

A Review Article on DHYANA

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Abstract: Yoga is the ultimate act of harmony between one's physical existence and spiritual conscience. In the Vedas, "Yoga" was used to designate a union or connection between various objects. These practices Of Yoga aim to control and perfect both the physiological and the psychological processes and functions. Dhyana is taken up in Yoga practices and is means to Samadhi. The concept of Dhyana is described in various traditions. Dhyana is a practice performs with peace, balance & separation with the aim of monitoring the ingoing & outgoing ideas from the mind. Dhyana over power one's thinking, mental and spiritual obstruction, fears, nervousness, stress, and depression by realizing the causes and become capable of managing them. When one's brain and body get stressed because of outer world then it is necessary to concentrate on inner world. Hindu meditation practices help our mind to get rid out of unwanted thoughts and to attain a state of calmness and peace. This review is genuine attempt for highlighting the concept of Dhyana According to various Hindu Yogic Text. So that one can understand the concept, techniques and benefits of Dhyana. Hopefully it will be beneficial for practitioner of Yoga and learners of Yoga for future scope.

Keywords: Dhyana, Meditation, Yogic Granthas, Yoga

INTRODUCTION

Dhyana (meditation) is one of the eight limbs of yoga as mentioned in Patanjali Yogasutra. The Yogachudamani Upanishad described dhyana as one component of sadanga yoga (six components of yoga). Dhyana Upanishad says that dhyana is the fifth anga of the sadanga yoga. Dhyana is performed in Padmasana and with kumbhaka. The Yogaraja Upanisad says that dhyana is one of the four angas of yoga such as asana, pranayama, dhyana and samadhi.

It comes under antaranga yoga. Swami Satyananda Saraswati says meditation is the vehicle which takes one on the inner trip.

DEFINITION OF DHYANA

"Tatra pratyaya ekatanata dhyanam." (Patanjali Yogasutra III/2)

In dharana (concentration), the continuous flow of similar mental modifications is dhyana.

"Soham chinmatrameveti chintanam dhyanam uchyate." (Trisikhibrahmanopanishad - 30)

Dhyana is the perfect reflection of self as absolute consciousness and Soham.

Dhyana yoga

In Yoga Upanishads and Samhitas Dr. Saroj Kumar Sahu Sheetal Arya The Gheranda Samhita says, one pointed awareness (ekagrata) of an object or thought process is dhyana.

Samadhi samata prokta yavad dhyanam prthak-prthak. (Vashistha Samhita 1/37)

The Vashistha Samhita says, dhyana is the balanced state of distinct ideas, while samadhi is perfect equanimity.

"Dhyanameva hi jantunam karanam bandhamokshayoh" (Vashistha Samhita 4/17)

Meditation, indeed is the cause of bondage and liberation of all the beings.

"Dhyanam Atmasvarupasya vedanam manasa bhavet" (Vashistha Samhita 4/19)

Meditation is defined as the true understanding of one's own Self by mind.

"Soham chinmatrameveti chintanam dhyanam uchyate." (Yoga Vashistha Sara - 10/24)

"I am that Supreme Self which is consciousness alone and Brahman", this type of reflection is called as dhyana (contemplation).

DHYANA

Dhyana is continuous thought towards a single object of concentration usually a thought wave arises, remains for a short while then subsides later followed by another thought wave. In Dhyana aspirant concentrates on the same object without interruption for a prolonged period.[1] Dhyana is uninterrupted flow of thoughts towards the object of Dhyana. Word dhyana means which gives ultimate bliss

Types of dhyana

There are mainly two types of dhyana

1. Saguna dhyana - As mentioned in Atharvaveda Dhyana by concentrating over an idol or

symbol is sagunadhyana. Controlling the breathing and concentrating over desired God in mind for sixty seconds is called sagunadhyana.[2]

2. Nirguna dhyana - Dhyana by controlling over soul (atma)is nirguna dhyana (shandilyopnishad). The person practicing nirgunadhyana can attain Samadhi within 12 days only. Once the person has achieved control over vayu, he will be free from jivana and attain Samadhi a condition of union between jivatma and paramatma. As the water takes the shape of container, the mind when it contemplates an object of thought, blends so well with the mind that there is no interruption in the flow of thought even for a moment.

