

Importance of yoga in the philosophy of Patanjali

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Abstract

The sage Patanjali is the founder of the Yoga philosophy. Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. The word yoga is used in variety of senses. The word yoga is derived from the root 'yuj' which means 'yoking' or connecting. Yoga is also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can achieve union between the body and mind to attain self realization. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be "in Yoga" and is termed as a yogi who has attained a state of freedom, referred to as Mukti, Nirvana, Kaivalya or Moksha.

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is the oldest text book of the Yoga school. It has four parts-the first part treats of the nature and aim of Samadhi or meditative absorption (samadhipāda), the second is the means of attaining this end (sadhanapāda), the third gives an account of the super-normal powers that is (vibhutipāda) and the final part is the nature of liberation (kaivalyapāda). In this regard, Vyāsa admits that Yoga sutra gives the standard exposition of the yoga principles.

Yoga is one of the most dynamic systems of Indian philosophy. It is the oldest of the orthodox philosophical systems. According to the founder of this system, Patanjali explained yoga as the process of unite body, mind and soul. He considered it as a mean of achieving freedom or mukti. The practices of yoga sadhanas are : Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi. Now a days Patanjali's yoga has spread all over the world from ancient times to the present date. Today most of the health conscious people practices yoga to reduce their various diseases. So it is clear that in the philosophy of Patanjali, yoga becomes essential for every dimensions of life.

Keywords : *Meaning of yoga, Yoga and meditation, yoga philosophy, yoga and well being.*

Introduction :

Yoga is one of the most dynamic systems of Indian philosophy. Yoga is believed to have originated in India about 5000 years ago. Yoga being widely considered as an 'immortal cultural outcome' of Indus Saraswati Valley civilization- has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. In the yogic lore, Siva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi. The 'Yoga Sutra' is the foundational text of the yoga philosophy. Yoga philosophy is based on the work of Maharishi Patanjali, popularly known as 'Patanjal Yoga Sutra'. The word 'yoga' is used in a variety of senses. It may simply mean 'method'. It is often used in the sense of yoking. The word yoga is derived from the root 'yuj', which means 'yoking' or connecting. The word yoga may mean- spiritual unification (the union of the soul with the supreme soul), concentration of the mind, complete suppression of the mental modes. The aim of yoga is self realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation'(Moksha) or 'freedom'(Kaivalya)-living with freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of yoga practice. Yoga philosophy discusses how to practice spiritual union of the individual soul with the supreme soul.

The Vedas, the Upanisads, the Mahaharata, including the Bhagavadgita, Jainism and Buddhism accept yogic practices. The Vedas are the oldest extant literary monument of the Aryan mind. The Vedas consists of four main texts-Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. These sacred scriptures contain hymns, rituals and philosophical discussions that have shaped religious and spiritual belief of the Indian subcontinent. The Bhagavadgita holds the spiritual value of self realization or God realization as ultimate aim of life. The Bhagavadgita is the part of the larger epic word called the Mahabharata. In the Bhagavadgita Krishna is a teacher and Arjuna in his student. In this text Krishna appears to Arjuna and teaches him the principles Yoga as means of end suffering. There are eighteen chapters in Bhagavadgita. The Yoga philosophy explained in the chapter 7 and 14 of the Bhagavadgita. The Gita expects man to lead his life, in such a way that he attains his realization of the true essence a real self and identifying the true self of a man with the universal self. In the Upanisads and the Bhagavadgita, the soul in its worldly and sinful condition is said to live separate estranged from the supreme soul. To be rid of sorrow and sin, we must attain spiritual unification, the consciousness of two in one, or yoga. According to the Patanjali, yoga is a methodical effort to attain perfection, through the control of the different elements of human nature, physical and psychical.

Methodology :

In my research work, in case of collection of data I collected primary data from television of the programme of Ramdeva yoga and yoga workshop. And for secondary data I depend on information from publish and unpublished materials like books, research journal, annual reports from academic institute and others. I will also adopt he descriptive and analytic method in my research work.

Discussion :

