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“An Overview Of Yoga In The Context Of Ancient Yogic Literatures”

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Abstract: –

Ancient India handed a true treasure “Yoga” to the world. Yoga is the art and science of living a healthy life which has been passed down from the generation to generation since the earliest times. The sources of Yoga are found in various Literatures. Yoga is also mentioned in the vast collection of scriptures called Vedas but it is the Upanishads which provide the main foundation of yoga teachings. The two massive epics i.e., Mahabharata and Ramayana are the best known for all yogic scriptures. The backbone of Yoga is furnished by Patanjali's Yoga Sutra. The classical texts on hatha yoga ‘Hatha Yoga Pradipika’, Gherand Samhita and Shiva Samhita describes different asanas and breathing exercises that forms the basis of practices of Yoga. Today, modern men have adopted this oldest science of life as a tool for keeping the systems of the body and the mind in radiant health. Today the interest in yoga is again at high pace. Scholar is now putting an effort to describe various aspects of Yoga by overviewing the literatures from various sources.

Keywords: , Yoga, Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, Hatha Yoga Gherand Samhita, Shiv Samhita

Introduction: India, is noted for its sages and seers. It is said that the great rishis lived, leaving a rich legacy. There has been a long succession of them from remote ages to modern times. It is wrong to suppose that they were always other-worldly- minded. They did not shun material happiness but lived a full rich life, enjoying all comforts but carefully kept in view the ideal of a strictly disciplined life, which always aimed at reaching Godhead. Hence, their scientific advance was coeval with their moral and spiritual grandeur. The Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas are full of stories, where highly developed souls were in communion with heavenly spirits and through their help satisfied their earthly needs. The word "yoga," which refers to a way of life, comes from the root "yuj," which means "to connect" or "unite." Thus, the term "Yoga" originally denoted a joining or connecting of different things. This meaning of the word first appears in the Rigveda, when a Vedic seer inquires as to who has discovered the yoga, or the relationship between the words in verses. In a similar vein, the term

"yoga" has also appeared in numerous Vedic texts—also known by the titles of various Satras, Brahmanas, and Aranyakas—in the meaning of "connection" or "conjunction." 'Yoga' has been used in the Atharvaveda to refer to a group of bullocks and, implicitly, to a plough pulled by a large number of bullocks. These diverse examples suggest that the word "yoga" may have its earliest meaning. The Vedas which is the sage of knowledge has a unique contribution to the world philosophy and culture. Upanishads are also well-defined essence of the knowledge of Vedas is considered as foundation of yoga teachings. According to Patanjali, the father of yoga ideology and technology, the activities of the mind need discipline. So long as these activities of the personality-complex (cittavrtti) continue, man is open to affections at various levels of his consciousness. At his existential level, his needs and problems relate to the body, good health and longevity.

Schools of Yoga: Yoga is not just popular in India but also in many European countries. For instance, hatha yoga has become more and more popular in North America in recent years. In India, a broad variety of yoga forms are practised, including hatha, raja, jnana, integral, karma, bhakti, mantra, kundalini, sahaja, and laya. Hatha yoga incorporates asanas, pranayamas, and kriyas (purification practises including breathing exercises and the six categories of purification methods known as shatkarmas) into its practise. Around 900 BC, the ancient sage Patanjali created the eight levels of yoga that are together known as ashtanga yoga. Thus, pranayama, meditation, and hatha yoga are all combined in integral yoga. In the Indian subcontinent, integral yoga is often referred to as yoga of change.

Methodology: For the present study, Sanskrit literature like Bhagwat Gita, Maharshi Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, various text on hatha Yoga such as Swami Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita and Shiva Samhita from the ancient period to 17th century was reviewed and a modest effort was made to understand the term yoga and its value for the welfare of humanity. There are various techniques of yoga given in different yogic text which helps in attaining self-realization, maintaining wholesome development and overall life style. These literatures were not filled with strict practise requirements, but rather with ideas of bliss, peace of mind, divinity, and intellect.

