

= Yogatattva Upanishad =

The Yogatattva Upanishad (Sanskrit : योगतत्त्व उपनिषद् , IAST : Yogatattva Upaniṣhad) , also called as Yogatattvopaniṣad (योगतत्त्वोपनिषद्) , is one of the minor Upanishads of Hinduism . A Sanskrit text , it is one of eleven Yoga Upanishads attached to the Atharvaveda , and one of twenty Yoga Upanishads in the four Vedas . It is listed at number 41 in the serial order of the Muktika enumerated by Rama to Hanuman in the modern era anthology of 108 Upanishads . It is , as an Upanishad , a part of the corpus of Vedanta literature collection that present the philosophical concepts of Hinduism .

Two major versions of its manuscripts are known . One has fifteen verses but attached to Atharvaveda , while another very different and augmented manuscript exists in the Telugu language which has one hundred and forty two verses and is attached to the Krishna Yajurveda . The text is notable for describing Yoga in the Vaishnavism tradition .

The Yogatattva Upanishad shares ideas with the Yogasutra , Hatha Yoga , and Kundalini Yoga . It includes a discussion of four styles of yoga : Mantra , Laya , Hatha yoga and Raja . As an expounder of Vedanta philosophy , the Upanishad is devoted to the elaboration of the meaning of Atman (Soul , Self) through the process of yoga , starting with the syllable Om . According to Yogatattva Upanishad , " jnana (knowledge) without yoga cannot secure moksha (emancipation , salvation) , nor can yoga without knowledge secure moksha " , and that " those who seek emancipation should pursue both yoga and knowledge " .

= = Etymology = =

Yoga (from the Sanskrit root yuj) means " to add " , " to join " , " to unite " , or " to attach " in its most common literal sense . According to Dasgupta ? a scholar of Sanskrit and philosophy , the term yoga can be derived from either of two roots , yujir yoga (to yoke) or yuj sam?dhau (to concentrate) .

Yogatattva is compound word of " Yoga " and ' tattva ' , the latter meaning " Truth " , or " Reality , That @-@ ness " . Paul Deussen ? a German Indologist and professor of Philosophy translates the term Yogatattva as " the essence of Yoga " .

The term Upanishad means it is knowledge or " hidden doctrine " text that belongs to the corpus of Vedanta literature collection presenting the philosophical concepts of Hinduism and considered the highest purpose of its scripture , the Vedas .

= = Chronology and anthologies = =

The text , states Mircea Eliade , was possibly composed in the same period as the didactic parts of the Mahabharata , the chief Sannyasa Upanishads and along with other early Yoga Upanishads : Brahmbindu (probably composed about the same time as Maitri Upanishad) , Ksurika , Tejobindu , Brahmavidya , Nadabindu , Yogashikha , DhyanaBindu , and Amritabindu .

The Yogatattva , adds Eliade , was composed earlier than the ten or eleven later yogic Upanishads such as the Yoga @-@ kundali , Varaha and Pashupatabrahma . Alternate chronological estimates include those by Michael Whiteman ? a professor of Mathematics and a writer on Yoga in Hinduism and Buddhism ,) who states it is possibly dated to about 150 CE . David White ? a professor of Comparative Religion , in contrast , suggests that the text derives its " ideas and images from the heritage of classical Vedanta " , and it is likely a medieval era text composed between 11th- to 13th @-@ century CE .

Gavin Flood dates the Yogatattva text , along with other Yoga Upanishads , to be probably from the 100 BCE to 300 CE period .

In the collection of Upanishads under the title " Oupanekhat " , put together by Sultan Mohammed Dara Shikoh in 1656 , consisting of a Persian translation of 50 Upanishads and who prefaced it as the best book on religion , the Yogatattva is listed at number 21 . Dara Shikoh 's collection was in the same order as found in Upanishad anthologies popular in north India . In the 52 Upanishads

version of Colebrooke this Upanishad is listed at 23 . In the Bibliothica Indica edition of Narayana ? an Indian scholar who lived sometime after the 14th @-@ century Vedanta scholar Sankarananda , the Upanishad is also listed at 23 in his list of 52 .

= = Structure = =

The Telugu version of the Yogatattva Upanishad has 142 verses , while the shortest surviving manuscript in Sanskrit is just 15 verses . Both versions open by hailing Hindu god Vishnu as the supreme Purusha or supreme spirit , the great Yogin , the Supreme Being , the great Tapasvin (meditator) , and a lamp in the path of the truth . This links the text to the Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism .

The meaning and message in verses 3 to 15 of the Sanskrit version mirror those of the last 13 verses of the Telugu version of the text .

= = Contents = =

The Yogatattva Upanishad is among the oldest known texts on yoga that provide detailed description of Yoga techniques and its benefits .

For the first time , an Upanishad gives numerous and precise details concerning the extraordinary powers gained by practice and meditation . The four chief asanas (siddha , padma , simha and bhadra) are mentioned , as are the obstacles encountered by beginners ? sloth , talkativeness , etc . A description of pranayama follows , together with the definition of the matra (unit of measurement for the phases of respiration) , and important details of mystical physiology (the purification of the nadis is shown by external signs : lightness of body , brilliance of complexion , increase in digestive power , etc .

