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PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA IN BAGVADGITA



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ABSTRACT:

Yoga is an ancient Indian worldview based on harmony of man with nature. It was present in pre-historical civilizations in the form of what Aristotle calls 'techne'. It acquired an 'epistemology' in the works of Sage Kapil and was finally abstracted and codified by Patanjali in third century CE. The process of abstraction went through different stages during different epochs of civilization. An important phase of Indian civilization was the period of Great Epics—Ramayana and Mahabharata. Bhagavadgita is said to be a derivative of the Great Epic--Mahabharata. The Bhishma Parva of Mahabharata has been taken out as Bhagavadgita because of its exclusive value for those who believe in the Philosophy of Action (Karma). This document has eighteen chapters all dealing with different nuances of Yoga. However, its four chapters are of special importance for those who seek initiation in any form of Yoga. It is worthwhile, therefore, to take a look at the philosophy of Yoga abstracted in Bhagavadgita.

KEYWORDS: *Philosophy of Yoga , Indian civilization , Sankhya philosophy .*

INTRODUCTION:

Definitions of Yoga: The second chapter of Bhagavadgita deals with the Sankhya philosophy of yoga. This chapter presents three different definitions of Yoga--equipoise, dexterity, and self-realisation. The concept of Yoga as equipoise is mentioned in hymn 48 as follows.

; ksLFk% dq delZ.k l xar; DRok /kuta %A

fl) ÷ fl) ÷ k% l ekHkRok l eRoā; kxeġ; rsAA

[Perform action, O Arjuna, being steadfast in Yoga, abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure! equipoise of mind is called Yoga.]

In hymn 50, Yoga is defined as dexterity in performance.

cf) ; ġrks tgrhg mHks l ġl'nq'drA
rLek | kxk; ; ġ; Lo ; kx% deġ qdSk yeAA

[Endowed with wisdom (evenness of mind), one casts off in this life both good and evil deeds; therefore, devote thyself to Yoga; Yoga is dexterity in action.]

In hymn 53, Yoga is defined as a tool of self-realization:

Jġrfi i fri lUk es; nk LFkL; fr fu'pykA
l ek/kopyk cf) rnk ; kxeokL; fl AA

[When thy intellect, perplexed by what thou hast heard, shall stand immovable and steady in the Self, then thou shalt attain Yoga.]

Yoga of Action: Chapter 3 of Bhagvadgita deals with Yoga of action. Even if one has realised oneness with the Eternal, one has to perform action through the force of Prakriti or Nature. Perfection is attained not by ceasing to engage in action but by doing all actions as a divine offering. It is desire that impels man to lose his discrimination and understanding, and thus commit wrong actions. Desire is the root cause of all evil actions. If desire is removed, then the divine power manifests in its full glory and one enjoys peace, bliss, light and freedom. imbued with a spirit of non-attachment and sacrifice. Yoga helps in controlling desires.

ykdsvfLeu-f}fo/kk fu"Bk i ġk i kDrk e; ku?kA
Kku; kxsu l ġ; kukadeġ kcsu ; kfxukAA

[In this world there is a twofold path, as I said before, O sinless one— the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogis!]

; LrqbfUnz kf.k eu l k fu; E; kġHkrs tġA
deġUnz Sdeġ kxs v l Dr% l %fof'k"; rAA

[But whosoever, controlling the senses by the mind, O Arjuna, engages himself in Karma Yoga with the organs of action, without attachment, he excels!]

Yoga of Wisdom: Chapter four of Bhagvadgita is the most popular one. It deals with the Yoga of Wisdom. It claims that faith is the most important qualification for an aspirant seeking divine wisdom. The doubting mind is always led astray from the right path. Faith ultimately confers divine knowledge, which removes ignorance once and for all. Yoga helps an aspirant achieve faith. When one has achieved complete self-mastery and self-control, when one has intense faith and devotion, then true knowledge dawns within and one attains liberation and freedom from all weaknesses and sins. Mere intellectual knowledge does not lead to liberation. It cannot grant one supreme peace and freedom. The chapter

concludes with the declaration that the soul that doubts goes to destruction. Without faith in oneself, in the scriptures and in the words of the preceptor, one cannot make any headway on the spiritual path. It is doubt that prevents one from engaging in spiritual Sadhana and realizing the highest knowledge and bliss. Therefore a person who wishes to achieve freedom through Sadhana must practice Yoga.

n0; ; KkLri ks Kk ; ksx; KkLrFkki jA
Lok/; k; Kku; Kk'p ; r; %l fdkror'kAAA

[(To achieve divine wisdom,) those who are determined, use the sacrifice of matter, asceticism, self-study, knowledge and that of Yoga.] (4-28)

In another hymn (4.38) Yoga is declared to be the best way of acquiring divine wisdom :

u fg Kkuu l n'ka i fo=feg fo | rA
rRL0; a; ksxs l fdk) adkyukRefu fonfrAA

[Certainly there is no purifier in this world like knowledge. He who is perfected in Yoga finds it in the Self in time.] (4-38)

Result of divine wisdom acquired through Yoga is freedom from doubts to perform. This concept is presented in hymn 41 of chapter 4:

; ksxs l U; rdekZ ka Kku l fANUul 'k; e-A
vkReorau dekZk u fc?uif /kuta %AA

[He who has renounced actions by Yoga, whose doubts are rent asunder by knowledge, and who is self-possessed,—actions do not bind him, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna!)]