Explanation of Yoga in various Ancient Yogic Literatures:

Bhagavad Gita The Epic Mahabharatha comprises the Bhagavad Gita, an ancient Hindu scripture and the sacred text of yoga. The discussion between Lord Krishna and Arjuna contains eighteen chapters and provides the appropriate "Yoga Bhava" or "Yogic attitude" for every human predicament. The term "Yoga" appears frequently throughout the Bhagavad Gita. However, the eighteen chapters are all entitled "Yoga." Lord Krishna gradually leads Arjuna out of Vishadha, or depression, and into a mental state that enables him to perform his warrior responsibility. Yoga Uchayati Samatva (Yoga is equal mindedness in all conditions) of the Gita's well-known yogic ideas. The basic principles such as Karma Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Jnana Yoga, and Dhyana Yoga, which have been profoundly ingrained in Hindu culture since the Vedic era, were first systematically defined and expanded within the context of the Bhagavad Gita. The Gita is organised into 18 chapters and contains 700 shlokas, or verses. The Gita mentions eighteen different yogas because each chapter is titled after a different yoga. The Gita is divided into three divisions by some scholars: the first six chapters, including 280 shlokas, address Karma yoga; the middle six chapters, comprising 209 shlokas, address Bhakti yoga;

and the final six chapters, comprising 211 shlokas, address Jnana yoga. This split is a little wrong, though, because each chapter covers a different facet of Jnana yoga, Bhakti, and Karma.

Karma Yoga: Yoga Karmasu Kaushaam (Yoga is skill in action). Karma yoga is the yoga of action. Duty also has the ability to bind or to open pathways to freedom. When we perform our duties with expectations and desire, we become slaves. Freedom comes from doing one's duty without desires or expectations. The additional title for this is Yagna, indicating sacrifice. This kind of conduct is also known as Niskam Karma.

Jnana Yoga

Na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate Tat swayam Yoga samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati
Nothing could be more pure than Jyana Yoga or wisdom. A person who has reached the apex of this pathway realises this inner conceptualization. Wisdom yoga is known as Jnana yoga. This is not the same as information; this is wisdom or awareness. Nowadays, information is abundant—in fact, it is a flood. However, intellectual ability is actually lacking, and the Bhagwat Gita teaches us how to acquire it. Through Jnana Yoga, we can discern between things that are good or terrible, right or incorrect, transient or permanent, lies or the truth, mortal and immortal, etc.

Bhakti Yoga

Purusah sa parah partha bhaktya labhyas tv ananyaya Yasyantah–sthani bhutani yena sarvam idam tatam
The path to the ultimate lord is pure devotion. Even though He lives in His dwelling, He permeates everything and is found in everything. The path of surrender, faith, and devotion is known as Bhakti Yoga. The word "bhakthi" is solely used to describe love that is dedicated towards the Lord. When this love is directed towards the Lord, bliss is created, and we reach Sath. –swaroopa chitananda (being, awareness, bliss)

Patanjali's Yoga Sutra: "योगश्चित्तवृत्तनिरोधः " Yoga is the practice of preventing the mind (Chitta) from arising in different forms (Vrittis). It is the giving up of mental diversion. The 196 brief verses that make up Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are meant to guide practitioners of yoga towards wisdom and selfrealization. Many people consider the text to be the foundation of yoga philosophy. It is estimated to have been written in or around 400 C.E. It is recognised by many as the original compilation of the formal philosophy of yoga. The Yoga Sutras have brief verses. Numerous subsequent Indian academics examined them and disseminated their commentary, including the 350–450 CE Vyasa Bhashya. Raja yoga is another name for Patanjali's style of yoga. The translation provided by I. K. Taimni reads, "Yoga is the inhibition (nirodha%) of the modifications (oltti) of the mind (citta)". The sutra is translated by Swami Vivekananda as follows: "Yoga is restraining the mind–stuff (Citta) from taking various forms (Vrittis)." The works of Patanjali also served as the foundation for the "Ashtanga Yoga" system, also known as "Eight–Limbed Yoga." The 29th Sutra of Yoga Sutras Book 2 is the source of this eight–limbed idea. These are: The five "abstentions" of Yama: Ahimsa (non–harming, nonviolence towards other living things). Satya (non–falsehood, truthfulness). Brahmacharya