Yoga is one of the orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. In Indian philosophy there are nine systems but these nine systems are broadly divided into two classes-one is orthodox and the other is heterodox schools of Indian philosophy. Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta are the orthodox or theistic schools of Indian philosophy. On the other hand Carvaka, Bauddha and Jaina are the heterodox or atheistic schools of Indian Philosophy. Gautama is the founder of the *Nyaya* school. Nyaya is the source to achieve the supreme goal. In this system we can study the Naiyayikas views on God through the four valid means of knowledge i.e. Perception, inference, comparison and verbal testimony. In the Sankhya school there are twenty five principles which defines vikas or parinamavada. Purusa and Prakriti are the two main elements for the creation or evolution. Yoga philosophy discusses how to practice spiritual union of the individual soul with the supreme soul. It is a spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of sense organs, gross body, subtle mind, intellect and ego. Vaisesika philosophy describes that all objects of the universe are composed of five elements-earth, water, air, fire and ether. Law of Karma is the basic theories of this school in which God presents as a guiding element. Vedanta philosophy concentrates upon the philosophical teachings of Upanisads. The Brahman instructs the rituals and sacrifices to achieve the supreme goal. Carvaka is a materialistic and atheistic school of thought. According to this school there is no other world and death is the end of human & pleasure is the ultimate object in life. Bauddha admits that world as full of misery and considered a man's duty to seek liberation from this painful world. According to the Jaina philosophy, the basic principle of anekantavada, the idea that reality is perceived differently from different points of view.

In the traditional schools of yoga, there are Guru-shishya paramparas of yoga led to the emergence of different yogic schools. These include Jnānayoga, Bhakti yoga, Karma yoga, Patanjala yoga, Kundaliniu yoga, Hatha yoga, Dhyana yoga, Matra yoga, Laya yoga, Raja yoga, Jaina yoga, Bauddha yoga. Among them yoga works on the level of one's body, mind, emotion and energy. It has given rise to four wide classifications of yoga- i.e where we utilize the body (Karmayoga), where we utilize the mind (Jnanayoga), where we utilize the emotion (Bhaktiyoga) and where we utilize the energy (Kriyayoga). Everyone is a unique combination of these four factors. In our day today life we have seen that every individual is engaged in the four classification of yogas.

The 'yoga sutra' of Patanjali is the oldest text book of the yoga school and it has four parts-the first part treats of the nature and aim of Samadhi or meditative absorption (Samadhipada), the second part is the means of the attaining this end (Sadhanapada), the third part gives an account of the super-normal powers that can be attained through yoga practices (Vibhutipada) and the final or last part is the nature of liberation (Kaivalyapada). In this connection, Vyasa admits that yoga sutra gives the standard exposition of the yoga principles. Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutra' is basic book to give

theoretical and practical aspects of yoga. The language of yoga sutra is Sanskrit. In Sanskrit the word yoga comes from the root word 'yuj' which mean 'yoke', to bring together, bind or to unite. The philosophy of yoga is based on the belief that we are all connected and that everything in the universe is interconnected. Patanjali's yoga encompasses a variety of practices that promote physical health and overall well being, through the integration of asanas (physical postures), pranayama (breath control techniques) and other yogic practices.

Now today's world accepts the yoga as a way of living. Though yoga was being practiced from the pre Vedic period, the great sage Maharishi Patanjali systematized it and codified for the existing yogic practices. Patanjali's Yogasutra is classified into four Pads, these are **Samadhi pada**, **Sadhana pada**, **Vibhuti pada** and **Kaivalya pada**. Yoga is defined as the suppression of the modifications of citta (cittavritti-nirodha). The chief aim of yoga is to prevent the self from identifying itself with the mental modifications. The *citta* may remain in five different stages or levels. These mental stages are known as *cittabhumi*. The citta is constituted by the elements of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The five stages of citta (cittabhumi), namely-ksipta or restless, mudha or blinded, viksipta or distracted, ekagra or single pointed and niruddha or restrained. In the first stage, the mind which is restless cannot penetrate into the object and know its real nature. This stage is not conducive to yoga, because there is no control over the mind and the senses. The second stage is mudha, it has an excess of tamas and has a tendency towards vice, ignorance, sleep and the like. So the blinded mind is not fit for the practice of yoga. In the third stage, the mind though free from the dominance of tamas, is not completely free from the sway of rajas. The fourth stage is ekagra, here the citta or mind is purged of rajas and tamas and there is perfect manifestation of sattva. In this stage the mind remains steadily fixed on a particular object. The ekagra is devoted to one object only and in this stage the mind or citta continues to meditate on some object, and so the mental modifications are not altogether arrested even here. Still the ekagra stage is conducive to yoga and prepares the way for the cessation of all modifications. The final stage is niruddha or restrained, where the cessation of all mental modifications has been effected. There is no object before the citta at the stage. Due to the complete arrest of all modifications the citta is left in its original unmodified state of calm.

In the yoga philosophy suppression of the mental modes means the concentration of the mind to achieve this complete suppression of the modifications of the mind. The modification of the Chitta are many and varied. These may be classified under five heads namely-*pramana* or true cognition, *viparyaya* or false cognition, *vikalpa* or merely verbal cognition, *nidra* or sleep, and *smriti* or memory. The modification of citta known as *pramana* or true cognition is of three kinds-perception (*pratyaksa*), inference (*anumana*) and verbal testimony (*agama*). *Viparyaya* is the knowledge of things as what they really are not. *Vikalpa* is a mere verbal idea caused by words, to which no real things correspond. *Nidra* is a another kind of modification of a chitta. It stands for deep dreamless sleep. In deep dreamless sleep, the modification of

chitta does not cease. On waking of sound sleep we say that we slept well and did not know anything. *Smriti* or memory is the reproduction of the past experiences without any alteration. Citta is undergoing constant modification these mental modifications are called knowledge.

