

**THE CONCEPT OF YOGA IN THE POETRY  
OF GURU NANAK IN THE BACKGROUND  
OF ANCIENT INDIAN THOUGHT**

A THESIS

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Guru Nanak and the Gorakhnāthis  
( An early nineteenth-century drawing )

Courtesy:  
Dr. M.S.Randhawa



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## INTRODUCTION

The technique of Yoga has aroused a great deal of interest in the whole of modern world, especially in the West, during the recent years, but mostly as a technique for achieving physical health and mental poise, though originally this was not the true purpose of the Yoga. In Hindu philosophy the thought and practice of Yoga is well-founded and well-developed. It has a long tradition of philosophical as well as practical path of realization. Yoga helps us to reach a higher level of consciousness and it is a methodical effort to attain perfection. Unfortunately, the spirit of Yoga has gradually waned over the centuries, thus resulting into the fanatic observances and wearing-of the outer symbols devoid of spiritual significance.

In ancient India Yoga was considered as the most scientific means of realising the philosophical truths. But the systematic study of Yoga philosophy has been discontinued for several decades on account of the ignorance and unscrupulousness of the most of the latter-day followers of Yoga. Thus Yoga, at the time of Guru Nanak was reduced to mere rites, arduous practices and unnecessary, complex ritualistic patterns.

Guru Nanak's advent was marked by the resurgence of the true religious spirit in India. Before he arrived at the



scene the minds of the people had been ensnared in the rigid frame-work of religious ceremonies. Guru Nanak came to revive the faith of man in man as also the faith of man in God. He gave a new meaning to human life and his teachings gave a direction to attain the Ultimate Goal. The Guru laid down a spiritual discipline for his followers which was the simplest and practicable, a discipline of self-purification, of love and devotion, of concentration and meditation on God. By laying down these objectives the Guru saved the medieval mysticism from degeneration and gave it a much purer form of spiritual quest. He institutionalized his faith and followers to preserve his teachings which cover both the spiritual as well as ethical objectives.

The Yoga in Guru Nanak's times seems to be a strange mixture of Vajrayana Buddhism, Tantric Saivism, Yoga of Patanjali and theistic Natha Yoga. The Yogis had a great sway over the minds of the people. The Siddhas and Nathapanthis who called themselves the devotees of Yoga practised sensational demonstrations for purpose of their false prestige, and their feats were an absurd association of relating mysticism with mystery-mongering. They were, in fact, utter stranger to the true Yoga.

Guru Nanak had raised a banner of revolt against pseudo-saints and also the superstitious beliefs in them. The Siddhas and Yogis are very often mentioned in the writings of the Guru.



No other sect or cult is discussed at such a length as the Yogis are. Hence I thought it worthwhile to study the concept of Yoga of Guru Nanak in the background of ancient Indian thought.

For the study of the concept of Yoga of the great Guru it is requisite to have awareness not alone of basic concepts of Yoga but also the nature of spiritual experience and the medieval manifestations of it. I have, therefore, in the first part of this work attempted to understand the ancient and medieval concepts of Yoga. In the second part, apart from the main chapter on the Yoga of Guru Nanak, a special chapter has been introduced on the *Siddha Gosta* because this long poem exclusively deals with the subject at hand. To be more explicit, I have thought it necessary to add two chapters on the life and the times of Guru Nanak.

The study of the Yoga of Guru Nanak reveals that it has two main implications. One is the criticism or rejection of the Yoga way adopted by the contemporary Yogis and the other is the exposition of his own thought about Yoga philosophy, i.e., Sahaja Yoga or Raja Yoga. The ideal man of the Guru is described as Gurmukh or Gurmukh-Yogi who, imbued with Sabdā and Guru's Grace, through Nām-simārānā and practice of moral virtues, leading a life of a householder, may become an Emancipated Being.



In this work, translations of quotations from the Ādi Granth are from the English version of Sri Guru Granth Sahib rendered by Dr. Gopal Singh. A few of them, however, are from 'the Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs' - a Unesco anthology. Some of the references to Purānic literature and various Saṃhitas are borrowed from The History of Indian Philosophy by Dr. S.N.Das Gupta.

I must acknowledge especially my deepest indebtedness to Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli, Senior Professor and Head of the Department of Punjabi, Panjab University Chandigarh, from who I received scholarly guidance and immense encouragement. Apart from his deeply humane and tolerant point of view, he has always enheartened me with his kindest patronage.

I owe a great deal to my benevolent teacher Sardar Harbans Singh, Head of the Department of Religious Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala for very kindly providing me the cycle-style copies of the research papers read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's life and teachings organized by Punjabi University, Patiala.

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PART I

ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL THOUGHT ABOUT  
YOGA



CHAPTER I

YOGA

(ITS MEANING IN A WIDER AND NARROWER  
CONTEXT)

Samyogoyoga itiukto jivātmāpārmātmānoha.  
Yajñavalkya.

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CHAPTER I

YOGA

(Its meaning in a wider and narrower context)

-:00:-

According to a traditional classification, the systems of Indian Philosophy are divided into two broad classes, e.g., orthodox and heterodox. To the former belong the six chief philosophical systems (sad-darsana) and the latter comprises the three main materialist schools, i.e., the Carvaka, the Bauddha and the Jaina. The heterodox class does not believe in the authority of the Vedas. The six famous orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy are the Nyaya, the Vaisesika, the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Purva-Mimamsa and the Vedanta (also known as Uttra-Mimamsa). These are regarded orthodox, not because they believe in God but because they are the Brahmanical systems and they all accept the authority of the Vedas.

The different systems of philosophy developed in the different centres of philosophical activity and atmosphere. According to Satishchandra Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, in the history of Western philosophy we usually find the different schools coming into existence successively. Each school predominates till another comes in and replaces it. In India, on the other hand, we find that the different schools, though not originating simultaneously, flourish together

during many centuries, and pursue parallel courses of growth. The reason is to be sought perhaps in the fact that in India philosophy was a part of life. As each system of thought came into existence it was adopted as a philosophy of life by a band of followers who formed a school of that philosophy. <sup>1</sup>

The parallel growth of different systems of thought thus continued to exist in India for centuries, with the systems mutually influencing and criticising one another. The general process of the origin and the development of the different philosophic systems is rather interesting. Every system of Indian philosophy, says T.R.V.Murti, has passed through three or four well-defined stages of development. A seer or a great man of insight gives utterance to his intimate vision of Reality. This is the mulamantra, the original inspiration, which initiates a new path and is the basis of a new philosophy. The second stage consists in defining and systematizing the suggestion in aphoristic (sutra or karika) form; a philosophical system is thus formulated. Then there is further elaboration -- drawing implications, application of experience to details, removing discrepancies, etc. A further stage is reached when the systems indulge in the criticism and refutation of other systems to strengthen their own positions. <sup>2</sup> These three stages which can be classified

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1. S.C.Chatterjee and D.M.Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p.9.
  2. T.R.V.Murti, Rise of the Philosophical Schools, article in The Cultural Heritage of India, Edited by Haridas Bhattacharyya, Vol. III, p.32.



as suggestive, systematic and scholastic are easily traceable in the development of Indian philosophy. Apart from the Vedas and the Upanisads, Indian philosophy has a rich treasure comprising Sutra literature, commentaries and a large number of sub-commentaries.

Though the different schools of Indian philosophy<sup>1</sup> present a diversity of views, they have many characteristics in common since they all grew out of the Upanisads. All the systems regard philosophy as a practical necessity and cultivate it in order to understand how an enlightened life can be led. Another point of agreement is that ignorance is the root cause of our bondage and sufferings, and liberation from these cannot be attained without proper knowledge of Reality. The idea of liberation is accepted as the higher end of life. The systems also believe in the theory of rebirth and pre-existence. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, all the systems protest against the scepticism of the Buddhists, and erect a standard of objective reality and truth as opposed to an eternal, unstable flux.<sup>2</sup>

The Nyaya is purely a system of logic, concerned with the means of acquiring right knowledge of the nature of the sixteen padarthas (categories). The Vaishesika classifies all

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1. The six schools of Indian philosophy, the Nyaya, the Vaishesika, the Samkhya, the Yoga, the Pūrva-Mimamsa and the Vedānta were formulated by Gautama, Kanada, Kapila, Patanjali, Jaimini and Badaryana respectively. However, they cannot be considered as the first originator of the systems.

Sometimes the six systems have been classified into three broad divisions : Nyaya-Vaishesika, Samkhya-Yoga, Purva Mimamsa-Vedanta.

2. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, p.25.

knowledge of the objective world under nine realities. It is allied to the Nyaya system and has almost the same goal in view. The Sankhya is a philosophy of dualistic realism and admits the ultimate realities, Purusa and Prakrti. It comprehends the universe as a sum total of twenty five principles. The Yoga accepts the Sankhya metaphysics, but admits also the existence of God. It lays great stress on the yogic practices as the means to the attainment of liberation. The Mimamsa is concerned chiefly with the correct interpretation and justification of Vedic ritualism. The Vedanta arises out of the Upanisads and it is an inquiry into the nature of Brahman. Of all these systems, the Vedanta and the Yoga have exerted the greatest influence on Indian life and culture because Vedanta depicts the ultimate object of knowledge and Yoga shows the way to experiencing directly the principles which Vedanta defines. <sup>1</sup>

Indian philosophy asserts that ignorance is the cause of human sufferings and that all knowledge is built upon experience, but it maintains at the same time that an outward perception only is not a real knowing and that the only way for knowing a thing completely, outwardly and inwardly, is to identify one self with it. Only being one with it one can know it in itself. According to Indian thought mere theoretical knowledge is not sufficient. Some type of

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1. cf. Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p.6.

Max Muller, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, pp.76-82.



discipline, viz., continued meditation on the accepted truths or practical life of self-control, were thought necessary for making such knowledge effective. It may be said that this necessity led to the development of an elaborate technique culminating in Yoga system. Though it was not confined to this system only, it certainly became the basis of Yoga ethics.

The Yoga philosophy is the counterpart of the Samkhya system. It is the application of the theory of the Samkhya in practical life. According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Yoga system is a branch of the preceding school, holding the same opinions on most points treated in common in their Sutras, with the exception of one important point, the existence of God. To the twenty-five principles (tattva) of the Nirisvara Samkhya, the last of which was the Purusha, the Yoga adds, as the twenty-sixth, the Nirguna Purusha, or Self devoid of qualities, the Supreme God of the system. Hence Yoga is called the Sesvara Samkhya.<sup>1</sup> The Bhagavadgita goes so far as to say that only the ignorant speaks of Samkhya and Yoga as different, not the wise. He, who applies himself well to one, gets the fruit of both.<sup>2</sup> Obviously in Bhagavadgita, Samkhya and Yoga are not considered as two different schools for they have the same goal in view and differ only in the methods. But the term Samkhya here, however, does not

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. XIX, p.969.

2. The Bhagavadgita, V,4.

specifically mean the system of philosophy known by that name.

In the introduction to the Cultural Heritage of India, Volume III, S.N.Das Gupta states that another school of Samkhya, known as the Patanjala school of Samkhya or the system of Yoga, appears in the Sutra form somewhere about the second century B.C. We know that some forms of yoga practice were probably prevalent in India as early as 3000 B.C. A definite form of yoga practices and some of the stages of yoga meditation were given probably for the first time by Buddha. This Yoga doctrine seems to be quite unrelated to the Samkhya doctrine. The attempt of Patanjali, and later of Vyasa, seems to have based the yoga practices on the Samkhya metaphysics, revising and reviewing the yoga methods in accordance with the Samkhya doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

According to the grammarians the word 'yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root 'yuj', which means 'to link or to unite', to which is added the suffix 'ghan' indicating completion.<sup>2</sup> The word has another derivative 'yugya' in later Sanskrit literature. S.N.Das Gupta states that there are three roots of the word yoga, namely, yujir yogē, yuj samadhau and yuj samyamane, i.e. the root yujir, to join, and the root yuj in the sense of cessation of mental states or one-pointedness, and

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, Introduction to The Cultural Heritage of India, vol. III, Edited by Haridas Bhattacharyya, p.14.

2. cf. the English 'to yoke' which is also from the same root.



yuj (yuj samyamane) in the sense of controlling.<sup>1</sup> Panini, in the classified roots of his grammar, gives three meanings to the word yoga — i. Samyoga (union), ii. Samyamane (to bind), iii. Samadhi, identification, the dissolution of the individual into the total Being.<sup>2</sup> The word 'yoga' taken in the sense of link is almost synonymous with the word 'religion' which also means 'the link'.

The word 'yoga' is used in various senses in the ancient and medieval philosophic literature. It is often used in the sense of yoking. It also signifies method, spiritual unification, exertion, strenuous endeavour and the restraint of the senses and the mind. The word occurs in Rg-Veda in different senses such as yoking, achieving the unachieved, connection and harnessing etc. In the later works it is used to mean the union of the individual spirit (jivātman) with the Universal Spirit (pārmātman). In the Bhagavadgita yoga is defined as Samtava, equability. Kṛṣṇa says to Arjuna that his business is only to perform his duties selflessly and not to look for the effects of his deeds. At the same time it is wrong to desist from performing one's duties. This sameness (Samtava) in joys and sorrows is described as Yoga.<sup>3</sup>

The word yoga had caused considerable perplexities in the minds of early thinkers. The Bhagavadgita, for example, is designated in the colophon of every chapter as the Yoga-

1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, pp. 443-44.

2. cf. Danielou, Yoga: The Method of Re-integration, p.6.

3. Bhagavadgita, II,48.

sastra, yet does not seem to take Yoga in Patanjali's sense as the cessation of mental states. Similarly we find that Yoga adopted by some Indian cults, viz., Vaisnavite, Saivite and Saktite broadly corresponds to the union of lower self with the Higher Self. In Patanjali, Yoga does not simply mean union, but a methodical effort to attain liberation through the control of physical as well as mental senses. According to Buddhistic thought Yoga is the possession of the five qualities of faith, energy, thought, concentration and wisdom. We find that later on some elements of Yoga had been accepted by most systems of Indian thought including the Vedanta.

Yoga is also defined as the ultimate state of unconsciousness (avedana), the eternal state when everything else has ceased.<sup>1</sup> In this state citta is destroyed, and one is reduced to the ultimate entity of consciousness; and thus, being free of all relations and differentiations of subject and object, one has no knowledge in this state, though it is characterized as bodhatmaka (identical with consciousness).<sup>2</sup> The Yoga-Vasistha occasionally mentions the term yoga as denoting the highest state and defines it as the ultimate state of unconsciousness (avedanam vidur yogam) or the cessation of poisonous effects of desire.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Yoga-Vasistha, VI.126. 99.

2. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, p.265.

3. Yoga-Vasistha, VI.37.1 and VI. 126. 99.



According to S.K.Majumdar the word yoga means both the perception of Self which is the goal, as well as the disciplines leading to it. It is therefore both the means and the end, the way and the goal.<sup>1</sup> In other words, Yoga is a method of training the mind and developing its subtle perceptual powers by which one may discover the spiritual truths. Yoga, thus, is the realization of the powers hidden in the man. It can also be described as the art of living which has its formulations, its interpretations of life and which is based upon subtle perceptions attained through control and concentration.

The aim of the Yoga, according to Dr. S.Radhakrishnan, is to free the individual from the clutches of matter. The highest form of matter is citta, and the Yoga lays down the course by which a man can free himself from the fetters of citta. By withdrawing the citta from its natural functions, we overcome the pain of the world and escape from saṁsara.<sup>2</sup> Yogic discipline turns back the citta to its original status by suppressing the qualities of rajas and tamas.

According to Visnu Purana that particular inclination of the mind which is accompanied by an active desire to know the Self and which leads to union with the Principle, is called Yoga.<sup>3</sup> Yoga Sara Samgraha states that the silencing of the

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1. S.K.Majumdar, Introduction to Yoga Principle and Practices, p.53.

2. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, p.344.

3. Visnu Purana, VI.7.3.

आत्म प्रयत्नसाधेया विशिष्टा वा मनो गतिः ।  
तस्या ब्रह्मणि संयोगो योग इत्यभिधीयते ॥

mind's activities which leads to the complete realization of the intrinsic nature of the Supreme Person is called Yoga.<sup>1</sup> The five activities of the mind are ascertaining of facts (pramana), false knowledge (viparyaya), imagination (vikalpa), sleep (nidra) and memory (smṛti). The constant activity of the mind is the main obstacle to realization of the Self. The word 'yoga' can also be used by extension for knowledge, love, action, etc., since these are also means of liberation and are thus the instruments of re-integration (Yoga).<sup>2</sup>

Yoga aims at the direct experience of all things through identification with them. The realization of supra-sensory perception is one of the stages of this technique. Without knowing this technique (yoga) no realization is possible. Yogabija Upaniṣad says, "O Goddess ! how could knowledge without the method of re-integration (yoga) lead to liberation".<sup>3</sup> Yoga thus is the process leading to the culmination of true religious practice, by which man transcends the mind and gets established in the superconsciousness. It can also be described as the means and the object of knowledge.

The Yoga system lays down a practical and pragmatic path of self-realization for yogin and the sincere religious aspirant. It holds that liberation can be attained through the

1. Yoga Sara Saṅgraha, p.1 (Adyar ed.)

दुरुपस्थ्या उपनिषत्स्वरूपावस्थिते हेतुस्थिते वृत्तिनिरोधे योग इति ।

2. Ibid. p.2.

3. Yogabija Upaniṣad, 18.

योगहीनं कथं ज्ञानं साक्षाद् भवतीति वरि ॥

real knowledge of the self as distinct from the physical world including body, mind and ego-sense. It can only be possible by fully controlling the different functions and activities of body and mind. Yoga reiterates the main Upaniṣadic conclusion that the soul must not be identified either with the body or with the senses or with the mind or even with the ego and the intelligence-principle, and that one must penetrate into the inner spiritual core after ripping open the sheaths (kosas) of materiality.<sup>1</sup>

The characteristics of the Yoga philosophy, according to Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, apart from points of less importance, are (1) the rejection of the atheist views of the Sāṃkhya, and (2) the treatment of the doctrine of absorption as the most effectual means for the attainment of the knowledge that secures emancipation. The technical detail of the theory of absorption forms the proper contents of the Yoga system, and has given to it its own name : for Yoga signifies originally 'yoking', then 'diversion of the senses from the external world, and concentration of thought within'.<sup>2</sup> Yoga is a method of self-help and severe mental discipline. It anticipated the doctrine of Psycho-analysis which prescribes methods of unearthing the repressed unconscious complexes and tackling them rationally.<sup>3</sup>

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1. cf. Taittiriya Upaniṣad, II.2-5.

2. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.XII, p.831.

3. cf. J.N.Sinha, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, p. 176.



The paramount aim of the Yoga, according to Theos Bernard, is to free man forever from the three sorts of pain: 1. Those arising from his own infirmities and wrong conduct, such as disease. 2. Those arising from his relations with other living things, such as a tiger, thief, and the like. 3. Those arising from his relations with external nature, such as the elements and other abstract and subtle powers. This is, according to him, accomplished, first, by achieving non-attachment to the world, but not necessarily isolation from it; secondly, by gaining restraint over the mind and its creations, thereby purifying the manifest consciousness; and, finally, by attaining positive and absolute union of the individual soul and universal soul. This condition is known as samādhi, and is the true purpose of Yoga.<sup>1</sup> The really important character of the Yoga, says Max Muller, consists in its teaching that, however true the Sankhya philosophy may be, it fails to accomplish its end without those practical helps which the Yoga philosophy alone supplies.<sup>2</sup>

The Yoga system assumes that the individual is part and parcel of the universe but is so involved in the fetters of material world as to have lost his identity and recognition of his true reality. Yoga sets forth means to bring the individual back to his true and original position absolving

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1. Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p.87.

2. Max Muller, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p.335.

him from the clutches of matter. The Yoga method of self-realization is a bold achievement of the Indian mind and most schools of philosophy have recognised Yoga as the most scientific means of realizing philosophical truths.

It may be noticed that the Upanisads, the Bhagavadgita, Buddhism and Jainism accept yogic practices. We find that the Svetasvatara Upanisad, the Maitrayani Upanisad and the Katha Upanisad show yoga leanings in a systematic manner, but the characteristic yoga practices can be traced back to much earlier literature. Usual methods of facilitating concentration and some of the psychological processes involved in contemplation were quite familiar in the pre-Sutra period. Yoga teachings have been accumulated through a ceaseless stream of adepts and were handed down from generation to generation through countless devotees.

Patanjali systematized the conceptions of the Yoga in his famous work Yoga-Sutra (the Yoga aphorisms) in the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup> He is credited with having given us the present literary form of the Yoga principles. The Yoga-Sutra is the oldest and authoritative text-book of this system. It treats with the nature and aims of Yoga and explains the means of attaining liberation (kaivalya). The analytic study of the Yoga-Sutra of Patanjali shows that the work is not any original

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1. The question of the date of Patanjali and the Yoga aphorisms are discussed at length in Chapter IV.

exposition but a masterly and systematic compilation. Among the other outstanding works of Yoga literature are Vyasa's Bhasya (commentary) on the Yoga-Sutra, Vacaspati's glossary on Vyasa's Bhasya known as Tattvavaisaradi (ninth century), Bhoja's Rajamartanda, Vijnanabhiksu's Yogavarttika and Yogasara-samgraha. Vyasa's commentary (fourth century A.D.) is, however, the standard exposition of the Yoga principles. A few other writers on the Yoga are Nagesa Bhatta, Narayanabhiksu and Mahadeva.

In course of time the Yoga practices came to be classified in different forms and thus arose the well-known divisions of Yoga, such as Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga and Jnana Yoga, etc. We find these divisions mentioned for the first time in the Bhagavadgita. One of the common classifications is that found in the Bhagavadgita namely :Karma yoga (Re-integration through action), Bhakti yoga (Re-integration through love and devotion) and Jnana yoga (Re-integration through knowledge). In later works, not only these broad divisions are mentioned but we also find mention of many sub-divisions, such as, Laya yoga, Mantra yoga, Hatha yoga, Kundalini yoga, etc.

It is significant that the various Yogas do not conflict with each other because they have the common goal in view. Each form of Yoga, if strenuously practised, leads the man to the same goal of perfection and attainment. The practices of Yoga, however, vary according to the state of development and the stage of advancement of the individual. It may be noticed



that all the Yogas, with different adjectives prefixed to them, have certain common features. They differ only according to the place and importance a particular discipline occupied in the life of a yogin.

The Yogatattva Upaniṣad speaks of four kinds of Yoga: Mantra yoga, Laya yoga, Hatha yoga and Raja yoga. The Śiva Samhita also acknowledges four stages of Yoga and gives their order differently according to the degree of initiation necessary for their practice. "There are four yogas — Mantra, Hatha, Laya and the fourth Raja yoga in which no duality remains."<sup>1</sup>

Swami Atmananda in his book 'The Four Yogas' has classified yogas into four, namely Karma Yoga, Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga and Jnana yoga. He states that the four sets of practices are meant to suit the four marked differences in the psychology of man. According to him, those who feel for the suffering humanity and are eager to discharge their social duties take to Karma yoga. Those who are filled with awe and reverence for the wonderful creations of God desire to adore Him symbolically by Bhakti yoga. Those who are wonder-struck by the miracles performed by some extraordinary men whom they have heard of or seen and desire to fathom themselves, take to the Raja yoga as systematised by Patanjali. Those whose intellectual alertness is fully awake, wish to go to the fundamentals of things as stated in the Upaniṣads and which

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1. Śiva-Samhita, V.14.

have been held as correct by the keen intellect of Samkara, these take to the path of Jnana.<sup>1</sup>

Evan-Wentz sets forth concisely the various aspects or parts of Yoga and their relationship to one another by the following table :

	<u>The Part</u>	<u>Master of</u>	<u>And leading to yogic control of</u>
I.	Hatha Yoga	breath	Physical body and vitality.
II.	Laya Yoga.	will	powers of mind.
	(1) Bhakti yoga	love	powers of divine love.
	(2) Shakti yoga	energy	energizing forces of Nature.
	(3) Mantra yoga	sound	powers of sound vibration.
	(4) Yantra yoga	form	powers of geometrical form.
III	Dhyana yoga	thought	powers of thought-processes.
IV.	Raja yoga	method	powers of discrimination.
	(1) Jnana yoga	knowledge	powers of intellect.
	(2) Karma yoga	activity	powers of action.
	(3) Kundalini yoga	Kundalini	powers of psychic-nerve force.
	(4) Samādhi yoga	self	powers of ecstasy. <sup>2</sup>

Ernest Wood, in his book Great Systems of Yoga, have listed the seven varieties of yoga practice as follows : 1. The Raja Yoga of Patanjali. 2. The Karma and Buddhi Yoga of Shri Krishna. 3. The Gnyana (Jnana) Yoga of Shri Shankaracharya. 4. Hatha Yoga. 5. Laya Yoga. 6. Bhakti Yoga. 7. Mantra Yoga.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Swami Atmanada, The Four Yogas, p.4.

2. Evan-Wentz, Tibtean Yoga and Secret Doctrines, p.33.

3. Ernest Wood, Great Systems of Yoga, p.8.

The distinctions of the forms of the Yoga are mostly matters of emphasis and in actual practice the different Yogas are more or less mixed. In all the Yogas there are great mental transformations, by attainment of purity and concentration. The object of the Karma yoga is to purify the mind of a man of his passions, namely his hatred and envy of others, his greed, his lust etc. The man has to strive with might against these enemies. It suits men of vital and active nature. Karma yoga of the Gita is blended with Jnana and Bhakti. Jnana yoga is the way of philosophical analysis and discrimination. The aim of the Jnana yoga is to take the individual away from the world of senses to the sphere of Superconsciousness, where alone one realises the Self. Jnana yoga is the intense zeal to keep up a continuous flow of the awareness of the inner Self. Bhakti yoga is the way of love and devotion. It emphasises exclusive meditation, beginning and ending with God alone.

Foremost among the Yogas is Raja yoga of Patanjali, literally means the royal yoga. It deals largely with the process of stilling the mind and insists on the methods of concentration. It is also known as Astanga-yoga (the eight-fold yoga). Of the sub-divisions of Yoga, Hatha yoga is the best known. It developed as a branch of Raja yoga and regarded that suitable postures and breath-control were of great help in the process of meditation. Hatha yoga is the name given to the technical practices and disciplines by which the body and the vital energies can be brought under control. Combined with the awakening of the Kundalini sakti, Kundalini yoga,



Hatha yoga is the best form of physical and psychic discipline. The Mantra yoga and Laya yoga are the other important subdivisions of Yoga. Mantra yoga is usually practised in the form of rhythmic repetition known as japa with the help of a rosary. Such practices are useful for many beginners in spiritual practice. Laya is the merging of the mind in the Self through concentration on a sound or idea. It is a close variation of Raja yoga. These and the other forms of discipline were developed and practised by the individuals of different temperaments.

The best known among the sects of the yogins are Śaivite, Vaiṣṇavite and Śaktite.<sup>1</sup> The Kanphatas are a subsect of Śaiva ascetics.<sup>2</sup> The close alliance of the Kanphatas to the Yoga is visible from the prominent part given to the Yoga praxis, the cakras, nādi-suddhi, vayus and pranas.

The Upaniṣads have assumed the Yoga practices in the sense of conscious inward search of the true knowledge of Brahman, and regarded tapas and brahmaçarya as means of spiritual realisation. Some of the Upaniṣads, such as Maitri Upaniṣad, vaguely refers to the six-fold yoga. Buddhist literature takes Yoga in the sense of a mental resolve and Buddhist Yoga emphasises the physical control as a preparation for enlightenment or the attainment of Bodhisattva. Jaina yoga is a complete course of moral discipline which leads to the

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1. For a detailed study see Chapter VI.

2. The Kanphatas are so called from their peculiar custom of slitting their ears. They are also known as Gorakhpantis. They trace their origin to a much earlier period than Gorakhnath's.

purification of the mind and thus is different from the Buddhist Yoga and the Yoga of Patanjali. Yoga according to Jainism consists of Jnana, śradhā (faith) and caritra (good conduct).

Yoga, according to Patanjali, means the cessation of mental functions and modifications. It does not mean any kind of contact or union between the individual self and the Absolute. Its aim is to prevent the self from identifying itself with mental modifications. The Yoga of Patanjali, also known as Aṣṭāṅga-yoga, in short, gives us the eight-fold means consisting of the discipline of yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyama, pratyahara, dhāra, dhyana and samādhi. Regular practice of these aids leads to the attainment of Yoga, both samprajñata and asamprajñata. The Yoga of Patanjali is primarily a system of psychic discipline. The Yoga of Gita is quite different from the Yoga of Patanjali; and it does not seem at all probable that the Gita was aware of Patanjali's Yoga or the technical terms used by him.<sup>1</sup> The commonly accepted meaning of the word 'yoga', as expounded in the Gita, is 'association'. The Yoga of Gita is prominently known as Karma yoga, i.e. self-surrendering and detached performance of one's duties (yogah karmasu kauśalam), and sameness in joys and sorrows. Yoga of the various cults, in short, can be defined as the union of the lower and the higher soul. Such a union can be effected

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1. cf. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p.453.

only with the help of the well-known eight accessories (aṣṭāṅga-yoga). Yoga, thus, is identity of the finite soul with the Infinite Self.

A yogin may acquire certain extra-ordinary powers by the practice of Yoga but the Yoga system warns against all practices with these ends in view. The acquisition of the super-normal powers is strongly condemned in Yoga ethics as Yoga is for the attainment of liberation only. However, there are a sort of 'new dispensationists' who call themselves devotees of Yoga, but practise sensational demonstrations for purpose of their false prestige and are utter stranger to the true yogic methods.

To use the words of Theos Bernard, the systematic study of the Yoga has now been stopped for hundreds of years, having gone into a state of decay on account of idleness, ignorance, and the unscrupulousness of the generality of its latter-day followers. Corrupted rites, false ideas, dogmatic tenets, which human selfishness begot in the course of ages, led man to practice social abuses and crimes, evils so common and rampant that Yoga was perforce compelled to retire to secret abodes.<sup>1</sup>

To conclude we may say that Yoga is not a repressive but a directive psychology; it is no retreat from the world. It rejects the illusion of our separate personality, but it is certainly not the denial of true personality.

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1. Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, pp.88,89.



CHAPTER II

UPANISADIC CONCEPT OF YOGA

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ādhyatmayogen devam matva.  
Katha Up.

CHAPTER II

UPANISADIC CONCEPT OF YOGA.

-:00:-

In the history of Indian Philosophy, the Upaniṣads form the concluding portions of the Vedas and are therefore called the Veda-anta, the end of the Veda. This denomination suggests that the Upaniṣads contain the essence of the Vedic teaching. The word Upaniṣad comes from upa ni sad, 'sitting down near'. It means the sitting down near the teacher to receive instruction. It gradually came to mean what we receive from the teacher, a sort of secret doctrine or rahasyam. Sometimes it is made to mean what enables us to destroy error and approach truth.<sup>1</sup>

The Upaniṣads are generally accounted to be 108 in number but only ten or twelve of them are considered to be the chief ones. Up to date, says S.C.Chakravarti, as many as 112 Upaniṣads have been found, and who knows some more may not be added, as the result of the further enterprise. One of the latest Upaniṣads, the Muktika Upaniṣad, carefully enumerates as many as 108 Upaniṣads, so that there may be no doubt left in the minds of believers about each and every one of them being a sacred and authoritative production.<sup>2</sup> It is very difficult to

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1. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.1.p.138.