(celibacy, faithfulness to a spouse), Aparigraha (non-avarice, non-possessiveness), and Asteya (non-stealing). The five "observances" known as Niyama are as follows: Sauca (purity, clarity of mind, speech, and body); Santosha (contentment, acceptance of others and one's circumstances); Tapas (persistent meditation, perseverance, austerity); Svadhyaya (study of self, self-reflection, study of Vedas); and Ishvara-Pranidhana (contemplation of God/Supreme Being/True Self, etc.). Asana: Which literally translates to "seat" and is used to describe the seated position for meditation in Patanjali's Sutras. "Suspending Breath" (Pranayama): "Ayama" means to restrain or stop, and "prana" is breath. Moreover understood as mastery over the life force. Pratyahara ("Abstraction"): Removing the sense organs from things outside of oneself. Focusing attention on a single object is known as dharana, or "concentration". Dhyana (or "Meditation"): Profound reflection on the nature of the meditation's subject. Samadhi, or "liberation"; a state in which awareness and the subject of meditation merge. According to yoga schools, each person discovers their blissful, liberating sense of self as a separate individual when they reach the state of moksha.

Study of text on Hatha Yoga: According to theos Bernard, in his book Hath Yoga, the discipline of Hatha Yoga involves a number of mental and physical controls, but breath control is at the heart of them all. The word "hatha" comes from the Sanskrit roots "ha" (sun) and "tha" (moon), which represent, respectively, the "sun breath" that comes from the right nostril and the "moon breath" that comes from the left nostril. Hatha yoga is the combining of these two breaths because the word yoga comes from the root 'yuj', which means to join. It is thought that the effect causes a mental illness known as samadhi. Despite being explained by myths, this is a real condition that can be both subjectively felt and objectively observed; it is not a fictitious or legendary state. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, and Siva Samhita are the three classic texts that contain the techniques of Hatha Yoga. These are the most significant texts on the topic.

- Yogi Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradipika (15th century)
- Shiva Samhita, unidentified author (late 17th century or circa 1500 C.E.)
- Yogi Gheranda's Gheranda Samhita (late 17th century)
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Hatha yoga Pradipika: Throughout the study, the Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika (abbreviated HYP) is used to refer to one of the most popular and accessible books on hatha-yoga. Because the word "pradipika" means "that which sheds light," the work's title translates as "Light on, or illumination of, hatha-yoga". Its author-ship is attributed to Svātmārāma Yogin (or Yogindra), who is believed to have lived in the fourteenth-century C.E.

The HYP comprises a total of 389 slokas, a sloka being a Sanskrit verse usually consisting of two pithily composed lines. The work is divided into four upadesas (lessons or chapters), containing 67, 78, 130 and 114 slokas respectively. The 'first' or 'principal' chapter (prathamopadeśa) deals, amongst other things, with the right environment for hatha practice, certain ethical requirements, and the yoga-asanas or 'postures'. The dvitayopadesa (second lesson) principally concerns pranayama—the 'harnessing' of vital energy through various modes of 'retention' (kumbhaka)—but

