CHAPTER - V

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF YOGIC SCHOOLS

Though the ‘mokṣa’ is regarded as the final goal of all forms of yoga, the word mokṣa has been interpreted variously by the various forms of yoga. Accordingly, different yogic disciplines are suggested to achieve the goal so interpreted. In other words, the different forms of yogic discipline presuppose their own philosophical doctrines as their bases. The present chapter intends to deal with a few important schools of yoga and their philosophical foundations. The main schools discussed here are Jñāna-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, Karma-yoga, Pātañjala-yoga, Bauddha-yoga, Haṭha-yoga and Kuṇḍalinī-yoga.

1. JÑĀNA-YOGA

Though most of the Indian schools of philosophy advocate right knowledge both as a means of eradicating ignorance and as a means to final liberation, it is only Advaita of Śaṅkara that is regarded traditionally as a champion of jñāna (knowledge) as the sure path of liberation. That is why the name of Jñāna-yoga (knowledge as a means) is associated so intimately with that school, that we cannot think one without thinking the other. Therefore, for a good account of Jñāna-yoga we have to depend on Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara propounds the necessity of Jñāna-yoga in his commentaries on the prasthāna-traya (three basic sources of Vedānta philosophy), namely, Bādarāyaṇa’s Brahma-sūtras, the Bhagavadgītā and the ten principal Upaniṣads.
Broadly, Jñāna-yoga may be defined as the pathway to the realisation of featureless Brahman in the embodied state by means of knowledge (jñāna).

Though this can be said to be the shortest definition of Jñāna-yoga, four concepts involved in it, namely, 1. featureless Brahman, 2. the pathway, i.e., jñāna, 3. Brahmam-realisation and 4. jīvanmukti (liberation in embodied state), need clarification, because the philosophical foundations of Jñāna-yoga consist in these basic concepts. This implies that Śaṅkara's Advaita is not merely a technical philosophy, but a way of realising the highest ideal. So let us begin with the concept of featureless Brahman.

1. Featureless (Nirguna) Brahman: One of the special features of Śaṅkara's Advaita is its conception of the highest reality, Brahman, as featureless. Here we are faced with two questions: (a) what is the nature of Brahman? What are the features that are said to be absent in Brahman? (b) Why is Brahman unknowable?

Śaṅkara, and, in fact, all other Advaitins, define Brahman as sat, cit and ānanda. This, according to the Advaitins, amounts to saying that the definition of Brahman as sat, cit and ānanda is analytical, as it does not enhance our knowledge of Brahman, because, insist Advaitins, these three words do not designate the qualities or attributes of Brahman.

The term ‘sat’ “points to the ontological principle of unity, to the oneness not constituted of parts, to the existential substratum of all subjects and objects . . .” (Eliot, 10). Though the word ‘sat’ means ‘being’ or
'existence', it means that it is not one of the existents, but existence itself. It is called 'sat' (existence), meaning that all existence is Brahman and vice versa.\textsuperscript{1} Śaṅkara, to prove the identity of Brahman and sat quotes Upniṣadic passages such as, “Self only is all this”\textsuperscript{2}, “Brahman only is all this”.\textsuperscript{3} However, the term 'sat' does not denote all that exists, but only that which truly exists. In other words, it refers only to Brahman, who truly exists. This necessarily implies that there is a difference between the manner in which Brahman exists and the manner in which other things exist. The difference between the two is clarified in this way: The ordinary things are manifold, physical and are objects of empirical knowledge; whereas Brahman is one, consciousness and is the content of mystical experience. It is the very basis (adhīṣṭhāna) of the existence of all other things. For Śaṅkara that which is eternal, infinite and indestructible (abāḍhitā) alone is real (sat), and that which exists is not necessarily real. In other words, Brahman who is eternal and infinite is real and the world, which exists only when created (and later destroyed), is neither eternal nor infinite. Moreover, when we realise Brahman the world does not exist for us. It is not real. All other things may change or perish, but their substratum (Brahman) is unchangeable and indestructible. That which is in the mutable is not mutable. Things have parts, spatial and temporal qualities, but Brahman is partless and devoid of spatial and temporal qualities.

Brahman is cit (consciousness) – infinite, unqualified, absolute and formless consciousness. It is not a conscious subject, but consciousness itself. Since it is not bound by body or any other thing, it is infinite (ananta);
since its being is not subject to any condition, it is unqualified and absolute; while our limited consciousness is characterised by psychological features like, anger, lust, changing forms (desires, thoughts, etc), the infinite consciousness does not have any such form – it is formless. Brahman is altogether without difference. Since he is without parts (*niravayava*), we cannot think of difference in intensity of consciousness in different parts of Brahman. Śaṅkara in order to reiterate his view of Brahman as undifferentiated whole without parts borrows support from the *Bṛhadāranyaka Up.*, where it is said “As a mass of salt has neither inside not outside but altogether a mass of taste, thus indeed has that Self neither inside not outside, but is altogether a mass of knowledge”.⁴ We refer to our consciousness in terms of certain qualities – as yourself, myself – meaning that each individual self is different and separate from others. But the infinite consciousness has no parts and therefore it is undifferentiated partless whole. In fact, the reference to yourself or myself as separate from other selves or the infinite consciousness is an avidyā-based and, therefore, a wrong one. All souls lose their differences and separateness once they realise Brahman.

Lastly, Brahman is *ānanda*, bliss. We frequently experience happiness and unhappiness. But Brahman is pure bliss itself and it is not mixed with unhappiness. Ānanada is different from pleasure (*sukha*) on two counts. Firstly, while pleasure is derived form material objects through the medium of senses, bliss (*ānanda*) is not derived from any external source at all; nor does it require the medium of the senses. Bliss is the very nature of the soul.
When the soul is in the bound state, its blissful nature is rather covered, as it were, than destroyed or mitigated. The pleasures we experience are imperfect copies of ānanda. And when it regains its original state, as in the state of mokṣa (the final liberation), it becomes Brahman and its blissful nature shines forth. Secondly, pleasure is temporary, lasting only as long as the sense-object contact lasts; whereas since bliss is constitutional to the free soul (or Brahman), it is neither gained nor lost.

However, it must be noted that “sat, cit, ānanda” is not a description of Brahman, for sat, cit and ānanda are not qualities of Brahman, but are the very constituents of Brahman, just as the threads are the constituents of cloth, and not its qualities. In fact, according to Śaṅkara, all descriptions intended to apply to Brahman ought to be wrong, because Brahman is indescribable. We normally describe object in terms of its colour, size, smell, etc., as being here or there, and as being a cause or effect of certain other objects. But Brahman does not have any of these qualities. In order to prove that the doctrine of featureless Brahman is not originally his fancy, but, in fact, an idea central to the Upaniṣadic teachings, Śaṅkara quotes a number of Upaniṣads.

1. Brahman “is neither coarse nor fine, neither short, nor long” 6
2. Brahman is “without sound, without touch, without form, without decay”7.
3. Brahman is “without body, being unproduced” 8
4. Brahman “is without cause and without effect, without anything outside or inside . . .”9
5. Brahman is “without parts, without actions, tranquil, without fault, without taint…”

The categories of time, space and cause, which are applicable to material objects, are not applicable to Brahman, who is infinite consciousness. In fact, he is not even masculine, although generally the term conveys such a meaning. So the best way to speak of Brahman, to follow the method of Yājñavalkya, is to say that Brahman is “not this, not this” (“neti neti”). To describe anything is to impose limitations on it. To assert “Brahman is red” is to exclude all non-red colours from Brahman. But Brahman not only cannot be related to other things (red, etc.), because there are no other things at all, but also it is devoid of any internal difference. Sugar cane can be said to be sweeter in some parts than in others, but sugar itself cannot be so described. Similarly, it cannot be said about Brahman that he is more densely present in human beings or gods than in stones or rivers. This is simply because he does not have parts. Therefore, it boils down to this, that whatever is described is non-Brahman and if Brahman alone is reality, no description applies to it.

Even the ascription of unity (oneness) to Brahman by the Upaniṣads is, strictly speaking, wrong. Because all our ascriptions in language and thought are derived from sense experience and, therefore, logically speaking, not applicable to anything beyond sense experience. To say “Brahman is one” is to say “Brahman is not many”. But since the concept of one and concept of many apply to phenomena, Brahman, who is not
phenomenon, cannot be described in terms of number at all. So the Advaitins prefer to say that Brahman is not-two (advaita = non-dual).

Śaṅkara notices that many Upaniṣads have described Brahman as creator, sustainer, destroyer, omnipotent, omniscient, etc. but these descriptions, according to him, “do not aim at setting forth the nature of Brahman, but rather at enjoining the worship of Brahman”,12 as an intermediary or auxiliary step, the final step being jñāna (knowledge), to the attainment of mokṣa. In the final analysis, all such descriptions are regarded as descriptions by the avidya-infected mind. In other words, according to Śaṅkara, Saguṇa Brahman (Brahman with qualities, such as omniscience, creatorship, etc.) does not have ultimate philosophical value. He invests such a value in Nirguṇa (featureless) Brahman. One can be aware of Saguṇa Brahman (also called Īśvara = God, in the theistic sense) by means of devotion (bhakti), but one who realises the Nirguṇa Brahman, to him Saguṇa Brahman becomes an unreality. Thus the only reality for the Advaitins is Nirguṇa Brahman.

If Brahman is unknowable, it is not only because he does not have any positive qualities like colour, smell, etc., but also because he is infinite. Whatever is finite the finite mind can know and since Brahman is infinite, the finite human mind cannot know him. The infinite reality also transcends the bounds of reasoning. “If the finite man can comprehend Brahman”, says S.Radhakrishnan, “then either his understanding must be infinite or Brahman finite”.13 Moreover, if we mean by ‘infinite’ all including the
knower, then the concept of knowing the infinite would become self-contradictory.

In any case, it is said that knowing such a reality is the source of ānanda, the highest happiness. In a conversation between Yājñavalkya, a learned sage of the Upaniṣadic times, and his wife Maitreyi, it is revealed that ānanda cannot be derived from material wealth but only from Brahman-realisation. While all our knowledge is measured in terms of utility (or the pleasure it is supposed to produce), our knowledge of Brahman alone is immeasurable. While pleasure based on utility is good, the bliss based on Brahman-realisation is qualitatively and quantitatively the best. Therefore, Brahman is supreme both in the ontological sense and in the axiological.

One may object that if somebody postulates the existence in this room of an animal, which is colourless, odourless, tasteless, etc., then there is a greater scope for doubting its existence. Because the existence of anything is known at all by its colour, smell, etc., however vague our knowledge of these qualities is. If so, how can we ever know the existence of such an animal? Similarly (one can argue), the existence of featureless Brahman can be reasonably doubted.

Proving the existence of Brahman is not difficult for Śaṅkara, for according to him, every individual soul (puruṣa) is potential Brahman, and if he can prove the existence of the individual soul, he has, in effect, proved the existence of Brahman, the universal soul. He, like Augustine and Descartes, argues that the self is Brahman and "to refute the Self is
impossible, for he who tries to refute it is the Self. Unknowability of Brahman is not the criterion for postulating his non-existence. Such a self, according to Śaṅkara, is a potential Brahman. He defends the identity of *puruṣa* with Brahman by quoting the *Katha Up.* (III.2) which declares that “Puruṣa (ätman) is the highest and there is nothing higher than it”.

The soul, which is essentially identical to Brahman, is not a knower or an enjoyer, because, according to Advaita, there is nothing apart from Ātman. “Where there is duality, as it were, there one knows another. (but), where indeed for one everything has become the Self there through whom and whom is to know? Him through whom one knows all this, through whom one is to know the knower?” Moreover, the psychological activities of knowing, feeling, etc. are the functions of the *antahkarana* and of the soul, and physical activities, like writing, walking, etc. belong to the physical body. Nor can it know itself, because it, in a lose sense, is the perceiver. “You cannot see the seer of seeing; you cannot know the knower of knowing. This is self of yours which is within all”. So in spite of the fact that it is within us, we cannot be aware of it, for the simple reason that it is the perceiver of our perceptions and cannot perceive the perceiver in the manner in which we perceive an object. Yet it is possible to realise the oneness of Brahman and ātman provided we shake off the age-old *avidyā*, which has kept the Reality from us.

The physical world: Now we ask, if the Advaitins maintain oneness of reality, are the physical objects and individual souls (*jīvas*) subsumed under it? Or, are they separate from it? Since for the Advaitins reality is one
without a second (*ekamevādvitīyatīm*), they cannot postulate the separate existence of the material objects and selves. Since reality is infinite consciousness (*satyam jñānam anantam*), it cannot include physical objects. And since the concept of Brahman as partless and undifferentiated consciousness is not consistent with individual selves which suggest that they are different parts of Brahman, they think that individual selves are not Brahman. So what is the ontological status of the plurality of selves and material objects? In answer to this question the Advaitins answer that the world of matter and spirits is an appearance, not reality. For all practical (*vyāvahārika*) purposes the world exists, but it is not real. Reality is characterised by eternality and only Brahman is characterised by it. The world appears now, but when knowledge dawns it disappears and in its place we see Brahman. The Advaitins compare the appearance of the world to an optical illusion. In darkness and owing to distance, we see a rope as a snake, but when in sufficient light we go near it, we realise that what appeared as snake is after all a rope. In this case, rope is reality and the substratum of the appearance of snake. The snake is not a fictitious construct out of nothing, but has a substratum, namely, the rope. So also, owing to our ignorance (*avidyā or ajñāna*) Brahman appears as the world. But the appearance of the world does not in any way defile the nature of Brahman, just as the clouds, which prevent us from seeing the sun, do not defile the sun. However, it is important to note that Brahman does not deliberately wish to appear as the world any more than the rope wishes to appear as snake. If Brahman wished to appear as world, it is possible that
we would not have succeeded in realising the true nature of Brahman, however hard we tried. Moreover, the thought that Brahman deliberately appears as world is inconsistent with the earlier mentioned doctrine that Brahman is featureless. The appearance of Brahman as the world is due to the avidyā of the onlooker and has nothing to do with Brahman or any other thing. Just as light and nearness help us recognise the rope as rope, so also knowledge (jñāna) helps us recognise Brahman as Brahman.

The individual souls: Puruṣa (individual soul) is not created, but its body-mind outfit is created. Jīva, as jīva, is associated with ajñāna or avidyā and its resultant adjuncts (upādhis). In other words, a jīva is necessarily bound to a physical body along with mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), ego (aham), the five sensory organs and the five motor organs. These are in fact limiting conditions for the otherwise pure and unconditioned soul, in the sense that as long as it is associated with these limiting conditions, it is subject to lust, infatuation, greed, fear, etc. which impel it to engage in karma-producing activities. But since in the next birth also it is associated with nescience, it is bound to reap the same consequences. In other words, as along it is associated with avidyā, it is bound to the samsāra (the cycle of births and deaths).

It is figuratively stated that there are jīvas, that each is different from every other jīva and that jīvas are finitised by avidyā and its resultant conditions. If these figurative references are accepted, then the other figurative statement must also be accepted, namely, that the jīvas are to be released. But according to Advaita, strictly speaking, plurality of jīvas is a
myth, and therefore, the distinction between them and their release from the
samsāra are also a myth. The soul in its pure state is not associated with
avidyā, but we wrongly associate it with avidyā. It is unconditioned always
and only because of our avidyā we wrongly think that it is finitised by
avidyā and the resultant conditions (upādhis). But once we acquire jñāna
(knowledge) we realise that we are Brahman and that essentially there is no
difference between one individual soul and another and between Brahman
and the individual souls. In this case also it may be repeated that Brahman
does not deliberately appear as individual souls. But we entirely because of
our own ignorance think wrongly that we are not Brahman, but separate
from him and from one another.

Śaṅkara also employs the analogy of dream in order to show the
unreality of the world and plurality of selves. As long as we are in the dream
state, says he, we believe in the reality of the dream objects and ourselves as
different from them; and we react accordingly. For example, seeing a
dream-snake in the dream state we perspire really. But when we come to the
waking state we realise that the dream-snake is not real and our belief in its
reality was wrong. So also, as long as we are in the grip of avidyā we
continue to believe in the reality of the world of material objects and
plurality of selves. Once we overcome avidyā by acquiring jñāna, we realise
that the hitherto held belief in the reality of world and plurality of selves is
wrong and that only Brahman is real.

2. Jñāna, the means to final liberation: According to the Advaitins, Jñāna-
yoga is the only way – in fact, the surest way – to final liberation (mokṣa).
They offer four strong arguments to show why the other means are ineffective.

*Karma and Karma-yoga:* According to Śaṅkara, *karma* (action) cannot be the means. He offers a fourfold argument in support of his thesis, which is as follows.

a) Action always produces certain results, visible (*drśta*) and invisible (*adrśta*). If we commit a theft the visible result is the object we stole and the other result is the invisible force which resides in us, on account of which we are going to face the punishment in future (for the time being the result is invisible and becomes manifest at the appropriate time). In any case, neither of the results is eternal.

Even if we perform good works, their results are not permanent, because corresponding to the degree of intensity of goodness of our act we may reap good consequences in the next life, but these good consequences also are not permanent. Thus good acts, like bad acts, neither prevent us from rebirth, nor from future possible suffering. In other words, they are not an effective means to *mokṣa*.

If we perform the *karmas* enjoined in the Vedas we may be happy here and hereafter; or at best, we enjoy the result of merit (*punya*). But merit or the enjoyment born of it is not inexhaustible. Once the *punya* exhausts, our enjoyment of the heavenly pleasure also comes to an end. The aim of Advaita is to achieve Brahman-realisation, which is eternal. Once we re-gain it, there is no chance of losing it again or returning to *samsāra*. 
b) What can destroy nescience (avidyā) is only jñāna, not karma for only jñāna is the opposite of ajñāna or avidyā (ignorance). "Only self-knowledge which is the plenary experience can destroy nescience" (Insights, 49). In fact, according to Śaṅkara, karma itself is the result of ignorance and as such, it cannot destroy nescience that stands between the aspirant and Brahman-realisation.

c) Moreover, the fruit of action is manifold. For example, by performing the Vedic rituals, one can enjoy such fruits as sons, wealth, health, horses, cattle, svarga (heaven), etc. whereas the fruit of jñāna is only one – Brahman-realisation.

d) Most importantly, by attaining the results of karma one is not freed from desires, because one performs actions only with a view to enjoying pleasures. In fact, it is the case that enjoyment of pleasures only multiplies the desire for pleasures. According to Advaita, however, withdrawal from material pleasure is at least a precondition for the attainment of goal (Brahman-realisation).

Having shown that karma cannot be the means Brahman–realisation Śaṅkara goes on to show how knowledge (jñāna) is necessary for the purpose.

