



CHAPTER – II

*YOGA PHILOSOPHY
IN ANCIENT TIMES*

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A. YOGA IN THE VEDIC PERIOD:

The Vedas are the most ancient sacred literary records of Indo – European languages. The Vedic hymns reveal attempt of early men to question, know and explain the mysteries of universe. Sacrifices were performed to praise and pray the deities for gaining some favours, to be free from diseases and enemies. There is mixture of mythology, cosmology and religion in the Vedas. It is difficult to think of *Yoga* without thinking about the Vedas, as the Vedas promote spiritual knowledge born of meditation which can be achieved through the practice of *Yoga*. *Yoga* is a term that is first found in the *Ṛgveda*. The Vedas do address with *Yoga* in an obvious but different way.

I. YOGA IN THE ṚGVEDA:

All the ideas of the Indian thoughts have their roots in the Vedic literature. The first development of *Yoga* may be traced back to the *Ṛgveda* in various senses such as Yoking¹ or harnessing, achieving the unachieved, connection and

¹ kadā yogo vājino rāsabhasya yena yajñam nāsatyopayāthaḥ / *Ṛgveda*,I.34.9

the like. At several places, it denotes the horses etc. to be yoked to a chariot or the act of yoking itself.² At times it also indicates the connection of the hymns with some sacrificial ritual.³ The word *Yoga* as used in the *Ṛgveda* is derived from the root *yujiryoge*, with suffix *ghañ*, either in the sense of *kartr* (the subject) or *kārana*. The verbal forms such as *yunajmi*, *yuje*, *yuñjate*, *ayukta* etc. can be seen very frequently in the *Ṛgveda*. They signify the act of yoking or connecting. Thus, the *Ṛgveda* lays stress on the yoking of the mind and controlling of the senses.⁴ Controlling the mind and thereby restraining the senses is the best path to have spiritual ecstasy. Therefore, the *Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa* declares that by

² rathamāvṛtyā hariyogamṛbhvasam // *Ibid.*, I.56.1 ;

vājayanniva nū rathān yoghā nerupastuhi // *Ibid.*, II.8.1;

harī rathe sudhurā yoge // *Ibid.*, V.43.5

³ yasmād ṛte nasidhyatiyajñ ovipaścitaścana / *Ibid.*, I.18.13 ;

sa dhinām yogaminvati adṛdhnoti haviṣkṛtīm prāñcam // *Ibid.*, I.18.8

⁴ yuñjate mana uta yuñjate dhīyo viprā viprasya bṛhato vipaścitaḥ // *Ṛgveda*, V.81.1;

yunajmi te brahmaṇā keśinā harī // *Ibid.*, 1.82.6;

brahmaṇā te brahmayujā yunajmi harī // *Ibid.*, III.35.4

yoking the mind and speech at the time of offering oblations, one can transcend both good and bad actions.⁵

In the *Ṛgveda*, Tapas is also called *yuj* or an ally.⁶ Although the word *Yoga* and the root *yuj* is generally used to denote any means to achieve any goal, three means viz. body, speech and mind are most important as far as the further development of *Yoga* is concerned. It is these that have developed into the *Kriyāyoga* of Patañjali. However, it must be noted that the end to be achieved by these means viz complete tranquility of mind or *Samādhi* is nowhere clearly mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.

Several seeds of Yogic concepts can be found in the *Ṛgveda* itself. The first two accessories of Patañjali's *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, *Yama* and *Niyama*, can be traced in the *Ṛgveda*. *Ahimsā* (non-violence) is mentioned as a virtue of God *Mitra*.⁷ The *Steya* (theft) and the *Stena* (thieves) have been often condemned.⁸

⁵ cf. Kenghe, Dr.C.T., *Yoga as Depth-Psychology and Para-Psychology*, Vol.I, p. 46

⁶ *Ṛgveda*,X.33.3

⁷ yan nūnam aśyām gatim mitrasya yāyām pathā /

asya priyasya śarmaṇya ahimsānasya saścire// *Ṛgveda*,V.64.3

Dhāraṇā consists in fixing the mind in a particular region and likewise the vedic poets were certainly trying to fix their minds on the deities while seeking their favours.⁹ Thus the idea of Yogic concepts was also current in some way in the age of the *Ṛgveda*.

II. YOGA IN THE ATHARVAVEDA:

In the *Atharvaveda*, the word *Yoga* occurs in the three passages of the *Atharvaveda* and these are just reproductions from the *Ṛgveda*.¹⁰ At one place¹¹, the word was used as *Aṣṭayoga* and *Ṣaḍayoga* certainly tempts one to find the *Yoga* of eight accessories and that of six accessories mentioned here, where as in other two places, the word is used in the sense of acquiring the un-acquired.¹² At

⁸ cf. *ripuḥ stenaḥ steyakṛda dabhrametu ni ṣa hī yatām tanvā tanā ca / Ṛgveda, VII.104.10*

⁹ *na ghā tvadrigapa veti me manastve itkāmaṁ puruhūta śisraya /*

rājeva dasma ni ṣado'dhi brhiṣyasminatsu some'vapānamastu te// Ṛgveda.X.43.2

¹⁰ *Atharvaveda, V.XIX.2K.7; XX.27.1; XX.69.1.*

¹¹ *imaṁ yavamaṣṭā yogaiḥ ṣaḍayogebhircarkaṣuḥ / Atharvaveda, VI.91.1*

¹² *aṣṭaviṁśāni śivani śagmāni sahayogaṁ bhajantu me /*

yogaṁ prapadye kṣemaṁ ca kṣemaṁ prapadye yogaṁ ca namohorātrābhyāmastu //

a few more places, the word occurs in compounds such as *Brahmayoga*, *Kṣtrayoga* etc.¹³ However, the growth of the means of self-advancement which was later to be systematized under the name of *Yoga* can certainly be found in the *Atharvaveda*, and to a very large extent indeed. The concepts of *Prāṇa* as the dynamic life principle can also be traced to a hymn in the *Atharvaveda*.¹⁴

There is the mention of the Brahmaids in the *Atharvaveda* who may be roughly equated with the *jñāna* yogins, of the later age. It is stated in a verse that the Brahmaids realize that wonderful self within the nine-gated lotus covered

Ibid.,IXX.8.2 ;

sa ghā no yoga ā bhuvat sa raye sa puramadhyām /

gamad vajevirā sā naḥ // *Ibid.*,XX.69.1

¹³ jiṣṇve yogaya brahmayogairvo yunjim / *Ibid.*,X.5.1 ;

jiṣṇve yogaya kṣtrayogaivo yunjim / *Ibid.*, X.5.2 ;

jiṣṇve yogayendrayogairvo yunjim / *Ibid.*,X.5.3;

jiṣṇve yogaya samyogairvo yunjim/ *Ibid.*,X.5.4;

jiṣṇve yogayāpsuyogairvo yunjim/ *Ibid.*,X.5.5

¹⁴ mātādityāni duhitā basunaṁ praṇaḥ prajānāmmritasya naviḥ /

hiraṇyabarnā madhukaśā ghritācūmahān vargaścarati matyersu // *Ibid.*,IX.1.4

with three forces (Guṇas).¹⁵ Although this lotus can better be understood here as referring to human body, the concept of the *hṛdayapuṇḍarīkā* and the cakras within the body may also be traced to this passage. In another passage, human body is described as an invincible fortress of gods having eight cakras and nine gates.¹⁶

As for the equipment of *Yoga*, in the *Atharvaveda* also, we find only the stray ideas. Amongst the Yamas, the concepts of *Ahimsā*, *Satya* and *Asteya* can be found in the *Atharvaveda* though, of course, not as the Mahāvratas unlimited by the consideration of class, time, place and condition. Thus, non- violence has been recommended specially in connection with the Brahmins and the cows. Similarly the theft of a *Brahmin* has been especially condemned. The importance of *Satya* or truth has been stressed at several places. God *Varuṇa* has been described as the protector of truth and punisher of falsehood. Other gods like *Agni*, *Indra* and others also are supposed to act in the same manner. We have

