



The Role of Physical Strength and Yogic Experience: in the Light of Swami Vivekananda

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Received 30th June 2015, Accepted 5th September 2015

Abstract

It is important to understand the central theme of the meaning of 'YOGA'. There are various interpretations by various commentaries; the word yoga has been derived from the root 'YUJ' which means union or identity. Today the admirers and devotees of Swami Vivekananda celebrating the hundred and fifty years anniversary and re read him in various ways and keep this enthusiasm in all walks of our individual, social and spiritual life. Swami Vivekananda was a comprehensive personality. Although of athletic muscular build, he had a mystic consciousness like Plotinus and Spinoza attuned with the absolute of the monistic idealists. In this present age the civilization of humanity passing through critical crisis, it has directly and indirectly affect the individual human beings physically, mentally and spiritually above all the youths loss their self confidence and they don't know how to survive in this competitive world. It is important to understand the central theme of the meaning of 'Yoga' there are various interpretations by various commentators. Vivekananda's heroic gospel of strength is summarized in the following statement remarks of his, and shows the leading elements of his influential personality: "I know that truth alone gives life, and nothing but going towards reality will make us strong and none will reach truth until he is strong. Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannized over by the rich nothing gives such strength as the idea of Monism. Nothing makes us as moral as the idea of Monism."

Keywords: Physical Strength, Yogic, Vivekananda.

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Introduction

It is important to understand the central theme of the meaning of 'YOGA'. There are various interpretations by various commentaries; the word yoga has been derived from the root 'YUJ' which means union or identity. Today the admirers and devotees of Swami Vivekananda celebrating the hundred and fifty years anniversary and re read him in various ways and keep this enthusiasm in all walks of our individual, social and spiritual life. Swami Vivekananda was a comprehensive personality. Although of athletic muscular build, he had a mystic consciousness like Plotinus and Spinoza attuned with the absolute of the monistic idealists. In this present age the civilization of humanity passing through critical crisis, it has directly and indirectly affect the individual human beings physically, mentally and spiritually above all the youths loss their self confidence and they don't know how to survive in this competitive world. It is important to understand the central theme of the meaning of 'Yoga' there are various interpretations by various commentators.

The Scope of Yoga

In India, Yoga and Vedanta have always had philosophic and religious orientation. In this modern age Swami Vivekananda upheld the Philosophy and psychology of Yoga and Vedanta to solve the problems due to agnostic and skeptic disturbance of mind individual and humanity. The great philosopher of yoga Patanjali said in his Yoga Sutra as "*Chitta vritti nirodhah*". (Yoga is restraining the mind stuff from taking various forms).

Synthesis Yoga according to Vivekananda

The first noteworthy fact to the student yoga is the method of harmonizing by which manifests his Divine potentialities. In the lectures on raja yoga Swami Vivekananda employing a synthetic method, by which he emphasis the importance of physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength to manifest the Divinity already in human self. The modern thinkers of philosophy pointed out that this synthetic model is high tradition of Neo Vedanta of Swami Vivekananda. His synthesis the method of *karma*, *bhakti*, *Raja* and *Janna* yoga's. Thus his philosophy of yoga is a current trend in this transition age. The notable feature of Swami Vivekananda's teaching is the interpretation of ancient yoga and Vedanta for modern needs He highlighted the practical aspect of Advaita Vedanta and experimental

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psychology of yoga to face the problems of our day to day material and spiritual life.

His synthesis of four *yogas* such as Karma, Bhakthi, Raja and *Jnana yogas* directs the self (*atman*) of a yogi towards the higher self (*Paramatman*) which is the fundamental Reality which is free from all type of defects sufferings. This is the goal of the human beings according to swami Vivekananda. He stressed that the importance of physical strength as “The role of physical strength is a unique necessity in all walk of human life especially in secular , and spiritual life according to Swami Vivekananda’s synthetic model. As a matter of fact according to him the spiritual view is always whole and integral. He negates the contradiction among the traditional Vedantic and yogic methods of freedom. In his Neo Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda highlighting the experience the union of Parmatman and Jivatman through the synthesis of yoga which is neither pragmatic compromise nor an mechanical relation between body and mind. The need of physical education in man making character building education of Swami Vivekananda says as “ My child, what I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel, inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, *Kshatra-Virya* plus *Bramha-Teja*”¹ In this thought provoking statement, Vivekananda stresses the Important of physical strength of the youth of India to rebuild our nation. Thus the need of Physical education for physical strength, Vivekananda emphasizes the important of *hata* yoga practice in his lectures on Raja yoga.