= = = Self realization and virtues of a yoga student = = =

On Hindu god Brahma ? s request Vishnu explains that all souls are caught up in the cycle of worldly pleasures and sorrow created by Maya (changing reality) . and Kaivalya can help overcome this cycle of birth , old age and disease . Knowledge of the shastras are futile in this regard , states Vishnu , and the description of the " indescribable state of liberation " eludes them and even the devas .

It is only the knowledge of ultimate reality and supreme self , the Brahman , which can lead to the path of liberation and self @-@ realization , states Yogatattva Upanishad . This realization of the supreme self is possible to the yoga student who is free from " passion , anger , fear , delusion , greed , pride , lust , birth , death , miserliness , swoon , giddiness , hunger , thirst , ambition , shame , fright , heart @-@ burning , grief and gladness " .

= = = Yoga and knowledge = = =

In the early verses of the Yogatattva Upanishad , the simultaneous importance of yoga and jnana (knowledge) are asserted , and declared to be mutually complimentary and necessary .

The text defines " knowledge " , translates Aiyar ? a Sanskrit scholar , as " through which one cognizes in himself the real nature of kaivalya (moksha) as the supreme seat , the stainless , the partless , and of the nature of Sacchidananda " (truth @-@ consciousness @-@ bliss) . This knowledge is of the Brahman and its non @-@ differentiated nature with that of the Atman , of Jiva and Paramatman . Yoga and knowledge (jnana) both go together to realise Brahman and attain salvation , according to the Upanishad .

= = = Yogas = = =

In the Upanishad , Vishnu states to Brahma that Yoga is one , in practice of various kinds , the chief

are of four types ? Mantra Yoga is the practice through chants , Laya Yoga through deep concentration , Hatha Yoga through exertion , and Raja Yoga through meditation .

There are four states which are common to all these yogas , states the text , and these four stages of attainment are : Arambha (beginning , the stage of practicing ethics such as non @-@ violence and proper diet , followed by asana) , Ghata (second integration stage to learn breath regulation and relationship between body and mind) , Parichaya (the third intimacy stage to hold , regulate air flow , followed by meditation for relationship between mind and Atman) , and Nishpatti (fourth stage to consummate Samadhi and realize Atman) . The emphasis and most verses in the text are dedicated to Hatha Yoga , although the text mentions Raja yoga is the culmination of Yoga .

The Mantra yoga is stated by the Yogatattva as a discipline of auditory recitation of mantras but stated to be an inferior form of yoga . It is the practice of mantra recitation or intonations of the sounds of alphabet , for 12 years . This gradually brings knowledge and special powers of inner attenuation , asserts the text . This mantra @-@ based method of yoga , asserts Yogatattva , is suited for those with dull wit and incapable of practicing the other three types of yoga .

Laya yoga is presented as the discipline of dissolution where the focus is on thinking of the " Lord without parts " all the times while going through daily life activities . The Laya Yoga , the second in the order of importance , is oriented towards assimilation by the chitta or mind , wherein the person always thinks of formless Ishvara (God) .

The Hatha Yoga , to which Yogatattva Upanishad dedicates most of its verses , is discussed with eight interdependent practices : ten yamas (self @-@ restraints) , ten niyamas (self @-@ observances) , asana (postures) , pranayama (control of breath) , pratyahara (conquering the senses) , dharana (concentration) , dhyana , and samadhi that is the state of meditative consciousness .

The text discusses meditation and thereafter through verse 128 , twenty stages of Hatha Yoga practice such as of Maha @-@ mudra , Maha @-@ Bandha , Khechari mudra , Mula Bandha , Uddiyana bandha , Jalandhara Bandha , Vajroli , Amaroli and Sahajoli . Thereafter , the Upanishad asserts Raja yoga to be the means for Yogin to detach himself from the world , translates Ayyangar ? a Sanskrit scholar . The tool for meditation , states the text , is Pranava or Om mantra , which it describes in verses 134 ? 140 , followed by a statement of the nature of liberation and the ultimate truth .

= = = = Asanas = = = =

The Upanishad mentions many asanas , but states four postures of the yoga for the beginner commencing on pranayama (breathing exercises) ? Siddhasana , Padmasana , Simhasana and Bhadrasana . The detailed procedure and the setting for these are described in the text .

Sitting in Padmasana (lotus) posture , the text states that the pranayama or breathing must be gradual , both inhalation , holding and exhalation should be slow , steady and deep . The text introduces a series of time measures (matras , musical beats) to aid self monitoring and to measure progress , wherein the beat is created by the yoga student with fingers self circumambulating and using one 's own knee for the beat pulse . A sequential gradual inhalation over sixteen Matras (digits) , holding the air deep within for sixty @-@ four Matras and gradually exhaling the air over thirty @-@ two Matras is suggested as the goal of the breathing exercise .