¹⁵ puṇḍrīkaṁ nabadbāraṁ trivirgunevirāvritaṁ /

tasmin yad yakṣāmatmanabattadvai brahmabido biduḥ //Ibid.,X.8.43

¹⁶ aṣṭācakrā nabadbārā devānām purayodhyā //Ibid.,X.2-31

already referred to *Brahmacārya*. The idea of *Aparigraha* or non-possession is, of course, equally foreign to the spirit of the *Atharvaveda* as well.¹⁷ Amongst the Niyamas, Tapas, *Svādhyāya* and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna* can be traced to the *Atharvaveda*. In this respect also, the position of the *Atharvaveda* is not much different from that of the *Ṛgveda*. We do not find any reference to Yogic postures also, in the *Atharvaveda*. As already noted, the concepts of *prāṇa* and *aprāṇa* were evolving in the days of *Atharvaveda*, but *Prāṇāyāma* has not been clearly mentioned in the *Atharvaveda* and the further Yogāṅgas were also still in the state of growth. Thus, although it is not proper to read full-fledged system of Yoga, in the age of the *Atharvaveda*, yet, the different means employed for self-advancement in those days have certainly contributed to the development of *Yoga*.¹⁸

B. YOGA IN BRĀHMAṆA LITERATURE:

¹⁷ Kenghe, Dr.C.T., *Yoga as Depth-Psychology and Para-Psychology*, Vol.I,p.37

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Between 1200 B.C. and 800 B.C. the *Brāhmaṇa* caste established itself as the priesthood in India. Only the caste's members knew reading and writing. They alone could carry out the immense range of elaborate and indispensable rites prescribed by the Vedas. During this period, the *Brāhmaṇa* scholars produced voluminous literature consisting of directions for carrying out elaborate rituals and for performing mystic sacrificial rites. This literature is known as *Brāhmaṇa*. They are prose compositions appended to the four Vedas. *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* belong to the *Ṛgveda*, *Śatapatha* and *Taitarīya Brāhmaṇa* to *Yajurveda* and *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* to the *Atharvaveda*.

In the *Brāhmaṇa* treatises, we see the Yogic tradition in their ritualism. The sacrifices require initiation and yoking of body, speech and mind. With initiation, *Yogī* controls his speech, body and mind. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly states that control on speech is a duty of a *Yogī*.¹⁹ Importance of yoking mind has been greatly stressed in this *Brāhmaṇa*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that nothing can be done properly without yoking the mind.²⁰ It has been

¹⁹ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, III.2.2.26

²⁰ *Ibid.*, II. 2.2.19

also stated in this *Brāhmaṇa* that success of every action depends on application of mind which is said to be the *Vibhuti* of the mind.²¹

In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the importance of mental *Japa* and observing silence is also explained.²² Meditation on the concerned deity is also recommended while offering oblations.²³ The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* also explains the significance of observing fast and sitting on black antelope's skin in connection with the sacrifice.²⁴ Thus we find the growth of certain Yogic tenets in these *Brāhmaṇas* as well.

The *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* states that by yoking mind and speech at the time of offering oblations, one can transcend both bad and good actions.²⁵ Another important topic from the view point of *Yoga* discussed in this *Brāhmaṇa* is the *Praṇavavidyā* or importance of *Om*. It seems that in the age of

²¹ *Ibid.*, X.5.3.3

²² *Aitareya Brahmana*, IX.7, *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* ,XIV.1

²³ *Ibid.*, XI.8

²⁴ *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa*, IV.11

²⁵ *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, I.16.

this *Brāhmaṇa*, the syllable *Om* was already recognized as an important object of meditation. The soul or *Puruṣa* has been called the twenty-fifth in the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*.²⁶ In the Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy too, *Puruṣa* has been described as the twenty fifth principles as well. The power of reading the thoughts in other mind is clearly mentioned in this *Brāhmaṇa*²⁷

C. YOGA IN THE UPANIṢADIC PERIOD:

The Upaniṣads occupy a unique place in the history of spiritual and philosophical thought of India, indeed, of the whole world. Indian intellectual tradition starts with the *Ṛgveda*. We have four Vedas and each *Veda* has four divisions- *Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āraṇyaka* and *Upaniṣad*. It can be said that Vedic seers arranged the Vedas to conform to the four stages of life. The *brahmacāri* studied the *Samhitā*, the householder followed the injunctions of the *Brāhmaṇas*, and the forest- dweller practised contemplation according to the *Āraṇyakas* and

²⁶ *Ibid.*, II.47

²⁷ *Ibid.*, II.126

the *Sanyāsin* was guided by the exalted wisdom of the Upaniṣads. The Vedas again fall into two distinct portions according to their theme-one dealing with the performance of rituals (*karmakāṇḍa*) and the other mainly devoted to knowledge (*jñānakāṇḍa*). The Upaniṣadas come under the second one. As a branch of Vedic literature even these texts are regarded as breathed out by *Brahman* and only visioned by the Vedic seers.²⁸

Yoga signifies the union of the *jivātman* with the *paramātman*. It is an alternate method of realizing *Brahman*. In the *Varāhopaniṣad*, The path of *Yoga* is mentioned as ant's way.²⁹ The method of *Yoga* can be said as synthetic in

²⁸ Majumdar, A.C. & Pusalkar, A.D., *The History and Culture of the Indian people, The Vedic Age*, p.47 ;

cf. sa yathārdra edhāgner abhyāhitāt pṛthag dhūmā viniścaranti, evamvāare'sya mahato bhūtasya niḥsvasitam, eta dyad ṛgvedo yajurvedaḥ sāmavedo'tharvāṅgirasa itihāsaḥ purāṇam vidyā upaniṣadaḥ ślokāḥ sūtrāny anuvyākhyānāni vyākhyānāni asyaivaitāni sarvāni niḥsvasitāni // *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*,II.4.10

²⁹ śukaśca vāmadevaśca dve sṛtī devanirmite /

śuko vihaṅgamaḥ prokto vama devaḥ pipīlikā // *Varāhopaniṣad*,IV.36

nature which proceeds harmonizing inner and the outer world to a meeting point. The meaning and method of Yoga are studied in the various Upaniṣads and Yoga Upaniṣads. It includes description of virtues and practice of meditation. The reference of Yoga can be found in the principal Upaniṣads also. It belongs to the time when the original idealism of the *Upaniṣad* teaching began to harden into the realistic philosophy of the Sāṃkhya.³⁰

Kaṭhopaniṣad says that when the five senses organs are silenced along with the mind and when the intellect ceases to function, that state is called as the highest, the supreme, transcendental state. The firm control of the senses is regarded as *Yoga*. After this control, the *Yogin* becomes free from all the vagaries of the mind, for the *Yoga* is subject to growth and decay. *Sthirām indriya dhāranam* and *buddhiścanaviceṣṭati* conform to the definition of *Yogasūtra* and *paramāṅgatiṃ*—means the state of realization, thereby fulfills the literal meaning of *Yoga* from the root *yuj* means union, i.e. union of individual self and *Brahman*.³¹ Because *Kaṭhopaniṣad* goes on saying that *Brahman* should be

³⁰ Chakravati, Suresh Chandra, *The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads*, p.384

³¹ yadā pañcāvatiṣṭhante jñānāni manasā saha /

apprehended only as existent and then in his real nature in both ways.³² When he is apprehended as existent, his real nature becomes clear slowly. When all desires that dwell within the heart are cast away, then a mortal becomes immortal and here he attains *Brahman*.³³ The concept of *Yoga* since it speaks of the control of senses and mind with the help of *buddhi*.³⁴ He, who has understanding, who has control over his mind and is ever pure, reaches the goal or end of the journey of *Yoga*, i.e. *paramapādam* and never born again. It further says that the wise man

buddhiś can na viceṣṭati tām āhuḥ paramām gatiṃ // *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, II.3.10;

tām yogam iti manyante sthirām indriyadhāraṇām /

apramattas tadā bhuvati, yogo hi prabhavāpyayau // *Ibid.*, II.3.11

³² astīty evopalabdavyas tattvabhāvena cobhayoḥ/

astīty evopalabdhasya tattvabhāvaḥ prasīdati// *Ibid.*, II.3.13

³³ yadā sarve prabhidyante hṛdayasyeha granthayaḥ /

atha martyo'mṛto bhavaty etāvad anusāsanam // *Ibid.*, II.3.15

³⁴ yastu vijñānavān bhavati samanaskas sadā śuciḥ/

sa tu tat padam āpnoti yasmāt bhūyo na jāyate // *Ibid.*, I.3.8 ;

vijñānasārathir yastu manaḥ pragrahvān naraḥ /

so'dhvanaḥ param āpnoti tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam // *Ibid.*, I.3.9

should restrain speech in mind, mind in the *buddhi*, he should restrain in the great self and the latter again in the *avyaktam*.³⁵

In another *mantra*, when Yama says- *adhyātmayogādhiḡamena devaṃ matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti*, the word *adhyātmayoga* is the clear mention of the concept of yogic practice. *adhyātmayoga* is the process by which a purified mind, and therefore, a highly concentrated mind, is brought to contemplate exclusively upon the nature of the *ātman* through a total avoidance of the mind wandering into any other object of contemplation.’’³⁶ *Dhīraḡ* (*vivekinaḡ*) as we have seen as a knower of *brahmavidyā* and *harṣaśokaujahāti* means the state of liberation or realization.

