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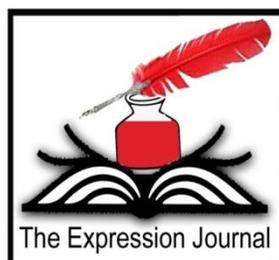
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YOGA AND KUNDALINI ENERGY: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

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Abstract

Yoga has many definitions. It has been defined in different ways having different meanings by yogic masters and texts. Yoga is an art, science and philosophy, It deals with psychology or mind also .It has several interpretations so as to understand its meaning. Out of many branches of yoga, Hatha Yoga is one important branch. It deals with asanas, pranamaya, mudra, bandha and dhyana etc. Kundalini awakening is the main aim of a true hatha yogi. Kundalini refers to dormant bio-energy of the body which can be awakened by hatha yogic methods. The goal of yoga as well as Kundalini awakening is transormaton of consciousness and final liberation or moksha. The immediate benefit of yoga practice is achievement of wellness in body and mind. In this article an attempt has been made to mention the various definitions, meaning different branches and description with special reference to Hatha yoga and Kundalini.

Key-Words

Yoga, Patanjali, Meditation, Moksha, Self, Hatha Yoga, Kundalini.

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Definitions

As per Encyclopedia of Children's Health the Sanskrit term "yoga" means union." Yoga combines physical exercises, mental meditation, and breathing techniques to strengthen the muscles and relieve stress

The Sanskrit root of the word "yoga" is yuj, which means "to join" or "to yoke" or "to join"

According to Marriam Webster Dictionary, Yoga is defined as a Hindu theistic philosophy teaching the suppression of all activity of body, mind, and will in order that the self may realize its distinction from them and attain liberation. It is a system of exercises for attaining bodily or mental control and well-being. Maharishi Patanjali defined Yoga as citta-vritti-nirodhaha (चित्तवृत्ति निरोध) (or restraining the mental modifications is yoga).

According to B K S Iyengar

Yoga is the rule book for playing the game of Life, but in this game no one needs to lose. Yoga is concerned with this fusion of nature and soul because this is the essence of human life. Yoga is about how the will, working with intelligence and the self-reflective consciousness can be free. Yoga is not about external display but internal cultivation, it is beautiful as well as Divine. This practice of yoga is to remove the weeds from the body so that the garden can grow. The challenge of yoga is to go beyond our limits within reason.

The practice of yoga is about reducing the size of the subliminal mounds and setting us free from these and other fluctuations or waves in our consciousness. Yoga is a powerful tool for liberating ourselves from unwanted, ingrained patterns. Yoga is meditation and meditation is yoga.

According to Krishna Pattabhy Yoga is

Yoga is 99.5% practice and 0.5 % theory:

Yoga is universal not one man's method

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Yoga is not [to be done for] physical purposes, yoga is for internal cleaning

According to T.K.V. Desikachar

- (i) Mastery of yoga is really measured by how it influences our day to day living, how it enhances our relationship, how it promotes clarity and peace of mind
- (ii) Yoga is to attain what was previously unattainable
- (iii) Yoga is action with undivided, uninterrupted attention.
- (iv) Yoga is the movement from one point to another, higher one.
- (v) Yoga is the bringing together, the unifying of two things.

Meaning of Yoga:

According to Panini's grammar the root *yuj* has three interpretations or meaning.

(A)Yujir yoge

It means joining the individual consciousness with the absolute consciousness.

Jiva is the individual consciousness and Paramatma is the absolute consciousness and yoga is the method for joining these two. According to Indian Philosophy Jivatma is a part of Paramatma, but separated. Jivatma undergoes evolution birth after birth and yoga is a process which hastens the process of evolution.

(B)Yuj Samadhau

Yoga is nothing but Samadhi as explained by Vyasa in Vyasa bhasya.

(C)Yuj Samjamne

Yoga refers to self-restraint.

