

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MORAL LIFE AND VALUES IN YOGA PHILOSOPHY

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### ABSTRACT

The Indian philosophy is very rich in teaching moral values in day to day life. The practice of *yoga* draws the attention of human beings in the present society, which reflects the very idea of how it can be acceptable to everybody. There are no moral values in our daily life and *yoga* can find useful to lead the individual and our society through its teachings. This paper discusses all the above points briefly.

**KEYWORDS:** Patañjali, *Yoga*, *Aṣṭāṅgayoga*, *Yama*, Values, Morality, Education & Practitioner

### INTRODUCTION

The Indian tradition has contributed much towards the development of human life through its Vedic teaching. Everybody accepts its richness and universal outlook in solving conflicts. Many problems are of different types, such as tension, social disharmony, violence, stress, misunderstanding, non-acceptability, ego, jealousy, hatred and terrorism. Due to such problems, there is unhappiness and uneasiness within every individual.

### NECESSITY OF MORAL VALUES

Everywhere, there is the destruction of moral values. Day by day people forget the quality of humanness. Every one of us wants the world to be in a better place to live in. But, how far one tries to solve this problem? We normally realize that, our problems are due to human apathy, non-co-operation, selfishness, intolerance, cruelty, pride, injustice, irresponsibility, carelessness, hatred, anger, violence and negativity. To solve our problems, every one of us needs a change in our attitude, which will be of helping in protecting moral, social, and spiritual values.

### EXECUTION OF YOGIC PRACTICE

The human beings are always prone to negative values in modern times. The morality is going down in every walk of life. Nobody is satisfied neither in house nor in office and society. The values must be practiced and one should always be in a state of satisfaction. The practice of *yoga* is universal in nature. *Yoga* has certain solutions to offer right type of training of the mind. *Yoga* is nothing but controlling the mind<sup>1</sup>. The *aṣṭāṅgayoga* has the function to enhance our personality by developing human values<sup>2</sup>. In this regard, the human values are those key factors, which can bring harmony, peace and individual training. But *yamas* are the key factors for values in our life. *Yoga* has human values and has an impact in society. Out of these eight steps of *yoga*, the first one is most important and it must be strictly followed and Patañjali introduced such a practice. These values are universal. The *Sūtra* says that these forms of abstention are basic rules of conduct. They must be practiced without any restrictions as to time, place, purpose or caste considerations (II.31). The individual must follow the necessary prescriptions for leading a moral standard through yogic practice.

### **Yama**

The word *yama* means the activity of the control of the body, speech and mind. Abstention is a great value among all values. By this, the person will strengthen their muscles and they will develop greater will power. They will concentrate their scattered mind. This abstention protects us from the lure of sense objects. This is the social code of conduct. This abstention is named *yama* in Patañjali *Yogasūtra* (Yo. su). The first step of *yama* consists of restraining harmful physical urges and wholesome thought and impulses. This restraint eventually helps to develop tremendous will power. *Yama* consists of the following five practices<sup>3</sup>: 1. Non killing or Non violence; 2. Truthfulness; 3. Non-Stealing or Non-theft; 4. Celibacy or Continence; 5. Non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts or Non-accumulation. This, as the first aspect of the eightfold discipline, Patañjali has given a code of social conduct which is purely psychological and ethical. The human being has to follow a moral life in order to be happy and free from stress.

### **AhiṂsā**

Everybody now is under violent behavior due to modern problems and innumerable wants. To fulfill such desires, one undertakes an unfair means to achieve it. For this, he sometimes commits many mistakes and violence. The foremost vow is now concerned with non-violence. Patañjali has prescribed this attitude only because we cannot all of a sudden start loving all those whom perhaps we have hated all the while. Hence, as a first stage of pure positive love, we must realize the futility of hatred and attitude of violence. Vyāsa has rightly noted that this is the most important rule and in case of conflicts, the other rules are to be subordinated to this fundamental rule and not vice versa. Violence is based on tension and it adds to further tensions. Of course, as body and mind form an integrated whole, one cannot have an attitude of non-violence and go on violating in the physical deeds. Hence, the commentators have rightly described non-violence on three levels viz-physical, vocal and mental. The Practice of non-violence is of three types' namely-mental level, vocal level and physical level. In view of its motives, intensity and consequences. Hence, the conscious attempts to build up a good moral character can never be looked upon as undesirable from the view point of psychology. Patañjali has prescribed a norm by which one can judge whether one has sufficiently advanced in the practice of non-violence. According to him, when perfection is reached in the practice of non-violence, not only does the practitioner give up all ideas of enmity in his own mind but even others are unable to entertain any such feeling in his vicinity<sup>4</sup>. Enmity has to be stopped in all these three levels. Actually speaking, enmity has no definition as it can occur to any one and any time<sup>5</sup>. The people have to follow the principle in everyday life.

