

Yoga: A Blissful Recipe

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Abstract—*Man is a juxtaposed between pleasure and pain as one is torn between the Divinity and the World. One is in the constant pursuit of happiness and wants to avoid the pain at all cost. Yoga is derived from the root “yuj”, it is a methodical effort to attain perfection by controlling various elements of human nature be it physical or psychical.*

Mind is seen as the major mischief-maker in obstructing an agent from knowing the ultimate truth. Mind is a peculiar substance existing between spirit and matter. It is non-spiritual and material in character. Mind follows the path of attachment; in the absence of attachment, the mind will not sway towards worldly objects. So an agent’s bondage and freedom depends upon it.

In controlling the mind, vairāgya plays an important role, here the agent perceives the Divine Principle as an underlying reality and shows total negation towards the worldly objects. Similarly there are other methods like niyāma (formation of habits), pranayama, and so on. Thus for the agent who is in search of happiness it becomes important for him to learn to control the mind. Before analyzing the nature of happiness (ānanda) it becomes necessary to analyze the nature of pain.

What is the origin of pain and how can it be removed? Pain cannot be natural to man because if it had been the case then there would be no possibility of ever freeing oneself from it. Moreover, any attempt of an agent to get rid of any natural entity from oneself would result in destroying one’s own individuality. Pain is not natural but accidental to the self i.e. the ātmā. The true nature of self is Sat – Chit – Ānanda a. And the agent who has control over the mind is able to have vivek jñāna and experiences true happiness. When this person puts his endeavor for the welfare of the society he brings happiness, joy and compassion to all and eradicates the pain and sorrows.

1. INTRODUCTION

The greatest need for today’s society is a general theory of life and conduct which can guide an individual to fulfil the requisitions of personal and social existence. One should be able to prioritize the social well being over one’s own selfish needs. Man, is a juxtaposed between

pleasure and pain. He is torn between the Divinity and the World: he is in the constant pursuit of pleasure and wants to avoid the pain at all cost. In order attain the self-fish goals agent stoops to very low level and it results in chaos in moral and social sphere. There is never a greater need than now of a general theory of life and conduct, of training the individual to fulfil the conditions of personal and social existence. Presently when social planning of many “guides through chaos” are offering their much needed services, it becomes obligatory on our part to understand and realize the efficacy of the scheme propounded for the well-being of humanity by Yoga Philosophy.

2. NATURE AND CHARACTERISTIC OF YOGA PHILOSOPHY

Yoga is derived from the root “yuj”, it is a methodical effort to attain perfection by controlling various elements of human nature be it physical or psychical. Yoga has acquired a meaning, which is well known as well as well defined and needs no reference to root and stem from which it is derived. There is a system of philosophy, which has been devoted exclusively to its study for proper understanding of the practices and theories underlying the practices of yoga on one hand and there are psycho-metaphysical theories of yoga on the other. There are disciplines, mental as well as physical for the realization of the truth of this philosophy. On the one side, we have the enunciation of what is conceived as the highest truth, the truth about Soul, World and God i.e. the conception of reality as whole. And on the other hand, it means to obtain a direct and continuous vision of this truth including mental discipline and physical training. In India, life and philosophy always go hand in hand. It is peculiar to Indian school of thought that it not only gives us knowledge of truth but also discusses the means to

attain it. At a closer look one can witness that all philosophies of India appear to be yoga of some kind or another.¹ Yoga philosophy is based on the metaphysical assumption that mind and body are intimately related and no improvement of mind can be hoped without a previous discipline of the body. Hence, it emphasizes on the steadiness of the body sine-qua-non, for profound thinking. Yoga is really an art to penetrate the psychic layers of our being; it is a methodical effort to attain perfection by controlling various elements of human nature, physical or psychological. *Patañjali* endorses the practical approach in attaining *Mokṣa*. Mind is seen as the major mischief-maker in obstructing an agent from knowing the ultimate truth. So the basic emphasis is to curtail the wandering of the mind.

3. DEFINITION AND NATURE OF MIND

Mind is a peculiar substance existing between spirit and matter. It is non-spiritual and material in character. It is atomic in size and the vehicle of memory; all affections of the soul such as knowledge and feeling or desire are attached to it. According to *ṛṣiPatañjali*², "proof, error, doubt, sleep, and memory, are the five functions of the mind". An agent's bondage and freedom depends upon it. The cessation of these functions is Yoga. The *Bhagavad Gītā* has enshrined the very fact that the one who has conquered the mind has in fact conquered the world. To attain this state, which is mandatory to encompass the journey called life one needs to follow yoga.