Subsequently, the aspirant of divine wisdom is categorically advised to take help (refuge) of Yoga in the final hymn of the chapter.

rLer Kku l EHkire-âRLFka KkufLukReu%
fNR0su l âka e-; ksxekfr'Bkfr"B HkijrAA

[Therefore, in order to cut the doubt of self, residing in your heart, born of ignorance, with the sword of knowledge (of the Self) take refuge in Yoga and arise, O Bharat (Arjuna!)]

It is clear from these discussions that a person can acquire divine wisdom through self-realisation, which can be achieved by self-introspection under dhyanam achieved by proper practice of Yoga. Self-knowledge is the real knowledge and Yoga is the only way of achieving this self-knowledge. Yoga of Selfless Action: Chapter five of Bhagavadgita deals with Yoga of selfless Action. This chapter is extremely important in understanding the difference between Yoga and other schools of Indian philosophy. Yoga preaches perfection in control over desires, which be attained only after the mind has been purified through the performance of selfless action.

l U; kl %deZ ks'p fu%J\$ l djkoHkA
r; kLrqdeZ U; kl kRdeZ ksksfof'k"; rAA

[Renunciation and the Yoga of action both lead to the highest bliss; but of the two, the Yoga of action is

superior to the renunciation of action.]

I U; kl Lr qegkckgksnq[kekIre; kxr%A
; kx; Ørksefucæe upjs kxf/kxPNfrAA

[But renunciation, is hard to attain without Yoga; the Yoga-harmonised sage proceeds quickly to Brahman!]

; kx; Ørkso'kq kRek foftrkRek ftrfUnz %A
I oHkerkRe HkrkRek dØUufi u fyl; rAA

[He who is devoted to the path of action, whose mind is quite pure, who has conquered the self, who has subdued his senses and who has realised his Self as the Self in all beings, though acting, he is not tainted.]

Yoga, therefore, prepares a person for active life. Wisdom can be achieved, according to Yoga, by active participation in life.

Yoga of Meditation: Yogi is one who has renounced the fruits of actions, not the actions themselves. The performance of actions without an eye on their fruits brings about the purification of the mind. Only a purified mind, a mind free from desires, can engage itself in constant meditation on the Atman. Desire gives rise to imagination or Sankalpa, which drives the soul into the field of action. Therefore, none can realise permanent freedom and tranquillity of mind without renouncing desires. Only with meditation one can realise God. Meditation is a subject of practice. Yoga helps both in practice and in meditation.

vk: {kks kxeus kke-de/dkj .kef; rA
; kxk: <L; rL; Ø 'ke%dkj .kef; rAA

[For a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for the same sage who has attained to Yoga, inaction (quiescence) is said to be the means.]

A sage is capable of controlling his desires and therefore his actions. At the time of meditation, there exists no cause for action, no desire

; nk fg ušUnz kfkzkqu deLouqkTtra
I oŁ æYi I U; kl h; kxk: <rns rAA

[When a man is not attached to the sense-objects or to actions, having renounced all thoughts, then he is said to have attained to Yoga.]

A person in meditation is able to realize the existence of God and gets liberated (from ignorance).

; Øtušal nkRekua; kxh fu; rekuI %A
'kkære-fuokZki jekæRI Lfkkeg/kxPNfrAA

[Thus, always keeping the mind balanced, the Yogi, with the mind controlled, attains to the peace abiding in Me (God), which culminates in liberation.]

The chapter describes in details methods of achieving meditation and its importance for realisation of self and the divine. This realisation help in achieving devotion, which leads to attachment with the devine.

Yoga of Realisation: Another important chapter of Bhagavadgita is chapter 7 which deals with Yoga of realisation. The Yogi who has reached the summit (samadhi) realises that the supreme God has to be realised in both its transcendent and immanent aspects. This is not possible even with divine knowledge. One needs to achieve a state of devotion to realise the immanent aspects of God present all over the nature.

e; kI Dreuk i kFkZ; kxa; tUlenkJ; %A
vI 'ka e~I exæ-ok; Fkk KkL; fl rPN'.kAA

[O Arjuna, hear how you shall without doubt know Me (God) fully, with the mind intent on Me, practising Yoga and taking refuge in Me!] It is clear from this hymn that devotion can be achieved only with the help of Yoga.

CONCLUSION

Bagvadgita presents Yoga as an integration of wisdom, action, meditation and realization. It is text that puts forth the philosophy of action, but the action has to be controlled one. The controlling force behind the action has to be a mind of equipoise. There are different methods to attain equipoise of mind including meditation. Meditation can also be achieved with different means including devotion. Both devotion and meditation are complementary to each other. Similarly, Meditation and equipoise are complementary to each other. Yoga acts a binding force to all of them. The philosophy of action (Karma), therefore, rests on philosophy of Yoga.

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