2. S.C.Chakravarti, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, p.35.

assign any exact date to these works as they are not the production of one single author. However, it is certain that the earliest of them are pre-Buddhistic and a few of them are post-Buddhistic. The accepted dates for the early Upaniṣads, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, are 1000 B.C. to 300 B.C.<sup>1</sup> Some people, while dealing with the Upaniṣads, have considered it necessary to limit themselves to the earlier thirteen Upaniṣads. Śankra has commented on ten only, namely, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Katha, Kausitaki, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Mundaka, Praśna, Śvetasvatara and Jabala. It is noticable that he has not included the Iṣa, Kena, Maitri and Mandūdyā, though these are also considered the important ones.

The Upaniṣads aim at bringing peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit. Their object is not so much to reach the philosophical heights. As in the case of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads were carefully preserved in memory from generation to generation. According to Professor Max Muller, when we read the Upaniṣads, the impression they leave on our mind is that they are sudden intuitions or inspirations, which sprang up here and there, and were collected afterwards.<sup>2</sup> One should bear in mind, while dealing with the Upaniṣads, that the Upaniṣads do not represent the thoughts of one exclusive period. There is a complete absence of systematic teaching in these works as the successive periods of thought were strangled

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1. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.1.p. 141

2. F.Max Muller, Vedanta Philosophy, p.19.



together into these texts . No doubt, they contain much that is inconsistent and unscientific, And yet one feels certain that behind these religious and philosophical thoughts there is a rich background of real historical growth. The Upaniṣads, according to S.C.Chakravarti, do not record the thoughts of the philosophers, according to the order of time in which they appeared, but are only the condensed records of the essential heads of thoughts of different groups of the thinkers, promiscuously placed.<sup>1</sup>

The different systems of Indian philosophy are not the isolated systems, which they appear to be, but are only stages in the evolution of thoughts. It is important that the roots of all the different systems, namely, Vaiśeṣika, Nyaya, Sāṃkhya, Buddhist and Yoga are to be found in the Upaniṣads.<sup>2</sup> However, it will be found that the elements of the Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika philosophies do not occupy much space in these works and were elaborately developed later on. The elements of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies, on account of their importance, have been more fully accommodated but detailed reference made to these philosophies is not found in the earlier Upaniṣads, as their main theme was the development of Ātman doctrine.

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1. S.C.Chakravarti, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, p.48.

2. "There is no important form of Hindu thought, heterodox Buddhism included, which is not rooted in the Upaniṣads."

Usually, we divide the systems of Indian philosophies into two distinct classes, namely, theistic and atheistic. In the atheistic group, the Sāṅkhya philosophy, being very systematic, is most important. It influenced the class of rational thinkers and, in a way, the rest of philosophies too. The Yoga philosophy was undoubtedly developed closely on the lines of the Sāṅkhya system.<sup>1</sup> In the early works the Yoga principles appear along with the Sāṅkhya ideas. In Upaniṣads, we see that those Upaniṣads which speak of the Sāṅkhya theories also refer to the Yoga system. The Katha, the Maitrayani and the Śvetasvatara refer to the practical aspect of religious realisation, which is distinct from the Sāṅkhya School of theoretical investigation.

While the Sāṅkhya pleads for the logical investigations, the Yoga discusses the nature of mental discipline and concentration. In the Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad, the Sāṅkhya holds that knowledge is the means of salvation while Yoga is considered as the way of active and dutiful striving in the spirit of disinterestedness.

The Yoga philosophy afterwards tried to fill up an important gap by introducing the conception of God, thus meriting the title of Sēsvra-Sāṅkhya. Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad,

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1. "The Yoga philosophy is the counterpart of the Sāṅkhya system, it begins where the other ends. The Sāṅkhya philosophy raises the question but refers to the Yoga philosophy for its solution; and therefore the first form of philosophical thought is incomplete without the second."

to which God is all in all, takes from the Yoga the appliances, by which man is to be prepared for the reception of the highest knowledge.

"He is the eternal one among those that are eternal, the conscious one among those that are conscious — the one among the many who dispenses desirable objects. Whoever knows this cause, the god who is to be comprehended by the Sāṅkhya and Yoga, is liberated from all bonds."<sup>1</sup>

The Yoga philosophy aimed at building a new kind of theistic attitude as against the atheistic school of thought. It wanted to do so by providing a sort of mental discipline, by means of which the conception of ultimate cause might be put upon a firm and practical basis.

S.C.Chakravarti<sup>2</sup> has commented that whatever alteration the conception of God of the Yogins may have undergone during the Sutra period, it is fairly certain that in the Upaniṣad period, when the Yoga philosophy was first stated and elaborated, God, in the sense in which he was then understood,

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1. The Śvetaśvatara Upaniṣad, VI.13.  
(Translation by Dr. E. Roer, p.308)

नित्यो नित्यानां चैतनश्चैतनानामेको बहूनां यो विदधाति कारणम् ।  
तत्कारणं सांख्ययोगाधिगम्यं ज्ञात्वा देवं मुच्यते सर्वे पाशैः ॥

2. S.C.Chakravarti, The Philosophy of the Upanishads, p.63.



found place in that system.

It is apparent that the concept of Yoga, as depicted in the Sutras of Patanjali was not perfected at the time of early Upanisads. We see its gradual growth only in the later ones. The word Yoga, as a technical term, occurs in the Katha and the Taittiriya Upanisads.<sup>1</sup> This term is not elaborated in these works and it can not be said that it is fully identical with the Yoga of Patanjali.

In the Katha Upanisad, we find the elements of the Samkhya and the Yoga theories. The question that how do we know of the Infinite Brahman is fully treated in the Katha. The chief means by which this thinking can be achieved is Yoga, which denotes a state by which the senses and the mind are withdrawn from the worldly objects and the intellect is directed only to Brahman.<sup>2</sup> Probably Katha Upanisad was written

1. "The technical term of Yoga is first found in the second part of the Katha Upanisad (Vith Valli,11) and denotes its own unitarian doctrine."

Dr.E.Roer, The Twelve Principal Upanisads, Vol.1.p.25

तां योगमिति मन्यन्ते स्थिरामिन्द्रियधारणाम् ।  
अप्रमत्तस्तदा भवति योगो हि प्रमवाप्य यो ॥११॥

(The state unperturbed when the senses are imprisoned in the mind, of this they say 'it is Yoga'. The man becomes very vigilant, for Yoga is the birth of things and their ending.)

(Translation by Sri Aurobindo.)

2. "When the five senses cease and are at rest and the mind rests with them and the higher mind ceases from its workings, that is the highest state, say thinkers." (Katha Up.VI.10)  
Translated by Sri Aurobindo.

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।  
बुद्धिरथ न विचेष्टति तांसाह परमां गतिम् ॥१०॥

at a time when the Saṅkhya had already been founded and it recognised the necessity of Yoga. In this Upaniṣad the Death imparts to Nachiketas the truth that the wise man, meditating on the Self by means of Yoga recognises the Eternal Being. A person who is free from desires, sees the glory of the Self, by controlling his senses. In the concluding lines of the Katha Upaniṣad it is stated that Nachiketas, having gained this knowledge (Yogavidhi) from Death, learned the whole ordinance of Yoga and thereafter obtained Brahman. Thus any one else may obtain this state in the similar manner.<sup>1</sup>

The Katha Upaniṣad, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, speaks of the highest condition of Yoga as a state in which the senses, with mind and intellect, are brought to a standstill. Not unnaturally, there were people who tried to induce artificially such state of trance.<sup>2</sup> The Yoga theory which gives direction how to refine the mind by discarding what is peculiar to the individual, is almost in concordance with the Upaniṣadic theory of self. Through this discipline, we can rise to the 'ardent impersonality'.

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1. Katha Up. VI.18.

मृत्युप्रोक्तां नाचिकेतोऽथ लब्ध्वा विद्यामेतां योगविधिं च कृत्स्नम् ।  
 ब्रह्मप्राप्तौ विरजः सूक्ष्ममृत्युरन्योऽप्येवं यो विदध्यात्ममेव ॥ १८ ॥

2. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.II.p.339.

The Yoga system stresses upon the individual the need to go through a course of mental and spiritual discipline. The Upaniṣads also emphasise that to obtain the knowledge of Brahman one should adopt austere practices and the life of brahmçarya. In the Praśna Upaniṣad, six sages approach the venerable Pipplada for a knowledge of the Highest Brahman. Pipplada sends them away for another year in leading the life of brahmçarya.<sup>1</sup> The life of austerity, where they will have no worldly attachments to perturb their mind, would enable them to have the mental peace and the subjugation of the senses.

According to the Yoga philosophy, the man must control the waves of the mind which make him the slave of the worldly objects, otherwise, "as water, when rained down on elevated ground, runs scattered off in the valleys, so even runs after difference a person who beholds attributes different from the soul. As pure water, poured into pure water remains the same, thus is the self of a thinker who knows".<sup>2</sup> Similarly, an ignorant mind always wavers hither and thither, but a disciplined and purified mind becomes one with Brahman like the pure water. The Kausitaki Upaniṣad also insists that one should adopt complete control over passions and desires. It speaks of Pratardana as the founder of a new system of self-control.<sup>3</sup> Apparently, we can draw this conclusion that the

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1. Praśna Up.I.2.

2. Katha Up.IV. 14-15.

3. Kausitaki Up. II.5.



idea of thought-wave control (cittavrttinirodha), elaborately developed later on, is very much rooted in the Upanisads, though it subscribes mainly to the Ātman doctrine.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Upanisads assume the Yoga practice in the sense of a conscious inward search or striving after a true knowledge of reality. Meditation and concentration are insisted on, since a direct knowledge of the self as subject is not possible. The Upanisads regard tapas and brahmaçarya as virtues productive of great power.<sup>1</sup> The Upanisads takes tapas as a means of spiritual realisation. The tapas liberate the soul from the slavery of the body. The Upanisads ask the enquirers to renounce selfish exertions, but certainly not the all interests. They plead for the detachment from self and attachment to God. The ideal sage may have desires, but these must not be the selfish ones. "He who has no desires, who is beyond desires, whose desires are satisfied, whose desire is the soul, being even Brahman obtains Brahman."<sup>2</sup> Hence, in the Upanisads, a distinction is drawn between true and false desires (Chhandogya Up.VII.1.3). and we are to share only in the true ones.

The Upanisads sometimes go into the details of Yoga practices. The Brihadaranyaka Upanisad suggests that one can bring about the state of trance by control of breath.<sup>3</sup> It can be observed that the idea of Samadhi may have developed

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1. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.II,p.339.

2. Brihadaranyaka Up.IV.4,6.

3. Ibid, I.5.23.

out of these Upaniṣadic theories. The Maitri Upaniṣad simply hints at the six-fold Yoga and mentions the technical terms of this system vaguely as the Yoga of Patanjali was not perfected at that time. The Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad presents a syncretism of the Vedānta, the Sāṃkhya and the Yoga. There are similar verses in the Bhagavadgīta and the Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad.

The Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad and some of the later Upaniṣads belong to the Epic period. They reflect the growth of Indian thought and attach themselves to either school of philosophy. The Maitri, The Jabala, The Dhyānabindu and the Yogatattva Upaniṣads refer freely to the Yoga method. The Maitri Upaniṣad tries to synthesize Sāṃkhya and Yoga theories, while the Jabala Upaniṣad pleads to root out all sorts of desire. The Yogatattva Upaniṣad throughout insists upon concentration through Yoga methods. It is evident that most of the Upaniṣadic works of this period suggest the reconciliation between the conflicting tenets of the Sāṃkhya, the Yoga and the Vedānta.

The Philosophers of the Upaniṣads were able to reach the Highest Truth, Brahman, with the help of the concentration.<sup>1</sup> They even declared emphatically that the Truth could be achieved

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1. "Those who have ascertained the meaning of the knowledge derived from the Vedānta, who by the Yoga which renounces all worldly concerns, are striving for emancipation and whose intellects are purified, all those at the time of their final death enjoying the highest immortality in the worlds of Brahman become fully liberated."

(Mundaka Up.III.ii.6.)

Translation by Dr. E.Roer.

by any one in the similar way. A brief mention of the rules of the concentration can be found in the early Upaniṣads. The Katha, the Prasna, the Mandukya and also the Śvetasvatara Upaniṣad have treated the Yoga system as a psychical process to obtain the knowledge of the self. In the modern Upaniṣads, we find the rules of Yoga method given systematically. The fundamental principles of mental control, in the shape of Mantras, are given in Yogasara Upaniṣad. Being the works of post-epic and the Sutra period, the ideas contained in such Upaniṣads are very much in consonance with the Yoga of Patanjali.

Before the rise of the Yoga system, the idea of Brahman, as well as that of Ātman had been developed. But the wave of materialism, which commenced with the promulgation of the Sāṃkhya system, tried to sweep away all theistic conclusions. At such a time, the Yoga system helped the theistic enquirers in driving away the doubts created by the materialists and sifting out the conception of the ultimate cause.

In ancient times, says S.C.Chakravarti, when scientific investigations were in their infancy, and the experience of man was comparatively small, the Yoga system played a very important part in widening the sphere of human knowledge, and gave birth to a wonderful truth, which will remain as the highest truth for mankind for all ages.<sup>1</sup>

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1. S.C.Chakravarti, The Philosophy of the Upaniṣads, p.74.



CHAPTER III

BUDDHISTIC CONCEPT OF YOGA

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CHAPTER IIIBUDDHISTIC CONCEPT OF YOGA

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Buddhistic thought had a history of almost a thousand years in India. As the centuries passed by the doctrines of Buddhism varied widely. In the course of the development of Buddhist thought many schools of philosophy, both major and minor, arose. The Hinayana, the Mahayana and the several specific schools constitute the history of Buddhism. As Buddhism flourished in different lands, it suffered enormous changes at the hands of successive times and generations.

The founder of this great creed, Siddhartha Gautama, was born about the middle of the sixth century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The title of 'Buddha' (awakened one) came to be applied to him afterwards. The message of his enlightenment laid the foundation of both Buddhistic religion and philosophy. Buddha wrote no books. Like all great teachers of ancient times he taught by conversation, and for a long time his teachings also were handed down orally by his disciples to the successive people. Hence, there is a certain amount of vagueness about the real form of his teachings

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1. The life of Siddhartha is well-known. Born in a Royal family of Kapilawastu he renounced the world at the age of thirty. The sights of the afflicted mankind and the endless suffering impressed the young prince to escape into the forest. He passed seven years in austerities and severe penance; but, not meeting with success he began a fresh course of self-discipline, till at last his endeavour was crowned with success. He did not spend his rest of life in the forest. Then he began the noble work of spreading the knowledge of Truth. He died at the age of eighty, at Kusinara about the year 485 B.C.

because it has to be gathered from the works compiled later on.

The teachings of Buddha are to be found in Tripitakas or the three baskets of teachings. These three canonical works, written in the Pali dialect, are Suttapitaka, Vinayapitaka, and Abhidhammapitaka. Of these the first contains tales and dialogues of Buddha, the second deals with rules of discipline, and the third contains expositions of philosophical theories. They were most probably compiled before the Third Great Council was held, i.e. before 241 B.C.

Early Buddhism is not an absolutely original doctrine as the Buddha did not break away totally from the spiritual ideas of his age and country. According to S.Radhakrishnan and Charles Moore, the Buddha takes up some of the thoughts of the Upanisads and gives to them a new orientation. The Buddha is not so much formulating a new scheme of metaphysics and morals as rediscovering an old norm and adapting it to the new conditions of thought and life.<sup>1</sup>

Buddha's Four Truths are that there is suffering (duhkha), that it has a cause (duhkha-samudāya), that it can be suppressed (duhkha-nirodha), and that there is a way to accomplish this (duhkha-nirodha-mārga). All the teachings of Buddha

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1. A Source Book of Indian Philosophy, Edited by S.Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, p. 272.

centre round these Four Truths. The Buddha postulates that life is full of suffering. All things in this world pass away, none can resist the universal supremacy of death. There is nothing permanent except the self or Ātman. The root cause of suffering is traced to ignorance (avidyā) and selfish craving (tanha). There are twelve links in the chain of causation. These are i. ignorance (avidyā), ii. impressions (saṃskāra), iii. the initial consciousness of the embryo (vijñāna), iv. mind and body, the embryonic organism (nāma-rūpa), v. six organs of knowledge (śaḍayatan-a), vi. sense-contact (sparśa), vii. sense-experience (vedana), viii. thirst (trṣṇa), ix. clinging (upādāna), x. tendency to be born (bhāva), xi. rebirth (jāti), and xii. Old age, death etc. (jāramarāṇa). When we get rid of these impediments we attain nirvāna. The nirvāna, so to say, is the cessation of ignorance, selfishness, and suffering and the attainment of wisdom and compassion. The attainment of this state should not be misunderstood as inactivity. The fourth Noble Truth lays down the path to be followed to reach the state of nirvāna; it is the famous eight-fold path of morality.

Ashtāṅgikā-mārga (the eight-fold path) constitutes the essentials of Buddhistic ethics. It consists in the acquisition of the eight good virtues, viz., right faith (sammāditthi), right resolve (sammāsankappā), right speech (sammevācā), right conduct (sammakammanta), right living (samma-ajīva), right effort (sammevayama), right thought



(sammāsati), right concentration (sammasamādhi). It is to be noted that this path consists of three main things, knowledge (prājnā), conduct (śīla), and concentration (samādhi), harmoniously cultivated. Knowledge is the basis of the whole discipline. Śīla includes virtues like truthfulness, contentment and non-injury. Samādhi, according to Professor M. Hiriyanna, is an aid in securing tranquillity of mind and in gaining a clear insight into the truth that has been learnt from others. This part of the training, he puts, includes, as in the Upaniṣads diverse forms of yogic exercises.<sup>1</sup> The eight-fold path is the best way to the extinction of suffering.

In course of the time as the followers of Buddhism increased, they were divided into different schools. The number of these schools that arose in India itself is eighteen. The most important division of Buddhism, on the basis of religious principles was into the Hinayāna and the Mahāyāna. These terms are variously explained; the most common but vague explanation signifies the Hinayāna as the 'small way' and the Mahāyāna as the 'great way' of salvation.

The Hinayāna is a logical development of the Pāli canon, the original teaching of Buddha, and preserves its rationalistic elements. The Hinayāna is called Theravāda or Sthāviravādā (the doctrine of the Elders). Since it flourishes mostly in Ceylon and Burma it is also known as Southern

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1. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 151.

Buddhism. The Hinayāna is the difficult path of self-help. The Arhata is the highest ideal which believes in the possibility of emancipation through one's own powers. This school regards the Buddha as a historical person whereas the Mahāyāna conceives the Buddha as supramundane and transcendental. The latter lays stress on the conception of Bodhisattva.

The Mahāyāna possesses no canonical work, and develops a sort of mystical religion. It prevailed largely in Tibet, China and Japan and therefore is known as Northern Buddhism. The Mahāyāna lays great stress on the idea that after enlightenment individual should work for the spiritual welfare of the world, and dedicate oneself to the service of the suffering beings. The greatness of the Mahāyāna lies in this spirit, and the inferiority of the Hinayāna is due to the lack of it. The Mahāyāna emphasizes the life of a householder as against the monk's life of renunciation suggested in the Hinayāna.

According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Mahāyāna found that it could capture the peoples' minds only if it gave up the icy coldness of some forms of early Buddhism and framed a religion which could appeal to human heart. It initiated the successful experiments of Hinduism embodied in the theism of the Yoga, of the later Upaniṣads and of Bhagavadgita.<sup>1</sup>

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1. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 591.

In the Mahāyāna Buddhism greatest stress is on the conception of Bodhisattva.

The Hinayāna Buddhism gave rise to two main schools the Vaibhāsikas and the Sautrāntikas. Similarly, the Mahāyāna Buddhism also gave rise to two main schools, the Yogācāras and the Madhyamikas. While the Vaibhāsikas and the Sautrāntikas are realists, the Yogācāras are idealists, and the Madhyamikas are nihilists (śūnyavādins). The external objects, according to the Vaibhāsikas and the Sautrāntikas are real but perceptible and inferable respectively. The Yogācāras hold that these are non-existent, and the Madhyamikas deny the absolute reality of these external objects. As these schools lived in close contact, they were more or less mutually influenced; they were differed from one another on points of dogma or practice. For our purpose we are, however, directly concerned here with the Yogācāra school of Buddhism.

The greatest works of the Yogācāras are Lanāvārasūtra (400 A.D.) and Asaṅga's Yogācārabhūmisūtra (450 A.D.). Asaṅga and his younger brother Vasubandhu are the founder of the Vijnānavāda. The Vijnānavādins used to practise Yoga and hence might be called Yogācāras. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, the school is called Yogācāra, since, it declares that the absolute truth or bodhi manifested in the

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1. Ibid., 624.

Buddha is attainable only by those who practise Yoga.

The title Yogaçāra brings out the practical side of the philosophy, while Vijnānāvāda brings out its speculative features.<sup>1</sup>

The Yogaçāra view admits that there is only one kind of reality which is of the nature of consciousness (vijnāna) and objects which appear to be material to consciousness are states of consciousness. The mind is a stream of momentary conscious states in which exist the saṃskāra of all past experience. The Yogaçāra calls it Alayavijnāna. Through self-control, says S.C.Chatterjee, this Alaya-vijnāna or the potential mind can gradually stop the arising of undesirable mental states and develop into the ideal state of nirvāna. Otherwise, it only gives rise to thoughts, desires, attachments which bind one more and more to the fictitious external world.<sup>2</sup>

The Yogaçāras view things from three different aspects: i. imaginary (parikalpita), ii. dependent (paratantra), and iii. absolute (pariniṣpanna). The absolute reality, which is free from diversity, which is beyond saṃsara or nirvāna is called by the Yogaçāras Tathata or pure being. It exists in the past, the present, and the future. It is also called Alayavijnāna.

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1. Ibid., 624.

2. S.C.Chatterjee and D.M.Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p. 150.



It is usually held that the practice of concentration in Buddhism is borrowed from the methods of Yoga philosophy. But we know from the history of Indian philosophy that the systematic form of Yoga is certainly post-Buddhistic. According to Edward J. Thomas, no direct comparison can be made about the origins, but we find it assumed in Buddhist works that the practice of concentration was not original in Buddhism. What was claimed as original was the true method - right concentration. A more important cause of resemblance between Buddhist practice and Yoga is that they developed side by side.<sup>1</sup>

The four noble truths of Buddhism closely resemble the Yoga theory of pain and suffering.<sup>2</sup> The Yoga holds that empirical life is suffering, that conjunction of purusha and prakrti due to ignorance (avidya) is the primary cause of suffering, and that the discriminative knowledge of the eternal self is the means of the extinction of the suffering. Buddhism also holds that ignorance is the root cause of bondage and it can be destroyed only by right knowledge.

Buddhist ethics of non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing and sex-restraint which are unconditional duties, under all circumstances corresponds closely to the Yoga ethics. There are some common terms, viz., savicāra, nirvicāra, savitarke and nirvitarke etc., which occur in both

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1. Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of Buddha*, p. 185.

2. *Yoga Sutra*, II. 15.

Yoga and Buddhism. Dr. Jadunath Sinha<sup>1</sup> opines that the Yoga ethics is ascetic, while the Buddhist ethics advocates the morality of middle path between asceticism and hedonism, self-denial and self-indulgence. According to him the Yoga afflictions (kleśa) correspond to the Buddhist defilements (kleśa). The terms 'citta' and 'nirodha', 'impermanance', 'impure', 'misery', and 'not-self' occur in both systems. The Yoga, like Buddhism, recognizes the necessity of the five qualities of faith (śraddhā), energy (virya), recollection (smṛti), concentration (samādhi), and intuition (prajñā) for trance.<sup>2</sup>

There are some fundamental dissimilarities between the Yoga and Buddhism. The Yoga is theistic. It believes in God, the eternal souls and the eternal prakṛti underlying the phenomena of nature but Buddhism recognises the impermanent qualities (dhammas) or phenomena mental and physical. According to Dr. Jadunath Sinha, the Yoga advocates Satkāryavāda which regards effects as modifications (parināma) of the permanent substances, sattā, rajas, and tamas, while Buddhism advocates Pratityasamutpāda or Asatkāryavāda which regards effects as non-existent in their causes and conditions by which they are produced.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Dr. Jadunath Sinha, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 337.

2. Yoga Sutra, 1.20

3. Dr. Jadunath Sinha, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 337.

It is possibly owing to the rivalry of systems, says Edward J. Thomas, that we find included among the Buddhist methods the acquisition of exceptional psychical powers.<sup>1</sup> Dhyāna, as highest contemplation, takes an important place in Buddhism, and it is largely developed in the Hinayāna school. It is significant that a part of the daily life of the members of the Buddhist sangha consists in the practice of dhyāna.

Dr. Radhakrishnan opines that both the Buddhist dhyāna and the yoga doctrine emphasises the physical and hygienic conditions necessary for mental training. Control of the body is a preparation for enlightenment. Tapas is replaced by psychological exercises leading to spiritual insight. Exercises of spiritual abstraction whereby the individual withdraws his powers from the external world and realises the stillness of the ego are common to all yogic theories. In the four stages of dhyāna we have a progressive and methodical abstraction from the plurality of the phenomenal world.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of concentration is widely accepted in Indian thought with regard to the attainment of the Highest Goal. The cessation of mental states and the suspension of sense impressions lead towards the realisation of the true self.

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1. Edward J. Thomas, The life of Buddha as Legend and History, p. 185.
  2. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I. p. 426.

The ideals of yogic practice, says Dr. Radhakrishnan, are different in different metaphysical systems. In the Upaniṣads, according to him, it is union with or realisation of Brahman. In Patanjali's yoga it is insight into truth. In Buddhism it is attainment of the Bodhisattva condition or realisation of the emptiness of the world.<sup>1</sup> It is significant that in Buddhism yogic practices do not tend towards acquiring the supernormal powers because these powers do not have any spiritual significance. The practice of righteousness is highlighted in Buddhistic ethics and is thus seen cultivated in the great eight-fold path.

Yoga in the sense of a mental resolve is also common to Buddhist literature.<sup>2</sup> In Apastamba Dharmasutra, Yoga stands for some golden means, Akrodha etc.<sup>3</sup> According to N.Aiyaswami Śāstri, it connotes "concentration", and "devotion", the key-note of the Gita which is also found in the Pāli canon (Majjhima, I, 472.)<sup>4</sup> The Buddhist Tantras had adapted the age-old methods and principles of Yoga to their own systems of meditation. Thus Benoytosh Bhattacharyya has come to the conclusion that it is possible to declare, without fear of contradiction, that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras into their religion and that the Hindus

1. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, p. 427.

2. Samyutta, V.414-20, 442-62.

3. Apastamba Dharmasutra, I.8,23.

4. N.Aiyaswami Śāstri Approach to Hinduism article in 2500 years of Buddhism, p.343.



borrowed them from the Buddhists in later times, and that it is idle to say that later Buddhism was an outcome of Saivism.<sup>1</sup>

Before conclusion it is significant to know what Mantrayana and Sahajayana are and what are their tenets. Mantrayana and Sahajayana are comparatively less known branches of Buddhism. They deal primarily with the psychologically effective aspects of spiritual development of a Buddhist. According to H.V.Guenther, Mantrāyāna is strongly opposed to escapism and posits a positive aim and ideal (bodhi) against a negative one (nirodha). All this is, as it were, preparatory to the last phase, the guru-yoga, as 'the means to have the all-sustaining power of reality settled on one's self.' By the guru-yoga, he puts, one realizes the indivisible unity of one's self with the ultimate reality.<sup>2</sup>

The literal meaning of the word 'sahaja' is 'to be born together'. It is dharmakāya or the ultimate in the mind, and the ultimate in Appearance which are born together. In order to achieve this realization, says Guenther, a course of meditation has been developed which is based on direct experience and takes cognizance of the fact that intellectual operations are inseparable from their emotional

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1. Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism, p. 343.

2. H.V.Guenther, Mantrāyāna and Sahajayāna, 2500 years of Buddhism p. 376.

concomitants.<sup>1</sup> The turbulent state of mind can be remedied by meditative yogic practices. Thus Mantrāyāna and Sahajayāna are directly concerned with the practical aspect of Buddhism and refer freely to the yogic principles. In few words we may say that the Buddhistic concept of Yoga is not so much a suppression of the senses as a cultivation of them towards the truth.

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1. Ibid., p. 377.

CHAPTER IVYOGA OF PATANJALI

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The primary sources of information in regard to the various systems of Indian philosophy are generally found in what are known as the Sutras. This form of literature is understood to have developed in India some centuries before the Christian era, when writing had not yet come to be used for literary purposes and the knowledge acquired by a person had to be conserved through memory only. These Sutras are hardly intelligible without some explanation; and the explanations which were committed to writing in the course of time under the name of Bhasyas or commentaries had become more or less divergent.

The Sutras, representing in one sense the starting-point of the various philosophic systems, presuppose a long course of literary and philosophic development the details of which are lost to us. The aim of Sutras, according to M.Hiriyanna, may be described as two-fold — to establish the particular doctrine which they inculcate and to refute all others which are at variance with it. They are thus critical as well as constructive.<sup>1</sup> One peculiar feature of the various Sutra texts is that the ultimate aim of particular text is stated at the very outset and the means to

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1. M.Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p.185.

achieve that objective is enunciated pointedly.

The simple meaning of the word Sutra is a 'thread'. A Sutra or an aphorism is, so to speak, the bare thread of exposition where only essential words are used. This species of aphoristic literature, handed down by teacher to pupils, was intended to be expanded and explained.

The Yoga Sutra is ascribed to Patanjali who is traditionally accepted as the founder of Yoga.<sup>1</sup> He is credited with having given us the present literary form of the Yoga doctrine in his famous treatise Yoga Sutra - the oldest and recognized text-book of the Yoga school. Very little is known of the life of this great author, and the few fragments that are available are so full of legend, that they cannot be trusted. Professor Weber<sup>2</sup> had tried to connect him with Kapya Patmchala, who is mentioned in Satpatha Brahmana, but this identification has long been given up.

There is, however, considerable controversy over the identity of Patanjali. It seems that the mere similarity of name has led to the absurd identification of Patanjali, the author of Yoga Sutra with the writer of commentary on

1. "According to Yajnavalkya Smṛti, Hiraṇyagarbha is the founder of the Yoga system, and Mādhva points out that this does not contradict Patanjali's authorship of the Yoga Sutra since Patanjali calls his work "Anuśāsana" where the preposition "anu" implies that his statement follows a primary revelation, and is not itself the first formulation of the system.

(Vid. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 341).

2. Weber, History of Indian Literature, p. 223.



Pāṇini called the Mahabhaṣya. The available evidence is too conflicting to evolve a settled opinion. Bhoja, in his introduction to the commentary on the Yoga Sutra called Rājmartanda, suggests that Patanjali wrote works on grammar, yoga and medicine. But it is still doubtful whether Bhoja himself has written this introduction.

Professor Max Muller thinks that the commonly received identification of the philosopher Patanjali with Patanjali, the grammarian and the author of Mahabhaṣya, should be treated as yet as a hypothesis only. According to him "it is of course as impossible to prove that Patanjali the philosopher and Patanjali the grammarian were not the same person, as to prove that they were; but if style of language and style of thought are any safe guides in such matters, we ought certainly to hesitate, and should do so in any other literature, before taking the grammarian and the philosopher Patanjali as one and the same person.<sup>1</sup> It is possible that the later commentators have made some confusion between the three Patanjalis, the Yoga writer, the grammarian and the medical writer the author of Patanjalantra. According to Das Gupta, it is indeed curious to notice that the great commentators of the grammar school such as Bhartrhari, Kaiyyata, Vāmana, Jayaditya, Nagesa, etc. are silent on this point. This is indeed a point against the identification of the two Patanjalis by some yoga and medical commentators

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1. F. Max Muller, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 313.

of a later age. And if other proofs are available which go against such an identification, we could not think the grammarian and the yoga writer to be the same person.<sup>1</sup>

The views of the scholars on the perplexed question of the probable date of the Yoga Sutra vary widely, ranging from the fourth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D. While S.N.Das Gupta is of the view that these Yoga Sutras are not earlier than 147 B.C.<sup>2</sup> Professor Woods puts the earlier limit of the Yoga Sutra at the fourth century A.D.

