

Siddha Yoga Philosophy Based on Thirumoolar's Thirumandhiram Concept – An Overview

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Abstract

Yoga is one of the most important philosophies in India. It is the practice of physical, mental and spiritual activities which originated in ancient India. According to Siddha philosophy the practice of yoga may be united with the universal soul and acquire similar super nature powers. Controlling the five senses and practicing the yoga make the soul and mind get united with the universal soul. One who goes on the path of yoga is called a yogi. The ultimate goal of yoga is MOKSHAM (liberation), although the exact form this takes depends on the philosophical or theological system with which it is conjugated. The history of Indian culture is the revelation of the mystery of human consciousness. The key to the mystery of consciousness is provided by yoga. Yoga is a process of relaxation ending and calming in samathi which is a state of supreme peace and bliss passing all understanding. It is the power of all true art and science. This paper says the philosophy of yoga by Thirumoolar Thirumandhiram concept.

Keywords: Epistemological aspect, Achievement, Thirumandhiram

Introduction

Yoga is a much misunderstood and abused term these days. It will be not just bending and stretching the limbs in various postures. Yoga is not merely a practice or a set of practices but the whole science of life itself. The term yoga means “method, activity, force, meditation, renunciation, concentration, evenness, practice of inner isolation,” etc. It may be interpreted as a method by means of which the basic aspects of the individual, namely, the vital current, mind, consciousness and energy are mobilized and harmonized. In short, it provides practical method for self-realisation. It is a science of the mind and soul. In Siddha literature the waking of the kundalini is the sole aim of yoga. When kundalini passes from one chakra to another is an unfoldment of spiritual consciousness stage by stage and also the acquirement of certain yogic powers called Siddhis. When kundalini reaches and merges into the sahasra, the yogin become conscious of consciousness. In that time the Siddhas felt the bliss and they construed as an opportunity to serve the society. That is, the social concern of the Siddhas has provided them with one more path for the discovery of the self. This concept that is showing the path to people in the philosophy of the Siddhas. The social concern of the Siddhas is best exhibited in their system of medicine.

Concept of yoga by Thirumoolar

First of all Thirumoolar calls the yoga in the Thirumandhiram as dhava-yoga or siva-yoga. The versus runs as follows, Siva-yoga is to distinguish the SITH from the ASITH, Yoga of penance is to attain self-illumination, Other types of yoga are not yoga proper, to attain Siva-aananda. Siva yoga, also called siva-raja-yoga distinguishes by means of discrimination, the sith (intelligence, consciousness, knowledge) from the asith (non-conscious). Though, the atma or individual soul or consciousness by nature is sith, it does not know due to ignorance that it is sith and it is treated as asith, but when once wisdom dawns, the ignorance that it is asith is removed.

Siva yoga is the yoga method by which the athmam identifies itself with sivam. It is a process of attaining sivahood at the top of the head. It is called in siddha literature as “Yoga which touches the top” Here the yogin is said to drink the AMBROSIAL JUICE oozing from the sahasraram. Hence this yoga is called by some siddhas as a process of “quenching the thirst at the top”. Siva yoga is attained by dhava-yoga. It is for the first that this yoga is explicitly explained and discussed in the thirumandhiram. Though Thirumoolar does not use the expression Kundalini-Yoga, what is discussed by him is only that. In the sections that follow, the term Kundalini-Yoga is used as the alternate term for SivaYoga. That is, the Thirumandhiram is not only an Agamam treatise but a treatise on yoga as well. Thirumandhiram discusses dealing with shakras, pranayama, pariyanga yoga, twilight language, etc., The Thirumandhiram develops Astanga-Yoga as Siva-Yoga.

Aspect of Yoga as discussed in the Thirumandhiram

Thirumoolar speaks of the following aspects of Yoga.

1. Astanga-Yoga
2. Kesari-Yoga
3. Chandra-Yoga
4. Pariyanga-Yoga.

Astanga Yoga

Astanga-Yoga or the eight limbs of Yoga leads to Samadhi and to gnanam waver not, this way and that follow the of eight-limbed Yoga and reach Samadhi state they who tread that blessed path shall reach gnana's peak. Astanga-yoga are Yama, Niyama and Asana, Pranayama wholesome and Prathyagara alike, Dharana, Dhiyana and Samadhi to triumph. These eight are the steely limbs of yoga.

Yama (Behavioural regulations)

Yama consists of a number of do's and don'ts, It is an ethical preparation for yoga. Truthfulness, No over indulgence or addiction, No acquisitiveness or stealing, Non-violence, No sensual or sexual misconduct.

Niyama (Ethical recommendations)

The ten virtues of niyama is purity, compassion, frugal, patience, forthrightness, truth and steadfastness these he ardently cherishes. Killing, stealing and lusting he abhors. Thus stands with virtues ten. The one who niyama's ways observes.

Asana (Yogic posture)

According to thirumoolar of which padmasana (Lotus posture), bhadrasana (the happy posture) kukudasanana (the cock posture) simhasana (the lion posture) are important. He speaks seven important asanas, bhadra, gomukha, padma and simha, sothira, veera and sukha. These seven along with eminent svastika constitute the eight, eighty and hundred, however, are asanas in all reckoned.