Yoga is a discipline, science and methodology to cultivate dispassion towards the enjoyment of this world as of the next, knowing them to be the epic enters of suffering and evil. ŚrīKṛṣṇasays,³ that yoga is difficult to achieve by those whose mind is not under control but with the practice by right means it can be attained. The *Gītā* lays major emphasis on the importance of mind, according to it, an agent who has conquered his mind has conquered the world⁴. Thus all the spiritual disciplines undertake the study as to how to control the mind. It is mind that constitutes the world; where the mind is not, the world is not. It is subject to constant change, its function is to resolve on the whirligig of resolve and doubts; whatever objects it properly grasps, transforms it into an image of that very object. It follows the path of attachment and attachment brings bondage to an agent, as agent gets attached to the worldly

objects; in the absence of attachment, the mind will not sway towards worldly objects. According to *Kaṭha Uṣ.* (II.44) the mind inconstant and unstable must be steadied so as to reflect the wisdom. Realization is only possible if mind is under control. And a person whose mind is controlled can attain happiness. Mind must be subjugated only then there can be negation of suffering.

Yoga is the stepping-stone for the eternal bliss as by it the mind can be controlled. Yoga encompasses various methods for subjugation of the mind. There is no escape without the control of mind, just as the reflection gets distorted in the tremulous water; similarly *ātmā* is not properly reflected in the quivering mind. The true form of *ātmā* can directly be perceived only by mind, which is still and does not waver, one can attain this stillness of mind by practicing yoga.

The exercise to control mind is to avoid the pain and suffering. So before analysing the methods to control mind and to inquire the nature of happiness (*ānanda*), it becomes necessary to analyse the nature of pain.

4. NATURE AND ORIGIN OF PAIN

The true nature of *ātmā* is non-divisible, blissful, formless. Now the issue is how come this pure self (*ātmā*) experiences the misery and pain. It is only through the embodiment that the self experiences misery and pain. Some thinkers even go to the extent and deny the existence of happiness. Happiness for them is myth. It is only pain which appears through delusion for example, an agent when experiences pain in various situations in life slowly absorbs it and tries to accommodate it in his daily routine and ultimately accepts it as the necessary condition of his existence. He accepts pain as part and parcel to lead the life and gives no thought to get rid of it. But this argument lacks the acceptance and is also logically not justified, because had this being the case there would be no difference between a spiritually wise person and one who is not. The basic difference between the two lies in the mental attitude, how they view the world. The wise man gives more emphasis on the real nature of self and not on the mundane existence, since pain is caused by embodiment. The real nature of self is *Sat*, *Chit*, and *Ānanda* so the knower of truth is free from all miseries, and where as the common man may not be able to do so.

5. THE METHODS OF MIND CONTROL

True meditation leads to real knowledge and this in turn is the way to liberation (*mokṣa*). *Mokṣa* from the bondage of birth and rebirth is only possible to those who are aware of the importance of *jñāna* and non-attachment as an essential step to the absolution of the soul from metaphysics. The earnest seeker of true happiness should acquire true and unshakable *vairāgya*⁵. *Vairāgya* in its highest form is to be found only in those God-attained souls who are liberated even though endowed with a body, they have dived deep into the ocean of Divinity and have lost all relish for sense enjoyment⁶. *Vairāgya*, the true dispassion lies in total negation of what appears as the world and the realization of the eternal presence of God in its place. Thus the agent perceives only the Divine principle as the underlying reality, for instance, as the water ceases to exist in the mirage the moment agent realizes that he is watching the mirage or the moment one wakes up the world in the dream he saw ceases to exist. The beginner should start with the practice of observing evil and misery in the worldly objects so that there may be diminution of his attachment for the same⁷.

Niyama i.e. the regularity of habits also plays an important role in controlling the mind. Every day the work must be carried in a fixed time and in a fixed posture and by doing this the agent forms the habit. Thus, at the appropriate time the mind begins the work without wandering and it leads to mind control. There should be no deviation, the routine must be rigidly followed, and regular meditation of even five minutes daily is beneficial than the irregular meditation of longer durations at irregular period. The self-discipline is not matter of intelligence. It is a matter of will and emotions. Self-discipline is easy when there is vision of the Highest (B.G. II.61.).

The agent should daily analyse the activities performed, introspection is must, only then the agent can know where and when the mind dictated in the wrong direction. Mind should never be obeyed particularly if it is not under the control. With the strong determination the agent should stand against the wanderings of the mind. He who does not lose the courage is bound to conquer the mind. Then instead of becoming mastermind will become the most obedient and faithful servant.