### **Satya**

Satya is regarded as the highest value among all types. Truthfulness means truthfulness in thought, speech and action. It is important because it controls human behavior. Our words and thoughts must be truthful. It must always be in conformity with the facts. This is the true nature of spirituality.

Thought (*mana*) -----Speech (*vakya*) -----Action (*karma*)

Truthfulness among all leads to a careful and systematic life. With the basis of this truthfulness in speech, thought and action, one can perform one's duty with perfection. It generates great mental strength. The major obstacle of this truthfulness is selfishness. According to Patañjali truthfulness is the second vow of our code of social conduct<sup>6</sup>. If we tell false, we get more frustrations. But falsehood requires another falsehood to conceal it and it goes on ad infinitum. According to Patañjali, there are five kinds of thought waves – some painful, others are not painful. Here, we have to

notice that what seems painful is not really painful, and what seems not painful is really painful. So, truthfulness has a great value in our life and education. Falsehood adds infinitive falsehood. But truth on the contrary is much more natural and does not require any further psychological effort. Patañjali declares that when one reaches perfection in such a practice of truth, the mind becomes the very basis of the actions and their results. A word of such a practitioner of truth gets a wonderful power and makes the thing follow it<sup>7</sup>. Truth becomes a part and parcel of our nature and every word uttered by us proves to be true if this happens, then there will be balance in our home, office and society.

### **Asteya**

To grab things of others is Selfishness and immoral act. Stealing is an extremely selfish work. —During the adolescent periods, the boys and girls have a tremendous change in their physical, psychological emotion and social aspects. They confine themselves in various negative emotional moods like anger, jealousy, worry, material love. Such extreme selfishness leads to stealing. In examinations, most of the students have faith in malpractice. This is one type of severe stealing. Pupils come to educate themselves, but this single work of stealing leads them in the opposite direction. And for this single negative value all forms of exploitation, profiteering, black-marketing, corruption and bribery spread all over the society. Anyone coveting wealth is actually poor. A person with no craving for wealth is truly its master and is the wealthiest of people. Patañjali has given a norm viz. when the practice of non-theft becomes firm and perfect, all jewels and valuables come to him. Some may ask how it is possible that valuable things will come to us without any human agency. That valuable things are the inner powers is mentioned in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* chapter III or in the *Vibhūtipāda*". Such powers can be achieved evidently when the attitude of non-theft becomes firm and perfect. Non-theft leads to selflessness. It minimizes our wants and concentrates our wants on one object. This leads to power and by this power we can buy the whole universe (II.37). Hence, the practice of non theft leads to tremendous progress in our life. This is also helpful for a high moral standard of once personality.

### **Brahmacarya**

Now-a-days, the sexual instinct is creating more hazardous problems in society. Students disturb themselves for this type of selfish love. For this, pupils deviate from their study and they become antisocial. This makes a man an animal. Society becomes polluted for this reason. This is the root cause of all inhuman activities. Patañjali's code of social conduct is celibacy. Celibacy is conservation of sexual energy (II.38), other than the conservation of precious physical and mental energy. Celibacy has many wonderful benefits. It enhances vigour, increases the capacity of the brain, sharpens memory and enables the celibate person to understand the deeper and subtler meaning of the scriptures. According to Patañjali just remaining unmarried and avoiding direct sexual intercourse cannot be said to be real continence. According to Indian thought, intercourse is possible at several levels. Mentally brooding on sex or constantly speaking about it is also a type of intercourse. The erotic actions or taking pleasure in seeing, hearing or reading the sexual pictures, songs, literature etc., is also considered to be as harmful as or even more harmful than the actual physical intercourse. Now-a-days we find that these types of things are spreading among the students of schools and colleges. So we have to inculcate the value of *Brahmacarya* (Celibacy) in them by the practice of Yoga. In ancient Indian student-life was called "*Brahmacaryāśrama*". Yoga is the only scientific technique for the sublimation of sex instinct. We call it as Yoga therapy. It gets transmitted into great psychic power which can be used to fight with the force of passion. In the yogic words it is *ojas-śakti*. So, by celibacy, we can get great power and this will be very much beneficial for our students in our educational system. Not only the students but also everyone human being must practice conservation of sexual energy through the principle of Celibacy.