Our philosophical Sutras are certainly post-Buddhistic, because they evidently refer to the Buddhistic doctrines, though not to the name of Buddha. The fact that Yoga Sutras do not enter on any controversy could easily be considered in favour of their being anterior to the other Sutras. The Yoga Sutras proper (first three chapters), says Das Gupta, were composed at a time when the later forms of Buddhism had not developed, and when the quarrels between the Hindus and Buddhists and Jains had not reached such a stage that they would not like to borrow from one another. As this can only be held true of earlier Buddhism I am disposed to think that the date of first three chapters of the Yoga Sutra must be placed about the second century B.C. Since there is no evidence which can stand in the way of identifying the

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.I  
p. 231.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 212.

grammarian Patanjali with the Yoga writer, I believe we may take them as being identical.<sup>1</sup> Another theory is that Tattvārtha Sutra of Umasvati (ii.52) refers to the Yoga Sutra (iii.22). Umasvati, who must precede his commentator Siddhasena (fifth century) is generally assigned to the third century A.D. So Patanjali, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, cannot be later than A.D. 300. He rather favours the largely accepted date the second century B.C.<sup>2</sup>

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is the first recognized and systematic text-book of this school of philosophy. It has been commented upon by Vyāsa (A.D.400), Vācaspati Mīra, Bhoja and Vijnānabhikṣu among others. Vyāsa's Yogabhāṣya (also called Sāṅkhyapravāṇabhāṣya) on the Yoga Sutra is the first standard exposition of the Yoga principles. Vyāsa's Bhāṣya is further commented on by Vācaspati Mīra (ninth century). Vācaspati's glossary known as Tattvavivāṛdī is a reliable sub-commentary. Bhoja's Bhojavṛtti (tenth century) is a simple and popular work of considerable value. Yoga-vartika and Yogasārasaṅgraha by Vijnānabhikṣu are other useful manuals of the Yoga philosophy. Vijnānabhikṣu has criticised some views expressed by Vācaspati. Another commentator Nagesa (seventeenth century) in his work Chaya-vyākhyā has tried to modify Patanjali's views.

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1. Ibid., pp. 237-238.

2. S. Radhakrishnan; Indian Philosophy, Vol. ii, p.341 n.

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is not an altogether original exposition of a philosophy. It is a work of compilation and formulation. As we have seen in the second chapter, the references to the yoga practices and principles have already been made in the Upanisads, viz., Katha, Śvetasvatara, etc., much earlier. Patanjali, so to say, is the distinguished person who systematised the conceptions of the Yoga doctrine and set them forth on the background of the established metaphysics of the Sāṅkhya, which he assumes with slight variations.<sup>1</sup>

Patanjali, according to Professor Das Gupta, was probably the most notable person for he not only collected the different forms of Yoga practices, and gleaned the diverse ideas which were or could be associated with the Yoga, but grafted them all on the Sāṅkhya metaphysics, and gave them the form in which they have been handed down to us.<sup>2</sup> It is evident from the analytic study of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali that these aphorisms are not any original exposition but a masterly and systematic compilation. Vācaspati and Vijnānabhikṣu, the two great commentators of the Yoga Sutra, also hold the same view that Patanjali was an editor, and not founder of this system.

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1. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 342.

2. S. N. Das Gupta, The History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 229.



One peculiar and noteworthy feature of the Yoga Sutra is that the exact meaning of many significant terms is defined clearly. More than 25 of the sutras are devoted to definitions to make the meaning of the words used precise, and to avoid any other meaning being attributed to these terms. At the same time the author has very carefully classified the facts of the whole text. This definitive and systematic style clearly shows that Patanjali has got a lot of materials already existed and that he has rendered the same into the first scholarly compilation.

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali is divided into four pādas or four parts. The first part consists of fifty one aphorisms and discusses the nature and aim of samādhi. It is called the samādhi-pāda and it treats of the nature, aim and forms of Yoga, the modification of citta and the different methods of attaining Yoga. The second, i.e., the sādhanapāda consists of fifty five aphorisms and explains the means of attaining this end (sādhanapāda). It deals with kriya-yoga as a means of attaining samādhi, the mental states causing afflictions, the fruits of actions and the fourfold theme of suffering, its cause, its cessation and the means thereof. The third part, known as vibhutipāda, consists of fifty four aphorisms. It gives an account of the inward aspects of the Yoga and discusses the supernormal powers that can be attained through the Yoga practices. The fourth part consists of thirty four aphorisms is called the kaivalyapāda. It

sets forth the nature and forms of liberation, the reality of the transcendent self and the other world, and discusses the final emancipation.

The last part (kaivalyapada) is said to be a later addition since the word 'iti' which denotes the conclusion of a work appears at the end of the third part. There is of course another 'iti' at the end of the fourth part also denoting the conclusion of the whole work. Since the criticism of the other schools of thought occur in the last chapter of the Yoga Sutra and since most of the doctrines of Yoga are described in the first three chapters, Prof. Das Gupta<sup>1</sup> is of the view that the last chapter is a subsequent addition by a hand other than that of Patanjali who was anxious to supply some new links of argument which were felt to be necessary for the strengthening of the yoga position from an internal point of view, as well as for securing the strength of the Yoga from the supposed attacks of Buddhist metaphysics. According to Professor Das Gupta there is also a marked change in the style of the last chapter as compared with the style of the other three.<sup>2</sup>

Yoga, according to Patanjali, does not mean union, but only effort.<sup>3</sup> It is a methodical effort to attain

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.I, p.230

2. Ibid., p.230

3. Yajnavalkya in his commentary on the Yoga Śāstra says that in Patanjali's time Yoga means samādhi, concentration, in the sense of the subject and object-thought with thought itself.

cf.R.C.Bose, Hindu Philosophy, p.167.

perfection, through the control of the different elements of human nature, physical and psychical. The physical body, the active will and the understanding mind are to be brought under control.<sup>1</sup> The Yoga of Patanjali is primarily a system of psychic discipline by which we can clear the intellect, free the mind of its illusions and get a direct perception of reality. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, Patanjali insists on certain practices which are intended to cure the body of its restlessness and free it from its impurities. When we secure through these practices increased vitality, prolonged youth and longevity, these are to be employed in the interests of spiritual freedom. The other methods are employed to purify and tranquillise citta. The main interest of Patanjali is not metaphysical theorising, but the practical motive of indicating how salvation can be attained by disciplined activity.<sup>2</sup>

The Yoga of Patanjali is generally known as Raja-Yoga since it deals at length with the process of stilling the mind and attaining samādhi. It insists on the methods of concentration and active striving. In the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali various courses of meditation are prescribed for the realization of the nature of the pure self. The author emphasizes the importance of the practical methods of purification and concentration of self.

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1. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 338.

2. Ibid.



The first two aphorisms of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali set forth this object of Yoga philosophy: "Now the exposition of Yoga is to be made. Yoga is the suppression of the thought-waves in the mind."<sup>1</sup> According to S.C. Chatterjee and Dhirendramohan Datta, while Yoga means the cessation of mental functions or modifications, it does not mean any kind of contact between the individual self and some other reality like God or the Absolute. The aim of Yoga is to prevent the self from identifying itself with mental modifications.<sup>2</sup> It can be possible only when the self realizes its distinction from the citta and mental modifications are restrained. Patanjali, so to say, begins with a description of Yoga as 'citta-vrtti-nirodha' (restraint of mental modifications). It can be described as the first step towards the ultimate goal (kaivalya).

The entire subject matter of the first chapter of the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali, is in fact an explanation of the second Sutra (Yogaścittavrttinirodhah). Citta (the mind) is the first manifestation in the world of name and form. What the Sankhya calls "mahat" the Yoga calls

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1. Yoga Sutra, I. 1-2.

2. S.C.Chatterjee and D.M.Datta, An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, pp.297, 298.



"citta".<sup>1</sup> It is the instrument that stands between the man and the world. We can describe its functions as two-fold-one negative and the other positive. It transmits from the world to the man within, and also from the man within to the outer world. Citta is made of three components, manas, buddhi and ahaṁkāra.

According to Dr. Jadunath Sinha the Sāṁkhya treats manas, buddhi and ahaṁkāra as the three internal organs with different functions though they are inter-related to one another, and constitute the psychical apparatus. The Yoga treats them as one and speaks of the citta and its modes. Patanjali generally speaks of citta. Sometimes he refers to buddhi as its equivalent.<sup>2</sup>

Citta, according to Patanjali, has five processes (vṛttis), i. Pramāṇa (real cognition), ii. Viparyaya (unreal cognition), iii. Vikalpa (verbal delusion), iv. Nidra (sleep) and v. Smṛti (memory).<sup>3</sup> Patanjali, like the Sāṁkhya, recognises three Pramāṇas, direct perception, inference and scriptural testimony.<sup>4</sup> These five functions of the mind are the sources of its changeableness and restlessness. The restraint of these thought-waves is to be achieved by repeated and constant practice (abhyasa) and by cultivating

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1. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II. p. 345.

2. Dr. Jadunath Sinha, A History of Indian Phil. Vol. II, p. 135.

3. Yoga Sutra, I.6.

4. Ibid., I.7.

desirelessness (vairāgya).<sup>1</sup> Practice, according to Patanjali, is the repeated effort to follow the disciplines which give permanent control of the thought-waves of the mind. It is the effort to secure steadiness and it requires earnest devotion for a long time. Desirelessness is self-mastery; it is the consciousness of supremacy in him who is free from thirst for perceptible and scriptural enjoyments.<sup>2</sup> It is the aim of the Yoga discipline to turn back the citta to its original status of all-pervading kāraṇacitta, by the suppression of rajas and tamas. The yogin acquires omniscience when the allpervading state of citta is restored.<sup>3</sup>

Concentration is a quality of the citta in all its five stages. This cognitive trance is accompanied by reasoning (vitarka), discrimination (viçara), bliss (ananda) and unqualified egoism (asmita).<sup>4</sup> The concentration of the true spiritual aspirant is attained through faith (samadhi) and illumination (prajna). It may also be attained through devotion to Içvara.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Ibid., I.12.

2. Yoga Sutra, I.13-16.

3. S.Padmakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, pp.345-346.

4. Yoga Sutra, I.17.

5. Ibid., I.20,23.

Patanjali has pointed out the obstructions which hinder our progress through ascetic exercises to the final goal. The obstacles to concentration are said to be the different forms of misconception, namely ignorance (avidya), egoism (asmita), attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa), and clinging to life (abhiniveśa).<sup>1</sup> Others are sickness, langour, doubt, heedlessness, laziness, worldliness, erroneous perception, failure to attain concentration and instability in it when attained.<sup>2</sup>

The object of Yoga is to weaken these above said five kinds of afflictions (klesas). Ignorance, says Patanjali, creates all the other obstacles to enlightenment. They may exist either in a potential or a vestigial form, or they may have been temporarily overcome or fully developed.<sup>3</sup> Ignorance is false identification; it is misunderstanding of one's real nature. Egoism is the appearance of identity in the nature of the subjective power of consciousness and the instrumental power of seeing.<sup>4</sup> Attachment is that which dwells upon pleasure and aversion is that which dwells upon pain.  
~~upon pleasure and aversion is that which dwells upon pain.~~

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1. Ibid., II.3.

2. Ibid., I.30.

3. <sup>Ibid.,</sup> ~~Yoga Sūtra~~, II.4.

4. Ibid., II.6.

The desire to cling to life is inherent both in the ignorant and in the learned.<sup>1</sup> These five afflictions, when their seed-power has been destroyed, disappear from the yogin's mind. According to Patanjali they can be overcome through meditation.<sup>2</sup>

Patanjali explains an important distinction between the two types of concentration (samādhi), Samprajñata and the asamprajñata. Out of the four states of the above-said unifying concentration, vitarka and viçara have each two varieties, savitarka and nirvitarka, saviçara and nirviçara. Higher than these are the ananda and the asmita states. In all these stages, according to Prof. Das Gupta, there are objects on which the mind consciously concentrates, these are therefore called the samprajñata type of samādhi. Next to this comes the last stage of samādhi called the asamprajñata, in which the mind is without any object.<sup>3</sup> When this asamprajñata state is reached, the samādhi becomes seedless. This is the perfect super-conscious state which gives us freedom.

According to S.C.Chatterjee and Datta, the final goal cannot be attained all at once. Even if it be possible

1. Ibid., II.7-9

2. Ibid., II.11.

3. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.I.p. 271.

for a self to attain once the state of samādhi and thereby release from pain, there is the possibility of a relapse and consequent recurrence of pain, so long as all the impressions and tendencies of the mind due to its past and present deeds are not wiped out.<sup>1</sup> All our actions and feelings leave behind them impressions, which revive the sensations of pleasure and pain within us. To overcome these hinderances the Yoga gives us the eight-fold (aṣṭāṅga) means, consisting of yama (abstention), niyama (observance), āsana (posture), prāṇayama (regulation of breath), pratyāhara (withdrawal of the senses), dhyana (fixed attention), dhāraṇa (contemplation), and samādhi (concentration).<sup>2</sup> Hence, the Yoga system of Patanjali is also called Aṣṭāṅga Yoga (the eight - limbed Yoga).

Before commencing to deal with each step or limb in succession Patanjali states at the outset the great purpose to be achieved by the complete mastery of them all. By the constant practice of the different limbs of Yoga, says Patanjali, the impurities of the mind being destroyed, knowledge becomes effulgent up to discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

These eight limbs may be classified into three groups, the first two (yama and niyama) one group, next three

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1. S.C.Chatterjee and D.M.Datta: An Introduction to Indian Philosophy, p.301.

2. Yoga Sutra, II.29

3. Ibid., II.28.



(āsana, prāṇayama and pratyadhara) another group and the last three (dhyana, dhāra and samādhi) the third group. The first five are known as outer limbs and the last three as inner limbs. The last three are so intimate that they are given a common name samyama (restraint).<sup>1</sup>

The first two limbs, also known as ethical limbs, contain five rules each which the yogin must practise. These two disciplines suggest five do's and five don'ts for the yogins's daily life. Put together they make what we call 'the ten commandments'.<sup>2</sup>

Yama consists in ahimsa (abstention from all kinds of injury to any life), satya (truthfulness in thought and speech), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (control of carnal passions), and aparigraha (non-acceptance of unnecessary gifts from other people).<sup>3</sup> These are negative virtues. They are the great vows and are not limited by time, place, caste or purpose.<sup>4</sup>

Psychologically, a man cannot concentrate his attention on any object when his mind is distracted and dissipated by evil propensities. So, the complete abstention

1. Ibid., III.4,7.

2. Earnest Wood, Great Systems of Yoga, p.27.

3. Yoga Sutra, II.30.

4. Ibid., II. 31.

from all the evil tendencies of life is a dire necessity, Patanjali admits no exceptions and pleads for complete observance.

The second discipline niyama (observance) consists in the cultivation of five good habits, sauca (purification of the body and the mind), santosa ( contentment ), tapas (austerities), Svādhyāya (study of scriptures), and Ishvara-pranidhana (meditation of and resignation to God).<sup>1</sup> The niyamas are positive virtues limited by time, place and other circumstances. Patanjali says that inimical thoughts have to be encountered by cultivation of desirable thoughts.<sup>2</sup> This is, however, a great psychological truth discovered by Yoga long ago.

Āsana, a discipline of body, consists in the adoption of steady and relaxed postures.<sup>3</sup> There are many kinds of posture, viz., Padmāsana, Virāsana, Bhadrāsana, Svastikāṣana, etc., but Patanjali does not recommend any particular posture. The discipline of the body is as much necessary for the attainment of the concentration as that of the mind. If the body is not controlled, it is very difficult to attain concentration of the mind. Yoga postures are

1. Ibid., II. 32.

2. Ibid., II.33.

3. Yoga Sutra, II.46.

to keep the body healthy and to tone up the nervous system. Hence, the control of the body is the basis of Yoga discipline. But it must be remembered that the Yoga asks us to control the body and not <sup>to</sup> kill it. It realises the dignity of the body and suggests the means for its perfection.

Prāṇayama is the regulation of breath, and the process consists of expiration, inspiration, and retention of breath, according to fixed rules.<sup>1</sup> Prāṇayama is regarded as a steadying influence on the mind. So long as the respiratory function continues, the mind also goes on fluctuating. Breath-control leads to control of the mind by purging it of impurities.<sup>2</sup> By practising it the yogin suspends the breathing for a long time and can prolong the concentration.

The fifth discipline is Pratyādhara or the withdrawal of the sense-organs from their outward functioning. The sense-organs instinctively imitate their master, the mind. When the mind is withdrawn from sense-objects, the sense-organs also withdraw themselves from their respective objects and thus are said to imitate the mind.<sup>3</sup> It requires resolute will and repeated practice.

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1. Ibid., II.51.

2. Ibid., II. 53.

3. Ibid., II. 54.

The third chapter of Yoga Sutra, Vibhutipāda, mainly deals with samyama (restraint), and gives the description of three inner limbs - dhārna, dhyana and samādhi. Dhārna (concentration) is holding the mind within a centre of spiritual consciousness in the body, or fixing it on some divine form, either within the body or outside it.<sup>1</sup> The object thus attained to may be the tip of the nose or a plexus of nerves in the belly or the crown of the head, etc., or it may be external to the body like the sky, the moon, the ether etc.

The next step is Dhyana (meditation). It means the unbroken flow of thought towards the object of concentration.<sup>2</sup> In other words, it is a sort of prolonged concentration. According to Swami Prabhavananda, Patanjali's dhyana does not correspond to our usual understanding of the word 'meditation'. By meditation we commonly mean a more or less discursive operation of the mind around a central idea.<sup>3</sup> Patanjali's dhyana, however, reveals the reality of contemplated object to the yogin's mind.

Dhyana culminates in Samādhi (absorption) which is the final step in the practice of Yoga. When all mental distractions disappear and the mind becomes one-pointed, it enters the state called samādhi. In this state, it passes

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1. Yoga Sutra, III. 1.

2. Ibid., III. 2.

3. Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood; How to know God, p. 111.

beyond the three kinds of changes which take place in subtle or gross matter, and in the organs : change of form, change of time and change of condition.<sup>1</sup> Samādhi, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, is the name of the condition to be passed through before reaching deliverance.<sup>2</sup> According to him, it is not a simple experience uniform as long as it lasts. On the contrary, it is a succession of mental states which grow more and more simple until they end in unconsciousness.<sup>3</sup> Thus the final aim of Yoga is to cease the slavery of the mind and achieve liberation (kaivalya). Yoga, which is the systematic attempt to transcend the mind, says Swami Atmananda, begins with the exercise of Samyama. So the three steps ending with samādhi deal with the deeper and internal instruments of man.<sup>4</sup>

In the third chapter of the Yoga-text, Vibhutipāda, Sutras from 16 to 54 elaborate samyama and that the different types of Siddhis. Patanjali describes the various supernatural powers and the methods by which they are acquired. The psychic powers may be obtained either by birth or by means of drugs, or by the power of words, or by the practice of austerities, or by concentration.<sup>5</sup> These supernatural

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1. Yoga Sutra, III. 11,13.

2. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, p.358.

3. Ibid., p.360

4. Swami Atmananda, The Four Yogas, p. 137.

5. Yoga Sutra, IV. 1.



powers, according to Patanjali, are really obstacles to samādhi, though they are regarded as perfections when one acquires them.<sup>1</sup> The yogin must not get entangled in the fen of these powers. Hence, Yoga of Patanjali is prominently a science of mental discipline.

In Raja Yoga of Patanjali, says Swami Atmananda, no place is provided for rituals at all. There, all attention is towards restraining the surging thoughts that rush into one's mind. This is done by making the mind dwell on the most beloved thought to the exclusion of all others.<sup>2</sup> Kaivalya is attained when the mind becomes as pure as the Self itself.

Now a few words about the concept of God in the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. An important point in this respect is that the Sāṅkhya system is atheistic while the Yoga is theistic (śeṣvara). Patanjali has grafted the concept of God on the Sāṅkhya metaphysics and made it theistic. Prof. Max Muller says that the admission of an Iśvara or Lord by Patanjali, in contradiction to Kapila who denies that there are any arguments in support of such a being, should be put down as mere economy or as an accommodation to popular opinion.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ibid., III.38.

2. Swami Atmananda, The Four Yogas, p.7.

3. Max Muller, The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy, p. 361.

Patanjali introduces the idea of God in Sutra 23 of the first chapter saying that the concentration may also be attained through devotion to Isvara. Isvara is a special kind of Being, untouched by the vehicles of affliction, action and fruition.<sup>1</sup> Patanjali proves the omniscience of God; His knowledge is infinite and He is not limited by time.<sup>2</sup>

Patanjali's devotion to God is not only a part of the practice of Yoga but it is also a means to help the purgation of evil and the attainment of concentration. Theism, according to Dr. Radhakrishnan, is not an integral part of Patanjali's creed. A personal God serves the practical purpose of Patanjali.<sup>3</sup> The views of Garbe and R.C. Bose regarding the God of Patanjali are also of great significance. According to Garbe<sup>4</sup> the insertion of the personal God, which subsequently decisively determined the character of Yoga system, was, to judge from the Yoga Sutra, at first accomplished in a very loose and superficial manner, so that the contents and purpose of the system were not at all affected by it. We can say, he adds, that the Yoga Sutra, I.23-27

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1. Yoga Sutra, I. 24.

2. Ibid., I.25-26.

3. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II.p.369

4. Garbe, The Philosophy of Ancient India, p.15.

II.45, which treat of the person of God, are connected with the other parts of the textbook - nay, even contradict the foundations of the system. Similarly Ram Chandra Bose states that Patanjali's God being a phantom conjured up to satisfy a popular clamor rather than to meet a necessity of his philosophy, he is simply laid aside, as all phantoms deserve to be in the work of liberation as in that of creation and entanglement of Prakriti in its own meshes, and it must not be forgotten that the so-called emancipation of the soul is in reality liberation of Prakriti in the shape of thinking principle from troubles of its own creation.<sup>1</sup> The Yoga of Patanjali, therefore, seems to be a double synthesis of associating the Sāṅkhya doctrine and Sāṅkhya metaphysics with the pre-existent system of Yoga practice which we find in Upaniṣads and Buddhism, and the association of the theistic cult of Isvara, who hangs rather loosely with the Yoga system.

Patanjali's attitude is strictly scientific. He describes certain techniques of meditation and their possible results. He teaches us to regard our sins with a certain scientific detachment. Since the Yoga psychology is intellectualistic, Patanjali refutes the philosophy of subjective idealism. His attempt can never be described as mere elaborate process of self-hypnotisation. In the end, we may

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1. R.C.Bose, Hindu Philosophy, p. 184.

say that the Yoga discipline is nothing more than the purification of the body, mind and soul, and preparing them for the blessed vision. It can therefore be best described as a manual of psychological ethics intended for developing the powers of the mind with the ultimate object of attaining liberation, the highest goal for a yogin.

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CHAPTER V  
YOGA OF GITA

Yogah karmasu kausalam.  
Bhagavadgita.



## CHAPTER V

## Y O G A O F G I T A

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The Bhagavadgita which forms part of the Bhishma-Parva is credited with the supreme place among the interpolated didactic hymns of the Great Epic, the Mahabharata. It is introduced at the beginning of the sixth book of the epic and precedes the description of the eighteen days' battle. It is the most influential work in Indian thought as far as its hold on the mind of man is concerned. It is said to be "the most beautiful, perhaps the only true philosophical song existing in any known tongue."<sup>1</sup> It may be assumed that this Song Celestial was originally an independent sacred text and that it was later added to the Great Epic.

According to Dr. S.Radhakrishnan the Bhagavadgita is later than the great movement represented by the early Upanisads and earlier than the period of the development of the philosophic systems and their formulation in Sutras. From ~~the~~ its archaic constructions and internal references, we may infer that it is definitely a work of the pre-Christian era. Its date may be assigned to the fifth

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1. William von Humboldt. (Vide S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy , Vol. I.p.519.)

century B.C., though the text may have received many alterations in subsequent times.<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer says that the Bhagavadgita is one of the more ancient components of the Mahabharata, and, apart from some later additions may well date from the third century B.C.<sup>2</sup> This question cannot be easily settled. Even, if we consider the Bhagavadgita a genuine part of the Mahabharata, we cannot be sure of its date.

Almost all the books belonging to the early period of Indian Literature are anonymous. Here too we are ignorant regarding the authorship of this sacred work. It is argued that the one who gives the Message is none other than the Divine Lord Himself in human form. Thus the exalted singer of this Song Celestial is Lord Krishna. At the moment of utter bewilderment and black despair, Arjuna loses heart and all worldly considerations persuade him to abstain from the battle. Then Krishna, who serves as his charioteer, addresses him and instructs him in thrilling notes, the true Yoga. Still other scholars wonder if the teacher could have recited the seven hundred stanzas to Arjuna right on the battle-field during the Bharata war. He must have uttered a few pointed and crucial verses which

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1. S.Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgita, p. 14.

2. Albert Schweitzer, Indian Thought and its Development p. 183.

were later elaborated by the narrator. Since the legendary compiler of the Mahabhārata is Vyāsa, the authorship of the Bhagavadgita is generally attributed to him.

At the time of the Bhagavadgita, there were different views about the ultimate reality prevailing. The teaching of the Gita is universal in its scope. The attempt of the teacher is to synthesise the heterogeneous tendencies of thought and is to put them all in a vast, true single whole. There are significant relations between the Vedas, the Upaniṣads, Buddhism and the Sāṅkhya and Yoga systems on the one hand and the Bhagavadgita on the other. It draws all these living currents of Hindu thought and shows how these different lines converge towards the same end. The very designation of the Bhagavadgita, as it is evident from the colophon at the end of each chapter, is Upaniṣad.<sup>1</sup> It refers indirectly to the inspiration it derived from the Upaniṣads.<sup>2</sup>

According to Richard Garbe, "the teachings of the Sāṅkhya-Yoga constitute almost entirely the foundation of the philosophical observations of the Bhagavadgita. In comparison with them the Vedānta takes a second place. Sāṅkhya and Yoga are often mentioned by name, while the

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1. Cp. the colophon: Bhagavadgitasu Upaniṣatsu.

2. "The Gita is the Upaniṣad of Upaniṣads." — Vinoba Bhave, Talks on The Gita, p.16.

Vedanta appears only once, and then in the sense of Upanisad or treatise. Accordingly, when we think merely of the role which the philosophical systems play in the Gita as it has been handed down to us, and when we consider the irreconcilable contradictions between the Sankhya-Yoga and the Vedanta, the Vedantic constituents of the Bhagavadgita prove not to belong to the original poem. Whether we investigate the Gita from the religious or the philosophical side, the same result is reached.<sup>1</sup>

In Bhagavadgita, the term Sankhya does not mean the system of philosophy known by that ~~same~~ name; nor does Yoga mean the Yoga of Patanjali. Sankhya, in the Gita, lays stress on knowledge and renunciation of desire and Yoga on action. Here, Yoga and Sankhya are not discordant systems. They have the same aim but differ in methods. The Sankhya way involves the renunciation of works while the Yoga insists on the performance of action in the right spirit. According to the Bhagavadgita Sankhya and Yoga tend to the same goal, only the approach is different.

"The ignorant speaks of renunciation (Sankhya) and practice of works (Yoga) as different, not the wise. He, who applies himself well to one, gets the fruit of both."<sup>2</sup>

1. Introduction to The Bhagavadgita by Garbe. (Cf. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. I, p. 527).

2. The Bhagavadgita, V. 4.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बलाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।

एकमेवास्थितः सान्ख्ययोगयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

"The status which is obtained by men of renunciation is reached by men of action also. He who sees that the ways<sup>of</sup> renunciation and action are one, he sees truly."<sup>1</sup>

No doubt, the renunciation or unselfish performance of work both lead to the soul's salvation, but of the two, according to the teacher, carrying on one's work is the more excellent. It comes to us more naturally.<sup>2</sup>

The Bhagavadgita is primarily called Yoga-sāstra and not a Dharma-sāstra. Its message is termed Yoga and the person who delivers it is called Yogesvara. Yogin is the ideal man described by the scripture. It is significant that the word 'Yoga' is not used in the Gita in any narrower context, nor it is used as a technical term for thought-control as we see in the Yoga aphorisms of Patanjali. It is used here in its primary sense of union with God, the highest goal for a yogin. "The Gita gives a comprehensive yoga-sāstra, large, flexible and many-sided, which includes various phases of the soul's development and ascent into the Divine. The different yogas are special applications of the inner discipline which leads to the liberation of the soul

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1. The Bhagavadgita, V.5.

2. Ibid., V.2.



and a new understanding of the unity and meaning of mankind. Everything that is related to this discipline is called a yoga such as jnana-yoga or the way of knowledge, bhakti yoga or the way of devotion, karma-yoga<sup>1</sup> or the way of action."

The Bhagavadgita stresses the purity of mind, the inner purity of man's motives and intentions. It gives us not only a metaphysics but also an ardent inner discipline. We may say that its aim is not so much to teach a theory as to enforce practice and inner discipline which lead to the liberation of the soul and a new understanding. It simply does not teach a mysticism that concerns itself with man's inner being alone. The Bhagavadgita teaches theism, and regards God as the Supreme and Perfect (Puruṣottama). Though He is Supreme, he becomes manifest in human embodiment to overthrow the forces of unrighteousness.

"Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bhārata, then I send forth Myself."<sup>2</sup>

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1. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgita, p. 50.

2. The Bhagavadgita, IV, 7.

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत।  
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदाऽऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७॥

The Bhagavadgita is a mandate for action (karma). It does not teach anti-social escapism. The ethics of the Bhagavadgita is not ascotism, but activism. The Gita opens with a spiritual problem. Arjuna, overcome by great compassion and delusion refuses to fight against his kinsmen (svajanam). He is being guided by false conventions and customary morality, and is passing through a great spiritual tension.<sup>1</sup> The distress of Arjuna, according to Radhakrishnan, is a dramatization of higher life, feels disappointed with the glamour of the world and yet illusions cling to him and he cherishes them. He forgets his divine ancestry and becomes attached to his personality and is agitated by the conflicting forces of the world.<sup>2</sup> Arjuna, thus represents the confused consciousness of typical soul seeking to reach perfection. In moments of great sorrow he is tempted to adopt the method of renunciation.

"I do not long for victory, O Krishna, nor kingdom, nor pleasures. Of what use is kingdom to us, O Krishna, or enjoyment or even life?"<sup>3</sup>

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1. The Bhagavadgita, I, 28, 29, 30.

2. S. Radhakrishnan, The Bhagavadgita, p. 95.

3. The Bhagavadgita, I. 32.

न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।  
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२ ॥

Arjuna retreats from his duties in a mood of sentimental self-pity. He faces difficulties, outward and inward. The purpose of the Gita is to remove the illusion of Arjuna. It raises the very fundamental question whether action or renunciation of action is better and concludes that action is certainly better. All living beings have to do some work whether they desire or not. Here all activity, whether mental or physical, is to be included in the term 'action'. The Gita suggests a complete dedication of all actions to God.