As the famous saying goes that an idle mind is devil's workshop so the agent should always engage the mind in the nobler pursuits, in order to keep evil thoughts out. The *Gītā* shows the need as well the way to fix mind on God⁸. In the beginning when the participant practices mind control, the mind shows great strength and easily overcomes the beginner by its instability and power, which often demoralizes the agent and despair takes the possession of his heart. Thus, the agent must keep patience and work persistently to subjugate the mind. "Through gradual practice let him acquire tranquillity by means of reason controlled by steadfastness; having established the mind in God, let him not think of anyone else"⁹. When the practice of yoga is strength, the mind gets relieved from worldly activities and attaches itself to God. Steadily it gets used to meditation that it will not give up meditation even when forced to do so. Mind is in the constant pursuit of happiness: it feels that worldly objects yield happiness so it runs after them. But when through practice it realizes that worldly objects are the source of misery and the supreme happiness lies in God realization, mind will give up the fondness for the worldly objects and run after God. According to *Muṇḍaka Up. (VI,34.)* as fire when deprived of the fuel gets extinguished in its own hearth, so when mental activities are suppressed (*vṛttikṣayāt*), *citta* is extinguished in its own seat. According to *Yoga-Darśna* to remove wandering of the mind, concentration on one among the five elements should be practiced¹⁰. The word *tattva* in the aphorism may be taken in the sense of an object. The object on which the gaze is fixed should be gradually made to appear smaller and smaller, reaching the stage where there is no perception of any object before the eyes—keep the gaze fixed without seeing. This practice is known as *Trātaka* and it stops wandering of the mind. The more one practice *Trātaka* the greater are the chances to gain mind control.

6. JAPA YOGA

Japa has the great importance in yoga. ŚrīKṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* says that among the *Yajña*s I am *Japayajña*¹¹. In *Kali yug* practice of *japa* is considered as the best and fastest way to attain *mokṣa*. According to *ŚrīChitānya*, fixing the mind on the lord and chanting God's name (*japa*) is also a potent source of controlling the mind. It must be performed with *sattvicbhāva*, *purity*, *prema* {love, and *śraddhā* (reverence)}. *JAPA YOGA* is a practice of taking the Divine Name in such a rhythm which gels

with breath taking and the agent should continuously take the Divine Name in every situation. As a result the agent forgets the worldly consciousness and the mind get attached to the God." He who sees me everywhere, and sees everything in Me, I am never lost from his view, nor is he ever lost from my view" ¹². *ŚrīKṛṣṇa* shows how the mind can be instructed to engage itself on the *japa* and consequently the agent gets God – Realization. *Japa* and *dhayāna* are slightly different, *japa* is repetition of a mantra or the God's name where as *dhayāna* is meditation on the form of God along with the attributes. *Japa* can be performed with or without *dhayāna*. *Mantra* is a mass of radiant energy. Every mantra has *mantra-śakti* and *mantra – chaitanya* by virtue of these when the aspirant repeats the mantra his mind is purified and stabilized. There are three ways of *japa*: mental repetition i.e. *mansiċjapa*, verbal repetition i.e. *veikharījapa*, and recitation in whisper or humming sound i.e. *Upāṃśujapa*. The verbal *japa* shuts out all the worldly sound and there is no break. *Upāṃśujapa* is more efficacious than verbal *japa*. Slowly the aspirant goes on to *mansajapa* which is considered as the most potent. By the performance of *japa* the mind is purified and is filled with good and pure thoughts. As per the human psychic, as the man thinks so he becomes. He who entertains the thought of Divinity transforms into Divinity by constant thinking and meditation. The aspirant's *bhāva* or disposition is purified and divinized. The mediator and the meditated, the worshipper and the worshipped, the thinker and thought get identified in the course of time. *Japa* is the spiritual food for the hungry soul. The yogis have advised that while repeating the mantra there should be *akṣara-śuddhi* (correct pronunciation), the words of the mantra should be pronounced properly, or else the aspirant will not be able to get full result.

While performing the *japa* one can concentrate either on the lotus of the heart (*anāhata-chakra*) or the space between the two eyebrows (*ājñā-chakra*) as per the *haṭha yoga* it is the seat of mind. If the aspirant concentrates on ones *ājñāchakra* with eyes closed, one gets the ability to control the mind.

7. CONTROLLED MIND IS IN STATE OF PURE BLISS

According to *Tulsidas*, when one sings God's name or hears it sung, one is unconsciously raised to sublime heights. One loses the body-consciousness and is immersed in joy. One gets divine intoxication and has

tasted the divine nectar of immortality, for instance, *Kabir*, *Mirabai*, *Tukaram* and so on. These practices destroy the malice and the mind becomes calm and tranquil. Through the indifference towards the sinner, the mental impurity of anger is destroyed. The agent when reaches this stage treats every one equal without any feeling of hatred towards them. The *tamas* and *rajas* in mind get pacified and the *sattva* becomes predominant which in turn brings happiness and joy to the mind¹³. The restlessness in the mind is due the fact that the self identifies itself with it. The instant the self becomes the observer of the mind all the restlessness will disappear. If the agent is able to form this habit of observing the activities as a spectator, the mind will be free from the thoughts. Once the mind is pure and self controlled, the senses do not go astray and their contact with the world is regulated by restrain and moderation thus no harm occurs to the spiritual fabric of individual soul. This will bring the peace, joy and pure happiness and the agent will attain the state of *ānanda*.