The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* states that to see the soul, one should practise meditation on *Om* regularly. By *tapa* and truthfulness, one can see it.³⁷ This

³⁵ yacchedvānmanasīprājñāas tad yacchejjñānaātmani /

jñānamātmanimahatiniyacchet tad yacchecchāntaātmani//*Ibid.*,I.3.13

³⁶ Desai, M.R., *The Kaṡha Upaniṣad : The story of Naciketas*,p.92

³⁷ svadehaṃ araṇiṃ kṛtvā praṇavaṃ co’ttarāraṇiṃ /

dhyāna nirmathanābhyāsāt devam paśyen nigūḡhavat // *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*,I.14

Upaniṣad describes the process of meditation. In the beginning of the second chapter, it praises and prays to god Savitā for attainment of *dhyāna* by connecting mind and *prāṇa* in *paramātmā*. With mind and senses joined with *paramātmā*, one should pray to Savitā, to help one for attainment of *dhyāna*. Then it gives steps of meditation. Learned one should sit steady by keeping his head, neck and chest erect and concentrating senses and mind into the heart. The object of meditation is *Om*.³⁸ With right movements and right diet, he should control his breathing and mind carefully.³⁹ The place of meditation should be plain, without sand, pebbles and fire. It should be away from any disturbance, away from local residence area and away from the river, lake where people come regularly to fetch water. Place should be favorable to mind. It should be away

³⁸ trirunnataṁ sthāpya samaṁ śarīraṁ hṛdīndruyāṇi manasā samniveśya /
brahmoḍupena pratareta vidvān srotāṁsi sarvāṇi bhayāvahāni // *Ibid.*, II.2.8

³⁹ prāṇān prapīḍyeha samyukta ceṣṭaḥ kṣiṇe prāṇe nāsikayo'cchvasīta /
duṣṭāśva yuktam iva vāham enaṁ vidvān mano dhārayetā pramattaḥ // *Ibid.*, II.2.9

from things by seeing which one is upset. It should be an isolated and quiet place like a cave.⁴⁰

The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*⁴¹ also says that by the practice of *Yoga*, one is free from disease, old age and untimely death. There is lightness, healthiness, brightness and fairness in the colour of the body. One is unattached to the worldly objects. One's voice becomes melodious. There is reduction in the urine and excretion. Thus, one becomes *kṛtārtha* and *vītaśoka* (free of sorrow).

The *Taittirīyopaniṣad* describes duties of students⁴² such as truthfulness, follow *dharma*, study of the scriptures. Other duties include respect to the parents, teacher, guest and elders. It states virtues such as *ṛta* (right dealing), *tapa*

⁴⁰ same śucau śarkarāvahni vālukāvivarjite śabdajalāśrayādibhiḥ /

mano'nukūle na tu cakṣu pīḍane guhānivātāśrayaṇe prayojayet //Ibid.,II.2.10

⁴¹ pṛthvyapyatejo'nīlakhe samutthite pañcātmake yogoguṇe pravṛtte /

na tasya rogo na jarā na mṛtyuḥ prāptasya yogāgnimayaṃ śarīram //Ibid. II.2.12 ;

laghutvaṃ ārogyaṃ alolupatvaṃ varṇa prasādaṃ svara sauṣṭhavaṃ ca /

gandhaś śubho mūtra purīṣam alpaṃ yoga pravṛttim prathamāṃ vadanti //Ibid. II.2.13

⁴² *Taittirīyopaniṣad*,I.11.1-4

(asceticism), *śama* (tranquillity), *dama* (self-restraint) and *dāna* (giving) with respect and faith. In the *Taittirīyopaniṣad* there is only one reference to *Yoga* in the discussion of *Vijñānamaya kośa- yoga ātmā, mahāḥpucchampratiṣṭhā*'.⁴³

The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* says that he who has self-control, calmness, withdrawn into himself, enduring and concentrated, sees the self in his own self.⁴⁴ It describes virtues like *yajña* (sacrifice), *dāna* (giving) and *tapa* (asceticism).⁴⁵ They are the means of the self-realization. It also states that *Karmayoga*⁴⁶ means one enjoys fruits of one's deeds. One should practice *Prāṇāyāma* and learn syllable *Om*, so that one is protected from death.⁴⁷ It also

⁴³ *Ibid.*, II.4.1

⁴⁴ śānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā ātmany evātmānam paśyati /

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, IV.4.23

⁴⁵ tam etaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti, yajñena, dānena, tapasānāśakena/ *Ibid.*,

IV.4.22

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, IV.4.6

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, I.5.23

mentions *recaka* and *pūraka* (exhalation and inhalation). Meditation means concentration on the Truth; i.e. *aham brahmāsmi*.⁴⁸

Again in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad*, we find a reference to yogic process. It says that when nourishment is pure, nature is pure. When nature is pure, memory becomes firm, when memory remains firm; there is release from all knots of the heart.⁴⁹ It praises virtues⁵⁰ like *dāna*, *tapa*, *svādhyāya*, *ārjavam* (rightdealing), *satya* and celibacy. It also judges vices⁵¹ like - stealing, intoxication, murder, non-celibacy. It calls mind as *āyatana*. It also mentions *karmayoga*. It states that there are one hundred one nerves introduced in heart. The one nerve *susumnā* is extended towards the brain. By breathing through it upwards, one attains

⁴⁸ brahma vā idaṁ agra āsīt, tad ātmānam evāvet, ahaṁ brahmāsmīti // *Ibid.*, I.4.10

⁴⁹ āhāraśuddhausattvaśuddhiḥsattvaśuddhaudhruvāsmṛtiḥ/

smṛtilambhe sarvagranthīnām vipramokṣaḥ// *Chāndogyopaniṣad*,VII.26.2

⁵⁰ teneyam trayī vidyā vartata,aum ity āśrāvayati, aum iti śaṁsati /

aum ity udgāyati, etasyaivākṣarasyāpacityai mahimnārasena // *Ibid.*,I.1.9

⁵¹ steno hiraṇyasya surām pibaṁs ca guros talpam āvasan brahma hā /

ca ete patanti catvāraḥ pañcamaś cācaramstaiḥ // *Ibid.*,V.10.9

immortality.⁵² Worship of *Om* and *Gāyatrī* is suggested. One, who withdraws all senses and mind into *ātman*, practises non-violence for the whole life, is never reborn.⁵³

Thus, the fact of practicing *Yoga* as a process of realizing *Brahman* has found place from the early *Upaniṣad* though not well- developed. Later on, we find the description of *Yoga* in more details in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*⁵⁴ and in the *Yogopaniṣad* of the *Atharvaveda*.

I. AṢṬĀṄGAYOGA IN THE UPANIṢADS:

Yoga as a system is founded by Patañjali in his *Yogasūtra*. There, he has mentioned that this *Yoga* consists of eight limbs, known as *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*. These eight limbs are – *Yama*, *Niyam*, *Āsana*, *Praṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*,

⁵² śataṁ caikā ca hṛdayasya nāḍyaḥ tāsāṁ mūrdhānam abhiniṣṛtaikā /

tayordhvam āyannamṛtatvam eti viṣvaṁ anyāutkramaṇe bhavanti, utkramaṇe bhavanti//

Ibid., VIII.6.6

⁵³ *Ibid.*, VIII.15.1

⁵⁴ *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, VI.18-30

Dhyāna and *Samādhi*.⁵⁵ Now, on the basis of these steps, we will try to find the references in the Upaniṣads although it is very scattered and implicit.