Pranayama (Breath control)

Pranayama is the harmonisation of the breath or the vital force. Prana is the vital energy and the process of the subduing of its activities is known as Pranayama. The pranas are the energies that propel themselves outwardly in terms of objects through the vehicle of the body and they have a say of their own in the activity in which they are involved. The process of pranayama consists of three acts: Inspiration (puraka), expiration (resaka) and suspension of breath (kumbaka). The chakras are unfolded by pranayama.

Prathyagara (Withdrawal of the senses from external objects)

Prathyagara is the restraint of the senses and the withdrawal of the mind from external things. It is not a mere control of the senses but a sublimation of the senses. It includes maintaining an inner focus and avoidance of dispersion and distraction.

Dharana (Concentrated attention)

Dharana means to retain the mind and keep it steadfast inside, which has been obtained by prathyagara. Dharana is supposed to be a fixing of the attention of the mind on a particular thing, either externally or internally, a form outside or a concept inside. Both are good enough, both are permissible. The practice of concentration, dharana is a great boon, a blessing. It is divine grace itself that has been bequeathed to us to attain higher level of consciousness towards the next stage of yoga, the Dhyana.

Dhyana

Dhyana is also known as meditation flow of thought. This is ultimate step which if practiced well leads to the highest step called Samadhi. Dhyana or meditation distinguishes itself qualitatively by an intensity, which is characteristic of its own self, apart from the activity known as concentration. In meditation, in dhyana, some novelty takes place. We do not any more feel a necessity to reject thoughts. Prathyagara leads to Dharana and dharana leads to Dhyana by a gradual self-movement of itself towards a larger expansion and an inward intensification.

Samadhi

Samadhi is the final goal of astanga-yoga. It is the attainment of tranquility. The ultimate union that is attempted in yoga is Samadhi. It is the highest form of concentration in communion with the absolute truth or reality. From the stages of iyama and niyama through the various graduated evolutionary stages in the course of the ascent of the individual soul from the lower to the higher, up until the final stage of total merger in the ultimate samadhi, a super-conscious stage, the highest step in Yoga. In this state one enjoys eternal bliss.

Kechari Yoga

Kechari-mudra is called Kechari-Yoga by thirumoolar. It is also called Niraadhaara-Yoga. Kesari means to transverse in space. In kechari-mudra when tongue has been lengthened one has to practice turning it upward and backward so to touch the palate until at length it reaches the holes of the nostrils opening into the mouth. Close the holes with the tongue and fix the gaze at the space between the eyebrows. This position of the tongue in the mouth is said to permit or facilitate the flow of current along the ida, the pingala, and the susuna nadis to sahasrara. This mudra is said to be the king among mudras. The Yoga of the inner tongue is called Kechari-Yoga. When kesari-mudra is performed, the mystic nectar will begin to ooze from the sahasrara. One who drinks the nectar obtains bodily immortality.

Chandra Yoga

Chandra yoga is not a separate kind of yoga as is Pariyanga-Yoga. Kundalini acquires different tantric names in its passage from Muladhara to Sahasrara. Kundalini extending from muladhara to anahata is called agni or fire kundalini. This is technically called as agni-mandalam. Kundalini extending from anahata to akkinai is called surya or sun-kundalini. This is called surya-mandalam. Kundalini extending from akkinai to the end of the susumna, at the top of the head is called chandra or moon-kundalini. This is called chandra-mandalam. Kundalini, which is beyond susumna and residing at sahasrara, has been termed as thuriya-kundalini. This, in short, is Chandra yoga finally merge the

kundalini in the cranium top. There in the sahasrara, the yogi pays homage at the feet of the lord. Those who have learned to merge the phases of the fire and sun in the phases of the moon, verily become masters of themselves.

Pariyanga Yoga

Maithuna-Yoga as Pariyanga-Yogam, which unfortunately has been translated as bedstead Yoga. Maithuna is a conceptual framework of the oneness between Siva-Sakthi. Pariyanga-yoga is a type of yoga in which the heroic yogin and his consort participate in the great banquet, a secret sex ritual which culminates in their act of intercourse under tantric laboratory conditions. It is the means to the attainment of spiritual greatness through the identity of siva and energy. The aspirants become identified with the absolute or the tremendous god-the highest state realized by ayogi-and remain there in the most adverse conditions. It is a test to see if the votary can have such control over bodily senses as to remain impassible to emotion and pleasure and to concentrate on the pure self.

Discussion

In the philosophical perspective of Thirumoolar, the world is neither an illusion nor a non-existent entity as held in the advaita philosophy. He has no reason to shrug off the world. Loving other beings as oneself is an important facet of Thirumoolar's spiritual wisdom. The siddhis are mystic accomplishments or miraculous powers attained in the process of Yoga. The philosophy of yoga deals with some of the greatest mysteries of life and the universe and so it must inevitably be associated with an atmosphere of profound mystery. If the doctrines of yoga are studied in the light of both ancient and modern thought it is much easier to understand. Practise of yoga is physical, mental and spiritual development through awareness of the infinite potential in man for knowledge, power and happiness.

Conclusion

Now we may be permitted to state the quint essential message of Tirumandhiram thus. The body consists of several parts. They must be preserved intact and must not be allowed to suffer any wear and tear. The veins and muscles must be held in constant control and they must never become effects or enfeebled. The Kundalini must be eoked and brought up through the Brahmarantra in the skull and there in the vast expanse, the spa of life's elixir must be made to gush forth. This done, life will be made to merge there with the supreme who is present there in the form of ineffable light. It is thus life is oned with the almighty. This indeed is Yoga.

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