CHAPTER - II

THE ORIGIN AND SCHOOLS OF YOGA
ORIGIN OF YOGA

It goes without saying that Yoga originated in ancient India. Yoga is a significant contribution that India has made to the world of psychology and spirituality. Yoga has been part and parcel of Indian life. It has been the core of Indian culture rooted in higher spiritual aspirations. It is not easy to trace the origin and determine the nature of Yoga. An adequate explanation of the origin and nature of Yoga requires a deep look into the past.

The issue of the origin of Yoga is a complex one. Historically, it is difficult to establish exactly as to when and how Yoga began. Some scholars of comparative religion hold that Yoga originated in the Vedic times. It developed in connection with the Brahminical religious practices. Some indologists hold that Yoga was practiced by the Shamanists who were after ecstatic states of mind. So both the
religious worship of the Brahmins and the practices of contemporary Shamanists are said to have the traces of Yoga in the ancient times. The origins of Yoga can also be traced to the magic practices of the Vratyas who were also of the Vedic period. Archaeologists have held that the origin of Yoga is pre-Vedic. Harappan culture of 2700 B.C. is said to have showed the earliest indications of Yogic practices. Excavated seals of the Harappan culture showed the pictures of a figure seated in a Yogic posture. The seals found in Mohenjo-daro also showed the seated deity absorbed in meditation. They indicate that the Yogic practices were known to the people of that period. They played a significant role in their religious life. The seals which showed a figure sitting cross-legged are a definite proof of Yogic practices. "Archaeological discoveries allow us therefore to speculate with some justification that a wide range of Yoga activities was already known to the ancient people of pre-Aryan India".¹

Although Yoga prevailed in Pre-Vedic India, it is difficult to draw a clear picture of the nature of Yoga knowledge and practice of that period. But there are clear references to Yoga in Vedic hymns dealing with sacrificial rites. This shows that Yoga had a considerable influence on the religious practices of the Vedic period. References to Yoga are found even in the hymns other than the religious ones. Yoga was practiced even by the Yogis who were non-religious. They were known as the Kesins whose objective was to attain transcendence in

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an unorthodox way. Kesin means a long-haired one, who was friendly with the natural elements.\(^2\) He was a master of the creative flame present in himself. He was homeless and traveled around clad in yellow rags. He was inscrutable to others, a companion to gods and belonged to the other sphere of life. He tread the path of the winds and his mind dwelled in the inner region. He could see everything and understand the whole universe. He was one with life itself and lived simultaneously in the physical and spiritual world. "He is seen as a gentle friend not only by gods and other higher beings, but by all other creatures, including wild beasts, and he knows what is going on in the hearts of all other beings he encounters. He has mastered all the forces of the Universe, even the dark ones, and unharmed endures and overcomes all the vicissitudes and dangers of existence."\(^3\)

Next the traces of Yogic practices could be found in the lives of the Vrātyas who lived in the Magadha region during the second millennium B.C. Vrātyas were the holy and solitary vagabonds. They produced an extensive literature which was later appropriated by the Vedas. They practiced Tantra Yoga, a sub stream of non-Brahmanic trends in religion. It was alive only for some time. Its practitioners were anonymous ascetic wanderers. They were philosophically minded aristocrats also known as Rājanyas\(^4\).
The Yogic practices of the Rājanyas with their transcendental aim greatly influenced the merely ritualistic Vedic practices. The Yoga of the Rājanyas gained esteem and popularity among other classes of people also. They exercised deep impact on the minds of the people because of their magic lore. They also influenced the learned who were interested in metaphysical questions about transcendental issues. Consequently, Vedic Brahminism was forced to incorporate Yoga as a part of the four stages of life (āsramas). Yoga formed part of the fourth stage, namely, sanyāsa, the other three being brahmacarya, grhastrha and vanaprastha. The sanyāsin is one who becomes homeless, resorts to forest and prepares himself for the final deliverance. He pursues the path of Yoga for the rest of his life. He adopts Yoga technique with a view to break through the transcendent.

Next, we see clear Yogic trends in the older Upaniṣads such as the Brhadāranyaka, the Chandogya, the Taittiriya, the Aitareya and the Kausitaka. The concept of dhyāna finds a predominant place in these Upaniṣads. In the Chandogya Upaniṣad we find a whole section devoted to dhyāna. Dhyāna is a contemplative absorption, a meditative state of mind through which one can have a vision of the reality. According to the Chandogya, dhyāna is a supra intellectual perception transcending the superficial states of mind (citta). Everything is said to be contained in dhyāna. It comprehends the entire universe with its earth, the waters, the mountains, the heavens,
the gods and so on. "What it means is that if one's mind has access to the deep cognitive state of dhūyāna, one sees everything in its proper place, the mind is at peace, balanced and without conflict."7

The practice of dhūyāna Yoga played a significant role in bringing about the intuitive experience of the ultimate reality, namely, the Upaniṣadic Brahmaṇ. It was definitely through dhūyāna that the mystic experiences oneness with the whole universe. It was through dhūyāna that the Yogis realized the true nature of reality and its creative essence. Realization of the oneness of Ātman and Brahmaṇ is not possible through speculative and intellectual exercise. The realization of the truth that "I am Brahmaṇ" was made possible through dhūyāna only. Thus Yoga is the basis of the Upaniṣadic philosophy and is at the root of Indian Philosophy in general.8

SCHOOLS OF YOGA

In the Indian tradition there are five major schools of Yoga. They are: (1) Jñāna Yoga, (2) Bhakti Yoga, (3) Karma Yoga, (4) Aṣṭāṅga Mārga of Buddhism, and (5) Patanjali’s Aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

Jñāna Yoga

Jñāna Yoga means the path of knowledge. Knowledge is the direct realization of the essential unity of existence. It is not a mere conceptual understanding of the Reality. Knowledge is wisdom of knowing and being one with the Reality which is the changeless
essence of the changing forms. The Bhagavad Gita and Śankara’s Advaita Vedanta have extensively dealt with Jñāna Yoga. Bhagavad Gita says that the final liberation is possible through the attainment of the discriminative knowledge of the Self and the not-self. Undisturbed concentration (Nirvikalpa Samādhi) is attained when the perfect knowledge of it shines forth in the mind. Knowledge of the Self is knowing the Self as one’s own being and as that of all. That is knowledge is the wisdom of knowing Ātman as Brahman. “Knowing Parabrahman alone is wisdom. That done is true education. Of all forms of knowing (education), knowledge of ultimate reality is the best, for any number of secular forms of knowing, cannot give us complete peace and freedom from the cycle of births. If one wants to redeem oneself from the pains of birth and death, one must take shelter in the Supreme Self. One must acquire self knowledge”.