1. YAMA:

Patañjali regards *Yama* as non-violence, truthfulness and abstinence from theft, continence and non-acceptance of gift.⁵⁶ The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* also gives us such a full- fledged idea when it says that if one does not refrain from bad conduct, senses are not pacified, mind is not concentrated or one's mind is not calm and tranquil and one cannot realize *Brahman*.⁵⁷ The *Taittirīyopaniṣad*⁵⁸ has given a long list of instructions of positive virtues like – speak the truth, practice virtue, etc.

⁵⁵ yamaniyamaāsanapraṇāyāmapratyāhāradhāranādhyānasamādha'oṣṭaungāni/

Yogasūtra,II.29

⁵⁶ tatr ahimsāsatyāsteyabrahmacāryapariḡrahā yamāḥ./Ibid.,II.30

⁵⁷ nāvīrato duścaritān nāśānto nāsamāhitaḥ /

nāśānta mānaso vāpi prajñānenainam āpnuyāt / *Kaṭhopaniṣad*,I.2.24

⁵⁸ tvām eva pratyakṣam brahma vadiṣyāmi, ṛtaṁ vadiṣyāmi,satyam vadiṣyāmi /

Taittirīyopaniṣad,I.1

2. NIYAMA:

Patañjali defines *Niyama* as purification, satisfaction, penance, study and continuous thinking about *Īśvara*.⁵⁹ The *Kaṭṭhōpaniṣad* also repeatedly says about purification of mental impurities, absence of desire for procuring more, study of the scriptures, continuous thinking on *saguṇa brahma* etc. in so many passages in a scattered way. Purification of intellect comes so many times as he (the intellect), through his understating and the control over his mind, reaches that goal from which he is not born again.⁶⁰ It is recommended in the *Chāndogyopaniṣad* under the name of *sattvaśuddhi*⁶¹ and *viśuddhasattva* in the

⁵⁹ śaucasantoṣatapahsvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāniniyamāḥ/ *Yogasūtra*. , II.32.

⁶⁰ yastu vijñānavān bhavati samanaskas sadā śuciḥ /

sa tu tat padam apnoti yasmāt bhūyo na jāyate// *Kaṭṭhōpaniṣad* , I.3.8

⁶¹ āhāraśuddhau sattvaśuddhiḥ sattva śuddhau dhruvā smṛtiḥ smṛtilambhe sarvagranthīnām vipramokṣaḥ /, *Chāndogyopaniṣad*,VII.26.2

Muṇḍakopaniṣad.⁶² The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* says that Brāhmaṇs seek to know *Brahman* by the study of the *Veda*, by sacrifices, gifts, penance and by fasting.⁶³

3. ĀSANA:

In Patañjali's *Yoga*, *Āsana* does not mean a specific posture, but it means steadily easy sitting.⁶⁴ It means the right posture of sitting. The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* has mentioned process of the practice of *yogāsana*.⁶⁵ It also prescribes a triple holding erect (of breast, neck and head) and symmetry of sitting posture.⁶⁶

⁶² jñāna prasadena viśuddha sattvas tatas tu tam paśyate niṣkalaṁ dhyāyamānaḥ /

Muṇḍakopaniṣad, III.1.8

⁶³ tam etaṁ vedānuvacanena brāhmaṇā vividiṣanti, yajñena dānena tapasānāśakena /

Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad, IV.4.22.

⁶⁴ sthīrasukhamāsanam / *Yogasūtra*, II.46

⁶⁵ same śucau śarkarāvhnivālukā vivṛjite śabda jalāśrayādibhiḥ /

mano'nukule na tu cakṣuṣpīdane guhānivātāśrayaṇe prayojayet// *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*, II.10

⁶⁶ trirunnataṁ sthāpya samaṁ śarīraṁ hṛdīndriyāṇi manasā samniveśya / *Ibid.*, II.2.8

4. PRAṆĀYĀMA:

Praṇāyāma means regulation of breath. It is one of the chief methods of making the mind steady. The *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad* says about it as *ābhidhyānādyojanāttatabhāvādbhūyaścāntevīśvamāyānivṛtīh*,⁶⁷ through the meditation, identifying oneself with the *Brahman* and thinking of *Brahman* as the Ultimate Reality- alone, one can be free from *māya* and free from *māya* is realization. The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* enjoins as the ‘sole vow’ to inhale and exhale.⁶⁸

5. PRATYĀHĀRA:

Pratyāhāra means withdrawal of the senses. It is a practice in which *Yogi* retains the senses from the objects so that the senses follow the nature of the mind.⁶⁹ *Kaṭhcopaniṣad* also contains much more references on it. In one *mantra*, it

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, I.10

⁶⁸ tasmād ekam eva vratam caret, prāṇyāc caivā, apāṇyāc ca/ *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*,I.5.23

⁶⁹ svaviṣayānsaprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṇām pratyāhārah / *Yogasūtra*, II.54.

says- merge the speech in the mind, it means all the organs of action and of knowledge have to be brought under perfect control of the mind. It means the detainment of the organs from their natural tendency of going outside or to their objects and the taking of an inward journey into mind. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*, going further says that the mind should merge into the intellect, intellect into the Great *Ātman* and the Great *Ātman* into the Peaceful *Ātman*.⁷⁰ In *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* clearly mentions that our senses are naturally outward moving, so rarely a wise man, desiring immortality, turns his senses inward to see the self.⁷¹ The *Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad* also talks about controlling of the sense-organs by the mind and also to enter the heart.⁷² In the *Chāndogyōpaniṣad*, it is said that

⁷⁰ yacched vāṇ manasī prājñas tad yacchej jñāna ātmani/

jñānam ātmani mahati niyacchet tad yacchec chānta ātmani// *Kaṭhōpaniṣad*,I.3.13

⁷¹ parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūs tasmāt parāñ paśyati nāntarātman/

kaś cid dhīraḥ pratyag ātmānam aikṣad āvṛttacakṣur amṛtatvam icchan//*Ibid.*,II.1.1

⁷² hṛdīndriyāṇi manasā samniveśya / *Śvetāśvatarōpaniṣad*, II.8

concentrating all the senses in the self, i.e. withdrawing from the external world to the internal one is *Pratyāhāra*.⁷³

6. DHĀRANĀ:

Confinement of the mind in a place is called *Dhāranā*.⁷⁴ The place might be the navel, the heart⁷⁵ or any outward object. The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* accepts says its place as the deep cavity of the heart.⁷⁶ For, meditation *dhīraḥ* need to introduce their minds to the truth (*Brahman*) with concentration, i.e. on *praṇava* or *Om* syllable first.⁷⁷

7. DHYĀNA:

⁷³ ātmani sarvendriyāṇi sampratiṣṭhāpya/ *Chāndogyopaniṣad*,VIII.15.1

⁷⁴ deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā/ *Yogasūtra* ,III.1

⁷⁵ hṛdy hy eṣa ātmā/ *Prśnaopaniṣad*,III.6

⁷⁶ taṁ durdaśaṁ gūḍham anupraviṣṭaṁ guhāhitaṁ gahvareṣṭham purāṇam/

adhyātma yogādhigamena devaṁ matvā dhīro harṣaśokau jahāti//*Kaṭhōpaniṣad* ,I.2.12

⁷⁷ yuktena manasā vyaṁ devasya savituḥ save suvargeyāye śaktyā / *Śvetāśvataropaniṣad*,II.2

In most of the Upaniṣads, the way of realizing *Brahman* is said as mediation on *Om*. *Dhyāna* has been defined by Patañjali as that state of mind where barring all other thoughts, there is a constant flow of one thought only.⁷⁸

The *Maṇḍalabrāhmanopaniṣad* also says that meditation as an unavoidable step on the way of self- realization.⁷⁹

8. SAMĀDHI:

The most important and the final phase of the yogic process is *Samādhi*. But when it comes to the Upaniṣadic concept of *Yoga*, there is no concept of *Samādhi*. It seems that the state of realization is attained, followed by *Dhyāna* or meditation. When the meditation itself having the manifestation of the object of meditation remains in the mind and it becomes as if devoid of its cognitional character, due to the coming in of the real nature of the designed object, then it is called *Samādhi*.⁸⁰ The *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* describes it with a slight difference that when the five sense- organs, which are the means of cognition and perception,

⁷⁸ tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam / *Yogasūtra*.,III.2

⁷⁹ sarvaśarīreṣu caitanyaikatānatā dhyānam/ *Maṇḍalabrāhmanopaniṣad* ,I.I.9

⁸⁰ tadevārthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyamiva samādhiḥ/ *Yogasūtra*.,III.3

along with the mind stay at rest and when the intellect ceases to function, that state is called the highest goal (*paramāṅgatiṁ*).⁸¹ The *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* says *samāhita* as a connotation of *Samādhi* in the Upaniṣadic context.⁸²

II. YOGA IN THE YOGA UPANIṢADS :

1. DHYĀNABINDUUPANIṢAD: According to *Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad*, by the practice of *Dhyānyoga*, sins of size of mountain are destroyed. The six fold *Yoga* is -*āsana*, *prāṇasaṁrodha*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.⁸³ *Haṁsa* is *prāṇa*, breathing. Syllable *Om* is the object of meditation.

