

MEDITATION AND ITS UTILITIES IN OUR DAILY LIFE

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Abstract

It is known to all that 'meditation' is an important part as the seventh steps of Astanga Yoga. This step is just the previous step of samadhi. Attainment of samadhi is the highest spiritual goal to every yogi. But, if we try to search its root, we shall find that everybody follows it in their every field of daily life. We also know that it is too difficult to control our mind. Besides, it is also very true that without controlling the mind nobody can complete any work in any field properly. The great Indian sage Patanjali leads us to the way of eight-fold means of yoga. He defines the yoga as: "Yogaschittavrittinirodhah". -Y.S. ½. That is to say, when a man can arrest his mind fully, he will be called a yogi. So, he is indicating here that our duty is to control our mind by the regular practice of meditation with respect. As a result, our mind will be calm, unperturbed and enlighten. We shall try to see in this article that how meditation or the power of concentration of mind helps us to do any work properly in our daily life by which we can achieve our goal.

Keywords: *Meditation, Astanga-yoga, Concentration, Samadhi.*

Introduction

What is meditation? Meditation is the power which enables us to resist all this (our slavery to nature). In a general sense, we know that everyone wants to be a conqueror in his own field. But it is not very easy to achieve success in any field of work. In born we are rational being. When we do anything, we do it rationally. But it is very true that our intelligence will not be used properly if our mind is perturbed. Both success and failure

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are contrary and also complementary to each other. In this perspective it may be mentioned here that both success and failure are dependent on the will power or the concentration power of mind. A man whose concentration power is more strong or prolonged, he would be more successful than others.

I

So, we have to focus our mind on a particular aim. Again, on the other side, meditation has another value and that is in this competitive life we all are distressed both mentally and physically. It is known to all that if we practice meditation for a few minutes regularly, we must be free from the stress of life. It has another role also for us. Though the practice of meditation regularly our mind becomes calm, enlightened etc. as a result, we can attend spiritual goals (*samadhi* or liberation). There we find various verses in the 'Yogasutra' as the different spots anyone can concentrate his mind for deep meditation. All of these will be illustrated later on. Hence, it is very clear to us that concentration and meditation are complementary to each other. One is nothing without the other. We find the definition of meditation in the Yogasutra as: "*Tatra Pratyakatanata Dhyanam*".¹ That is to say, meditation or *dhyanam* is constant concentration of mind on any particular spot or object. It will be like a flow of oil. There will be no gap. Swami Vivekananda used to say that the difference between a genius and an idiot is their power of concentration. He also says that the powers of the mind are like the rays of the Sun when they are concentrated, they illumine. Usually, we know that the form of meditation is that where a person must sit on a posture for a few minutes with closing his or her eyes and concentrating his or her mind on a particular spot of his or her own body or object. But my question is here that if a person who is very busy in his physical work, will he not be able to meditate? In reply, it may be stated here that anybody may practice meditation without sitting on any posture. When a student reads with much attention, we call him a meditator. Similarly, when a farmer is cultivated, a worshipper is worshipping etc. all of them are called meditators. Because,

according to Patanjali, meditation is to fix the mind on any particular spot or object. Of course, great sage Patanjali has mentioned clearly regarding the various powers of a meditator according to their different concentrating points in his *Yogasutra*. We shall try to relate with all of these later on.