1. As for one who is afflicted with disease there is restoration of health when the disease is removed, so for one who is miserable there is restoration to his native state when the world of duality is resolved; the realisation of non-duality is the fruit. And, since the
world of duality is the effect of nescience, its resolution is through knowledge.\textsuperscript{17}

2. Action does not remove nescience, as it is not opposed to it; knowledge does destroy nescience, as (destroys) dense darkness. ignorance (\textit{avidyā}) only jnāna can be of help.\textsuperscript{18}

3. The opposition between wisdom (\textit{jñāna}) and works (\textit{karma}) is unshakable like a mountain. Bhagavān Vyāsa, the great Vedic teacher, taught his son conclusively after much reflection, thus: These two paths are taught in the Veda, one called the path of activity (\textit{pravṛtti}) and the other of renunciation (\textit{nivṛtti})\textsuperscript{19}

4. One desirous of release should always renounce action along with its means. It is only by one that so so renounces that the inner Self which is the supreme goal is released”. Therefore, it is not intelligible that knowledge should require the help of, or be dependent on, action\textsuperscript{20}

However, this does not mean that Śaṅkara rejects all works as totally useless for one who practises Jñāna-yoga. What he rejects is only the Vedic injunctions and other selfish good actions as the sole and direct means to \textit{mokṣa}. He, it must be noted, does not reject Karma-yoga. In fact, he advocates Karma-yoga, though as an auxiliary to Jñāna-yoga. He recommends Karma-yoga as an important and necessary element for the development of a meaningful Jñāna-yoga.
Śaṅkara, in his commentary on the *Mundaka Upaniṣad* uses the compound “avidyākāmakarma” to convey the idea that the jīvātman (individual soul) because of avidyā is gripped by selfish desires (kāma). Once he is overpowered by selfish desires, he rushes to perform such actions as fulfill those desires. The result is bondage (karma-bandhana). One desirous of mokṣa must get rid of selfishness or, in other words, attain citta-śuddhi (purification of mind). Karma-yoga, which aims at citta-śuddhi, according to Śaṅkara, is a prerequisite for Jñāna-yoga. Karma-yoga essentially means an attempt at achieving predominance of sattva over rajas and tamans, which results in niṣkāma karma (selfless action). It is said in the *Upadeśasāhasrī* “When and to whomsoever the notion of the personal ego conveyed by ‘I’ (aham) and the notion of personal possession conveyed by ‘mine’ (mama) cease to be real, then he is the knower of Ātman”. This means that eradication of selfish desire through Karma-yoga expedites the eradication of avidyā through Jñāna-yoga. But Śaṅkara insists that while Karma-yoga is not itself a direct means to ātmavidyā (self-knowledge). It is certainly necessary as a useful aid to Jñāna-yoga.

This means that one without pure mind lacks the competence to tread the path of knowledge, and such a competence is gained by means of citta-śuddhi (purity of mind) which itself comes about by Karma-yoga i.e., performing action without attachment to results. “A mind that is impure, filled with passions and selfish desires, cannot even turn in the direction of self-knowledge . . . The craving for possessions, the thirst for sense-enjoyment, is what defines the mind and makes it unfit for the higher
Therefore, mind must be freed from such defilements through Karma-yoga, the discipline of selfless action, before it becomes eligible for Jñāna-yoga.

However, Śaṅkara agrees with the Bhagavadgītā in that inaction is not a part of Karma-yoga. One may be inactive bodily, but may be intensely active mentally. That is, one may be constantly passionately thinking of the results of his actions. So Karma-yoga consists in being active bodily without being active mentally, i.e., abstaining from the result of action. Real selflessness is excluded from the sense of agency also.

Bhakti-yoga: Śaṅkara in his commentary on the Brahma-sūtras argues that the pradhānavāda (the thesis that there is nothing beyond the primordial pradhāna or prakṛti as the cause of the world evolution) of the Sāṅkhyas is philosophically untenable and that since the purpose we unfailingly witness in the world suggests an omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent God, brahma-prīṇāmavāda (the thesis that Brahman transforms himself into the world) is preferable to it. One is really perplexed by this argument of Śaṅkara, because his argument contradicts his earlier stand that Brahman does not undergo any change, and that there is no creation at all, since the world is only an appearance (vivarta). Does Śaṅkara by positing the new view give up his earlier view, or vice versa?

Śaṅkara’s own answer is that though ultimately there is only one reality, Nirguṇa (featureless) Brahman, there is a necessity of Saṃguṇa (with qualities) Brahman or Īśvara. The devotee expresses his devotion to God
(Īśvara), assuming that God is real. His devotion need not involve the traditional detailed worship. Whether he offers anything to God or not is inconsequential. What is important is that he should offer (surrender) himself to God. When his devotion to god is complete, he desires for nothing. The eradication of desires from his mind makes it pure. Purity of the mind enhances the chances of nirvikalpaka samādhi, in which the soul is revealed in its true nature. That is, it realises that it is featureless Brahman (Nirguṇa Brahman). The individuality and plurality of soul, the independent existence of the physical world and the Saguṇa Brahman himself are simultaneously revealed as illusory.

Rāja-yoga: The other auxiliary aid to Brahman-realisation recommended by the Advaitins is Rāja-yoga whose goal is citta-vṛtti-nirodha (cessation of mental modification). Because of the mental modifications the latent tendencies erupt, as a result of which the individual is caught in the web of five kleśas (afflictions), namely, avidyā (ignorance), asmitā (wrong identification of the self with the body, sense, mind, etc.), rāga (passion), dveṣa (hatred) and abhiniveṣa (clinging to life and fear of death). In association of citta and because of its modifications, the soul (puruṣa or jīvātman) thinks, enjoys or suffers and is engaged in various kinds of actions (karmas) which in turn push him to the saṃsāra (the cycle of births and deaths). The only way of eradicating the afflictions is to practise vairāgya (renunciation) which comes about as a result of the long practice of Aṣṭāṅga-(eight limbed) yoga. The eight limbs by which the practitioner acquires vairāgya are, yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra,
dharana, dhyāna and samādhi (for a detailed account of these steps please see the fifth section on of this chapter). A mind which is under the full control of the aspirant is essential for the nirvikalpaka samādhi.

What is the nature of jñāna, which is aid to be surest means to mokṣa? In response to a question by Śunaka, namely, “What is that by knowing which all else is known?”, the great sage Aṅgirasa speaks of two kinds of knowledge (vidyā) – the higher (parā) and lower (aparā). He further says, “The lower knowledge is ignorance”, and comprises (in addition to the various sciences and other forms of empirical knowledge) Rg-veda, Yajur-veda, Sāma-veda and Atharva-veda. It may be noted that since the Upaniṣads also form a part of the Vedas, they are also treated as lower form of knowledge, and therefore, ignorance. In fact, all knowledge that contains any other thing than Brahman is lower knowledge. Then, what is higher knowledge? Higher knowledge is higher because it is knowledge of Brahman. One may have mastery over the Upaniṣadic sentences, which speak of Brahman, but “the knowledge of Brahman is distinctively mentioned and it is called higher knowledge since even after the mastery of the assemblage of words the realisation of the Imperishable (aṇḍa) is not possible . . .”

What is the criterion of parāvidyā? According to Śaṅkara, the criterion is abāḥditatva, i.e., it should not be contradicted by any other form of knowledge, such as perception, inference, comparison, etc. “A knowledge acquired can be said to be true only so long as it is not contradicted. Thus the world appearance though it is very true now, may be
rendered false, when this is contradicted by right knowledge of Brahman as the one reality . . . The only absolute truth is pure consciousness, which is never contradicted in any experience at any time". The empirical reports our mind receives are, as long as we have not yet regained vidyā or parāvidyā are misleading. “Even as the conclusions of common sense are corrected by the those of scientific understanding, the conclusions of the latter require to be corrected by the light of the spirit in us”.29

S.Radhakrishnan makes clear the Upaniṣadic distinction between lower and higher knowledge in epistemological terms. During waking state our individual soul (jīvātma) is related to ego (aham), mind (manas), intellect (buddhi), the senses and their respective objects. Only a relation of the jīvātma with these can produce lower knowledge. In other words, our pratyakṣa is an outer-directed, object-oriented knowledge. Even when we are engaged in inference our intelligence, “through the process of doubt, logic and skilful demonstration”, reflects on the sense-data supplied by the mind. “At the intellectual level, we grope with an external vision of things, where object are extrinsically opposed to one another. We are besieged by error and incapacity. Integral knowledge possesses its object truly and securely. Nothing is external to it. Nothing is other than itself. Nothing is divided or in conflict within its all-comprehensive self-awareness. It is the means of knowledge and knowledge itself”.30

Another important feature which S.Radhakrishnan notes in the intuitive knowledge (parāvidyā) is the absence of the subject-object distinction. He says, “Intuitive knowing is immediate as distinct from the
discursive and mediate knowledge. It is more immediate than sensory intuition, for it overcomes the distinction between the knower and the known which subsists in sense-intuition. It is the perfect knowledge, while all other knowledge is incomplete and imperfect in so far as it does not bring about an identification between subject and object."\(^{31}\)

However, \textit{parāvidyā} and \textit{aparāvidyā} cannot be the possession of the same man at the same time. Since all forms of \textit{aparāvidyā} are ignorance (\textit{avidyā}) however valuable they are to our practical life, they are qualitatively different from \textit{parāvidyā} and one who has \textit{aparāvidyā} has not yet acquired \textit{parāvidyā}. Similarly, once we realise Brahman, i.e., once we acquire \textit{parāvidyā} we begin to see the Reality only, and are never again caught by \textit{aparāvidyā}\(^{32}\). "... the final goal of knowledge, namely, spiritual intuitive insight, once attained, relegates all other forms and types of knowledge to a lower knowledge - lower at least because none of them is capable of bringing one to a realisation of Reality or is capable of either demonstrating or refuting Reality..."\(^{33}\). "The \textit{pramāṇas}, such as perception, inference and comparison, are justified as valid means of knowledge as long as they do not have pretensions to finality or ultimacy"\(^{34}\). Because they are means to differences froms of \textit{aparāvidyā}. Thus while \textit{parāvidyā} alone validates itself, the other forms of knowledge do not validate themselves – in fact, they are invalidated by \textit{parāvidyā}.

According to the Advaitins the practice of Jñāna-yoga requires certain qualifications. They insist that only those who have viveka (discriminating knowledge), vairāgya (renunciation), śaṭṣampatti (abundance of the six
virues) and mumukṣatva (strong desire for mokṣa or liberation) qualify for the practice of Jñāna-yoga.

Viveka: Because of avidyā, not only have we forgotten our true nature, but also we have misunderstood that we are a complex of body, mind, sense, etc. Because of this wrong belief we try to keep that complex happy at any cost. The result is a series of miserable lives. Therefore, we must develop viveka, the wisdom that enables us to believe that we are not body, senses, etc., but Self, that the material pleasures we are after are evanescent and cause only misery, and, most importantly, that the highest pleasure (ānanda) lies in self-realisation.

Vairāgya: once we have the required viveka, we realise the futility of the sensual pleasures and must decide to turn away from them. We must also despise the pleasures of heaven, as they too are temporary.

Śaṭsampatti: One who has viveka and vairāgya must also develop the six virtues, namely, (1) śama (calmness or tranquillity of mind), (2) dama (equanimity or self-control), (3) uparati (freedom from the desire to possess, (4) titikṣā (patience or forbearance), (5) śraddhā (sincerity based on self-confidence) and (6) samādhāna (not to lose sight of the goal).

Mumuksatva: The aspirant must have a strong desire and determination for the attainment of liberation or mokṣa. In fact, it is the last that makes the preceding three meaningful.35

While Karma-yoga, Bhakti-yoga and Rāja-yoga are auxiliary, the actual path of jñāna, i.e., the actual discipline which leads to the acquisition of jñāna, involves three steps, namely, śravaṇa, manana and nididhyāsana.
Sravana: Though the word ‘sravana’ literally means ‘hearing’, it actually designates study of the Vedas. Once upon a time when the Vedas were not committed to writing, they were transmitted from person to person orally. Thus to learn the Vedas one had to first hear them from somebody who knew them all by memory. But just by hearing the Vedic words one cannot know anything. Therefore, if the Vedas are to provide knowledge about anything at all, they must be studied. Thus sravana really means study of the Vedic doctrines, especially in this case, the doctrines of Brahman, Brahman-realisation and the ways and means of realising Brahman. However, knowledge gained from the study of the Vedas is mediate and only aparā-vidyā (lower knowledge) and as such, it does not lead us to mokṣa. This is precisely why when we learn from the Vedic study that ātman is identical to Brahman we are not released. However, Advaitins insist that sravana is necessary. Its virtue lies in its being an infallible source of information as to the ultimate reality, ultimate goal of human life and the best way to achieve it. Therefore, without sravana our spiritual efforts would be a groping in the dark.

Manana: While sravana is necessary, it is not sufficient, because one has to understand clearly the meaning and exact purport of the Vedic texts. Having listened to the latter from the teacher, the aspirant has to reflect over them in order to see the rationality behind them. Such a rational reflection is called manana. Manana also helps eradicate our old wrong beliefs, for example, that the Vedic texts are false. In fact, rational reflection is an attempt at philosophically justifying the Vedic (Upaniṣadic) texts. Without such justification the spiritual discipline would have been a blind practice.
Nididhyāsana: The word 'nididhyāsana' literally means constant meditation. But in this context it means not the process, but the product, that is, intuitive knowledge. The aspirant in addition to śravaṇa and manana, has to practise meditation which culminates in intuitive knowledge of the non-dual, partless, infinite consciousness (Brahman). This is same as parā-vidyā – the kind of knowledge in which the aspirant’s mind loses the usual distinction between subject and object. The aspirant’s mind loses all its wrong beliefs generated by the long-established avidyā and establishes in their place non-dual Brahman. It has no knowledge of itself as such and such, and realises that it is Nirguṇa Brahman. Only a person who has attained to this state is rightly able to declare “I am Brahman” (“aham brahmāsmi”). His is an intuitive experience in the sense that he sees all as one permeated by Brahman.

3. Brahman-realisation: Mokṣa consists in the attainment of knowledge (jñāna or vidyā), but knowledge in this case does not involve the duality of the subject and object as in the usual, empirical context. Instead of the soul (ātman) knowing Brahman as object, it becomes Brahman or realises itself as Brahman. What does it mean to say that ātman becomes Brahman, or that it realises itself as Brahman? The question becomes important in the light of our usual conception that ātman, as jīvātman, is finite because of its limiting adjuncts (upādhis) ignorance, karma, fears, passions, lust, anger, etc. and Brahman is devoid of finitude and the limiting adjuncts. When the Upaniṣads declare that “That thou art” (“tattvamasi”) or “I am Brahman” (“aham Brahmāsmi”), what is the exact purport? Is the soul identical to saguṇa Brahman or Nirguṇa Brahman?
At the outset it is clear that the soul cannot be identical to saguna Brahman, because the latter is illusory or not ultimately real. What is illusory or not ultimately real cannot be our goal. If worldly pleasures are regarded as worthless, on the ground that the desire for worldly pleasures is a product of ignorance (avidyā), then Isvara (saguna Brahman) who is also a product of avidyā cannot be any better. Secondly, because the saguna Brahman is creator, omnipotent, etc. and the finite soul (jīva) cannot be conceived to be identical to him. Thirdly, if the individual soul is conceived as identical to saguna Brahman then we have to necessarily conceive as many Gods as there are individual souls, and the idea of innumerable saguna Brahman is absurd. So scriptures declare the identity of the individual soul with Nirguna Brahman, not with saguna Brahman.

Even in such a case, we have to ask: How can a finite jīva be identical to infinite Brahman? This question is based on the wrong presupposition that Brahman and the individual soul are two separate entities and that, being two, they can never be numerically identical. Can they be at least regarded as qualitatively identical? Of course, it is logically possible that they are qualitatively identical. But the conception of two things so conceived pose two problems: firstly, if Brahman is infinite, jīva cannot be infinite, for the simple reason that the conception of two infinites is logically absurd; secondly, the conception of two qualitatively identical beings causes violence to the non-duality of Brahman who is described as one only without second. Not only Īśvara and the world, but also the individual souls are unreal in the final analysis. Because of avidyā or māyā we think that the
world and the identical souls are real and both separate from Brahman. Once the ignorance is destroyed, the duality of Brahman and ātman vanishes and then onwards, Brahman or ātman alone is. Similarly, the duality of Īśvara and world vanishes and only Brahman or ātman is. One who has destroyed his ignorance does not ‘see’ the world, but only Brahman.

The Brahman-realisation should not be construed as an evolution, for the liberated man does not acquire a new form. It is not a transformation from something like fish into something else like frog. For all practical purposes, he is the same man. However, a tremendous transformation has taken place both in his metaphysics and axiology and psychology. That he is identical to Brahman is not a newly gained notion, but a notion regained; he treats the world as unreal or illusory, not real, as he used to treat it earlier. The worldly pleasures are now regarded by him as worthless, not only because they are evanescent but also because they are shallow. His conquest of peace-disturbing emotions, such as lust, anger, greed, infatuation, etc. has brought about a sea change in his behaviour with others. 6-11.01

4. Jīvanmukti: The fact that one must be liberated when alive is essential to Jñāna-yoga. Release and its effects are not something to be attained after death or in some other world, but something necessarily to be attained in this life and in this world. A person who is released in the embodied state is called jīvanmukta. But is mokṣa when alive possible?

The Advaitins’ answer to this question is in affirmative. If one has to attain mokṣa, according to them, one must attain it only in the embodied state. Their simple reason is that if mokṣa consists in eradication of avidyā
and attainment of jñāna, then it is necessary that one must do so in the embodied state. Because just as avidya-infected antahkarana (mind-intellect-ego complex) thinks wrongly that Brahman is different from jīva, so also the same antahkarana thinks, when it acquires jñāna, that Brahman and ātman are identical. Therefore, it is impossible to attain such jñāna without antahkarana, which works only when one is alive. Such being the case, it is ridiculous to argue that we can eradicate avidyā or acquire jñāna in a disembodied state. However, Śaṅkara also makes room for the idea that if for some reason one cannot attain mokṣa in this life in spite of the best efforts, one will attain it after his death.

If jīvanmukti is possible, then we can know clearly know who a jīvanmukta is. What are the essential features of a jīvanmukta?

The most important feature of a jīvanmukta is that he is completely free from sorrow, because he has conquered both kinds of sorrow, the sorrows of this world and the sorrows of the other world. Vidyāraṇya, a noted post-Śaṅkara Advaitin, says in his Pañcadasī, (xiv, 2,3):

A man of illumination has no wants and is impelled by no desire. He has nothing to accomplish in this world or in the next. Nor is there anything left for him to be attained either here or hereafter. When he has achieved the supreme human goal, what need has he for the trinkets of this world? The entire choir of heaven and furniture of the earth seem naught before his divine vision. He revels in the bliss of Brahman.37

Absence of wants implies the absence of future (āgāmi) karmas, because of which a man is subjected to the cycle of births and deaths.
The root cause of misery is avidyā-born ego, which is mistaken for ātman and which generates all kinds of desires. All afflictions, as Śaṅkara notes, are for such an ego. Such ego “struggles desiring something for himself, something else for his son, a third thing for his wife, and so on, goes the round of births and deaths, and is diseased when his body is diseased. But all this is impossible for the man who sees everything as the self”. Ego-naughting is necessary for overcoming the desires. Similarly, he has no worries about the merits and demerits, which are supposed to yield their fruits in the other world.

All the accumulated (saṅcita) karmas have been burnt by the fire of his jñāna. Therefore, his jñāna, which roots out all selfishness, ensures the destruction of all their future consequences.

The past karmas which have begun to fructify (prārabdha karmas) are not destroyed and cannot be destroyed. Every person, whether he is a sinner or an ascetic must experience their fruits. But while the former suffers because of them, the latter is not afflicted by them.

In addition to these negative words, the jīvanmukta is also described in positive terms. The bliss he enjoys is matchless. About him the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VIII, xii. 3) has this to say: “there such a one moves about, laughing, playing, rejoicing with women, chariots or relations, - not remembering the appendage of this body”.39

The most important aspect of the bliss he enjoys is this, that while empirical pleasures presuppose the distinction between the happiness and
the enjoyer of happiness, there is no such distinction presupposed in ananda (bliss). To attain ananda what is required is not something like a pleasurable object, or someone, like God, but only the destruction of evil called avidyā.