⁸¹ yadā pañcāvatiṣṭante jñānāni manasā saha,

buddhiś ca na viceṣṭati tām āhuḥ paramām gatiṁ/ *Kaṭhopaniṣad*,II.3.10

⁸² tasmād evaṁvit śānto dānta uparatas titikṣuḥ samāhito bhūtvā tmanyevātmānam paśyati

sarvam ātmānam paśyati/ *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad*,IV.4.23.

⁸³ āsanam prāṇasaṁrodhaḥ pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā /

dhyānam samādhiretāni yogāṅgāni bhavanti ṣaṭ // *Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad*, 41

2. BRAHMAVIDYĀUPANIṢAD: This *Upaniṣad* states that one should practice *Yoga* and *Dhyāna* every day. It results into *jñāna* and concentration. *Haṃsa* is absolute reality.⁸⁴

3. YOGATATTVAUPANIṢAD: In *Yogatattva Upaniṣad* different types of *Yoga* are stated such as *Hathayoga*, *Layayoga*, *Mantrayoga* and *Rājayoga*. There are four states that are common to all four *Yoga* - *ārambha*, *ghata*, *parīcaya* and *niṣpatti*.⁸⁵

4. TRISIKHI BRĀHMAṆAUPANIṢAD: *Trisikhibrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad* states two types of *Yoga* – *Jñānayoga* and *Karmayoga*.⁸⁶ It describes meaning of eight fold *Yoga*. Meditation within heart is mentioned.

⁸⁴ yogadhyānaṃ sadā kṛtvā jñānaṃ tanmayatām brajet /

jñānātsvarupaṃ paraṃ haṃsamantraṃ samuccaret // *Brahmavidyā Upaniṣad*,59

⁸⁵ yogo hi bahudhā brahman vidyate vyvahārataḥ /

mantrayogo layaśaiva haṭhoaso rājayogakaḥ // *Yogatattva Upaniṣad*, 19 ;

ārambhaśca ghaṭaścaiva tathā paricayaḥ smṛtaḥ /

niṣpattiścetyavastathā ca sarvatra parikīrtitā // *Ibid.*, 20

⁸⁶ jñānayogaḥ karmayogaḥ iti yogo dvidhāmataḥ /

5. YOGACŪDĀMANIUPANIṢAD: *Yogacūḍāmani Upaniṣad* states six fold

*Yoga - āsana, prāṇasaṃrodha, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi.*⁸⁷

There is discussion of six cakras and nerves. It praises *prāṇāyāma* and *Om*.

6. MAṄḌALABRĀHMANA UPANIṢAD: *Maṅḍalabrāhmana Upaniṣad* states

that by the practice of *samādhi*, the ascetic becomes a *Paramhaṃsa* or *Avadhūta*.

It states five types of *ākāśa*.

7. ADVAYATĀRAKA UPANIṢAD: The description of different types of

ākāśa is given in *Advayatāraka Upaniṣad*. The man, who sees light with a little

above both brows by intuition, is *Tāraka Yogī*.⁸⁸

8. ŚĀṄḌILYA UPANIṢAD: *Śāṅḍilya Upaniṣad* states eight fold Yoga as in the

Pātañjala Yoga.

kriyāyogamathedānīm śṛṇu brāhmaṇasattam // *Trisikhibrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad*,

⁸⁷ āsanam prāṇasaṃrodhaḥ pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā /

dhyānam samādhiretāni yogāṅgāni bhavanti ṣaṭ // *Yogacūḍāmaṇi Upaniṣad*, 2

⁸⁸ bhrūyogamadhyabile dṛṣṭim taddvārā ūrdhvasthitateja ābirbhūtam

tārakayogo bhavati / *Advaytāra Upaniṣad*, 11

9. YOGAKUṆḌALINĪ UPANIṢAD: *Yogakuṇḍalinī Upaniṣad* states that *citta* has two causes –*vāsanā* and *prāṇa*. One should control one of them to bring about restraint of *citta*. For control of *prāṇa*, *kuṇḍalinī śakti* should be moved up. It gives obstacles in *Yoga*. They are - disease, doubt, carelessness, laziness, and sleep, attachment to sense objects, sensual objects, no faith, and failure to attain truth of *Yoga*.

10. VARĀHA UPANIṢAD: *Varāha Upaniṣad* states that one should practice *Layayoga* i.e. dissolution of the mind. Eight fold *Yoga* is described along with *Mantrayoga*, *Haṭhayoga* and *Layayoga*.

11. AMṚTANĀDABINDU UPANIṢAD: It states that mind is of two types - pure (without desires) and impure (with desires). It should be restrained to such an extent that it gets merged into the heart. It is *jñāna* and is *mokṣa*. One should concentrate on *Om*.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ cf. *Amrutanādabindu Upaniṣad*, 1-7

12. YOGARĀJA UPANIṢAD: It presents fourfold *Yoga -āsana*, *prāṇasaṃrodha*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*. It describes four kinds of *Yoga* such as *Mantrayoga*, *Rājayoga*, *Hathayoga* and *Layayoga*; and nine cakras.

13. AMṚTANĀDA UPANIṢAD: It states that one should meditate on *Om*. There is six fold *Yoga* - *prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*, *tarka* and *samādhi*.⁹⁰

14. NĀDABINDU UPANIṢAD: It states that *Yogī* should sit in *siddhāsanā* with *vaiśṇavimudrā* and concentrate and meditate on 'Om'. He should hear internal sound. Then *citta* is absorbed in it. The state beyond sound i.e. soundless state. It is *Paramātmān*.⁹¹

15. TEJOBINDU UPANIṢAD: It states that supreme meditation should be done on *Tejobindu* i.e. seed or source of spiritual light. It is *ātman* of the universe

⁹⁰ pratyāhārastathā dhyānaṃ prāṇāyāmo'tha dhāraṇā /

Tarkaścaiva smādhīśca śaḍaṅgo yoga ucyate // *Amṛtanāda Upanisad*, 6

⁹¹ cf. *Nādabindu Upaniṣad* , 1,2,48,53

seated in the heart. It is of the size of an atom, pertaining to Śīva and is quiescent.

The parts of *Yoga* are *yama*, *niyama*, *tyāga* (renunciation), *mauna*(silence), *āsana*, *mūlabandha*, *dehasāmya*, *ḍṛksthiti*, *prāṇasaṃyama*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.⁹²

16. HAṂSA UPANIṢAD: It states that *Haṃsa* is *prāṇa* (breath). It has eight fold *vṛttis*. Oneness of *Haṃsa* or *jīvātmā*, the lower self with *Parama Haṃsa* (*Paramātmā*) is done in two ways –*Samprajñāta* and *Asamprajñāta*. When one reflects upon mind by means of *Haṃsa*, one hears *nāda*.

17. YOGAŚIKHĀ UPANIṢAD: It states that the *Mahāyoga* is four-fold - *Mantrayoga*, *Rājayoga*, *Hathayoga* and *Layayoga*.⁹³ Inhaling is *haṃ* and exhaling is *sa*. Meditation on *Om* with *tantra* practice is mentioned.

