

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOGA IN VACHANA SAHITYA

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Abstract

Yoga is a holistic discipline that originated in ancient India, encompassing physical postures, breath control, meditation, and ethical principles. It aims to promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, fostering harmony between the mind, body, and spirit

Yoga offers numerous physical health benefits, such as improved flexibility, muscle strength, posture, and balance. It can also enhance cardiovascular health, increase lung capacity, and promote better digestion. Regular practice can help alleviate chronic pain, reduce the risk of injuries, and boost the immune system. Additionally, yoga's relaxation techniques may help lower blood pressure and manage stress, contributing to an overall healthier lifestyle.

Yoga has several mental health benefits, including reducing stress and anxiety levels through relaxation techniques and deep breathing. It can improve focus, concentration, and cognitive function, enhancing mental clarity. Regular practice of yoga has been linked to better sleep quality, mood regulation, and a sense of overall well-being. It may also help manage symptoms of depression, promote self-awareness, and provide tools for coping with life's challenges

Key words – Shivayoga, Pashupata- veerashaiva, Shivapuja, Shivamantra, Shivarpana, Shivashastra

HOW YOGA REFLECTS IN VACHANA SAHITYA

Yoga is a discipline that can help people achieve a higher state of consciousness, and it can be important in Vachana Sahitya because it can help people achieve a higher state of consciousness. Vachana Sahitya is a collection of poems written by Basavanna and other saints in the Shiva-centered bhakti movement. These poems are known for their profound philosophy and thought-provoking,

YOGA INFLUENCE IN SHIVAYOGA

Knowledge will come out of Yoga and Yoga will be developed through knowledge. In order to realise both of them, the wise should take care of their health.

The highest aim of the Shivayogis belonging to the age of the agamas was to attain identification with Shiva. They adopted the fivefold means of freeing themselves of the bondage of past life, tapa, karma, japa, dhyana and jnana. Thus they purified themselves interiorly and exteriorly as a preparation for Jnanayoga (union through knowledge), the highest aim in their life. According to their disposition, action, acquisition of knowledge, practices and advancement in spiritual life, the Shivayogis were called avadhuta, sanyasi, yogi, pashupata, shiva, lingi, veera, veerashaiva, mahamaheshvara, yati etc.

There is indication that Yama (control), Niyama (rule), asana (posture), Pranayama (control of breath) were considered as the first steps in Yoga. Dhyana and Samadhi were considered as the later part. Shivasharanas stressed the latter part of the Yoga and incorporated it in the Sat-sthala. We may note that the writers of agamas tried to reach spiritual heights by practising the agama dharma in the name of jnana, kriya, charya and yoga. Their knowledge was limited to the concepts of Pashu, Pasha and Pati. Their practices were limited to the sixteen ways. Their aim in life was to attain purity of soul through the worship of Linga and other religious practices. They practised yoga in order to control the mind, as necessary for attaining purity of soul. But, generally speaking, to all the Shaivas and chiefly for the Veerashaivas, Shivayoga was the worship of Shiva. As worship was a religious act, they used to consider also knowledge and contemplation of God and the sciences of God, creation and souls and finally the worship of Linga as the greatest act of worship ever performed by a Shivasharana. Although Shivasharanas borrowed many terms and principles from the agamas, they enriched them with new meanings got through their own inner experience. As they explain, the Pranalingi is the highest stage in Shivayoga, which is one of the ekottarashatasthalas. The terms shivayogi, jangama, sharana and shivasharana are used in the same sense in the vachanas as they are used in the agamas. The term 'Yoga' signifies union. The phenomenon of reducing multiplicity to unity is a characteristic of every yoga. In mantrayoga, the mantrayogis combine Vaikharivani and arouse Paravani and lose themselves in hearing it. In Hatayoga, pranavayu and apanavayu are combined, and the Hatayogi gets the strength of Pranayoga. In Layayoga, Nada and Bindu are combined, and the Layayogi does away with Mana and Maruta, achieving a stage beyond the reach of sound. In Rajayoga, the Ida and Pingala nerves are combined, and thus the concentration of vision is achieved. Likewise, in Shivayoga, Shiva and Shakti are combined, and the Shivayogis find an inseparable relation between Shiva and Shakti.