The jīvanmukta, for all practical purposes, is no different from others. He “lives in the world, but he is not of the world”. He eats and drinks and laughs like any of us, but he does all these things without any selfish motive behind them. All his thought, speech and acts are touched by unselfishness, generated by jñāna. Like any of us he also sees the world and makes valid distinction between chairs and tables, and between Brahman and the world, but he knows that the world is māyā and that it is only an appearance.

One significant transformation in his behaviour is his inclination to altruism. “While some liberated undertake the minimum activity for sustaining life (jīvanamātrārtham), others throw themselves into the work of the world (lokasaṁrārtham)” For such people altruism is one thing which they cannot extricate themselves from.

A jīvanmukta is free to do anything he likes. This, however, does not mean a licence to violation of the conventional morality. He does not violate any moral code, for it is impossible for him to do so. An action is called evil, if it is prompted by an evil purpose, and since the liberated person “has no longer any object to aim at, since he has achieved all” he cannot be said to have any evil purpose. Therefore, whatever he does is unselfish and for the sake of others. He has transcended moralistic individualism associated with avidyā and landed in altruism.
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2. BHAKTI-YOGA

Bhakti-yoga or the way of devotion, is the most popular method of attaining liberation. The oldest method, it is defined as “a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing and ending in Love.”

Though historically we cannot fix the date of the origin of Bhakti-yoga, we can safely conclude that Bhakti-yoga began the moment man conceived deity in terms of theism.

While in Karma-Yoga selfless action is believed to lead us to liberation, in Bhakti-yoga bhakti (devotion) is believed to take us to liberation. Hence the question, What is bhakti (devotion or Love)?

Nārada defines bhakti as “intense love to God; when a man gets it, he loves all, hates none; he becomes satisfied for ever.” Therefore, a man whose love is limited to his own God or his own people and who hates other forms of God and followers of other Gods is a cruel fanatic, not a bhakta (devote).

In fact, the definition of bhakti as intense love to God must be qualified. It is a selfless, unconditioned and total love to God. Many people show their devotion (bhakti) for various selfish purposes. For example, the early Vedic people worshipped gods and goddesses with sons, wealth, cattle, and success over enemies, etc., in their view. Even now there are many people who become devotees the moment they encounter greater difficulties. But true devotees pray to God for innumerable opportunities to show their intense love to God, and never for wealth, etc. This precisely is
why Nārada says: “Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Yoga, because these are intended for an object in view, while bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end.”

Unconditional love is love without any strings attached to it. We love our children, wives, husbands, parents, etc., because they are our children, our parents, etc. If we do not love others’ children or others’ parents, it is because they are not our children or our parents. Our love is expressed sometimes in the form of our readiness to sacrifice our personal comforts for their sake. If our children do not show respect to us in return to our love or go astray morally and hurt our feelings, either the intensity of our love decreases or our love vanishes completely. Similarly, there are people who love God conditionally. They show their devotion (love) on the condition that God must grant them the result they want in return. If they do not obtain that result, they give up their devotion. There is no need to say that conditional love is no love, because, being so fragile, it does not take us far. Unconditional love, which is true love, is not attached to any result. A real devotee, in the first place, will not ask for any favour; and secondly, even if God does not show his grace, he continues to worship him. We see such a parallel in the case of both animals and humans. Animals take utmost care of their new offsprings, perhaps not in the hope that they will be taken care of in their old age by their offsprings. Similarly a human mother showers her love on her child without expecting anything from it.

Total love is love reserved for only God. If a devotee loves God as well as worldly comforts, his love to God is not total; in such a case he is
ready to sacrifice his honour, money, etc., for other comforts also. This implies that while he loves other things, he has forgotten God, at least to that extent. In fact, it is said by many devotees that just as two enemies cannot live in the same house, so also love for God and love for worldliness cannot be entertained by the same man, simultaneously. This divided love is not a means to liberation. A true devotee loves God, and nothing but God. He turns all his thoughts, speech and actions towards God and is ever ready to sacrifice his personal comforts for God's sake.

In fact all devotion is in the beginning selfish, conditional and incomplete. But one who wants God-realization must transcend these limitations.

STAGES OF BHAKTI-YOGA

Bhakti-yoga normally begins with idolatry; or as Swami Vivekānanda says, 'idolatry is the kindergarten of Bhakti-yoga'. The idol that is worshipped may be anthropomorphic images of gods and goddesses such as that of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇapati, Lakṣmī etc., or symbols like Lingas or Devī Cakra.

Image worship, in the words of Rāmānuja, is abrahmaṇi brahma dṛṣṭyānusandhānaṁ, i.e., believing what is not Brahman as Brahman and concentrating on it by intense devotion. The stone image of Viṣṇu, for example, is not Brahman (or Viṣṇu); the devotee must for the time being, assume that it is Brahman and concentrate his mind on it devotedly during his worship. Why should he assume a sculpture of Viṣṇu for Viṣṇu? Does it
mean that he should mistake, consciously and deliberately, the sculpture for the Lord? Deliberate mistaking is a contradiction in terms and is, therefore, logically impossible. What Rāmānuja means is that the devotee knows (1) that the image is not Viṣṇu and (2) that he worships not the image, but Viṣṇu, whose image it is. One who assumes that the image itself is Viṣṇu understands neither Viṣṇu nor the image; nor can he progress in the way of devotion. It is such people who become fanatics, who hate other religious symbols and practices. One who makes the distinction between the symbol and the symbolized sees God in all symbols or images. What is more, when his devotion matures he can worship God without images or symbols.

In the second stage of Bhakti-yoga, the devotee remembers God not only during the image worship, but whenever possible. This may get expression in the form of audible utterance of mantras or names of God, or singing. To this may be added listening to the discourses and the like, and attending the worshipping ceremonies arranged by others. In course of time the devotee may utter inaudibly or just remember the mantras or names of God. Just as people feel happy when they remember their dear ones who are far off, so also the devotees feel happy by remembering God when they cannot see him; because “the above kind of remembering is as good as seeing”.

In the third stage of Bhakti-yoga, the devotee’s life undergoes a transformation because of his new understanding of the world and God. Now he thinks that the external objects, his body, senses, mind, intellect, etc. which he earlier mistook to belong to him are really granted by God.
They are, as the Lingāyats would say, prasāda of God. Just as we do not reject prasāda (holy food), however tasteless it is, so also the devotee in this stage regards all objects as God-given and rejects none of them. This is same as the attitude of a sthitaprajña conceived in the Bhagavadgītā. For him there is no difference between the hot sun and the soothing moonlight, a good feast and fasting.

Further, he regards his thoughts, words and acts as not his own, but as those of God. That is, whatever he does is perceived as acts of God. He enjoys offering his entire personality to God. The entire personality is perceived as a vehicle through which Paraśiva (God) enjoys.

Such an enduring consideration is not the result of reason or compulsive thought – it is the result of mystic experience. One who has had mystic experience once wants to have it frequently, because in it he feels his oneness with the highest reality. He wants to surrender himself completely.

In the fourth and final stage, his devotion is transformed into bliss (ānanda) which is both qualitatively and quantitatively different from ordinary sense pleasure. It is qualitatively different because, while sense pleasure is the result of the conscious contact of the sense with the sense object, bliss requires neither the employment of any sense nor an object. It results from meditation. It is not at all like any pleasure we are aware of. It is quantitatively different because while the sense pleasure lasts only as long as there is sense-object contact, bliss is more enduring.

For the devotee bliss comes out naturally and effortlessly. The moment he remembers God he is lost in the bliss. In some cases the mystic bliss results in singing the glory of God or dancing or both.
It is believed that God appears to the devotees of this stage in the form they like. Devotees like Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahamsa are believed to have realized God in many forms, such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Kāli, Allah, etc. Since ‘seeing’ God is their ultimate goal of life, it is no wonder they experience bliss during such a perception.

For Bhakti-yoga bhakti in the fourth state is not a means to some other end, it is itself the end; because the devotee’s desire for God-realization has been fulfilled. Therefore, he has no further desire.

**TYPES OF BHAKTI**

Religious thinkers recognize in devotion two levels – aparā-bhakti (lower devotion) and parā-bhakti (higher devotion). Expressing our devotion in a visible form is the former, in which we are involved in such technical acts as image-worship, singing, offering food, fruits, etc. to God, uttering divine names, etc. In parā-bhakti, we worship God in our minds and our religiosity is expressed in our moral behaviour, such as compassion, renunciation, meditation, etc.

Sometimes religious thinkers recognize six types of devotion – dāsya, sakhyā, vātsalya, sānta, kāntā, and madhurā. Conceiving God as master and oneself as his faithful servant (dāsa) is devotion known as dāsya (servitude); conceiving God as one’s friend is sakhyā (friendliness); conceiving God as one’s son is vātsalya (parental love); conceiving God as one’s father is sānta (peace); conceiving God as one’s husband is kāntā (wife’s) bhakti; conceiving God as one’s lover is madhurā (sweet).
Hanumanta, Arjuna, Yasodhā, Prahlāda, Sītā and Rādhā are, respectively, the suitable examples of the above six types of devotion.

It is argued that these are not six types, but only six levels, of devotion. A friend's love to his friend is more intense, and without any restriction, than a servant's devotion to his master; a mother's love to her son is deeper and more enduring than a friend's; a young son depends on his father and therefore loves him more than a mother loves her son; compared to all these four levels, the love of a wife to her husband is more intense and enduring. While a wife expects her husband to behave favourably in return to her love, a beloved's love (like the love of Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa) is unselfish and therefore of the highest type.

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

Bhakti-yoga involves four philosophical concepts—Personal God, duality, disembodied liberation and divine grace.

1. Personal God:- It is interesting to note that Bhakti-yoga is not compatible with three doctrines of deity, polytheism, Deism and spiritual monism. Polytheism is the belief in and worship of many gods and goddesses. If our reverence is divided among the many gods and goddesses, it cannot be a total bhakti. Moreover, polytheism sometimes leads to either kathenotheism or henotheism. Kathenotheism is the belief in and worship of one god at a time. The Vedic people's worship of Varuṇa at one time and of Indra at another time is an example of kathenotheism. Bhakti-yoga presupposes a God of theism. The early Greeks' worship of Zeus, the leader of Gods and
goddesses is a case of henotheism. But the fact is that all forms of polytheism involve a utilitarian religion: when their worship did not produce the desired results, they were discarded by the devotees.

Deism is the belief in a God, who, after creation remains indifferent to both the world and human beings. This doctrine was proposed in England by a group of thinkers who called themselves Deists (17th century A.D.) led by Lord Herbert of Cherbury. The Deists hold that since God has created a faultless world, he need not frequently interfere in the happenings of the world. This implies that God does not respond to our prayers, good acts or even wicked acts. Such a God does not evoke in us the feeling of awe, fear, reverence and devotion. Therefore, devotion to such God becomes irrelevant.

Spiritual monism (Advaita) expounded by Śaṅkara, is the doctrine that featureless Brahman, which is nothing but sat, cit and ānanda, alone exists. Brahman, according to Śaṅkara, does not have any quality of a human person. Thus he is neither creator, maintainer and destroyer of the universe, nor a judge of human actions. Brahman of Advaita is a lifeless infinite spirit. In short, the devotee observes nothing in Brahman that deserves reverence. Even when Bhakti-yoga is said to help the devotee in his effort to attain self-realization, it is in the final analysis regarded as illusory.

The God of Bhakti-yoga, the object of our worship must be free from all imperfections and must have certain adorable qualities. God of Bhakti-
yoga must as Rāmānuja says in his commentary on the *Brahma-sūtras*, be free from all imperfection and must have infinite auspicious attributes (ananta-kalyāna-guṇa-visiṣṭa)⁶. In his *Vedārtha-Saṅgraha* he speaks of God as “the abode of countless auspicious attributes unsurpassing in their perfection.” (anvadhika-atiśayāsamkhyaeya-kalyāṇa guṇa-gaṇa).⁷

God must not have birth and death. Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, who had both birth and death are still worshipped with devotion, because they are regarded as incarnation (avatāra) of Lord Viśṇu. Anyone who is not an incarnation and who is subject to birth and death, does not deserve to be the objects of Bhakti -Yoga.

God must be creator, sustainer and destroyer of the world. When the question of origin and cause of the world comes, we are necessarily inclined to believe that it is created, and the creator of innumerable objects, innumerable variety of vegetation, innumerable variety of living beings (with intricate and complex bodies) must be infinitely powerful (sarvasakta) and infinitely wise (sarvajñā). He controls the universe both physically and morally. Being all-knowing, he judges human actions, and awards punishments and rewards according to their moral and spiritual behaviour. Bhakti-yoga presupposes a God who dwells in the heart of devotees as well as each particle of the world. The most important character which makes God deserve our bhakti is his capacity to respond to our devotional call. The Deist’s God, though personal, is not worshipped or prayed to, simply because he is totally indifferent to human acts – religious, moral or otherwise.
2. Dualism: The word 'Bhakta' means 'one who is separated'. The word in the context of Bhakti-yoga means one who is separated from God. This implies that he was once upon a time with God or in God, or a part of God. He wrongly thinks that he is separated from God, while metaphysically nothing can exist independently of or separated from God. In any case, according to a form of devotionalism (Bhakti-yoga), the individual soul is different, if not separate, from God. His difference issues from several facts. God, who is omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, is the creator of the universe, while the individual soul has none of these qualities, and therefore, cannot be a creator. He cannot maintain the universe or destroy it as God does unfailingly. Secondly, the individual soul is atomic and therefore, finite, while God is infinite and can pervade everything, including the atomic human soul. Therefore, the individual soul is neither equal to God nor can it become God even during the state of mokṣa. In the mokṣa state, the soul lives in the world of God (sālokya); it may attain proximity to God (Samīpya); it may become pure like God (Sārūpya); it may merge in him temporarily; but it can never become God. It is same as saying that the part (amśa) can never become whole (amśi). Thus, the sects like Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita, Christianity, Islam, etc., which advocate dualism of God and soul, are clearly opposed to Śaṅkara's Advaita which denies both separation and distinction between Brahman and jīvas.

3. The theory of disembodied liberation (Videha-mukti): Advaita proposes the view that liberation must be embodied liberation (jīvanmukti), because while neither devotion (bhakti), selfless action (karma) nor a combination
of the two can fetch us liberation, only knowledge (jñāna) can be the means to liberation, and if one cannot have knowledge in an embodied state, one can never have it; in a certain sense, jñāna itself is liberation. Therefore, having knowledge or liberation cannot be an after-death achievement. Even the Mādhyamikas and Yogācāras speaks of embodied liberation.

The schools which recommend devotion as the means to mokṣa (e.g. Rāmānuja’s Viśiṣṭādvaita) find a basic fault with the concept of embodied liberation. In his Tattva-muktā-kalāpa, Vedānta Deśika defines liberation as liberation from vital breath, senses physical body etc.\textquotedblright; (mukti prāṇākshadhādibhiḥ upādhibhiḥ atyanta-viśhleṣa-rūpa)\textsuperscript{8} Therefore, whoever has body, senses, etc., is not liberated or not disembodied. Anybody who claims the possibility of embodied liberation is claiming the logically impossibility of embodied being disembodied.

The Viśiṣṭādvaitin’s definition is justified on the ground that the physical body, sense, etc., are the result of prārabdha-karma and since liberation is liberation of the soul from all karmas, including prārabdha karma, embodied liberation remains a logical impossibility.

The liberated souls are freed from the imperfect bodies made of prakṛti and are provided with perfect bodies, so that they can perceive God’s beauty and grandeur, and can enjoy the heavenly pleasure. In fact, it appears the followers of Bhakti-yoga prefer dualism to monism, because for them mokṣa is a state of the soul in which it enjoys the eternal service of God. Just as Śaṅkara identified jñāna with liberation, so also the Vaiṣṇava
devotees identify bhakti with mokṣa, in the sense that mokṣa is an eternal companionship of the soul with God or eternal devotion or service to God, and one who loses his identity cannot worship or serve God. If one says bhakti is a means to mokṣa a perfect devotee would prefer bhakti to mokṣa.

However, in the Bhagavadgītā, which also advocates Bhakti-yoga in addition to Karma Yoga, the ideal of embodied liberation is admitted. Here the definition of mokṣa is freedom from ignorance and the resultant dualities like love-hate, desires, discrimination, etc. It is said in the Bhagavadgītā that one who has achieved equanimity (sāmya) and can overcome the evil effects of samsāra9 abides in Brahman in this life itself. Similarly, in the Kannada vacanas, it is held that one who surrenders himself completely to Paraśiva unites with him in the embodied state.

4. Divine Grace (anugraha) : Ignorance, bondage and creation are beginningless. The soul’s bondage with physical body, senses, etc. and with a particular environment in which it lives and acts, are both due to its karma. Its association with karma is the cause of its defilement. To become pure, i.e. to free itself from impurity, it has to perform, on the one hand, absolutely disinterested duties and, on the other, show untainted, unselfish, unconditional and total devotion to God. While disinterested action makes the soul pure, devotion takes the soul to God. The two together coupled with jñāna, which according to Rāmānuja means, constant remembrance of God, are the combined means to liberation. God who is pleased with the complete surrender (prapatti or śaraṇāgati) of the devotees decides to help them in their spiritual efforts. This help is called anugraha (grace). In fact, the
prapatti is aimed at anugraha, because it includes six steps (1) to think, will and act in such a way as to please God, (2) not to displease God on any account, (3) faith that would protect, (4) Appeal to God for protection, (5) absolute self-surrender to God, and (6) feeling of absolute dependence on God.10 “(ānukūlyasya saṅkalpah prātiṅkūlyasya varjanam. rakṣisyatīti viśvāso goptṛtve varaṇam tathā. ātmanikṣepakārpanye śaṅvidhā śaraṅgatīḥ.)”11

Rāmānuja speaks of two kinds of grace, which are both possible – markaṭa-nyāya, mārjāla-nyāya.12 Markata-nyāya (analogy of the monkey) implies that the baby monkey clings to its mother for protection and in this case its self-effort is stressed; in the mārjāla-nyāya (analogy of the cat), the mother itself catches its kitten between its teeth in order to transport it to a safety place. The mother, noticing the need for safety for its kitten, itself takes the initiative, because the kitten is incapable of moving or conveying its needs. Here, the mother’s helping nature is stressed. God, noticing the moral and spiritual merits of his devotees, showers his grace in both ways.

Even in the Bhagavadgītā and the Vacanas which speak of jīvanmukti and union of soul with the ultimate reality, divine grace is regarded as a necessity. Human effort, without divine grace is futile. But obtaining divine grace depends on the spiritual merits of the devotee and not the whimsical choice of God.
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3. KARMA-YOGA

The word ‘Karma’ is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘कर्म्’ which means ‘action’, ‘to do’, etc. The word ‘karma’ has at least four meanings:

1) ‘Action’ is the root meaning and in such a sense, the word applies to all kinds of actions – purposeless, purposive, involuntary, voluntary, good, bad, etc. 2) With reference to the Vedas the word means Vedic rituals, such as performance of sacrifices in the names of various gods and goddesses. That part of Veda, which deals with the performance of rituals, is rightly called ‘karma-kāṇḍa’, as distinguished from ‘jñāna- kānda’ which deals with liberating knowledge. 3) In the same context the word refers to the doctrine of karma and rebirth, where the word specifically refers to a purposive moral action, which produces in future a particular ‘unseen’ result. 4) In the word ‘Karma-yoga’ the word ‘karma’ means only unselfish action (niṣkāma-karma) or duty. The word ‘Yoga’ also has more than one meaning. But in this context it means ‘the way’ or ‘discipline’ and as such, ‘it is a way’ which leads to mokṣa. It is for this reason that the name ‘Karma-yoga’ is used as a synonym of ‘karma-mārga’. Therefore, in the present context we are interested in the analysis of the doctrine of disinterested action.

