

A critical study of Human Transformation and Yoga

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Key words

Transformation; Yoga Sutras; Ashtanga Yoga; Kleshas; Dhyana.

Abstract-

Human transformation is a conscious evolution engulfing from physical to psychological to spiritual facets of the human system. Yoga when imbibed as a practical way of life, and the techniques such as *Ekatatvabhyasa*, *Pratipakshabhavanam*, *Chitta prasadanam* etc. are implemented to enhance the psychological capabilities which in turn impact the physical, vital and intellectual well being of the human system by removing the mental afflictions and physical toxins. Yoga sutras require an integral perspective in which the sutras blossom as techniques for human transformation.

Life is that which makes efforts, which pushes upwards and downwards and on; Life is the opposite of inertia, and the opposite of accident; there is a direction in the growth to which it is self-impelled. At every stage, to go forth and seek, it has to invest effort and fatigue. It has to consciously make choices between good and bad, the easy and the difficult, the best and the worst, and so on. Life cannot be stagnant. There has to be a progressive change. Even in the plants, though there is no motion visual, to sustain, to grow, they take all the measures. There is nothing called still-state in life. Life will move either upwards or downwards. If the conscious choice is not made to move upwards, the life will decide the way by itself to go downwards. It is not a fight with the outer world. But it is a conscious evolutionary process of the life inside everything. Sri Aurobindo puts it” It is by a constant growth that one can find a constant newness and unfailing interest in life. There is no other satisfying way¹. This conscious effort to grow, to move upwards, to be aware of the purpose of life is a progressive change, a transformation of the entire human system of an individual. Yoga, when applied comprehensively will inculcate this transformation in the subtle layers of the human system. Sage Patanjali, the compiler of the yogic wisdom in the form of Sutras has given numerous techniques which are capable of uplifting the individual. The practices set forth in the Yoga Sutras help us to quiet and still the body-mind thereby making it easier to relax into this awareness, and to give us the ability to understand the nature of things². In the sutra 1.6, he clearly puts forth the five categories of mental fluctuations. According to him, Abhyasa (Persistent Practice) and Vairagya (Non-attachment) are the key factors in coming out from the clutches of these fluctuations. Sri Krishna too in his explanation on sublimating the human emotions, points out the same in Gita. Patanjali narrates the five dimensions of the mental affliction i.e. Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Devesha and Abhinivesha (Yoga Sutra 2.3). Awareness is the key to eradicate the afflictions which flourish during Dhyana (Yoga Sutra 2.11). His sutras 1.30 and 1.31 shed light on the mental disturbances as the psychological impact of the kleshas. Hence in order to transform, to explore the higher layers of consciousness, these mental disturbances should be eliminated. Sage Patanjali chalks out different techniques and lets the aspirant to take up any of them based on his approach and capabilities. *Ekatatvabhyasa* or Intense application (Yoga Sutra 1.32) is another technique to heal the mental turbulences caused by the Kleshas. ‘There is ample evidence that negative thoughts and feelings can be harmful to the body,’ says Lorenzo Cohen, director of the Integrative Medicine Program at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston³. To eliminate negative patterns of the mental waves, cultivation of positive emotions should take the form of a regular process. This is termed as *Chitta Prasadanam* (Yoga Sutra 1.33) by Patanjali. Being aware of the Prana and focusing the mind towards its regulation will also instill tremendous change in the patterns of the mind (Yoga

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Sutra1.34). Meditating on desired object which can enhance the emotions is another technique preferred by him (Yoga Sutra 1.39). Harvard Medical School scientists have found that regular meditation can also alter the structure of our brains⁴. There has been ample of researches substantiating the power of meditation, a technique used by most of the ancient civilizations. Incapable to undertake the meditation can opt for Japa of an initiated mantra. By creating different wave patterns at physical and psychological layers, mantras are capable of taking oneself into his inner being. Mantras are creative forces that act directly upon consciousness⁵.

Practice of Ashtanga Yoga; the eight fold path of Yoga is an inevitable factor for those who wish to transform their lives. Patanjali is firm in declaring the fruit of this life style. Toxins from the body-mind system are removed as the first step of the transformation. Inner light, which eastern mysticism defines as the real master, guides him to the path of happiness. Yoga School of Philosophy has always been exploring the inner realms of the body-mind system and striving hard to make the life on earth happier. As Joel Krammer puts it, the transformation that yoga brings makes you more yourself, and opens you up to loving with greater depth. It involves a honing and refining which releases your true essence, as a sculptor brings out the beauty of form in the stone by slowly and carefully chipping away the rest⁶. Yoga when understood and implemented as a life style will instill an incredible progressive change i.e. transformation which re-defines the purpose, views and way of life to a larger extent.

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