"He, who acts, offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water."<sup>1</sup>

The central point of the teaching of the Bhagavadgita is activism, or in the words of the Gita, karma-yoga. The Gita recognises that it is through work that we are brought into relation with the rest of the world. It does not support an ascetic ethics. The word karma-yoga may be rendered as devotion to the discharge of social obligations. It is important that in the materialistic world, all voluntary actions are generally preceded by a

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1. Ibid., V,10.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः।  
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १० ॥

desire for their motive (phala). Such an undertaking, however, would be devotion to phala and not to karma. For karma yoga, the action should be taken not as a means but as an end in itself. We must work with a perfect serenity indifferent to the results. That is, the idea of result must be abandoned altogether before as well as during the work.

"Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit thereof. Let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be to inaction."<sup>1</sup>

"Fixed in Yoga, do thy work, O Winner of wealth (Arjuna), abandoning attachment, with an even mind in success and failure, for evenness of mind is called yoga."<sup>2</sup>

The term 'yoga' is in this place explained as evenness of mind (samatvam) in success or failure. According to Prof. N.Hiriyanna, this teaching that we ought to engage ourselves in our work as members of a social order

1. Ibid., II.47.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।  
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्माते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७॥

2. Ibid., II, 48.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनं जय ।  
सिद्धयसिद्धयोः सज्जो भूत्वा सन्नत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८॥

in the usual way and yet banish from our mind all thought of deriving any personal benefit therefrom is the meaning of karma-yoga and constitutes the specific message of the Gita.<sup>1</sup>

The renunciation is an inward attitude, it has little to do with outward works. The work done in the right spirit with inner renunciation helps us. The unmistakable teaching, around which the whole Gita revolves, is: 'one who gives up action, falls, and one who gives up only the reward rises.' The unique way to attain self-realisation is renunciation of fruits of action. The yogin attains complete tranquillity by abandoning the same.

"What they call renunciation, that know to be disciplined activity, O Arjuna, for no one becomes a yogin who has not renounced his selfish purpose."<sup>2</sup>

The disciplined activity is said to be more vital than the mere renunciation. Thus true devotion, according to Gita is not mere outward worship. It is

1. M.Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p.120.

2. The Bhagvadgita, VI.2.

ये संन्यासमिति पुरुयोगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।  
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥



wrestling with the evil forces within oneself. He is the devotee (yogin) who is jealous of none, who is without egotism, who is selfless, who treats alike happiness and misery, who is free from exultation, sorrow and fear, who treats friend and foe alike.<sup>1</sup> But such knowledge and devotion have to stand the test of renunciation of fruits of action. Gita teaching, as Prof. Hiriyanna puts it, stands not for renunciation of action, but for renunciation in action.<sup>2</sup>

The object of the Gita seems to discover and uphold a unique combination of the two ideals of pravṛtti and nivṛtti or of work and withdrawal, preserving the excellence of both. The Gita reconciles the two in the spirit of the Upaniṣads. Karma-yoga is such a means because it does not renounce action and still preserves the spirit of renunciation.

The word 'yoga' as it is used in the Bhagavadgita connotes different meaning at different places. 'Yoga' or the other compounds from this word have occurred more than 80 times in the text of the Gita. As we have already stated, no where except in atmost three or four places has it been used in the meaning of Yoga of Patanjali. There it refers to the modes of meditation through concentration or thought-control.

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1. The Bhagavadgita, VI.7,8,9,10.

2. M.Hiriyanna, Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p.121.

"There taking his place on the seat, making his mind one-pointed and controlling his thoughts and sense let him practise yoga for the purification of the soul."

"That state called Yoga, which is free from the contacts of pain, should be known. Nay, this yoga should be resolutely practised with an unwearied mind."<sup>1</sup>

According to S.N.Das Gupta, in the Gita the word yoga has not attained any definite technical sense, as it did in Patanjali's Yoga-sutra, and, in consequence, there is not one definition of yoga, but many. Thus yoga is used in the sense of karma-yoga, or the duty of performance of actions, in V.1, and it is distinguished from the Samkhya path, or the path of knowledge, in II.39. The word Buddhi-yoga is also used at-least three times, in II.49, X.10 and XVIII. 57, and the bhakti-yoga also is used at least once

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1. The Bhagvadgita, VI.12,23.

तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तोन्द्रियक्रियः ।  
 उपविश्यासने युज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥१२॥  
 तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगविभोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।  
 स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥२३॥

in XIV. 26. The one meaning of yoga that suits all these different contexts seems to be "association"<sup>1</sup>.

According to B.G.Tilak, we find almost every where the word used more or less in the meaning of 'means', 'skilful device', 'method', 'the thing to be done', 'union', etc., and it must be said that this is one of the comprehensive words used in the Gita-science. Still, it is not enough even to say in a general way that 'yoga' means 'means', 'skilful device' or 'method'. Because, according as the speaker may wish, it may be a means of Renunciation or Action or mental-control or of Release or of something else.<sup>2</sup>

We find that in order to clarify what this word generally mean it has intentionally been defined by the teacher in the text of the Gita itself as : 'yogah kamasu kausalam',<sup>3</sup> i.e. Yoga means some special skill, intelligent method or graceful way of performing actions. And there should remain no doubt about the primary meaning of this word as it is used in the Gita. It appears for the first time in the second chapter of the Gita and the meaning of

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.II, p.451.

2. B.G.Tilak, Gita Rahasya, p.78.

3. योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥५०॥

(II,50.)

the term is explained at that very place. "Yoga is equanimity of mind, it teaches indifference towards success and failure."<sup>1</sup>

This yoga, according to the teacher is not altogether a new doctrine. He declares that he is only restoring 'yogah puratanah'; the tradition, the eternal truth handed down from one to another by the royal sages.

"This same ancient yoga has been today declared to thee by Me; for thou art My devotee and My friend; and this is the supreme secret."<sup>2</sup>

In Gata, Yoga is sometimes defined as the negation of the possibility of all association with sorrows.<sup>3</sup>

The sixth chapter of the Gita describes the nature of yogic practices, four kinds of yogins, the methods of yoga, the nature of yoga realization and the ultimate superiority of yoga as communion with God. It contains indirectly a description of the postures of the Yoga of Patanjali necessary for steadying the mind. The advice

1. The Bhagavadgita, II.48.

2. Ibid., IV.3.

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।  
अज्ञोऽसि मे सर्वार्थेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

3. Ibid., VI.23.

तं विद्याद् दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।  
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३ ॥

given to Arjuna at the end of this chapter, to become a yogin, indicates that the yogin is greater than the ascetic.<sup>1</sup> It should not mean that the teacher suggests to adopt the Yoga of Patanjali but it has to be taken as meaning karma-yoga since the words 'yogin' and 'karma-yogin' have apparently been used synonymously in the Gita. The Gita is, of course, aware of the process of breath-control, but curiously enough, it does not speak of it in its sixth chapter.

The Gita, says Prof. M.Hiriyanna, requires man to continue to work even in the perfected state, there being nothing in outer activity which is incompatible with inner peace. Here we see the exalted position assigned to work by the Gita. It contemplates no period, when activity may be wholly renounced.<sup>2</sup> The Gita urges that the liberated soul can remain in service even after liberation. This must be, for ever, the aim of man.

The Bhagavadgita, according to Swami Atmananda, is a wonderful synthesis of all the most evolved spiritual practices prevalent in its times. Bhakti yoga, in one of the purest form is given exposition here just as the Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga. Karma Yoga is conceived as the common basis of all the three, to be practised while one lives in this world.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.VI.46.

2. M.Hiriyanna; Outlines of Indian Philosophy, p.127.

3. Swami Atmananda, The Four Yogas, p.74.



To conclude, we may say that the Bhagavadgita inforces the three-fold method of karma-yoga, bhakti-yoga and jnana-yoga but the superiority of the Karma-yoga is greater. The essential purpose of the Gita is to teach us a way out of bondage and not merely enjoin action.

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CHAPTER VI

-:0:-

YOGA OF INDIAN CULTS

1. Vaiṣṇavite.
2. Śaivite.
3. Śaktite.

-:00:-

Tayorabhedavijñānam yoga ityabhidhiyate.  
Narāḍīya Purāna.

CHAPTER VIYOGA OF INDIAN CULTS

-:00:-

In the history of Indian Philosophy, the later Upaniṣads contain the philosophic basis of Śaivism, Śaktaiism, Vaiṣnavism and other minor cults of Hinduism. Generally, they centre round Śiva, Śakti, Viṣṇu, Rama, Kṛṣṇa, Gaṇeśa, Surya and other deities. The great gods of Hinduism, viz., Śiva and Viṣṇu, are in the real and final analysis only manifestations of the supreme reality, Brahman.

In Hindu cosmogony, according to Encyclopaedia Britannica, every major deity has several manifestations. For instance, Śiva is called Gaṅgadhara, Mahadeva, Ishwara, Nilakantha and Nataraja, and similarly Vishnu has many names. Each name of a deity either refers to a mythical incident in which he plays a part, or to a particular quality of his or both. Besides each deity has a wife who is usually worshipped along with her husband.<sup>1</sup> The history of the great gods may be traced out right from the beginning of the Vedic period. But many of the Vedic gods lost their importance gradually, and subsequently in their place emerged the well-known trinity made up of Brahman,

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.11, p.574.

Viṣṇu and Śiva. Brahma is traditionally known as creator, Viṣṇu as protector and Śiva as destroyer.

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, the worship of Śiva and Viṣṇu goes back to Vedic times, and probably even farther back in the case of the former. Archaeologists have found several phallus-like objects which they identify with the *linga* the emblem, usually an enshrined stone, of Śiva as procreator — and an image on a Harappan seal has been identified as that of Pashupati, the lord of animals, one of the forms of Śiva. If these identification are true, states Encyclopaedia Britannica, than the cult of Śiva is certainly pre-Vedic.<sup>1</sup>

There are a large number of texts on Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śaktaism. They include saṁhitas, later Upaniṣads, later Purānas and Āgamas. We have definite evidence regarding the antiquity of these sects; though systematized in the post-Śaṅkara period, they have been cultivated as cults for centuries. According to Dr. Murti, they derive their inspiration from the religious strain found not only in the R̥g-Veda, the Upaniṣads, and the Bhagavad-Gita, but also from the canonical sources, variously called the Āgamas (Śaiva) and the Saṁhitas

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1. Ibid.

(Vaiṣṇava)<sup>2</sup> The Tantras are commonly called Āgama, and these are divided into three main groups according as the Iṣṭadevata worshipped : Śiva, Śakti, or Viṣṇu. Hence, they are known as Śaivagama, Śaktagama and Vaiṣṇavagama.

The Śaiva Upaniṣads teach idealistic monism or Absolutism. The Śakta Upaniṣads also advocate absolutism (advaita), whereas the Vaiṣṇava Upaniṣads are dualistic (dvaitavadin) and regard the distinction between the supreme Self or Brahman and the individual self as real. According to Dr. J.N.Sinha, the sectarian Upaniṣads were written obviously to give an air of sanctity to their deities. Many of them are mere elaborations of some texts of the earlier Upaniṣads, which are bodily incorporated in it. The technical terms of Śaivism and the Tantric terms of Śaktism, e.g., paśu, paśupati, paśa, Śiva, Sadaśiva, Śakti, spanda, haṃsa, nāda, bindu, kāla, nyasa, mudra, kundalini, ṣaṭcakra, the union of Śiva and Śakti in the highest cakra and the like are used.<sup>3</sup> These Upaniṣads include Tripuratapini, Yuddhakanda, Jābāladarsana, Jabali, Nāda-bindu, Dhyanabindu, Yogatattva, Yogacūdamani, Śandilya, Yocāśikha and some others.

The predominant note of these Upaniṣads is pure monism. According to Dr. J.N.Sinha, they advocate anti-

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2. Dr. T.R.V.Murti, Rise of the Philosophic Schools - an article in the Cultural Heritage of India, Vol.III, p.40.

3. J.N.Sinha, The Foundations of Hinduism, p.123.



hedonistic and ascetic morality. They lay stress on Jnana-yoga with meditation and trance as the pre-eminent method of realizing Brahman. They recognize karma-yoga and bhakti-yoga as subsidiary methods.<sup>1</sup>

The later Puranas, written between 500 A.D. and 1000 A.D., also preach the cults of Visnu, Śiva and Śakta. The Vaiṣṇava Puranas are theistic whereas Śaiva Puranas are monistic with a blend of Pantheism and theism. Markandeya Purana which preaches Śakti cult is pantheistic with a blend of henotheism, theism and monism. These Puranas, says Dr. Sinha, inculcate performance of prescribed duties (Karmayoga), devotion (Bhaktiyoga), and knowledge of experience of Brahman (Jnanayoga). The Vaiṣṇuite Puranas lay stress on devotion, whereas the Śaiva Puranas emphasize knowledge as the means of release. The eight-fold Yoga is enjoined for union of the individual soul with the supreme Soul or Brahman. Patanjali's concept of Yoga as complete suppression of mental functions for isolation of the soul is not recognized.<sup>2</sup> The famous among the Puranas are Viṣṇupurana, Nārāḍīyapurana, Agneyapurana, Kurmapurana, Garuḍapurana, Vayupurana, Skandapurana, and Markandeyapurana.

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1. Ibid. p. 124.

2. Ibid. p. 126.

To use the words of Encyclopaedia Britannica each Indian sect may be compared to a huge river, which is joined by many tributaries and which is known by different names in different parts of the country.<sup>1</sup> This is true to a great extent so far as the history of Indian cults is concerned. However, there has been much rivalry among some cults, especially between the two sects of Śiva and Viṣṇu. They received stiff opposition from Buddhism and Jainism also which they overcome ultimately in the sixth century. It is strange that sometimes Śiva and Viṣṇu have considered as one and the same, possibly owing to the common goal of the respective worshippers.

In Śaivism, Śaktaiism and Vaiṣṇavism, the absolute reality is Śiva, Śakti and Viṣṇu respectively. They are considered as the Supreme gods and are worshipped by their followers. The empirical self is bound to saṃsara owing to ignorance, egoism, desire and other afflictions (kleśas). All these cults lay stress on the purity of mind which can be brought about by the disinterested performance of duties (niskāma-karma) and the knowledge aided by Yoga. Thus, the eight-fold Yoga is the key-note of the philosophy of these cults. There is a spiritual interpretation of some yogic practices in the Saṃhitas, Upaniṣads and Puranas relating to Vaiṣṇavism, Śaivism and Śaktaiism. Yoga is

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 11, p. 576.

defined as the union of the lower and the higher souls. In the following pages, we shall deal one by one with the Yoga ethics and practices as propounded in these three cults.

### 1. VAISNAVITE.

Vaiṣṇavism is the creed in which Viṣṇu is worshipped as the supreme God. Viṣṇu is a Vedic deity who is infinite, eternal, omniscient and omnipotent. His essential feature, as depicted in the hymns, says Prof. Hiriyanna, is his taking three strides (tri-vikarma) which in all probability refer to the rising, culmination, and setting of the sun. It was this worship of the sun, "the swift-moving luminary", that gradually transformed itself into the worship of Viṣṇu (the pervading) as the supreme God.<sup>1</sup> According to Theos Bernard, Vaiṣṇavism is a form of monotheism, for it sets aside the original triune equality of Brahman, Viṣṇu and Śiva in favour of the one god Viṣṇu, often called Hari.<sup>2</sup> Viṣṇu assumes different forms called Avtārs.

Vaiṣṇavite theology contains elements drawn from Vedas, Āgamas, Puranas, and Alvars' Prabandham. The generally conceded first teacher of Vaiṣṇavism is Natha

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1. H. Hiriyanna, The Essentials of Indian Philosophy, p.34.

2. Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 18.

Muni (ninth century). Ramanuja (1017-1137 A.D.) laid down and elaborated the lines of its doctrine. A sectarian split, resulting in the rise of two conflicting sects known as Tenkalais (southern school) and the Vedakalais (northern school), can be seen among the Vaiṣnavas in the post-Ramanuja period. The followers of Ramanuja consist of Madhva, Nimbarka, Vallabha and Caitanya.

The Vaiṣnava Upaniṣads regard Viṣṇu as Para and Apra Brahman, the personal God of love and grace, possessing the usual attributes of sat, cita, ananda. Though they advocate idealistic monism, Vaiṣnavism lays great stress on loving devotion (bhakti) as a means to redemption because devotion produces the knowledge of Brahman.

According to Ahirbudhnya Saṁhita, the energy of Viṣṇu is of a two-fold nature, as dynamic activity (kriyakhya) and as determining being (bhuti), the latter being the result of the former.<sup>1</sup> In Viṣṇu-Saṁhita, the five powers of the five senses are regarded as the power of Viṣṇu. In the thirtieth chapter, according to Das Gupta Viṣṇu-saṁhita deals with yoga and its six accessories (ṣaḍ-anga-yoga), and shows how the yoga method can be applied for the attainment of devotion and calls it

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1. Ahirbudhnya-saṁhita, VI. 29.

Bhagavata-yoga. It may be noticed, he says, that the description of human-souls as all-pervasive is against the Srivaishnava position. The astanga yoga is often recommended and was often practised by the early adherents of the Srivaishnava faith.<sup>1</sup>

Parama-samhita<sup>2</sup> deals with jnana-yoga and karma-yoga. Jnana yoga, which is regarded as superior to karma-yoga, means partly practical philosophy and the effort to control the sense-objects by knowledge. Jnana-yoga of Parma-samhita includes samādhi and the practice of Prāṇayama. The word 'Yoga' connotes joining or attaching one self to God through deep meditation and detachment from worldly bonds. The Jayakhya - samhita<sup>3</sup> suggests two ways of achieving the ultimate goal, the absorptive trance and the concentration on the mantras. The practice of Prāṇayama, Pratyāhara, Dhyana and Dhārna is also suggested. The Yoga is classified as sakala, niskala and visnu. In sakala type of Yoga, the yogin concentrates upon the gross idol and becomes habituated. In the niskala type the yogin meditates upon the ultimate reality whereas the third type consists in the meditation on the mantras.

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.III,p.23.

2. Parma-samhita, Ch.X.

3. Jayakhya-samhita, Ch. XXXIII.



Viṣṇu-saṁhita describes a process of bodily and mental control known as Bhagavata-yoga. Prāṇayama, consisting primarily of the various kinds of meditation, is prescribed for a vaiṣṇava. According to Prof. Das Gupta, the so-called bhakti school of the Bhagavatas was so much under the influence of the yoga system that a bhakta was required to be yogin.<sup>1</sup> Parma-saṁhita also suggests that the knowledge attained by Yoga is better than any other kind of knowledge. Yoga here means the peaceful union of the mind with any particular object.<sup>2</sup>

In Vaiṣṇavism, karma yoga has a different meaning than that of the yoga of Bhagavad-gīta. Karma yoga of Gīta means the performance of the scriptural deeds without any desired fruition, whereas karma yoga of the Vaiṣṇavas connotes yama and niyama, involving fasting and gifts and some virtues of diverse kinds of self-control. However, in Vaiṣṇavism, the yogin is advised not to make any violent attempt at self-control, viz., painful trances and penances etc., but to proceed a slow and gentle though long course of mental discipline.

According to Ahirbudhnyā-saṁhita, the practice of yogic postures contribute to the good health of the yogin

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol.III.p.32.

2. Parma-saṁhita, Ch.X.

but these physical practices are of no avail unless one turns to the spiritual side of Yoga.<sup>1</sup> Though the Yoga is described as the union of the lower and the higher soul in the Ahirbudhnya-saṁhita, it is definite that the author was undoubtedly aware of the Yoga sutras of Patanjali as the well-known eight accessories, viz., yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇayama, pratyādhara, dhāraṇa, dhyana, and samādhi are mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

The Vaiṣṇava Puranas which preach the cult of Viṣṇu are theistic. Viṣṇu-purana regards Viṣṇu as Para Brahman who is devoid of sattva, rajas and tamas. He can be realized through concentration of mind on him with single-minded devotion. In Viṣṇu-purana Yoga is defined as that particular inclination of the mind which is accompanied by an active desire to know the self and which leads to union with the Principle.<sup>3</sup>

In Naradiya Purana (850-950 A.D.) Narayana or Viṣṇu is said to be the Ultimate Reality. This has been called as Mahaviṣṇu. According to Dr. Sinha, Naradiya Purana prescribes the triple method of action (karmayoga),

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1. Ahirbudhnya-saṁhita, XXXI, 15.

2. Ibid.

3. Viṣṇu Purana, VI, 7,3.

devotion (bhaktiyoga), and knowledge (jnanayoga) for the realization of Brahman. It prescribes the method of meditation and trance also as the final phase of sadhana like the Bhagavad-Gita.<sup>1</sup> Yoga is described here as Brahma-laya. When, like a magnet, the self draws the mind inside and directs its activities in an inward direction and ultimately unites with Brahman, that is called Yoga.<sup>2</sup> In Agneya Purana, Patanjali's concept of Yoga as complete suppression of all mental waves is rejected and the eight-fold Yoga is stressed.<sup>3</sup> Thus, according to the Vaisnavite scriptures, Yoga is the union of the lower self with the Higher Self in which ritualistic morality is discouraged and the inner purity of the mind is emphasized.

## 2. SAIVITE

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Śaivism is the creed in which Śiva is conceived as the Supreme God. The beginning of this cult can be traced back to early hymns, where we find Rudra as the personification of the destructive powers of nature as exemplified in storms and lightning. The name of 'Śiva'

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1. J.N.Sinha, The Foundation of Hinduism, p. 136.

2. Naradiya Purana, 47.7.

3. Agneya Purana, Ch. 372.

becomes his distinctive designation in the later portions of the Vedas. He is described there as the great God (Mahadeva) also.

Śiva is the one supreme master of gods and is the most adorable Lord. Sometimes he is said to be the creator of Brahman and Viṣṇu and sometimes identified with them. He is characterised as sacchidananda (consciousness and bliss). As the jar has the potter for its first cause, says Dr. Radhakrishnan, the staff and the wheel for its instrumental cause, even so the world has Śiva for its cause, Śakti for its the instrumental cause, and maya for its material cause.<sup>1</sup> Śiva is also known as Paśupati. (the Lord of creatures). To the Lord (pati) belongs the paśu, literally cattle, the infinite host of souls.

Śiva worship is largely based upon Āgamas (literally 'tradition') which are not, according to some thinkers like Śaṅkara, entirely in agreement with the teaching of revelation or the Vedas.<sup>2</sup> Hence the primary sources of Śaivism are the twenty eight Śaivagamas and also the Tattva-prakāśa of Bhoja. The Śaivagamas or Siddhantas are supposed to have been originally written by Maheśvara. There is a considerable controversy as to whether the Āgamas were originally written in

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1. S.Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p.724-5.

2. See Śaṅkara's commentary on Vedānta - sūtra of Bādarīyana II, 45.

Sanskrit or in the Dravidian tongue. According to Das Gupta, most of the Āgamas are written in Sanskrit characters in about half a dozen Dravidian languages, such as Tamil, Telegu, Kanarese, Grantha and Nandi-nagri. Several Tantras based on these Āgamas are also found as Sanskrit compositions in Dravidian scripts.<sup>1</sup>

Śaiva philosophy and the worship of Śiva had spread long before the eighth century A.D. Śiva is worshipped generally in the form of the phallic symbol (Śiva-linga). Śaivism is divided into two principal schools. The realist school of southern Śaivism, which includes Lingayat sects is known as Śaiva-siddhanta and the idealist school of northern Śaivism is ordinarily called Kashmir-Śaivism. The first great leader of the southern school, according to Theos Bernard, is Lakulisa, believed to have been the last incarnation of Mahesvara and the founder of the sect of Paśupatas.<sup>2</sup> The father of Kashmir Śaivism school is Vasugupta (8th-9th century) to whom the Śiva-sutra is assigned. According to the Śaiva tradition Śiva-sutra was supposedly revealed in Kashmir by Śiva himself. Śaiva-siddhanta analyses the universe into thirty-six tattvas as against the twenty-five of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. It does not support the illusory

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1. S.N.Das Gupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. V, p. 16 F.n.

2. Theos Bernard, Hindu Philosophy, p. 129.



concept of the world. Kashmir Śaivism, according to Theos Bernard, reconciles the dualism of the Sāṃkhya with the monism of the Vedānta. However, it is said that logic can never construct an unassailable monism; therefore, final proof of these two aspects can be had only by the spiritual experience of Samādhi (union) attained through the practice of Yoga.<sup>1</sup>

According to Spanda school, says Dr. Radhakrishnan, the soul gains knowledge through intense yogic contemplation, realises the supremacy of Śiva in the universe and becomes absorbed in the mystic trance of peace and quietness. The three methods of gaining release mentioned in the Śiva - Sutra belong to the Śiva, the Tantra and the Yoga.<sup>2</sup>

A Spiritual interpretation of some yogic practices finds place in the Śaiva Upaniṣads. For instance, in Trisikhibrahmana Upaniṣad, yama is described as dispassion for the body and the sense-organs and niyama is attachment for the ~~body and the~~ supreme reality. Āsana is indifference to all objects, prāṇayama is experience of the falsity of the world-appearance and pratyahara is turning the mind

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1. Trisikhibrahmana Upaniṣad, 28-30.

2. Jabaladarsana Upaniṣad, VIII. 3-4.

inward to the Ātman.<sup>1</sup> According to Jabaladarsan Upaniṣad, pratyahara consists in dedication of all actions, right or wrong to God,<sup>2</sup> Both these Upaniṣads treat dhārnā as concentration of the mind and dhyāna as meditation on the pureconsciousness.<sup>3</sup> Samādhi, the complete forgetfulness of meditation, is the cessation of the mind and complete identification with Śiva (Brahman).

According to the philosophy of the Śiva-mahapurāna, Śiva is properly approached only through sincere faith (śraddha) in him and not by tapas and instructional knowledge. The Śaivadharmā consists of knowledge, action, rigid conduct, and yoga. Yoga here means the arresting of all mental states, excluding the constant thinking of God. Yoga comes from knowledge and knowledge gradually arises from disinclination to worldly objects. Yama and niyama, two accessories lead man towards the path of yoga.

In Śiva - mahapurāna the five kinds of the Yoga are described as mantrayoga, sparśayoga, bhāvayoga, abhāvayoga and mahāyoga.<sup>4</sup> These are the five stages in the path

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1. Trisikhibrahmana Upaniṣad, 28-30.

2. Jabaladarsana Upaniṣad, VIII. 3-4.

3. Trisikhibrahmana Upaniṣad, 31, Jabaladarsana Upaniṣad, IX. 1-5.

4. Śiva-mahapurāna, VII. 2.37.

of a yogin. The mantrayoga consists in constant repetition of certain mantras. The mantrayoga associated with breath-control forms the basis of sparśayoga. The next stage bhāvayoga is the elimination of chanting the mantras from sparśayoga. When this state is further advanced and the various forms of world-appearance entirely disappear one may attain abhāvayoga. By the disinclination towards the worldly objects and being one with Him, the yogin reaches the highest state called mahāyoga. However, this practice of Yoga includes seven out of the eight accessories indicated in the Yoga-śāstra of Patanjali; these are yama, niyama, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhara, dhāraṇa, dh-yāna and samādhi.

So far as the Śiva-mahāpurāṇa is concerned, says Das Gupta, we do not find much difference between the practices of the different accessories such as yama, and niyama, āsana, etc., and those that are described in the Yogasāstra of Patanjali. The only important difference is that, while in Patanjali's yoga the mind has to be concentrated first on the gross objects, then on the subtle entities or tanmātrās, then on the ahaṅkāra or egohood, and then on buddhi, here in the Śaiva yoga, the yogin has to meditate on the divine nature of Śiva. In the Yogasāstra also it is through devotion to him that liberation may be granted to any yogin.<sup>1</sup>

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1. S.M.Das Gupta, History of Indian Philosophy, Vol. V., p. 124.

In Paśupata-yoga a great emphasis is laid on dhyāna. However, dhyāna means nothing more than the constant flow of an intellectual state of the form of Śiva. One should always try to practise dhyāna as there is nothing greater than dhyāna.<sup>1</sup> Only those who practise dhyāna are united with Śiva, not those who perform rituals. In Paśupata yoga, the word yoga is used in the sense of constant contact and not the suppression of mental waves.

In Kurmapurāna and Vāyupurāna, the eight-fold Yoga is prescribed for the union of mind with Brahman as an auxiliary method.<sup>2</sup> The Vāyupurāna describes the nature of Maheśvara-yoga. Maheśvara-yoga consists of five elements, such as prānāyāma, dhyāna, pratyāhāra, dhārnā and smaraṇa. Pratyāhāra is the control of one's desires and dhārnā is regarded as the fixing of mind on the tip of the nose. The ultimate object of Yoga realization is the attainment of Brahmanhood as Maheśvara. There is no reference in Vāyupurāna to suppression of thought-waves and Kaivalya.

### 3. ŚAKTITE.

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The Śaktas are the worshippers of Śakti (literally energy) which is the personification of the female principle

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1. Śiva-mahāpurāna, VII.2.39.29.

2. J.N.Sinha, The Foundation of Hinduism, p.107.

in the creation of the universe. The Śāktas regard Śakti as Brahman. Śakti is, however, sometimes regarded as the creative power of Śiva. He manifests himself through Śakti in the world. The Śākta Upaniṣads regard Śakti as the creative power of Śiva without which he cannot create the universe. Thus, Śakti is cosmic nescience (kālarātri) and the root-evolvent (mulaprakṛti). She is known by many names such as Čandī, Durgā, Devi, Kālī, mahāmāyā, mahalakṣmi etc. According to Dr. J.N.Sinha, Śakti is three-fold: will power (icchāśakti), power of action (kriyāśakti), and direct power (sakṣat śakti).<sup>1</sup>

This cult is elaborated in Tantras (about 6th-7th centuries A.D.) in which are mentioned, in detail, the special forms and personification of the 'great goddess'. Śāktas are divided into the followers of daksinaçāri (rightists) and vamaçāri (leftists). The latter are extremists but even among them, only a few practise the cult with five m's ( म ) prescribed in some Tantras, viz., māṃsa (flesh), matsya (fish), madya (wine), maithuna (copulation) and mudrā (mystical finger signs).

The Śākta literature is extensive, though most of it is of a mixed character. According to Dr. Radhakrishnan, seventy-seven Āgamas belonging to the Śākta cult are

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1. J.N.Sinha, The Foundation of Hinduism, p. 107.



divided into five subhagamas (or samaya), which teach practices leading to knowledge and liberation, sixty-four kaulāgamas which teach practices intended to develop magical powers, and eight misrāgamas which aim at both.<sup>1</sup> The Tantras belong to the seventh century and onwards. Bahurōpaniṣad identifies Śakti with the Absolute and the Lord, and regards the world and the finite selves as appearances. Sitopaniṣad describes Śakti to be both different and non-different from the Lord. Annāpurnopaniṣad teaches idealistic monism. Śakti is one infinite and eternal being, consciousness and bliss.

According to Dr. Rādhakrishnan, the mystic side of the Yoga system plays a large part throughout. Mantras are sacred and are regarded as divine creations, in a sense, identical with Śakti, who is Śabda, or eternal world. Great emphasis is laid on the awakening of the forces within the organism. The perfect man will awaken the Kundalini and pierce the six cakras.<sup>2</sup>

In the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna, Yoga is described as a cessation of ajnāna through knowledge. The knowledge is, on the one hand, emancipation and unity with Śakti (Brahman), and on the other, disassociation from the gunas

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1. S. Rādhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 735.

