Concept of Yoga

Bhugati Samadhi:

A long haired half naked person was seen ready to enter a pit which measured 2 x 1 X 1 meters and had been dug specially for the demonstration. He entered into it and then the top of the pit was totally covered, so that no air could pass in. The man remained inside for several days. He emerged out of the pit after a long stay, fresh and agile, with no symptoms of fatigue. This feat is called Bhugata Samadhi.

The root of word YOGA,

The term Yoga has its verbal root as Yuj in Samskrta. Yuj means joining, Yujvate anena iti Yogah. Yoga is that which joins. What are the entities that are joined? In the traditional, it is joining of the individual self, Jivatma with the Universal SELF, Paramatma. It is an expansion of the narrow constricted egoistic personality to an all pervasive, eternal and blissful state of REALITY.

Patanjala Yoga is one among the six systems of Indian philosophy known as satdarsanas. One of the great Rsis(Seers), Patanjali, compiled the essential features and principles of Yoga in the form of ‘Sutras’ (aphorisms) and made a vital contribution in the field of Yoga, nearly 5000 years ago (as dated by some famous western historians). According to Patanjali, Yoga is a conscious process of gaining mastery over the mind.

The scope of Yoga as portrayed in Bhagavadgita and Upanishads is far more comprehensive. As Swami Vivekananda puts it ‘It is a means of compressing one’s evolution into a single life or a few months or even a few hours of one’s bodily existence.’ In general, there is growth process due to interactions with Nature in all creation. But it may take thousands and millions of years for this natural growth; that is the long, instinctive way in animals. Man, endowed with discrimination power, conscious thinking faculty, the Mind (Buddhi) and well-developed voluntary control systems, aspires to accelerate his growth. Yoga is that systematic conscious process which can compress the, process of man’s growth greatly.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes that Yoga is a methodical conscious effort towards self-development of the potentialities latent in the individual. He emphasizes an all-round personality development at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. It is a process by which the limitations and imperfections can be washed away resulting in a superhuman race.

Thus, Yoga is a systematic process for accelerating the growth of a human being in his entirety. With this growth, man learns to live at higher states of consciousness. Key to this all-round personality development and the growth is culturing of the mind.

Culturing the Mind

1.3 DEFINITIONS

1. Yoga – Mastery over the mind ( Yogascittavrttinirodhah )
2. As mentioned earlier, Patanjali defines in his second Patanjali’s aphorism “Yogascittavrttinirodhah” (Yoga Sutra: 1.2). “By so controlling the mind we reach our original state; then the Seer establishes himself in his casual state. (Yoga Sutra: 1.3). This is the technique of”mind control” prescribed by Patanjali. Control involves two aspects – a power to concentrate on any desired subject or object and a capacity to remain calm and quite all the time. All of us have been developing the first aspect, namely concentration. Rarely, the second capacity of man, to remain calm and silent, has been harnessed. Hence, Yoga mainly emphasizes this second aspect.
3. In Yoga-Vasistha, one of the best texts on Yoga, the essence of Yoga is beautifully portrayed thus, - Yoga is called a skilful trick to calm down the mind. It is an Upayah, a skillful subtle process and not a brutal, mechanical gross effort to stop thoughts in the mind. An unskilled layman trying to repair a television set is almost sure to spoil it, while an experienced and skilful person knows exactly on what to lay hands and to rectify the malfunctioning. He operates at the right place. ***Knowledge is the key.*** Similarly, in the control of mind, a novice tries hard and gets disgusted when he finds himself more messed up, while Yoga gives him the necessary techniques to operate at the right place at the right time to gain complete mastery over it. This skill is the trick of allowing the mind to calm down and not to use brutal force to stop it.
4. In action, Yoga is a special skill which makes the mind reach its subtler state: ‘Yogah Karmasu Kausalam’ (Gita 2.50). Yoga is dexterity in action. The dexterity is in maintaining relaxation and awareness in action. Relaxed action is the process. Efficiency in action is an outcome. Thus, Yoga is a skillful science of gaining mastery over the mind. Yoga is normally and traditionally conjectured, popularly known as a process or a technique to reach the ultimate state of perfection. However, in the scriptures Yoga is also defined as the states of higher powers and potentialities and even as ultimate state of SILENCE. Further, Yoga is also described as the power of all creative endeavors and creation itself.

