



Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

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Insight into Sutras #6

## **Beyond Confusion**

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

Growing up, I was confused. My schoolteachers said, “Do your best.” But when I finished the assignment in 10 minutes, they would tell me to go back to my seat and redo it. Confusing!

In church, they told me to have faith. I couldn’t figure out how to believe in something I couldn’t see and that had no scientific proof. At home, my family said, “We love you.” Then they followed up with, “Be good so we can love you.” But if I have to be good for you to love me, then you don’t love me when I’m bad. So, what is love?

It took me decades to figure out that the problem wasn’t me. What I needed was better teachers. Searching far and wide, I found that only yoga gave me teachings I could trust and a teacher I could rely on. Better yet, I was given genuine upliftment as well as practical ways to better myself.

Yoga’s teachings and practices come from the ancient sages of India. Their inward focus shows the way to your inherent wholeness and holiness. It is the only thing that ever fulfilled me.

J~nanam annam.<sup>1</sup> – Shiva Sutra 2.9

Self-Knowing is the only real nourishment, that which gives satisfaction.

Your experiential knowing of your own Self is the only thing that truly feeds you. When you apply your mind to lesser truths, you are left feeling half-empty, still looking for something more. In the inner knowing of your own Beingness, all frustrations and disappointments fade away. The light of Consciousness fills you from the inside out.

Yoga’s profound teachings resonate with something deep inside. It’s like tuning forks — when one is struck, the other also rings. True teachings touch your soul and deeper, all the way to your own Self.

Once you have experienced your inner infinity, your old ideas of yourself cannot hold you. Thus this sutra also has a second meaning:

Limited knowledge is to be digested.

These differing translations arise from the ambiguity in the word j~nanam (nya-nam). While it means knowledge, it can refer to your deep inner knowing of your own Divine Essence or to knowledge of worldly things.

True knowledge nourishes you and satisfies you completely. Worldly knowledge can keep you limited and small. It has to go! When I describe your essence as Divine, your tendency toward self-doubt and disparagement has to go. Limiting knowledge is to be digested, meaning you utilize the nutrients and excrete the waste.

This is not how most people live. A kind yogi hosted me in her home when I taught a yoga weekend in her hometown. Her living room had college pennants on the walls, yearbooks on the coffee table and school mugs on the dining table. She clearly identified with the prestigious school from which she had graduated. But she had graduated 15 years earlier. And she lived in a city 1,000 miles from her alma mater. I wondered, when do you grow up?

Another yogi has lived in the USA for years, now having become a citizen, but she still introduces herself as being from the country where she was born. Another speaks of himself as a scientist, but has been retired for more than a decade. These forms of limiting knowledge ultimately contribute to dementia. It’s time to be here — now. Digest your past and move on.

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<sup>1</sup> J~naanam annam.

To accomplish this, you need better quality guidance than what you've based your life on so far. You need higher truths and more expansive teachings. You need the Grace-fueled upliftment that shows you the scintillating energy of which you are made.

This is why I loved sitting at my Guru's feet, listening to him expound. It is like my Baba showed me the sun when the world had shared only a flashlight with me. Of course the world only shared a flashlight, for that's all they had.

Moha-pratisamhata tu karmatma.<sup>2</sup> — Shiva Sutras 3.35

Living in a cloud of delusion, a person gets tied up in actions (with repercussions that affect them in the future).

Moha means your inner light shines dimly. While your Divine Essence is gloriously intact, superficial layers hide it like clouds hide the blue sky. Moha is density and delusion that lead you into confusion, infatuation, neediness and pain. Most people love their unconsciousness too much, another definition of moha.

It makes you grab for outer things, as well as people and places. You cling to what has previously given you an experience of light, of your own aliveness, of joy, love and clarity. You get tied up in your actions, creating repetitive cycles that bind you unto lifetimes.

This is why the ultimate goal is Self-Knowingness. When you know your own Self, you live in a clarity that arises from within.

Bhuyah syat prati-milanam.<sup>3</sup> — Shiva Sutras 3.45

For such a yogi, the awareness of the Divine arises again and again, both inside and outside.

Delusion is gone. Darkness and density are a faint memory, just enough that you understand those still floundering around in their own minds. When you look inward, you see all the way to God. When you look outward, you see God in her many forms – all the beings and objects of the world.

You still have freedom of choice. You can act or not, but the reasons for your actions have changed. Free from need, greed and fear, wisdom underlies your choices, which are for the benefit of all. What comes, comes. What goes, goes. And you love it all, with an expansive love, minus the clinging.

Your freedom includes freedom from confusion. When others say and do self-contradictory things, you can see they are lost in moha again. But their delusion isn't contagious.

You can love them, even help them, without getting caught in their stuff. It's similar to learning how to ride a bike. You remember the process, so you understand when someone else is going through it. But once you know, you know.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "INSIGHT INTO SUTRAS"

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<sup>2</sup> Moha-pratisamhata tu karmaatmaa.

<sup>3</sup> Bhuyah syat prati-milanam.