2. Ibid. p. 737.

of prakṛti. The root cause of all the afflictions is attachment. Destruction of egoism destroys attachment. The prāṇāyāma is supposed to destroy sins. In the ultimate stage the yogi becomes one with Brahman, just as water thrown in water becomes one with it.<sup>1</sup> In Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna, there is no reference to cittavṛttinirodha as Yoga. Yoga is the union of the soul with Brahman. Purity of mind, body and speech is an indispensable condition of mokṣa.

Devi Bhagavata lays a great stress on performance of duties (karmayoga), right knowledge (jñānayoga), and devotion (bhaktiyoga). A yogin worships the great goddess with single minded devotion and meditates on her alone. Yoga, thus, is identity of the finite soul with the Infinite Self.<sup>2</sup> The mind prepares it for the advent of knowledge. The combination of these three means is apparently suggested in the cult of Śaktas. Though Śaktaism advocates pure monism (advaita) it finds a place for devotion as a means to the attainment of the knowledge of identity.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāna, 40-41.

2. Devi Bhagavata, IV. 2.

3. Ibid. III, 15-19.

CHAPTER VII

--:0:-

HATHA YOGA AND KUNDALINI YOGA

--:00:-

Hathayogavidya virajte prasnottar Rajyogamarodhumi-  
chhoridhrohinina.

Goraksha samhita.

CHAPTER VII

-:0:-

HATHA YOGA AND KUNDALINI YOGA.

-:00:-

Hatha Yoga is a system of technical practices and disciplines by which the body and the vital energies can be brought under control. It is a system of health and hygiene involving both body and mind and is a discipline involving various bodily and mental controls. The Hatha Yoga exercises are known as the first preparation towards the way of self-realisation. According to Danielou , all treatises on yoga insist that the sole purpose of the physical practices of Hatha yoga is to suppress, physical obstacles on the spiritual or Royal Path of re-integration Raja yoga; and Hatha yoga is therefore called "the ladder to Raja yoga".<sup>1</sup>

The traditional meaning of the word 'Hatha' is the force or violence as well as oppression. It is used adverbially in the sense of 'forcibly', 'violently', 'suddenly' and 'against one's will', etc. According to

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1. Danielou , Yoga: The Method of Re-integration, p.17  
See also Goraksha Samhita, "The science of Hatha yoga is the ladder up which those climb who wish to reach the higher regions of the Royal Path."

उठ्याग विद्या विराजते प्रोक्तं राजयोगमोरोदुग्धिच्छेदरिधिरौठिणीव ।

Hatha yoga Pradipika the syllable 'Ha' represents the sun, and the syllable 'tha' represents the moon and the conjunction of the sun and the moon is therefore Hatha yoga.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the word 'Hatha' symbolises the two biomotor processes of the body, the energy-consuming (Ha, the sun) and the energy-acquiring (tha, the moon) principles. It is evident from this explanation that Hatha yoga aims at balancing and harmonizing these two forces by means of yogic exercises, especially the breath-control.

Though the idea behind Hatha yoga was to create the physical conditions for super-conscious awareness and the Hatha yoga exercises were first developed as a preparation for the yoga of contemplation; in later times elaborate techniques and disciplines of health and hygiene were evolved which have not much spiritual motive. The purely physical aspect of this yoga, which has the training of the physical body as an end in itself, thus came to be known as Ghatastha Yoga.

In course of time, says S.K.Majumdar, Hatha yoga came to be developed in an extraordinary manner for the physical power and benefits it brought. Many who were attracted to it lacked high spiritual motive and understanding. The original rational outlook was overlaid in

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1. उकारः कीर्तितः सूर्योष्णकारश्च उच्यते ।  
सूर्यान्वन्द्यमसौ योगोऽयं योगो निगद्यते ॥



many cases with fancies and dogmas of various kinds. Divorced from its spiritual motive, it became an elaborate technique for gaining control over the body and its functions.<sup>1</sup> Hatha yoga is a powerful, but difficult system whose whole principle of action is founded on an intimate connection between the body and the soul. The body, according to Sri Aurobindo, is not to the Hathayogin a mere mass of living matter, but a mystic bridge between the spiritual and the physical being. Hatha yoga, he puts, is in its own way, a system of knowledge; but while the proper Yoga of knowledge is a philosophy of being put into spiritual practice, a psychological system, this is a science of being, a psycho-physical system.<sup>2</sup> Hence, it must not be forgotten that both produce physical, psychic and spiritual results and that both do arrive at the same end. Hatha yoga, however, is a long and difficult path to the Supreme Truth.

The various techniques and theories of Hatha yoga, practiced in India by several teachers and handed down to their pupils without disruption for over centuries, came to be formulated, organised and presented in a number of scholarly texts. Of those which are available today, the

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1. S.K.Majumdar, Introduction to Yoga Principles and Practices, p.55.

2. Sri Aurobindo, On Yoga, I.p.491.

leading treatises on the subject are Hatha yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Śiva Samhita and Goraksha Samhita. All these texts are not very old, the earliest only dating back to the thirteenth century.

Hatha yoga Pradipika, considered to be the standard authority, comprises 393 couplets. It is a technical treatise of the practical method of physio-mental training. It was composed by Svatanama Yogindra, and the main commentary on it is the Jyotsna of Brahmananda.

The Gheranda Samhita contains the answers of the Yogi Gheranda to the questions of the seeker Chandakapali. It is a general technical treatise on Hatha yoga. In some instances the verses of Gheranada Samhita correspond closely to that of the Hatha yoga Pradipika.

The Śiva Samhita, according to Theos Bernard, presents a fuller account and introduces a brief outline of the general attitude towards Hatha yoga, showing its importance and metaphysical foundation.<sup>1</sup> The Goraksha Samhita is also a technical treatise on Hatha yoga by Mahayogi Gorakh Nath. All these texts are meant only

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1. Theos Bernard, Hatha Yoga, p.16.

to serve as a guide and are written in the technical phraseology of Tantrik literature. A teacher (Guru) is required to furnish the necessary details. As we have already noted these texts agree that Hatha yoga is only a stepping stone and that the Ultimate liberation can be attained through Raja yoga.

Among the most popular yogins, who knew Hatha-Vidya are Matsyendranath and Gorakshanath. Some of the other famous Siddhas, said to have existed in former times, are Svatanma, Jalandharanath, Sabara, Ananada, Bhairava, Chaurangi, Minanatha, Virupaksha, Bilesaya, Manthana, Siddhi, Buddha, Kanthadi, Korantaka, Surananada, Siddhapada, Charpati, Kaneri, Pujiyana, Nityanatha, Niranjana, Kapali, Vindunatha, Kaka-Chandisvara, Allama, Prabhudeva, Ghoda Choli, Tintini, Bhanuki, Naradeva, Khanda and Kapalika.

According to Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Hatha Yoga is not taught indiscriminately to every one because a yogin, desirous of success, should keep the knowledge of Hatha yoga secret, for it becomes potent by concealing, and impotent by exposing.<sup>1</sup> The student of Hatha yoga is required to first fulfil the moral requirements, the ten Yamas and the ten

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1. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, I,11.

Niyamas. Requirements and restrictions for different forms of Yoga are discussed in Siva Samhita.<sup>1</sup>

The Hindu Sastras mention four kinds of Yoga: i. Mantra Yoga, ii. Hatha Yoga, iii. Laya Yoga and iv. Raja Yoga. Mantra yoga is the mental concentration brought about by the process of repeating mentally the sacred Mantras. It is the first state of yogic sādhanā and must be practised regularly with devotion by the beginners in Yoga. The next stage of yogic sādhanā is Hatha Yoga. Yogasikhaupanisad explains that just as a bird whose wings are bound by strings, cannot fly freely into the air, similarly human mind is fully controlled by Prana. Evidently, it cannot be controlled by mere power of discrimination. It is hardly possible to control it without the control of Prana.

Hathayogic practice is composed chiefly of Āsana, the practice of various yogic postures; Prāṇayama, the regulation of breath, and a set of six bandhas or body-purifications. By practising Āsanas and mudras an aspirant can acquire control of mind easily and be immune from various physical diseases. Prāṇayama helps purification of nerves and awakens Kundalini, the Serpent Power. Hence the main object of Hatha yoga is the control of the breath and awakening of the Kundalini Śakti, and for this it lays great stress on the third and

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1. See Siva Samhita, V, 10-14.

fourth steps of the eight-fold yoga of Patanjali. Laya Yoga is the third stage of yoga and it corresponds to the fifth, sixth and seventh stages of the Astanga yoga, viz., Pratyahara, Dhârna and Dhyana. After practising Laya yoga vigorously the devotee finds the stage set for the fourth and highest state Raja yoga which corresponds to Samâdhi, the eighth stage of Astanga yoga. However, in this connection one must understand the wellknown maxim: 'No Raja without Hatha; no Hatha without Raja'.

The Hatha yoga techniques, says Majumdar, are collectively known as nâdi-suddhi processes, that is, processes for purifying the nerves and vitalizing the body. Purity in yoga means calmness or balance, while impurity stands for dullness and restlessness. According to him there are four broad divisions of these techniques which are, 1. Postures (âsana and mudra), 2. Breath-control (prânayama), 3. Dynamic contraction exercises (charana), 4. cleansing, special control and locking exercises (satkarma, bandha and mudra) of these the âsanas and the prânayama are the most well-known and widely practiced.<sup>1</sup>

Sri Aurobindo also states that the two main members of Yoga's physical discipline, to which the others are mere

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1. S.K.Majumdar, Introduction to Yoga Principles and Practices, p.105.

accessories, are Āsana, the habituating of the body to certain attitudes of immobility, and Prānāyāma, the regulated direction and arrestation by exercises of breathing of the vital currents of energy in the body.<sup>1</sup>

It has already been noted that Hatha yoga comprises those prescribed methods of exercise and practice, which are concerned primarily with the gross body (sthula-sarira). Undoubtedly the control of the gross body affects the subtle body (sukśmasarira) with its intellection and passions, for the sthula-sarira is expressly designed to enable the sukśma-sarira to work out the karma it has incurred. In Hatha yoga, unlike the Mantra yoga, the question of the fitness of a yogin is determined from the physical point of view and various rules are prescribed to free the body of the disease. In Hatha yoga, according to Arthur Avalon (Sir John Woodroffe), contemplation is on the "Light", and the Samādhi called Mahā-bodha is attained by the aid of control of breath and other vital Vāyus (Prānas), whereby the mind is also controlled.<sup>2</sup>

To use the words of Danielou, the Cosmic Principles which, in relation to the earth, manifests themselves in the planetary world as the sun and the moon are

1. Sri Aurobindo, On Yoga I, p. 492.

2. Arthur Avalon, The Serpent Power, p. 198.



are found in every aspect of existence. In the subtle body they appear as two channels along which our perceptions travel between the subtle centre at the base of the spinal chord and the centre at the summit of the head. These two channels are called Ida and Pingala.<sup>1</sup> Ida artery situated on the left side is white and corresponds to the cold aspect or the lunar principle. On the right side is Pingala, the warm aspect or the solar principle. Ida ends in the left nostril, while Pingala terminates in the right nostril. According to legend Ida is the Ganges of the lower world, Pingala the river Yamuna and between Ida and Pingala is Susumna, the subtle river Saraswati.<sup>2</sup>

Hatha Yoga consists in checking the flow of Prānas through the left and right arteries and making it flow through Susumna which is centrally situated in the spinal chord. The base of Susumna is called the Brahmadvāra or the gate of Brahma. When breath passes through it, prāna becomes restful and movements and provocations to the senses and mind are no more perceived.

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1. Danielou, Yoga: The Method of Re-integration, p.17.

2. इडा भोगवती जंगा पिङ्गला यमुना नदी।  
इडापिङ्गलमोर्धच्ये सुषुम्ना च सरस्वती॥

The word 'Āsana' means 'easy, comfortable', and the posture in which a man can remain longest without effort is the best. There are various postures in which a yogin is to sit when he engages in meditation. These posture movements of yoga are mainly spinal, abdominal and thoracio-diaphragmatic. Different āsanas are described in different books on Yoga. Their number has grown with the years. Hatha yoga Prādīpikā describes fourteen postures, Yoga Brādīpā twenty-one, Gheraṇḍa Saṁhita and Viśvakoṣa thirty-two each and Anubhava-Prakāśa fifty. Traditionally, there are eighty four āsanas which are mentioned in the Śiva Saṁhita.<sup>1</sup> Of these thirty three are said to give good results.

The most well known and generally practised āsanas are Siddhāsaṇa, Padmāsaṇa, Svāstikāsaṇa and Sinhāsaṇa. In some treatises on Hatha Yoga the last two āsanas are replaced by some other āsanas, such as Bhadrāsaṇa and Ugrāsaṇa but the first two, mentioned above, are the common in all the treatises on hatha yoga. Hatha Yoga Prādīpikā opens its section on āsanas as follows: "Being the first accessory of hatha yoga, Āsana is discussed first. It should be practised for gaining steady posture, health and lightness of body."<sup>2</sup>

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1. According to legend there are eighty-four hundreds of thousands of Āsanas described by Śiva.

2. Hatha Yoga Prādīpikā, I, 19.

All the postures are meant to establish a rhythmical breathing in the system which is a pre-requisite for the practice of Prāṇayama. Every āsana is intended directly or indirectly to quiet the mind. According to Theos Bernard, for the advanced meditation practices of Yoga there are only two postures that are considered essential. These are Siddhāsana and Padmāsana. The other āsanās have been advised to build up different parts of the body and to develop the needed strength that is required by the rigid physical discipline.<sup>1</sup>

Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā describes the Siddhāsana as follows : "Press firmly the heel of the left foot against the perineum, and the right heel above the male organ. With the chin pressing on the chest one should sit tight, having restrained the senses, and gaze steadily at the space between the eyebrows. This is called Siddhāsana, the Opener of the Door of Salvation. Some call this Siddhāsana, some Vajarāsana. Others call it Mukthāsana or Guptāsana. It cleanses the impurities of 72,000 nadīs."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Theos Bernard, Hatha Yoga, p.23.

2. Hatha Yoga Pradīpikā, I,37-45.

Similarly, while practising Padmāsana, according to Gheranda Samhita, "place the right foot on the left thigh and similarly the left one on the right thigh, also cross the hands behind the back and firmly catch hold of the great toes of the feet so crossed. Place the chin on the chest and fix the gaze on the tip of the nose. This posture destroys all diseases."<sup>1</sup>

The different postures have different effects according to the state of the yogin who practises them. It must be noted that the postures should be learnt from some qualified teacher. To accelerate and complete the effect, the āsanās are accompanied by various mudrās (physical gestures), bandhas (muscular contractions) and Prāṇayama. The mudrās are also particular postures of the body immune from all sorts of diseases and the mind serene and controlled. There are twenty-five mudrās, the practice of which give success to the yogins. The most important of them are Maha-mudra, Maha-bandha, Uddiyana-mudra, Śakticalani mudra, Mulabandha, Khecari, vajroli, Mahavedha-mudra, Viparita karani-mudra and Jalandhara-bandha. The Śiva Samhita refers to only these ten prominent mudrās.

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1. Gheranda Samhita, ii,8.

The practice of Yoga also aims at purifying and rejuvenating the nerves and other channels of the body which become impure and obstructed by physical and mental ailments. There are six acts (ṣat-karma) which have a remarkable effect in purificating the organism. According to Hatha Yoga Pradipika the six acts to be performed by a yogin are i. dhauti (washing out the stomach), ii. vasti (washing out the bowels), iii. neti (cleansing of the nose, iv. nauliki (shaking the abdomen), v. trātaka (fixing with the eyes) and vi. kapāl bhati (breathing bellows).<sup>1</sup> Bhaktisagara of Charan Dasa adds to these gaja-karani (the elephant act), dhanu-karani (the air-pipe act), dhagikarani (the tiger act) and shankha-pashala (the conch act).

Dhauti is swallowing a piece of cloth, fifteen cubits long and four fingers broad, and pulling it up again, thus washing out the stomach. Vasti practice consists in sitting in the Utkatāsana in water upto the navel with a tube in the anus and then to wash out the inner belly by drawing in water. Neti is done in two ways with water and with a string. It purifies the head, gives superhuman sight and quickly does away with all diseases affecting any organ situated above the elbows. The

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1. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 2,22.

practice of nauliki or nauli, shaking the belly rapidly from right to left like quivering water, increases the digestive secretions and dries up all kinds of disease. To fix with insistence the sight, without winking, on a minute object until the tears come to the eyes is known as Trātaka. It destroys eye troubles and prevents sleepiness and laziness. Kapāl bhati is breathing in and ~~presses~~ out lightly like the bellows of a blacksmith. It cures lymph deficiencies and purifies the lungs.<sup>1</sup> These are the basic purification processes. Having purified the nerve system one should begin the practice of Prāṇayama.

Prāṇayama stands for the control of the vital airs that are always in a state of flow and react on the mind. It is necessary for rhythmical breathing without which the body can not be kept fit for the arduous physical practices of Yoga. Vacaspati says, Prāṇayama renders the mind fit for concentration by making it steady.<sup>2</sup> The aim of Prāṇayama, according to S.K.Majumdar, is to still the vital processes and control the nerve currents of the body for purpose of higher meditation. During this practice, yogis become

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1. Ibid. 2, 24-34.

2. The Y.S. of Patanjali, Vacaspati's gloss, ii, 104.



aware of certain centres of consciousness in the body and also some special flow of nerve currents.<sup>1</sup>

Hatha Yoga Pradipika states that control of breath must be brought about very gradually, "as lions, elephants and tigers are tamed or else the experimenter will be killed",<sup>2</sup> and by any mistake there arises cough, asthma, head, eye and ear pains, and many other diseases. Prānāyama is the process whereby the ordinary and comparatively slight manifestation of Prāna<sup>3</sup> is lengthened, strengthened and developed. The yogin sitting in Padmāsana, inhales (puraka) and exhales (Recaka) alternately through the left and right nostrils, retaining the breath meanwhile (Kumbhaka) for gradually increasing periods. Puraka, in other words, is inspiration and Recaka expiration. Kumbhaka is the retention of breath between these two movements. This process of alternate breathing is the accepted technique. Kumbhakas should be performed gradually four times during the day and night, till the number of Kumbhakas for one time is 80. Kundalini awakens by Kumbhakas and by its awakening Susumna becomes free from impurities and success in Hatha Yoga is accomplished.

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1. S.K.Majumdar, Introduction to Yoga Principles and Practices, p.205.
  2. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, 2,15-18.
  3. The five principle Vayus are Prāna, Apāna, Samāna, Udāna and Vyana. The Prana moves in the heart; Apāna in the sphere of anus; Samāna in the navel region; Udāna in the throat and Vyana in the whole body.

There are nine main types of Pranayama each having different effects. These are: 1. Anuloma-viloma (the with-and-against), 2. Surya bhedana (the piercing of the sun), 3. Ujjayi (the victorious), 4. Sitkari (the cold-maker), 5. Sitali (the colling), 6. Bhastrika (the bellows), 7. Murch'ha (the rising), 8. Bhramari (the bee), 9. Plavini (the floating).

The main achievement from the holding of breath is the awakening of the Kundalini. The Kundalini literally means 'coiled up like a snake', and stands for the hidden power that rests in mulādhara. It is like a serpent having three and a half coils. It closes with its mouth the entry to the Sūṣumna called Brahmadvāra and is asleep, with its head downwards, in the bodies of ordinary and ignorant persons. It can become active through meditation and other yogic exercises. Kundalini, according to Arthur Avalon, is the mightiest manifestation of creative power in the human body.<sup>1</sup>

Gradually, the awakened Kundalini rises higher and higher through the series of six cakras (centres), which are threaded upon the spinal channel at

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1. Arthur Avalon (Woodroffe), The Serpent Power, p.227.

various points in the body and are situated at the levels of the base of the spine, the root of the penis, the navel, the heart, the throat and the eyebrows. These cakras are depicted as flowers having petals and are the centres of subtle forces. According to D.N.Bose their position is on the Merudanda (vertebral column). They are the centres of cosmic consciousness, the generation of Prāna or vital force and the openings on the macrocosm.<sup>1</sup> These are known as Mulādhara, Svadhīsthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddha and Ājna.

The basal centre, Muladhara, is located at the sex centre below the genitals. The object of meditation on this centre is to collect the Kundalini power and make it flow upward. The next centre, the Svadhīsthana, is located a little above the Mulādhara, between the navel and coccyx. Next comes the Manipura, in the region of the navel. The Mulādhara cakra is a four-petalled lotus whereas Svadhīsthana is of six and the Manipura ten-petalled. The heart centre, Anahata, is the place where one experiences a feeling of delight from love and affection. The next centre is called the Visuddha; it lies in the throat area. Above it, between the eyebrows, is the Ājna which is the centre of all sense-knowledge.

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1. D.N.Bose, *Tantras their Philosophy and Occult Secrets*, p. 167.

And finally, in the upper cerebrum, there is the thousand-petalled, the Sahasrāra. But it must be borne in mind that, as the Kundalini is a mysterious power, so also are the cakras the mysterious centres in the path of the ascent of the Kundalini.

Gorakhnath, in his Siddha-Siddhanta-Paddhati, has referred nine cakras whereas in Goraksha-Sataka, which also is regarded as an authentic work of Gorakhnath, the cakras are enumerated as six. The three other cakras, explained in Siddha-Siddhanta-Paddhati are Talu-cakra, Bhru-cakra and Nirvana-cakra. These are said to be located at the root of the palate, between the two eyebrows and within a part of Sahasrāra respectively.

Before reaching Sahasrāra, according to Swami Atmananda, one remains in Suddha-Sattva, but as soon as the Kundalini reaches the culminating point, the devotee experiences Nirvikalpa Samādhi in which the body is completely forgotten. It is here that the devotee realises his identity with the Parmatman.<sup>1</sup>

This awakening of dynamic spiritual consciousness in the individual mind is described by Gorakh Nath<sup>1</sup> and the

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1. Swami Atmananda, The Four Yogas, p. 232.

Natha yogi school as the awakening of the apparently sleeping Divine power in man. In Goraksha-Sataka as well as in many other books, according to Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, Gorakhnath instructs every truth-seeker to contemplate his own body as a house (griha) in which Śiva dwells as the individual soul (jeeva). This house is said to stand on one pillar. The pillar obviously refers to the spinal column with Sahasrāra as its roof. The nine doors of this house indicate two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, one mouth, one generating organ and one excretive organ, which are linked with the centre of vitality by the nine principal nādis and which are the openings of this bodily house for contact with the outer world. A tenth door (dharma dvara) is mentioned at the root of the palate, which is an opening to the higher spiritual region. The five presiding deities may mean according to the yogic viewpoint Brahma, Viṣṇu, Rudra, Īswara and Sadasiva, who are special spiritual self-manifestations of Śiva-Śakti for governing different planes of the Cosmic System as well as of the individual bodies. A yogi is to realise these Cosmic Divine Personalities within his own body as the glorious self-manifestations of his own true Soul, i.e. Śiva<sup>1</sup>

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1. Akshaya Kumar Banerjea, Philosophy of Gorakhnath, p.181-2.

The yogis of Natha cult have given great extension to Hatha yogic practices thus adopting Yoga to dazzle others. It is for such reasons that spiritual teachers came to look askance at the more extreme practices of Hatha Yoga. Yogic practices should of course go with spiritual motives and meditation without which such practices lead to a state of suspended animation.

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PART II

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( GURU NANAK AND HIS CONCEPT OF YOGA )

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CHAPTER I

-:0:-

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF GURU NANAK

-:00:-

'Gurmukh kal wich pargat hoa'

CHAPTER I

--:0:-

LIFE AND WORKS OF GURU NANAK

--:00:-

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh Religion, was born at Talwandi Rai Bhoie, now known as Nankāna Sahib, situated about 40 miles south-west of Lahore in Sheikhupura district on April 15, 1469 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Nanak's father Mehta

1. The main source of Guru Nanak's life is Janamsākhis (biographies). But these legendary works are loaded with several miracles and differed greatly with each other on several points, dates, names and places.

The date of Nanak's birth is still disputed by scholars. Janamsakhis, such as Willayat wali, Sodhi Meharban wali, Bhai Mani Singh wali and Puratan Janamsakhi as well as some other scriptures mention the date of birth to be Vaisakh Sudi 3, Samvat 1526 (April 15, 1469). But Janamsakhi Bhai Bāle wali, Nanak Parkash and a few other works put it on the Kartika Purnima, Samvat 1526 (November 1469). Mahima Prakash gives Vaisakh Sudi 3, 1525, exactly one year earlier than the date given by Bālā Janamsākhī, Karam Singh Historian in his 'Kattak Ki Vaisakh' sought to establish Vaisakh date by attacking the Bala tradition as totally unreliable.

The place of his birth is also disputed. Most authors state it to be Talwandi Rai Bhoie but Janamsākhī Meharban puts his birth at his 'nānke' at Chahlewala (district Lahore). Khushwant Singh refers the name of the mother's parental home as Kanha Kacha (A History of the Sikhs, Vol.I, p.30 f.n.)

Kalyan Chand, popularly known as Mehta Kalu, was a village Patwari. By caste he was a Hindu Khatri of the Bedi tribe. The name of Guru Nanak's mother was Mata Tripta.<sup>1</sup> He had an elder sister named Nanaki.

From his childhood, Nanak showed himself to be different from the normal run of children of his age. Even as a small child he was seen absorbed in deep meditation. According to Janamsākhi Meharban, he was only five years old when people noticed that he did not play with other boys but adopted a grave mien and spoke words of wisdom well beyond his years.<sup>2</sup>

Nanak was put to the usual tasks by his parents. As he was not a child of usual character he developed an attitude of positive dislike towards the worldly profits and his bent of mind did not appeal to his worldly-minded father.

According to Gursabad Ratnakar, in samvat 1532 Nanak was sent to Pundit Gopal for learning Hindi, in samvat 1539 he was sent to Maulvi Qutab-ud-din for receiving the knowledge of Persian language.<sup>3</sup> The author of Siyur-ul-

1. Janamsākhi Meharban gives her the name of Tripta .
2. Janamsākhi Meharban, p.11.
3. Bhai Kahn Singh, Gursabad Ratnakar, Vol.iii,p. 2073.

Mutakhrin states that Nanak learnt persian and Arabic from Maulvi Sayyid Hasan. He was introduced to the knowledge of the most esteemed writings of Mussulmen.<sup>1</sup> The worldly teachers, with their narrow approach, however, could not satisfy Nanak's hunger of divine knowledge.

The unusual behaviour of Nanak, during his early age, harrassed his parents. On the advice of Rai Bular, the village chieftain, it was decided to send him to Sultanour, the town of his elder sister Nanaki. Consequently, in 1484 A.D. Jai Ram, the husband of Nanaki took him to his place and got him appointed as a modi (store-keeper) at the royal stores (modikhana) of Daulat Khan Lodi in the year of 1485.

After some time Nanak took his companion Mardana, a muslim minstrel (rababi) with him to Sultanour and both of them would sing hymns in the praise of Almighty God, in the morning as well as in the evening.

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1. Siyar-ul-Mutakhrin I, 1786 ed. pp.82,83  
(quoted by Dr. Hari Ram Gupta in A Life Sketch of Guru Nanak, p.15).

On Jeth 24, samvat 1544,<sup>1</sup> he was married to Sulakhani daughter of Mul Chand of village Pakho ki Bandhawa in Gurdas Pur district. Sulakhani was blessed with two sons, Sri Chand and Lakhmi Dass. They were born in 1494 and 1496 A.D. respectively. Even married life could not divert Nanak's attention from spirituality to worldiness.

At Sultanpur, one morning Nanak, as usual, went to the river Bein for the bath and then suddenly disappeared.<sup>2</sup> It was generally believed that he had been drowned. After remaining untraced for three days, when Nanak reappeared, he was a changed and determined man. He emphatically declared : "there is neither a Hindu nor a muslim".<sup>3</sup>

1. This is according to Gursabad Ratnakar of Bhai Kahn Singh. All the Janamsākhis do not agree on one date and give the age of Nanak, at the time of marriage, ranging from 12 to 24. Janamsākhis, however, also do not agree on the place of Guru's marriage. Janamsākhi Mani Singh says that the marriage took place at Talwandi whereas Janamsākhi Bhai Bala and Nanak Parkash put it when Nanak was at Sultanpur.
2. According to Duncan Greenlees this incident happened on 20th August 1507 (The Gospel of the Guru Granth Sahib, p. xxxviii) Teja Singh and Ganda Singh put it in 1469 (A short History of the Sikhs, Vol. I, p. 5) and Indu Dhushan Bannerji puts it 'somewhere near the year 1495' (Evolution of the Khalsa, Vol. I, p. 77).
3. Purātan Janamsākhi, pp. 18.19.



Soon after receiving the Divine Call to preach his mission to the suffering humanity, Guru Nanak gave up the service of Daulat Khan Lodi and took to travelling to propogate his ideals.

The life of Guru Nanak, according to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, can be divided mainly into three parts : (i) family life from 1469 to 1496 (27 years) or the period of soul-awakening and enlightenment; (ii) the period of his travels from 1496 to 1521 (25 years) or the time of gaining experience of other religions and expounding his own views; and (iii) the period of retired life at Kartarpur on the banks of the Ravi from 1522 to 1539 (18 years) - a period of laying the foundation of Sikhism.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak propogated his mission travelling towards all the four directions and covering thousands of miles on foot. He visited innumerable places to examine practically the working of various religions and sects prevalent in India at that time. He had a missionary zeal which prompted him to go to the far-off places. He visited almost all the important places of worship and pilgrimage of both the Hindus and the Muslims. His travels, numbering

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1. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, A Life - Sketch of Guru Nanak, p. 14.

four, are popularly known as 'Udasis'.

On leaving Sultanpur<sup>1</sup> Nanak, alongwith Mardana first visited the neighbouring areas. They went to Saiyadpur (Eminabad) where Nanak stayed and greatly relished the course oatmeal bread offered by Bhai Lalo as against the richly brahmabhoja of Malik Bhago, thus showing his deep love and respect for the poor working class.

From Eminabad Nanak went to Tulamba near Multan, where lived a notorious thug named Sheikh Sujjan. Guru turned a new leaf in Sujjan's life with deep and affectionate treatment. Nanak pricked his conscious by saying :

Bright sparkles the bronze,  
but rub it thou and its black comes off;

Wash it as well as thou may,  
but its inner impurity goeth not.

He alone, O dear, is our friend who goeth  
along with us in the Yond,  
and wherever the account (of deeds) asked from us,

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1. According to Gursabad Ratnakar, Guru Nank left modikhana in 1497 (samvat 1554). Dr. S.S.Kohli states that he started from Sultanpur in 1499 (Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.4) whereas Hazan Singh puts it to be in February 1500. (History and Philosophy of Sikh Religion, p.69).

neither he stands (as our pledge).

The houses and mansions may they be painted  
from without,

But, if they crash but once, they are of no avail,  
for, they are a yawning emptiness from within.<sup>1</sup>

(Raga Suhi, M.I)

First, Guru Nanak undertook the extensive journey to the East (1497-1509) and mainly visited the Hindu places of worship. He went upto Assam passing through the main centres like Kurukshetra, Hardwar, Mathura, Gorakhmata, Prayaga, Benaras, Gaya and Jagannath Puri etc. As Nanak had something peculiar and dramatic in his character he took strange type of performances at these places to drive home into the minds of the people his teachings.

At Kurukshetra and Hardwar Nanak drew the attention of people, choosing the way which was sure to agitate them, by cooking a deer at 'the holy place' and by throwing water towards 'his fields in Panjab', thus pointing out the hollowness of the most of the religious rituals and observances.