We will now see how Yoga is described as a state and a power in various Yoga and Upanisadic texts.

B.YOGA – a state

Man leaps into higher states of consciousness and learns to stay and act tuned to these states. Yoga often refers to these subtle layers of causal states of our mind,

1. Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya |

Siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga ucyate || Gita 2-48 ||

Perform action, O, Dhananjaya, being fixed in Yoga, renouncing attachments and staying even minded in successes or failures. Evenness is verily Yoga.

1. Tam yogamiti manyate sthiramindriyadharanam || Kathopanisad-2-6-11

Yoga is the state in which all our Indriyas are beheld steadily i.e., a state of mastery over senses and mind.

1. Srtivipratipanna te yada sthasyati niscala |

Samadhavacala buddhistada yogamavapsyasi || gita-2-53||

When your mind will remain steadfast and unperturbed even on hearing confusing and conflicting statements, then you will attain the state of Yoga – ‘Samadhi’.

Thus, the subtle state of mind featured by ‘Steadiness’ is referred as Yoga. Yoga is a state of great steadiness at emotional level; balance of concentration and detachment at mental level and homeostasis at body level. It integrates the personality by bringing body-mind coordination in a well-balanced way.

C.YOGA – a power of creativity

Gita further portrays yoga as power of creation:

1. Vistarenatmano yogam vibhutim ca janardana |

Bhuyah kathaya trptirhi srnvato nasti memrtam || gita-10-18 ||

Krsna, tell me once more, in detail your power of Yoga and Your glory; for I know no satiety in hearing your nectar-like words.

Na tu mam sakyase drastumanenaiva svacaksusa |

Divyam dadami te caksuh pasya me yogamaisvaram || gita-11-8 ||

But surely you cannot see Me with these human eyes of yours; therefore I vouch safe to you the divine eye. With this you behold My divine power of Yoga.

1. Niharadhumarkanilanalanam khadyotavidyutsphatikasasinam |

Etani rupani purahsarani brahmanyabhuyaktikarani yoge || svetasvatara upanisad-2-11 ||

While practicing yoga, forms that appear like snow, smoke, sun, wind, fire, glow-worm, lightning, crystal or moon may precede the manifestation of Brahman.

Thus Yoga is:

* A process for elevating oneself through calming down the mind.
* Also to achieve the very states of higher, subtler layers of mind, and
* Conceived as a creative power in man and that of the Reality itself.

1.4 SUMMARY

In this unit, we learnt about yoga, its definitions & explanation according to various texts and authorities.

1.5 MODEL QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

4. Fill in the Blanks

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is not Yoga.

Rope Trick

1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is the verbal root of yoga in Samskrta meaning \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Yuj, joining

Yujyate anena iti Yogah

Yoga is that which joins

1. Yoga is joining of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Jivatma, Paramatma

individual self, Universal SELFK

1. ‘Yogah Karmasu Kausalam’ is quoted in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gita 2.50

1. Select the right answers.
   1. Yogascittavrttinirodhah is told by
      1. Swami Vivekananda
      2. Sri Aurobindo
      3. Patanjali

III. Patanjali

* 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ emphasizes an all-round personality development; at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels.
     1. Sri Aurobindo
     2. Swami Vivekananda
     3. Patanjali

1. Sri Aurobindo
   1. Yoga Vasistha says
      1. Yogah Karmasu Kausalam
      2. Manah prasamanopayah yoga ityabhidhiyate
      3. Yogascittavrittinirodhah
2. Manah prasamanopayah yoga ityabhidhiyate
3. Answer the following questions.
   1. What are the two aspects of mind control prescribed by Patanjali ?

* A power to concentrate on any desired subject or object
* Capacity to remain calm and quiet all the time.
  1. What dexterity is as told in Gita?

The dexterity is in maintaining relaxation and awareness in action. Relaxed action is the process. Efficiency in action is an outcome. Thus, Yoga is a skillful science of gaining mastery over the mind.