

PERCEPTION OF KUNDALINI IN HATHA YOGIC TEXTS: PSYCHO-PHYSICAL EVALUATION AND INTERPRETATION

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ABSTRACT

Kundalini is described as lying "coiled" at the base of the spine, represented as either a goddess or sleeping serpent waiting to be awakened. In modern commentaries, Kundalini has been called an unconscious, instinctive or libidinal force, or "mother energy or intelligence of complete maturation. The Shiva Samhita is one of the highly regarded texts on Hath Yoga; the other two being the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. The Sanskrit verses are a conversation between Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati. According to Hatha Yoga Pradipika, as the chief of the snakes is the support of the earth with all the mountains and forests on it, so all the Tantra (yoga techniques) rest on the kundalini. (The vertibretal column) and when the sleeping Kundalini awakens by favour of a guru, then all the lotuses (in the six chakras or centres) and all the knots are pierced through. Gheranda Samhita is a manual of yoga taught by Gheranda to Chanda Kapali. Unlike other hatha yoga texts, the Gheranda Samhita speaks of sevenfold yoga: Shatkarma for purification - Asana for strengthening, Mudra for steadying, Pratyahara for calming, Pranayama for lightness, Dhyana for perception and Samadhi for isolation. Kundalini yoga, as a 'tool' is a process that helps cut through a state that reinstates in Gheranda samhita, there is no bond equal in strength to Maya and no power greater to destroy that bond than Yoga". Though lot of conceptual developments and analysis have mean made in different texts, the work in this field is also at present very essential. Detailed scientific analysis is required to establish a link between ancient yogic texts and modern medical science. THE PSYCHO-PHYSICAL ANALYSIS is essential for harnessing this dormant energy, studying its effect and utilizing this also for individual as well as whole some development of society.

KEYWORDS: Kundalini, Hathayoga, Mudra, Serpent Power, Coiled, Ida, Pingala, Sushumna, Nadis, Chakras, Mooladhara, Swadhisthana, Anahata, Visudhi, Sahasrara, Agyan Chakra

INTRODUCTION

Yoga has several branches, among which Hathayoga is very important. Hatha vidya is another name for Hathayoga. Hatha is translated as force, and therefore, Hathayoga is illustrated as doing yoga in a forceful manner.

Hathayoga has been mentioned in several classical texts, including Hathayoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Siva Samhita, Yoga-kundalini Upanishad, etc. Among these various texts, the Hathayoga Pradipika (Light on Hatha Yoga) is the most influential surviving texts on hatha yoga. It is a classic Sanskrit manual on this topic, which was authored by Swami Svatomarama, who was a disciple of Swami Gorakhnath. Hathayoga Pradipika, along with Gheranda Samhita and Shiva Samhita, form a trinity of classic texts on hatha yoga. The Yoga-kundalini Upanishad is a highly meaningful manuscript that describes the Kundalini Yoga. It's one of the 20 Yoga Upanishads, and is among the 32 Upanishads that accompany the Krishna Yajurveda of 108 Upanishads. The Yoga-kundalini Upanishad explains yoga as the following, "even as fire in logs of wood will not rise without churning, so also without the practice of Yoga, the light of knowledge

cannot be lit". It illustrates chitta or mind as the basis for samskaras and vasanas (behavioural predisposition), as well as influencing Prana. This Upanishad provides details on how to employ yoga skills and methods to become aware of and to control Prana. These methods applied to stimulate a Kundalini include Mitahara (moderate, balanced nutrition), Asana (posture exercises), and shakti-chalana (arousing the inner force).

Kundalini has been defined as the feminine Sanskrit adjective that is synonym with "circular" or "coiled". The kundalini coils in six chakras, which are indicated as sites of physical or spiritual energy in the human body. If the kundalini extends to the seventh chakra, the yogi would attain enlightenment.

Kundalini is portrayed as a "coiled" arrangement at the base of the spine. This portrayal is considered as either a goddess or sleeping serpent that needs to be awakened. Modern interpretations consider Kundalini to be an unconscious, instinctive or libidinous power, or mother energy or intelligence of complete maturation. The Upanishads (9th century BCE - 3rd century BCE) have also commented on a similar notion. The Sanskrit adjective ku--alin means "circular, annular". In the Rajatarangini chronicle (I.2), which was written in the 12th century, this term appears as a noun for "snake" (meaning "coiled", as in "forming ringlets")?

The British Dictionary defines kundalini as a Noun that represents the life force dwelling at the base of the spine (in yoga).

Laya yoga is another name for Kundalini Yoga. It is a school of yoga that is inspired by Shaktism and Tantra schools of Hinduism. Kundalini Yoga has been so named as it concentrates on arousing one's kundalini energy through frequent practice of meditation, pranayama, chanting mantra and yoga asana.