also discusses the sat-karmani (six [cleansing] acts) which are required to aid the purification 10 of vital channels (nādis). In the trtiyopadesa (third lesson), the subject of mudra (sealing) is addressed; and the caturtho-padesa (fourth lesson) discusses the state of samadhi, which in its highest form is the ultimate goal of yoga, and the practice of nada-anusandhana (meditation upon the inner sound) which leads to that goal. The Hatha yoga pradipika was composed by Svātmanāma in the 15th century CE as a compilation of the earlier hatha yoga texts. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Gheranda samhita are derived from older Sanskrit texts. In Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Svātmanāma introduces his system as preparatory stage for physical purification that the body practices for higher meditation or Yoga. It is based on asanas (postures) and pranayama (breathing techniques). Hatha Yoga Pradipika lists 35 great Hatha Yoga siddhas or masters Ādi Natha, Matsyendranath and Gorakshanath. It includes information about shatkarma (purification), asana, pranayama (subtle energy control), chakras (centers of energy), kundalini (instinct), bandhas (muscle force), kriyas (techniques; manifestations of kundalini), shakti (sacred force), nadis (channels), and mudras (symbolic gestures) among other topics. (Hiralal sharma)

Gheranda Samhita: Like Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Shiva Samhita is also one of the classic texts in yoga. In late 17th-century Gheranda Samhita was composed which serves as an encyclopaedia on Hatha yoga. The Gheranda-Samhita ('Collection of Gheranda'), is a work of 351 slokas, divided into seven upadeśas. Each upadesa deals with an aspect of the sevenfold system (sapta-sādhana) dictated by the sage Gheranda to his disciple, Chandakāpāli. Georg Feuerstein dates the work to the 'late seventeenth-century'," and It is generally accepted to have happened after the HYP, from which a number of slokas have been extracted. It is interesting that Gheranda uses the term ghatastha-yoga when Caṇḍakāpāli asks him to teach him the path to attain the knowledge of truth (tattva-jñāna) in the second ūloka. Given that ghata signifies "vessel" or "container," This could also be translated as "yoga of the vessel (of the Self)," where the "vessel" refers to the entire physical psycho organism—rather than just the gross physical body—through which the Self (ātman, puruṣa) perceives the outside world.

षट्कर्मणा शोधिञ्च आसिं भवेद्दृढम् ।
 रुद्रया स्थिरता चैव प्रत्याहारेण धीरता ॥ 10 ॥
 प्राणायामाल्लाघवञ्चध्यानात् प्रत्यक्षरामश्चि ।
 सर्वाश्च धि च शिश्चलमपतं रुस्थिरेवं ि संशयः ॥

11 ॥

The Gheranda Samhita commences by referring to shatkarma, or the body's purification rituals. They are as follows: dhauti, which is a cleansing of the head and the alimentary canal from the mouth to the anus; basti, which is a cleansing of the large intestine; nauli, which is a strengthening and massaging technique for the muscles and organs of the abdomen; kapalbhati, a kind of pranayama; and trataka, which is a mind-concentrating technique. These are regarded as