⁹² yamo hi niyamastyāgo maunaṃ deśca kālataḥ /

āsanam mūlabandhasca dehasāmyam ca ḍṛksthitiḥ // *Tejobindu Upanisad*, I.15 ;

prāṇasaṃyamanam caiva pratyāhāraśca dhāraṇā/

ātmadhyānam smādhiśca proktānyaṅgāni vai kramāta // *Ibid.*, I. 16

⁹³ cf. mantrō layo haṭho rājayogāntā bhumikāḥ kramāt /

eka eva chatuṛdhāyam mahayogoabhidhīyate // *Yogasikhopaniṣad*,129

D. YOGA IN THE EPIC PERIOD:

I. RĀMĀYAṆA:

The *Rāmāyaṇa*, one of the most admirable epics of Hindu religion, says less about the concept of *Yoga*. However, a very lengthy didactic treatise based on the *Rāmāyaṇa* viz. *Yogavāśiṣṭha* about *Yoga* which was composed by Valmīki, the author of the original *Rāmāyaṇa*, according to tradition. But this tradition cannot easily be accepted as it is obvious that much of the portion of this work belongs to a much later age having Buddhist influence.⁹⁴ And hence this chapter doesn't contain discussion on *Yoga* in the light of *Yogavāśiṣṭha*.

It is to be mentioned that in the original *Rāmāyaṇa* only casual reference to *yoga* and Yogic practices are noticed. Several types of Yogic practices have been referred to in the *Āraṇyakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. In the sixth chapter of the *Āraṇyakāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, several types of ascetics have been mentioned and all of them are said to be firmly resorting to *Yoga*.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ cf. Kenghe, Dr.C.T., *Yoga as Depth-Psychology and Para-Psychology*, Vol.I,p.34

⁹⁵ *Rāmāyaṇa*, III.6.2.-6

Several accessories of *Yoga* mentioned casually including other Yogic concepts also are found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.⁹⁶ From all these references, it is apparent that *Yoga* both as a discipline and system of thought is quite popular in the age of this great epic *Rāmāyaṇa*.

II. MAHĀBHĀRATA:

The *Mahābhārata* is a magnificent and invaluable treasure house of mythology, religion, philosophy, ethics, customs, and information about clans, kings and sages throughout the ages. The *Mahābhārata* is called Fifth *Veda* or Kṛṣṇa's *Veda*. It is the grand epic of India, composed of about 100000 stanzas which make the *Mahābhārata* seven times longer than the Iliad and the Odyssey combined.

The *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* is the largest didactic portion and the largest *Parvan* of the same. It abounds in reference to Yogic techniques, especially in the *Mokṣadharmā* portion. Chronologically, this portion belongs to a later date than that of the *Bhagavadgītā* and its contents too are much more heterogeneous. The first feature to be noted in this connection is that *Yoga* has

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

been described as a source of great psychic power in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*.⁹⁷

Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that in the *Mahābhārata*, the Sāṃkhya and Yoga are used as complementary aspects of one whole, signifying theory and practice, philosophy and religion.⁹⁸The *Mokṣadharmaparvan* prescribes subtle spirit (*Sukṣma Ātman*) to be concentrated at different regions viz. navel, neck, head, heart, stomach, lips, eye, ear and nose.⁹⁹

The elocution of the limbs of Yoga (*yogāṅga*) such as *Dhāraṇā*, *Praṇāyāma* etc. mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* is noteworthy.¹⁰⁰ Yoga in the *Mahābhārata* is frequently used as the means for achieving the magical powers.¹⁰¹ This epic consists of many wonderful stories of the ascetics who are enjoined with the practice of different forms of austerities. Numerous hermits of

⁹⁷ *Mahābhārata*, XII. 255.7

⁹⁸ Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II., p 340

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, XII. 301.39

¹⁰⁰ *Mahābhārata*, XII. 11683-4

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* XII. 340.55, XII. 303. 163, XII. 14.420

this epic, practice of *Yoga*, as they consider, is the medium for having supernatural powers.¹⁰²

It is well accepted that the *Bhagavadgītā*, also known as *Gītā* is the world famous scripture of Hinduism. This famous Hindu scripture is the most glorious part of the ancient Hindu epic - the *Mahābhārata*. The *Bhagavadgītā* which forms part of the *Bhīṣmaparva* of the *Mahābhārata* is the most popular religious poem of Sanskrit Literature.¹⁰³ In other context, S. Radhakrishnan describes the *Bhagavadgītā* as the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue.¹⁰⁴ It consists of 700 verses.

The word *Yoga* is frequently used in the *Bhagavadgītā*. In fact, every one of the eighteen chapters is entitled as *Yoga*. In all the eighteen Chapters of the discourse between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, the proper *yogābhava* or Yogic attitude' towards every human crisis is given. *Yoga* was codified and elaborated in a systematic way for the first time in the *Bhagavadgītā*, which was probably

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, XII. 326.8

¹⁰³ Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, Vol I, p.519

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

pre-Buddhistic. We find that the word *Yogin* has been used not so much in conformity with *yujśamādhau* but rather with *yujir yoga*. This has often been a source of confusion. But a pretty large number of the *Gītā* passages show that a *yogin*, in the sense of a person who lost himself in meditation, was regarded with extreme veneration.¹⁰⁵

Bhagavadgītā is a description of the three paths of *Yoga*, i.e. *Bhaktiyoga* (the *Yoga* of devotion), *Karmayoga* (the *Yoga* of the selfless action) and *Jñānayoga* (the *Yoga* of knowledge). Through these three path of *Yoga*, the individual comes to self-realization. In the *Bhagavadgītā*, the word *Yoga* is more and more reserved for the regular discipline of *Dhyānayoga*. At a few places, it is also connected with action, knowledge, and devotion.

There are many references to *Yoga* in *Bhagavadgītā*. *Yoga* sometimes means ‘method’,¹⁰⁶ sometimes ‘activity’,¹⁰⁷ ‘force’,¹⁰⁸ Meditation,¹⁰⁹ or

¹⁰⁵ yuktaḥ karmaphalaṁ tyaktvā śāntimāpnoti naiṣṭhikīm /

ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa phale sakto nibadhyate // *Bhagavadgītā*,V.12

¹⁰⁶ loke’smindvidihā niṣṭhā purā proktā mayānagha /

jñānayogena sāmkyānām karmayogena yoginām// *Ibid.*,III.3.

renunciation (*sannyasa*)¹¹⁰ etc. This variety of meanings corresponds to real morphological diversity and this is due to the diverse sphere of *Yoga*.¹¹¹ *Yoga* is not just a ‘withdrawal from the world and practice of extreme asceticism’. But rather a *Yogīs* he who is moderate in eating and fasting, sleeping and waking.¹¹² Even dejection and despair can be *Yoga* in the sense that often such despair is the starting point of the spiritual life. Some verses of the *Gītā* contain the only practical physical techniques of *Yoga*. “The balance of the *Gītā*’s spiritual instruction on *Yoga* is primarily on cultivating the proper attitude towards oneself and the world.

¹⁰⁷ *Mokṣadharmā*,II.682 as quoted in *Yoga: Immorality and Freedom* by Trask,

R.Willard,p.156

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, II.675

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*,II.691

¹¹⁰ *yaṁ sannyāsamiti prāhuyogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava/*

na hyasannyastasaṅkalpo yogī bhavati kaścana// Bhagavadgītā,VI,2

¹¹¹ Trask,R.Willard,*Yoga: Immorality and Freedom*,p.150

¹¹² *nātyaśnatas tu yogo’sti na caikantamanasnataḥ/*

na cāti svapna sīlasya jāgrato naiva cārjuna// Bhagavadgītā,VI.16

In The *Bhagavadgītā*, Lord Kṛṣṇa defines *Yoga* is nothing but excellence in work (*karmasukauśalam*).¹¹³ Excellence in work means doing any work efficiently. For performing any work well, we need to have a peaceful mind. *Yoga* is the way of liing which calms the mind and improves our ability too. In another place, we find second definition of *Yoga* such as -equilibrium (*samatvam*) of mind is *Yoga*.¹¹⁴ It is said that *Yoga* makes for the happiest behavioral adjustment. *Yoga* signifies a picture of behavior that is free from self-imposed limitations and hence makes for the happiest adjustment. The *Yoga* is one who has controlled his senses.¹¹⁵ In other passage, “A *Yogī* is a man who

¹¹³ buddhiyukto jahātīha ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte/

tasmād yogāya yujyasva yogah karmasu kauśalam//*Ibid.*, II.50

¹¹⁴ yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi saṅgamtyaktvā dhanañjaya/

siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā samatvam yoga ucyate//*Ibid.*,II..48

¹¹⁵ tāni sarvāṇi saṅyamyā yukta āsīta matparaḥ/

vaśe hi yasyendriyāṇi tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā //*Ibid.*, II.61

rises above the duality of action and non-action.”¹¹⁶ The *Yogī* is not attached to the fruits of action.¹¹⁷

Hence, the *Bhagavadgītā* gives clear and precise knowledge about *Yoga*. It also describe the nature of self and the realization of the self, the spiritual return to the highest or, in the personal sense the realization of the personal self, has always been the goal of its fundamental philosophy and spiritual approach to life.