Amarkosh

Yogah sanhnanopayah dhyana sangati yuktishu-Yoga is harmony of meditation. It is a technique of meditation.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra

Yoga means sanyama or control over the senses.

Yogas citta vritti nirodhah (Patanjali Yoga Sutra)

Yoga is avoidance of mental modifications. The cessation of all movements of the mind stuff is called Yoga.

Citta is the graffiti written on the walls of the mind over several countless births. It is the knowledge stored in the memory. The mental impression firmly impresses in the mind, which calls for centuries of scrubbing. Yoga is the scrubbing.

Vritti can be defined as that modification which results in the knowledge of object. It is of the nature of ignorance.

The entire gamut of activities that follow the fundamental modification are all mind's modifications. While individual Consciousness jiva is enveloped by avidya or ignorance, the Universal Consciousness is enveloped by Maya or illusion. Yoga is when mistaken perception yields place to knowledge and thus removal of avidya.

Bhagavad Gita

Lord Srikrishna is yogeshwara. In Gita we get many definitions of yoga also as follows.

Yoga Karmasukaushalam. (Shrimad Bhagavad Gita)

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When we do certain work with the expectation of some return or beneficial result, it brings bondage. Action without expectation gives peace. Skill in action can be called “yoga” says Lord Sri Krishna.

Samatvam Yoga uchyate (Shrimad Bhagavad Gita) .

The essence of yoga is equanimity. When the mind is disturbed because of pain or pleasure one cannot take proper decision. Thus, mental balance should be kept irrespective of the situation be harsh or friendly. That quality of equilibrium in every stage of life is also Yoga says the Lord. This is nothing but the evenness of the mind.

So as per Bagabvhad Gita we can conclude that

- Yoga is skill in action.
- Of the two paths Arjuna, yoga is the more direct.
- The essence of yoga is equanimity.

Different Branches of Yoga

Depending on different schools of philosophies, Guru-shishya paramparas, lineages, traditions, different Schools of Yoga have emerged. Those are for example. Bhakti-yoga, Jnana-yoga, Dhyana-yoga, Karma yoga, Patanjala-yoga, Hatha-yoga, Kundalini-yoga, Laya-yoga, , Raja-yoga, Bouddha-yoga, Jain-yoga, Vinyasa yoga, Iyengar Yoga, Ashtanga Yoga, Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga, Bikram Yoga, Hot Yoga ,Yin Yoga, Restorative yoga ,Jivanmukti Yoga, Power Yoga, Anusara Yoga, Kripalu Yoga, Prenatal yoga, Integral yoga, Sivananda yoga, Vini yoga, Kriya yoga, Tantra yoga, Japa yoga and Office yoga etc.

Baba Ramdev and Yoga

Baba Ramdev founded the Divya Yog Mandir Trust in 1995. Through open camps and tv shows he has popularized yoga and ayurveda throughout the world. His Patanjali Yogpeeth works for the promotion and practice of Yoga and Ayurveda. It has two Indian campuses, Patanjali Yogpeeth I and Patanjali Yogpeeth II in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. And part from India other locations include UK, US, Nepal, Canada and Mauritius.¹

Hatha Yoga:

The word *haṭha* has a meaning similar to "force" in Sanskrit.

The word ‘*ha*’ refers to Sun, ‘*tha*’ to Moon. *Ha* means sun and *tha* means moon, It indicates both “hot” and “cool” postures.

Hatha is meant for balancing the Moon and Sun energies in us. *Hatha* yoga practice harmonizes *Pingala nadi* and *Ida nadi in the body* or the solar (surya)and lunar (Chandra)energies within us to elevate to a level of higher consciousness. It is nothing but a science which activates the third, central nerve channel- Sushumna - which is the path to attain enlightenment.