Of all kinds of knowledge, knowledge of the Brahman is superior and sacred. It alone is the antidote to the ignorance of mistaking the body, the prakṛti, the not-self for the Self. Knowledge alone liberates from the pain of ignorance and gives the bliss of the Brahman. However, Bhagavad Gita does not seek to expound the final knowledge but links it to the knowledge of action (Karma Yoga). It says that Jñāna-Yoga is possible through Karma Yoga which means skill in performing action. Karma Yoga is performing action without the desire for its fruits, without a sense of egoism and agenthood. It is the
disinterested action (Niṣkāma Karma) of offering the fruits of action to God. It purifies the mind in which alone the supreme knowledge originates. "As colour will not adhere to a soiled cloth, as seed will not sprout in a saline soil, knowledge will not originate in a mind associated with sin. It must be cleansed by disinterested performance of actions (Karma-Yoga)\(^1\).

Bhagavad Gita deals with Jñāna Yoga in the fourteenth chapter which begins with a brief note on Karma-Yoga, since the latter is an essential part of the former. It is only through the cooperation between the two Yogas that one can realize the Brahmaṇ. Knowledge and action together lead us to the final liberation. Knowledge of disinterested action is essential for the knowledge of Brahmaṇ. Understanding and doing action in its true sense constitute the knowledge of the highest kind. True action is that which is done as a sacrifice to the God. Acting by sacrificing its results to the Lord is Yoga. Disinterested action does not mean having no interest in action. It does not mean being lazy and inactive. A true Karma-Yogi is one who sees inaction in action and action in inaction. He alone can become a true Jñāna-Yogi. "He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is Yogi and he has accomplished all his work in a harmonious manner"\(^12\).
Sankara Advaita prescribes four requirements (sādana catuṣṭaya) for the attainment of the knowledge of the Brahman. They are: (1) Viveka, (2) Vairagya, (3) Saṣampathi, and (4) Mumukṣatva.

**Viveka** means discrimination between the impermanent and the permanent, the superficial and the essential, the illusory and the real, and the relative and the absolute.

**Vairaga** means dispassionateness. It means guarding the mind against passions and emotions, being possessed and infatuated. A Yogi has to overcome sensual desires and attachment to things of sensual pleasure. He has to cleanse the mind of these obstructions to achieve a clear vision. "To achieve the clarity of mind that is essential for final knowledge and wisdom, attachments and passions that "colour" it must be got rid of".

**Saṣampathi** means six attainments, namely, śama, dama, uparati, titikṣa, sraddhā, samādāna. Śama means the cultivations of the tranquility of the mind. Dama is self-control in action. Uparati means eradicating the eagerness to possess. Titikṣa means patience. Sraddhā means confidence and sincerity. And samādāna is intenseness of the mind.

**Mumukṣatva** means longing for the final liberation. The Yogi must develop a positive longing for liberation. The longing should not be a
blind passion but a clear perception of what is real and unreal. This is "the advanced ability to discriminate between the unsatisfactory superficial reality and the safety promising spiritual dimension of higher experience." Besides the above mentioned four basic requirements, the Yogi on the path of Jñāna-Yoga has to go through the following three more stages viz., śravana, manana and nididhyāsana.

Śravana means hearing. It means an extensive and an intensive study of the Upaniṣadic and Advaitic texts. It can be done by listening to the teaching of the great masters (gurus). Listening to and studying at the feet of the master is essential for attaining jñāna. It gives the aspirant the right direction and outlook required for the succeeding stages.

Manana is deep thinking or contemplation. It is the intellectual analysis of the knowledge gained by the study of the scriptures. It involves the critical examination of the knowledge in all its dimensions. It enables the Yogi to realize that true knowledge is neither intellectual nor perceptual. Absolute truth is beyond perception and inference. "When he firmly arrives at this conclusion, he is able to enter the path of meditation which brings him to the following and final stage of training."
Nididhyāsana means constant and deep meditation on the Absolute. It enables the aspirant to have intuition into the ultimate reality, namely, Brahman. Intuition transcends the senses and the intellect. This is the final stage in which the aspirant attains liberation. “As this capacity is developed and deepened, the Yogi’s intuition and spiritual vision grow until he reaches the final vision of truth, which brings him the final achievement of liberation (mokṣa)”16.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga is also called the path of Divine love. It is based on the belief in a personal God. It regards devotion to God as the highest form of spirituality. Here God is recognized as the ultimate reality the realization of which is the highest goal. Bhagavad Gita underlines the notion of a personal God. It regards God as the highest reality manifesting in Incarnations (Avatāras). Kṛṣṇa is one of the Incarnations devotion to whom leads to ultimate liberation. A life of surrender to the Lord is a direct and an easy path to the ultimate freedom. The worshipper should sacrifice all his thoughts, emotions, words and deeds to the Lord. Bhakti Yoga is as efficacious as any other Yoga in bringing liberation to the Yogi. “Possessing extreme love for God alone is devotion”17.