CHAKRAS

"Chakra" has its origin in Sanskrit and literally signifies "wheel". These chakras are represented as circular-shaped, energy-spinning focal points that are present in our subtle, etheric body, which is the non-material energetic counterpart to the physical body. Chakras are seven in number and are positioned along the spine, both towards the front and the back of the body. Every chakra has several distinctive attributes that play a significant role in the enhancement of energy from the base level, which represents self-identity, and is the first chakras, to the higher vibration spirit level at our crown, wherein awareness of the self is attained. These centres of energy are an epitome of the highest level of integration, wherein it is split, as a prism, into a spectrum of colours. Yoga enables to become an expert on each chakra's fundamentals, and thereby bring all the chakras into a united field of brilliance. Similarly, we need to re-unite our incongruent elements to produce a brilliance of full self-awareness.

Three linked energy shafts are present on the spine. One energy shaft, the Shushumna, ascends the spine. The other two are present on either side of this central route and have lesser energy. The Pingala is on the right and Ida on the left, with both running parallel to the spinal cord. At the intersection of these energy routes, the chakras are formed. Chakras absorb as well as accumulate prana (life force energy). Later, they transmute and forward the energy acquired. These chakras are considered indispensable for our material bodies to exist, as they operate as gateways energy flow and life flow into our physical bodies.

Every chakra is correlated with a specific body part and a specific organ, supplying with energy its proper functioning. Furthermore, just as every organ in the human body corresponds to the development on a mental and spiritual

level, similarly, each chakra is representative of a particular human behaviour and development trait. Every person has differing circular spirals of energy that vary in size and activity. The vibration of the chakras at distinctive stages is related to the cognizance of the individual and their aptitude to incorporate each of its qualities into their life. The lower chakras denote fundamental emotions and desires. The energy in these chakras vibrates at a lower frequency producing denser vibes. The upper chakras produce finer energies that represent our higher mental and spiritual ambitions and faculties.

The symbolic portrayal of the seven chakras in the core body is represented as follows:

- **Base or Root Chakra (last bone of spinal cord, *coccyx*)**
- **Sacral Chakra (ovaries/prostate)**
- **Solar Plexus Chakra (navel area)**
- **Heart Chakra (heart)**
- **Throat Chakra (throat and neck)**
- **Brow or Third Eye Chakra (pineal gland or third eye)**
- **Crown Chakra (Top of the head)**

The Pranamayakosha or the energy body is known to have 72,000 nadis, which are not indicated physically. However, on increasing spiritual awareness, these nadis are sensed as not moving at random but in pre-determined passages. The source of the 72,000 nadis are basically from three fundamental nadis– the left, the right and the central, called as the Ida, Pingala, and Sushumna. "Nadi" does not mean nerve, but are passages or routes of prana in the body. Therefore, it is concluded that there are 72,000 diverse methods by which the energy or prana can travel.

The movement of Ida and Pingala is along the spine (merudanda) of the subtle body. Sushumna nadi flowing between Ida and Pingala has its course both in the upward and downward directions. Thereby, it flows through the chakras.

The ganglion of ribes is located in the area between the eyebrows that has the ajna chakra, which has a nerve centre with numerous ganglionated cords of the nervous system. Ida and Pingala meet at the junction of the ganglion of ribes. Ida courses on the left side of the spine circles the ganglion of ribes and meets on its left side. Pingala courses on the right side of the spine circles the ganglion of ribes and meets on its right side. Both the forces meet at the ganglion of ribes, located in the area between the eyebrows, called asajna chakra.

Meditation and awakening of the Kundalini attempt to equalize Ida and Pingala, in addition to permitting Prana to flow in Sushumna.

As per Hinduism, a man is represented in terms of 3 bodies, 5 Koshas (sheaths), and 3 States. The features of the 5 Koshas are elaborated in the following few paragraphs.

Kosha (also, Kosa) literally means "sheath", and Vedantic philosophy considers it as one of five (or seven) coverings of the Atman or Self. However, the Kosha system in Yogic philosophy entertains the view that the human nature embraces both physical and psychological facets to serve as one holistic system. The Kosha system suggests these varying facets to be layers of individual experience. These layers could involve the dense physical body or the more subtle levels of emotions, mind and spirit.

According to the Kosha system, the soul (atman) is enveloped by five layers (Pancha kosha) of Arishadvarga (the band of the six internal foes within us). Therefore, Arishadvarga are deemed as the 6 inner adversaries of a man.

Arishadvarga– (ari = shatru = enemy) (shad = 6) (varga = classes)

The six Arishadvarga or the six obsessions Of the mind (vicars) are the following: Kama (Lust or desire), Krodh (Rage, anger or hatred), Lobh (Greed), Moh (delusory emotional attachment), Mada or Ahankar (Ego or pride) and Matsarya (envy or jealousy).

