



## **CONCEPT OF RAJA YOGA AND ITS PRACTICAL UTILITY**

*Abani Sonowal*

*Baihata Chariali B.Ed College, Baihata Chariali, Assam*

*Mukesh Doley*

*Student, Dibrugarh University*

### **Abstract**

Raja Yoga literally means the “Royal Yoga” or “Royal Union” which is also known as Astanga Yoga and Classical Yoga. The Yogis of India discovered mystic secrets of mind through their inner experiences of Concentration, Meditation and Samadhi. The Raja Yoga sutra is an unparalleled work of ancient psychology, parapsychology and spirituality. It presents practical guidelines and disciplines for attaining success in every aspect of life leading to God realisation. In the view of Swami Vivekananda- Raja Yoga means the attainment of liberation by controlling the mind and the physical body. In Raja Yoga the mind and the body is controlled through the medium of some mental and physical disciplines. According to some Raja Yoga is the ultimate path for attaining liberation or union with God. Therefore it is called Raja Yoga – The king of all Yoga. Raja Yoga is consisted of eight steps i.e. YAMA, NIYAMA, ASANA, PRANAYAMA, PRATYAHARA, DHARANA, DHYANA and SAMADHI. Raja Yoga teaches us to uncover those experiences by observing the internal states through the daily practice of meditation. In Raja Yoga we do not need to believe anything because everything is based on practical experiences. The most practical utility of Raja Yoga is the physical and mental therapy. By keeping the physical body clean, flexible and well lubricated we can significantly reduce the catabolic process of deterioration. To get maximum benefits of Raja Yoga one has to combine the practice of yogasana, pranayama and meditation.

Regular practice of these three can help such diverse ailments such as diabetes, blood pressure, digestive disorders, heart condition etc. This paper is attempted to analyse the concept of Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda and its practical utility and how it is led an important role in practical of human.

**Keywords-** Raja Yoga, Royal Union, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

## **INTRODUCTION**

All knowledge is based on experiences. From the Yoga comes knowledge and knowledge again helps the Yogi. He who combines himself both Yoga and knowledge with him Lord is pleased. Yoga comes from the Sanskrit root “Yuj” which means to “Yuke” or “Unite”. This union describes the goal of Yoga, to unite us with the ultimate consciousness, which is sometimes called the Absolute, the Self, God, the Creator. Raja Yoga means the “Royal Yoga” or “Royal union” which is also known as the classical and Astanga Yoga. It was first introduced by a rishi who lived thousands of years ago and discovered a practical method so people could evolve to their highest nature and started to train others.

The Raja Yoga sutra is an unparalleled work of ancient psychology, parapsychology and spirituality. It presents practical guidelines and disciplines for attaining success in every aspect of life leading to God realisation. Swami Vivekananda, gives his view about the concept of Yoga which is known as the “Raja Yoga”. According to him Raja Yoga means the attainment of liberation by controlling the mind and the physical body. In the Raja Yoga the mind and the physical body is control through the medium of some mental and physical disciplines. It is called Raja Yoga – The king of all Yoga. There is nothing secret or mysterious in this.

In Raja Yoga we do not need to believe anything, because everything is based on practical experiences. We learn many things but this knowledge is not an end in itself. The goal is to find oneness with the Absolute Ultimate- Yoga. As this is the goal, the object of meditation must also be the formless Absolute Ultimate.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER**

In this paper some main aims and objectives have been mentioned. These are -

1. To analyse the concept Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda and its relevance to the society.
2. To spread awareness about Swami Vivekananda, his works and contributions to the nation.
3. To popularise the practice of Raja Yoga for their mental, physical and psychological benefits.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This paper is based on philosophical and textbook method. In the paper we have drawn the documentary sources like books, articles written by different experts, writers and authors. We have further collected various major information from the official published data, and also collected the data from books, journals and newspaper. Therefore an attempt has been made to analyse the above mentioned subject.

## **RAJA YOGA OF VIVEKANANDA**

Raja Yoga literally means the “Royal Yoga” or “Royal union” with God or attainment of liberation. Raja Yoga method is a relaxing, refreshing and recharging the mind. It helps you look inside to rediscover and reconnect with your original, spiritual essence and restore a healthy balance between your inner and outer world. The mind in Raja Yoga is simply an instrument through which it interacts with world including the physical body.