Bhagavad Gita says that jñāna-Yoga is difficult to follow and it is meant for a few only. Bhakti Yoga is meant for all, the learned as well as the laity. It takes us to the ultimate reality without any need.
for a philosophical understanding of it. It is not only possible but easy to reach the 'unmanifest' through the 'manifest'. Worship of the formless straightaway is difficult. Lord Kṛṣṇa says that He is Himself the formless. Worshipping Him with faith and without egoism leads the God without qualities. First one should take refuge in God with qualities, and serve him always with love. Then the mind becomes pure by God's grace. He will be endowed with the strength and qualities intended for the worship of God without qualities. One should commence first with the idea, "I am your servant" (dāsōham). It will gradually lead him to 'I am you' (soham). "By worshipping God with devotion, byprostrating before Him and surrendering to Him, saying, 'I do not know anyone else except you', man's egoism vanishes gradually. Selfishness gets extinguished... Hence Kṛṣṇa commanded that for egoists the worship of the formless would be difficult".18

Swami Vivekananda says that Bhakti Yoga is a real and genuine search after the Lord. It begins, sustains and ends in Love for the Lord. Referring to the Nārada Sūtras, Vivekananda defines Bhakti as the intense love to God. He says, "One single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom".19 According to him, Bhakti is upheld as a means to liberation by many sages in the ancient times. Bhakti is greater than Karma and Jñāna. Karma devoid of Bhakti is superficial. Jñāna without Bhakti is sterile. Whereas, Bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end.

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At the same time, Vivekananda says that there is not really much difference between jnana-Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. In the end they converge at the same point. He also says that there is not much difference between Rāja-Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Rāja-Yoga when pursued and practiced by genuine Yogis leads to the same goal as Bhakti. But he contends that of all Yogas, Bhakti-Yoga "is the easiest and the most natural way to reach the great divine end in view."\(^{20}\)

**Karma Yoga**

*Karma Yoga* is the path of action. Importance of *Karma Yoga* can be seen in its relation to other Yogas. *Karma Yoga* is the fundamental Yoga, since nobody can abstain from action at all. A Jñāna Yogi, Bhakti Yogi or Yogi following any other kind of Yoga should perform action. As it has already been mentioned in the section on Jñāna-\(Yoga\), doing action by offering its fruits to God is the highest kind of Jñāna. And devotion to God, namely, Bhakti, is the highest kind of karma. Even Patanjali's Rāja-\(Yoga\) prescribes action by sacrificing its results to God as one of the *niyamas* for the realization of *Samādhi*.

Bhagavad Gita says that no one can abstain from active participation in life. Every one is made to work by the forces of nature.\(^{21}\) All actions arise out of the Brahman. Action is something which man shares with the Almighty. A Yogi should distinguish
between good and bad *karma*. A good action (*Nishkāma Karma*), is that which is not motivated by the selfish desire (*kāma*) and anger (*krodha*). It alone can lead the Yogi to the wisdom of doing action devoid of sensual pleasure and external achievement. *Karma Yoga* means renunciation of personal and aims in action. It is doing something without attachment to the fruits and with deep concern for the welfare of the society. When a Yogi acts in this way, his actions do not bind him. It will liberate him from the burden of accumulating the results of action. Moreover, a Yogi who performs action without a motive and an attachment finds contentment within himself, since there is within him the Divine. "One should and can find pleasure, satisfaction and contentment in oneself (for there is the universal *Ātman* to be found eventually) and then there is nothing one has to do exclusively for one’s own interest"21.

Swami Vivekananda says that *karma* is different from *karma-Yoga*. *Karma* is action with motive, whereas *Karma-Yoga* is action without motive. Former is self-centred while the latter is without any selfish motive in view. He holds that man works with several motives in mind. Some work for fame, some for money, some others for power, heaven or penance. There are those who work for the sake of work, out of good will. The person who works without any selfish motive gains the highest. Unselfish work done out of truth and love is more paying, for it gives moral power. Works done with self-restraint results
in development of power. A man who can work even for a few minutes without any selfish motive, without thinking of reward or punishment will derive the capacity of a powerful moral giant. "It is hard to do it, but in the heart of our hearts we know its value, and the good it brings. It is the greatest manifestation of power this tremendous restraint; self restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action."  

Swami Vivekananda further says that self-control in action produces mighty will. It is this mighty will that is at the source of the great men like the Buddha, the Christ and so on. Many people are short-sighted in performing their action. They work for narrow and temporal gains. They do not have the patience to look beyond. They become wicked and immoral by working for selfish ends. This is their weakness and powerlessness. Swami pleads us to work for higher and higher goals. We have the right to work but not to the fruits thereof. We need not care for the results. We have to leave them aside and alone. He says, "If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or good work, do not trouble to think what the result will be."  

One must work always and intensely. But at the same time one should not be totally immersed in the struggle of life. One has to learn to be intensely active even in the midst of the greatest silence, and be silent in the midst of intense activity. The ideal man is one
who has learnt the secret of restraint and self-control. He is calm and
cool even when he is in the midst of busy streets of a big city. He is
quiet as if he were in a cave where nothing is heard. Yet he is working
intensely all the time. "That is the ideal of Karma-Yoga, and if you
have attained to that, you have really learnt the secret of work," says
Swami Vivekananda.

The Buddhist Aṣṭānga Mārga

The Buddha was both a realistic and practical thinker. He
wanted to liberate people from the speculative trends of the Vedic
tradition. He wanted to replace the ritualistic outlook by the realistic
attitude of practical orientation. His sought to liberate the individual
"here" and "now". He detested the metaphysical and dialectical
discussions and disputation. He urged people to follow a system of
training the mind for its total transformation. He persuaded people to
meditate with a "heightened awareness and analytical insight". He
prescribed a systematic path for attaining such awareness and
insight. The goal of the path is the final achievement of a vision of
reality that transcends the world of samsāra and sorrow. This is
accomplished when the path is practised till the final stage, namely,
Samādhi is reached. Samādhi is Nirvāṇa wherein the individual
attains full enlightenment, perfection and peace. The path consists of
eight steps. The eight steps are: Right View (Sammā diṭṭhi), Right
Thinking (Sammā Sankappa), Right Speech (Sammā Vāca), Right
Action (Sammā Kammanta), Right Livelihood (Sammā Ajiva), Right Effort (Sammā Vayāma), Right Mindfulness (sammū satil), and Right Absorption or Concentration (Sammā Samādhi).