Due to the modification of citta, all the human beings suffering, which is known as Klesas in yoga philosophy. In the yoga philosophy there are five kinds of klesa- Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dwesa and Abhinivesa. *Avidya* or false knowledge consists in mistaking the non-eternal for the eternal, the impure for the pure. This type of knowledge is the cause of all other kinds of afflictions. *Asmita* consists in the erroneous identification of oneself with the instruments with the body and mind. It can be removed by the discriminative knowledge which is known as vivekakhyati or sattva-purusanyatakhyati. *Raga* or attachment is the desire for an object which yielded pleasure in the past and is remembered now. *Dvesa* or aversion is the anger towards an object which yielded pain in the past and is remembered now. *Abhinivesa* is the fear of death. It is instinctive. It is common to the wise and the ignorant.

Patanjali defines yoga as complete suppression of all mental modes (cittavrittinirodha). Vyasa defines it as absorptive concentration or Samadhi. The complete suppression of the mental states and processes effected by the eightfold method of yoga, known as yoganga. There is eight steps in the practice of yoga (yoganga). These are-*yama* or restraint, *niyama* or moral culture, *asana* or posture, *pranayama* or breath control, *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses, *dharana* or attention, *dhyana* or meditation and *Samadhi* or concentration. *Yama* or restraint consists in abstaining from injury to any life, from falsehood, theft, incontinence and avarice. *Niyama* or moral culture is the cultivation of good habits like purification, contentment, penance, study of the Vedas and contemplation of God. *Asana* is the adoption of steady and comfortable postures. *Pranayama* or reath control is regulated inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath. *Pratyahara* or sense control consists in withdrawing the sense from their objects. *Dharana* or attention is fixing the mind on some intra organic or extra organic objects like the nose-tip or the moon. *Dhyana* or meditation is the steady contemplation of the object without any break. *Samadhi* or concentration is that state in which the contemplative consciousness is lost in the contemplated object and has no awareness of itself.

Of the eight disciplines, the first five (abstention, observances, posture, breath control and withdrawal of the senses) are the external aids (bahiranga-sadhana). They represent the stage of purgation. They are accessories to Yoga, and are not themselves elements in it. The last three disciplines (attention, meditation and concentration) are known as internal aids (antaranga-sadhana) to yoga. Of these three, again dharana or dhyana represent the stages of illumination, while Samadhi represent the union.

Conclusion :

In this regard we may conclude that yoga is not merely physical exercise, it is a holistic approach to body, mind and spirit. In our complex world, it continues to guide individuals towards a healthier, more fulfilling life amidst chaos. Patanjali's yoga sutra is a guiding principle to know the world's reality and self realization, a better understanding of the universe. Yoga's central theme is that the imperceptible may be sensed as well. Its global appeal is a testament to the enduring relevance of its ancient wisdom in our modern lives.

Yoga is a lifestyle that involves practicing awareness and achieving harmony using a variety of methods. Yoga refers to the goal, unity and harmony with oneself and others. It brings full of peace, harmony in the challenging condition of human being. People come to yoga for a wide variety of yoga---stress management, fitness, relief from physical and emotional pain. It helps in the education sector, memory increase, health sector, psychological treatment etc. In this regard we may conclude that in the present situation, yoga is essential for every dimensions of life. Yoga has spread all over the world by the teachings of eminent yoga trainers from ancient times to the present date. In the present era millions and millions of people across the globe have benefitted by the practice of yoga.

So it is clear that yoga is one of the richest systems in the history of Indian philosophy. The practices of yoga Sadhanas are-Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, through these Sadhanas Patanjali's yoga has spread all over the world from ancient times to the present era. Today most of the health conscious people practice yoga to reduce their various diseases. Therefore, we can not deny the importance of yoga in the philosophy of Patanjali.

Findings of the research paper :

From the above discussion I find that yoga is a valuable and priceless thing for the human being. It is welfare for all. The ultimate objective of yoga is to achieve oneness of mind and body to enter a state of pure consciousness known as Moksha or Samadhi. The value of yoga as an important method to realizing the spiritual truths of Indian philosophy. The practice of yoga is the best way of self purification; viz-purification of the body and the intellect. The regular practice of yoga can help reduce stress and inflammation in the body, lowering the risk of heart disease. Therefore, everyone should try to know about the real form of yoga.

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