He also visited Gorakhmata, an important centre of the Nath Yogis in the Himalayan foothills and held

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1. Adi Granth, p. 729.

discourses with them. Guru told them how the people of the country were suffering tyrannies at the hands of the ruling, and priestly classes, and asked them why they did not employ their miraculous powers for the good of the suffering people. At Prayga, Banaras and Gaya Nanak exposed the superstitious beliefs and the false rituals which the priesthood had prescribed to exploit the ignorant masses for its own material gain.

Then Guru Nanak and Mardana went to Kamrup, a place whose women were notorious for their skill in magic. Nurshah, the queen of the place, did her best to enchant the Guru but of no avail. Afterwards he advised her to lead a virtuous life by developing faith in Almighty and to give up the vices. Nanak had so many other unpleasant experiences in this region. While returning home from Assam he adopted a different route and visited Jagannath Puri where he raised his voice against the practice of 'Aarti' in the temple and other such practices. It is here he met Chaitanya, a great saint of Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

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1. According to Dr. Ganda Singh Guru Nanak arrived at Puri towards the end of 1566 Bikarmi (March 1510) and met Chaitanya Prabhu and his followers there in July 1510. The Sikh Review, Oct., Nov., 1969, p. 61.

His second Journey (1510 to 1515)<sup>1</sup> was to the south.<sup>2</sup> He travelled as far as Ceylon for visiting Buddhist and Jaina places of repute, passing through Malwa area of Panjab, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Mysore, Madras, Kerala and Maharashtra route. This time he was accompanied by his two Jat disciples, Saïdo and Seeho.

At Sirsa, he had a discourse with the then successor of Pir Makhdum Baha-ul-Din. In Bikaner he saw the Jaina mendicants and in Ajmer he visited the shrine of Pir Qutub-ud-Din, and he made no secret of his strong feelings regarding religious degradation. He visited nearly all the Śaivite and Śaktite temples of the South.

On reaching Ceylon, Raja Śivanabha asked him about his religion or sect and the Guru gave him a befitting reply by elaborating his concept of true religion. It is said that Guru Nanak composed his mythical composition Prāna Sangali while in Ceylon. After completing his mission in Ceylon he retraced his steps towards the north, alongwith the western coast and through Sinḍh, and visited a number of

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1. Khazan Singh is of the view that Guru Nanak set out on second Udasi in March 1506.
  2. According to Khushwant Singh (Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 16) Nanak travelled round in Panjab and visited the Sufi Headquarters at Pak Pattan before he set out on his second long voyage. Macauliffe also holds the same view.

Next, he travelled to the North (1515 to 1517) into the snowy Himalayas, the home of the Yogis and the Siddhas. Before setting out for the third great travel, Nanak paid a visit to his parents at Talwandi and stayed for a few days at Sultanpur. He also founded, at the request of a peasant, a village named Kartarpur on the banks of the river Favi.

During this Udasi of Uttarakhand Nanak is said to have been accompanied by Hassu, a blacksmith and Sihan, a calico-printer.<sup>1</sup> First, they went towards Kashmir passing through Shiwalik hills.<sup>2</sup> At Sri Nagar he had an encounter with Brahma Das and cured him of his pride.

After visiting Sri Nagar, according to Duncan Greenlees, Guru crossed the mountains to Mt. Sumeru where he had a certain mystical experience among the great Siddhas of that remote Himalayan summit.<sup>3</sup> There he held discourses with many followers of Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath. They enquired whence he had come and in what

1. S.S.Bal refers to Mardana as Guru Nanak's companion this time. (Life of Guru Nanak, p. 88).

2. According to Dr. S.S.Kohli Guru Nanak, passing through Himachal Pradesh, went towards Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet and China and then entered Kashmir. (Travels of Guru Nanak).

3. Duncan Greenlees, The Gospel of The Guru Granth Sahib, p.xivii.



state he had left Hindustan. Giving details of the degradation and decadence that was plaguing the whole society in India, Guru Nanak explained to the Yogis what the true Yoga is and how should it be practised.

Guru Nanak seems to have gone upto Mansarovar in Tibet and even beyond.<sup>1</sup> According to Dr. Trilochan Singh Guru Nanak visited both Eastern and Western Tibet and the impact of his visit on this region is so profound that even long before Chinese occupation of Tibet there never has been a time when Tibetans did not trek hundreds of miles to pay homage to the ever-living spirit of Guru Nanak at the Golden Temple.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Surindar Singh Kohli states that Guru seems to have travelled a lot in China or Mahachin and returned to India by Sinkiang state.<sup>3</sup> After visiting northern region, Guru Nanak reached Kartarpur in 1517.

After staying for some time at Kartarpur, the Guru set out for his fourth and the last journey (1517 to 1521) towards the West, the Muslim countries. This time

1. Bhai Gurdas, Var I, 29.

2. Dr. Trilochan Singh, *The Sikh Review*, Oct. - Nov. 1969, p. 86.

3. Dr. S.S.Kohli, *Travels of Guru Nanak*, pp. 126-127.

he was accompanied by his faithful minstrel Mardana. Nanak dressed himself in the manner of a Haji - a Mohamadan pilgrim. He put on blue garments, took a staff in his hand and carried a collection of his hymns and a small carpet whereon to pray. He went towards the Muslims' holy cities Mecca and Medina and went as far as Baghdad. Bhai Vir Singh suggests that Guru Nanak went to Arabia by sea and returned by land via Medina, Baghdad and Iran.<sup>1</sup>

When he arrived in Mecca, 'weary and footsore' he slept at night with his feet towards the holy Kaaba. An Arab priest, much incensed at this impertinence, cicked him and said, "why hast thou, O sinner, turned thy feet towards God?" The Guru asked the man to turn his feet any where he could where God was not. Head priest Pir Patalia asked him which of the two religions, Hinduism and Islam, was superior in his eyes. According to Bhai Gurdas, Nanak answered :

"Without good deeds both lead only to suffering.

Neither Hindus nor Muslims find refuse in His Court.

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1. Bhai Vir Singh, Guru Nanak Chamtkar, Part II, p. 149.

The safflower's pigment is not fast;  
 it runs of when washed in water.  
 People are zealous of one another,  
 but Ram and Rahim are one.  
 The world has taken the devil's path."<sup>1</sup>

From Mecca, Nanak went to Madina where he vanquished the Muslim priests in argument. Thence he proceeded to Baghdad,<sup>2</sup> where he gave a new Call to Prayer (Azan). In his discourses, the Guru spoke of the vast, infinite universe different from the limited one presented by Islam. Then the Guru passed through a good many towns of Persia, Central Asia and Afghanistan before reaching the *Chyber Pass*.<sup>3</sup> He worked his way round by Kabul to Peshwar where the Guru argued with the yogis at the temple of Gorakhnath - Gorakh Hatri.<sup>4</sup>

1. Bhai Gurdas, Var I, 33.

2. An inscription in mixed Turkish and Arabic was discovered in Baghdad during World War I. It reads :

"In memory of the Guru, the holy Baba Nanak,  
 King of holy men, this monument has been raised  
 anew with the help of Seven Saints."

The date of the tablet is 927 Hijri, i.e. 1520-21 A.D.

3. According to Dr. S.S. Kohli the Guru travelled some parts of Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Azirbaijan, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. (Travels of Guru Nanak, The Fourth Journey).

4. Sarjit Singh Bal states that Guru Nanak visited Gorakh Hatri and Hasan Abdal before going to Mecca. (Life of Guru Nanak, pp. 98-99).

On their way back home, Nanak and Mardana visited Hasn Abdal, now known as Panja Sahib. There lived on a small hillock a bigoted and selfish priest known as Wali Kandhari who refused water to Mardana. Nanak exhorted the Wali to be true saint of God and love him by loving His creatures.

Guru Nanak came to Eminabad, at the time of Babar's invasion of the Panjab, where a general massacre had been ordered by the invader. Women were dragged shrieking and weeping. This indiscriminate slaughter made Nanak's heart bleed. He wrote a pathetic poem about their sufferings :

The tresses that adorned these lovely heads,  
 And were parted with vermilion,  
 Have been shorn with cruel shears :  
 Dust has been thrown on their shaven heads.  
 They lived in ease in palaces,  
 Now they must beg by roadside  
 Having no place for their shelter.<sup>1</sup>

Nanak was arrested along with other faqirs.  
 Later on the King himself came to see the Guru and,

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1. Adi Granth, Raga Asa, M.I.p.417.

impressed by his words, ordered the release of all those arrested. The barbarous treatment shown by the invaders shock Guru Nanak endlessly. In his agony he took even God severly to task and said:

Though Khurasan has been shielded by Thee,  
 Though terror has struck at the heart of  
 Hindustan,  
 Thou, O Creator of all things,  
 Takest to Thyself no blame;  
 Thou hath sent Yama disguised as the Moghal,  
 Babar.  
 Terrible was the slaughter, loud were the cries.  
 Did this not awaken pity in Thee, O Lord?<sup>2</sup>

From Eminabad, he returned to Kartarpur and finally settled there. There he spent the last seventeen years of his life with his family and some devout disciples who had come and settled at Kartarpur. The Guru earned his living by cultivating his lands, but spent a good deal of time in spiritual instructions to the people at daily congregations (sangat). Thus, he preached to his followers to live in the world and work, while at the same time thinking of God always and praying for His Grace. According

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2. Ibid.p.360.

to Duncan Greenlees, he also wrote down many of the hymns he had already sung elsewhere and which no doubt Mardana had committed to memory. When Mardana died, in 1522, he was succeeded as chief minstrel by his son Shahzada.<sup>1</sup>

The Guru went on a short journey to Multan and Achal Vatala soon after settling down at Kartarpur. At Achal Vatala, the Guru attended the Śivaratri festival and held long discussions with certain yogis, some of which are included in *Siddha Gost*. By this time he was too old to undertake any strenuous journey, and he did not again leave Kartarpur. He ever conversed, says Macauliffe, on religious subjects, and divine measures (songs) were ever sung in his presence. The *Sodar* and the *Sohila* were chanted in the evening and the *Japuji* recited at the ambrosial hour of the morning.<sup>2</sup> Sangat and Lengar became a regular feature of this new society.

A few days before his death, on September 2, 1539, Guru Nanak nominated his most devoted and sincerest

1. Duncan Greenlees, *The Gospel of the Guru - Granth Sahib*, p.iii. According to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, Mardana died while at Baghdad during the fourth journey. (*A Life-sketch of Guru Nanak*, p.24)

2. Macauliffe, *The Sikh Religion*, I, p.181.



disciple Bhai Lehna, later Guru Angad Dev, as his successor laying before him five Paise and a coconut as offerings, and bowed before him, the second Guru. By doing this, according to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, he established the Unity of Guruship - based on the principles of impersonality, indivisibility and continuity. The result was that the succeeding Gurus used the name 'Nanak' in their compositions, correspondence, etc.<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak did not consider the claims of his sons as they were not mature enough as to be installed as Guru in his place. On the other this act of the Guru exalted the householder above the ascetic.

Guru Nanak left for his heavenly abode on Asuj 23 (sudi 10) samvat 1596, i.e. September 22, 1539 at the age of about seventy, at Kartarpur.<sup>2</sup> He came to be revered as the King of holy men, the Guru of the Hindus and the Peer of the Muslims: 'Baba Nanak shah faqir, Hindu ka Guru, Musalman ka Pir'. He accepted unreservedly that all human beings were brothers and the differences between them

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1. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, A Life - sketch of Guru Nanak, p.25.

2. Puratan Janamsakhi gives Asuj Sudi 10, Samvat 1595 (Sept, 1538) (Puratan Janamsakhi, p.115). Gyan Ratnavli (p.587) and Karam Singh (Gurpurb Miranay, pp.47-49) give Asuj Sudi 10, Samvat 1596 (Sept. 22, 1539). Balā Janamsakhi gives the date as Asuj Vadi 10, fifteen days earlier than that of the Gyan-Ratnavli date.

were accidental and not basic. To him equality of man was not a theoretical principle, he endeavoured to give it an institutional basis. He found an inner contradiction between the true spirit of religion and formal rituals.

To use the words of Dr. Niharranjan Ray, at his essential core Guru Nanak was certainly a man of God, but he was at the same time a total man, a good husband, a good father, a good householder working with his hand to earn his bread and many things besides. He was a man of deep and sharp socio-political consciousness, wide awake to what was happening in the world around him, and constantly applying his mind on the facts, situations and problems of the time and place he belonged to.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak was also a great poet and a lover of nature to the last. He used poetry as a medium to preach his divine message. He took pride in calling himself as "Nanak shair" or "Nanak -- the Poet". The melodious hymns of Guru Nanak are contained in the Adi Granth.<sup>2</sup> According to Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli, there is no doubt

1. Dr. Niharranjan Ray, The Age and the Social Message of Guru Nanak, (Paper read at Sahitya Akademi Seminar New Delhi), p. 43.
2. The number of the hymns of Guru Nanak, according to Gursabad Ratnakar is 947. ( Dr. S.S.Kohli and Khushwant Singh give the number as 974. ( A Critical Study of Adi Granth, p.5; Hymns of Guru Nanak ,p.xiv) whereas Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi puts it to be 958 (Guru Nanak Beni, p.32).

about the authenticity of the compositions of the Guru included in the *Adi Granth*, but, like other great poets, a good deal of apocryphal literature sprang up after his passing away.<sup>1</sup>

Out of the total 31 Ragas (melodies) of the Sacred scripture, the *Adi Granth*, Guru Nanak's hymns are found composed in the following Ragas : Sri Raga, Majh, Gauri, Āsa, Gujri, Bihagra, Vadhans, Sorath, Dhanasari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilawal, Ramkali, Maru, Tukhari, Bhairo, Basant, Sarang, Malār and Parbhati. Besides the poetry in these Ragas, Japuji a longer poem, four Sahaskriti slokas and thirty-three surplus Var-slokas (Sloka Varan to vadhik) are also there in the *Adi Granth*. Some of the longer poems, such as Patti, Thitti, Siddha Gosta, Āsa di Var, etc. are written in the different Ragas.

The major works of Guru Nanak are Japuji, Siddha Gosta, Āsa di Var, Majh ki Var, Malār ki Var, Dakhni Onkar and Baramaha (Tukhari) Guru's compositions can roughly be divided into three main parts, i. Metaphysical and mystical, such as the Japuji, Dakhni Onkar and Siddha Gosta etc., ii. criticism of social customs and practices, such as Āsa di Var and other slokas in various

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1. Dr. S.S.Kohli, *Philosophy of Guru Nanak*, p.8.

Ragas; iii. referring political conditions, viz., Babar Bani and some slokas in Raga Āsa and Raga Tilang.

The Japuji is the most important and outstanding composition of the Guru. It acquires first place in the Ādi Granth. Besides the Mul-Mantra, it has 38 paudis (stanzas) and an epilogue. According to Professor Sahib Singh the probable date of the composition of the Japuji is 1532 A.D.<sup>1</sup> Japuji contains the quintessence of Sikh religion and philosophy, and is recited every morning by the Sikhs. The main purpose of the Japuji is to arrive at and see the vision of Reality. The real problem is 'how shall the Truth be attained and falsehood removed'.<sup>2</sup> Thus the theme of the Japuji is the eternal problem of human deliverance.

Guru Nanak wrote three Vārs, Majh ki Vār, Āsa di vār and Malār ki Vār. Of these Āsa di Vār is an important longer poem. It is meant to be sung in the early hours of morning and is set to the music in Raga Āsa. The Var is divided into slokas and 24 paudis. It opens with the praise of the teacher (Guru) and refers to the creation of the Universe.

1. Sahib Singh, Japuji Sahib Steek, fifth ed. pp.1333

2. ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੇ ਤੁਟੈ ਯਾਲਿ ॥

Ādi Granth, p.1.

Vār Āsa, according to Dr. Taran Singh, outlines the means to be adopted or the path to be traversed to attain the status of a 'devata'. It is the path of knowledge, action and devotion all the three put together.<sup>1</sup> In this Var Guru Nanak also points out the religious degradation and the moral decadence of the priestly class and has condemned the innumerable rituals and false practices.

The very name of 'Siddha Gosta' suggests that it contains some discussion or dialogues. The poem which is in question - answer form is a long philosophical composition. It was written towards the end of the Guru's life at Kartarpur, some-time after his visit to Achal Vatala. According to Khushwant Singh, Siddha Gosta is based on a dialogue said to have taken place between Guru Nanak and a band of Yogis who came to visit him either at Achal Vatala or at Gorakh Hatri. It deals largely with the respective merits of Hatha-Yoga advocated by yogic followers of Guru Gorakhnath and Nama-marga preached by the Guru.<sup>2</sup> (A comprehensive and critical study of Siddha Gosta is given in Ch.III.)

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1. Dr. Taran Singh, Vār Āsa, an article in Guru Nanak his life, time and teachings, p.285.

2. Khushwant Singh, Hymns of Guru Nanak, p.173.

Baramaha Tukhari is believed to be amongst the last writings of the Guru. It is based on the Indian tradition of composing the poem on twelve months while giving the reactions of lonely, separated, and desperate being. Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli considers it the very first available Baramaha in Panjabi literature.<sup>1</sup> The poem contains twelve stanzas of ecstatic, melodious and powerful poetry one for each month besides a few stanzas of the prologue and epilogue. This poem is distinguished for its pictorial quality and exuberance of love as well as anguish of separation. In this poem the poet paints the countryside and Nature in all aspects as well as the emotions of the separated soul pining for the Almighty.

The two Vārs, Majh and Malār contain several important philosophical thoughts of Guru Nanak besides portraying the contemporary socio-religious life of the people. The Guru has devoted a large part of these two Vārs to the criticism of some aspects of the Hindu life. It seems that Guru Nanak finished these two poems in the early years of his Ashram life at Kartarpur. In 54 - stanza poem, the Dakhni Onkar, Guru Nanak has elaborated his concept of Bliss. This poem too is full

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1. Dr. S.S.Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p.11.



of poetic images. Patti, like Onkar, is based on a current Alphabets (now known as Gurmukhi). This 35 - stanza poem enumerates the basic philosophic principles and is deeply mystical. Thitti is another poem written around dates (Thittas) in which the Guru has pointed out the true approach to the attainment of Reality. Various hymns, edited under different Ragas, are composed in the form of slokas duple, triple, chaupade, astopadis, poudis etc. and the arrangement of the hymns in the Adi Granth is highly systematic.

The poetry of Guru Nanak is metrical as well as musical. He adopted prominent Chhand's (meters), such as Chaupai, Dohira, Dwaiya, Kundalia, etc. and the poetic-forms like Vār and Baranaha which are a part and parcel of the folk-lore. Guru Nanak had a mastery over the similes, metaphors and images. His poetic-fiction and imagery is highly classical. We find an adorable synthesis of philosophic grandeur and poetic sensibility in Guru Nanak.

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CHAPTER II

CONDITIONS IN THE TIME OF GURU NANAK

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AS DEPICTED IN HIS WORKS

'Kal kati raje kāsāi dharam pankh kar udria!

CHAPTER IICONDITIONS IN THE TIME OF GURU  
NANAKAS DEPICTED IN HIS  
WORKS.

The age of Guru Nanak has a remarkable significance in both Eastern and Western religious philosophical thought. Events of great significance took place in this period. It was an age of renaissance and religious reformation both in India and Europe. It was a period of an eager quest to find out elements which could vitalise the society at length. Columbus discovered America in 1492 A.D., Vasco-de-Gama found the new sea-route to India in 1498 A.D. and Ferdinand Magellan made the first global journey in 1519 A.D. On the other hand, Martin Luther, the great reformist began the Reformation in Germany during the year 1517 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

In India the Bhakti movement had already taken roots in the South and was gradually spreading towards the North. The great saints, such as, Ramanand, Narsi Mehta, Namdeva and Eknath, etc., had already made an impact on the minds of the people through the protestant movement which itself arose out of the Brahmanical Hinduism. The Nath cult and yogis had

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1. See also A Life-sketch of Guru Nanak by Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, p.5.

a great sway over the minds of the common people. At the same time the Indian version of Sufism became very popular among the new Muslim converts in India. Prominent among the contemporaries of Guru Nanak were Vallabhācharya (founder of Krishna cult, born in 1499), Chaitanya Maha-Prabhu ( a great saint of Bengal, born in 1486), Mira Bai ( a Rajput princess and an ardent devotee of Lord Krishna, born in 1499), Sankardev of Assam and Tulsidas, the great poet and an exponent of the Rama cult. To deal with the conditions in the time of the Guru it would be better for us to itemize the political, social and religious aspects of the time of Guru Nanak and then discuss the age from various angles as put down in his writings.

#### Political Conditions.

At the time of Guru Nanak's birth in 1469 A.D. Bahlol Lodi was the Sultan of Delhi (1451 to 1489). He was succeeded by Sikandar Lodi (1489 to 1517) and Ibrahim Lodi (1517 to 1526). Much of the time of Lodi Sultans was spent in warfare in the Eastern and Southern regions. Hence the Western dominions enjoyed comparative peace during the later half of the fifteenth century. At the time of Guru Nanak's birth Tattar Khan was Lodi Governor of Lahore and Dipalpur. He was killed in a battle near Ambala in 1485 A.D. Said Khan Sarwani was then appointed to manage the affairs of the Panjab. In 1500 A.D. Tattar Khan's son Daulat Khan

Lodi was made the Governor of Lahore. Thus, the province of the Panjab was governed without any revolt, rather peacefully, from 1489 to 1519.

According to Dr. J.S.Grewal, the most dramatic events in the politics of the Panjab during Guru Nanak's life-time were connected with the political activity of Babar.<sup>1</sup> Babar crossed the river Chenab in 1520 A.D. and occupied Sialkot. Thence he marched on Sayyidpur (Eminabad) where a large-scale massacre was ordered. Daulat Khan Lodi invited Babar to invade Hindustan, but towards the close of the year 1523, Ibrahim succeeded in making Daulat Khan Lodi to flee from Lahore away. Babar, who had already crossed the river Indus, marched on Lahore and defeated the Afghan commanders there and plundered the city of Lahore in 1524 A.D. He appointed his men as Governors at different places and himself returned Kabul. In the meantime, Ibrahim recaptured Dipalpur from Alam Khan. Babar again invaded the Panjab in 1525 A.D. and after the re-occupation of the province marched towards Delhi in the early months of 1526 A.D. and defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the decisive battle of Panipat.

Upto the time of Guru Nanak's death in 1539 A.D. the Panjab under the Moghal Empire, remained virtually free from any sort of warfare and disorder. It is evident that during the Lodi period lawless elements had begun to raise

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1. Dr. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.6.

their heads in defiance. 'The ruling class, which was largely Muslim, found its authority circumscribed and its coffers denuded and turned to robbing the wealthier Hindu trading community by imposing illegal taxes and denying it justice. Protests were met with severe persecution, massacre of 'infidles', and destruction of their places of worship.<sup>1</sup>

It may be noted at the very outset that Guru Nanak was much aware to and critical of the political degeneracy, administrative decadence and the disgruntled elements in the government. He very often denounces the political rule of that time in general terms. His criticism was very much balanced and scholastic. It is invariably evident from his following verses :

This age is like a drawn sword,  
 The kings are butchers ;  
 Goodness hath taken wings and flown.  
 In the dark night of falsehood  
 the moon of Truth does not appear to rise  
 anywhere.<sup>2</sup>

.....

The kings are lions and the muqaddamas dogs,  
 They fall upon the people day and night.

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1. Shushwant Singh, A History of the Sikhs, Vol.I,p.28

2. Adi Granth, Majh ki Vār, p.145



Their agents inflict wounds with  
 claws of power,  
 and the dogs lick blood and relish  
 the liver.<sup>1</sup>

... ..

Guru Nanak's criticism was simply not directed against the Muslims only; it was primarily against all those whom the political power had made blind. He was an eye-witness to the barbarous treatment meted out to the people of Panjab during Babar's invasion in 1521. He felt very much perturbed over the atrocities committed by the officers and soldiers. He referred to the unfortunate aspects of the political life of the day with a certain vividness and depth of feeling :

As the word of Lord descendeth upon me,  
 So I make it known, friend Lalo;  
 With evil as his best man,  
 Bringing a crowd of sins as his bridal procession,  
 Like a bridegroom Babar has hastened from Kabul,  
 To seize by force as his bride, O Lallo,  
 the wealth of Hindustan.  
 Modesty and righteousness both have vanished,  
 Falsehood leading the Van, holds the fields,  
 O Lallo ;

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1. Ibid. Malar ki Vār, p. 1288.

Both the Qazi and the Brahman are out of the  
work,

The devil reads the marriage service.

Muslim women, who read the Koran,

In their agony will cry on God, O Lallo,

Hindu women of high caste or low caste

Will meet with the same dire fate.

Men will sing hymns in praise of Murder, O Nanak,

an instead of saffron, smear themselves with

blood.<sup>1</sup>

Raga Tilanga, M.I.

A kingdom that was Jewel was washed by the dogs,

No one mourn their passing.

Praise, praise be to God

Who bringth people together and divideth

them also.<sup>2</sup>

Raga Āsa, M.I.

It may be noted here that there are only a few  
direct references to Muslim rule in Guru Nanak's hymns.

In Raga Basant he says :

The Ād-Burkh is called 'Allah'

It is now the turn of Sheikhs ;

1. Ādi Granth, p.422, (Translation, Selection from the  
Sacred Writing of The Sikhs, pp. 96-97.)

2. Ādi Granth, p. 360, (Tr. Ibid. pp. 86-87).

The gods and their temples are being taxed.  
Such is the custom of the day.<sup>1</sup>

In these lines, says Dr. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak appears to assume a close connection between the holders of political power and the respective professors of their faith; he notices also a 'discrimination' against those who do not belong to their faith. This largely depicts the situation of his day. It is obvious that Guru Nanak had no sympathy for 'discrimination' on religious grounds.<sup>2</sup>

Guru Nanak was very sensitively aware to and critical of political abuses and consequent miseries of the people. He observes that wealth and beauty which once served as the source of pleasure and pride to the princesses have now become their greatest enemy. Thus Guru Nanak adds :

Had they paused in time,  
Then would they have received punishment of  
having reduced to such plight ?  
The rulers of Hindustan paid no heed.  
Desecration and desolation follow in the  
foot-steps of Babar.  
And now the princes starve.<sup>3</sup>

Raga Āsa. M.I.

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 1191.
  2. Dr. J.S.Grewal, Guru Nanak in History, p.158.
  3. Ādi Granth, Raga Āsa, p.417.

Guru Nanak, referring to the unfortunate aspect of war, observes that rape was committed indiscriminately. The women who suffered are specifically referred to as many a Hinduani, Turkani, Bhatiani and Thakurani.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak's denunciation of the political degeneracy and discrimination was free and frank. He condemned overwhelmingly the atrocities committed by the invaders, unsympathetic attitude of the officials, imposition of illegal taxes, etc., and sympathized with dishonoured, wailing humanity and the downtrodden.

#### Social Conditions.

The Panjab in the last four centuries before Guru Nanak had witnessed an unprecedented upheaval due to the constant invasions from the adjoining North-western Muslim countries. That intermittent political turmoil greatly affected the social life of the people inhabiting the Panjab. These invasions had not merely political reasons, but at the same time these had behind them an aggressive religious zeal of the fanatic Muslim invaders. This zeal which was not easily assimilable in the Hindu society resulted in a disastrous debacle and demoralisation among the Hindus in general. Thus, every-thing which was significant and valuable in Hindu social life was degraded.

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1. Ibid.

Evidently there were two distinct societies which were poles apart culturally and mentally. In other words, there were two cultures, one of them Indian and the other Semitic. For the majority Hindu class there was one vital problem of the simple survival in a demoralising situation as Muslims being powerful had the upper hand. They exploited the people and committed grave atrocities and taxed the other class heavily. There was certainly no scope of respectable employment for Hindus. Stronuous efforts were being made to crush Hindu culture by demolishing schools of the Hinds and razing their temples to the ground, thus converting them into mosques.

Evidently, a large number of Hindus were forcibly converted to Mohamadanism, crushing the very soul of the people. For a Hindu there was no other alternative but to reconcile with the aggressive Muslim fanatics. According to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, there was a wide gulf created between the rulers and the ruled and between the Hindus and the Muslim population - so much so that Hindu Faqirs were subjected to all types of humiliations and were made to dress differently from the Muslim Faqirs. There was complete segregation between the Hindus and the Muslims - their rites, customs and ceremonies and their way of living.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Dr. Hari Ram Gupta, A Life-sketch of Guru Nanak, p.7.

As has already been mentioned that a very low status was assigned to the Hindus and they were greatly emasculated. They were ordered to stick patches of different colours on their shoulders, so that no Muslim might be put to the indignity of showing them honour by mistake. A Hindu could ride only on a donkey and he could not use the saddle when riding.<sup>1</sup>

In that long, continuing situation, according to A.R. Deshpande, an open doctrinal opposition was a disastrous adventure. The invading new had a mighty armed support, and all means of oppression at command. The mouth of an opposing creature could be permanently shut by getting his head cut off. Seats of such preachers and their resources were destroyed without leaving a trace and care was taken to see that they would not spring up again.<sup>2</sup>

Constant hammering of the Hindus by the Muslims seriously damaged Hindu morale and created a sense of demoralisation among them. It is quite evident that during Turkish rule, notwithstanding the conferment of some basic concessions, the Hindus had so greatly degenerated in spirit that all sense of pride and dignity and the priceless virtues of chivalry appeared to be steadily vanishing.

1. See also, Shri Ram, The Religious Policy of Mughal Emperors, p.14.

2. A.R.Deshpande, Guru Nanak and His Age, a paper read at Sahitya Akademi Seminar at New Delhi, p.6-7.



Dr. Fauja Singh, however, adds that we cannot attribute this phenomenon exclusively to foreign conquests. The process of that downfall had begun much earlier. Even from the period of Maharaja Harsha certain harmful tendencies had crept into Hindu society and caused it to degenerate.<sup>1</sup>

Hindu society in itself was rigidly divided by the caste system and the perpetuation of untouchability, supremacy of the Brahman priesthood over the other Varunas (sects) of the Hindu class led to a sort of stoic social frame-work which was full of superstitions, exploitations and which ultimately lead to the mental disintegration of the Hindu society. With the result the behavioural Brahmanism gave rise to the priest dominated, fake and ritualistic religions and text-bound, narrow scholastic way of life. It should, however, be noticed here that the Hindus in a way had accepted indirectly the supremacy of the ruling class and were anxious to please them by adopting their way of life. It is quite clear from the direct evidence emerging from some of the verses of Guru Nanak. In Raga Aasa, he says :

Decency and faith are far removed from them,

And Nanak, it is falsehood that filleth them all.

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1. Dr. Fauja Singh, Guru Nanak in Historical Perspective, an article in the Sikh Review, Oct. -Nov.1969, p.29.

With sacred mark on their foreheads,  
 And their loins girt by the folds of dhoti,  
 With knives in their hands, they are  
 butchers of the world.  
 They wear blue clothes to seek favour of the  
 Muslim rulers,  
 And receiving money from barbarians (malechhas)  
 they worship the Purānas :  
 And they eat the goat slaughtered in the  
 Muslim way,  
 Yet they allow access to none to their kitchen-  
 square.

Raga Āsa M.I.<sup>1</sup>

The people in general fell prey to greed, sin, falsehood  
 and lust. Guru Nanak obviously refers to the prevalence of  
 all these social evils and moral weaknesses of the common  
 people in general and of the priestly class in particular :

Avarice and Sin are the king and the minister,  
 and falsehood is their chief.  
 And lust, yea, is the advisor, and so they all  
 confabulate.  
 Their subjects too are blind, without wisdom;  
 The wise dance and make music and deck themselves  
 as beauties.