**Right View:**

Primarily, right view means looking upon everything in life in the light of the Buddhas teachings. It is to study the doctrinal formulations and live according to them. It is viewing reality according to the spirit of the Buddhist scriptures. It means to see things directly as they really are. Right viewing means transcending one's own narrow personality. It is training oneself in understanding things and reality as a whole in an impersonal way. It implies overcoming the self-centred attitude and seeing the life-world in an objective way. It is controlling the instinctual way of living life. It implies repudiation of our expedient attitude of looking at everything from utilitarian point of view. It is observation by refraining from personal inclinations and idiosyncrasies. It is setting aside prejudices and looking at the things in a matter of fact way. Right viewing resembles the attitude of the scientist who looks at the object of investigation in an impartial way and without preconceived ideas.

"Training in right viewing means learning to look at reality from a higher perspective that transcends man's personal interests and in the long run aims at seeing every single thing in the context of the
whole of reality, in other words, from the view point of the absolute whatever this may be taken to mean. 26

Right Thinking:

Right thinking is two-fold in its formulation. Firstly, it means thinking without greed, ill-will and cruelty. Secondly, it implies thinking devoid of worldly pursuits. The two formulations are meant for leading the monk on the right path. Right thinking is "contemplation on virtues of renunciation and compassion. It will serve one as an aid for the speedy removal of taṇha." 27 Right thinking follows automatically from right view. Right view of transcending the narrow personal outlook naturally results in thinking that is not governed by greed and passion. The practice of seeing things objectively and as they actually are leads to thinking that is conducive for the final goal. Right thinking is the full knowledge and cognition essential for Enlightenment. It opens the door to following other steps without difficulty. Thinking is the basis for everything we do. As is our thinking so is our life. Right thinking generates wisdom that turns the whole life in the direction of the final goal. The first two steps we have so far considered, namely, right view and right thinking constitute prajñā part of the path. They provide the practitioner the right knowledge essential for following the remaining steps. Prajñā is the foundation on which the Buddha has built morality or Śīla. The next three steps, namely, right speech, right action and right
livelihood constitute the Sila part of the eightfold path. This is known as the practical side of the path leading to Nirvāṇa. Sila is a natural consequence of the practice prajñā.

**Right Speech:**

Right speech means abstaining from lying, tale-bearing, harsh language and empty talk. Brahmajala Sutta of Digha Nikaya describes right speech as that which is free from the words that are false, rough, abusive and unbeneficial. Right speech means speaking only the truth, combining truth with truth, and always remaining steadfast in truth. It means abstaining from deception and being trustworthy. It implies refraining from slander and from sowing seeds of discord among people. It means talking for the sake of encouraging unity among people. The monk on the path to Nirvāṇa speaks just for bringing about harmony. He speaks only blameless words, pleasing to the ear, affectionate, heartful and courteous. "His speech is appropriate to the occasion, being truthful, beneficial, consistent with the doctrine and the discipline, memorable, timely, opportune, with reasons, confined within limits and conducive to welfare".  

**Right Action:**

Right action is abstention from stealing, killing, immoral sexual behaviour and using intoxicants. It is not taking what has not been given. One should not accumulate things out of greed and covet
other's things. One should not have a relation with women against the convention or law. One should not violate the accepted moral values of a given society in relation with women. One should not have illicit contact with women, and never lust for other man's wife. One should never have sex even with those betrothed with other man. One should avoid thinking of having sex with the women who are under the protection of parents. According to Brahmajala Sutta, right action is to refrain from using improper means to satisfy one's sexual desires. Right Action has a higher value for a community of monks. A monk of the Sangha has to refrain from sexual conduct altogether. He should abstain totally even from the thought of injuring any being, expecting even small things form others. By totally avoiding thoughts and actions of sex, causing injury and possession of things, the monk attains the ability to discriminate between what is good and what is evil. He attains clarity of perception and understanding required for higher vision.

Right Livelihood:

A Yogi following the eightfold noble path should adopt the pattern of living that does not involve violation of the principles of the preceding steps. That is, the Yogi lives with total responsibility for everything he does in his life. He lives strictly according to the moral and spiritual principles embodied in the Buddhist law. He should follow the means of livelihood which does not involve the destruction
of life, telling lies, trading of women, arms, meat, intoxicants. The monk should abstain from making a living by selling weapons or poisons. He should also refrain from living by making predictions about the eclipses and fortunes of Kings. He should also avoid making a wrongful living by performing low arts such as "propitiating the devas by promises of offerings; making offerings to devas for favours granted; causing possession by spirits or exorcising them; casting spells with magical formulae learnt in a mud-house; turning eunuch into a man and man into a eunuch; practicing the art of choosing building sites; propitiating the devas while choosing building sites; practicing the profession of mouth-washing or bathing; fire-worshipping; causing vomiting; giving purgatives; using emetics or cathartics; letting out phlegm etc. from the head..."30.

**Right Effort:**

Of the above five steps, the first two, namely, right view and right thinking constitute the **prajñā** part of the path. The latter three, namely, right speech, right action and right living, constitute the **Sīla** part of the path. The five steps take care of the knowledge and morality part of the monk's life. The remaining three, namely, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration take care of the **Samādhi** part.
**Right Effort:**

Right effort is the first step in the actual training of the Buddhist Yoga. It constitutes the four noble efforts on the part of the monk. They are: (1) avoiding unsuitable states of mind; (2) eliminating the unsuitable states of mind that have already entered the mind; (3) developing new suitable states of mind; and (4) maintaining the suitable states of mind that are already developed.