The worship of Linga, which contains in itself shivajnana, shivabhakti, shivadhyana and shivamantra (knowledge of Shiva, devotion to Shiva, contemplation of Shiva, incantation of Shiva and, worship of Shiva) is the best means for Shivayoga. These five parts, bhakti, jnana, dhyana, japa, tapa (devotion, knowledge, contemplation, prayer and penance) are all essential for the achievement of Shivayoga, either collectively or individually. Shivayoga mainly depends on worship. Channabasavanna has defined the way of performing Shivayoga in the following manner: "One keeps the Linga on his palm and worships Shiva attentively. He devotes time to Shivapuja, Shivamantra, Shivarpana, Shivashastra and Shivayoga." Whether the Linga worshipped is Shtbhvara or Ishta, it is the embodiment of the supreme God, who is formless. Since He has no qualities, He can be best described, only negatively, as 'Not this, not that (neeti). The Shivasharanas believe that Shiva out of His omnipotence and absolute freedom has created the universe for His own enjoyment.

God, who is the supreme consciousness, has created souls similar to Himself. That is the dignity of the soul which informs human body. Life is the result of the union of soul and body. Along with life there appears mind. According to the experience of the yogis the body is a hindrance to union with God. It is the bodily desires and the faculties of the mind that come in the way. The

soul is independent of the body and mind, which depend on the life principle for their existence. Owing to several reasons, the life principle in man is not orderly. It has lost its harmony. Hence the mind, too, which is its dependent, is fickle like the life principle. Because of the unbalanced state of the life principle and of mind, man's body has become an abode of vices, such as the eightfold pride, the sevenfold worries, the sixfold enemies, and other desires and lusts which go on multiplying. As a consequence, the soul (atma) forgets its true self, and thinks as a separate entity, which is called Jiva (an individual soul).

The sadhaka of Shivayoga (identification with Shiva) begins his practice with the exercise of the vision. Rajayoga is said to be the basis of this practice. He looks into the mirror of Ishtalinga to realise the true nature of his self. As the surface of the mirror, when dirty, cannot reflect the image clearly, so if the worship of Ishtalinga is defective, self-realisation cannot be experienced. 'To gaze at Linga is to worship it. Through constant look at Linga the body will be purified'.

When the eyes are fixed
The breath is under control;
If the breath is controlled
The mind comes under control;
If there is concentration
One can conquer the fetters of time,
And there is no trace of illusion.
Channabasavanna suggests the same thing in the following vachana:
To open wide the eyes of him
Who sits e'er clinging to His feet
The Compassionate One
Has wiped the corporal taint that comes
Of ignorance
If you would know the way
This kinship with the Pranalinga came to be
As the Compassionate One
Opened my eyes,
This is the way it was:
O Lord Kudala Channasanga!
Even as my body bared itself
To those great saints who had seen God,
Like eyesight swallowed in the eye,
Like space absorbed in the cosmic egg,
Like water frozen to a pearl,
Like fragrance going back to flower,
My body's habits have ceased to be!

The Sharana who, wishes to be completely at one with Shiva through the practice of Shivayoga, will always be careful to keep his thoughts, words and deeds free of all uncleanness. He will try to sublimate his lower tendencies. In all his difficulties he will have recourse to Shiva. He will detach himself from all the earthly desires and attach himself to the Supreme God. In Him he will find his happiness. At this stage, his senses, both internal and external, will receive a spiritual dimension. His way of thinking, feeling and doing will be attuned to the Divine will. His body, his total self, will be a fit dwelling for the Almighty, who will henceforth make his abode in the Shivayogi.

The Shivayogi will know at the centre of his heart that Shiva and he are one.

And that is salvation.

At this juncture, the inward mind blooms At the first rays of the sun

Of divine intelligence residing in the navel;

It rises six inches from the region of the anus, gene and the navel.

He will be glad to see the light of the heart,

Radiating like jewels.

The Shivayoga, according to the Shivasharanas, is different from any other yogas.

Channabasavanna explains the effects of Shivayoga according to the Sharanas.

If there is Shivayoga

The attachment to the world ceases;

When the attachment to the world ceases,

It is the yoga of the favour of Linga.

The conjunction of the favour of Linga is

The conjunction of the favour of Jangama.

If there is the conduction of the favour of Jangama,

It is the conjunction of the favour of Prasada.

If it is the conjunction of the favour of Prasada,

It is an agreement in the threefold way.

If it is the conjunction of the threefold agreement,

It is the conjunction of the concentration of mind;

If it is the concentration of the mind,

It is perfect union with

Lord Kudala Channasanga.

If one practices Shivayoga, there is no need of any other yoga, prayer or mortification of the flesh. Shivayoga leads one towards perfect union with Shiva. If we scrutinize vachanas, we find there an important place given to mantrayoga. A suggestion is made in Shivayoga Pradipika that certain principles of Rajayoga, such as prayer, abstinence etc., are to some degree helpful in the achievement of Shivayoga. Channabasavanna to says that all the other yogas should lead to Shivayoga, the perfect union with Shiva:

The Mantrayoga, Hathayoga,

Layayoga and Jnanayoga
Should be understood first
And given up gradually,
And one should mainly depend on the Bhaktiyoga
And follow the Rajayoga
That is beyond speech, mind or feeling,
Detached from everything, absolute void,
Formless, and the Highest State.