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 472.

They shout and they scream out confusion,  
about their heroes.

And the foolish Pundits revel in argument,  
And cherish their set codes.

- Raga Āsa, M.I.<sup>1</sup>

The Hindu deterioration had its adverse influence on the Muslims also. The religious zeal of the Turks which was at its glory at the time of their invasion to India was slowly waning down, and by the end of the fifteenth century, we see a marked deterioration in the Muslim social order also. The Muslim priestly class (Qazis) which was also a part of the Muslim administration had gone the way of its counterpart in Hindu society. In Raga Tilang, the Guru says :

Modesty and righteousness have disappeared,  
and falsehood reigns supreme;

The way of the Qazis and the Brahmins are no  
longer there.

The devil plays the priest.

- Raga Tilang, M.I.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid. p.469 (translation by Dr. Gopal Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Vol, II, p. 462).

2. Ādi Granth, p. 722.

A Qazi sits on the seat of justice,  
 tells his rosary  
 And mutters the name of Khuda (God).  
 Taking bribes he deprives one of his rights.  
 On being questioned, he quotes chapters and  
 verse.<sup>1</sup>

From the above analysis, it is quite clear that for Guru Nanak the good and bad persons were not classified according to religious labels that they bear, but in terms of their conduct. He rejected outrightly the institution of caste as baseless, unjust and derogatory to the dignity of man. To him all men were equal. He rejected, at the same time, the wretched belief that in the divine heirarchy women occupied a lower place than man. Women were treated as Shudras in the society at that time. Guru Nanak referred to the indispensability of woman and regarded her as possessing equal dignity and honour. In his oft-quoted verse the Guru says :

Of a woman are we conceived,  
 Of a woman we are born,  
 To a woman are we betrothed and married,  
 It is a woman who is friend and partner of life,

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1. Ibid.

It is a woman who keeps the race going,  
 Another companion is sought when the life-  
 partner dies,  
 Through woman are established social ties.  
 Why should we consider woman cursed and condemned  
 when from woman are born leaders and rulers.

- Raga Āsa, M.I.<sup>1</sup>

The evil practice of 'Sati' was prevalent amongst the Hindus. According to Dr. Bakhshish Singh Nijjar it was common but not compulsory. During the Muslim rule, it could not be performed except under the Sultan's consent, which was absolutely indispensable.<sup>2</sup> It was the Brahman community who encouraged and promoted these gross errors for its mercenary gains. Guru Nanak had emphatically raised his voice against this detestable practice among the Hindus:

A sati is not she who burneth herself  
 on the pyre of her spouse.

A sati is she who, O Nanak, dieth with  
 the sheer shock of separation.

- Raga Suhi, M.I.<sup>3</sup>

1. Ādi Granth, p.475.

2. Dr. Bakhshish Singh Nijjar, Panjab under the Sultans, p. 148.

3. Ādi Granth, p.787.

A careful study of Guru Nanak's poetry reveals his familiarity with many of the socio-political and socio-economic aspects of life in the Panjab. He succeeded in this revelation because he had a clear social purpose in view and he adopted ways to work out the same effectively. His social comment was very much related to the general idea of human misery. He criticised false customs and evil practices of the day, and laid down the foundation of a powerful faith to continue his social purpose.

#### Religious conditions.

In these socio-political circumstances it is evident that the socio-religious conditions could not be less disturbing and confusing. The main religion before the advent of Islam was Hinduism which was further sub-divided into many smaller sects and cults. Religion in itself had degenerated into ritualism and formalism. For more sociological reasons than one, says Dr. Niharranjan Ray, all institutionlised and priest dominated religions tend to be more and more formal and ritualistically and socially rigid. Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam in early medieval India were no exception, already by about the tenth and eleventh centuries both within behavioural Brahmanical Hinduism and Mahayana Vajrayana Buddhism there arose therefore more than one movement of socio-religious criticism and protest. In Buddhism this movement was spear-headed by the



Sahajayani Buddhists, in Hinduism by the Nathapanthi yogis and certain other esoteric sects and cults, in the main.<sup>1</sup>

As we have seen earlier that Nathapanthi yogis had great impact in the Northern India at that time, there were a large number of the followers of such cults, viz., Avdhuta margas, Kapalikas, Hathayogis, Siddhas and others. In Northern India a great deal of difference existed among these cults in regard to the nature of the ways (sādhna) and the ultimate goal (sādhya). Before the beginning of fourteenth century there arose another protest movement out of the out-dated Brahmanism. This movement was generally known as the Bhakti movement. It had its origin in the South and then fastly spreaded towards the North, Ramanand, Namadev, Chaitanya, Mira Bai, Ballabhacharya were among the prominent exponents of this movement, having a devotional surrender to God incarnated in Viṣṇu, Krisna and Rama.

On the other hand a protest movement originated by the Sufis was shaking badly the orthodox Islam. Like Bhakti movement, Sufism was also a way of life with devotional surrender to God as well as protest against meaningless practices and dogmas. In the words of Dr. Niharranjan Ray, there was thus in the socio-religious situation

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1. Dr. Niharranjan Ray, The Age and The Social Message of Guru Nanak, a paper read at Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi Seminar, p. 8,9.

in India of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries an atmosphere of criticism and protest against the behavioural pattern of the larger Hindu and growing Indo-muslim society, one that had been gathering force already from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was helped by the changing political situation in Northern India at any rate.<sup>1</sup>

The fifteenth century had witnessed another phenomenon of socio-religious protest which gave rise to another class of saints known as Nirguna sampardāya. Kabir and Dadu were the foremost of the saints of this sect. In this epoch-making period Guru Nanak had his distinctive and outstanding role to play. Hence it would be unfair to identify Guru Nanak with the protagonists of the aforesaid sects and cults.

To ensure the purity of religion, according to Principal B.S.Anand, Guru Nanak had to contend against all the forces of conservatism and orthodoxy entrenched in power - such as the Brahmins, the Mullahs and the Sanyasis. The Guru had to struggle against the cults which the Brahmins had borrowed from the magicians of the primitive society and the cults they had added on their own.

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1. Ibid. p. 12-13.

He had to reawaken the spirit of true worship among the people, rid them of the apathy and inertia and the weariness of the spirit that had overtaken them.<sup>1</sup> In Ramkali Baga Guru Nanak has lamented at the overall degradation and the sad state of religious affairs :

A Hindu is born to a Hindu,  
 He wears the sacred thread,  
 He wears it but continue to do evil deeds,  
 He does not purify himself thereby.  
 A Muslim feels proud of being a Muslim,  
 Without a proper guide, he does not find the  
 true path.  
 He gropes in the dark,  
 He cannot enter paradise without performing  
 good deeds.  
 A son of a Yogi becomes a Yogi;  
 He wears ear-rings; and wearing them roams about.  
 God is every where: He has created us all.  
 He who realises this is a true Hindu or a  
 Muslim.  
 All others are hypocrites,  
 All shall have to answer for their actions.  
 Good deeds will bring salvation.

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1. B.S.Anand, Guru Nanak and Formalism in Religion, an article in Guru Nanak : His Life, Time and Teachings, published by Guru Nanak Foundation, p. 164.

Truth alone shall prevail in the end;  
 Nothing else will be a substitute for  
 it before God.<sup>1</sup>

- Raga Rāmkali, M.I.

A Qazi tells lies and accepts bribe.  
 The Brahmin bathes but kills beings,  
 The Yogi is blind and does not know the  
 practice of Yoga,  
 All the three are bondage for leading astray.<sup>2</sup>

- Raga Dhanāsari, M.I.

The ignorant but cle-ver priestly class had  
 reduced the religion to a mockery with false rites and obser-  
 vances. The performance of various rituals is highly  
 condemned by Guru Nanak in his verses at many places.

The Muslims praise their law and they  
 read and dwell upon it.

But the Lord's bondsman is he who binds him-  
 self to see His Sight.

The Hindus praise the Lord whose  
 presence and form are Infinite.

(But to win Him) they bathe at the holies,

1. Ādi Granth, p.952.

2. Ādi Granth, p. 662.

And make flower-offerings to the idols  
 and burn perfumed incense before them.  
 The Yogis who dwell on the void and name  
 the Creator as 'Unknowable'.<sup>1</sup>

- Āsa di Vār, M.I.

They read the (holy) books, perform  
 prayers and then fight,  
 And they worship stocks and stones and then,  
 like the herons, enter into a pseudo-trance.  
 In their mouth is falsehood, and their  
 bodies are decked with piety.  
 And the three lines (of Gayatri) they  
 recite three times in a day.  
 Round their necks is the rosary, on their  
 forehead the saffron-mark,  
 And the Dhoti on their loins, and the cover  
 on their heads.<sup>2</sup>

- Āsa di Vār, M.I.

Guru Nanak's criticism of the contemporary religion was not merely negative one, he showed the path of liberation to the humanity and laid the foundation of a new faith i.e., Sikhism which was altogether free from the

1, Ibid, p.465.

2. Ibid, p. 470 (Tr. Dr. Gopal Singh)

existing ritualistic pattern of worship. His approach towards the religion was solely objective and practical.

We conclude by using the words of W.H.Mcleod that political, social and economic issues find expression in Guru Nanak's works only in so far as they relate to the pattern of religious salvation which he upheld, or to contemporary patterns which he rejected. This is not to deny that details relating to such issues can be gleaned from his works, and it is obvious that his teachings have had effects which extend far beyond a recognizable religious context.<sup>1</sup>

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1. W.H.Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p. 162-63.



CHAPTER III

A CRITICAL STUDY OF SIDDHA GOSTA

-: 00: -

'Nama ratte Siddha gosta hoe'





Siddha Gosta at Achal Vatāla  
(from the samādh of Baba Khuda Singh Naurangabad, Amritsar)



CHAPTER IIIA CRITICAL STUDY OF SIDDHA GOSTA

-:00:-

Siddha Gosta or the Conference with Siddhas is a long philosophical poem composed by Guru Nanak in Raga Ramkali. According to Gursabad-Ratnakar Siddha Gosta is a Divine Song of seventy three padas (stanzas) which includes in question-answer form the essence of the discussions of Guru Nanak with the Siddhas and also his preaching of Absolute to them.<sup>1</sup>

One of the many meanings of the Sanskrit word 'Siddha' is one who has attained siddhi<sup>2</sup> or perfection. The word 'Siddha', according to Bhai Vir Singh, means completion or perfection. All the thirty four meanings of the word reflect in one or the other way the sense of perfection. One of these meanings corresponds to an individual who has attained through tapas and sadhanas the supernormal and miraculous powers.<sup>3</sup> The word 'Siddha' is used in the Adi Granth in the sense of the followers of Gorakhnath.

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1. Bhai Kahn Singh, Gursabad-Ratnakar, p. 585.

2. The eight main siddhis are : anima, mahima, garima, laghima, prapti, prakamya, isitva, vasitva.

3. Bhai Vir Singh, Siddha-Gosta Steek, p.3.

In Siddha Goṣṭa it has the same meaning. The word 'Goṣṭa' is also from the Sanskrit root. It connotes to a dialogue, a debate, a discussion or a conference. Hence the word Siddha Goṣṭa refers to the discussions held between the Guru and Siddhas.

Goṣṭa literature has a significant place in the world philosophy and literature right from the ancient times. Lord Buddha, Lord Christ, Socrates, Plato and other great men of the world during their life-times held discourses to explore the Truth. The Goṣṭas have a great tradition in the philosophic literature in Sanskrit. The discourse held between Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna is a great accomplishment in this field. Goṣṭa is a powerful means of elaborating threadbare the minute details of some philosophic or ethical problem and is an interesting medium to arrive at a decision through mutual discussion. In world literature there are goṣṭas written in prose as well as in verse. Guru Nanak's Goṣṭa with the Siddhas<sup>1</sup> which is in verse, is the oldest one available in Panjabi language.

Siddha Goṣṭa was written soon after Guru Nanak visited the Siddhas at Achal Vatala. There are conflicting

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1. It is generally believed in Hindu scriptures that there are eighty four Siddhas who have attained immortality through yogic practices. They are said to be dwelling deep in the Himalayas. In Sikh scriptures the term 'Siddha' is frequently confused with Naths and Yogis.

views recorded in the Janam-sākhis and other sources regarding the time and place of its composition. Some say that the goṣṭa was held at Mount Sumeru or Gorakh-hatari<sup>1</sup> and other say that it was held at Achal Vatala.<sup>2</sup> Still some others are of the view that it is a summary of all the discussions of Guru Nanak with the Siddhas held at different places.<sup>3</sup>

According to Puratan Janam-sākhī, Guru Nanak in his fifth journey travelled to Gorakh-hatari where he met Siddhas and held the discourse with them which is recorded in Siddha Goṣṭa.<sup>4</sup> It also refers to the Guru's visit to Mount Sumeru where he conversed with the Siddhas who sent him to fill a pot with water. But the Guru broke it when he <sup>saw</sup> instead of water the jewels in the lake. After exorcising the spell of the Siddhas Guru Nanak repaired the pot and filled it with water. The Siddhas, after a long discussion, asked the Guru to proceed to Achal. Then a brief discussion took place there.<sup>5</sup>

Janam-sākhī Meharban refers to these discourses as held at Mount Sumeru and Gorakh-hatari.<sup>6</sup> It says that

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1. Puratan Janam-sākhī, sākhī 52.

2. Bhai Gurdas, Vār I.44.

3. Dr. Taran Singh, Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala, p.111.

4. Puratan Janam-sākhī, sākhī 52.

5. Ibid., sākhī 50.

6. Janam-sākhī Meharban, goṣṭa 117 and 126, pp.392, 415-418.

climbing Mt. Sumeru Guru Nanak found all nine Siddhas, Gorakhnath, Machhindarnath, Isarnath, Charpatnath, Barangnath, Ghoracholi, Balgundai, Bharathari and Gopichand, seated there. When Gorakhnath asked the identity of the visitor his disciples replied, 'This is Nanak Bedi, a pir and a bhakta who is a householder'. Gorakhnath asked Guru Nanak from where he had come and what was happening in the Kaliyuga. The Guru gave a befitting reply in his verses.<sup>1</sup> Later Guru Nanak arrived at Gorakh-hatari during a fair and conversed with the 'Guru of the Yogis'.<sup>2</sup>

Bhai Gurdas, in very clear terms, suggests that Siddha Gosta was held at Achal Vatala.<sup>3</sup> He has referred to the discourses held both at Mount Sumeru and at Achal Vatala. In stanzas 28 and 29 of his Vār I there is a reference to the Guru's visit to Mount Sumeru. Bhai Gurdas states that after visiting all important places in plains the Guru ascended Mount Sumeru and held discourse with eighty four Siddhas including Gorakhnath. They asked him about the conditions of the world below. Guru Nanak reported of darkness, sin, corruption and exploitation prevailing everywhere. He said that the Siddhas have retired to the hills and there is no body to look after the common folk. Deeply

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1. Vār Ramakali, 12. 2-7.

2. Janam-sākhī Meharban, gōṣṭa 126.

3. Bhai Gurdas, Vār I, 44.



impressed by Guru Nanak's utterances the Siddhas sought to persuade the Guru to enter their sect and asked him to fetch water from the lake. Guru Nanak emerged victorious foiling all their efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Bhai Gurdas's account of the Guru's discourse at Achal Vatala is to be found in stanzas 39-44 of the same Vār. The substance of these stanzas is as follows : On the occasion of Śivaratri fair Guru Nanak travelled from Kartarpur to Achal Vatala where many yogis had gathered. Piqued by the crowds attracted by the Guru's personality, the yogis sought to overwhelm him by displaying their miraculous powers. Later, they turned up in a body to engage him in debate. Bhangarnath asked him why he had put off the garb of a recluse and became a house-holder. Guru Nanak exposed his hypocrisy in these words : 'Thy mother hast not given thee proper instructions. Abandoning homelife, thou turnest an anchorite and yet thou goest to beg at the doors of householders.'<sup>2</sup> Displaying their esoteric powers the Yogis assumed many different forms. They asked the Guru to show some miracle to them. Guru Nanak eventually overcame them by insisting upon the Name of God. Their doubts were resolved, superstitions removed, and they obtained the peace of mind.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., Vār I, 28-31.

2. Bhai Gurdas, Vār I. 40.

3. Ibid., Vār I. 44.

After a careful study of all these sources W.H.Mcleod has drawn some very significant conclusions. He says that the story of Guru Nanak's disputation with the Siddhs at Gorakh-hatari must be regarded with considerable doubt as the sakhis which describe it in the Puratan and Miharban versions are both unsatisfactory. In the Puratan Janam-sakhis it amounts to no more than a wonder story of how the Siddhs sought to overwhelm him by assuming fearsome forms through the exercise of their occult powers. It appears that the sakhi must originally have developed without having any specific location assigned to it, for Bhai Gurdas sets the same story in the context of the Achal Batala disputation. The Miharban Janam-sakhi gives an entirely different description and one which is equally unsatisfactory. All that it tells us is that a religious fair was being held there and that Guru Nanak held a discourse with 'the guru of the yogis'. Guru Nanak may have visited the locality, but neither of these sakhis can be accepted as sufficient evidence for such a visit.<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted that Mount Sumeru sakhis are of the legendary nature. Mount Sumeru is the legendary mountain and in this context represents Mount Kailas. Moreover Guru Nanak and Gorakhnath could not possibly have been contemporaries. The names of the prominent yogis, such as Matsyendranath, Gorakh-

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1. W.H.Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion*, p. 141.

nath, etc., referred to in the sākhis are historical ones.<sup>1</sup> Dr.S.S. Kohli says that Machhindra, Charpat and Lohareepa who are said to have held discussions with Guru Nanak, cannot be said to be the historical characters because they lived long before Guru Nanak. These names appear to be the names of contemporary yogis. But it is also probable, he adds, that during their discussions, the contemporary yogis might have quoted their ancient authorities and Guru Nanak while composing his poems might have kept the ancient authorities in view.<sup>2</sup>

The Achal Vatala sākhi, however, has a solid and well-founded basis. The nearness of the place from Kartarpur and the Śivaratri date enhances the historical propriety of the tradition. W.H.Mcleod comments that the location is not named in any of his (Guru's) compositions, but it is clear from many of them that his contacts with Nath yogis must have been frequent and it seems evident from such a work as the Siddh Goṣṭ that he engaged them in formal debate.<sup>3</sup> Bhai Gurdas's detailed account of Guru Nanak's visit to Achal Vatala provides an acceptable evidence to the historic discussion which ultimately lead to the composition of the Siddha Goṣṭa.

So far the date of this work is concerned, Dr. Sher Singh is of the view that it could be stated definitely on the autho-

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1. Matsyendranath is said to be the Guru of Gorakhnath and Gorakhnath was the Guru of Charpat and Lohareepa.

2. Dr. S.S.Kohli, A Critical Study of Ādi Granth, p.274.

3. W.H.Mcleod, Guru Nanak and The Sikh Religion, p.141.

rity of Bhai Gurdas that Siddha Gosta was composed by Guru Nanak in April-May, 1539 A.D. at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan) only a few months before he passed away (in September, 1539); and as such it contains the mature and final views of the Guru on certain significant matters of life here and hereafter.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi also holds the same view but he adds that it might have been composed during the Guru's visit to Multan.<sup>2</sup> Bhai Kahn Singh and Khazan Singh<sup>3</sup> give the date of Achal Vatala encounter as Samvat 1586 (1529 A.D.) and feel that Siddha Gosta was written after this date. Bhai Vir Singh has roughly stated that it was written some time in between 1519 and 1539 A.D.<sup>4</sup> These scholars are, however, much vague in assigning some date but there cannot be two views on the plea that the work was composed much later than that of the Guru's visit to Achal Vatala and that too during the last part his life. Hence, it might have been written during the early months of 1539 A.D.<sup>5</sup>

There are seventy three stanzas (padas or paudis) in this poem in all, out of which the first eighteen are of four lines each (chaupadas) and the remaining fifty five are of six lines each

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1. Dr. Sher Singh, The Siddha Goshti, an article in Guru Nanak: His Life, Time and Teachings, p. 295.
  2. Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichardhara, p. 51.
  3. Bhai Kahn Singh, Gursabd Ratnakar, p. 131, and Khazan Singh, History and Philosophy of the Sikh Religion, p. 107.
  4. Bhai Vir Singh, Siddha Gosta Steek, p.6
  5. cf. Dr. Taran Singh, Guru Nanak: Chintan te Kala, p. 109.

(chhepadas). After the first stanza there are two special lines of Rahau (the pause) which represent the central theme of the Siddha Gosta. The rhyme scheme of the stanzas vary widely. There are eight-syllable lines in some stanzas and sometime the number of the syllables is twelve or sixteen.

For practical purposes we can divide the paudis (stanzas) of Siddha Gosta into three main parts: i. stanzas 1 to 25, ii. stanzas 26 to 42, and iii. stanzas 43 to 73. In the first part stanzas 2,4,6,12,14,17,19,21 and 22 contain the questions by the Siddhas. The answer to these questions by the Guru are given either in the last lines of the same stanza or in the next one. However, in stanzas 7,9 and 16 Siddhas do not ask direct questions but merely elaborate some of the basic principles of their faith.

In the second portion, evidently, there is no question put by the Siddhas. It seems that the questions already put in part first are so important that they require a detailed and comprehensive treatment. Guru Nanak, while elaborating his view-point has treated these very questions on a much higher plain than that of the Siddhas. Obviously, one can hear in these stanzas the echoes of the philosophic grandeur of the Japuji. In this part various characteristics and qualities of a Gurmukh are dealt with at length. Guru Nanak has invariably explained the relationship between Guru and Gurmukh and sets forth the significance of Nām (the Name) without which there can be no Yoga. Stanza 26 deals with the faults and failures of a Manmukh (egocentric).

The third part again contains some serious and fundamental questions regarding the origin and existence of the Universe, three-fold qualities, the stability of the mind and importance of self-control etc. In stanzas 43, 45, 48, 58, 61, 64, 66, and 68 the Siddhas ask questions in cryptic form. It seems that they sought Guru Nanak's comments on the validity of their own beliefs. Guru Nanak's approach to these questions is highly psychological. The prompt and logical answers by the Guru add considerable interest to the dialogue. Through positive reasoning and reinterpretation of the yogic terms according to his own belief, Guru Nanak ultimately made the Siddhas to submit. Stanza 73 is, in a way, an epilogue through which the poem is concluded on a humble note of submission to the will of God.

Siddha Goṣṭa contains some twenty eight basic questions. Originally there are almost seventy questions, both major and minor, and the Guru answers all of them in the text. In the first instance the Siddhas ask the questions which are of personal nature. They ask the Guru his name, his abode and his faith.<sup>1</sup> Significantly, Guru Nanak disposes them off in an impersonal manner, saying :

I abide eternally in the One who Pervadeth all  
 hearts,  
 And my Way is to walk in the true Guru's Will,

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1. Siddha Goṣṭa, 2.



I came as was the Will and will depart in His Will:  
 yea, I submit ever to His Will.<sup>1</sup>

The rest of the questions are religious, moral and meta-physical problems. Broadly speaking, says Dr. Sher Singh, they relate to the place of man in the universe, the true purpose of his life and the means by which this purpose could be achieved.<sup>2</sup> The nature and contents of some of the important questions are : How is one to go across the sea of world ? How is one to arrive at Guru's door ? Who is Unmanifest? Who is emancipated ? Who is it that is United to Reality from within and without? Who is it that pervades the three worlds? How does one become Pure? How is one enveloped by Darkness? How is one to bypass the stroke of Death and enter into the Abode of Fearlessness? Wherefrom has man come and whither does he go? How did life originate? How can one still one's ego? How is one to attain the state of endless void? Which is the Way to Wisdom? What is the Practice of a Siddha? Where does the mind abide? When the body and the heart were not, where was then the mind? How is one to know the First Cause and the Self? How does the world merge in its Source and all pain is ended? etc.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid., 3.

2. Dr. Sher Singh, The Siddha Goshti, an article in Guru Nanak: His Life, Time and Teachings, p. 297.

3. Siddha Gosta, 4,6,12,19,43,45,61,64,66,68.

Obviously, some of these questions involve centuries-old metaphysical queries of the human soul and reiterate man's eternal search after the knowledge of Truth. In stanzas 4 and 7 of the Siddha Gosta two Siddhas namely Charpat and Lohareepa are made to ask questions. The rest of the questions are not ascribed to any particular yogi but a broad class of yogis is involved. There are, however clear and direct questions and the answers by Guru Nanak are also vivid, straightforward and to the point.

According to Dr. Sher Singh, there is an elegance of style. While addressing each other the Yogis and the Guru do observe a scholarly dignity and gentlemanly etiquette. For instance, the Guru addresses the Yogis as 'holy men', 'liberated souls', 'disciplined saints', etc., and similarly the Yogis call the Guru a 'respectable person', a 'young man', 'a saint of detachment', etc. Expressions such as 'if you don't mind', 'please', 'pray', etc. are also implied.<sup>1</sup>

The Siddha Gosta begins with Siddhas sitting in yogic postures and shouting their salutations to the holy assemblage (Sant Sabha). Guru Nanak salutes the Infinite dedicating his body and soul to Him. After considering the questions of personal nature put by the Siddhas, Guru Nanak answers, rather a bit

1. Dr. Sher Singh, The Siddha Goshti, an article in Guru Nanak: His Life, Time and Teachings, edited by Gurmukh Nihal Singh, p. 296.

satirically, a question asked by Charpat Nath as to how is one to go across the sea of the world which is considered impassable. The Guru, first of all, comments: 'how one can instruct the one who says that he knows and how one can argue with him who considers himself having crossed the Sea?' Then Guru Nanak lays stress on the life of detachment amidst the wordly affairs saying :

"As the lotus liveth detached in waters,  
 As the duck floateth care-free on the stream  
 So doth one Cross the Sea of Existence,  
 his mind Attuned to the Word.  
 One liveth detached, Enshrining the One Lord in the  
 mind, shorn of hope, living in midst of hope.  
 And see-eth what is Unperceivable and Unfathomable;  
 Of him Nanak is a slave."<sup>1</sup>

The attitude of a seeker of Truth should be that while living in this world and enjoying its gifts he should keep his mind united with the Universal Spirit and thus remain detached. Then the Yogis question as to how is one to arrive at the Guru's door, Guru Nanak answers that the mercurial mind is controlled and abides in Truth, its real home, when the Name (Nām) is one's support. Then the Lord lets his grace dawn and unites one with Him.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Siddha Goṣṭa, 5.

2. Ibid., 6.

Hereupon Loharipa, a disciple of Gorakhnath pleads for the life of celibacy, wandering all over the country unattached, and bathing at the centres of pilgrimage. Apart from the Guru's Word, he says, this way of Yoga too brings peace of mind. Guru Nanak is very much opposed to this sort of renunciation of the world and one's household duties. One must live the life of a householder with an alert mind and should not falter seeing another's beauty and wealth. Mental poise cannot be achieved without the Name. Guru Nanak advises the Yogi :

"Let the Lord's Vision be thy coat, ear-rings  
and thy wallet:

"And Dwell only on the One Lord in all the twelve  
(sects) of Yoga, and let His only path teach thee  
the wisdom of the six Shastras.

"If one instructeth one's mind thus, one is hurt  
not again.

"If one knoweth thus, through the Guru, one knoweth  
truelly the Way of Yoga."<sup>1</sup>

"Let thy ear-rings be the Cherishing of the Word and  
stilling of thy ego:

"And rid thyself of lust, wrath and ego and be instru-  
cted in the Guru's Wisdom through this Word.

1. Ibid., 9.

"And to See the Lord Pervading all, let this  
be thy wallet, thy coat.

"The Master is True, as is His Name, and He  
Testifieth to the truth of the Guru's Word".<sup>1</sup>

The Yogic symbols such as a pair of ear-rings, a tall cap, a begging bowl, the patched cloak, the loin cloth, etc. cannot help an individual to control his carnal desires and other impulses. It is only through Guru's Wisdom and Word that one can overpower one's desires and develop moral virtues. This proves, says Dr. Sher Singh, how Guru Nanak was opposed to all types of formalism. He condemned all symbols devoid of spiritual value, irrespective of whether they were of the Brahmanical, the Muslim, the Jain or the Yogic way of life. These ostentatious symbols were merely a sign of hypocrisy. He, therefore, advised the Yogis to have their minds fixed on the Holy Word rather than on the paraphernalia which they had adopted; and thus get rid of their pride and egotism.<sup>2</sup> Inner qualities such as truth, contentment and continence lead a man having attuned to Guru's Word to become a Gurmukh.

After the first eleven stanzas of the Siddha Gosta no particular names of the yogis are referred, and the Guru himself describes according to his own belief various technical terms

1. Siddha Gosta , 10.

2. Dr. Sher Singh, The Siddha Goshti, article in Guru Nanak: His Life, Time and Teachings, p. 299

of Siddha metaphysics. Hereafter the question-answer pattern of the dialogue becomes a sort of general discourse on spiritual and metaphysical matters. There are some important questions: Who is Unmanifest? Who is a liberated one? Who is it that Pervades the three worlds? Guru Nanak promptly dismisses the queries by saying :

"He who Permeates all hearts is Unmanifest too:  
It is the God-conscious being who's Emancipated.  
For, he is United with the Word from within and without.  
It is the egocentric who cometh and goeth:  
Yea, it is the God-conscious being who Mergeth in  
Truth".<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, Guru Nanak's view of emancipation is not mere traditional but revolutionary. One can attain liberation (Mukti) in this very life and continue to be liberated one hereafter, merging oneself in the Divine Soul in the due course of time. According to him man is bound because of evil worldly values and is in the maws of Maya, the serpent. Meeting with the true Guru one's darkness of the mind is dispelled, one's ego is stilled and then one merges in God.<sup>2</sup> If one holds the mind in endless Void (śunya) one controls the body and the mind. In the cave of Equipoise (sahaja) one can discover the True Name.<sup>3</sup> The Yogis ask the Guru why then has he become a recluse,

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1. Siddha Gōṣṭa, 13.

2. Ibid., 15.

3. Ibid., 16.



and how will he attain emancipation. "I became a recluse", says the Guru, "to seek out the God-conscious beings and I am out to buy Truth. It is with the God-conscious being (Gurmukh) that one gets to the opposite shore".<sup>1</sup>

The Yogis argue that the life is hard as steel and a person who does not know Yoga is like a man without teeth. How can a person without teeth bite on it and live. The Guru gives a befitting reply that when one who overcomes the three qualities (gunas, viz., Sattva, rajas and tamas) one can eat the uneatable and then the Emancipator Himself Emancipates.<sup>2</sup>

Hereafter, some fundamental questions regarding the creation of the universe and the pre-creation conditions are discussed. The Yogis ask the Guru what are his views on the question of beginning of Creation, Where did then the Absolute God Abide? How is one to bypass the stroke of Death and enter the Abode of Fearlessness? Wherefrom has man come and where does he go when he dies? Guru's answer to all these questions is very clear and significant too. He says:

"Man emergeth from the Lord's Will;  
He quitteth as is the Will; he Mergeth too in the Will.  
And practiseth the Truth, by the perfect Guru's grace,  
and Knoweth the Lord's Extent and Content through  
the Word.

1. Ibid., 17-18.

2. Ibid., 20.

"As for the Beginning, one can talk only in terms of wonder: then, the Absolute Lord abided in Himself. Desirelessness is the ear-ring if one Reflecteth on the Guru's Wisdom; yea, the God alone Abideth in all hearts.

Through the Guru's Word, one Mergeth in Equipoise, and through Equipoise, one attaineth the Essence of the Absolute.