### **Aparigraha**

Greed brings more unhappiness and unnecessary desires. There is no end to grabbing things either by accepting unnecessary gifts or by giving them. Those who receive gifts become obliged to the giver. Unscrupulous people sometimes give gifts, secretly intending to obligate the recipients. The recipients may feel obliged to return the favour by doing even unethical things. Obligation is a form of slavery. It robs people of their freedom and generates mental degradation. A serious student must avoid accepting unnecessary gifts, as far as practicable. It removes the negative value, greed. Moreover by non-accumulation, we develop the virtue of non-attachment for things of bodily enjoyment. This non-attachment leads to self study. It means when a man becomes steadfast in his abstention from greed, he gains knowledge of his past, present and future existence<sup>8</sup>. This can be represented in the following divisions -- supernatural power, purification of human body and mind, self study, on attachment and non accumulation.

As such, education becomes the basis of personality development on all dimensions – moral, mental and emotional. Since time immemorial Value Education has drawn the attention of all. This very concept, when applied to the simple syllabus every child can be benefitted from every educational institutions.

### **TREATMENT OF ETHICAL PHILOSOPHY**

To follow certain principles of moral life, means following the basic code of conduct. Patañjali discusses many aspects of ethical prospects for life. He puts forth the idea of purity in every now and then for almost every work. He says when one is pure then there arise indifference towards the body and disgust for all attachment to bodily pleasure<sup>9</sup>. The ethical knowledge is the first where the value education is based its root. Then, the attainment of spiritual growth that has been described by the scriptures and Yoga science as an essential part of education can only be gained through morality and ethics. Seeing it through another viewpoint also proves the same thing because when we consider education as a means of attaining salvation (*mokṣa*) and also as a support on the pathway to liberation, then we cannot differentiate it from Spiritualism.

Every ancient Hindu text emphasizes on growth of moral values and character of each one of us. One needs to be polite and should set an ideal example of simple living and high thinking. This is moral values in life to be effectively taken from the Yoga system of philosophy which is very effective.

This is indeed the view-point of *yoga* system pertaining to value education if applied in a wider perspective. The worth of this lies in the fact that education should necessarily be helpful in building the inner quality of everybody<sup>10</sup>. Along with this, to make the mind free from lust –the main cause of problems in human life and for to attain mastery over mind and passion, practice of ethical values and observance of morality is necessary. The *yoga* system provides everything in detail. There are strict observances called *niyamas* which are purity, contentment, modification, study and devotion to God<sup>11</sup>. These are also form the basic structure of the values in *Yoga* system. Hence, foundations of education should be laid on morality and ethics and *yoga* provides a scientific way to achieve this goal. Hence, the yogic value education is very important not only in India but in the whole world as well.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The *yoga* philosophy has many things to contribute towards a high moral standard of life. Yoga disciplines both body and mind hence, very scientific and effective for a holistic growth. The spiritual quest culminates in a new birth, a new person,

characterized by physical well-being, mental stillness, emotional stability, intellectual clarity, serenity and compassion in other words a unique combination of rare and admirable qualities that present a further evolution of the human being.

Human values are universal values irrespective of caste, creed, sex religion, time and place. It always gives positive results. It impacts sound body and sound mind. Yoga influences the outer and the inner behavior of a person and brings the total transformation in the life of a practitioner. The practitioner has to take in a true spirit and implement those in his daily life.

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3. Ibid. II.30.
4. Ibid, II.35.
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6. Ibid. II.36.
7. Truth has enormous power. Many great people have experimented this fact. This is the fundamental code of conduct to lead a peaceful life.
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