Vedic texts indicate that the human soul can reside only within the physical body, wherein it is swathed in five (actually it is seven koshas if we go in more specifics of the vedic texts) sheaths called Pancha kosha. The Atman is considered to be present at the epicentre of the Bliss sheath.

Therefore, if the soul is enclosed in seven sheaths, development of all the seven sheaths is highly essential for a man to have absolute spiritual evolution.

The following are the 5 sheaths (Pancha **kosha**) or 7 sheets (layers of existence) that a human soul is encased in:

- **Annamay Kosh (Food Sheath) – Outermost of the Pancha koshas**
- **Pranmay Kosh (Vital Air Sheath or the life force)**
- **Manomay Kosh (mind as distinctly different from intelligence Sheath)**
- **Vigyanmay Kosh (Intellect Sheath)**
- **Aanandmay Kosh (Bliss Sheath – or ceaseless joy not connected with body or mind) – Innermost of the Pancha koshas**
- Gheranda Samhita and Hathapradipika are considered as very ancient texts of India that refer to Hatayoga. These texts are more than several hundreds of years old, but are still various yoga schools in India and throughout the world endorse them. Some of the following paragraphs deliberate on their parallel features while simultaneously highlighting their distinctive styles.
- According to mythology, Hatha yoga was first taught by Lord Siva to his partner Parvarti. However, a fish in the neighbourhood eavesdropped on their conversation and thereby introduced the rest of the world to this wonderful knowledge. Hathapradipika refers to Lord Siva as Adinatha in its first verse of the first chapter. On the other hand, Gheranda Samhita is the interchange between a Guru and a disciple (Gheranda and Candakapali). A Guru, in Indian custom, corresponds to god.

HATHAYOGAPRAADIPIKA MENTIONS SOME THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS

- The support of the kundalini. (The vertibretal column) to Tantra (yoga techniques) is exemplified as the supreme snake bearing the earth with all its mountains and forests.
- When the sleeping Kundalini is aroused with the assistance of a guru, all the lotuses (located in the six chakras or centres) and knots are penetrated.
- Susumna(Sunya Padavi) develops as the key passage route for Prana, relieves the mind to becomes free of all

influences (those pertaining to enjoyment). In this manner, the individual can evade Death.

- Susumna, Sunya Padavi, Brahma Randhra, Maha Patha, Smasana, Sambhavi, and Madhya Marga are synonyms.

The Shiva Samhita is held in high esteem by the followers of Hath Yoga, along with Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita. The Shiva Samhita is supposed to have been inscribed between the 15th and 17th centuries. However, it is an anonymous script. These texts in Sanskrit represent the conversation between Lord Shiva and his consort Parvati. Chapter 2 of Shiva Samhita deals with the spinal column and the nadis, of which 14 are significant. Several networks, branches and sub-branches surface from these nadis, resulting in the formation of 350,000 nadis that are equipped to supply to all parts of the body and regulate the functions of the body. Of the 14 nadis, 3 are of prime importance, which are ida, pingala, and sushumna. Among the 3, sushumna is considered to be the most crucial.

Within the sushumna is the chitranadi, encasing the barahmarandra (the most subtle of all nadis). Chitra is preferred by lord Shiva. Therefore, by meditating on chitranadi, the yogi can overcome all sins. The site of kundalini is considered to be at the base of the sushumna. Kundalini has 3 and ½ coils. The ida (representing moon) on the left coils around sushumna (representing fire) and goes to the right nostril (representing sun) and the pingala coils around sushumna and goes to the left nostril. The sushumna has six energy points, which the yogis represent as six lotuses. The energy points embrace the fire in the abdomen that aids in digestion, nourishes the food, promotes life, imparts energy and wipes out diseases.

GHERANDA SAMHITA

Gheranda Samhita is a manual of yoga with the teachings of Gheranda to Chanda Kapali. This text is distinct from other hatha yoga texts, as it addresses the following sevenfold yoga concept:

- **Shatkarma for purification**
- **Asana for strengthening**
- **Mudra for steadying**
- **Pratyahara for calming**
- **Pranayama for lightness**
- **Dhyana for perception**
- **Samadhi for isolation**

The text is split into seven chapters, and lays emphasis on the shatkarma. Occasionally, some scholars consider this text to deal with ghatastha yoga as well.

Kundalini yoga is considered as a 'tool' that facilitates curtailing the present state and restoring Gheranda samhita. Maya is supposed to be the strongest earthly bond, and it can be vanquished by Yoga alone, as it has greater power.

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of theoretical developments and evaluations in various texts, more research on this field is required. Detailed scientific analysis would help to determine an association between ancient yogic texts and modern medical

science. THE PSYCHO-PHYSICAL EVALUATION helps to channel this dormant energy, by examining its influence, and thereby employing this energy for the well-being of an individual as well as for the development of society.

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