Other types of dhyana

Sthuladhyana (gross meditation) - Meditating over a gross idol, guru or figure is sthuladhyana. Jyotirmayadhyana (luminous meditation) - Meditating over luminous object is jyotirmaya dhyana. Sukhsma dhyana (subtle meditation)- Meditating over subtle aspects like bramha as point (bindu), and kundalini force is suksmadhyana. The Yoga Sutras In the Yoga Sutras 27 a key text of the Yoga school of Hindu philosophy, Dhyana is the seventh limb of this path, following Dharana and preceding Samadhi. Dhyana is integrally related to Dharana, one leads to other. Dharana is a state of mind, Dhyana the process of mind. Dhyana is distinct from Dharana in that the meditator becomes actively engaged with its focus. Patanjali defines contemplation (Dhyana) as the mind process, where the mind is fixed on something, and then there is "a course of uniform modification of knowledge".[3] Bronkhorst states that Buddhist influences are noticeable in the first chapter of the Yogasutras, and confirmed by sutra 1.20 because it mentions asamprajnatasamadhi is preceded by "trust (sraddha), energy (virya), mindfulness (smriti) and insight (prajna)". According to Bronkhorst, "the definition of Yoga given in the first chapter of the Yoga Sutra does not fit the descriptions contained in the same chapter," and this may suggest the sutra incorporated Buddhist elements as described in the four jhanas Wynne, in contrast to Bronkhorst's theory, states that the evidence in early Buddhist texts, such as those found in Suttapitaka, suggest that these foundational ideas on formless Dhyana and element Dhyana were borrowed from pre-Buddha Brahmanical sources attested in early Upanishads and ultimately the cosmological theory found in the Nasadiya-sukta of the Rigveda.[4] AdiShankara, in his commentary on Yoga Sutras, distinguishes Dhyana from Dharana, by explaining Dhyana as the

yoga state when there is only the "stream of continuous thought about the object, uninterrupted by other thoughts of different kind for the same object"; Dharana, states Shankara, is focussed on one object, but aware of its many aspects and ideas about the same object. Shankara gives the example of a yogin in a state of dharana on morning sun may be aware of its brilliance, color and orbit; the yogin in dhyana state contemplates on sun's orbit alone for example, without being interrupted by its color, brilliance or other related ideas.[5] In Patanjali's Raja Yoga, also called "Dhyanayoga".[6] Dhyana is "a refined meditative practice", a "deeper concentration of the mind", which is taken up after preceding exercises. In Hinduism, dhyāna is considered to be an instrument to gain self- knowledge. It is a part of a self-directed awareness and unifying Yoga process by which a world that by default is experienced as disjointed, comes to be experienced as Self, and an integrated oneness with Brahman The Brahman has been variously defined in Hinduism, ranging from non-theistic non-dualistic Ultimate Reality or supreme soul, to theistic dualistic God.[7,8,9] defines Dhyana as the "continuous flow of the same thought or image of the object of Dhyana, without being distracted by any other thought". Vivekananda explains Dhyana in Patanjali'sYogasutras as, "When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called Dhyana".[10] While Dharana was the stage in yoga where the yogi held one's awareness to one object for a long period of time, Dhyana is concentrated Dhyana where he or she contemplates without interruption the object of Dhyana, beyond any memory of ego or anything else.[11] In Dhyana, the meditator is not conscious of the act of Dhyana (i.e. is not aware that he/she is meditating) but is only aware that he/she exists (consciousness of being), his mind and the object of Dhyana. Dhyana is distinct from Dharana, in that the yogi contemplates on the object of Dhyana and the object's aspects only, free from distractions, with his mind during Dhyana. With practice, the process of Dhyana awakens self-awareness (soul, the purusha or Atman), the fundamental level of existence and Ultimate Reality in Hinduism, the non-afflicted, conflictless and blissful state of freedom and liberation (moksha).

PRANAVA DHYANA

As per DhyanaBindu Upanishad, the one Akshara (letter OM) should be contemplated upon as Brahman.

One should contemplate on Omkara as Isvara resembling an unshaken light (sthira dipa), as of the size of a thumb (Angustha matra) and as motionless. It says during puraka (inhalation) one should meditate upon Mahavishnu at Nabhi sthana (navel). During kumbhaka (retention) one should meditate upon Brahma athrd sthana (heart) and during rechaka (exhalation) one should meditate upon Shiva atlatata sthana (between the two eyebrows).

PLACE FOR DHYANA

The stillness and calm of nature acts as a perfect setting for the practice of meditation. One should face north or east to take advantage of favorable magnetic vibrations. It is best to have a special room for meditation which should be clean and tidy, free from distracting vibrations and associations.