Those who doubt the perfect union with God,
How do they know about Lord Kudala Channasanga?

For the beginner devotion becomes the first step in the achievement of Shivayoga. The Shivayogi starts his yogic practice with sight. He joins the sun and the moon – the main principles of a Rajayogi – quite easily. Then he unites the mind and the wind – the main principles of Layayogi. The Hatayogi combines oxygen and the apana gas at the anus. Further, he finds that Linga and mantra are not different. Thus he will reach the unity. A Shivayogi, at the ultimate stage, experiences all the five parts of Shivayoga, namely, Shivajnana (knowledge of Shiva), Shivabhakti (devotion to Shiva), Shivadhyana (contemplation of Shiva), Shivavrita (rite for Shiva), Shivachara (worship of Shiva), as he looks at the Ishtalinga. Channabasavanna records that Prabhu saw his self in his Ishtalinga and said “when the band becomes the throne for Linga there should be no gap between Linga and Anga. Thus remembering what Allama Prabhu showed to the world, he fixed his gaze on Linga and thereby gained immense experience and knowledge.

When with the look of the eye and knowledge of the heart
I was speaking to myself,
Honey rained, nectar flowed,
And I was completely absorbed

In the vast ocean of joy, O Lord Kudala Channasanga.

Channabasavanna records his own experience. ‘One should forget the external world completely; one’s heart should be opened wide and thus one should merge completely with the Ishtalinga, which is a heap of light of complete knowledge. This is the mystery of the achievement of Shivayoga’. This is how Sarpabhusanashivayogi speaks of his experience:

One should mix with the bright Ishtalinga
Forgetting the external world,
One should mix with the radiance in hand,
Accompanied by the fragrance of understanding,
And the heart in bloom.

It has been said already that purification of life is given the first place in the practice of yoga. Like other yogas, Shivayoga gives an important place to total purity. ‘If the purpose of the worship of Ishtalinga is to make the body a purified one (Prasadakaya)... the purpose of the worship of Pranalinga is to obtain the life of Linga and not a shining body (Prakashakaya).’ The

method of purifying life by the practice of Shivayoga and the result there of are quite unique. One should realise Linga as the outcome of the purification, that is, once the Supreme Being is found one should identify oneself with It. This is the second stage in Shivayoga. That is why Channabasavanna has said, "If one can breathe Linga alone instead of air, that is Shivayoga." If a man forgets Linga, he becomes a worldly man. The very air in him and around him will be polluted. But by constant practice of Shivayoga he should purify all that impure air. For this different types of air like Prana etc., (of. above) should be placed in Pranalinga and the other ten places. Channabasavanna has very minutely analysed various kinds of air in a number of vachanas, as also the process of achieving this pranalingi stage. If there is control of breath, Prana is Linga and Linga is Prana.

Benefits of Yoga to open Third Eye in Vachana Sahitya

Mudra and consciousness in The Mantrayoga, Hathayoga, Layayoga and Jnanayoga to open third eye, Should be understood first, And given gradually, And one should mainly depend on the Bhaktiyoga, And follow the Rajayoga, That is beyond speech, mind or feeling, Detached from everything via Yoga, absolute void, Formless, and the Highest State. Those who doubt the perfect union with God, How do they know about Lord Kudala Channasanga

YOGA IMPORTANCE IN SAMADHI STHITI

Swami Vivekananda who had reached the stage of "samadhi sthiti" from Ramakrishna Paramahansa said about yoga; "Yoga literally means connection or union with the supreme spirit. What unites us with the supreme spirit is yoga, there is only one in the universe" "yoga for true understanding depends not on words but on experience"

Allama prabhu thought about yoga

Allama Prabhu introduced yoga in two stages. The first is the Ashtanga (08) yogas mentioned by Maharishi Patanjali. The first is 'Yama', the second is 'Niyama', the third is 'Asana', the fourth is 'Pranaya', the fifth is Pratyahara, the sixth is Dharana, the seventh is 'Dhyana' and the eighth is 'Samadhi' which have their own significance

Conclusion

Yoga isn't merely physical exercise; we seen in vachana sahitya, it's a holistic approach to body, mind, and spirit. In our complex world, it continues to guide individuals towards a third eye, more fulfilling life amidst chaos. Its global appeal is a testament to the enduring relevance of its ancient wisdom in our Vachana sahitya also