Texts on Hatha Yoga

Here is a list of hatha yogic texts as follows:

1. Hatha Yoga Pradipika written by Swami Swatmaram
2. Goraksha Shatakam
3. Goraksha Samhita

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4. Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati of Gorakhnath
5. Gherand Samhita of sage Gheranda
6. Yoga Taravali of Adi Shankaracharya
7. Hatha Ratnavali of Srinivasa Bhatta Mahayogendra
8. Shiva Samhita

Kundalini

Kundalini represents an energy goddess or sleeping serpent lying coiled at the base of the spine waiting to be awakened. It is the mother energy and assumed as instinctive or libidinal force within the human body. In Sanskrit Kundalini has been defined as an adjective synonym with coiled or circular. There are six chakras in the human body which are the places of spiritual energy. Generally kundalini energy lies dormant at the base of the spine i.e. mooladhara chakra. When yogi practices different specific yogic kriyas to awaken this dormant energy, kundalini is aroused and passes through several chakras one by one. If it extends to seventh chakra, there is enlightenment, as described in scriptures.

Kundalini In Puranaic Literatures

Kundalini has been described in the Rigveda. In this description, Vishnu takes three steps, reaches the highest place in His third step and then flows Soma [RigVeda1.32.12]

Kundalini is mentioned in Uttarakhanda of Brahmanda Purana, Skanda Purana, Padma Purana, Hamsa Upanishad, Yoga kundalini Upanishad, Devi Bhagavat Purana and Srimad Bhagabatam. Srimad Bhagvatam from 4.4.24-27 also describes Sati leaving her body through Kundalini Yoga:

कृत्वा समानावनिलौ जितासना सोदानमुत्थात्य च नाभिचक्रतः ।

Then she carried the life air upwards and placed it in the position of equilibrium near the Nabhi Chakra/ Navel Chakra (Manipura Chakra.) (Srimad Bhagvatm 4.4.25)

Kundalini inYogic Texts

Hatha Yoga Pradipika is one among the three classic texts of hatha yoga, the other two texts being Gheranda Samhita and Shiva Samhita. This is a classic yogic text of fifteenth-century, which was written by Svami Svatomarama, a disciple of great Yogi master Gorakhnath.

The speciality of this text is, introduction of the practice of physical purification to make the body suitable for higher meditation or yoga. The text describes postures, breathing techniques, locks and meditation on sound for attaining higher state of realization.

In *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* there is a list of thirty-five earlier Hatha Yoga gurus or teachers including Adi Natha, Matsyendranatha and Goraksanatha. This text contains chapters that covers detailed information about purification or satkarma, posture or asana, breath control or pranayama, spiritual centres in the body or chakras, coiled power or kundalini, force postures or bandha, kriya, power or sakti, subtle/gross physical channels or nadis and gestures or mudras, among other topics. The more developed perception and understanding of hathayoga has been possible by the modern research on the system. From the analysis of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and other works by Svatomarama Swami, better access to the understanding of the origins of hatha yoga, its concept and effects have been possible.

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Gheranda Samhita or Gheranda's collection is one of the three classic texts of hatha yoga. *Gheranda Samhita* is a text of 17th century and is no less than an encyclopedia on hatha yoga. The text is an authentic manual on yoga where the sage Gheranda teaches the concept and practices of different hathayogic procedures, breathing practices, mudra and meditation to the disciple Chandakapli through mutual conversation. *Gheranda Samhita* speaks specially of Kundalini practice and meditation on Kundalini. Contrary to other hatha yogic texts, *Gheranda Samhita* speaks of seven fold yoga such as Shatkarma, Asana, Mudra, Pratyahara, Pranayama, Dhyana and Samadhi. It may be noted here that *Patanjali's yoga sutras* describe eight fold path or astanga yoga. In the Samadhi chapter of *Gheranda Samhita* the methods explained are different than those described by Maharshi Patanjali.