The doctrine of disinterested action which was already present in the Upaniṣads in the seminal form was for the first time expounded brilliantly and effectively in the Bhagavad-gītā. The latter advocates activity on two important grounds. 1. Man is always engaged in one activity or the other. It
is impossible for him to be inactive.\(^1\) Because he is a product of Prakṛti, the principle of activity. If we decide to remain inactive deliberately, it only means that we have decided not to continue our life.\(^2\) God himself is continuously active. He did not take rest after creating the world – he has been actively engaged in preserving it both physically and morally. He sees to it that the world does not disintegrate, that seasons maintain their regularity (physical preservation) and judges human actions impartially and awards punishment or rewards accordingly (moral maintenance). Man must emulate God and should not prefer to be inactive.\(^3\)

Now, with reference to the Karma-yoga we have to ask three questions, viz., 1. What kind of actions should we choose and what kind of actions should we avoid? 2. What is the manner of performing the chosen action? 3. What should be the motive behind our performance of those actions? In short, what are the characteristics of Karma-yoga, which leads us to final liberation? One may object that since everybody is engaged in one action or the other, since he does it in one way or the other, with one motive or the other, these questions have no relevance. But if the actions we choose should lead to liberation, which is the final aim of Karma-yoga, these questions are in fact more relevant. If we notice that actions done in a wrong way or with wrong motive only strengthen our bond with the cycle of births and deaths, the relevance of the questions gains more proportion.

1. Bhagavadgītā does not discriminate between actions which lead to liberation. From the worldly point of view we regard the duty of a doctor or a judge or a teacher as ‘higher’ because it is economically more
remunerative and, like other ‘white collar’ jobs, they offer us an elevated status in society; we regard the duty of a scavenger or that of a potter or a cobbler as ‘lower’ because it is economically less remunerative and it gives us ‘lower’ social status. Unfortunately, in India professions were the yardstick which decided one’s status in the social hierarchy. Thus the Brahmins, whose duty of performing yajñās, teaching the Vedas, etc. was regarded as superior to other duties, occupied the top rung in the social ladder. By the same standard, potters, weavers cobblers, scavengers, etc. were pushed down to the lowest position in the social hierarchy. Even the duty of an agriculturist who feeds the country was regarded as lower than the Brahmin’s. Bagavādghītā advocates that any profession, if done properly, would lead to liberation (mōkṣa).

However, two observation must be made in this context on the attitude of the Bhagavadgītā. (1) Though the Bhagavadgītā argued that all professions, if done properly, would lead to mōkṣa, it did not condemn the discrimination between professions. Agriculture, if practiced properly, so far as it is a means to mōkṣa is as good as teaching the Vedas, but the former was not regarded as superior like the latter. (2) The more disturbing factor is that the Bhagavadgītā, in fact, positively supports the caste concept based on professions. When Kṛṣṇa says that He Himself created the fourfold caste system it means it is an act of the wisest being. Further, it is said that caste-mixing (varṇa-saṅkara) is a great sin. So one is advised to carry on one’s profession which has come down to him from his ancestors, and not to take up profession of another caste however great it is.
In any case, according to Bhagavadgītā, discrimination between professions should be shunned and one must perform one's duty diligently, without undervaluing it, however mean it is from the worldly point of view. Doing one's duty with diligence is a necessary condition of Karma-yoga. Just as a sweeper who undervalues his duty cannot become a Karma-yogi, so also a doctor who refuses to attend to a patient of a particular class or caste cannot become a Karma-yogi. This is precisely what Kṛṣṇa was driving home when Arjuna refused to fight, on the ground that the persons whom he had to fight were his own teachers, friends, cousins, etc. Arjuna's duty as a Kṣatriya was to maintain moral order in the country and whoever disrupted it must be punished and eliminated, even if they were his kith and kin. In short, neglecting one's duty deprives one of the opportunity of attaining mokṣa.

One must do one's duty so diligently that he must be deaf to the external happenings, and must neglect one's own desires, urges, infatuation, hatred, etc. As an example it may be mentioned that when a devotee, who was engaged in the service of his parents, noticed that Lord Viṣṇu appeared, he, without stopping his duty, offered the Lord Viṣṇu a brick to stand on. The attitude of Arjuna towards his duty is just the opposite. That is why Kṛṣṇa tells him not to turn his back to duty either by cowardice or by infatuation, and to do it willfully and courageously. Only the duty done diligently can produce better results.

3. What should be the motive behind the performance of our duty? Nobody, not even a mad man, does a voluntary act without a motive. So,
What kind of voluntary act leads us to liberation? is relevant in this context.

We are engaged in action mostly for selfish purposes. We act in order to avoid losses, to gain money, position or fame. Even the acts which are intended to take us to svarga (heaven) are selfish. The help we render to our children, relatives, friends and people of our caste or religion, of our village or state without expecting anything in return is no less selfish. Because it is based on the idea that we will be happy if they are happy. The Bhagavadgītā asks us to be free from such motives. Freedom from selfish motives is the essence of Karma-yoga. We must act necessarily, but we must keep away from the results. Many people turn away from the results of their actions when they are negligibly small or dangerous or embarrassing. But the Bhagavadgītā insists that a karma-yogi is indifferent to not only such results, but even the ones which bring us fame, money, position and other goods. This does not mean that rendering help to friends, relatives, etc. is wrong; what is wrong is insisting that those whom we help must be our friends, relatives, etc. and that they must be grateful to us in some manner. One who is not interested in the result of his duty must be happy whether the result is enjoyed by his friends or relatives or some strangers. In other words, unselfish acts have no boundaries.

There are many people who are ready to work unselfishly. They are not lured even by heaven. Though it is true that disinterested work leads to mokṣa, the agents of such work are not interested in it. People like Bodhisattvas, reject Nirvāṇa also, till all others have attained it. Their only
concern is selfless action. Though they are never interested in the results of their action, their diligence in the performance of the duty is never weakened. “For Karma-yoga, the act should be viewed not as a means but as an end in itself. That is, the idea of the result, which is to ensue from the action, must be dismissed altogether from the mind before as well as during the act.” Every act does produce a result, but it is not Karma-yogi’s result, because he has already renounced it even before it is produced. In other words, “the Gītā teaching stands not for renunciation of action, but for renunciation in action”.

The word “Yoga” is used in the Bhagavadgītā to connote equanimity of mind (Samatva or Sthita-prajñatva). The Karma-yogi who does not cease to act looks upon the result of his act with equanimity. For him the gold has the same value as the mud. “This teaching that we ought to engage ourselves in our work as members of a social order in the usual way and yet banish from our mind all thought of deriving any personal benefit there from, is the meaning of Karma-yoga and constitutes the specific message of the Gītā.”

The doctrine of selfless action is associated with two other concepts, namely, pravṛtti (activity), and nivṛtti (inactivity). There is on the one side pravṛtti (activity), which we are engaged in for a particular selfish end which may be worldly like wealth, fame, position, etc., or other-worldly, like life in heaven. In this case there are only two alternatives – either we are active for the sake of a selfish end, or, if we do not want that end, we are inactive. On the other side there is inactivity or renunciation which was
praised for wrong reasons. People believed activity produces rebirth, inactivity leads to jñāna, the means to mokṣa. The choice, therefore, between activity and inactivity, is choice between rebirth and release from rebirth. The Bhagavadgītā, however, saw the danger, especially in the ideal of neglecting activity, or renouncing family and social life in favour of a life of recluse, conducive to undisturbed meditation. It noticed the shortsightedness behind both of these attitudes and felt the necessity of reconciling the two. It aimed at discovering a

golden mean between the two ideals of pravṛtti and nivṛtti or action and contemplation, as we might term them, preserving the excellence of both. Karma-yoga is such a mean. While it does not abandon activity, it preserves the spirit of renunciation. It commends a strenuous life, and yet gives no room for the play of selfish impulses. Thus it discards neither ideal, but by combining them refines and ennobles both.

One may wonder, whether it is really possible to act without a motive whatsoever. If motiveless action is a myth, what then is the motive of a Karma-yogi? Prof. M. Hiriyanna in his brilliant exposition answers this question.

There are two answers to this question furnished in the book: (1) ātma-suddhi, which means ‘purifying the self’ or ‘cleansing the heart,’ and (2) subserving the purposes of God.
(Śvara) --a fact which, by the way, implies a mixture of teaching here. The spirit in which one engages oneself in activity is different according to the two aims. What is done is done in the one case for the sake of the social whole of which the doer is a member; but in the other it is done for the sake of God, resigning its fruit to him. What in the one appears as duty to others appears in the other as service to God. The former type of agent is directly conscious of his relation to his environment and realizes it as a factor demanding his fealty; the latter is conscious only of God conceived as a personality in constant touch with the world, and whatever he does he regards as God's work, which has therefore, to be done.  

So, there is a motive, but that motive is not selfish. The action done for attaining mokṣa reflects a desire, but it is a desire to become desireless which is possible in the mokṣa state.

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION

1. GOD: There are several commentaries on the Bhagavadgītā written from the non-dualistic view (Śaṅkara), pantheistic view (Rāmānuja), dualistic view (Madhva), etc. Moreover, there is a conjecture that the Bhagavadgītā, originally authored by Vyāsa, the author of Mahābhārata, was later modified by several others, over centuries, mostly by interpolation, as a result of which we now find in it several theories of ultimate reality, such as theism,
pantheism and monism. Occasionally we notice the presence of polytheism.\textsuperscript{14}

Kṛṣṇa declares that “There are these two persons (puruṣa) in the world, the kṣara (the destructible) and akṣara (the indestructible). The destructible is all beings; the indestructible is unchanging (kūṭastha)”\textsuperscript{15} Even if we ignore the question, how can puruṣa be kṣara, our decision to conclude that the former is individual beings who are subject to change and destruction and the latter is the indestructible, underlying reality, Brahman is not justifiable. Our conclusion is rendered false by the next confusing verse which states “Since I transcend the perishable person and am higher than the imperishable person, I am regarded by people and the Vedas as Puruṣottama (supreme person)”.\textsuperscript{16} Perhaps these two verses together mean that the supreme reality is above both embodied beings which are destructible and the spiritual entities, souls, which are indestructible.

This kind of transcendence is the same as immanence, because when Kṛṣṇa often declares, “This entire universe is pervaded by me. While all things are in Me, I do not abide in them”\textsuperscript{17}, what is meant is that he transcends the things. Even when he asserts his all-pervasiveness, he means to say that although he is immanent, he transcends sense perception.

Again this idea of a transcendent God, which implies dualism, is contradicted by other verses, which clearly imply pantheism. Kṛṣṇa says that he is the sacrifice, he is the offering, he is the herb, he is fire, clarified butter,\textsuperscript{18} he is father, mother, grandfather of the universe, the syllable ‘Om’
the Rk, Sāma and the yajus, in fact, the seat of creation, sustenance and dissolution, etc. Perhaps there is nothing which God has not self-transformed into. When God is said to have extended his feet, hands, eyes, mouths, ears, etc., in every direction, moving and unmoving, within and without beings, undivided, yet residing in divisible beings, we have pantheism. The 11th chapter, called “Vision of the Cosmic Form” (viśvarūpa-darśana) proves our conclusion beyond doubt. In any case, whether God resides within things or without them, he remains inaccessible to sense perception, but is certainly amenable to jñāna (= parā vidyā) or Yogic intuition.

Here two things must be noted (1) The Bhagavadgītā does not regard the difference between the innumerable things which God has become as unreal or illusory. God has really become innumerable things. (2) In this multiplicity we cannot fail to notice the indwelling Brahman, the principle of unity. In the absence of God not only the different things cannot exist, but also when they exist, they fall apart, like the flowers of a garland when the thread passing through them is removed. Actually they exist like attributes depending on a substance. Thus God is the single, ultimate reality underlying the phenomenal multiplicity. God, souls and world are woven into one single reality.

In fact, the God of Bhagavadgītā is personal, in the sense that he is creator, maintainer and destroyer of the world. For the welfare of mankind he incarnates. He listens sympathetically to the prayers of virtuous devotees and comes to their help. In fact, according to theism world over,
divine grace plays a dominant role in the spiritual life of the aspirant. Theism of the Bhagavadgītā is no exception. In the words of Dr. S. Rādhākrṣṇan,

the supreme God puts forth His active nature or svāmprakṛtim and creates the jīvas, who work out their destinies along lines determined by their own nature. While all this is done by the supreme through his native power exercised in the perishable world, he has another aspect untouched by it all. He is the impersonal absolute as well as the immanent will.

The God of Bhagavadgītā, unlike that of Advaita of Śaṅkara, is qualified by Prakṛti, which is of two kinds, parā (higher) and aparā (lower). Parā-prakṛti is nature which consists of conscious beings. While aparā-prakṛti is the unconscious material world; which is reducible to eight constituents, namely, earth, water, fire, air, space, mind (manas), intellect (buddhi) and the I-sense (ahaṅkāra). God not only controls the twofold Prakṛti, but both transcends them and pervades them entirely. However, his all-pervasiveness must not be mistaken for imprisonment in the limited twofold Prakṛti, for he transcends them also. Nor does it follow that he is tainted by the tainted objects.

While the twofold Prakṛti cannot exist or be active without depending somehow on God, God can exist without them, as, for example, in the state of pralaya.
Our conception of God as all-pervasive or as self-transforming into innumerable beings, or as residing in our heart, brings him closer to us, rather than making him look the 'distant other'. It is this conception which generates, or strengthens our devotion.

2. WORLD: As is already noted whatever is other than God is a combination of the parā-prakṛti and aparā-prakṛti. But since God is the basis of the twofold Prakṛti, or since God himself reveals that he is all that exists, there is no scope for us to misunderstand the world as illusory or unreal, in spite of the fact, the word 'māyā' is used often. When, for example, he says that he, by using his own Prakṛti, and his power of māyā, incarnates, he does not mean to say that he wants to create an illusion; similarly, when he says that he dwells in the heart of men making them move in the samsāra by means of his power called māyā, there is no reference to illusion. Māyā is simply God's power and the world of change is real, though not eternally real like God.

The world is not an illusion, though by regarding it as a mere mechanical determination of nature unrelated to God, we fail to perceive its divine essence. It becomes the source of delusion.

Sometimes the world is regarded as a place where the aspirant can mould his character. He may either strengthen his bondage to samsāra, or he may, by means of a serious spiritual effort, strain his relation to samsāra.
3. INDIVIDUAL SOUL: The individual self is neither the continuously changing body nor the senses. Though mind is greater than senses, intellect (buddhi) greater than manas, Atman is greater than all of these.

The soul conceived in the Bhagavadgītā is closely comparable to the soul conceived in the Upaniṣads. So it is said that soul is neither born, nor destructible; it is beginningless, eternal; no weapon can cut it, nor can fire burn it; water cannot soak it, nor wind dry it; the body in which it resides is destructible, but not it; just as man discards old cloths in favour of new ones, so the soul discards the old, dilapidated bodies and after death enters new bodies. Though in its original nature, the individual soul (jīva) is a part (aṁśa) of God, it is subjected to many limitations in its embodied state.

The foundational limitation is ignorance owing to which it is aware of neither the true nature of God, nor its own true nature. Further, it is infected with infatuation (moha), because of its association with body, mind, etc., which are the products of the three guṇas (sattva, rajas, tamas). As long as one is limited by moha caused by ignorance, one is unable to pierce the screen of māyā and see God beyond it. In fact, the soul is not doer (kartā) in its original nature. But since every soul is associated with body, senses, mind, etc., which are all products of the three guṇas (or Prakṛti), everybody is engaged continually in one act or the other. While the products of the Prakṛti are unconscious in their original nature, they think, desire, act, etc., because of their association with the conscious soul. But the soul because of egoism is deluded to think of itself as the agent (kartā). The self cannot
deal with non-self; only non-self (i.e. Prakṛti) can deal with non-self (Prakṛti). This only the wise knows.46

On the basis of Kṛṣṇa’s statement that God and others existed in the past and will exist in future47 one can conclude that Bhagavadgītā believes in plurality of selves. Moreover, the epithet, “puruṣottama” (best of persons) applied to God also suggests plurality of selves.

It is worth noting that the different souls are only different parts of God. From this one can easily infer that according to Bhagavadgītā, all souls are in essence identical, the difference being only due to body, sense, antahkaraṇa, etc. with which they are associated.48

4. MOKṢA :- It is interesting to note the Bhagavadgītā advocates both the beliefs in svarga (heaven) and in mokṣa (final liberation) as the goal of life. When Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna “If slain you will enter heaven; or if victorious, you will win kingdom (from your enemies)”,49 we are told to believe in heaven. But while the belief is retained, the hankering after earthly pleasure in heaven is condemned. People who, perform the Vedic rites for the attainment of svarga are regarded as ignorant, suggesting thereby that there is a still higher goal, namely, mokṣa.50

Mokṣa is liberation from ignorance, its resultant I-sense, selfish desires, and their resultant karma. Knowledge (jñāna) consists in the realization that the individual soul is an inseparable part (āmsa) of paramātman. But kāma (intense desire) obscures our jñāna.51 One who attains jñāna destroys all past karmas,52 and since it frees the soul from all
selfish desires, none of its acts produces karma. It generates uninterrupted peace \(^{53}\) and blocks rebirth.\(^{54}\) In this sense, karma, jñāna and bhakti merge into one inseparable effort.

Statements like these imply clearly that the Bhagavadgītā expounds the doctrine of embodied liberation (jīvanmukti).\(^{55}\) But it is also said that though the ātma-trpta (self-satisfied) has no duty to perform\(^{56}\) because he has nothing to achieve further, he continues to work for others (lokasaṅgraha),\(^{57}\) like God himself.\(^{58}\)

Sometimes mokṣa is regarded as constant perception of God. If that is so, it is a disembodied attainment. In any case, the liberated soul does not lose its individuality, but continues to exist in the eternal companionship of God.\(^{59}\) It becomes pure like God, but does not become God.\(^{60}\) Mokṣa consists in the soul’s realizing that it is an eternal part of Paramātman and bondage consists in forgetting this truth, leading to succession of rebirths and re-deaths.

Remarks :- Karma-yoga, if it just means selfless action, is compatible both with theism and atheism. Even if it means renunciation of the fruits of action to God, it is compatible both with polytheism and monotheism, or with any other conception of deity.
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4. PĀTAÑJALA-YOGA

NATURE OF PĀTAÑJALA-YOGA (ĀŚṬĀNGA-YOGA)

Pātañjala-yoga, also sometimes called Rāja-yoga, is often wrongly thought to be the only Yoga, while in fact there are other schools of Yoga, such as Bhakti-yoga, Karma-Yoga, etc. Though Yoga seems to be as old as at least 2700 B.C. (the era of Harappan culture), the earliest seems to be Jaina-yoga. However, the first account of Yoga in written form is that of Baudhāya-yoga. But the most systematic account of Yoga is undoubtedly that of the Yoga of Pātañjali. Pātañjali is not the founder, but only the first systematizer (codifier), of Yoga that had existed from an unknown past.