Right effort implies the strong will to reach the Enlightenment. It is employing volitional exertion to reach the final goal. Right effort is not a matter of deciding once and for all. It is a constant maintenance of diligence on the path of Yoga. "In other words, the volitional drive has to be steered in the direction of the goal until the vision of the goal becomes so clear and strong that deviation is virtually out of the question." 31

**Right Mindfulness:**

Right mindfulness is training the mind in awareness. Mindfulness means constant watching of the activity of the mind. It is a careful observation of the thoughts or ideas in the mind. It is checking the mental forces of which we are rarely aware. Right mindfulness is a crucial step, since it aims at the full knowledge of oneself and the life-world as a whole.
Mindfulness is training oneself to be attentive to movements, both physical and mental. Brahmajala Sutta defines right mindfulness as steadfast mindfulness of nāma (mind) and rūpa (body). It means thinking, feeling and acting in full awareness of them. It is living in full consciousness and responsibility. It is transcending the mechanical and instinctual way of living. Training in mindfulness enables the practitioner to act according to his conscious will. It increases self-knowledge and capacity for self-control. It puts an end to the unconscious or half-conscious reactions which result in pain and regret. It also puts an end to the behaviour conditioned by habits, instincts and inclinations. It liberates the mind of its eccentricities and idiosyncrasies which create conflict in us. A Yogi who is trained in right mindfulness has an insight into his actions and reaction to external stimuli. He can ably distinguish between the external stimuli and the reactions to them which automatically arise in his mind. He is even mindful of the brief moment before the reactions are translated into action. "And this moment of clear insight into working of his mind enables the trainee to preserve his control over it so that he can check those reactions and decide quite freely on action to be taken or on inaction, according to his knowledge or his long held wishes or aspirations for higher aims. In the long run this procedure even enables him to change or completely drop certain
habits or traits, to change and improve his whole character and finally to transcend the limitations of an individual personality altogether.\textsuperscript{22}

**Right Absorption:**

Right absorption is also termed as right concentration. It constitutes gradual meditational progress that a Yogi achieves. Having diligently followed the preceding two steps, namely, right effort and right mindfulness, the Yogi withdraws his mind from the outer world. He focuses his attention on his inner being. He controls the impressions entering his mind through the senses. He frees the mind from its pre-occupation with images and ideas, emotional and conceptual problems. The Yogi purges his mind of its content gathered by the senses and thinking. He eventually begins to experience "a dynamic but burdenless state of mind which has transcended both the external world of things and the internal world of the personal ego."\textsuperscript{22}

Concentration (Sam\textadhatu) is a process of purification and perfection of the mind. It consists of four stages of absorption (jh\textit{\textacute{a}nas}). Having detached from sensual objects and unsalutary things, the Yogi enters into the first absorption. This is born of detachment but yet accompanied by thought conception. The absorption is filled with rapture and joy. Then the Yogi overcomes thought conception and gains inner tranquility and oneness of the mind. Thus he enters the
second absorption. This absorption is born of deeper concentration. It is also filled with rapture and joy. Then the Yogi dwells in equanimity and experiences the feeling of happiness caused by equanimity. Thus he enters the third absorption. And then the yogi gives up both pleasure and pain and enters into a state beyond joy and grief. Thus he enters the fourth absorption. This state of consciousness is purified by equanimity and mindfulness. This marks the ending of the practice of the noble eightfold path. This also marks the total cessation of suffering. According to the Buddha, eightfold path is the only way of overcoming saṁsāra and attaining nirvāṇa. This is the sole way, for the purification of beings, for ending of sorrow and lamentation, "for the destroying of pain and grief, for reaching the right path, for the realization of Nibbāna."

So for we have explained in a considerable detail four important systems of Yoga, namely, Jñāna Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and the Buddhist Aṣṭānga Marga. Before going to explain Patanjali's Raja Yoga, let us now mention in brief the minor forms of Yoga like Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga and Tantra Yoga. Hatha Yoga and Kundalini Yoga are very much part of Patanjali Yoga. Hatha Yoga has been formulated by a further elaboration of the third and fourth steps of Patanjali Yoga. It is the extension of āsana and prāṇayāma. It comprises a sequence of bodily postures and numerous breathing exercises for the external and internal perfection and purification of
the body and mind. Kundalini Yoga is the superstructure based on the Hatha Yoga. It aims at raising the Kundalini Śakti, the spiritual energy from the mūladhāra to the sahasrāra, the thousand petalled lotus at the top of the skull of the Yogi, through the sūṣumna. It is attained by the constant and methodical practice of prāpāyāma, the fourth step of Patanjali's Āṣṭāṅga Yoga.

Vipassana Yoga is part and parcel of the eightfold path prescribed by the Buddha. Vipassana Yoga means insight meditation. It is similar to the seventh step, namely, the right mindfulness of the eightfold path. Insight meditation is that in which the Yogi concentrate very deeply on the object of meditation until he actually realizes the truth of it. He reaches the final step, namely, Samādhi, with a little more effort in the Vipassana state.

And Tantra Yoga is based on the idea that sexual energy could be directly utilized for the purpose of spiritual progress. There are two schools of thought in Tantra Yoga—the right hand Tantric practice and the left hand Tantric practice. The former school believes that sexual energy is utilized for spiritual practice by transforming it into pure spiritual energy. The latter school believes that sexual practices on the physical level are a part of the methodological procedure aimed at a direct experience of the cosmic creative forces. Tantra Yoga is very much related to the Kundalini Yoga which too believes that the energy
of *kundalini* is the same as the energy manifesting as the universe. In an ordinary person who is unawakened this energy is utilized only for procreation, whereas a Yogi utilizes it for the spiritual purpose of realizing the ultimate freedom.

**Patanjali's Astānga Yoga**

*Aṣṭānga Yoga* is a systematic exposition of the meditative technique. Patanjali has enshrined this method in the slender volume called *Yoga Sūtras*. It comprises four sections or books. They are *Samādhipāda*, *Sādhanāpāda*, *Vibuthipāda*, and *Kaivalyapāda*. The volume summarizes the actual process of Yoga in a condensed manner. The aim of it is *Kaivalya* which is "aloofness of the Self from prakṛti, as its knower". The times and the authorship of the *Yoga Sūtras* is enigmatic. There is no agreement among scholars as to when it was written and as to who this Patajali was. Very little is known about Patanjali. Not even a legendary account of him is available. But it is generally believed that Patanjali, the author of the *Yoga Sūtras*, is the same Patanjali who wrote works on grammar and medicine. Although Patanjali is said to be the author of the *Yoga Sūtras*, he cannot be said to be the founder of a new system of Yoga. He did not write anything that had not been known before. He does not seem to have said anything new. He has merely codified what was there in the Upaniṣads about Yoga. He systematized the knowledge and practice of the Yoga of his times. "The ingenuity of his
achievement lies in the thoroughness and completeness with which all the important stages of Yoga practice and mental experiences are included in his scheme, and in their systematic presentation in a succinct treatise.41

