



Life Evolution with Yoga and Vedanta

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Abstract: *The seeker of ultimate truth needs the understanding of the practical side of Vedanta philosophy, the five Koshas or Sheaths beyond which the Atman, the Self remains. Yoga is a collection of physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines that originated in ancient India and are aimed at controlling the mind as well as recognizing the detached consciousness. Five koshas (Panchamaya model) consist of five main layers of our systems: physical structure, physiological processes, the content of minds, ideas, and attitudes towards our surroundings, and our sense of connection to other people, society, and the Universe. Each of those layers includes tools established by the yoga tradition to promote balance and healing. Through Vedanta and Yoga one can transcend these layers in a systematic manner to attain self realization - ultimate Reality.*

The discipline of Yoga has been summarized by Patanjali in his famous Yoga Sutras or Aphorisms on Yoga. Yoga practice includes following ethical values and attitudes (yama, niyama), prayers (devotion has also its place in some schools of Yoga), doing postures (asanas) and breathing techniques (pranayama), concentration of the mind (dharana) and meditation practices (dhyana). The goal of Yoga is an absorption of the mind in several degrees which culminates in nirvikalpa samadhi, a total cessation of the mind natural's activities with no division between subject and object, that is equated to liberation.

Vedanta, on the other hand, says that the usual means of knowledge such as perception and perception based inference can give us access to certain laws and principles governing this empirical world. However, these means of knowledge that are used by a knower to know everything other than himself, are not adequate to know the true nature of the knower. This is because, unlike everything else which can be objectified (either through sensory and witness perception or inference), I can never be objectified. To truly understand Yoga and what it means by unity with the higher Self one should study Vedanta.

Introduction:

Yoga is a healthy way of life, originated in India. Now, it is believed to be a form of science accepted all over the world. The western culture is also accepting it as a healthy form of scientific exercise, Although the origin of yoga is obscure, it has a long tradition. Yoga for a

common person contains the practices of yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, and meditation, which are helpful to keep oneself physically fit, mentally alert and emotionally balanced. This ultimately prepares ground for the spiritual development of an individual.



The word 'Yoga' is derived from Sanskrit root 'yuj' which means 'join' or 'unite'. This may be taken as the union of body, mind and soul. As an end, yoga signifies 'integration of personality' at the highest level. As means, yoga includes various practices and techniques which are employed to achieve the development of such integration. These practices and techniques are means in the yogic literature and are also referred collectively as 'Yoga'.

Definition

According to Bhagavad Gītā "an equal vision on the negative and positive results of an action is called yoga".

*yoga-sthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgam tyaktvā
dhanāñjaya
siddhy-asiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvaṁ
yoga uchyate*

Bhagavad Gītā – II-48

There are several references of yoga in the Bhagavad Gītā "The ability to keep the flattering mind in the state of Samadhi results in yoga".

Yogabhashya defines yoga as "YOGAH SAMADI" that means when mind is dissolved, that state itself is Samadhi. As per Pathanjali "YOGAHA CHITTA VRUTTI NIRODHAHA" "Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications".

The philosophy of yoga is the combination of karma and jnana. Jnana leads to karma, and karma leads to jnana. Action and knowledge both coincide to form life of the human. Aurobindo rightly declared 'ALL LIFE IS YOGA'.

The aim of yoga is to encourage a positive and healthy lifestyle for physical, mental and emotional health. Yoga helps in the development of strength, stamina, endurance and high energy at physical level. It also empowers oneself with increased concentration, calm, peace and

contentment at mental level leading to inner and outer harmony. This achievement provides togetherness of individual and universal consciousness. Experience with the beginning stages of the physical personality gradually penetrates into the deeper levels and the prime purpose is to correct the imbalances that erupt out of erratic living life styles. Each system of Yoga we practice would fall within the gamut of one or more of these categories. Every individual is a unique combination of these four factors. "All the ancient commentaries on Yoga have stressed that it is essential to work under the direction of a Guru." The reason being that only a Guru can mix the appropriate combination of the four fundamental paths, as is necessary for each seeker.

Traditional schools of Yoga :

Yoga does not adhere to any particular religion, belief system or community; it has always been approached as a technology for inner wellbeing. Anyone who practices yoga with involvement can reap its benefits, irrespective of one's faith, ethnicity or culture. Traditional Schools of Yoga : These different Philosophies, Traditions, lineages and guru-shishya paramparas of Yoga lead to the emergence of different Traditional Schools of Yoga e.g. Jnana-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, Dhyana-yoga, Kundalini-yoga, Hatha-yoga, Mantra-yoga, Laya-yoga, Raja-yoga, Jain-yoga, Bouddha-yoga etc. Each school has its own principles and practices leading to ultimate aim and objectives of Yoga.