Pātañjali’s Yoga starts from the presupposition that man, because of avidyā, suffers from certain mental conditions, such as selfishness, infatuation, lust for life, etc., as a result of which he acts selfishly only in order to get caught in a series of births which are full of misery. If he has to come out of this web, he has to overcome avidyā and to overcome avidyā he has to get awakening knowledge and to get this, he has to undergo the eight-limbed Yoga (āśṭāṅga-yoga) prescribed by Pātañjali. The eight limbs are yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi. In fact, the very definition of Yoga is cessation of mental modifications (citta-vṛtti-nirodha),¹ which results in jñāna. The eight-limbed Yoga claims to be both a way of observing the mental modifications and a means of controlling them. In fact, according to Yoga psychology, it is not only the actual states that disturb our mind, but what are called sāṃskāras, the
potential states, which express themselves as actual states of mind depending on the situation. Therefore controlling or eradicating the samskāras is as important as controlling the actual states.

The actual disciplining of the mind involves ethical discipline, called yama and niyama. Yama consists in the adherence to moral codes, which are mainly five, namely, ahimsā (non-injury), satya (truthfulness), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (celibacy) and aparigraha (non-acceptance of anything which we have not earned). Strictly speaking, all of them can be reduced to ahimsā (non-violence). If by telling lies, by stealing, by extramarital sex indulgence, and by readiness to accept gifts, we are hurting others, it is as bad as inflicting injury directly. Non-violence brings about non-enmity also, (tat-sannīḍhau-vairā-tyāgaḥ). It also includes the positive qualities such as compassion, etc.

The “niyamas are śauca (cleanliness), santoṣa (contentment), tapas (austerities), svādhyāya (study of scriptures) and Īṣvara-praṇidhāna (devotion to God).” Daily cleansing the body may produce in the aspirant an aversion to body. Aversion to body may give rise to, on the one hand, aversion to the bodily needs, and, on the other, self-mortification, leading to mokṣa. One who indulges in eating, drinking, etc. in order to satisfy the bodily needs, is turning away from mokṣa. Internal purification includes removal of evil ideas, development of good will, concentration, etc. Santoṣa means self-contentment and aversion to sensual pleasure. Practice of austerity gives rise to destruction of depravation. Svādhyāya means uttering mantra in order to make a god or goddess descend to fulfill one’s
Isvara-pranidhāna, which seems to be an option, means devotion or surrender to Isvara (God) by which one can get samādhi. But Isvara-pranidhāna is not the sole means to samādhi, otherwise the other limbs of Pātañjala-yoga would be redundant. It is only complementary to the other means. It is also possible to attain samādhi without Isvara-pranidhāna. However Isvara-pranidhāna may quicken the process of the attainment to samādhi.

The most important effect of the observance of yama and niyama is acquisition of selflessness, which is necessary for samādhi.

3. Āsanas (postures): Though it is true we should not indulge in excessive sensual pleasure, it is equally true that we should not be negligent towards bodily health. An aspirant with disease or weak body cannot concentrate. So, one should perform āsanas (postures) in order to free himself from all diseases and weakness. He is able to sit cross-legged, motionless for a longer period, which is needed for longer duration of meditation. Though Patañjali himself does not mention the names of the asānās to be practised, his commentators do. He only says that the posture necessary for meditation is any stable and comfortable posture, “sthira-sukhām-āsanam”.

At the same time we are asked to be careful about our food. We should not eat and drink things which set our nerves on edge, driving them into fever or stupor. The lower satisfactions of life generally strangle the true joy of spirit. If intellectual life and moral
activity are the true ends of man, then the bodily needs should be subordinated to them. The later stages of the Yoga demand great powers of physical endurance, and cases are not wanting where the strenuous spiritual life strains the earthen vessel to the breaking-point, and so the body has to be first brought under control. Hatha-yoga aims at perfecting the bodily instrument, freeing it from its liability to fatigue and arresting its tendency to decay and age.¹¹

Many a time the extremities of weather like heat and cold disturb our meditation. But by performing āsanas one can overcome conflicts and become strong and immune to the duality of cold and heat, thirst and hunger, pain and pleasure, attraction and hatred etc. "tato dvandvānabhighātah".¹² Thus the dvandvas or mental conflicts gradually lose their force and are overcome by the āsana practice.

4. Prāṇāyāma:- "The word ‘prāṇa’ originally stands for a subtle, fundamental, ultimate life-force; in a practical way this force is most closely linked to and represented by respiration, which is most essential activity characteristic of living organism. So very often the word prāṇa is used in yogic literature for the respiration or breath. The term prāṇāyāma is specifically used for certain respiratory practices which are the practices for controlling the respiration,"¹³

The pause in the movement of inhalation and exhalation is prāṇāyāma.¹⁴ There is a close relation between our breathing and mental
states like restiveness and peace, equanimity, etc. Various kinds of breathing practices are advised with a view to attaining equanimity of mind, necessary for self-absorption.

Prāṇāyāma should be practised while sitting in āsana only. Thus āsana is pre-requisite for prāṇāyāma. Here also certain āsanas are recommended for regulated breathing leading to meditation, some of which are padmāsana, siddhāsana, svastikāsana, etc.

5. Pratyāhāra: The specific meaning of the term pratyāhāra according to vācaspati mīśra is “withdrawal of the senses inward towards their source viz. the mind and ultimately the citta”\(^\text{15}\). Pratyāhāra is withdrawal of the senses from their (respective) objects and taking the form of citta (mind-stuff) “sva-viṣayāsamprayoge citta-svarūpānukāra ivendriyāṇāṃ pratyāhāraḥ”.\(^\text{16}\)

Learning withdrawing the senses from their respective ‘foods’ (such smell, taste, etc.) is the first psychological training. Pratyāhāra does not mean closing the eyes and ears, keeping away from smell, taste and touch. What it really means is detachment of the mind from objects of sense. According to Patañjali the senses “go out” along with mind (citta) to the sense objects; and when the mind (citta) returns along with the senses, the latter are not related to objects. One who is able at will to check his mind from going out to objects of sense has succeeded in Pratyāhāra. “When we can do this we shall really possess character; then alone we shall have taken a long step towards freedom”.\(^\text{17}\)
"To the roving, restless mind of man that would probe the secrets of earth and analyse the mysteries of heaven, the Yoga says that the truth can be known by a persistent withdrawal of consciousness from outward acts as well as inward changes."18

6. Dhāraṇa (concentration): While pratyāhāra is emptying the mind (citta) of its thoughts about external objects and internal states of the subjects, dhāraṇā is fixing the mind (citta) on a particular object. Dhāraṇā is defined as “deśa-bandha-cittasya dhāraṇā”.19 Dhāraṇā is fixing of mind (citta) on a spot within a conceptual sphere. "Normally the aspirant fixes his mind in spots like his naval, heart, tip of his nose, etc. He can also fix his mind on external objects like a still flame of a lamp or an imaginary flower, etc.

7. Dhyāna (meditation): When dhāraṇā is successfully performed, dhyāna (meditation) results.20 Dhyāna is defined as “pratyayaikatānata dhyānam”21 i.e. Dhyāna is 'an unbroken continuously stretched awareness of a very precisely uniform experience (pratyaya) of the subject chosen for these meditational processes'.22 Dhyāna really involves three things – (1) unawareness of external objects and internal states, (2) unbroken awareness of the object on which the mind is fixed, such as naval, tip of the nose, flower, etc., and (3) effortless prevention of other mental modifications. In short, Dhyāna is an unbroken, prolonged dhāraṇā.

Samādhi is the door to transcendental consciousness. When the dhyāna becomes deeper, it is called samādhi when “the mind is entirely freed from any other thought”.24 In this state the mind is completely unaware of external and internal condition, and also of time; but the awareness of the object on which the mind is fixed continues in an unbroken fashion. “The one-pointedness (ekāgratā) of the citta results when the past awareness [of the object in which the mind (citta) is fixed] and the present awareness are indistinguishable.”25 Vyāsa in his Bhāṣya on the Yoga-sūtras recognizes two stages of samādhi, namely, samprajañāta-samādhi and asamprajañāta-samādhi. “In the former the mind remains conscious of the object. That state where the citta is single in intent and fully illumines a distinct and real object, removes the afflictions and slackens the bonds of karma, and has for its goal the restraint of all modifications, is called samprajañātasamādhi.(Yoga Bhāṣya. i.1.) In it there is a union between the knower and the known, in which the knower may be said to know the object simply because he is it.”26 Moreover, samprajañāta-samādhi is a conscious enjoyment of bliss and the aspirant has rejected his individuality. In asamprajañāta-samādhi the distinction between the subject and the object is obliterated as long as samādhi lasts. Higher than these two is dharmamegha- samādhi in which (1) the soul is free from all karmas, (2) its distinction from prakṛti is fully realized.

Patañjali calls the three states of meditation, dhāraṇa, dhyāna and samādhi, “saṃyama”. ‘trayam-ekatram samyamaḥ’.27 By constant practice of saṃyama one’s knowledge of one’s self becomes clear.28 This knowledge of oneself unlike other types of knowledge, is transcendental. By means of
sense perception (pratyakṣa) one can get knowledge of physical objects having characteristics such as form, smell, taste, etc. By means of inference we can have knowledge of unperceived objects. But inference is necessarily based on sense perception, at least indirectly. But knowledge of self comes from neither of these sources; nor does it come from scriptures or discourses. We can have discursive knowledge about self, God, liberation, etc. from scriptures and discourses, but such a knowledge is second hand knowledge and we are not sure of its validity. It comes only from one source – samādhi. Therefore, samādhi is a way and jñāna is the result. This is the reason why Yoga is defined as the suprasensory and supraplanetary experience of oneself and of the world.

The realization of soul’s distinction from prakṛti, which is called mokṣa or kaivalya or apavarga results in the complete transformation of the aspirant’s life. He is no more perturbed by the changes in nature since his citta has overcome all modification.

PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION:

1. Prakṛti and Its Evolution: The metaphysical doctrines of Yoga of Patañjali are the same as those of Sāṅkhya. Therefore, it can easily be declared that the concepts of (1) prakṛti, (2) puruṣa form the philosophical foundations of Pātañjala-yoga. However, Pātañjala-yoga has developed the third concept, that of Īśvara, which is totally absent in the Sāṅkhya system.

The Sāṅkhya system insists that the termination of all miseries depends on our acquisition of metaphysical knowledge of the evolved
(vyakta), the unevolved (avyakta) and the jña (the knower). The objects of experience (vyakta) are evolved from the prakṛti which is avyakta or unevolved, and the spiritual entity, called puruṣa in this system, is the knower. About the interrelationship of these three S.S. Suryanarayana Shastri says

In experience we first have the diversified world of phenomena; these are evolved. They are realized to be effects and are traced back to their causes and thence to the ultimate single cause which, though evolving, is itself not evolved. It will be found that both phenomena and their causes are non-intelligent, that the process must have a purpose, and that purpose must necessarily relate to an intelligent being that is neither cause nor effect, but knows both. Thus comes the knowledge of the knower. When all these three are understood, it is also realized that the knowing experiencing subject is other than and different in nature form the objects of experience which occasion pleasure and pain, happiness and misery; with this discrimination comes the knowledge that suffering is not of the subject and thereby the cessation of suffering.31

The Sāṅkhya texts have used the terms prakṛti, Mūla prakṛti, avyakta, pradhāna, almost synonymously. The word prakṛti is used in the Sāṅkhya-kārikā and the commentaries thereon, to denote either the Mūla prakṛti, which is not a vikṛti (evolute), but the cause of vikṛti32 or to denote the 23
vikṛtis or the effects. Therefore, in order to avoid this ambiguity, let us reserve the word prakṛti and its synonyms to connote its ultimacy and distinguish it from its evolutes (vikṛtis), such as buddhi, manas, etc.

Though prakṛti or mūla-prakṛti is a reality, it is empirically not perceived, because of its extreme subtlety. The easiest and the surest way of knowing its existence is to infer it from its effects. “The Great One (mahat) and rest (like ahaṅkāra, etc.,) are its effects”. In the ninth kārikā it is argued that whatever is effect was already existing in an unmanifest or potential form in the cause. Called satkāryavāda, it implies that the whole phenomenal world was already there in the causal state called mūla-prakṛti (or root evolvent). There is no root (cause) for the root evolvent. Nor can we imagine any principle as the cause of mūla prakṛti, because it is absurd to think of the origin of the origin, or the root of the root evolvent. If we fancy such a thought, we would be landed in regressus ad infinitum (anavasthā)

The mūla-prakṛti, according to both Sāṅkhya and Pātañjala-yoga, is constituted of innumerable subtle substances, technically called guṇas in these systems. They are classed under sattva, rajas and tamas. This means that “there is no reality called prakṛti apart from the guṇas, just as there is no forest apart from the woods which constitute it” Therefore, saying that prakṛti is the origin of the phenomenal world is the same as saying that the guṇas of the three kinds are the cause of the phenomenal world. The phenomenal world of living and non-living beings is the result of the aggregations in various proportions of these three kinds of guṇas. Thus the
guṇas are the constituents of not only the mūla-prakṛti but also its evolutes (vikṛtis).

The prakṛti is so called, because it evolves (prakaroti iti prakṛti), Prakṛti is the inexhaustible source of energy owing to which it becomes productive. In fact, activity and productivity are the very essence of prakṛti. To say that prakṛti is active and productive is to say that guṇas are active and productive. However, the result of activity and productivity of a thing depend solely on the proportion of the guṇas of which it is constituted. The Sāṁkhya says that though all the guṇas are present in everything, guṇas of one kind can be prominent at a particular time over the others. Thus because of the predominance of sattva guṇa, a thing becomes light, illuminative (laghu and prakāśakaṁ), Sattva is what makes things intelligent and intelligible. For example, since buddhi has predominance of sattva, it is capable of knowing. According to Vacaspati Miśra, buoyancy (lāghavaṁ) is "conducive to the efficient functioning of the instrument and is opposite to tamas which makes the instrument or cause inefficient" Sattva and tamas, being themselves inert, are unable to manifest their original capacities unless the driving force (upaśṭambhaḥ) is supplied by rajas, "which excites them and rouses them from their natural inertia and urges them on to the accomplishment of their respective effects" This means that though sattva and tamas are forces they are impelled to become active only if rajas influences them in a particular way. However, it must be noted that this does not mean that rajas imparts some of its qualities to sattva or tamas. The quality of capacity to produce a particular effect is
already present in them, but it gets expressed when impelled by rajas. Rajas is a sort of catalyst.

No guṇa works individually, nor does it exist independently of the other two kinds of guṇas. They co-exist and cooperate. A cooperation of influence and counterinfluence of the three kinds of guṇas cannot take place without the guṇas of one kind becoming dominant over the guṇas of the other two kinds. Thus the antaḥkarṇas, the senses and the material objects like tables and chairs, rivers and mountains, etc., though different from each other, owe their existence and nature to the collocation and modification of the same three kinds of guṇas in various proportions. This difference in proportions involves necessarily predominance of a particular set of guṇas over the other two sets. In fact, all guṇas are predominant – but at a given time guṇas of one set are more predominant, while other two sets are less predominant. The set that is predominant at time₁ may be less predominant at time₂. Similarly, the set that is less predominant (or subjugated) at time₁ may become more predominant at time₂. Therefore, predominance of any set of guṇa is not decisive or final.

During pralaya (retraction) not only all things lose their names and forms and become the original three guṇas, but also the three guṇas remain in a state of equilibrium (sāmyāvasthā). Since the three guṇas are by nature active, sāmyāvasthā cannot be interpreted as a state of the inactivity of the guṇas; rather they remain in a state of equal force, i.e. a state in which no set of guṇas predominates over the other sets nor do they cooperate with each other.⁴¹
We are not told how long the pralaya lasts, nor why it lasts as long as it lasts; nor why the state of equilibrium is broken. We are only told that when preponderance of sattva over others takes place, pralaya ends and creation begins simultaneously. Preponderance of sattva gives rise to the first evolute, namely, buddhi (mahat) or the principle of intelligence.\textsuperscript{1} Buddhi-tattva is the storehouse of all the buddhis that become individuated after creation ends. However, the Mahat (or buddhi) includes in itself all the seeds of the phenomenal world as well as the senses, manas, ego, etc. These do not become manifest until tamas becomes dominant. As soon as the evolution of the buddhi-tattva comes to an end, the buddhi tattva is simultaneously disturbed by all the three gunas. Such a disturbed state is called ahaṅkāra which is capable of evolving further. When ahaṅkāra is dominated by sattva, it is called vaikārika ahaṅkāra and it gives birth to eleven indriyas which abound in sattva\textsuperscript{42}; these eleven senses are manas (mind), five senses of knowledge and the five senses of action; when it is dominated by tamas it is called bhūtādi and it manifests the subtle matter (tanmātras) - rūpa (form), rasa (taste), gandha (smell), sparśa (touch) and śabda (sound)\textsuperscript{43} Rajas helps both sattva and tamas to evolve their respective products. The five gross elements (pañca-bhūtās), namely, earth, water, fire, air and space, are the last evolutes, and they are not evolvents. All inanimate objects and the bodies of the animals, are alike the combinations of more of tamas and less of other two.

It is interesting and important to note that though the prakṛti is jaḍa (insentient), it evolves “for the sake of the conscious puruṣa” (Puruṣārtha)\textsuperscript{44}
All our psychical activities presuppose desire, urges, wishes, etc., which are themselves the result of one set of guṇas overpowering the other two sets. These psychical activities produce karma and in order for them to fructify a rebirth is needed. If we have to free ourselves from the rebirth, we have to destroy the karma-seeds; if we have to destroy the karma-seeds, we have to stop acting in that way; if we have to stop acting in that way, we have to control our mental activities (citta-vṛttis). Controlling the karma-producing citta-vṛttis is possible by constant, diligent and disciplined practice of Eight-limbed Yoga.

2. Puruṣa: Puruṣa in the Sāṅkhya-Yoga system, though conscious, is inactive by itself since it does not have antahkaraṇas or body. Prakṛti, though unconscious, is active by nature. But being unconscious, it cannot think, decide, or do any mental act. But when these two come together, the body, senses, intellect, etc., become consciously active; the soul mistakes itself to be doer, though in fact, it cannot be doer. (For details please see Chapter-III, “The Sāṅkhya Concept of Soul” pp.--)

3. GOD: The Sāṅkhya of Īśvara Kṛṣṇa is completely silent about God. It explains evolution, maintenance and dissolution of the world, the happiness and unhappiness of the human beings, rebirth and redeath, without reference to God of any kind. It tries to explain all these as solely due to the inherent nature of the guṇas that begin to work according to the karma of the individuals. While to the question, “How can the non-intelligent karma or inherent nature (svabhāva) of the guṇas, create a teleological world?”, the Sāṅkhya has no answer, the Yoga of Patañjali comes out with the answer
that Īśvara, being a special soul (puruṣa-viśeṣa)\textsuperscript{45} and having a body of pure sattva, ‘who has never been subject to ignorance, afflictions and posssions’,\textsuperscript{46} has a permanent wish that the evolution of the guṇas must ‘serve the double interest of the puruṣa’s experience (bhoga) and liberation (apavarga).’ So Īśvara is said to disturb the equilibrium of the guṇas so that evolution may start.\textsuperscript{47} Patañjali also believes that “worship of God (Īśvaraprāṇidhāna) and meditation (dhyāna) on him are one of the means of attaining supreme knowledge and liberation. He does admit, however, that it is not absolutely necessary to believe in God in order to experience the truth of religion, holding that truth will make itself felt in spite of belief or disbelief provided one follows the practices of Yoga.”\textsuperscript{48}

The God of Patañjali is omniscient (sarvajñā).\textsuperscript{49} In fact, the commentators see a proof for God’s existence here. That is, from the fact of limited knowledge each puruṣa is endowed with, they draw the conclusion, “Therefore there must be a Puruṣa višeṣa who is omniscient.” Svāmi Vivekānanda argues that every knowledge presupposes a teacher and every teacher presupposes a previous teacher. We are forced, he says, to conclude that God is the Teacher of all ancient teachers, omniscient and not limited by time,\textsuperscript{50} because he teaches (the Vedas) to mankind at the beginning of each creation. God, according to Patañjali is represented by the syllable ‘Om’ (pranava).\textsuperscript{51}

The God of Yoga only disturbs the equilibrium of the guṇas at the end of pralaya, but is not a direct creator or maintainer of the world. Of Īśvara (God) S. Rādhākrṣṭhān has this to say: “He does not reward or
punish the actions of men. But some work had to be devised for him when once he was on the scene. He is said to aid those who are devoted to him in removing the obstacles to their upward progress. Ṣvara facilitates the attainment of liberation, but does not directly grant it”.