As regards his times, he seems to have been a post-Buddhist. Yoga Sūtras could have been composed somewhere during 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. But J.H. Woods concludes that the Yoga Sūtras must have been composed between 300 and 500 A.D.42 Some scholars have argued that the text is not a unitary work. It is a compilation of two or three separate texts. The text also seems to have one or two interpolations. This again proves that the author did not intend to give us anything original but wanted to give a systematic account of the Yogic lore of him times. The methodical scheme of Patanjali's Yoga has eight steps like the eightfold path of the Buddha who certainly existed much before Patanjali. So also, the ordering of the steps of the Patanjali Yoga is almost identical with the Yoga of the Upaniṣads. For instance, the Svetāsvatara Upanisad mentions the initial steps of Yoga like āsana and prāṇāyāma. It also gives an explicit description of pratyāhāra, dhāranā, dhyāna and samādhi. The Katha Upaniṣads also presents a systematic account of pratyāhāra, which means the withdrawal of the mind from the senses. It also mentions dhāranā, which is the training of the mind in concentration, and Samādhi, the unification of the mind with the
Many subsequent Upaniṣads known as the Yoga Upaniṣads have elaborately dealt with various aspects of Yoga practice. They have also dealt with the religious and philosophical issues relating to the practice of Yoga.

All this shows that Patanjali's Yoga Sūtras is post-Upaniṣadic and post-Buddhistic. It appeared when Yoga practice was very popular due to the spread of the teachings of the Upaniṣads, Buddhism and Jainism. Yoga as contained in the Upaniṣads, Buddhism and Jainism took different turns. It was modified and practised by people depending upon their respective beliefs and cults. The principle of the purification of the mind as a preliminary step for a higher vision is said to be a consequence of the sectarian ideas. The idea of ecstatic union with one's chosen deity as a goal of Yoga is also the result of some sectarian beliefs. Some of the practices led to less strict observances or even to the total obliteration of the moral discipline in Yoga. Patanjali Yoga Sūtras came into the scene with a definite set of moral standards and the role of God in the practice of Yoga. The text has been followed by generations of truth-seekers for over many centuries. "The Yoga Sūtras therefore, came to be viewed as a classical text of Yoga and have remained so practically till the present day".

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Patanjali defines Yoga as the attainment of Kaivalya by putting an end to mental modifications. Kaivalya is the separation of the puruṣa from prakṛti through discriminating knowledge. Patanjali has adopted the dualistic system of Sāṃkhya founded by Kapila. According to Sāṃkhya, there are two fundamental principles, namely, puruṣa and prakṛti. Puruṣa is self-intelligent while prakṛti is non-intelligent. Former is of the nature of consciousness which is changeless and pure. Latter is totally devoid of consciousness. Puruṣa is without change, a state of equilibrium of the three guṇās, namely, sattva, rajas and tamas. Being in proximity with the puruṣa, prakṛti begins to change. There arises a state of disturbance in the balance of the guṇas. The disturbance, the change gives rise to the process of evolution. Evolution is also the transformation of prakṛti. The transformation or the evolution brings forth all the psychical and physical elements into existence. The elements are as follows: mahat (buddhi), egoism (ahānkāra), mind (citta), the five organs of perception, the five organs of action, the five subtle elements, and the five gross elements. These elements evolve successively from prakṛti. They are otherwise called categories also. "Thus there are twenty-four categories of objects, including prakṛti. Together with puruṣa, there are altogether twenty-five principles according to Kapila, the founder of Sāṃkhya system."
The mahat (buddhi) is of the nature of sattva. The principle of sattva is transparent and pervasive in character. The puruṣa is also of the nature of transparency and pervasiveness. So it mistakenly identifies itself with the mahat. Thus puruṣa and prakṛti seemingly partake of each other’s characteristics, somewhat like a pure crystal appearing red in proximity to a red flower. Thus begins the erroneous identification of the self with the not-self, says Ishvarakrishna.

As a result, buddhi appears to be conscious and intelligent and puruṣa appears to be unconscious and unintelligent. The essentially luminous and changeless puruṣa appears to undergo the changing states such as knowledge and ignorance, pain and pleasure, virtue and vice, bondage and freedom. Puruṣa which is the pure witness Self turns out to be the seer only in relation to the seen, namely, Prakṛti. It becomes experience in relation to the experienced, namely, the Prakṛti. And Patanjali says that ignorance is the root cause of the identification of the Seer with the seen. And the purpose of Yoga is to remove ignorance, the cause of suffering.

Patanjali begins his Yoga Sūtras by defining Yoga as the subduing the modifications of the mind-stuff (Yoga chittavṛttinirodha). With the cessations of the mental modifications, the puruṣa, abides in its true nature and remains as distinct from prakṛti. Patanjali prescribes the practice of the eight steps for the
attainment of Kaivalya, the state of pure being, consciousness and bliss (Sat-cit-ānanda). The eight steps are: (1) Yama, (2) Niyama, (3) Asana, (4) Prāṇayāma, (5) Pratyāhāra, (6) Dhāraṇa, (7) Dhyāna, and (8) Samādhi.  

Yama constitutes five abstentious, namely, ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacarya and aparigraha. Ahimsa means non-violence, satya means truth, aparigraha means non-stealing, brahmacarya means continance which is the control of sexual misconduct, or controlling of sex as a whole. And aparigraha means non-covetousness of not possessing anything more than what is essential.

Niyama embodies five observances namely, soucha, santosa, tapas, svadhyaya and Ishvarapranidana. Soucha means cleanliness of body, mind and heart. It is being pure bodily, mentally and emotionally. Santosha means contentment of being happy always. Happiness comes when one is friendly with those who are happy, compassionate with those who are in sorrow; regard for those who are virtuous, and indifferent to those who are dishonest. Tapas means controlling of the body, the senses and of the mind. It implies controlling of the organs of speech which leads to the controlling of the other organs. Svādhyāya means the study of the scriptures dealing with spiritual development. It also includes the repetition or
the japa of the sacred word, namely, Om. And, Īshvarapraṇidāna means worship of God by surrendering the fruits of action to Him.62.

