The Shat Ripus May Be Vanquished
By Cultivating Self – Awareness

Theme:
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Theory of the Shat Ripus

- Each human being must vanquish six dragons (Asuras) to attain the truly Divine State. These enemies are known as the Shat Ripus, or Six Destructive Tendencies.
- The Shat Ripus are: Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (delusion), Mada (egotistic pride) and Matsarya (jealousy)
- They are defined as follows:
  1) Kama or desire for riches, property, honour, status, fame, children. Attachment to all things of this sensory world.
  2) Krodha or anger. Yearning to harm others and cause ruin to them.
  3) Lobha or greed. Determination that no one else should partake of even a small fraction of what one has earned or what one has. Even in times of distress, one’s possessions should not be diminished by use.
  4) Moha or illusion. Seeing life incorrectly. Unable to see reality, living in illusion. The delusion that some people are nearer to one than others and the desire to please them more than others, leading to exertions for earning and accumulating for their sake.
  5) Mada or egoism or pride. The false pride that develops when one feels that he has either scholarship or strength or riches or high birth or good looks or fame, more than others. Even when one has not got these, Mada makes men move about without reverence for elders and consideration for others’ feelings and stimulates craving only for one’s own comfort and security. Mada is extreme egoism or self-centeredness.
  6) Matsarya or jealousy. Finding it intolerable that others are as happy as oneself, Matsarya makes one miserable; over other’s good fortune. “Only I should have all things” is the feeling of Matsarya.

The Problem: The strange thing about the average person is that he thinks he is good and what he is doing is right even though it is wrong. This attitude of blindness to one’s own faults is called Avidya or ignorance and Asmita, egoism. Literally, one ignores the evil tendencies in oneself. How does one do this? By excuses. Excuses are used to cover up failings. For example a boy steals a pencil from his friend but thinks, “He has so much
money, he can buy another one”. Or, someone hurts another by gossip or in other ways but thinks, “They hurt me, I must hurt them. I must teach them a lesson”.

These “excuses” cover up the dirt. The person can think they are clean and perfect in all actions, when they are dirty with all the Shat Ripus.

THE SOLUTION: The soap to wash out the dirt of excuses is self study, Swadhyaya. To constantly check oneself. Sitting quietly for ten minutes after waking and ten minutes before sleep will help one cultivate Swadhyaya. In these times one should review the day’s activities. One should keep a diary of one’s insights, thoughts, actions and write in it every evening. “Am I saying, doing, thinking the right thing?” One must have the desire to change, to vanquish the demons within. One must have the desire to become a better person each day in every way. One must gladly accept the corrections and advice of one’s elders and teachers. As long as these demons live inside us, we will never be happy.

Hatha Yoga Practices To Overcome Shat Ripus

SECTION ONE: KAMA – DESIRE

Kama means desire. Kama means to want something without restraint, without caring how one obtains that object / situation. Kama means selfishness, caring only about oneself. Kama means one’s highest goal is one’s own comfort. Kama is a fire which is difficult to put out. Kama usually means desire for some emotional fulfillment from another persons or attraction to another.

Some Yoga practices help become aware of and to help control desire.


Lord Shiva destroyed Kama, the God of Desire, by burning him to ashes with the fire (intense concentration) coming from Shiva’s third eye. Perform Shiva Surya Namaskar. The Kriya helps us to concentrate on Shiva’s ability to destroy unwanted desire by controlling body, emotions and mind.

Perform Shiva Surya Namaskar. Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.

SECTION TWO: KRODHA – ANGER

Krodha means anger, which springs from frustration of desire. We want something. We cannot get it. We become angry. We desire to harm, to hurt, to destroy, to break, to fight.

To overcome Krodha we must realize that our greatest enemy is ourselves. We must become great warriors with strength and skill to vanquish Krodha.
Sit quietly in Padma Asana hands in Jnana Mudra. If possible sit in Baddha Padma Asana, locking all the limbs. We express anger through our Karmendriyas – hands and feet, kicking and hitting. We bind these hands and feet in consciousness with Baddha Padma. Do nine rounds of Savitri Pranayama 6:3:6:3. Come to feet. Warm up Jattis and Aruna Surya Namaskar.

Come to standing, do some Jattis and Aruna Surya Namaskar. We can sublimate angry feelings with different versions of Hakaras. “Hah” is a military sound of aggression. When used consciously we sublimate these feelings. One must be heroic to overcome anger. So, we perform two Virya Asanas (I) and Virya Asana (II). To conquer anger one can perform Virya Asana, also using the Hakara.

Perform Kshatriya Kriya, the Warrior’s Action.
Come down to Vajra Asana. Do the Hakara Kriya in Vajra Veerya Asana.
Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.

SECTION THREE: LOBHA – GREED

Lobha ṭ Greed. We want everything only for ourselves. We should have everything. Everyone else should have nothing. Greed springs from desire and causes anger. We will not give anything to anyone. Our hands grab and hold and will not let go.

Desire for worldly objects can be overcome by the poses of the Rishis who were great renunciates or Sannyasins. They had overcome greed for material objects.


Throw greed out with Nasarga Mukha Bhastrika after shaking hands, while standing in Sama Sthithi Asana.

Vriksha Asana was a Tapasya Pose of the Rishis. Perform Vriksha Asana with hands in Namaskar. Do Vriksha Asana with all the Mudras. Hastha Pada Vriksha Asana. Vatsyana Asana, Brahmachari Mudra, Baddha Padma Asana, Yoga Mudra and Matsya Asana.

Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.

SECTION FOUR: MOHA – ILLUSION, FALSE DREAMS AND IDEAS

Moha makes us live in a dream world. We think if we can get first rank, we will be happy. If we can get 5 lakhs per month job we will be happy. These are all illusions (Moha). We must learn to see reality. To do this we must be flexible. The Yogic personality sees the world clearly, without illusion. The Yogic view is opposite to the Bhogic view. So, we perform Topsy Turvey Poses.

Perform Double Leg Lift, Hala Asana, Sarvanga Asana, Sethu Asana, Paschitnothan Asana, Purvotthan Asana. Do Mehru Asana with one leg lifted, Mehru Asana with Head on ground and Makara Asana.

In this way we learn to see the world from many angles and enlarge our perception of reality.

Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.

SECTION FIVE: MADA – EXCESIVE EGOISM AND PRIDE

The ego can never love or be loved. The ego can not be intelligent. The ego puffs up like a frog, full of self pride. To overcome ego one must cultivate humility and learn to bend and show reverence and gratitude.

The ego is rigid, expecting everyone and everything to bow to its wishes. One can counter this by learning to bend before higher wisdom, creating a flexible spine.

One can cultivate respect, gratitude and loving kindness.


Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.

SECTION SIX: MATSARYA – JEALOUSY

Jealousy is vicious, like a rat, biting at everyone and everything, filled with spite and hatred.

Jealousy is like a snake full of venom. Jealousy is a scorpion filled with poison. One can release that venom harmlessly with some Yoga practices like Bhujangini Mudra. One can open one's heart to realize that all beings are one. How can we be jealous of ourselves? The Namaskar Mudra teaches us that God dwells in all, so how can we be jealous of anyone?


Lie down in Shava Asana and breathe deeply.