



The Psychology Of Yoga

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Abstract

This paper, titled "Psychology of Yoga", analyses the psychological and spiritual aspects of yoga, particularly its potential to transform human consciousness. It combines Indian psychology with modern scientific research to study the mental and cognitive effects showing that yoga is not only a means of relief from mental stress, depression and diseases, but is also a path to self-development, purification of mind and self-realization. Special attention is given to the state of turiya or samadhi, which is the highest state of consciousness mentioned in Vedanta and Yogasutras. turiya is beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep state in Indian philosophy which expands beyond modern psychology. Yoga is a scientific and spiritual practice, which leads a person towards non-duality, peace and happiness. The combination of yoga and psychology becomes a powerful medium to enter the depths of consciousness.

Keyword: -, Samādhi, Turiya, Yogasūtra Philosophy, Self-realization, Yoga, Ātman, Kaivalya, Jagrit, Swapna, Susupti, Avastha-trai, Sat-Chit-Ānanda.

Introduction

Yoga has psychological and spiritual dimensions. There are many scientific researches done on yoga. Studies have shown physiological, neuro-physiological, and psychological changes associated with the practice of asana, pranayama, and dhyana. In this work, I will analyze the state of Turiya or Samadhi in order to draw attention towards Indian psychology.

In these studies, yoga has been studied from the perspective of psychodynamics, neuropsychology, cognitive neuroscience, humanistic psychology, and transpersonal psychology. Yoga is approached in these studies as a strategy to improve psychomotor abilities and cognitive functions; people became better in memory, attention, concentration, and performance of skills, etc. It also acted as an adjunct to psychotherapy, as a way

of relaxing, relieving stress, and dealing with depression. Yoga acted as a growth-promoting strategy—it healed illness and also developed oneself through actualization, making a person more creative and psychologically healthy.

It is also studied as a way of inducing altered states of consciousness, which means qualitative alteration in mental functioning. Modern psychology recognizes consciousness in three states: the first is the waking state (Jagrit), the second is the dream state (Swapnaavastha), and the third state is deep sleep (Susupti state).

Ordinarily, we refer to consciousness with reference to our waking state of mind, i.e., we are conscious and aware of things in the external world and mental processes in the internal world. In dream, also, we are aware of something we experience, but it is a creation of our mind, and in deep sleep, we are neither aware of the objective world nor are we aware of mental activities.

Yoga and Consciousness: Beyond the Waking State

The Jagrit, Swapna, and Susupti states make a sleep-wakeful cycle. The practice of yoga can induce altered states in these three states of consciousness, but the goal of yoga is to go beyond all mental activities. To realize a state that is beyond the three ordinary states of consciousness. In Vedic terminology, this state is called Turiya in the Upanishad, Samadhi in the Yoga Sutra, and Kaivalya in Sankhya Darshan, all of which represent a state beyond the waking state, dreaming, and deep sleep state.

"Na antaḥ-prajñam na bāhiḥ-prajñam na ubhayataḥ-prajñam na prajñam na aprajñam... etat tu avyavahāryam agrāhyam alakṣaṇam acintyam avyapadeśyam." (Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Mantra 7)

Indian psychology speaks of "Pure Consciousness" beyond the state of dreaming, waking, and deep sleep, which serves as the ground for all our experience in the three states. The simplest term used for it is TURIYĀ, from Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, which means the fourth state. This state does not have any qualities or characteristics.

Turiya: The Fourth State of Pure Consciousness

The state of Turiya or Samadhi is neither a state of introverted knowledge nor of extroverted knowledge, nor is it a state of uncertain consciousness, nor collective knowledge, nor ignorance. It is unseen, unrelated, inconceivable, un-inferable, unimaginable, indescribable. It is studied as the essence of the one self-cognition common to all states of consciousness.

"Shāntam śivam advaitam chaturtham manyante sa ātman sa vijñeyah." (Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad, Mantra 7)
It is a state where all phenomena cease. This state is characterized by peace (Shānti), bliss (Ānanda), and non-duality (Advaita).

Yoga is a way of living developed thousands of years ago in ancient India. Yoga is a Sanskrit term meaning “Union” or to “join.” It is a state, according to Kathopanishad, in which all the indriyas (senses) are in control. The Bhagavad Gītā states that it is a state free from sorrow, and Manusmṛti considers it as a tool through which one can realize the subtleness of Parātmā. Patañjali Yoga Sūtra states that yoga is restraining the mind stuff (chitta) from taking vṛttis. According to Patañjali, yoga is the cessation of all the activities of the mind. When the cessation of mental modifications is there, the person who is a Drṣṭa (seer) will associate itself with the activities of the mind.

Modern psychology operates on the view that there are only three states of consciousness, but Indian psychology states that there are states beyond the three states of consciousness. Indian psychology tells us that there is a higher state of consciousness, which is more valuable than the ordinary waking state, and yoga is the way to realize that higher state. That higher state of well-being can be called Sat-Chit-Ānanda.

Conclusion

The study of Yoga from a psychological perspective shows that it is extremely effective in enhancing mental, emotional, and spiritual health. While modern psychology considers only three states-Jagrat (waking state), Swapna (dream state), and Susupti (deep sleep state) as the limits of consciousness, Indian psychology through the Upanishads, Yoga Sutras, and Bhagavad Gītā reveals a fourth state-Turiya or Samadhi. This state is a state of non-duality, peace, and pure consciousness, beyond all mental activities. Modern scientific research has proved that Yoga is not only helpful in reducing stress, combating depression, and as a cure, but it also enhances cognitive abilities and paves the way for self-development. Thus, Yoga is not just a sādhanā but a scientific path of life and mind leading to self-realization and Chitta-Śuddhi. The coordination of ancient knowledge of Yoga and modern psychology paves the way to delve into the depths of consciousness.

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