Here it is necessary to make note of an important point of difference between the classical Saṃkhya of Kapila and the Yoga of Patanjali. Kapila does not recognize the existence of God in his system. He does not regard the worship of Īśvara as a requirement for the attainment of Kaivalya. His system therefore is known as Nirīśvaravāda, a system without God. He says that the existence of God cannot be established.63 Where as, Patanjali recognizes the existence of God. He treats belief in God as an essential step in the practice of Yoga. To him, Īśvara is the First Teacher, the Teacher of Teachers. He regards the syllable "Om" as the symbol of Īśvara. The repetition of it is efficacious in attaining Kaivalya. Patanjali says that one can attain Samādhi through the worship of God as well.64 That is why the syncretic system of Saṃkhya-Yoga is known Sēśvaravāda.

The next step is āsana. Āsana is a steady and comfortable posture conducive to unperturbed concentration. It is only when the body and mind are in a study and comfortable posture that a Yogi can concentrate for long duration. Through the practice of āsana one can increase the power of enduring the factors of heat and cold, hunger and thirst. The āsanas that are conducive are as follows: Padmāsana, Siddāsana, Svastikāsana, Sukhāsana and Samāsana.65
Next is prāṇayāma. Prāṇayāma is the practice of regulation of prāṇa, the breath. It has three movements – inhalation, exhalation and retention of the breath. Constant practice of prāṇayāma brings about calmness of the body and the mind.

Next is pratyāhāra which is the withdrawal of the sense-organs from external objects and turning them inward. It is controlling the senses by turning them towards the mind. Then the mind remains within itself without taking the shape of its objects.

Next is dhrāra which means concentration. It is the first step in the process of meditation. It involves fixing the mind on the object of concentration. The object of concentration may be external or internal. Patanjali has suggested a number of objects of concentration within the body and outside the body.

Next is dhānā which means meditation. It means concentration of the mind on the object for a long duration. It is the uninterrupted flow of dhrāra on to the object of meditation. There are three factors in dhānā, namely, the mediator, the object of meditation, and the act of meditation⁵⁴. Concentration here flows from the mediator to the object like the continuous flow of oil or honey.
The last step is Samādhi. It is the state in which the Yogi attains the ultimate freedom (Kaivalya), namely, Sat-cit-ānanda. Samādhi fundamentally is of two stages—Saṃprajñātā and Asaṃprajñātā. In the first stage, there is only the object of meditation. The thought of mediator and meditation are not there. And in the second stage even the object of meditation drops. Here the Yogi realizes the discriminating knowledge (Viveka-Khyāti) between the buddhi-sattva and the pure Self. He discerns the difference between the two and realizes the Self as being distinct from the buddhi-sattva. He gains a clear and study perception of the Self as being other than the buddhi-sattva. Viveka-Khyāti dispels ignorance (avidya), the primal cause of the identification of the Self with the not-self. Samādhi is the state in which the Self alone is meditated upon without the meditator. Then the Self alone shines forth. All else, having no separate existence, are unified in it⁸⁷. A detailed exposition of the several stages of the Saṃprajñātā and the Asaṃprajñātā states of Samādhi will be given in the fourth chapter.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF YOGA

To understand the nature and purpose Patanjali's Yoga, it is necessary to examine its theoretical foundations. Classical Yoga predominantly is a spiritual practice. Yoga may also be defined as "the technology of consciousness transformation"⁸⁸. Nevertheless, it has its own theoretical foundations. Yoga has the double aspect of theory
and practice. Yoga of Patanjali is also a theoretical system, since it contains, at least implicitly, a sufficiently complex theoretical structure. It is generally believed that the theoretical framework of classical Yoga is borrowed from the classical Sāṁkhya. It is believed that Patanjali Yoga is merely a theistic version of the Sāṁkhya metaphysics. This is not altogether correct. An understanding of the actual relationship between Sāṁkhya and Yoga reveals that Yoga has a different background. The earliest history of Yoga shows that it was "the product of the amalgamation between the āryan and the non-Vedic āryan as well as the non-āryan cultures, rather than the ingenious device of one particular race or nation". The classical Sāṁkhya also has the same origins. It has its beginnings in the Rg Veda. The Satkāryavada of Sāṁkhya can be traced back to the famous Rg Vedic hymn of creation. The Sāṁkhya theory of elements may also be said to have its origin in Rg Vedic hymns. Thus it may be argued that both Yoga and Sāṁkhya have a common source. The exact intellectual atmosphere in which Sāṁkhya emerged is not clear. No doubt it arose as a counter-movement to the monistic trends of the Vedas and the early Upaniṣads like the Bṛhadāranyaka, Chandogya, and the latter Upaniṣads such as the Svetāsvatara, Katha and Mundaka. These Upaniṣads represent the Sāṁkhya views by emphasizing the distinction between the subject and object in the form of the Ātman and Bṛahman. Next, we find the traces of Sāṁkhya
views in the *Mahābhārata* where the seeds for the atheistic and dualistic Sāṅkhya are sown. The Sāṅkhya movement was active till the advent of Śāṅkara's (788-820 A.D) Advaita Vedanta. But Sāṅkhya as a classical system is found in Īśvara Kṛṣṇa's *Sāṅkhya-Kārika* only. This work is believed to have been composed somewhere in fourteenth century A.D. only.

The above discussion shows that Yoga and Sāṅkhya have similar origins. Nevertheless, the two systems have differences between them. The first difference lies in their methodology which may be regarded as being responsible for other differences also. The followers of Sāṅkhya rely on their scriptural tradition (*śāstra*), whereas the Yoga resort to first-hand experience (*pratyakṣa*) as its guiding principle. Intellectual capacity for discerning (*viveka*) the Self (*Puruṣa*) from the non-self plays an important role in Sāṅkhya. Discernment is followed by renunciation of all rational knowledge as not constituting the essential nature of man. On the other hand, classical Yoga regards the actual realization as the means of transforming empirical consciousness. Rational thinking alone is not enough for eradicating the false identification of man with the insentient nature. "True gnosis is required".

Theologically, classical Sāṅkhya is atheistic. It denies the existence of God as the Lord who is providential and protecting the
individual souls. Classical Yoga is theistic in that it advocates worship of God as one of the *niyamās*.