4. Mokṣa: Like other systems of Indian Philosophy, the Yoga system also holds responsible avidyā (ignorance), as the root cause of all misery experienced by man. The Yoga-sūtra has made a list of five causes of suffering which, are the obstacles to Yoga practice. The chief of them is ignorance. “To regard the non-eternal as eternal, the impure as pure, the painful as pleasant and the non-self as the Ṣvara – this is ignorance”. The other four, are egoism (asmitā), attachment (råga), aversion (dveśa) and fear of death (abhiniveśa). Therefore, mokṣa in this system means uprooting avidyā, by doing which, the remaining four obstacles are automatically uprooted. Awakening to knowledge of puruṣa until all illusion is removed is mokṣa. Mokṣa, called in this system Kaivalya, is relapse of the three guṇas and since the citta-vṛttis have ceased to produce selfish purpose, the soul has become free from all purposes and as a result, it has regained its original form (svarūpa) (Guṇasambandhātītāh svarūpamātrajyotir, amalaḥ kevalī puruṣa iti (vyāsa’s Yoga Bhāsya, ii, 27), The self remains aloof (kaivalya), untouched by the Citta.
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23. Ibid., III.3.
28. Ibid., III.5.
29. The name Sāṅkhya according to scholars, may refer to any one of the three-Proto-Sāṅkhya (the Sāṅkhya enunciated in the Upaniṣads and the *Mahābhārata*), the classical Sāṅkhya (the Sāṅkhya thought enunciated in Īśvarakṛṣṇa’s ‘Śāṅkhyā-kārikā’ and the commentaries thereon, chiefly *Tattva-kaumudi* by Vācaspati Miśra) and Neo-Sāṅkhya (the monistik Sāṅkhya thought enshrined in Vijñāna Bhikṣu’s *Śāṅkhyā-pravacana-bhāṣya*, Aniruddha’s *Aniruddha-vṛthi*). But in this context the name specifically applies to classical Sāṅkhya.
31. SK, II.
32. SK, 3, 8, 16 etc.
33. SK, 11, 22.
34. SK, 8.
35. SK, 3.
36. SK, 10.
37. SK, 3.
38. SK, 12 & 13.
39. SK, 13.
40. SK, 13.
41. Sāṅkhya-tattva-kaumudi of Vācaspati, v. 16
42. SK, 24
43. SK, 24.
44. SK, 42.
46. Ibid., I.24.
53. Karambelkar P.V, op.cit., II.5.
56. Quoted in Radhakrishnan, S, op.cit., p. 364, n.
5. BAUDDHA-YOGA

NATURE OF BAUDDHA YOGA:

Historians are of the opinion that Buddha, having renounced the happy family life and a large kingdom, wandered about in order to discover the truth about existence, happiness, reality, self, immortality, etc. He is believed to have met many gurus who were adept in these, but it seems he was dissatisfied either with their doctrines or with their method of achieving the final goal of human life. It seems, in the process, he also practiced Haṭha-yoga, etc. but came to realize that self-mortification like self-indulgence, leads nowhere. It is said that when he was one day sitting under a tree he had enlightenment. In this state Buddha discovered, and a little over-emphasized, the ubiquity of suffering (duḥkha). He also discovered that it can be permanently terminated by what he called ‘Ārya Aṣṭaṅgika-mārga’ (‘The Noble Eight-limbed path’). The eight limbs which are the means to the eradication of duḥkha are also the way to the attainment of nirvāṇa, a positive attainment of permanent peace.

The practice of the eight limbed way is the Baudda-yoga.

The Buddhist eightfold path is a system of training the mind and the whole human personality for the final achievement of a vision of reality that is far beyond the ordinary capacity of an individual mind to grasp in normal circumstances. Therefore the task of the path is to prepare the individual for the feat of transcending himself. This is done in stages which include
unselfish behaviour, impersonal thinking and deep status of meditation in which the individual personality is left behind.¹

Like other forms of yoga, the Buddhist yoga also aims at training man to transcend himself. These eight limbs are:

1. **Samyag-drṣti** (Right view)
2. **Samyag-saṅkalpa** (Right thinking)
3. **Samyag-vāca** (Right speech)
4. **Samyag-karmānta** (Right acting)
5. **Samyag-ājīva** (Right livelihood)
6. **Samyag-vyāyāma** (Right effort)
7. **Samyag-smṛti** (Right mindfulness)
8. **Samyag- samādhi** (Right absorption)

1. **Samyag-drṣti** (Right view): Buddhist Yoga insists that our perception of the world and of ourselves is normally wrong and, therefore, must be removed and right perspective must be established in its place. Because much of our misery comes from wrong understanding and therefore for the achievement of nirvāṇa we must free ourselves from wrong perception and develop the right perspective. According to Buddhism right view consists in viewing “everything in the light of the doctrinal formulations so abundant in the Pāli canons and the commentaries.” This in other words means seeing things as they really are.
Man instinctively views things from an utilitarian angle. He shows interest in things that are of use to him and overlooks other things. He does not know how to view things impersonally and objectively. A scientist, on the other hand, while investigating an object is normally free from personal interests, prejudices and emotions. If, on the contrary, he is overtaken by personal interest, prejudice, emotions, etc., his investigation is bound to suffer and would not achieve objective knowledge of the object. If, for example, he examines a patient whom he hates, his knowledge of the patient's illness is certainly defective. Similarly, if the aspirant's viewing of things and men is governed by prejudices, profit motive, emotion, etc., he fails to see reality as a whole, and to see individual objects as integral parts of whole reality. If the individual clings to the wrong theory that he has a permanent substantial self and that sense pleasure is the goal of life, his bondage to the saṃsāra is further cemented and if he knows the truth that human personality is an aggregate of five aggregates which continuously change and there is no such thing as an unchanging spiritual substance (ātman), then he strives for liberation.

2. Samyag-saṅkalpa (Right thinking): Right thinking consists, negatively, in thinking which is free from greed, cruelty, etc., and decision to renounce worldly pursuits, and positively, adherence to eightfold path, involving love and compassion. "It is the longing for renunciation; the hope to live in love with all; the aspiration of true humanity."2

Samyag-saṅkalpa is also the right resolve and it is a natural consequence of samyag-drṣṭi. That is, one who perceives the things are
men and animals, in the proper perspective, naturally resolves to give up ego-centric actions and to take up altruistic ones. One who perceives the ubiquity of misery, resolves to escape from it permanently; i.e., he resolves to attain mokṣa or nirvāṇa.

3. Samyag-vāca (Right speech): Right resolve must express itself in speech and action, and naturally follow from the first two. Right speech negatively “means abstaining from lying, from tale-bearing, from harsh language and from vain talk.”3 These must be avoided because they are intended to cause violence to others. It may be noted that we do not tell lies or carry tales, except with a view to harming other’s interest or serving our interest, or, sometimes both simultaneously. Therefore, it is not so much telling lies, carrying tales, etc., that are regarded as morally bad, as the motive behind them of causing injury to fulfill our selfish purposes.

Positively, right speech involves speaking what is true, in a gentle, soothing, friendly way. Moreover, right speech must have the intention of knowing reality, promoting morality and spirituality. In the Tevijja Sutta it is said:

Putting away lying, he abstains from speaking falsehood. He speaks truth, from the truth he never swerves; faithful and trustworthy, he injures not his fellow man by deceit ....

Putting away slander, he abandons from calumny. What he hears here he repeats not elsewhere to raise a quarrel against the people here; what he hears elsewhere he repeats not here
to rise a quarrel against the people there. Thus he lives as a binder together of those who are divided, an encourager of those who are friends, a peacemaker, a lover of peace, impassioned for peace, a speaker of words that make for peace...

Putting away bitterness of speech, he abstains from harsh language. Whatever word is humane, pleasant to the ear, lovely, reaching to the heart, urbane, pleasing to the people, beloved of the people – such are the words he speaks...

Putting away foolish talk, he abstains from vain conversation. In season he speaks; he speaks that which is; he speaks fact;... he speaks, and at the right time, that which redounds to profit, is well-grounded, is well-defined, and is full of wisdom. 4

4. Samyag-karmānta (Right acting): Right action, like right speech follows from the first two. It also has two sides – negative and positive. Negatively it means abstention from stealing, killing, immoral sex, alcohol consumption. Killing must be avoided because that is a cruel way of satisfying one’s selfish desires. Even killing an animal as a sacrifice to a god or goddess, it must be avoided, because it means loss of life, for our sake. Even if animal is sacrificed in the hope that the agent secures entry into heaven, it should be avoided, not only because it is loss of life for our sake, but also because, the result we get is surely inferior to nirvāṇa, the
highest value. Stealing must be abstained from, not only because it is an act blinded by greed, but also because the loser is hurt. While the monks are advised to be completely away from sex, the laymen are advised not to indulge in sexual act with any one other than their wives. Intoxicants must be avoided because they can impair our ability to discriminate between good and bad, moral and immoral, etc. They can also obscure and slacken our spiritual vows.

Right action also includes proscription of acts like offering food, etc. to Agni, bathing in sacred rivers to cleanse oneself of sins, etc. Buddha says “Better homage to a man grounded in the dharma than to Agni for a hundred years”. “The Bahuka, the Adhika cannot purify the fool of his sin, bathe he himself ever so often. No river can cleanse the doer of evil, the man of malice, the perpetrator of crime. To the pure it is always a perpetual fast. To the man of good deeds it is a vow everlasting.”

Asoka not only prescribes certain acts, but also proscribes certain other acts. He says: “Not superstitions rites, but kindness to servants and underlings, respect to those deserving of respect, self-control coupled with kindness in dealing with living creatures, these and virtuous deeds of like nature are verily the rites that are everywhere to be performed.”

That right action consists not merely in abstention from immoral acts, but in consciously doing morally good acts is borne out by Buddha’s insistence that “Anger, drunkenness, deception, envy, these constitute uncleanness; not the eating of flesh”, and declaring, that “neither
abstinence, nor going naked, nor shaving head, nor (wearing) a rough
garment, neither offerings to priests, nor sacrifices to the gods will cleanse a
man who is not free from delusion. 7 He made the important distinction
between Śīla and dāna, i.e, the observance of the five rules (which ask us to
abstain from telling lies, etc.) and actively involving in charity (dāna),
which reflects our readiness to help the needy.

5. Samyag-ājīva (Right livelihood): One who is established in right action
knows the necessity of moral life for achieving the spiritual goal.
Therefore, he knows what right livelihood should be. Just because a man
wants to achieve nirvāṇa, he does not cease to be a part of the family or
society. He must not cease to earn his livelihood. But at the same time, his
effort to earn his livelihood must not be incongruent with his religion.

No order of a superior, no public demand, no loyalties of
whatever kind can shift from the individual’s shoulders the
responsibility for offences against moral and spiritual
principles (which are backed by the universal law of karma).
This considerably narrows down the occupational options open
to a strict follower of the path. 8

In short, a Buddhist who wants to attain nirvāṇa must not hold
professions, which involve telling lies, killing, sex, trade in intoxicants,
weapons, meat, etc. What the rule really means is that man must try to be as
much morally pure as possible.
6. Samyag-vyāyāma (Right effort): Right effort seems to mark the training in Yoga proper. The right effort is theoretically divided into what are called “Four Great Efforts”, namely, (1) the effort to avoid the influx of mental states which are not conducive to peace of mind required for the further practice of Yoga; (2) effort to eradicate such mental states which already exist; (3) effort to develop new mental states which are conducive to the easy practice of Yoga and (4) effort to retain such mental states as are already developed.

The word “vyāyāma” means “furthering”, suggesting that we must have a strong will both to eradicate the disturbing mental states and to develop the conducive ones. It is a continuous conscious, careful effort, to convert all our thoughts, words and actions into an effective means of nirvāṇa. Slipping from carefulness is more dangerous than not beginning.

Whosoever is pure and knows that he is pure and finds pleasure in knowing that he is pure becomes impure and dies with an impure thought. Whosoever is impure and knows that he is impure and makes effort to become pure dies of a pure thought.⁹

Right efforts must be practiced on the lines suggested by Buddha:

(1) Attend to some good idea. (2) Face the danger of the consequences of letting the bad idea develop into action. (3) Turn attention away from the bad idea. (4) Analyse its antecedents and so nullify the consequent impulse. (5) Coerce
the mind with the aid of bodily tension. By ašubhabhāvanā, or reflection on the evil, we acquire a disgust for all that is corrupt.\textsuperscript{10}

7. Samyag-smṛti (Right mindfulness): Right mindfulness consists in training the mind in constant and careful awareness of one’s own internal states so that he warns himself against evil thought, evil speech and evil action, whenever they occur and remembering (smṛti) about the highest goal whenever it slips, as it occasionally happens. Most of us forget our goal in the midst of our profession and occasionally our pressurized actions compel us to give secondary place to our goal. In the light of this right mindfulness is more needed. Right mindfulness implies, effort to prevent unconscious, half-conscious and instinctive behaviour, which makes us impure, especially if we are not trained in right mindfulness. The training includes, therefore, an important element, namely that, the aspirants are asked to imagine “the grave and unpleasant consequences of their thoughtless action”, so that they may decide against doing it. An effective training keeps them constantly alert and watchful. Sometimes the aspirant is asked to analyze and evaluate his mental states as often as possible especially, before going to bed. Being aware and constantly watchful of one’s own mental states is the only way to overcome them if they are enemies of spirituality and no amount of external compulsions like, for example, others’ advice, works better than mindfulness.

Buddha is quite clear that right mindfulness is not suppression of the senses. If it meant suppression or inactivity of the senses, he argues, the
blind and the deaf must be great yogis — which, obviously, they are not. He says that “A true sense-culture means a training of the senses so as to discriminate all forms of sense-consciousness and estimate their real worth. Spiritual insight is an expansion and development of intellectual vijñāna and sense-perception.”

8. Samyag-samādhi (Right absorption): What is called Samyag- samādhi is not the result of Bauddha yogic training, but the training itself. Though it is called samādhi, it is really inclusive of pratyāhāra, dharāna, dhyāna and samādhi of the Pātañjala-yoga. However, Bauddha-yoga recognizes the stages of samādhi without naming them. The aspirant in the first stage withdraws his mind from objects of sense and the changing thoughts, desires, about objects. It is then that he experiences his empty burdenless and dynamic mind. He then becomes unaware of both the external world and his own internal states.

The process of emptying the mind of all its contents running through four stages is itself dhyāna. In the first stage the meditator is still able to fix his mind on one single object of meditation. The second stage, in which the thought of this object also becomes extinct, is still marked by concentration and alertness coupled with ecstasy. In the third stage of dhyāna the meditator feels intense happiness without his dhyāna being disturbed. When the meditator transcends this, the final dhyāna follows “which can be conceptually described only as complete equanimity (upekṣā).” In all these states the mind remains alert and watchful. Though it is not actually nirvāṇa, in fact, it is a thin line between samsāra and nirvāṇa, because “from
it the world of samsāra can be contemplated and scrutinized as a whole as well as in its details, and from it the final breakthrough to Enlightenment can also be accomplished."

Thus the Bauddha-yoga includes metaphysical training (samyag-dṛṣṭi and samyag-saṅkalpa), moral training (samyag-vāca, samyag-vyāyāma, samyag-smṛti, samyag-samādhi).

**PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATION:**

Unlike some schools of Yoga, the Bauddha-Yoga directly includes lessons in metaphysical doctrines. One of the metaphysical doctrines which the aspirant must learn in the first stage (samyag-dṛṣṭi) is the invalidity of the sat-kāya-dṛṣṭi, held by the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads hold that there is a permanent self. The Buddhists, on the contrary, hold that human personality is an aggregate of five aggregates and there is no such thing as a permanent self-existent spiritual substance. (For details, please see above “The Buddhist concept of soul”, pp.—) For the Buddhist aspirant sat-kāya-dṛṣṭi is a delusion. It is the root cause of all other delusions, because one who is trained in the Upaniṣadīc philosophy of a permanent self may post-pone his spiritual programme to the next life, reserving this life for sense enjoyment. In order to get rid of this delusion he must be taught the skandha-vāda, the doctrine that human personality is an aggregate of five aggregates, and there is nothing in him corresponding to the spiritual substance, ātman, of the Upaniṣads (For details please see “The Buddhist concept of soul”, Pp.—).
Kṣaṇikavāda (Theory of momentariness): The Upaniṣads had already recognized the transitoriness (anityatā) of material things as against the eternity (nityatva) of the soul. Similarly, the Jainas had held earlier that though matter (like soul) is enduring, it is subject to change. But the pāli and Saṃskṛt philosophical literature of Buddhism time and again reminds us that things are not only transient but strictly momentary (kṣaṇika), that is, as Buddhaghośa says “strictly speaking, the duration of a living being is exceedingly brief, lasting only while a thought lasts”\(^{14}\). In fact, the rule of momentariness covers not only living beings, but all things. “There are three things, O King, which you cannot find in the world: that which whether conscious or unconscious is not subject to decay and death – that you will not find; that quality of anything, organic or inorganic, which is not impermanent – that you will not find; and in the absolute sense there is no being possessed of being.”\(^{15}\) In order to show the validity and importance of the awareness of momentariness to the Buddhist Yoga, various analogies have been employed. The most famous one is the analogy of flame of a lamp. The flame of the lamp we see now appears the same as the flame we saw a moment ago. But the two or the many that follow, are only similar, not the same; because every flame is new, and existing for only a moment, it is destroyed immediately, but only after giving rise to a similar new flame.\(^{16}\) What appears, as the same is only an illusion? The so-called permanence of mountains, rivers, stars, the sun etc. is only an illusion. Everything continuously changes.
The universal momentariness governs not only compound things but the elementary forces (dharmas) also. The duration of all dharmas is as brief as a thought, which lasts for a moment ("Eka citta khaṇika sabbe dhamma" - Kathāvattu, xxii, 8).

The reason for stressing momentariness is not to generate in us pessimism, or hedonism. The reason is to generate in us an aversion to worldly happiness and the desire for freedom from misery.

That Buddhism rejected the thought about the self, decisive for the yogin, could not weaken the force of the trend in that direction. Detaching oneself from the world of non-self was here, as there in the Yoga, equally an earnest and exalted goal. And even if it was not called self, when the one in meditation looked into himself: that sense of detachment would not have liked to be filled less than by the glory and bliss of the otherworldly super-existence the words could not express, nor needed to express. (Oldenberg,208)17

Pratītya-samutpāda-vāda (the law of dependent origination): Another theory which justifies the Buddhist Yoga and the desire for nirvāṇa is pratītya-samutpāda-vāda, proposed by the Sarvāstivādins. The latter have shown with sufficient justification that all existence and events are governed by the law of dependent origination. The law means that every thing or event is the result of collocation of cooperative causes and conditions and is
never due to a single cause or condition. Therefore it can be called the law of interaction.