the six hatha yoga purification techniques. These body-cleansing techniques were regarded by Sage Gheranda as the fundamental aspect of yoga. Asanas are then defined; Sage Gheranda primarily explains positions that strengthen and stabilise the body. Once total control over the body has been established, the goal is to reach a point where there is no more pain or discomfort. Sage Gheranda talks about twenty-five mudras in the third dimension that can be used to regulate prana flow within the body. He thinks that the body generates heat and energy internally through prana, or energy. In advanced sadhana, the body produces heat when an individual sits in an asana for extended periods of time; the body temperature only decreases if the internal prana shakti is uncontrolled, resulting in the loss of energy. However, the prana shakti, or energy, is drawn out of the body through the use of mudras and refuse to deteriorate. For the purpose of sustaining prana within the body, Sage Gheranda explains the mudras. Pratyahara is referred to as the fourth dimension after mudras. The body is first cleansed, and illnesses are eliminated. After that, asana stability is attained. Mudras are then used to balance and control prana. The mind naturally acquires itself while the senses are under control in pratyahara. According to Sage Gheranda, it is simple to awaken the pranas during the pratyahara state, when the mind is integrating and becoming one-pointed. It takes no effort to awaken the pranas and absorb the mind in that subtle state. Following pratyahara, awakening occurs naturally and one has experiences at the subtle level, including perception of the invisible universe. Pranayama is listed by Sage Gheranda as the fifth dimension. When pranayama is done consistently, the duration of the inhale and exhale is equal, and the inhalation and exhalation are usually counted. This practise is continued by Sage Gheranda, although mantras are employed in place of counting. Every pranayama technique specified in the Gheranda Samhita is done while reciting a mantra. Sage Gheranda increases the potency of pranayama by adding mantras. The vibrations of the mantra are felt when it is chanted while breathing, which heightens focus and generates pranic energy. One maintains control over this awakened energy through the combined practise of pratyahara and pranayama; it never becomes uncontrollable. The sixth dimension follows, which is dhyana, or meditation. Meditation naturally arises when the mental state is absorbed and the prana is awakened. Three types of meditation are mentioned by Sage Gheranda: one-pointed meditation (ekachita dhyana), inner meditation (antaranga dhyana), and external meditation (bahiranga dhyana). While inner realisation is awakened in one-pointed meditation, awareness of the experiences created in the subtle mental levels is present in external meditation. Important pointers on how to enter the seventh dimension, samadhi, are provided along with a description of deep meditation. Ghatastha yoga is another term used by Sage Gheranda to refer to his seven limbs of yoga. Ghatastha yoga translates to "body-based yoga." Ghata signifies both the body (sharira) and a pot or pitcher.. He had witnessed the body as a mud pot, formed by matter and filled with all that God has bestowed upon it, including the senses, the mind, knowledge, wisdom, and ego, which collectively constitute the individual's pitcher. Therefore, the body is the starting point for self-realization in Sage Gheranda's ghatastha yoga. By controlling the mental and emotional levels through the body, spiritual realisation is awakened. This is what he thinks

Siva Samhita: The Śiva-Samhita, also known as the 'Collection of [the knowledge of] Śiva,' is thought to have originated around the same time as the Gheranda-Samhita, but its concepts proceed back much further. It is presented as though the god Śiva himself is speaking directly. The author presents a yoga-śāstra, or yoga doctrine, that draws from later Tantric material as well as the Advaita (nondualist) school of Vedānta. It is significantly longer than the other primary texts examined here, with a total of 645 slokas spread across its five chapters. An introduction to Advaita metaphysics is given in the first chapter, wherein it is stated that the yogin's task is to realise the unity of the

individual self and the universal Self (§ 1.62), that is, to perceive the true nature of reality by 'dissolving' the veil of maya. A brief discussion of the human subtle body matrix is covered in the second chapter, and prāṇāyāma and āsana are addressed in detail in the third chapter. Mudra is dealt with in the fourth chapter, and the fifth—which is by far the longest—discusses four types (or facets) of yoga: mantra, hatha, laya, and raja yoga. It also contains additional descriptions of the six major cakras. Shiva Samhita is a classical text on Hatha yoga, just like Gheranda Samhita and Hatha Yoga Pradipika. This book's author is still unidentified. The text is displayed as an address from the Hindu deity Shiva to his spouse Parvati. Some scholars believe that this text was written in the 17th or 18th century. Shiva Samhita is divided into five chapters; a brief description of each of these chapters, as translated by Srisa Chanra Vasu, is available. The text's five chapters contain details concerning the following subjects: 84 asanas, including nadis, ida, pingala, sushumna, prana, ten types of pranās, obstacles in yoga, standards and signs for accomplishment, signs and indications of nadi purification, description of four essential asanas, nadi shodhana and its method, duration of nadi purification, mantra yoga, shadow gazing, and Anahata dhvani (sound). James Mallinson, however, believes that the text had to have been written before the year 500 CE. Mallinson proposes that the Shiva Samhita may have been composed in or near Varanasi. Shiva Samhita, according to Mallinson, is a book on Tantra and yoga instruction.