Ontologically, classical Sāṅkhya proposes a model which is less comprehensive than that of the classical Yoga which is practice-oriented. Classical Yoga analyses the lived experience into two basic categories—the Self (*Puruṣa*) and the Not-self (*Prakṛti*). The two are essentially independent and eternal principles. Like the classical Sāṅkhya, Patanjali also advocates a radical dualism between the subject and the object. Besides the dualism of the Self and the not-self, Yoga system believes in the pluralism of the individual selves. These selves are qualitatively identical but quantitatively different. So they interact and interct. This theory is implicitly there in Patanjali Yoga. *Prakṛti* is the opposite of the multiple Selves. *Prakṛti* is that which brings forth the entire manifest universe. It refers to the transcendental ground of the objective reality. It is "primordial undifferentiated continuum, potentially contains the entire universe in all its levels and categories of being".

It is from *Prakṛti* that the manifest world evolves according to a definite design. This process of evolution of the world is called *satkārayavāda* or *prakṛtiparināmavāda*. This is the doctrine of causation. It says that the effect is pre-existent in the cause. The effect is not an illusion but a real modification of the *Prakṛti*. The
effect is not an entirely a new product. So also the disappearance of an object does not mean its total annihilation. The so-called dead thing becomes latent again. It only enters the unmanifest Prakṛti. This is designated as tirobhāva or disappearance. Another important part of the ontology of Yoga is its guṇa theory. The sycretic tradition of the Sāṁkhya-Yoga upholds the guṇa theory. It subscribes to three guṇas namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas. They are the primary constituents of all material and mental phenomena. Sattva means 'being-ness', raja means 'to be excited', and tama means 'to be constricted'. Sattva is illuminating, rajas is stimulating, and tamas is concealing. The three are the three phases of the same homogeneous field of Prakṛti. They produce the entire structure of the cosmos. All that is manifest is the product of their interplay. The activity of the guṇas produce the world of objects like the lamp, composed of many parts, produces the single phenomenon of light. "The guṇas are of the nature of joy, joylessness and dejection and have the purpose of illuminating, activating and restricting. They overbear each other, are interdependent and productive and co-operative in their activities."65

According to classical Yoga, there are four levels being. They are: (1) the Undifferentiated (ālinga), (2) the Differentiated (lingamātra), (3) the Unparticularized (avišeṣa), and the Particularized (Višeṣa). These four levels of being are hierarchical and continuous. The first level, namely, the 'undifferentiated' represents the pure
primordial and potential part of the being. The second, namely, the 'differentiated' refers to the first-born principle, the I-am-ness at the psychological level. It is from this principle that the five types of fine-structures (tanmātras) evolve. It is from these five structures that the eleven types of senses and the five types of elements (pañcabhūtas) are produced. All these principles constitute the entire field of nature (Prakṛti). They comprise both the manifest and the unmanifest universe.

And outside the boundary of the universe as depicted above there are the multiple Selves (Puruṣās). These Selves are of the nature of perfect consciousness, absolute autonomy and eternal awareness. Sentient beings arise only when the pure selves are associated with a particular combination of the insentient matter. When the Self gets associated (saṁyoga) with the non-self the former forgets its true nature. It thinks that it is bound by space and time. The purpose Patanjali Yoga is to dissociate the Self from the not-self. That is why Raja Yoga is a process of separation and not union. As Georg Feuerstein rightly says, "The task of Yoga is, in principle, to dissolve this 'association' by reducing the false identification of the ever free Self with aspects of the world-ground. Hence the definition of Yoga as 'separation' or Viyoga".66
So far we have examined the ontological aspect of the Yoga. Let us now deal in brief with its psychological aspect. Yoga may also be defined as the method of transforming consciousness or mind. Just as psychology, Yoga is concerned with the various states and functions of consciousness. According to Yoga, the structure of the human person is a part of the structure of the Cosmos. Man is a micro replica of the macro universe. The human personality shows the same layers of being which the universe is composed of. Man is not an accidental collection of the constituents of nature. As it has been mentioned earlier, the pure Self is the essence of the human being. But the Self gets into bondage because of its proximity to the personality complex comprising all the evolutes of nature. Since the human being is of the nature of consciousness he or she can regain the original status of the Self. The Self is omniscient and omnipresent. It is not actually involved in the material process of Prakṛti. So man can re-identify himself with his original Self by virtue of his consciousness. Human being as body-mind complex is the unconscious matter functioning mechanically. But it is due to the proximity to the Self that the human personality becomes a being of consciousness. The Self induces consciousness in the body-mind complex. Man's identification with the body-mind complex is due to nescience (avidya). Nescience is the ignorance of the union between the Self and the not-self. This union is the cause of egoism, attachment, aversion and hunger for life, which in turn are the cause
of suffering (dukkha). These are the causes of suffering (klesa). Their attenuation and ultimate eradication is the sole objective of Yoga.”

A mere theoretical understanding of the ontological and psychological aspects of man is not sufficient. An intellectual grasping of the truth that man is not identical with the body-mind complex is not enough. This is where Patanjali goes beyond the classical Sāṃkhya which says that clear knowledge of the distinction between the Self and the not-self is enough for attaining Kaivalya. For Sāṃkhya, intellection, reasoning, and insight are sufficient. But Patanjali considered them as insufficient. They cannot eradicate the subliminal tendencies ‘hidden’ in the depths of our consciousness. Patanjali seems to have subscribed to the notion of the ‘unconscious’ as the part of consciousness. The unconscious is composed of the impressions left by our experience. The buddhi is full of such deep rooted impressions. These impressions are the basis of our thoughts (Chittānvittis) and actions. They are technically called saṃskāras. They are responsible for the formation of definite patterns (Vāsanās) in the mind. These patterns are the forces which control our conscious life. Mere knowledge cannot eradicate them. It is only the practice of Yoga that can eliminate them without residue. Man is condemned to samsara and dukkha as long as he is ruled by the impressions and the patterns hidden in the mind. “Until, they are completely eliminated, through the attainment of asamprajñātā-Samādhi man is trapped in the circle of repeated births and deaths.
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