E. YOGA IN THE PURĀṆAS:

The Purāṇas constitute the most important religious literature of India and stand next to the Vedas. The Purāṇas inform us about the social, religious and cultural life of the people of ancient India. It also consists of varied topics like Philosophy, History, Geography, Poetics and so on and so forth. The different morals and values propounded in the Vedas, the Upaniṣadas, the Epics and the

¹¹⁶ karmaṇyakarma yaḥ paśyeda karmaṇi cā karma yaḥ/

sa buddhimānmanuṣyesu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt // *Ibid.*, IV.18

¹¹⁷ kāñkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhim yajanta iha devatāḥ/

kṣipraṁ hi mānuṣe loke siddhirbhavati karmajā// *Ibid.*, IV,12

Dramaśāstras are dealt in detail. Different thinkers explain the term *Purāṇa* differently. The word *Purāṇa* means *Puranamākhyanam* i.e., old narrative.¹¹⁸ The *Vācaspatyam* explains the word *Purāṇa* as *purbhavam*, i.e., *Purāṇa* is that which remains in the past and deals with the past.¹¹⁹ The *Purāṇas* themselves also try to ascertain the meaning of the term in the *Purāṇas*. In *Purāṇa*, *Yoga* is found mainly on the eighteen¹²⁰ major *Purāṇas* and some available minor *Purāṇas*.

The *Brahmapurāṇa* is the first of the eighteen *Purāṇa*. The *Brahmapurāṇa* points out that *Yoga* is not simply possible by *Padmāsana* or by concentrating on the tip of the nose but in fact it is defined as the contact or proper co-ordination between the Mind and the senses.¹²¹ The *Kūrmapurāṇa* states that the fire of *Yoga* burns the cage of sin that surrounds a man. Knowledge becomes purified

¹¹⁸ Winternitz, M, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 1, p. 496

¹¹⁹ *Vācaspatyam*, p. 4369.

¹²⁰ madvayaṁ bhadvayaṁ caiva batrayaṁ vacatuṣṭayaṁ /

¹²¹ na ca padmāsanaḥ yogo na nāsāgranirīkṣaṇāt /

manasaśceindriyāṇāṅca saṅyogo yoga ucyate // *Brahmapurāṇa*,234.28

and *Nirvāṇa* is directly obtained.¹²² By *Yoga*, knowledge is obtained and through knowledge *Yoga* is practised. With a person endowed with *Yogajñāna*, Śiva is pleased.¹²³ *Yoga* is also classified in to two kinds; *Abhāvayoga* and *Mahāyoga*, the latter being the most eminent of all *Yogas*.¹²⁴ When in the mind is concentrated upon God thought as void and formless, it is called *abhāvayoga*. When one sees everywhere one's own soul identified with him, the ever blissful and pure, that is called *Mahāyoga* which is the highest.¹²⁵ The *Yoga* is also said to be of two kinds *Sabijā* and *nirbīja*.

¹²² yogāgnirdahati kṣipramaśeṣaṁ pāpañjaraṁ /

prasannaṁ jāyate jñanaṁ sāksānnirvāṇasiddhiṁ // *Kūrmapurāṇa*,2.11.2

¹²³ yogātsañjāyate jñānaṁ jñānadyogaḥ pravartate /

yogajñānābhiyoktasya prasīdati maheśvaraḥ // *Ibid.*,2.11.3

¹²⁴ yogastu dvividho jñeyo hyabhabaḥ prathamo mataḥ /

aparastu mahayogaḥ sarvayogottamottama // *Ibid.*, 2.11.5

¹²⁵ śūnyaṁ sarvanirābhāsaṁ svarupaṁ yatra cintyate //

abhāvayogoḥ sa prokto yenā'tmanam prapaśyati // *Ibid.*,2.11.6

The *Agnipurāṇa*, one of the later Purāṇas, embodies topics bearing on philosophy and cosmology. It has given the definition of *Yoga* as *Yoga* is a kind of special mental activity, which is characterized by its dependents upon one's own effort and its union with Brahman.¹²⁶ The *Agnipurāṇa* enumerates the eight aṅgas of *Yoga*, which are *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhyāna*, *Dhāraṇā* and *Samādhi*.¹²⁷

The *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is of the opinion that the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are ten in number and they can be practised in two ways that is *Sakāma* and *Niṣkāma*, if practiced with some purpose, they fulfill that desire, but when practised without any desire for fruit, they become conducive to liberation.¹²⁸ According to the *Viṣṇuopurāṇa*, the mental activity characterized by one's own efforts by which

¹²⁶ ātmaprayatnasāpekṣā viśiṣṭā ya manogatih /

tasyābrahmāṇi saṅyoga yoga etyabhidhīyate // *Agnipurāṇa*,137.25

¹²⁷ prāṇāyāmastathā dhyanam pratyāhāro'tha dhāraṇā /

samadhiśca munisreṣṭhā yamo niyama āsanam // *Ibid.*,38.1.11

¹²⁸ ete yamāḥ saniyamāḥ pañca pañca ca kīrtitāḥ/

viśiṣṭaphalavāḥ kāmyā niṣkāmaṇām vimuktidāḥ // 6.7.38

one becomes united with *Brahman* is called *Yoga*.¹²⁹ The *liṅgapurāṇa* has first defined *Yoga* as status in which one gets knowledge of everything in the world.¹³⁰ By the word *Yoga*, *nirvāṇa* is denoted and it is the ultimate abode of Śiva.¹³¹ This *Purāṇa* has only referred to three *Āsanas*¹³² viz. *Svāstika*, *Padma* and *Badhvāsana* while no explanation is given.

F. SOME OTHER WORKS ON YOGA:

Besides getting place in the above mentioned literatures, a numbers of other works disusing the *Yoga* can also be found. Some of them are mentioned below:

¹²⁹ ātmaprayatnasāpekṣā viśiṣṭā yā manogatih /

tasyā brahmaṇi saṅyogo yoga etyabhidhīyate // *Viṣṇupurāṇa*,6.7.31

¹³⁰ svārthajñānaniṣpattirāsrayo yogo ucyate / *liṅgapurāṇa*,8.3

¹³¹ yogaśabdena nirvāṇa mahesaṁ padamucyate / *Ibid.*,8.4

¹³² āsanam svastikam badhva padmāsanam tu va / *Ibid.*,8.8.5

I. YOGAVĀŚIṢṬHA:

One of the most popular treatise of the Yoga Philosophy is the *Yogavāśiṣṭha*. It elaborates the Yoga Philosophy in a lucid way. The date of this composition is still a matter of doubt. However, tradition assigns it to the sage Valmīki, the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. If this is so then it would have to be 7000 years old. The original text of the *Yogavāśiṣṭha* runs into 32000 couplets. It is called *Bṛhat* (the Great) *Yogavāśiṣṭha* or *Yogavāśiṣṭha Mahārāmāyaṇa*. It is also known by the name *Jñānavāśiṣṭha*. The *Yogavāśiṣṭha* is a conversation between sage Vaśiṣṭha and Sri Rama. Traditionally, *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* and *Yogavāśiṣṭha* are regarded as one work. *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* being the *Pūrva Rāmāyaṇa* and *Yogavāśiṣṭha* being the *Uttara Rāmāyaṇa*.¹³³ According to Swami Ranganathanda, “The *Yogavāśiṣṭha* has been a favorite book of spiritual seekers in India all these several centuries. Its special appeal lies in its thoroughly rational approach and in its presentation of the Vedanta as a philosophy which dares like the *Bhagavadgītā*, to bridge the gulf between the secular and the sacred action and contemplation, in human life, through a comprehensive

¹³³ Panashikar, W.L, *Sanskrit Introduction to Yogavāśiṣṭha*, p.1

rational, practical and lofty spirituality. It is in this spirituality that man in the modern age needs to rescue himself from the stagnation of worldliness and put him on the high road of creative living and fulfillment.”¹³⁴

Yoga means uniting – uniting with Reality, Hence *Yogavāsiṣṭha* means teaching of *Yoga* as expounded by sage Vaśiṣṭha to Sri Rama. According to *Yogavāsiṣṭha*, *Yoga* is the means of keeping the mind clam.¹³⁵ Some of the earliest concept of *Yoga* also is found in the *Yogavāsiṣṭha*. This scripture must also predate the *Mahābhārata* and the *Bhagavadgītā* by millennia. The Yogic attitudes and suggestions for *sādhanā* are found in this text.