Raja Yoga of Swami Vivekananda is consisted in eight steps of – YAMA, NIYAMA, ASANA, PRANAYAMA, PRATYAHARA, DHARANA, DHYANA and SAMADHI.

**Yama:** The first step of Raja Yoga is Yama. Yama means, in general ‘Self Control’ or moral discipline. The disciplines of Yama include Non-Injury or abstention (ahimsa) from all kind of injury to any life. Never producing pain by thought, word and deed in any living being is called Ahimsa. Satya or Truthfulness is in thought and speech. By truth we attain the fruits of works. There is nothing higher except truth. Non covetousness

or Non-Stealing (asteya) means not taking others goods by stealth or by force. Chastity in thought, work and deed always and in all condition is called Brahmacharya. Non acceptance or not receiving anything from anybody, even when one is suffering terribly is called Aparigraha. When one receives anything from others his heart becomes impure, he becomes low, and he loses his independence, and becomes bound and attached. Unless an aspirant has attained success in the practice of these disciplines, the subsequent steps of Raja Yoga will be ineffective.

**Niyama:** Niyama consists in austerity, tapas; Study, svadhyaya; Contentment, shantosa; Cleanliness or purity, shaucha; and worshipping God, Isvara-pranidhana. Fasting or in other ways controlling body is called physical tapas. The regular habit of study of religious book, repeating the Vedas and other mantras, by which the sattva material in the body is purified, is called study or svadhyaya. There are three sorts of repetition of these mantras. The audible or loud is verbal, the semi-verbal is where only the lips move, but no sound is heard and the inaudible repetition of the mantras, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning is called the mental repetition and that is the highest of all. Contentment is the habits of being content, with what comes of itself without undue exertion. There are two sorts of purity or cleanliness- external and internal. External purification means the purification of the body by water or other materials as bathing etc. Purification of mind is by truth and by all the other virtues is what is called the internal purification. Both are necessary. It is not such that a man should be internally pure but externally impure or dirty. No one will be a Yogi until he has both. Isvara-pranidhana or worshipping God is by praise, by thought and by devotion.

**Asana:** The third is called Asana. The only thing to understand about it is leaving the body free, holding the chest, shoulders, and head straight. The practice of asana is described in Hatha Yoga which is mainly concerned with maintenance of the health and attainment of the longevity of the body. The discipline of this is as much necessary for attainment of the concentration as that of the mind. If the body is not completely free from diseases and other disturbing influences it is very difficult to attain concentration. It prescribes many rules for preserving the vital energy, and strengthening and purifying the

body and the mind. The asana or postures recommended all the limbs especially the nervous system can be brought under control and prevented from producing disturbances in the mind.

**Pranayama:** Pranayama generally means the control of breath. Breathing is one of the many exercises through which we get to the real pranayama. Pranayama means the control of Prana, means the vital forces in one's own body and Ayama means controlling them. There are three sorts of pranayama- the very simple, the middle and the very high. When you begin with twelve seconds, it is the simple pranayama. When you begin with twenty four seconds, it is the middle pranayama. That pranayama is the best which begins with thirty-six seconds. There is a mantra called Gayatri. In one pranayama three Gayatris repeated.

According to Indian philosophers, the universe consists of two primordial elements Akasha and Prana. Akasha is the ultimate or basic stuff out of which all the gross form, from galaxy to atoms, from microscopic cell to perfected human and divine bodies, take shape and into which they resolve when they are dissolved or disintegrated to the pristine condition.

Prana means what works upon akasha and shape it into all forms or manifestation. Just as the Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana, the infinite, omnipresent, manifesting power of this universe. At the beginning and at the end of a cycle everything becomes akasha, and all the forces that are in the universe resolve back into the prana.

**Psychic Prana:** The term psychic prana includes in a broad sense all the vital energy working in the nervous and other system of the body, and particularly the latent or coiled up energy at the base of the spinal column, technically called Kundalini or coiled up power. Kundalini has to understand in the context of the yogic conception of the nerve currents in the human body. Modern anatomy teaches that the vertebral column has the spinal cord running through it, starting from the brain and ending in the lumbar vertebrae as fine nerve fibres.