According to the early Buddhists and the Sarvāstivādins the conscious and unconscious beings are constituted of 72 dharmas (elements of existence). They believe that each dharma only when combined with other dharmas exhibits its kāritva (capacity of producing effects). Therefore, every dharma is a would-be a saṃskṛta (compound object) dharma.

The law of interaction involves three notions. (1) Every thing or event must have a cause and there is no scope for chance or causelessness. This is opposed to the Cārvāka’s yadṛcchāvāda that the elements combine with, and separate from themselves fortuitously. (2) No phenomenon can arise from a single dharma, nor do the separate dharmas exist. Existence means existence of saṃskṛta dharmas (compounds of dharmas). In order for a dharma to produce a necessary consequence, it requires the cooperation of the other dharmas. (3) The very word ‘saṃutpāda’ (‘combined origination’) renders unjustifiable the supposition that a thing or an event occurs because of an agent external to causes and conditions. So the world does not need an efficient cause, God.¹⁸

The law of interaction suggests causal cooperation both between the bhūtas (gross elements) and bhautikas (smell, taste, etc.) and between citta (mind) and caitasika (mental states). It is extended to the moral world – where it gets expressed as: this act produces that result. In fact, Buddha is uniformly said to have set out to discover the solution to the problem of
misery and to have discovered the solution at long last which is technically called 'pratītya-samutpāda-vāda', that is, that our present states of happiness and unhappiness are effects determined by moral causes (acts done in previous life). In this sense, pratītya-samutpāda-vāda is more relevant to the explanation of human existence.

Pratītya-samutpāda-vāda also called bhava-cakra (wheel of existence), is a law of twelve-linked moral causation. "The twelve links (nidānas) are, 1. avidyā (ignorance), 2. saṃskāras (moral forces), 3. vijñāna (pre-natal consciousness), 4. nāma-rūpa (pre-natal mind-body complex), 5. Śaḍāyatana (pre-natal six faculties, viz., mind and the five senses), 6. sparśa ('contact' of a new born baby), 7. vedanā ('feelings' of children of 3-10 years age group), 8. trṣṇā ('desire' for flesh present in those who have attained puberty), 9. upādāna ('clinging' to, or developing strong desire for, particular objects), 10. bhava (karma seeds leading to rebirth), 11. jāti (rebirth), 12. jarāmarāṇa (decay and death)."

A simplified version of the pratītya-samutpāda-vāda can be as follows: Avidyā, which is beginningless, is the cause of a wrong belief in a separate 'I', while in fact, 'I' is only a name and not a reality, just as 'chariot' is only a name having no specific reference over and above the wheels, yoke, axle, etc. of which it is composed. The aspirant must know that “All are impermanent, body, sensation, perception, samkhāras and consciousness. All these are sorrow. They are all not-self.” Avidyā creates in us the indomitable craving (trṣṇā) and strong desires (upādāna), by trying to fulfill which we gain the seeds of rebirth. We are already victims of old
samskāras, of which our present existence is the effect and we have already gained “bhava” (seeds of next rebirth). The result of bhava is our acquisition of a new womb (represented by words like “nāma-rūpa”, “vijñāna”, “ṣādayatana”, etc.). Bauddha-yoga insists that the aspirant know the secret of bhava-cakra, such that he is able to breakthrough it. Nirvāṇa consists in silencing the ever changing dharmas to a quiescent state and separating the five aggregates from one another after death.

Thus the philosophical doctrines, namely, that all things are composed and nothing is self-existent, that there is no permanent self and so called consciousness (vijñāna) is dependent on other aggregates, that vijñāna is neither a self-existent substance nor an eternal thing, that all sorrow begins from avidyā which gives to passion, etc. leading a series of rebirths, and that only Buddhist-yoga beginning with samyag-dṛṣṭi and ending with samyag-samādhi successfully leads to nirvāṇa, that nirvāṇa consists not in entering another world nor in uniting with the supreme self, but simply in decomposing the human personality into the elements of which it is composed, are the foundation of Bauddha-yoga.

That Buddhism rejected the thought about the self, decisive for the yogin, could not weaken the force of the trend in that direction. Detaching oneself from the world of non-welf was here, as there in the Yoga, equally an earnest and exalted goal. And even if it was not called self, when the one in meditation booked into himself: that sense of detachment would not have liked to be filled less than by the glory and bliss of the other worldly super-existence the worlds could not express, nor needed to express.22
REFERENCES:


5. Rādhaṅkṛishnan S. op. cit., p.421.


7. Ibid., p.422.


10. Ibid., p. 422.

11. Ibid., P.424.


13. Ibid., p.129.


17. Dr. Shrotri S.B. (Tr.), *The doctrine of the Upaniṣads and the early Buddhism*, (Delhi,MLBD,1991), p.208


22. Oldenberg, 208.
6. HAṬHA – YOGA

Haṭha-yoga is one of the four forms of Yoga mentioned in the Upaniṣads, the other being Mantra-yoga, Laya-yoga and Rāja-yoga. These four Yogas are often said to make up one Yoga. In Haṭhapradīpikā, it has said “Svātmārāma yogin teaches Haṭha-vidyā solely for the attainment of Rāja-yoga”. The object of Haṭha-yoga is to give complete control over the body and mind, so that the Yoga-practitioner (Yogin) keeps perfect health and to prepare himself to reach the goal of Rāja-yoga, which will lead him to ‘kaivalya’ or final emancipation. Thus “Haṭha-yoga forms a ladder for ascending the heights of Rāja-yoga”.

Scholars are of the opinion that the term ‘Haṭha-yoga’ consists of three parts, namely, ‘ha’, ‘tha’ and ‘Yoga’. The syllables ‘ha’ and ‘tha’, meaning the Sun (piṅgalā-nādi) and the Moon (Iḍā-nādi) i.e. ‘Prāṇa’ and ‘Apana’. Their Yoga or union, is called Haṭha-yoga, which means “union (yoga) of prāṇa (Ha) and apāna (tha)” in the central nerve, suṣumnā. The Haṭhayogic texts themselves declare that this union is not state of liberation, the highest goal of life, but only a means to the end, which is liberation. But the text again states that Haṭha-yoga is a means to Rajayoga, which in turn, is a means to liberation.

According to the Tāntric model of the human body, the axial channel (suṣumnā nādi) is entwined by the helical iḍā-nādi and piṅgala-nādi. The iḍā is the carrier of the human force on the left of the bodily axis, and the piṅgala is the conduit
of the solar force on the right. The primary objective of a Haṭha-yogin is to intercept the left and right current and draw the bipolar energy into the central channel, which commences at the anal centre or ‘mūlāḍhāra-cakra’, where the ‘kūṇḍalinī’ is thought to be asleep. This persistent effort to redirect the life force (prāṇa) acts upon the ‘kūṇḍalinī’, which is mobilized.⁴

Thus in Haṭha-yoga a methodical effort has been made to utilize the body’s innate life force (prāṇa) for the transcendence of the self. All texts on Haṭha-yoga seem to agree that it cannot lead to the realization of the higher truth on it’s own. But it greatly increases the chances of subsequent spiritual progress when a mental yoga path (Rāja-yoga) is taken up”.⁵

Sanskrit texts e.g. Gheraṇḍa-saṁhitā, Haṭhapradīpikā, Gorakṣa-śataka, Śīva-saṁhitā, Haṭharatnāvali and Siddha-siddhāntapaddhati which are some of the important sources for Haṭha-yoga, date from mediaeval times. But it seems that “they are based on older sources at present unknown to us”.⁶ The most common feature about these texts is the philosophic background pointing to the goal of Advaita on which their systems are building up.⁷ Secondly, the results accruing from the Haṭha-yogic practices, advance the aspirant step by step to the goal by bringing a balanced functioning of body and mind. Lastly the goal of self-realization is held as a beacon light to guide the aspirant. Thus all Hatha-yogic texts are reiterating that the Haṭha-yogic practices are only meant to sub-serve Rāja-yoga, and they say that the two must go hand in hand “ḥaṭham vinā rājayogo
The important Haṭha-yoga texts differ among themselves so far as the number of limbs (aṅgas) is concerned. Yet all of them admit that samādhi is final limb and prāṇāyāma is the most important aid.

Haṭhapradīpikā of Svātmārāma Yogin is one of the best-known and widely used treatise on Haṭha-yoga. It is divided into four chapters and comprises a total of 389 ślokas. Haṭhapradīpikā advocates ‘Caduraṅga-yoga’ (yoga of four limbs) namely, āsanas, kuṇḍhakas (prāṇāyāma), Mudrās and Nādānusandhāna (Samādhi), the second chapter principally concerns prāṇāyāma but also discusses the ‘ṣaṭ-karmas’, which are required to aid the purification of nāḍīs. The fourth chapter, nādānusandhāna, discusses the states of samādhi, which is the ultimate goal of Yoga.

Gorakṣa-śataka of Gorakṣanātha Muni actually comprises 101 ślokas, which out-line the practices of āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi, and it is popularly known as ‘Ṣaḍaṅga-yoga.

The Śiva-Saṁhīta which is presented as though directly spoken by the deity Śiva himself, comprises 645 ślokas. Though it has specifically not mentioned any yogāṅgas, it describes Yoga practices like āsana, prāṇāyāma, mudrā, descriptions of ṣaṭ-cakras as well as discussing four varities of Yoga, namely Mantra-yoga, Laya-yoga, Haṭha-yoga and Rāja-yoga.

The Gheraṇḍa-saṁhitā of sage Gheraṇḍa is comprising of 351 ślokas, divided into seven chapters. Each chapter deals with an aspect of the
sevenfold system (Saptângâ-yoga). The seven aspects (aṅgas) are: (1) Śaṭ-karmas, (2) āsana, (3) mudrā, (4) pratyāhāra, (5) prāṇāyāma, (6) dhyāna and (7) Samādhi. The ‘śaṭ-karmas’ purify the body (śodhana); ‘āsanas’ strengthen the body (dṛḍhatā); ‘mudrās’ gives steadiness (sthairyam); ‘pratyāhāra’ brings courage (dhairyam); ‘prāṇāyāma’ leads to lightness (lāgha-vam); ‘dhyāna’ gives realization of the self (pratyakṣam) and ‘samādhi’ leads to isolation (nirliptam) and there by liberation.10

Hatha-yogic Practices:

If we examine the yogic practices described in the above said texts, we can name the following practices as the Hatha-yogic practices, (1) Śaṭ-karma, (2) Āsana, (3) Mudrā, (4) Prāṇāyāma, (5) Pratyāhāra, (6) Dhāraṇa, (7) Dhyāna and (8) Samādhi. These will lead to the ultimate goal of Hatha-yoga. Some scholars consider the last three aṅgas, which are called Saṃyama by Patañjali are nothing but Rāja-yoga of Śākta-cult. All Hatha-yogic texts have ‘samādhi’ as the last ‘aṅga’ and it signifies consciousness of the unity of being, not the ‘samādhi’ of Patañjali’s 'Aṣṭāṅga-yoga'. Here, one more important point is to be noted that, Hatha-yogic practices do not include the first two aṅgās of Patañjala-yoga, namely, ‘yamas’ and ‘niyamas’ as separate aṅgās. Though Svātmārāma does not mention yama and niyama as separate limbs of his yoga, he does include them as necessary parts of Hatha-yoga. He says, “Just as mitāhāra (moderate diet) is (foremost) among yamas, and non-violence (ahimsā) (foremost) among niyamas, so Siddhāsana is (the foremost) among all āsanas.”11 Yamas and niyamas are restraints and observances, which are absolutely essential for
one living and studying Yoga in social environment. As Feuerstein points out, “Again and again the Yoga texts emphasize that the moral integrity is an indispensable precondition of success in Yoga.”

1. Śaṭ-Karma: “Those who suffer from inequality of the three doṣas (humors) – namely vāta, pitta and kapha, are required to practise śaṭ-karmas which purify the body and facilitate prāṇāyāma. For others who are free from these defects they are not necessary”. The six cleansing processes (śaṭ-karmas) which form the first steps in the Haṭha-yoga are dhauti, vasti, neti, trāṭaka, nauli and kapālabhāti. The most extensive accounts of these practices are to be found in the first chapter of the Gheraṇḍa-saṃhitā. “These are the various processes by which the body is cleansed and made pure for the Yoga practice to follow”.

2. Āsana: Drḍhatā, or strength or firmness, is attained by āsana and it is the second limb of Haṭha-yoga. The āsanas are postures of the body, primarily intended to provide stable and comfortable foundation for the body and mind. “Āsana is an aid to clear and correct thought. The test of suitability of āsana is that which is steady and pleasant, a matter which each will settle for him self”. A suitable steady and comfortable āsana produces mental equilibrium. Haṭha-yoga prescribes a very large number of āsanas. Haṭha-pradīpikā declares the number of āsanas propounded by Śiva to be eighty-four, and of these, four are most important, namely, Siddhāsana, padmāsana, simhāsana and bhadrāsana. Of all these āsanas siddhāsana is said to be the best for Haṭha-yogi, because of its relative ease and suitability for the practice of prāṇāyāma, and other higher practices in progression. In
Hatha-yoga, the body is truly regarded as the temple, and if self-realization is to be achieved then the temple must be made a worthy abode.

3. Mudrā: Steadiness (sthiratā) is achieved by the practice of mudrās. Hatha-yogic mudrās are specifically prescribed for the awakening of the kuṇḍalinī. They are health giving and destructive of disease and of death. Mudrās also include Bandhās (locks), which are used in prāṇāyāma, to control the prāna. There are several mudras, but Haṭhapradīpikā mentions Daśa-mudrās, namely Uḍḍiyāna-bāṇḍha, mūla-bāṇḍha, jālaṇḍhara-bāṇḍha, mahā-mudrā, Mahā-baṇḍha, Mahā-veda, khecari, viparītakaraṇi, vajroli and śakticālanī-mudra.

4. Prāṇāyāma: Since prāṇāyāma is the most important aspect of Haṭha-Yoga, certain physiological techniques are advocated to purify the body, which in turn help effective prāṇāyāma. Therefore this training of the body (ghaṭa) is called Ghaṭastha-yoga (Physiological Yoga), (Theos, 16). “As by learning the alphabets one can, through practice, master all the sciences, so by thoroughly practising first the (physical) training, one acquires the knowledge of the true (tattva-jñāna).” (Gheraṇḍa-samhitā I, 1-11). Prāṇāyāma is par excellence technique of Haṭha-yoga and the key aspect of prāṇayāma is ‘kumbhaka’. “It is the process whereby the ordinary and comparatively slight manifestation of prāṇa is lengthened and strengthened and developed”. The Haṭha-yogic prāṇāyāma is a threefold practice, the three parts being recaka (exhalation), pūraka (inhalation) and kumbhaka (Retention). Kumbhaka itself is divided into sahita-kumbhaka and kevala-kumbhaka. Mind and breath are interrelated and when breath (prāṇa) is
regulated so is the mind. ("cale vāte calam cīttam, niścale niścalam bhavet"). "By prāṇāyāma one sets the power of levitation, diseases are cured, kūṇḍalinī is awakened, the state of manonmanī spruces and finally by it, the mind is filled with bliss". Ḥaṭha pradīpikā advocates Āṣṭha-kūṃbhakas (eight variety of prāṇāyāma).

5. Pratyāhāra: When the body and mind are purified and controlled, pratyāhāra follows to secure courage (dhairya). Pratyāhāra helps the practitioner to take him from sūhūla-sārīra to sūkṣma-sārīra. It helps to gain control over the senses, in turn helps to control over the body and mind.

The last three aṅgās viz. Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi are admittedly advanced practices directly concerned with mental processes. Through samādhi the quality of nirliptatva or detachment, and thereafter mukti (liberation) is attained. The Ḥaṭhapradīpikā says that “on perfection being attained in Ḥaṭha-yoga the body becomes lean and healthy, the eyes are bright, the semen is controlled, the nāḍīs are purified, the gastric fire is increased, and the nāda sounds are heard”

Philosophical Foundation of Haṭha-yoga:

From the available Haṭha-Yoga texts it is almost impossible to cull out any philosophy of Haṭha-yoga. However, two things emerge: (A) The Śiva-samhita, as the name itself indicates, regards Śiva as the highest reality and says is one of its ślokas that Haṭha-yoga was first taught by Śiva himself. (B) In the opening verse Śiva is said to state to Pārvatī (his spouse) (1) that
jnāna (that is, consciousness) alone is real and the diversities we see in the world are products of sense and not real; (2) that when the sense perceptions cease (as in samādhi jnāna alone remains; and (3) that Śiva, who loves his devotees, gives them spiritual emancipation.

Svātmārāma upholds the identity of the individual soul and the Universal Soul, which identity, according to him, cannot be realized so long as the mind is working. Regarding the nature of universe Svātmārāma seems to hold the same view as is held by the Advaita or monistic Vedāntists. In IV.58: ‘saṅkalpa-mātrakalanaiṣvajagatsamaṇḍram’ and in IV.61 ‘manodṛṣyamidaṃ sarvam yatkiñcit sacarācaram’. According to this view the universe, as we know it is not ultimately real. It has only a pragmatic reality and is concerned to be real only for all practical purposes.21
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8. HP., II. 75.


11. H.P. I 38


14. Ibid., p.204.

15. HP., I. 33,
17. Ibid., P. 212.
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7. KUṆḌALINĪ - YOGA

From the findings of the Indus Valley excavations some scholars have concluded that the worship of Mother Goddess (Śakti) is not only non-Āryan, but also pre-Āryan. Though the names like Bhavāni, Ruadrāṇi, and the images of the Indus civilization suggest female worship, they do not establish that Śakti cult in the present form was prevalent then.

The origin of Kuṇḍalinī-yoga is, historically speaking, obscure. Though it is true that the Tantras – works which deal with Kuṇḍalinī-yoga – are very old, their publication must be in the beginning of the Christian era. The Hindu and Buddhist Tantra might have originated from a single ancient tradition, which till it bifurcated, had been transmitted from teacher to student orally and practically. Some of the practices, which are performed even today by ardent Śāktas, may be older than the Vedas.

Kuṇḍalinī-yoga sometimes called Bhūta-śuddhi, is specifically associated with the Śāktas. The name “Kuṇḍalinī-yoga” refers to the Kuṇḍalinī-Śakti, or Supreme power in the human body by the arousing of which the yoga is achieved. In other words, the Kuṇḍalinī-yoga involves piercing the six cakras or padmas (lotuses) situated in the spinal column of man. It is called Bhūta-śuddhi (purification of the five elements) because by purification of the five elements out of which the physical body, Yoga can be achieved. Yoga in this case is union – the union of the Supreme Power Kuṇḍalinī with consciousness, Śiva.
The Śāktas (follower of Śakti cult) accept the doctrine that the highest principle, designated by such names as, ‘Śiva’, ‘Parabrahman’, ‘Cit’, ‘Devi’, ‘Śakti’ is consciousness in its essential nature (Cintamayī or vijñānagahanarūpiṇī)\(^2\) But this infinite consciousness is free from limitations of body and sense, the duality of subject and object, associated with individual consciousness. It is succinctly described Sat-cit-ānanda\(^3\) It is sat (being) having no distinction of here and there; it is cit – infinite consciousness free from subject - object duality; and ānanda (bliss), unfettered by sorrow. In fact, it is free from all limitations (sarvopādhi-viṁśmukt\(a\)).\(^4\)

It is beyond human knowledge (ameya)\(^5\); it is not the content of human thought or language.\(^6\) Since it is beyond human conception, any attempt to determine its nature results in inadequate expression. We can only use negative epithets like nirākāra (formless),\(^7\) nirguṇa (featureless),\(^8\) nīṣkala (partless),\(^9\) nirvīkāra (immutable),\(^10\) beyond the world made of fire gross elements (niṣprapaṇca).\(^11\) It is supreme and causeless (niṣkāraṇa).\(^12\) This clearly implies that the infinite reality is beyond the finite conception, not that it has no attribute.