8. THE NATURE OF ĀNANDA

The joy as experienced in the physical coating is known as health, in the vital coating as strength, in the mental coating as comfort, in the intellectual coating as knowledge and in the blissful coating as peace. Just as the same water gets name of a spring, a stream, a river, a lake, or a sea by reason of the limiting boundaries, which define it for the time being, so does the same joy gets these various names. The Vedanta does not at all concede that there is in essence any difference between sensuous happiness and the Bliss of the Self; it is only the latter that finds expression in the former but under very limiting and polluted surroundings.

The person who is sense-bound and is unable to realize that he is really enjoying the Joy of the self when it comes to him through the senses, it is quite necessary to segregate him, as it were, from sense-born joys but such a process is not necessary to the person who sees only the Joy of Self everywhere. But such a realization is not at all an easy and is achieved rarely even after heavy ordeals and strenuous courses of training.

Ātmā is always free, one is not bound. We can't say that I am bound to my habits. To consider one bound, is a mistake. We have that capacity to be free from all bondage. The truth of the self is free for access to all, but only few attain it because very few are willing to pay the price in self-discipline, steadfastness and non-attachment. Though the truth is open to all but many do

not feel the urge to seek. Among those who have the urge, many suffer from doubt and vacillation. As the agent is not misled by seeing the image in various mirrors. Similarly when one knows that, the true nature of the self is *Sat, Chit and Ānanda*. Here Sat means that the self cannot be negated. Knowledge is same in all. One cannot think of not having the knowledge that can be extinguished, erased or put off. That knowledge is of one's existence. Thus, I cannot be negated and I cannot be without knowledge. Knowledge is intrinsic. So is existence. Desire for happiness is unconditional. Similarly, desire for oneself is unconditional. Consequently, *ātmā* is in the form of happiness as *ānanda*. *Ānanda* has to be discovered. One is in the form of *ānanda*. This situation cannot to be created; it is to be discovered by oneself. As whatever is created, would be limited and would be lost. And whatever is discovered, not created, is going to last forever. *Ānanda* is the limit of our development and we grow into it from the level of *vijñāna*. It belongs to Cosmic manifestation. The Absolute is not the *ānadamayaātmā*, not the divinized self. Nor is this *ānadamaya* self the Supreme Spirit since it is the subject to conditions and is modifications of *prakṛti*, an effect and the sum of all the results of good acts¹⁴. *Sat-chit-Ānanda*, is the self's true nature. If one is able to realize this then mind will not be carried away by external objects. Because one runs after the external objects to get happiness but once it is known that I am already happy, I am the ocean of bliss, why should I go after a drop? Will it add anything to the ocean? Since I don't see myself as an ocean, every drop appears important.

You don't need anything to be knowledgeable because you are knowledge itself. You don't need anything to be happy because you are in the form of happiness. Now what do you need? When the need of security is not there, need of knowledge is not there. Ultimately one discovers then there is freedom from the Samsara for good.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Everyone tries to seek everlasting happiness. An agent can only accomplish it if he is able to get it on spiritual as well as on materialistic front. Yoga philosophy of India from the very dawn of civilization has given the key to the mankind to achieve this bliss. Today the whole world recognizes this fact and is trying to imbibe its scientific, holistic and pragmatic principles into their life. The enactive the convener Dr. Sonia Mehta, which the

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Abbreviation

Bhagvad Gitā as B.G. or Gitā

Upaniṣad as Up.

Notes and References

- [1] For further detail see B.G. VI. 10-20. Here the way to attain yoga is discussed.
- [2] Yogasutra I. 6
- [3] B.G. VI. 36.
- [4] B.G. VI. 34.
- [5] *B.G. II. 14-15*
- [6] B.G. II. 59.
- [7] B.G. XIII.8.
- [8] B.G. VI.26.
- [9] B.G.VI.25.
- [10] *Smādhi-pada* 32
- [11] B.G. X. 25.
- [12] B.G. VI. 30
- [13] B.G. theory of *samdr̥ṣṭa* shows how the yogīperceives God in all. Hence all are in the same footing, the hierarchy is demolished.
- [14] *Vivikacūdāmaṇi*,212.

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