The Shiva Samhita, an ancient yogic text in Sanskrit is in form of an address by hindu deity Siva to his consort Parvati. It explains yoga in a comprehensive and democratic manner. According to James Malinson it was composed in or around Varanasi before 1500 CE. It has five chapters covering information regarding nadis, prana, types of prana, ways to attain success in yoga, persons suitable for yoga, symptoms of yoga eligible aspirant, signs of a person whose nadis have been purified

Siva Samhita explains that "in the pericarp of the adhara lotus there is the triangular beautiful yoni, hidden and kept secret in all the Tantras. In it the supreme goddess Kundalini of the form of electricity in a coil. It has three coils and a half (like a serpent) and is in the mouth of Sushumna. It represents the creative force of the world and is always engaged in creation." (Siva Samhita-Ch-2, Versus 22-24)

The jivah (being) residing in the human body, experiences the result of past karmas. All pleasures and sufferings are a result of karma

Effects of Kundalini Arousal

In Hatha yoga pradipika it is written

*Udghatayet kapatam tu yatha kunchikaya hatha
Kundalinya tatha yogimokshadvaram vibhedayet.*

As a door is opened with a key, so the Yogi opens the door of mukti by opening Kundalini by means of Hatha yoga.

*Yena margena gantavyam brahmasthanam niramayam
Mukhenachchadya tadvatam prsupta paramesvarim.*

The parameswari (kundalini) sleeps, covering the hole of the passage by which one can go to the seat of Brahma which is free from pains.

*Kandordhve kundali saktihisuptamoksaya yoginam
Bandhanaya cha mudhanamyastam vetti sa yogavit.*

Kundali sakti sleeps on the bulb, for the purpose of giving moksa to yogis and bondage to the ignorant. He who knows it, knows yoga.

Goal of Yoga

From spiritual point of view the ultimate aim of yoga is liberation or mokhsa. Moksha means the liberation from worldly suffering and from the cycle of birth and death through reincarnation. One being free from sequential lives gets an enlightened relationship with the

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creator. There are different schools of yoga having differing beliefs regarding this enlightened relationship.

Moksha brings realization of identity with the Supreme Brahman as per the hindu monist schools such as Shaivism and Jainism. Similarly, for bhakti schools of Vaishnavism, moksha bring realization of identity is made with Vishnu.

However, one thing is common in all schools of yoga, the goal of the practitioner is the attainment of perfect tranquility and spiritual awakening while meditating on Brahman and this state leads to moksha and eternal peace

For some people, the purpose of yoga is to keep the body healthy, while for others it is to de-stress the system. Some may accept it as a form of meditation and tool for transcending the ego. Purpose may be individual for practitioners, moving past their own limitations in their own personal journey. Yoga leads to Self-awareness and Self-realization. One may start a yoga practice to feel better, appear better, to heal the body illness etc. which is nevertheless great. Sooner or later the effects of yoga will be felt in every aspect of our life. Yoga is an amazing tool used to tap into our true Self. It helps us become the best, most beautiful, perfect and shining version of who we are.

Though the ancient seers named several postures and poses with the pose and shape of reptiles, birds and animals having some resemblance, only human beings can practise Yoga Asanas, in line of the eight limbs of Yoga, but not the other beings

Conclusion:

Yoga has multiple definitions and meanings. However practice of yoga gives physical and mental stability. It has its origin from ancient times. People in the world are practising yoga to get rid of stress and diseases. More and more efforts need to be done to scientifically evaluate the impact of yoga on our body and mind and there should be yoga education more and more in our educational institutions in addition to other courses. It is the naturally available supplement to rejuvenate our body and mind. Introducing yoga in our daily life will bring innumerable benefits to mankind. Hatha yoga is the yoga of postures and poses. It focuses on Asanas, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha etc. Kundalini awakening is the process of awakening the dormant energy of the human body by yogic processes. Irrespective of type, methods and variation the main aim of yoga is freedom from worldly burdens in physical, mental and spiritual levels.

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