II. GORAKṢA ŚATAKAM:

The *Gorakṣaśatakam* is an ancient scripture of *Yoga*. Ṛsi Goraka was a widely traveled *Yogī* who perhaps lived about 1500 years ago composed *Gorakṣaśatakam* in 100 verses.¹³⁶ He was one of the most important disciples of

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.3

¹³⁵ *manaḥ praśamanopayaḥ yog ityabhidheeyate / Yogavāsiṣṭha, II.2.4*

¹³⁶ *gorakṣaḥ śatakam vakti yoginām hitakāmyayā / Gorakṣaśatakam, 4*

Matsyendranath. He was a representative of the Nātha School and in his work are many practical techniques of *Yoga* written down for the benefit of seekers. He preaches the ideal of Patañjali and defines the various limbs of *Yoga*.¹³⁷

III. GHERAṆḌA SAMHITĀ:

The *Gheraṇḍa Samhitā* means Gheraṇḍa's collection. It is one of the three classic texts of *Haṭhayoga* (the other two being the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* and the *Śiva Samhitā*). Though it is a treatise on the *Haṭhayoga*, it does not use the word *Haṭha* instead, it is called a text on *Yoga* discussed in the treatise, *Ghatthaayoga*. The *Gheraṇḍa Samhitā* is in the form of dialogue between Gheraṇḍa, the preceptor, and Canakapali, the disciple. Unlike other *Haṭhayoga* texts, the *Gheraṇḍa Samhitā* speaks of a sevenfold¹³⁸ *Yoga*.

1. *Satkarma* (purification)
2. *Āsana* (posture)

¹³⁷ āsanam prānasamrodhaḥ pratyāhāraśca dhāranā/

dhyānam samādhiretāni yogāṅgāni bhavanti ṣaṭ // *Ibid.*,7

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*,I.10-11

3. *Mudra* (steadiness)
4. *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of breath)
5. *Praṇāyāma* (control of breath)
6. *Dhyāna* (meditation)
7. *Samādhi* (concentration)

The text itself follows this division in seven chapters, and has a focus upon the *satkarmas* (*satkarma*), thus this text is sometimes said to describe *ghatasthayoga*. For instance, the *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali describes an eightfold path (*yama* and *niyama* instead of *satkarma* and *mudrā*, and addition of *dharma*. The closing stanzas on *Samādhi* teach different methods than those described by Patañjali. Ṛṣi Gheraṇḍa enunciates *Saptayoga*, (seven limbs) of *Yoga*.¹³⁹ According to these seven limbs, exercises are for making the body fit for Divine Wisdom.¹⁴⁰ Āsanas have been described in great detail in this work. Again we find the concept of 84 lakhs of *Āsana* described by lord Śiva. There are as many

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ sudhanaṃ dṛḍatā caiva sthairyaṃ dhairyam ca lāghavam/

pratyakṣam ca nirliptam ca ghaṭasya saptasādhnam // *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*, 1.9

Āsana as there are creatures on the earth.¹⁴¹ Among these *Āsanas*, eighty four are best, and of those eighty fours, thirty two have been found useful for mankind. This great *Ṛsi* also discusses *Pratyāhāra* and *Praṇāyāma* techniques laying emphasis first on the purification of the *Nāḍīs*. He also discusses *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* in detail. He divides *Dhyāna* into three types.¹⁴²

IV. HAṬHAYOGAPRADĪPĪKĀ:

The *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* is one of the three works on *Haṭhayoga*. An Indian *Yogī* named *Svātmarāma* wrote the *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* in the fifteenth century. He wrote this book for the students of *Yoga*.

The word *Pradīpikā* comes from the Sanskrit root *pra+√dip* ‘to flame forth’ and means a light, lamp. It is extended meaning, since one is throwing light on a subject, is an explanation or commentary. Therefore, the title means, “An Explanation of *Haṭhayoga*.”

¹⁴¹ āsanāni samasthāni yāvante jīvajantavaḥ, caturaśāti lakṣāṇi śivena kathithāni ca/ *Ibid.*,II.1

¹⁴² sthūlam jyotistathā sūkṣmam dhyānasya trividham viduḥ / *Ibid.*,6.1

The *Haṭhayogapradīpikā* consists of four chapters which include information about *Āsana*, *Praṇāyāma*, Cakras, *kuṇḍalinī*, bandhas, kriyās, *śakti*, nāḍīs and mudrās among other topics. The *Pradīpikā* is divided into four parts. The first explains yamas (restraints on behaviour), niyamas (observances), āsanas (posture) and food. The second describes *Praṇāyāma* (control of breath), and the satkarmas (internal cleansing practices). The third deals with mudrās (seals), bandhas (locks), the nāḍīs (channels of energy through which *prāṇa* flows) and the *kundalini* power. The fourth expounds *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *dhāraṇa* (concentration), *dhyāṇa* (meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption). In all, the text contains 390 verses .Out of these, about forty deal with āsanas, approximately one hundred and ten with *Praṇāyāma*, one hundred and fifty with mudrās, bandhas and Śatkarmas and the rest with *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāṇa* and *samādhi*.

Sage Svātmarāmasūri in his second verse, proclaims that Svātmarāma yogin, having saluted his Lord and Guru, teaches the *Haṭhavidyā* solely for the attainment of *Rājayoga*.¹⁴³ It runs in the line of Hindu Yoga (to distinguish from

¹⁴³ prāṇamya śrīguruṃ nātham svātmārāmena yoginā /

Buddhist and Jain Yoga) and is dedicated to Śrī (Lord) ādināthā¹⁴⁴ (Adinātha), a name for Lord Śiva (the Hindu god of destruction), who is believed to have imparted the secret of *Haṭhayoga* to his consort Parvati. The text describes āsanas (postures), *satkarma* (purifying practices), mudras (finger and hand positions), bandhas (locks), and *Praṇāyāma* (breath exercises), It also explains the purpose of *Haṭhayoga* is the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* (subtle energy), advancement to *Rājayoga*, and the experience of deep meditative absorption known as *Samādhi*. Satmaramasūri also mentions 72,000 *nāḍīs*¹⁴⁵ and claims only *suṣumnā*¹⁴⁶ *nāḍī* is of importance. He describes many methods of achieving the *Samādhi* state. He lays emphasis on the use of *nāda*, or inner sound.

kevalam rājayogāya haṭhavidyopadiśyate // *Haṭhayoga pradīpikā*, I.2

¹⁴⁴ śrīādināthamatsyendraśāvarānandabhairavāḥ /

cauraṅgīmīnagoraḥsavirūpākṣabileśayāḥ // *Ibid.*, I.5

¹⁴⁵ dvāsaptatisahasrāṇām nāḍīnām malaśodhane/

kutaḥ prakṣālanopāyaḥ kuṇḍalyabhyasanādṛte // *Ibid.*, III.123

¹⁴⁶ iyaṁ tu madhyamā nāḍī dṛḍābhyāsenā yoginām /

āsanaprānaśāyāmamudrābhiḥ saralā bhavet// *Ibid.*, III.124