The Upanishad suggests breathing exercises in a variety of ways , such as breathing with one nostril and exhaling with another , asserting that a regular practice multiple times a day cleans up the Nadis (blood vessels) , improves digestive powers , stamina , leanness and causes the skin to glow . The text recommends restraining oneself from salt , mustard , acidic foods , spicy astringent pungent foods . The text also states that the yoga student should avoid fasting , early morning baths , sexual intercourse , and sitting near fire . Milk and ghee (clarified butter) , cooked wheat , green gram and rice are foods the text approves of , in verses 46 ? 49 . The Upanishad also recommends massage , particularly areas of body that tremor or profusely perspire during the practice of yoga .

The next stage of Yoga practice , states the text , is termed Ghata (Sanskrit : ??) with the goal of bringing union of Prana (breath) , Apana (hydration and aeration of body) , Manas (mind) and

Buddhi (intellect) , as well as between Jivatma (life soul force) and Paramatman (supreme soul) . This practice is a step , asserts the text , for Pratyahara (withdrawal from distraction by sensory organs) and Dharana (concentration) . The aim of Dharana , states Yogatattva , is to conceive everyone and everything one perceives with any of his senses as same as his own self and soul (Atman) . In verses 72 to 81 , the text describes a range of mystical powers that develop within those who have mastered Ghata stage of yoga . The Upanishad adds that " perfection requires practice , the yogin must never revel in what he achieves , never be vain , never be distracted by trying to comply with demonstration requests , remain oblivious to others , yet be always intent on achieving the goals he sets for himself " .

= = = = Kundalini = = = =

The Upanishad , in verse 82 and onwards , elaborates on the third stage of Yogic practice , calling it the paricaya (Sanskrit : ????? , intimacy) state . It is the stage where the yogin awakens the Kundalini , asserts the text . Kundalini , states James Lochtefeld ? a professor of Religion and Asian Studies , refers to " the latent spiritual power that exists in every person " . The premise mentioned in Yogatattva , is also a fundamental concept in Tantra , and symbolizes an aspect of Shakti that is typically dormant in every person , and its awakening is a goal in Tantra . In Yogatattva text , this stage is described as where the Yogin 's Chitta (mind) awakens and enters the Sushumna and the chakras .

The five elements of Prthivi , Apas , Agni , Vayu and Akash are called as the " five Brahmanas " corresponding to five gods within (Brahma , Vishnu , Rudra , Ishvara and Sada @-@ Shiva) , and reaching them is described by the text as a process of meditation . The meditation on each , asserts Yogatattva , is assisted by colors , geometry and mantras : prthivi with yellow @-@ gold , quadrilateral and La? , apas with white , crescent and Va? , agni with red , triangle and Ra? , vayu with black , satkona (hexagram) and Ya? , akash with smoke , circle and Ha? .

The Upanishad dedicates verses 112 through 128 on a variety of Hatha yoga asanas . The procedure and benefits of yoga practices of Sirsasana (standing on the head for 24 minutes) , Vajroli and Amaroli are explained briefly by the text . With these practices the Yogin attains the Raja Yoga state , realizes the facts of the life cycle of mother @-@ son @-@ wife relationship .

= = = = Om meditation = = = =

The Upanishad expounds the principles behind Om mantra as part of the yogic practice asserting that " A " , " U " and " M " are three letters that mirror the " three Vedas , three Sandhyas (morning , noon and evening) , three Svaras (sounds) , three Agnis and three Gu?as " . Metaphorically this practice is compared to realizing the hidden smell of a flower , reaching the ghee (clarified butter) in milk , reaching the oil innate in sesame seeds , effort to extract gold from its ore , and finding the Atman in one 's heart . The letter " A " represents the flowering of lotus , " U " represents the blooming of the flower , " M " reaches its nada (tattva or truth inside , sound) , and " ardhmatra " (half @-@ metre) indicates the Turiya , or bliss of silence .

The Upanishad states that following the yogic practices prescribed , once the yogin has mastered the functioning of nine orifices of the body and awakened the Sushumna inwards , he awakens his Kundalini , he becomes self @-@ aware , knows the Truth and gains the conviction of his Atman .

= = Reception = =

Yogatattva Upanishad is one of the most important text on Yoga .

It is the Yogatattva that appears to be most minutely acquainted with yogic practices : it mentions the eight angas and distinguishes the four kinds of yoga : Mantra yoga , Laya yoga , Hatha yoga and Raja yoga .

The text , states Whiteman , discusses a variety of Yoga systems , including the Hatha yoga , " a system of practices developed intensively ' , with the basic objective of " health and cleanliness of

the physical body and perfection of voluntary control over all its functions . " A notable feature of this Upanishad is definition of four types of yoga and a comparison .

The Yogatattva Upanishad and the Brahma Upanishad are also known as one of the early sources of tantric ideas related to chakras , which were adopted in Tibetan Buddhism . However , states Yael Bendor , there are minor differences between the location of inner fires as described in the texts of Tibetan Buddhism and in Yogatattva text of Hinduism .