II

The great Indian sage Patanjali has mentioned eight-fold means of yoga. The main aim of a yogi is to attain *samadhi*. The first two steps are – *yama* and *niyama* lead us to the way of morality. Then *asana* and *pranayama* help us to keep our body fit and mind calm. *Pratyahara* (withdrawal of senses), *dharana* helps us to become introverts or withdrawal of senses from the external objects. Then meditation comes. Now, we shall try to know what meditation is meant and what is the relation between meditation and yoga. The term 'yoga' is used in a variety of senses. Literally, the term 'yoga' means 'union', which refers to 'unite any two individuals'. Again, according to Sri Krishna, yoga is efficiency in action (*yogah karmasu kaushalam*).² Nowadays, the term 'efficiency' is a great word. We all want to be efficient in every field of work. Again, we find another definition of yoga in the Upanishad: " *Tam yogamiti manyante sthiramindriyadharanam*".³ That is to say, yoga is to fix our organs anywhere. However, in this manner, we find various meanings of yoga. But, actually the main aim of a yogi is to attain *samadhi*. In this spiritual sense a yogi wants to get rid of all kinds of sufferings in life. If Yogi attains *samadhi* through the practice of eight steps of yoga, he must be free from all kinds of tribulations of life eternally. But, to attain *samadhi* or yoga it is not possible without practice of its previous steps like meditation, *asanas*, *pranayamas* etc. We know that it has been mentioned in modern psychology that the mind has three states - conscious, subconscious and unconscious. So, the area of mind is broader than consciousness. Concentration is related to consciousness. When our conscious mind is fixed or focussed in a particular object for a long time we must be able to acquire certain knowledge regarding that subject matter. Each and every

great man had discovered anything by the force of his concentration. We can give an example for such concentration that is when a cat hunts a mouse. That is called concentration. We can quote Swami Avedananda: "Concentration is the one and only method by which we can know something".⁴ now, we shall try to see the effects of concentration in view of the *Yogasutra* in the next chapter.

III

In a general sense, we know that a concentrated mind is the secret of success. Anyone, whose concentration power is much more he attains much success. Patanjali defines the concentration or *dharana* as: " *Desabandhaschittasya dharana*".⁵ One who wants to be a yogi, he has to fix his mind on any external or internal object full of concentration. There a question may arise here- is concentration or *dharana* applicable for those who want to attend *samadhi* only? In reply, we can say that no it is not, anyone, who can concentrate his mind always in his day to day life in his own field of work. For instance, we can mention some sentences from the *Mahabharata* where Dronacharya, the teacher of Arjuna asked him Oh Arjuna, what are you seeing in the tree? Arjuna replied that I am seeing only the head of a bird nothing else. Here, Arjuna's target was not to be a Yogi. He was practising archery only. In the *Yogasutra*, *dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are closely related to each other. When the mind is fixed in any object for 144 seconds, it will be called *dhyana* or meditation. Again, when our concentration will be uninterrupted for 29 minutes, we will constitute *samadhi*.⁶ Thus, it has been proved here that we all are yogis in our daily working life.

Concentration is not only valuable for our daily working life but it is also valuable for spiritual life. Patanjali has mentioned various Miraculous powers of concentration in his book, according to different fixing spots viz., if a person concentrates his mind on his own mind-stuff, he can know other's mind-stuff.⁷ Again, a yogi may disappear from the locality if he fixes his mind on his own body's form.⁸ In this manner, we shall find

more miraculous powers of a yogi in the third chapter of the Yogasutra. *Dharana*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are called unitedly *samyama*. Here, anybody may suspect against miraculous powers of concentration or meditation, which are mentioned in the Vibhuti pada of the Yogasutra, that those powers are not real or only imaginary. We can say here against that suspect mentioned above and can say that Sankaracharya had disappeared once when he was involved in a debate with Bharati Mishra (wife of Mandana Mishra) regarding sexual related questions and he was defeated by her. Because he was an unmarried and celebrated person (Brahamachari). Then he sat in a posture for meditation and disappeared from his gross body. He entered into the dead body of king Amaruka. Then he had known everything regarding sexual knowledge from the wife of the king and then he came back into his own body. He had defeated Bharati Mishra.⁹