Though the Śāktas call it “Devi” to describe its maternal aspect, strictly speaking, it is beyond sex. The Devī of the Śāktas “who is Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. \...\...\... in reality is neither male, nor female, nor neuter.”\(^13\)

The infinite reality contains in itself all that is or would be. In this sense it is cidākāśa (spirit-space). That is, just as physical space contains in
itself all material things, so the spirit-space contains in itself all material things, all physical space and the individual selves. None of these is illusory – all are real, emanated from the Goddess. This means that, in itself the highest reality is nişkala (absolute), and when related to the world, it is sakala (relative).

How can the featureless consciousness become qualified? To this the Śākta answer is that the Supreme consciousness is not the featureless and inactive Brahman of Śaṅkara or the puruṣa of the Śaṅkhyaśa, but an active Brahman. In other words, the Śāktas, like the Kashmir Śaivites, regard the ultimate reality both as Śīva and Śakti, i.e., as something conscious, and as something active. Just as the combination of inactive puruṣa and the continuously active prakṛti of Śaṅkhyā is profitable to both puruṣa and prakṛti, so also the conscious Śīva and the active Śakti derive profit from their union. But this does not mean in the case of Śākta school that Śīva and Śakti are two ontologically distinct principles, which at some point of time come together. In fact, there has be no time when the two were separated. When Śīva - Śakti complex is quiescent and inactive, it is Śīva (consciousness which is featureless); and when Śīva is active and productive, he is Śakti. But all activity or productivity is guided by consciousness (Śīva) and therefore, Śakti is the quality of Śīva, or Śakti depends on Śīva like quality on substance.

Śīva as Śakti evolves the phenomenal world out of himself, in the manner in which a spider evolves the web out of itself. Or, the Śakti, as guided by Śīva, transforms into phenomenal world. To quote Sir John
the subtler state is in the form of consciousness (Cidūpiṇī),"15 the gross state is in the form of world of multiplicity and diversity (viśvātmikā).

Sometimes Śakti is called māyā. But māyā and Śiva are not opposite principles, though one of them is consciousness and the other unconsciouness. During the pralaya (retraction) conscousness exists alone; but its Śakti is not totally absent, but exists unmanifest in consciousness. Creation is manifestation of the active consciousness, or Śakti.

The Śāktas, like Kāshmir Śaivas and the Vīraśaivas, explain the evolution of the world in terms of 36 principles (tattvas). When the highest and the original principle, Paramaśiva, decides to create pralaya ends and the remaining 35 principles emanate from him, which the Śāktas classify under three heads: (1) Śiva-tattvas, which include Śiva, Sadāśiva, Īśvara, Sadvidyā; (2) Vidyā-tattvas, including Māyā, Kalā, Kāla, niyati, rāga, vidyā and puruṣa and (3) Ātma-tattvas, including the Prakṛti, buddhi, manas, ahaṃ, five jñānendriyas, five karmendriyas, five objects of sense (smell, taste, etc.) and five gross elements (pañca-bhūtas).16

Just because the Śakti has evolved into the world of matter, life and intelligence, it does not follow that it is separated from Śiva. The world is entirely pervaded by Śiva, and so he is the world. Devī (or Śiva) is viśvātmika, not only because she exists in it, but also because she is it. Or, as Woodroffe says, "spirit is the substance of matter"17 In philosophical parlance Śiva can be described as both the material cause (Śakti) and efficient cause (consciousness).
This position of the Śāktas leads to a problem: if Śiva transforms himself into the world, does it mean that he changes? If he changes does it not mean that he is imperfect? The Śāktas do not regard the transformation of Śiva into the world as illusion. Nor do they think that the problem is serious. They argue that Śiva in the sense of consciousness does not change and Śiva in the sense of Śakti undergoes change. Even if we say that since Śiva cannot be separated from Śakti, change in Śakti obviously means change in Śiva also, it can still be argued that if change means change of attribute, then Śiva does not change. Consciousness never ceases to be consciousness, nor its infiniteness and absoluteness. Even Śakti does not lose its original or essential character when it is said to change, because change only means change of form, not substantial. When the Viśvasāra Tantra says “What is here is there, what is not here is nowhere.”

The Śāktas worship Śakti as Mother Goddess, because, just as a mother produces children from her womb, so Śakti is believed to produce the world out of her womb and for this reason she is called Śrīmātā, viśvamātā, Jagajjanāṇī (mother of the world). Moreover, like a mother, she has tender feelings towards the creatures she has produced. “She is untraversable ocean of mercy”. But her mercy is reserved for those who have religious merit acquired in the previous births and those who meditate on her.

Śakti as Kuṇḍalinī: The special feature of the Śākta system is the insistence that the Supreme Power is not transcendent, but, being a part of us (or we
being a part of Her) is residing in us. The process in which the Supreme power comes to settle down in us is briefly explain as follows:

Śakti as Prakṛti first evolves mind (Buddhi, Ahamkāra, Manas) and senses (Indriya), and then sensible matter (Bhūta) of fivefold form (“either,” “air,” “fire”, “water,” “earth”) derived from the supersensible generals of the sense-particulars called Tanmātra. When Śakti has entered the last and grossest Tattva (“earth”) – that is, solid matter – there is nothing further for Her to do. Her creative activity then ceases and she rests. She is again coiled and sleeps.

She is now Kuṇḍali-Śakti, whose abode in the human body is the Earth centre of Mūlādhāra-Cakra.²⁵

Before creation, i.e. in the Pralaya state, she lay coiled around Parasiva, and such a state is called Mahākuṇḍali; now she has coiled around Svayabhū-liṅga (a form of Paraśiva) in the mūlādhāra of the aspirant. The sādhaka (aspirant) must not only arouse the Kuṇḍalinī of his mūlādhāra, but also bring it up slowly and steadily to the spot in his head called Sahasrāra where it unites with Śiva. The union of Kuṇḍalinī Śakti with Śiva is called Yoga (union) and that is the highest goal of an aspirant.

The Śākta-yoga (i.e. Kuṇḍalinī-yoga) presupposes certain physiological, psychological and metaphysical doctrines. The Śāktas (and also followers of Haṭha-yoga) believe that in the definite portions of the vertebral column (meruđāṇḍa) of every man, there are, what are called
Padmas (lotuses) or cakras, which are always reckoned at five, namely, mūlādhāra, svādhiṣṭhāna, maṇipūraka, anāhata and viśuddhi. They are believed to be located near anus, genitals, navel, heart and throat. The Śāktas also believe that there is a sixth cakra called ājñā located in the head between the eyebrows. The top of the brain is said to be the location of sahasrāra padma ('thousand petalled lotus'). However, these cakras, though said to be 'located' near different parts of the body, are not really visible. They are only subtle centres of consciousness.

Does this mean that the Supreme power is distributed, equally or unequally, among men? Or, does it mean that the Supreme Power residing in each man is different from that in other men?

The Śāktas firmly believe that the same cit-śakti (consciousness-force), the Supreme Power, which exists in the different parts of the human body also exists in the rest of the universe. The consciousness that transcends the universe is Paramātmā. "The consciousness which is embodied in Mind and Matter is the Jīvātmā." Just as the whole universe is pervaded by the Supreme consciousness (Para samvid), so also the entire body is pervaded by the embodied (limited) consciousness, jīva. Therefore, the Kulāṇava-tantra describes the jīvas as parts of Paraśiva enveloped by māyā. The so-called centres of consciousness, cakras, are not the only place of consciousness. But for human beings they are the places by disciplining which consciousness can be realized, just as though air is everywhere nose is the organ by which air can be inhaled and exhaled.
The five cakras are five places, represented by five material elements. Thus the Mūlādhāra cakra is represented by the element earth, svādhiṣṭhāna by the element water, manipūraka anāhata and viśuddhi by tejas (fire), vāyu (air) and ākāśa (space), respectively. The ājñā cakra is represented by Manas (mind) and Sahasrāra by soul (ātman).

The Śāktas also name the goddess residing in each cakra. Thus the Śakti residing in the Mūlādhāra is called Dākini. The aspirant who meditates on her becomes free from diseases and attains wealth. The Śakti residing in svādhiṣṭāna is Rākini and one who meditates on her overcomes the enemies of spiritual life (lust, anger, greed, infatuation, arrogance and hatred). The Śakti in the manipūraka is called Lākini; the Śakti in the anahata cakra is called Kākini. The Śakti in the viśuddhi is called Sākini. The power that dwells in ājñā is called Hākini, and that dwelling in Sahāsrāra is called śaṅkhinī. This is the chief root to liberation, because it is here that Śiva and Śakti are said to unite.

Why, it may be asked, if Śiva and Śakti are always one or united, are they said to unite only in the sahasrāra? The union that is spoken of here is the union of individual soul and Śiva the cosmic soul. The individual soul, puruṣa or jīvātma is called Śakti because the individual is Śiva enveloped by māyā. Just as anything in the world is a form of Śakti, so also the individual is a form of Śakti. By means of a spiritual discipline called Kuṇḍalinī-yoga, the individual uncovers his shackles and unites with Parasiva.
The Practical Aspect of Kūṇḍalinī-Yoga:

The term Kūṇḍalinī-yoga also applies to "those physical and psychical processes which are used to discover man’s inner essence, which is the supreme". Therefore, the term refers both the goal and the means to achieve the goal, both the product and the process leading to the product. The speciality of Kūṇḍalinī-yoga is its fundamental doctrine that what is not in man is not in the universe, and therefore, he has in himself all that is required for the attainment of mokṣa. All that is required is only to remove the impediments that stand between man and God (or Goddess). The thing that is to be removed is avidyā (ignorance) and the way of removing is to still the citta, its vṛttis and the prāṇa.

In order to achieve the goals the Śāktas recommend that if we obstruct the affection of mind by the external stimuli originating from the objects of sense, then the pure consciousness shines forth. The result is called samādhi, whereby the identity of the individual soul with the universal soul is experienced. However, the process requires an elaborate and complex discipline.

The discipline aims at awakening the dormant Kūṇḍalinī Śakti lying coiled in the mūlādhāra-cakra and making it move upward piercing the remaining five cakras, till it reaches the sahasrāra padma where it is said to unite with Paraśiva. The discipline includes āsanas, mudras, prāṇāyāma, in addition to moral and religious training.
Dharma: Those who aim at Samādhi leading to the realization of the union of Śiva and Śakti must live a religious and moral life. As John Woodroffe says, “only those who follow Dharma go to its Lord. The disorder of an immoral life is not a foundation which such a Yoga can be based”. The life based morality is the life which is free from selfishness and a life full of altruism. Selflessness is the shortest way to effective meditation by which the Kuṇḍalinī-śakti is awakened.

Kuṇḍalinī-yoga is a very elaborate and the most complex of all the Yogas and not easy to understand or formulate. Though we can describe it as a form of yogic discipline which involves the arousal of the Kuṇḍalinī power asleep in the mūlādhāra cakra and its upward progress in the spinal column of man piercing on its way the remaining four cakras, and one in the head between the eyebrows and finally settling in sahasrāra at the top of the brain, the preparation for this technique is elaborate and complicated, involving many other forms of Yoga, like Haṭha-yoga, Maṅtra-yoga, Laya-yoga, etc. of these the practice of Haṭha-yoga seems to play an important role in helping the aspirant to achieve his goal. Since Haṭha-yoga gives utmost prominence to prāṇāyāma and since prāṇāyāma is very useful in the process of arousal of the Kuṇḍalinī power, Kuṇḍalinī-yoga cannot but hold Haṭha-yoga as very essential.

The word Tantra (‘technique’) applies not only to the infamous ‘left-handed’ (vāmacāra) Tantra, but to many others also. The Kulārnava Tantra speaks of several ācāras (ways), from Vedācāra to Kaula, while other Tantras add two more to the list, namely, aghora and Yoga. Moreover, the
word 'Tantra' applies to the different tāntric practices found in various sects of Hinduism, namely, Śākta, Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura and Gāṇapatya. It is also well known that there is a Buddhist-tantra. Therefore, these different Tantras – Hindu and Buddhist – offer many ideas, ideals and the ways of achieving the ideals.

As practical science of realization (sādhana-śāstra) bearing applicability to differing human competencies and constitutions, and different stages of the progress made by the 'healing' soul, the lines of treatment by the śāstra and its prescriptions are bound to be of a varied nature. Aspirant souls have to carve out their own suitable paths or lines of approach, which will be found to diverge more or less at first from one another, but converge and coalesce, as closer and closer approach is made to the final goal which is the same for all.\(^{39}\)

As in the other systems of Indian philosophy so in the Śākta system, the final aim of man is to attain the pure and perfect consciousness, which in the Śākta Tantra is called, sat-cit-ānanda. This is not possible as long as there is avidyā (ignorance) in us which has produced other limitations, body, senses, etc. According to the Śāktas the same limitations, namely, body, senses, etc., can be converted into useful aids in order to remove the avidyā the force that obstructs our union with sat-cit-ānanda. Śākta Tantra is, therefore, a technique of removing the obstruction so that our soul unites with Paraśiva or sat-cit-ānanda. Our body-mind complex is a rope by means of which we have been dropped and by the same rope we have to climb up
and reach the perfect consciousness. In plain words: we have to transform the body-mind complex by increasing its working efficiently. "A transformation, dynamisation and sublimation of the physical, vital and mental apparatus is possible only by what is called the rousing of Kuṇḍalinī and reorientation from ‘downward facing’ to ‘upward facing’", so that the individual soul, paśu is able to free itself from pāśa (rope), i.e., bondage and merges in paśupati (paraśiva, the infinite consciousness).

1. The actual spiritual programme starts with the purification of the five elements out of which the physical body is made. The purification is really purification of the elements which surround the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti. That is, unless the elements are purified, the Kuṇḍalinī surrounded by them cannot be roused or made to move upwards. This process is called bhūta-suddhi (purification of the material elements).

The Kuṇḍalinī Śakti is ‘asleep’ in the mūlādhāra cakra which is dominated by the earth element. The aspirant has to annul all the evil influences of the earth elements, such that, the Kuṇḍalinī which is sleeping with the head downwards, is aroused or lifts its head upwards. Its upward movement by piercing each of the other cakras is marked by purification of the elements which govern the respective cakras. In fact it is sometimes said to be “dissolution” (laya) of the bhūta (elements).

This process at the perceptual level involves performance of Tāntrik rituals. It includes a procedure, explained in the Mahānirvāṇa-tantra which “involves visualizing the process of elemental creation in reverse order. Thus the yogin pictures the lowest element, earth, associated with the center
(cakra) at the base of the spine as dissolving into the water element at the second cakra, and that as dissolving into the fire element at the navel center, and that into the air element at the heart, and that into the ether element at the throat," etc. In the seventh, i.e. sahasrāra cakra manas (and all the five material elements) are dissolved. The part Yoga which aims at dissolution (laya) of the five elements and manas is called Laya-yoga.

Laya-yoga, however, is not itself a complete yoga. It is sometimes described as the culmination of Haṭha-yoga, which in turn is complementary to Kuṇḍalini-yoga.

2. Mantra-yoga: It is believed that the frequent recitation of mantras has, on the one hand, the power to increase the concentration capacity, and on the other, it produces the desired results. The effectiveness of the mantras depends on dīkṣā (initiation by an authorized guru). In addition, the guru's grace (anugraha) is also required. There are four forms of reciting the mantras – loud, whispering, mental and writing (likhita-japa). But no recitation produces its effect unless it is done with utmost concentration. Or else, it is a mere sound. Varna-mālā is a Tāntric text which specifically deals with mantra-śāstra.

The real significance of recitation of mantra lies in its power to develop concentration, which facilitates the arousal and upward movement of Kuṇḍalinī-sakti and its union with Śiva in the sahasrāra cakra. Concentration means not only that which is required for mediation, but also manana, i.e. concentrated reflection.

3. Mudrās: Though the word ‘mudrā’ means ‘bodily posture’ or ‘seal’, in the context of Kuṇḍalini - yoga it means only ‘hand gesture’. Mudrās are
supposed to be on the one hand, means of controlling the energy in the body and on the other, symbolic representations of mental state. There are 108 mudrās and according to the Nirvāṇa-tantra fifty-five are most commonly used. The intention behind the gestures is the formation of collected mind, necessary for meditation. This is evidenced by the fact that, for example, jñāna-mudrā is used during meditation and without it or other mudrā meditation is not effective. In the Mantra-yoga-samhitā it is said that nineteen mudrās are necessary in the worship of Viṣṇu, ten in the Śīva worship, nine in the Durgā worship, etc.

4. Yantra (Geometric circles): A Yantra is a circle with a square covering it. Inside the circle there is again a geometrical figure, such as triangle, or two triangles, one upward and the other downward, or sometimes many triangles arranged in such a fashion that at the centre there is the smallest triangle. The yantra-figures are invariably surrounded by pictures of lotus petals which symbolize the padmas with particular number of petals. In each of these types is a ‘point’ at the centre, called “bindu” (“seed-point”). Sometimes it is said that the triangle with upward point symbolizes Śīva (consciousness) and the triangle pointing downwards symbolizes the Śakti and the diamond shape produced by their meeting is called creation. It also represents symbolically the universe as a means to liberation. The yogin is advised to visualize the entire complexity of the yantra. However, initially he practices the internal visualization by intensely gazing at the yantra drawn on a paper, or wall, or carved on a metal sheet or wood.
Bhūta-śuddhi, mantra, mudrā and yantra are to be practise along with worship. Worship of an image or yantra must not be mechanical, it should be diligent and based on the understanding of the principles of the worshipper, the worshipped and the articles used in worship. “If the worship is intelligently done, that is, with an understanding and appreciation of the principles, then mantra, yantra (symbolic diagram), the offerings, the procedure and the paraphernalia of worship are all transformed into forms and expressions of cit-śakti and cid-vilāsa” (ānanda)⁴⁷ As mentioned earlier, mantra (or Mantra-yoga) or Laya-yoga involving bhūt-śuddhi cannot itself lead to the final goal. “In fact, the final result cannot be attained through mantra, yantra and pūjā unless thereby Kuṇḍalinī is aroused, the ego-centric, blinding, and blinding current is reversed, ascent is made from the plane of aśuddha to that of śuddha-tattvas, and, finally, to pure and perfect experience itself”⁴⁸

Kuṇḍalinī-yoga recognizes Yoga of Patañjali and jñāna also as useful aids to realization of sat-cit-ānanda. That is, one must adopt the physiological (āsanas) and respiratory techniques (prāṇāyāma) of Pātañjala-yoga, viveka (discriminating knowledge), vairāgya (detachment), self-control, etc. advocated by Śaṅkhara’s Jñāna-yoga. Thus Kuṇḍalinī-yoga is a harmonious blend of Haṭha, Laya, Mantra, Bhakti, Karma, Jñāna and Pātañjala-yoga.
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