ASANA FOR DHYANA

The meditation asanas are Sukhasana (Easy pose), Ardha Padmasana (Half-lotus pose), Padmasana (Lotus pose), Siddhasana (Accomplished pose for men), Siddha Yoni Asana (Accomplished pose for women), Swastikasana (Auspicious pose) and Dhyana Veerasana (Hero's meditation pose).

PRANAYAMA FOR DHYANA

Pranayama serves as a basis for many types of mediation. Those pranayamas are Nadi sodhana pranayama (psychic network purification), Ujjayi pranayama (The psychic breath), Bhastrika pranayama (Bellows breath), Kapalabhati pranayama (Frontal brain cleansing breath) and Bhramari pranayama (Humming bee breath).

MUDRA FOR DHYANA

Mudras meant for meditation are Jnana mudra (Psychic gesture of knowledge), Chin mudra (Psychic gesture of consciousness), Khechari mudra (Tongue lock), Shanmukhi mudra (Closing the seven gates), Akasi mudra (Awareness of inner space), Vajroli mudra (Thunder bolt attitude), Sahajoli mudra (Spontaneous psychic attitude), Shambhavi mudra (Eye brow centre gazing) and Agochari mudra or Nasikagra drishti (Nose tip gazing).

BANDHA FOR DHYANA

Bandhas meant for meditation are Jalandhara bandha (Throat lock), Moola bandha (Perineum contraction), Uddiyana bandha (Abdominal contraction) and Maha bandha (The great lock).

DHYANA AND RELATED CHAKRAS

In Sthula dhyana, Anahat and Sahasrara chakras are activated. But the Mooladhara and Ajna chakras are activated in Yotir dhyana.

PRACTICES OF DHYANA

There are different practices of dhyana such as Japa yoga, Mantra Siddhi yoga, Ajapa japa, Yoganidra, Antarmouna, Inner visualization, Trataka and Antar trataka, Nada yoga, Prana vidya and Kundalini kriyas.

DISCUSSION

BENEFITS OF DHYANA

Dharanabhirmanodhairya jati caitanyam adbhutam” (Yogachudamani Upanishad -110)

The Yogachudamani Upanishad says that one enjoys chaitanya (lightened state of consciousness) during the practice of dhyana. “Sagunam dhyanam etat syat animadi gunapradam, Nirgunadhyana yuktasya samadhischa tato bhavet.” (Yogatattva Upanishad – 105) The Yogatattva Upanishad says that dharana on Akasa tatva for six ghatikas (two hours twenty four minutes) leads to Saguna dhyana which gives different siddhis. Nirguna dhyana leads to Samadhi within twelve ghatikas.

“Jadhi sailasama papam bistirnam bahuyojanam, Vidyate dhanayogena nanyobhedah kadachana.” (Dhyana bindu Upanishad -1)

As per Dhyana bindu Upanishad, dhyana yoga is the destroyer of papa (sin). The one Akshara (letter Om) should be contemplated upon as Brahman which is called Pranav meditation. The Svetasvatara Upanishad says if one keeps on meditating on the cosmic Self after death, he attains the third state, the state of over lordship that is he becomes one with Isvara. It says that if one meditates on Saguna Brahman, he becomes one with Isvara. This is called karma mukti (gradual liberation). If one meditates on Nirguna Brahman, he gets immediate liberation. It says that concentration on the eternal Brahman will save him from being drawn into public welfare activities and being shackled by this world. In Trisikhi-Brahmanopanisad it is said that both Saguna dhyana and Nirguna dhyana lead to mukti (liberation). If a Yogi is able to meditate, his mental preoccupations will be completely calmed down. He would have salvation in his grip. All the occult powers like Anima would be very much within his reach.

“Dhyanaena Atmani Pasyanti kechit Atmanam Atmana” (Bhagavad Gita - 13/24) As per Bhagavad Gita, dhyana (meditation) is better than jnana (intellectual knowledge) and jnana is better than abhyasa (practice).

“Dhyanat Pratyaksha Atmani” (Gheranda Samhita 1/11)

The Gheranda Samhita says, by dhyana one can get Pratyaksha Atman (self realization).

It is becoming one with the soul or higher self.

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CONCLUSION

Dhyana has been given importance since Vedic period. All religion encourage the practice of Dhyana for liberation. Thus it can be concluded that to remain oneself free from negative emotions like anxiety, stress, nervousness, fear, anger, depression, Ego, frustration and to attain the sense of calmness, soundness, one should practice Dhyana Daily. Dhyana maintain physical and mental stillness. Dhyana helps to attain one of the Purusarths (Moksha).

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