### **Control of Psychic Prana**

i) Breath in and out in a measured way, mentally uttering OM in the process. Breath may be comfortably deep, but is not to be held in. One should breath with awareness i.e. consciously unlike what we normally do.

ii) Slowly take in the breath through the left nostril, imagining that you are drawing in energy through the Ida and sending the nerve current down the spinal column and striking forcibly on the Muladhara, the seat of the Kundalini. Holding the current there for a while, then breath out slowly through the right nostril, i.e. bring out the current through the pingala.

iii) In the third kind of pranayana air is in hald and exhald as above according to the same time schedule but air is not retained in.

**Pratyahara:** Pratyahara literally means the “gathering towards”. The organs of the senses are acting outwards and coming in contact with external objects. Bringing them under the control of the will is what is called Pratyahara. We retain the impression of an object only when the mind is attached to it through a sense organ. By means of Pratyahara the Yogi can check the outward inclination of the mind and face it from tharlltdown of the senses. The aspirant may allow the mind to move any way it likes, himself remaining relaxed and witness its restless movement without trying to suppress his thoughts. Whether they are good or bad he should let them come to the surface. Thus he will be able to know his inner nature, such knowledge is, in itself a great gain.

**Dharana:** After practice of Pratyahara, one should go to the next step i.e. Dharana, which means holding the mind at a certain point. One may start holding the mind fixed to an exclusively external object; for external concentration is comparatively easy. Or one may try to feel only one spot or part of the body, say the hand to the exclusion of the rest of the body. Or one may try to fixed the mind in the centre of one’s being, which is called ordinarily the heart. To facilitate the Dharana or fixing of the mind, the help of imagination can also be sought. One may imagine a lotus flower or a flame in the centre of one’s own being and fixed the mind exclusively on it.

**Dhyana:** Limited to one spot, making that spot the base, a particular kind of mental wave rises; these are not swallowed up by other kinds of waves but by degrees become prominent, when all the others recede and finally disappeared. Next the multiplicity of these waves give place to unity and one wave is left in the mind. This is Dharana, meditation. In this stage the mind acquires the power to think of an object uninterruptedly. The flow of the Yogi's mind to the object is unbroken, like the uninterrupted sound of gong struck with a stick.

**Samadhi:** The last step of Raja Yoga is Samadhi or total absorption, a state of mind in which the Yogi rejects the external part- the name and the form of the object of meditation and contemplates only its essence. When no basis is necessary, when the whole of the mind has become one wave, one formedness is called Samadhi or when the mind goes beyond this line of self-consciousness it is called the Samadhi or super-consciousness.

### **PRACTICAL UTILITY OF RAJA YOGA**

The most important benefit of Yoga is the physical and mental therapy. By keeping the body clean, flexible and well lubricated, we can significantly reduce the catabolic process of cell deterioration. To get the maximum benefit of Yoga one has to combine the practice of Yogasana, Pranayama and Meditation.

Regular practise of asana, pranayama and meditation can help such diverse ailments such as diabetes, blood pressure, digestive disorders, heart condition etc.

### **PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS**

Physicians and scientists are discovering brand new health benefits of Yoga every day. Studies show it can relieve the symptoms of several common and potentially life threatening, illness, such as arthritits, chronic fatigue, diabetes aids, asthma and obesity.

### **MENTAL BENEFITS**

The practise of Raja Yoga meditation or intellectual communion with God brings into the soul many powers. Of these, eight are very important-

1. Power to pack up
2. Power to tolerate
3. Power to accommodate
4. Power to judgement
5. Power to discrimination
6. Power to face
7. Power to co-operate
8. Power to withdraw

### **CULTURAL BENEFITES**

It includes- improvement of blood circulation to all abdominal organs, vitalization of pelvis and nerves of the lower back.Helps in seminal weaknesses.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the above discussion we have come to the conclusion that Raja Yoga of Vivekananda is really very important for the present society. In Raja Yoga we have find some important information which is very necessary in the life of the human being. The teaching and the practice of Raja Yoga can change a human being. The Yogi who practices Raja Yoga can attain liberation. This Yoga can give the Yogi mental, physical and psychological development and purification. Purification is of two types – mental and physical or external and internal. It is true that a Yogi should be internally and externally purified.

The practice of eight step of Yoga is not easy one. If the first two steps are not completely success then the subsequent steps will be ineffective. A Yogi should physically and mentally fit. The true Yogi should never forget that the body is his, and he the body's. Health and bodily care are needed for Yogi. It is true that the practise of Yoga gives more benefit to the Yogi or who practices. Therefore we may say that the concept of Raja Yoga is very important and has its practical utility in the society.



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