- The complex physiology of the body is described in the Shiva Samhita. Only four of the 84 asanas are thoroughly explained.
- A description of the five different types of pranās and how they are regulated.
- The text discusses tantric procedures, mudras, meditation, and Yogic philosophy.
- This text claims that a common householder can practice yoga and reap its benefits.
- The first chapter discusses various liberation techniques, including philosophical analysis.
- The second chapter's primary focus is the inner fire, or jiva and nadis.
- The third chapter goes into great detail regarding the four stages of yoga, the importance of the guru, the five elemental visualisations, the winds in the body, and the four asanas.
- The eleven mudras that lead to yogic attainments are found in fourth chapter.
- The fifth and longest chapter involves a wide range of subject matter, including the "king of kings of yogas," four types of aspirants, esoteric centres, the shadow gazing technique, seven lotuses, internal sound, and bodily energies (the kundalini). It also includes the global mantra.

S.No	Name of the Sanskrit Literature	Given by	Period	Type of Yoga	Sloka
1.	Bhagwat Gita	Maharishi Veda Vyasa	400BCE - 400CE	Karma yoga	योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्
2.	Yoga sutra	Patanjali	2 nd century BCE	Ashtanga yoga	योगश्चित्तवृत्तनिरोधः

3.	Hath yog a pradipika	Swami swatmar ama	15th century	Hatha Yoga	प्रणम्य श्री-गुरुं नाथुं स्वात्मारामेण योगगना । के वलुं राज-योगाय हठगवद्योपगिश्यते ॥ २ ॥
4.	Gherand Samhita	Maharis hi gher	Late 17th century		शोधनुं दृढता चैव स्थैर्यं धैर्यं च लाघवम् । प्रत्यक्षं च गनगलिप्तुं च घटस्थसप्तसाधनम् ॥ ९ ॥

Discussion:

Through our overview of the major studies exploring yoga including Literatures as Bhagwata Gita, Yoga Sutra of Maharishi Patanjali, Hatha Yoga Pradipika of Swami Swatmarama, Gherand Samhita and Shiva Samhita we have found that yoga is the way of life. Yoga believes that the problem of man is man, and that everything done for him outside of himself is an artificial conditioning and not real. It was accepted in ancient India that man is the cause of his own bondage or freedom (manah eva manusyanam karanam bandhamoksayoho). This is axiomatic in Yoga. Bhagwat Gita describes the idea of "Yoga" as a way of life that could encompass every aspect of a man's existence in his ultimate work with clarity and audacity. Lord Krishna tells the devotee Arjuna in these eighteen chapters, each of which is labelled "Yoga," that yoga deals with acquiring the "proper attitude" of mind in every circumstance. Maharshi Patanjali has given Eight-fold Path or Ashtanga Yoga for attaining moksha or salvation. Some of the main Hatha yoga techniques aimed at improving physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being are described in the classic texts Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, and Siva Samhita.

CONCLUSION:

Yoga has a long history and is deeply ingrained in our culture. The ancient sages were highly knowledgeable and experienced in the fields of physiology as well as psychology. They were deeply familiar with the body's metaphysical system.

They were skilled at conveying various anatomical and complex functions of the body in symbolic form. The body, in their opinion, was a tool for higher sadhana. They were concerned about the relevance of human birth for higher yogic practises and awareness. In addition to postures and breathing practises, diet, site of establishment, place of practise, ethical values and punctuality, and overall lifestyle were all given consideration. The seers have warned of many challenges and diverting elements. Modern life has become hurried and competitive. However, the individual is unable to escape the day-to-day tensions and odd problems that he encounters in his daily existence. He loses mental equilibrium and total health, including physical fitness, as a result of the conditions. This is a critical time to recognise the value of Yoga as stated in traditional writings and to put it into practise in true words and spirits, so that humanity can live a healthy and peaceful life in harmony with the environment.

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