realization
8	2.42	<i>Santoṣa</i> – Contentment	Supreme happiness
9	2.43	<i>Tapas</i> – Austerities	Impurities destroyed, perfection in the body and organs of sense and action
10	2.44	<i>Svādhyāya</i> – Mantra Practice	Communion with one’s chosen deity
11	2.45	<i>Īśvarapraṇidhāna</i> – Surrender to the Divine	Perfects <i>samādhi</i>

12	2.48	<i>Āsana</i>	Pairs of opposite cease to impact
13	2.52	<i>Prāṇāyāma</i>	Removes the inner light's veils
14	2.53	<i>Prāṇāyāma</i>	Mind gains steadiness for <i>dhāraṇā</i>
15	2.55	<i>Pratyāhāra</i>	Supreme mastery over <i>indriyā</i>
PĀDĀ III – VIBHŪTI PĀDĀ			
Sr. No.	P.Y.S. No.	<i>Samyamā</i> on	<i>Siddhi</i>
16	3.16	Three <i>parināma</i> , transformations (<i>nirodha</i> , <i>samādhi</i> and <i>ekāgratā</i>)	Knowledge of past and future
17	3.17	Name, form and idea of an object	Understanding of sounds produced by all living beings
18	3.18	Direct experience of <i>saṁskāra</i>	Knowledge of past incarnations
19	3.19	Direct experience of the state of another person's <i>citta</i>	Knowledge of its quality
20	3.21	Form of Body	Invisibility
21	3.22	Sound, etc.	Disappearance of sound and other sense perceptions
22	3.23	<i>Karma</i> - active and dormant	Knowledge of time of death & omens
23	3.24	Friendliness, etc.	Strengthens (those qualities)
24	3.25	Strength of elephant (any animal)	Corresponding strength is developed
25	3.26	Inner light	Knowledge of subtle, obscure or distant objects
26	3.27	Sun	Knowledge of cosmic spaces
27	3.28	Moon	Knowledge of arrangement of stars
28	3.29	Pole star – <i>Dhruva</i>	Knowledge of movement of the stars
29	3.30	Navel centre	Knowledge of arrangement of body

30	3.31	Throat pit	Hunger and thirst cease
31	3.32	<i>Kurma nāḍi</i> (in middle of chest)	Steadiness
32	3.33	Light in crown of head	Vision of the <i>siddhas</i> , perfected ones
33	3.34	(From) Intuition	Knowledge of everything
34	3.35	Heart	Knowledge of the <i>citta</i>
35	3.36	One's own awareness	Knowledge of <i>puruṣa</i>
36	3.37	<i>Puruṣa</i> or subjective awareness	Intuition & higher levels of hearing, touch, sight, taste & smell
37	3.39	Loosening the cause of bondage, and by knowledge of the <i>Citta</i>	One can enter another body
38	3.40	By mastering <i>udāna vāyu</i>	Ability to avoid contact with water, mud, thorns etc., and float over them
39	3.41	By mastering <i>samāna vāyu</i>	The body shines with radiant light
40	3.42	Relationship between hearing and <i>ākāśa</i>	Divine hearing
41	3.43	Relationship between the body and <i>ākāśa</i> , and lightness of cotton fibre	Ability to travel through space
42	3.45	Gross, essential, and subtle natures, constitution and purpose of the <i>bhūtā</i>	Mastery over <i>pancabhūtā</i>
43	3.46	Mastery of <i>pancabhūtā</i> (3.45)	<i>Aṣṭa siddhi</i> , <i>aṇimā</i> , etc., & perfection of the body's appearance and no limitations to its function
44	3.48	Essential nature of cognition, <i>asmitā</i> , and inherent quality of purposeful action	Mastery over the <i>indriyā</i>
45	3.53	Succession of instants in time	Brings discriminative knowledge

Caption: Table 2.1 lists about 50 perfections of mind – *siddhis* – described in Patañjali Yoga Sūtra. Serial No. 1-15 list those in *Pādā* II, while 16 to 45 list those in *Pādā* III with some lines including many *siddhis*.