IV

We saw in the previous chapter that how a person can acquire various Miraculous powers through the practice of regular meditation. Now we shall try to see here that how the power of concentration can be utilized for our day-to-day life. We know that nowadays we are suffering from various mental tribulations like stress, anxiety, depression etc. As a result, there many kinds of social disorders are increasing in this society like drug addiction, commitment of suicide, jealousy, political violence, rape, Murder, killing animal etc. All of these incidents are the cause of mental illness or weakness. It is very true that we are living in a highly developed science and technological era. We can remove any kind of physical or mental diseases with the help of ultra-modern invented medicines. It is right that medicine can cure our diseases but it is initially not permanently. All kinds of medicines must have side effects and it is admitted by medical scientists. But if we practice different kinds of postures (*asanas*), *pranayams*, *mudras*, must be cured from all kinds of bodily disorders permanently and without any side

effect. Hence, Swami Sivananda Sarasvati says, "Yoga is the highest physical and spiritual science".

The first step of astanga-yoga is *yama* which has five steps viz. Non-violence, truth, non-covetousness, celibacy and not to take anything without any one's consent. We have a common sense that non-violence is fully opposite of violence. Every animal wants to win or rule on others. As a result, it begets violence. The great sage Patanjali advises us that violence comes from greed, anger and delusion. Violence is that thing which comes back to its own as a boomerang, because, it is the cause of sin and nobody may get rid of his own fruit of sin. Thinking about it we should become desisted from any type of violence.

Again, we see that terrorism and political violence are common facts in our daily life. There is no invention or technology that can make us scrupulous. It is the only yogic method that can make us spiritual or scrupulous. As a result, violence will vanish from our society. In this context, we may quote Patanjali: "Ahimsapratisthayam tatsannidhou vairatyagah".¹⁰

We see that there are many scams such as cheating of money, some people are taking money for giving job, political leaders also giving false promises to the public etc. All of these may be allowed as social diseases. These incidents are occurring due to not for establishing truth and non-covetousness. The moral path of yoga (*yama* and *niyamas*) leads us to the way of morality in every field of life by speech, deed and mind.

Critical Remarks and Conclusion

Till now, we have discussed regarding the effects of some steps of yoga. But, anyone can say that in this era we have plenty of effective medicines for curing various difficult physical ailments. So, why should we practice various limbs of hathayoga which is also long-term based? It is very true that we all are very busy in our busy schedules. We have no time to practice yogic asanas, pranayamas etc. Again, we may be relieved from every physical ailments by taking some effective

medicines. But, we should know it also that there is no medicine that has no side-effect. We take some medicines which for curing any disease and these may appear due to side-effect of previous taking medicines. If we give at least thirty minutes for ourselves for practising some limbs of yoga, we must live a happy and healthy life. There is no bar for practising yoga, anybody of any religion can practice it anytime.

So, it may be concluded that practice of concentration gives us success in our life, meditation gives us mental strength by which we may complete any difficult work and as well as spiritual fulfilment. Again, we may be free from all kinds of physical and mental disorders through the practice of *asanas* and *pranayamas*. The primary two moral steps of yoga (*yama* and *niyama*) gift us an ideal society. That is to say, these two steps can remove many social diseases.

Notes and References:

1. “*Yogasutra*”, 3/2.
2. The ‘*Gita*’, verse no. 2/50
3. ‘*Katha Upanisad*’, verse no. 2/3/11
4. Swami Abhedananda, “*Yoga and Its Theory and Practice*”, Ramkrishna Vedanta Math, Kol.-06, Page 97, Fourth Edition 2009
5. *Yogasutra*, verse no. 3/1.
6. “*Dharana dvadasayama dhyanam dvadasa dharanah.*’ “*Dhyanam dvadasam yavat samadhirabhidhiyate*”, ‘*Yogasarasangraha*’, Vijnabhiksu, verse no. 2/17.
7. “*Pratyayasya parachittajnanam*”, ‘*Yogasutra*’, verse no. 3/19
8. ‘*Yogasutra*’, verse no. 3/21.
9. Sankaracharya, ‘*Vivekchudamani*’, Bengali translator Swami Ramasukhadas, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, p.130
10. ‘*Yogasutra*’, verse no. 2/30.