Swatma Rama, who had compiled the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, had made explicit the various techniques such as Asana - posture, Prānāyama - breathing exercise, and Shat karma - six purification methods.



He has completely eliminated the yama - moral code and niyama - self -restrictions which are the rudiments in Raja Yoga of Patanjali as well as the Buddhist and Jain Yoga systems. According to him, the first things are that the aspirant should purify the stomach, intestines, and nervous system and the other parts of the body. Therefore, Shatkarma - six purification includes Neti - Nasal cleaning, dhouti - cleaning the internal parts with salt warm water and clothes, basti - yogic anama, Kapalabhati-frontal brain cleaning techniques, trataka - concentrate gazing and Nauli - abdominal massage.

Uttara Mimamsa:

The philosophical system of Uttara Mimamsa does not have a specific founder since it is a conglomeration of three different schools of thought, namely Advaita, Visishtadvaita and Dvaita. The philosophical system of Uttara Mimamsa is otherwise called Védanta. All the three schools of Védanta have different teachers. Adi Sankara is the head of the Advaita system of Védanta philosophy. Ramanuja is the architect of the Visishtadvaita system of Védanta and Madhva is the head of the Dvaita system of Védanta philosophy. Adi Sankara is the first philosopher who identified the philosophical truths expounded in the Upaniṣad attached to the Védas. Jaimini gave importance to the Karma Kanda portion of the Védas whereas Sankara saw the Supreme Truth that lay firm in the message of the Upaniṣad. Sankara called the world illusory as a result of Maya or delusion. Maya causes the illusion akin to the cognition of serpent on the rope. A person gripped by ignorance fails to see the substratum of the universe. Brahman is the substratum of the universe. It is not seen due to delusion or Maya. Sankara

calls the universe an illusion and the Brahman or the Supreme Entity as Truth. Everything around us is adventitious of the Brahman. Into Brahman all creation goes. Deluge is the ultimate condition during which the Brahman withdraws all its creation unto itself. Ramanuja advocated the Visishtadvaita school of Védantic thought. It is a qualified version of monism and hence is called qualified monism. Ramanuja differs from Sankara only a little in the sense that he considers the jiva or the individual soul as the entity different from the body and is infinite in number and cannot be one with the Supreme as long as it is confined in a body. Madhva the founder of the Dvaita school of Védantic thought says that the jivas or the souls can attain liberation through bhakti and the grace of God. It is important to note that all the three teachers accepted Védas as a valid means of knowledge.

Yoga works on every aspect of human kind incorporating the physical, mental, emotional, psychic and spiritual needs providing a bond of unity, in fact the oneness that flows out of the very word yoga. This achievement provides togetherness of individual and universal consciousness. Experience with the beginning stages of the physical personality gradually penetrates into the deeper levels and the prime purpose is to correct the imbalances that erupt out of erratic living life styles. The dissertation through its detailed chapters touches upon all aspects of yoga with emphasis on āsanās and Prānāyāma. Védas, the types and the branches have been discussed in detail. R̥gVédas contained knowledge and information on yoga and the chakras. India has a rich and divorce Philosophical tradition going back to the Upaniṣadic period and Upaniṣad are considered as the



essences of Védas. The six schools of orthodox Hindhu philosophy and the three heterodox schools provide the cream of the thoughts that existed at various periods of time. Jainism also referred to yoga and said about the mind and body. During the 6th century Lord Buddha gave considerable attention towards the steadiness of mind and talked about methods of meditation ethics and morality. It appeared that yoga did not have any prominence during that time. When we move on to the Epics, the Mahabharata, and Ramayana gave lots of details about yoga moral disciplines and yama and Niyama. The Bhagavad-Gita also talked about the definition of yoga. Purānas in particulars the Bagavatha explained Bakthi yoga, Linga Purāna about yama, Niyama, Prānāyāma, and vayu Purāna touched upon the details about pratyahara, Dhāraṇa, and Dhyāna. Archeological findings from two of the largest cities, Mohanjo-Dhara and Harappa, revealed (among other things) a portrait of human being or God meditating in what looks like that yoga evolution has been for at least 5000 years. Around 300 BC Maharshi Pātanjali compiled, modified systematized and refined yoga as an all round system for developing the human personality. It is also observed that yoga existed as a part of Tantric Civilization in India and around the world for about ten thousand years. Tantra is a combination of two words Tanoti and Trayti meaning expansion and liberation. The point here is that man has realized this potential and evolved techniques. Yoga is the highest goal for spiritual path, physical and mental therapy, with the help of āsanās which help curing of many illness. The observation is that harmony is needed with compassion and co-existence mentality in this age. According to both Ayurvedha and

Hata yoga the imbalance in the doshas resulting illness and this can be taken care with practice of Prānāyāma. There are kriyas such as duthi, vasthi, nethi, trataka, nouli and khapalabhati. Which individually benefit the respective areas of body to remove toxins.

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