2.4 QUOTES ABOUT *SIDDHIS*

Sri Aurobindo: “It (*siddhi*) is a universal faculty present in all human beings, but latent in most, in some rarely or intermittently active, occurring as if by accident in others, frequent or normally active in few. But just as anyone can, with some training, learn science and do things which would have seemed miracles to his forefathers, so almost anyone, if he wants, can with a little concentration and training develop the faculty of supra physical activity.”

Pandit M.P. (1992). *Dictionary of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga*, Lotus Light, Twin Lakes, WI

Swami Vivekananda: Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of Religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of the opinion that the sooner it is done the better.

If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could happen.

All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation. Not only will it be made scientific—as scientific, at least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry—but will have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.

Vivekananda S, From “*Reason and Religion*”. Lecture in England, 18.11.1896. Complete Works, 1. 367.

Maharshi Mahesh Yogi: “When the conscious mind expands to embrace deeper levels of thinking, the thought waves become more powerful and result in added energy and intelligence.”
“The fulfilment of science and of man lies in the expansion of consciousness, not merely to the stars, but beyond – to the direct experience of the infinite, unbounded reality, which alone can

fulfill the natural direction of man's growth, and which is the natural aim and goal of scientific progress.”

Maharishi M.Y. www.brainyquote.com › quotes › maharishi_mahesh_yogi_641026

Pandit Sriram Sharma Acharya Quote 1: (On performing a miracle that saved the lives of him and his disciples), Gorakhnath (told) them: A controlled and enlightened mind is like an obedient giant endowed with supernatural powers. What you all saw was only a glimpse of its miraculous capabilities. It can eliminate thousands of such *tantriks* and adversities in no time.”

Quote 2: One day a stranger entered the hall for Ramakrishna Paramahansa's *daršana*. Ramakrishna had never met this fellow, but he started scolding him like a mother would to her mischievous child. Swamiji said, “You have beaten your wife at home, and came here for devotion? Go back! First obtain her pardon, then only think of entering this place for *satsanga*.” The stranger was shocked, he cried, confessed his mistake, and went home to apologize to his wife.

Sharma Acharya P.S. (2001) *The Extrasensory Potential of Mind*, p. 117. Shri Vedmata Gayatri Trust, Hardwar, UK, India.

Nicola Tesla: “The day that science begins to study non-physical phenomena, it will make more progress in one decade than in all the previous centuries of its existence. ... If you want to find the secrets of the universe, think in terms of energy, frequency, and vibration.”
“My brain is only a receiver in the universe. There is a core from which we obtain knowledge, strength and inspiration. I have not penetrated into the secrets of this core, but I know that it exists ... What one man calls God, another calls the laws of physics.”

“When we speak of ‘man’, we have a conception of humanity as a whole, and before applying scientific methods to the investigation of his movement, we must accept this as a physical fact ...

Still more, this one human being lives on and on. The individual is ephemeral, races and nations come and pass away, but ‘man’ remains. Therein lies the profound difference the individual and the whole.”

Tesla N. See <https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/nikola-tesla-quotes>

Einstein: “The most beautiful and deepest experience a man can have is the sense of the mysterious. It is the underlying principle of religion as well as all serious endeavors in art and science. He who never had this experience seems to me, if not dead, then at least blind. To sense that behind anything that can be experienced, there is a something that our mind cannot grasp, and whose beauty and sublimity reaches us only indirectly and as a feeble reflection. This is religiousness.”

Einstein A. (1932). *My Credo speech in: Einstein and the World: Timeline*. p.76

Stefan University Press, La Jolla, CAL.

2.5 SUMMARY

This study is theoretical in nature. In Chapter Six, Results, it thoroughly analyses the core texts. This chapter reviews essential aspects of the most popular texts namely Rāmāyaṇā, Mahābhārata, Śrīmadā Bhāgavata Mahāpurāna, and Patañjali Yoga Sūtra. Also, quotes on *siddhis* from eastern and western personalities have been given. *Siddhi* is not limited to a religion or a region. *Siddhis* are described in various other religious texts, and also among different ethnic groups. People in different regions have different belief systems, which nevertheless recognizes *siddhis* as a part of their rich culture and varied heritage.