The Practice of Hata Yoga for Nerves Strength and Psychic Equilibrium

In this modern age there is a great recognition to the practice of *yoga asana* and pranayama from the field of scientific and psychological circle in India and abroad. It is important to note that the practice of yoga does not simply involve exercising the body only. Although certain bodily postures have an important role in the part of the practice of Yoga but all these *asanas* and *pranayamas* must be preceded by a certain way of life which is based on the spiritual maturity through non-violence, austerity, purity ,truth above all self knowledge. In the absence of such needs the yogic way of life, Yoga is not only a mere a bodily training. However, it is interesting to note that even this bodily exercises, if done with total constant regularity with sraddha, would have an impact on one’s way of life but they alone will not bring out the whole effect of Yoga in one’s life because the ultimate objective is the experience of our real nature Brahman and that can be possible only if we pursue a way of life conducive to this goal. Among the steps of Yoga, the *yama*, *niyama* and *asana* gradually prepare the aspirant’s body mind complex for the experiences of the higher state of consciousness which is already in his *atman*, in this real in the ego is not operative. Having reached this state of mind one becomes immersed with happiness free from the

ignorance such as one’s identification with the ego with body and mind and the subsequent desires associated with them.

Concept of Yoga

According to Indian conception of yoga, it is moreover essential the aspirant cannot make any progress in the spiritual life, if he does not stop at a particular chosen ideal or Liberation. During the time of yogic practice or meditation, it is upon this particular object that he ought to concentrate. It, therefore, follows that meditation presents to us two distinct phases. At first, it is by means of meditation that the *sadhaka* devotes himself to his chosen ideal and the *sadhaka* is able to make his way, and to penetrate his self to the very depths of metaphysical reality (or) Brahman. According to the modern thinkers of India, the heritages such as yoga is a methodological effort to attain perfection (*purnatvam*) through the control of the psychological phenomena and trained the physical body and control the psyche by which the active will of the ego and the mind will be under the control of the trained yogi. Patanjali insists on certain practices which are intended to cure the body of its restlessness and free it from its impurities or *vasana*.

The Place of Hatha in Raja Yoga

There are eight steps according to Raja yoga system. The third step in this way is Asana. Hatha yoga is one of the major practices in the Yoga system that teaches the practical aspects of spiritual life... Hatha yoga is the science of *pranayama* that includes other aspects of yoga also like *asanas* and *mudras*. According to the Yoga sutras of Patanjali (200.B.C.) asana is the third of the eight steps towards of yogic experience. He defines it as that posture in which one can sit comfortably and steadily for a long time for meditation (*vide* 2.29, 46, 48). The works on *Hatha* yoga recommend the following asanas for yogic meditation Bhadrasana, *padmasana*, *siddhasana*, *svastikasana*, *vajrasana* and *virasana*. This article highlighting the importance of yoga of Patanjali yoga system in the light of Swami Vivekananda. In our time Sri Aurobindo highlights and interpreted as integral yoga it is highly pragmatic and rational. The yoga teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of existence, beyond reason, a super consciousness state and when the mind gets to that higher state, and then this knowledge, beyond reasoning comes to man. This state of going beyond reason. It may sometimes come by chance to a man who does not understand its science; he as it were stumbles upon it. To get any reason out of the mass of incongruity we call human life, we have to transcend our reason, but we must do it scientifically, slowly by regular practice, and we must cast off all superstition.

Swami Vivekananda stressed out the need of physical strength in physical and spiritual life especially in yogic way of life. He pointed out that “We cannot expect anything high from a race whose whole brain

energy has been occupied in such wonderfully beautiful problems and researches, and are we not ashamed of ourselves? Ay, sometimes we are; but though we think these things frivolous, we cannot give them up. We speak of many things parrot-like, but never do they; speaking and not doing has become a habit with us, what is the cause of that? Physical weakness, this sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterward be strong, my young friends; that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. These are bold words; but I have to say them, for I love you... you will understand the Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of atman when your body stands firm upon your feet, and feel yourselves as men thus we have to apply these to our needs.

Conclusion

Vivekananda's heroic gospel of strength is summarized in the following statement remarks of his, and shows the leading elements of his influential personality: "I know that truth alone gives life, and nothing but going towards reality will make us strong and none will reach truth until he is strong. Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannized over by the rich nothing gives such strength as the idea of Monism. Nothing makes us as moral as the idea of Monism.

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2. The complete works of Swami Vivekananda (Vol. 3. P.242).
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