Then, one goeth not on another path: and one, who seeks, finds.

Wondrous is the Lord's Will and it is known only when one walketh in His Will: then, one knoweth also the Way of the life of Truth:

Yea, one, who obliterates oneself and so becometh Detached and Enshrines Truth within, is a true Yogi".<sup>1</sup>

According to Khushwant Singh, hereafter the question-and-answer pattern of Siddha Gosta gets somewhat confused. There are long soliloquies, sometimes repetitive interrupted by further questions - also frequently repetitive.<sup>2</sup> There is no direct question by the Siddhas in this part (stanzas 26 to 42). Guru Nanak elucidates at length in about sixteen stanzas the qualities, characteristics and achievements of a Gurmukh and the difference between a Gurmukh and a Manmukh. In stanza 26 faults and failures

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1. Siddha Gosta, 22-23.

2. Khushwant Singh, Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 181.

of a Manmukh (egocentric) are depicted. A Gurmukh is a liberated being and cultivates truth, harmony and restraint whereas a Manmukh is egocentric, conceited, living under delusions caused by ignorance. Being a slave to his passions he goes astray and loses the merit of life. Wandering over the superstitions and wrong practices he does not know the Word and speaks evil.<sup>1</sup>

The Gurmukh, according to Guru Nanak, through the Word conquers the wild mind and attains the state of Unalloyed Bliss (Parma-pada). He practises righteousness living in the midst of his family. He not only achieves godliness for himself, but he is also able to make others know the path of liberation. By stilling his ego he, ultimately, merges in God.<sup>2</sup> The Gurmukh attains all the mental faculties and the miraculous powers. He discriminates truth and untruth, and as such knows what is worldiness and what is detachedness.<sup>3</sup>

Gurmukh, Nāma (the Name), and Śabda (the Word) are the central points of the philosophy of the Siddha Gosta. A perfect Gurmukh is far better than a Yogi who only sticks to formalism and wanders without self-restraint. The way to the realization of Truth lies through the Guru's Word (Śabda) and the worship of the Name (Nām - simrana). Being imbued with the Name is, therefore, more rewarding than performing austerities and observing outer symbols. Guru Nanak reiterates the significance of the

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1. Siddha Gosta, 26.

2. Ibid., 29.

3. Siddha Gosta, 31.

Name in these words:

"Imbued with the Lord's Name, one is rid of ego;  
 Yea, Imbued with the Name, one Abideth in Truth.  
 Imbued with the Name one knoweth the Way of true Yoga;  
 Yea, Imbued with the Name, one is emancipated;  
 And knoweth one the mystery of the three worlds,  
 And is ever in Bliss.

"Imbued with the Name, one converses (truly) on Yoga;  
 For, he, who's Imbued with the Name, practiseth true  
 austerity.

Yea, the Essence of the true living is to be Imbued  
 with the Name:

Only then doth one reflect (truly) on Virtue and Wisdom.  
 Without the Name, all that one uttereth is vain.  
 Yea, they who're Imbued with the Name, O victory be  
 to them!"<sup>1</sup>

Last but not least, says Dr. Sher Singh, this poem explains the glory of Nām (the Name of God). Nām transforms one's whole being and brings about a change of attitude, a change in the angle of one's vision; it is ignoring the appearance and concentrating on the essence of things which is the same everywhere - in all men, animals, plants, woods, stones,

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1. Ibid., 32,33.

water, fire, air, earth, space; it is viewing the 'One' in all these 'Many' -- to get in touch with that 'One' for a moment, for a while, for ever ! And this through prayer; begging for His grace, for His guidance through some guided one, through the holy congregation; praying on and on till superstition goes out and Light comes in; till the mind is kindled and a continuous link of the 'inner' with the 'inner of the outer' is established.<sup>1</sup> Blessed with the Name, compassion and purity Gurmukh gets himself attuned to God in natural Poise and is honoured at the Lord's Court.<sup>2</sup> He knows in his heart the mystery of all the worlds and gets his mind rid of vice. To illustrate the characteristics of Gurmukh and Manmukh Guru Nanak gives example of Rama as a Gurmukh and Ravana as a Manmukh.<sup>3</sup>

In the third part (stanzas 43-73) again there are questions by the Siddhas. This time the questions though brief are more serious in nature and their answers by the Guru too are detailed and vivid. The Siddhas, however, seem to have lost their earlier courage. They first ask about the origin of life and then enquire about the teacher (Guru) of Guru Nanak. "From the air is the beginning", says Nanak, " The Word (Śabda) is my teacher. Through the Word one worships the Lord and through it one reflects on

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1. Dr. Sher Singh, The Siddha Goshti, an article in Guru Nanak's Life, Time and Teachings, ed. Gurmukh Nihal Singh, p. 304.

2. Siddha Goshta, 36.

3. Ibid., 40.

the Gospel of the Lord".<sup>1</sup> The Yogis feel that the path to salvation is a difficult one and one must stick to ascetic austerities to be able to tread the same. "How can one break iron with the teeth of wax?" they argue, "How can one live in a house of snow when one's clothes are aflame?" meaning thereby that the soul encased in a body full of passions has bleak chances of liberation. Guru Nanak elucidates that the world is hard for the egocentric for he is unwise. As soon as the Word overwhelms the heart, body and mind are cleansed and the inner fire is quenched through Guru's grace.<sup>2</sup>

"Wherefrom comes the light of the moon (mind) and wherefrom does the sun (knowledge) get its searing heat?" ask Yogis. The Guru replies that the utterance of the Word illumines the mind and one's darkness is dispelled. Learning on the Name, one looks on pain and pleasure alike and the fear of death ceases. With Nān-simrana one overcomes sorrow and fear of death and dispels doubt and duality.<sup>3</sup>

Hereupon, Guru Nanak elaborated the concept of Śunya (endless Void). Śunya, he says, is the great stillness within and without and pervades the three worlds. It is in this state that a man is identified with God. In this fourth state of Sahaja (also turiya avastha) one is not effected by virtue or sin.

1. Siddha Gosta, 44.

2. Ibid., 46.

3. Ibid., 48-49.



Those who are enraptured by this state are like the One from whom they emanated. They are not bound by the cycle of birth, death and re-birth.<sup>1</sup> One should fill up the nine doors of the body and so fulfil oneself arriving at the Tenth. Then, within one's mind one hears the Unstruck Melody. Thus, meeting with Him all-too-spontaneously, one is ever in the state of Bliss and is ever-awake to the Lord.

The Siddhas then question the Guru on the validity of their own beliefs. Where does that Word through which one is to go across the Sea of Existence abide? Where does the air (breath) reside? How can the mind be made stable? etc. The Guru expounds his views on the significance of the Word saying:

"The Word pervadeth all beings, and wherever one  
See-eth, it one See-eth.

As is the air (all - pervading), so is the Lord of Void;  
Yea, the Lord is Attributeless, yet all attributes  
inhere in Him.

When the God is Merciful, the Word abideth in heart  
and one is rid of Doubt;

And one Cherisheth the Name in the mind, and purgeth  
one's body and mind of evil through the Immaculate  
Word.<sup>2</sup>

1. Ibid., 51-52.

2. Ibid., 59.

Sabda is the true sustenance of life through which one should rise above the three qualities and acknowledge the One alone. Such an individual, according to Guru Nanak, knows well the discipline of breath-control for the Lord Himself makes him know.<sup>1</sup>

The Yogis continue their questions. How is one to know the First Cause and the Self? When there was neither a body nor a heart, where did the mind and breath reside? Guru Nanak replies that abiding the mind in the Self through the Guru, one may know the First Cause. As the Gurmukh is rid of his ego, he merges in Equipoise. When there was no human body nor the heart, the mind abided in the Absolute Lord in detachedness. When there was nor form, no sign, no individuation, then the Word, in its essence, abided in the Absolute Lord permeating all the three worlds.<sup>2</sup> In reply to a query regarding the origin and existence of the world the Guru says:

"The world came into being through a sense of individuation, and, forsaking the Name, it cometh to grief. The Gurmukh Reflecteth on the Quintessence of Wisdom, and, through the Word, stilleth his ego:  
And his body and mind become pure; pure too is his word,

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1. Ibid., 60.

2. Ibid., 67.

and so he Mergeth in Truth.

Through the Name, he remaineth detached, and Enshrines Truth in his mind.

Without the Name, one can practise not the Yoga."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the Guru unequivocally elucidates the importance of the Name without which Yoga cannot be practised. One may wear myriad garbs but without Name one is strayed from the path. It is only through the Guru that one attains the Name and the Way of Yoga (Yoga-juṣṭi). *Siddha Gōṣṭa* ends with a note of humility and submission to the will of God and a prayer for the gift of His Name.

It would be significant to note that the *Siddha Gōṣṭa* is written on the pattern of *Machhindra-Gorakh Bodha*.<sup>2</sup> The exponents of the two systems, in these two compositions, have a common approach to the dialogues at hand. In several respects they have many things in common and hold identical views though there are points of variation also. The main point of difference in the two texts, however, is that in *Machhindra-Gorakh Bodha* a teacher expounds his views on the queries by his pupil having same belief whereas in the *Siddha Gōṣṭa* the dialogue is held

1. *Ibid.*, 68.

2. *Machhindra-Gorakh Bodha* is a dialogue of 127 padas said to have taken place between Gorakhnath and his teacher Machhindarnath. It deals largely with the Siddha mysticism. Gorakh asks question in a stanza and Machhindra answers the same in the next one, and so on.

between the exponents of two different creeds. A careful study of the Siddha Gōṣṭa reveals that apart from the common style and frequent use of certain technical terms as well as phraseology, the Siddhas are made to ask a number of same very questions to Guru Nanak which Gorakhnath is believed to have put to his teacher Machhindranath almost four centuries ago. The answers to these questions by Guru Nanak also have close resemblance with that of Machhindra's. To illustrate, we shall quote here only three such examples.

In Machhindra-Gorakh Bodha, stanza 13, Gorakhnath puts the questions:

"O Swami, How did the life originate ?  
 What are the Ways of the present Age ?  
 Who is the Guru, and who is disciple?  
 Which is the Field (of a Yogi), how is Union attained?  
 Grasping what essence one becomes detached?"<sup>1</sup>

The Yogis' question to Guru Nanak in Siddha Gōṣṭa is :

"How did life originate? Which Way hath its sway in the present age?"

1. Gorakh Vani, p. 187.

अवधू मन हूल पवन बेला ॥  
 सबद गुरु सुरति बेला ।

Who is thy Guru of whom thou mayst be the follower?  
Which is the Gospel that keepeth thee Detached?"<sup>1</sup>

Machhindra's answer to Gorakh:

"O Avdhu, from Mind is the origin,  
air is the time.

Word is the Guru and attentive mind is the disciple".<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, Guru Nanak answers to the Yogis:

"From the air is the beginning: the age is of the Guru  
The Word is the Gurus and the mind Attuned (to the  
Word) is the disciple.

I remain Detached, being attached to the Ineffable  
Gospel (of the Lord)".<sup>3</sup>

Both of them agree that the Word is the Guru and the  
mind attuned to it is the disciple. Moreover, the questions put  
by Gorakhnath in Machhindra-Gorakh Bodha, stanzas 25 and 27, and  
the answers by Machhindranath in stanzas 26 and 28 closely  
resemble to that of the questions by the Yogis in Siddha Gosta,  
stanzas 64 and 66 and the answers by the Guru in stanzas 65  
and 67. Gorakh questions Machhindra:

1. Siddha Gosta, 45.

2. Gorakh Vani, p. 187.

स्वामी कौन मूल कौण बेला । कौण गुरु कौण वेला ॥  
कौण वेण कौण वेला । कौण वेण वेणो सवेलाक ॥

3. Siddha Gosta, 46.

"O Swami, where doth the mind abide: where abideth  
the vital-breath?

Where doth the Word abide and where abideth the Moon?"<sup>1</sup>

The same very question is asked by the yogis to  
the Guru :

"Where doth this mind, the self-willed elephant,  
abide?

Where abideth the vital breath?

Where doth the Word abide when the wanderings of  
mind cease?"<sup>2</sup>

Machhindra's answer to Gorakh is:

"O Avdhu, the mind abideth in the Self: the vital  
air is in the Navel-lotus.

The Word Pervadeth the phenomenal world of Form and  
the Moon abideth in the sky".<sup>3</sup>

Like Machhindra, Guru Nanak, too, holds the same view:

"The mind abideth in the Self: the Navel-lotus is the  
abode of the vital breath.

The Word Pervadeth all, if it abideth in the Self,

1. Gorakh Vani, p. 189

स्वामी बसै मन कहाँ बसै पवन।  
कहाँ बसै सबद कहाँ बसै चंद्र।

2. Siddha Gōṣṭa, 64.

3. Gorakh Vani, p. 189.

अवधूँ हिरद बसै मन नागो बसै पवन।  
रूप बसै सबद गगन बसै चंद्र।



through that Word the Light of the three worlds  
is seen.<sup>1</sup>

Corakh further questions: When there was no heart, where was then mind? When there was no Navel-lotus, then where did the breath abide? When there was no form, where did the Word abide? Exactly same are the queries asked by the Yogis to Guru Nanak in Siddha Gosta, stanza 66. The sameness of the ideas put forward by the exponents of the two systems is thus seen in their answers.

Machhindra says:

"O Avdhu, when there was no heart, the mind abideth  
in Void (sunya). When there was no lotus of Navel,  
the vital air abideth in Formless.

When there was no form, then the Word abideth in the  
absolute.<sup>2</sup>

Nanak's reply to the Yogis is:

When there was no human body nor heart, the mind  
abided in the Absolute Lord in Detachedness.

When the lotus of the Navel supported not the vital  
air, then it abided in itself, Imbued with the Lord's  
Love.

When there was no form, no sign, no individuation,

1. Siddha Gosta, 65.

2. Corakh Vani, p. 139.

अवद्य हिरदा न होता तब सुनि रहिता मन ।  
नाभी न होती तब निराकार रहिता पवन ॥

Then the Word, in its essence, abided in the Absolute.<sup>1</sup>

It is needless to mention that the frequent use of the yogic terms such as, Avdhu, Sunya, Sahaja, Avigata, Kamal, Paven, Sidhi, Surti, Dhyana, Anshat, Mudra, Yama, Bindu, Nabhi, Sasi, Soor, Sakhrma, Ida, Pingala, etc., reveal Guru Nanak's deep study of Yogic concepts. The whole dialogue is written in medieval saint diction full of yogic phraseology. Apart from its philosophic significance it is an excellent piece of literature in a traditional form.

We conclude in the words of Khushwant Singh that the Siddha Gosta deals largely with the respective merits of Hatha Yoga advocated by yogic followers of Gorakhnath and Nāma-marga preached by the Guru.<sup>2</sup> Siddha Gosta is an embodiment of the overwhelming victory of Guru Nanak's philosophical and mystical doctrines over the views of the proud and power-conscious Yogis.

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1. Siddha Gosta, 57.

2. Khushwant Singh, Hymns of Guru Nanak, p. 173.

CHAPTER IV

-:0:-

YOGA OF GURU NANAK

(A Critical and Comparative Study)

-:00:-

'Kabi Kal sujasa gavo Guru Nanak raja-yoga jin manio.'

## CHAPTER IV

YOGA OF GURU NANAK

(A Critical and Comparative Study)

-:00:-

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries much of the socio-religious life of northern India, including Panjab, was surcharged with the spirit and ideas of the non-Brahmanical, protestant and non-conformist cults and sects like those of the Siddhas, the Avadhutas, the Kapalikas, the Nathpanthis etc. There can hardly be any doubt that throughout northern India, the Yogis had a great impact over the minds of the common people.<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak's frequent discussions with the Yogis show the influence that the latter enjoyed over the masses at that time. According to Bhai Jodh Singh, the Siddhas through a display of supernatural powers, the use of Jantras, Mantras and Mantras, the expectation of blessing and the fear of curses created awe in their (people's) minds and the people in terror ministered to their wants and became their followers. Mostly they belonged to solitary sect of the Yogis. The Mussalmans, too, desirous of securing those powers were freely admitted to the fraternity.<sup>2</sup>

The tremendous influence of Yogis on the socio-religious and cultural life of the people in this region is quite apparent from the fact that no other school of thought so often mentioned

1. Cf. Dr. Mazari Prasad Dwivedi, *Hindi Sahitya Ki Bhumi*, pp. 74-75.

2. Bhai Jodh Singh, *Guru Nanak and the Siddhas*, a paper read at the Inter-national Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings organized by Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 2-3.

and commented in the writings of medieval saints, especially Kabir and Guru Nanak, as the Yogis are. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, almost all the medieval saints vigorously commented on Yoga and Yogis, and this confrontation with Yogis continued even in Sikh history upto the time of Guru Gobind Singh. The twelve sects of Yogis exercised vast influence on the country from their monastic centres called siṅgha-śāṣṇas or siṅgha-śāṣṇas which also became or at centres of pilgrimage. Most of these centres were named after Gorakh and his companions, and sometimes after Śiva. The asceticism and renunciation of the yogis, their display of yogic facts and occult powers, their magic and mysticism attracted every Indian from a king to a beggar. The genuine and the pretenders of Yogic powers went from village to village, from door to door all over India preaching cynical contempt of the world and mystifying their life and doctrines.<sup>1</sup>

The Yogis<sup>2</sup> looked down upon the common people as engrossed in the chase of worldly life, though for the fulfilment of their physical necessities they depended on them. They practised Yoga to increase their supernatural mental powers, and to win the devotion of their followers they adopted various disciplines of Hathā Yoga. These practices had certainly no spiritual

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1. Dr. Trilochan Singh, Sikhism and Yoga, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings organised by Panjab University, Patiala, p. 6.

2. Various kinds of recluses were included in the generic term of 'Yogi'. Some of them were Jangam, Avadhut, Nath, Siddha, Vairagi, Tapa, sanyasi etc., each further divided into sub-sects.

spiritual significance. The numerous adherents of the Kanphatā or Nath sect of the Yogis, divided into various sub-sects were claiming allegiance to Gorakhnath and were following essentially the Hathā Yoga technique.<sup>1</sup>

There was a great deal of difference among mystical and esoteric sects and cults in regard to yogic practices and methods and their interpretation, though many of the terms and concepts used by various adherents remained the same. They considered their creed much higher than that of the six systems of Indian philosophy and Jainism and Buddhism. The Yogis, having the ancient tradition of 'dark' Tantrism as their philosophic basis, were seeking power to dominate and to fulfil by magic their anti-human and anti-social lower desires. This was, indeed, a scene of utter confusion in which true religion had no place and formal ritualistic patterns were out to degenerate the social life and morals of the people.

It was in this epoch-making period that Guru Nanak strongly felt the unhealthy and disasterous influence of the Yogis on the socio-religious life of the country, and to counter-act these elements he visited almost all the strongholds of the Yogis. He called them to the path of enlightenment, honesty and righteous action and pleaded that the lure of miraculous powers was a great hinderance in the path of spiritual attainment. By suggesting them a new outlook Guru Nanak taught them that only the practice of love and truth in the daily life could lead the man to salvation. In a way, the Guru cautioned the

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1. cf. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dvivedi, Kabir, pp. 38-39.



Yogis of the tremendous harm they were doing to society at large in the name of Yoga. The Guru criticised the self-imposed pessimism and cynicism as well as the selfish individualism of the Yogis.

According to Bhai Jodh Singh, Guru Nanak laid stress on two things in his discourses with Siddhas, One was that the Siddhas instead of withdrawing to high mountain, caves and thick forests should live amongst the common folk and give them right guidance so that tyranny of the rulers which they are undergoing could be removed. Secondly they should not condemn householders who provided the wherewithal to support their physical life. He wanted to cure them of the craze for miraculous powers and long life. He dissuaded them from the use of intoxicants as a help of concentration.<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak vehemently exposed the meaninglessness and sheer contradiction of the life of the Yogis.

Because of the extremely wide influence of Yoga among the masses, says Gurbachan Singh Talib, so much so that for most people religion hardly stood for anything except what the itinerant Yogis told them - and because of the prestige which the system of Yoga as adumbrated by the famous saint Gorakhnath had acquired, the Guru felt it necessary particularly to make a critique of the entire doctrine and practice of this creed. Hence it is that, despite the criticism of false and misguided

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1. Bhai Jodh Singh, Guru Nanak and the Siddhas, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings organized by Punjabi University, Patiala, p. 17.

practices and beliefs as manifested by other creeds, the largest, almost overwhelming space in the Scripture has been given to Yoga. Yoga is the pervasive theme of the Guru's hymns. It is in terms of Yoga that his teaching is most often presented.<sup>1</sup>

The form of Yoga which Guru Nanak found prevalent among the people, particularly in its darker aspects was Natha Yoga which ranged from the practice of penances and austerities for physical control to the black magic and the perverted Tantric practice of five "H's." A brief description of some of the sects of this Yoga will not be out of place. The Yogis of the Kapalika sect were used to eat and drink in a cup made out of the human skull and their ear-rings were also made of human bones. They used to live in crematoriums and always had a woman votress, Kapalini, with them for the sexual intercourse. The drinking of liquor and the fulfilment of the sexual urges was the highest salvation in their creed. The believers of another sect Kaul Gian, originated by Machhindranath, for the fulfilment of the object of their life believed that Yoga and Bhoga go together. They also freely indulged in drinking, meat eating and sexual intercourse. On the other hand Gorakhnath who was an ardent believer in perfect continence hated woman extremely. He did not hesitate to call a woman a tigress. Gorakhnath, however, condemned mere wearing of outer symbols but he preached renunciation of worldly activity. In the course of time the Natha Yogis had left the path shown

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1. Gurbachan Singh Talib, Guru Nanak His Personality and Vision, p. 132.

by Gorakhnath and used the Natha Yoga technique as a means of exhibiting their false prestige. There were as many as twelve important sects (panths) of the Nath Yogis in Panjab. Besides the other outer symbols a Yogi was required to wear a special rosary (rudrākh mālā) and large ear-rings made of wood, glass, stone or some mineral. The word 'Nath' was suffixed to the name of each Yogi. Guru Nanak seems to have got himself well acquainted with all these sects and the practices during his visits to the strongholds of the Yogis.

Dr. Kala Singh is of the view that one reason for the vast significance of the Nath cult in Panjab may be that during the tenth and eleventh centuries it had fully established itself as against the Brahmanism, and that the Siddhism born mainly out of the Buddhistic doctrines had been completely singled in the Nathism.<sup>1</sup> It will, however, not be out of place to mention here briefly the rise of the Sant synthesis as Guru Nanak's main source of inspiration appears to have been the strong flowing tradition of the Nirguna Sampradaya, popularly known as the Sant tradition. The Sant tradition which was essentially a creative synthesis of the three principal dissenting movements, a compound of elements drawn mainly from Vaishnava Shakti and the Natha Yoga with a marginal contribution from Sufism, rejected altogether the practice of celibacy and asceticism, of penances and austerities, of rituals and formalism.

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1. Dr. Kala Singh, Jog-matt bare Guru Nanak Vichardhara, an article published in the Gurmat Bookesh, Guru Nanak philosophy Anth, November, 1969, p.218.

In several respects this tradition disagreed with conventional Shakti and Nath elements. Nath influence emerged particularly in much of the basic terminology used by the Sants, especially Kabir, in rejection of all exterior forms and in the concept of a mystical union. Guru Nanak reinterpreted in the light of his own personality the inheritance provided by the Sant tradition.

Regarding the antecedents of Guru Nanak's thought, W. F. Johnson says that Nath beliefs certainly exercised an influence and we encounter many examples of Nath terminology in his works, but in so far as these influences and terms constitute integral expressions of his own beliefs they represent aspects of the Sant inheritance. Guru Nanak, he says, himself explicitly rejected Nath beliefs and his works bear clear witness to open controversy with Nath yogis. Nath concepts were communicated to his thought through Sant channels which transformed their meaning, and in his usage such elements are, for the most part, naturalized. They are recognizably of Nath derivation but they belong to the Sants, not to the Nathas.<sup>1</sup>

The frequent use of the yogic terms by the Guru may lead to the conclusion that he must have accepted or adopted some kind of yogic practices or Yoga leanings, particularly in view of the fact that his predecessor Kabir too used these terms in his verses but the fact remains there that Guru Nanak adopted

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1. W. F. Johnson, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, pp.157-158.

the yogic terminology for reinterpreting the urges of spiritual life and had used it rather symbolically, more as an image which had a meaning for those to whom his words were being addressed. Indeed all these yogic technical terms and concepts that Guru Nanak makes use of, says Dr. Niherranjan Jay, seem to have been, for him at any rate, nothing more than just a convenient means of communicating an idea of a mystical experience which was otherwise incommunicable.<sup>1</sup>

In the Sikh scriptures, according to Dr. Trilochan Singh, the word Yoga is used in three senses: Firstly it is used in the sense of classical Yoga of Patanjali.<sup>2</sup> Bhai Gurdas calls Patanjali a Gurukh, an enlightened Sage, a term used in the Sikh scripture for perfect saints and ideal Sikhs. Bhai Gurdas also shows the close affinity between the objectives of Patanjali's Yoga and Sikhism, Patanjali achieving them through Yoga practices while Sikhism achieves them through moral and spiritual discipline of the Guru's vidya.<sup>3</sup> A clean mind and a clean heart shows the real self of man. This is the fundamental principle of Patanjali's Yoga as well as Sikhism.<sup>4</sup>

1. Dr. Niherranjan Jay, The Concept of ekaj in Guru Nanak's Theology - Its Antecedents, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings, Patiala, p. 26.

2. surte wali gyan ki jogi ka jati hoe. (The intellectual purifies himself through knowledge while the Yogi keeps himself pure through celibacy).

Bhai Gurdas, p. 1240.

3. Bhai Gurdas, Var I, 14.

4. Idid.

Secondly the word Yoga is used by Guru Nanak in the sense Hatha Yogis use it, and he calls it Hatha-Nigreha; - Restraint through self-will.<sup>1</sup> The Kauphata Yogis of Gorakh Nath school employed it with various techniques. All the twelve sects of these Yogis had employed different techniques and methods of meditation. Guru Nanak mentions various schools by name, and the discussions and comments which the Guru has recorded in his writings show that he was thoroughly acquainted with the doctrines of Hatha Yogis as enunciated in their basic texts such as : Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita and Siva Samhita. When we read these texts side by side with Guru Nanak's comments on their doctrines, and techniques, we come to the conclusion that in the light of his knowledge and experience Guru Nanak presents a very analytical criticism of these works.

Thirdly, says Dr. Trilochan Singh, Guru Nanak uses the word Yoga to denote his own system also, but to distinguish it from other schools of thought he calls it Gurmukh Yoga, or Gurmat Yoga or Sahajya Yoga.<sup>2</sup> The first two indicate that Yoga in Sikhism is strictly according to the doctrines of the Guru, or Guru's Wisdom (Gurmat). The word "Sahajya" is also used for Gurmat Yoga, but it has a different meaning and significance in Sikhism from its earlier usage in Buddhism, Tantra, and Vaishnavism.<sup>3</sup>

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1. hath nigroh kar kãye chijai,  
vart tapen kar man nahi bhijai. - Ādi Granth.p.905.

2. gurmukh jog kemãvai aũhu, jot sat sabãd vicãri. - Ibid.p.908.

3. Dr.Trilochan Singh, Sikhism and Yoga, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak, pp.2-3.



By going through the Ādi Granth one finds, apart from the famous dialogue with the Siddhas - the Siddha Gosta, a large number of hymns by Guru Nanak addressed to the Yogis. The particular names of the two Siddhas, namely Charpat Nath and Uchareepa, figure in the discussion recorded in the Siddha Gosta. In Raga Āsa three hymns (4.3.37, 4.4.38 and Āsa Astōdi ghara 2,8.1) are addressed to Bharthari, said to be the founder of Vairag Panth.<sup>1</sup> In Raga Rāmkali a hymn is addressed to Machhindrenath.<sup>2</sup> The names of the Yogis, viz., Isar, Gorakh, Gopi Chand, Charpat and Bharthari are also mentioned in the hymns in Raga Rāmkali.<sup>3</sup> Besides these, there are many hymns in which the Guru has not named any particular individual but has addressed the Yogis in general calling them Avōhus, Yogis, Rawals, etc.

The hymns in Raga Rāmkali, which is a favourite Raga of the Yogis, mainly deal with the Yoga - its practices, rituals and other aspects and are loaded with Yoga terminology. The stanzas (pauḍis) 28 to 31 of the Āpuji explain the true methods to be adopted by a yogin. Certain hymns in Giri Raga (4.1.3, 4.2.2, and 4.8.2)<sup>4</sup> and Vār Mājh (pauḍi 5 and sloka 19)<sup>5</sup> deal with the pursuit of siddhis and the uselessness of the outer yogic symbols. In Raga Gauri, pade 4.3.15 and Astōadis 6,7 and 11 enumerate the real path of Yoga.<sup>6</sup> Besides the three

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1. Ādi Granth, pp. 360, 417.

2. Ibid., p. 377.

3. Ibid., pp. 952, 953.

4. Ibid., pp. 14-17.

5. Ibid., pp. 140, 147.

6. Ibid., pp. 155, 223, 226.

hymns already mentioned, in Raga Āsa Āṣṭpādī 14 and chhant 4.2.2 also deal with the same subject.<sup>1</sup> Yogic terms such as Nabhi-kanal, sunya-samadhi and sahaja have been frequently used in Raga Gujari.<sup>2</sup>

Criticism of the prevalent Yoga way of life and various Yogic practices have an important place in Guru Nanak's poetry. In Raga Suhi, ghara 7, the Guru while condemning the Yoga formalism has described the true Yoga-praxis (Yoga-jugti).<sup>3</sup> In Raga Māru hymns 9 to 11 and Āṣṭpādī 7, the Guru has reoriented the Uatha Yogic terms and has given his own concept of the real union.<sup>4</sup> In Māru Solha at places there are references to the Yogic concepts. Solha 17 explains at length the word Sunya.<sup>5</sup> In Raga Basant paḍā No.6, the Guru spells out his concept of Sahaja Yoga and in Āṣṭpādī 3 in the same Raga, he deprecates pride in the false practices and the outer garb.<sup>6</sup> In Raga Prabhāṭī Āṣṭpādī 3, Guru Nanak has outrightly condemned sat-karma, Prāṇāyāma and Kundalini and explained that without the Śara these acts are merely useless.<sup>7</sup> Besides these, in other Ragas, viz., Sorathi, Dhānasari, Bilawal, Uhaira and Malār, too, the Yoga and the conduct of a yogin is discussed. Evidently, most of the comments on the philosophical and mystical doctrines have been recorded by Guru Nanak in his writings and the Yoga takes the foremost place in this respect.

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1. Ibid., pp. 418, 419, 436.
  2. Ibid., pp. 489, 503, 504.
  3. Ibid., p. 730.
  4. Ibid., pp. 991, 992, 1013,
  5. Ibid., pp. 1037, 1038.
  6. Ibid., pp. 1170, 1189.
  7. Ibid., p. 1343.

The direct and indirect mention of Yoga is a prominent feature of Guru Nanak's poetry. At places, the compositions in the *Sri Granth* are built round this theme. Out of the two major implications of this phenomenon one is that the Guru felt the necessity of the persistent refutation of the harmful impact made by the prevalent rituals of *Ratha Yoga* on the life of the common people. Secondly, he thought that the essence of true Yoga should be preserved so as to impress upon the minds of the seekers the true spiritual path. Hence, the Guru imparted a new and ethical significance to the Yogic concepts and terminology.

On a close and careful study of the *Scripture*, says Gurbachan Singh Talib, it becomes clear that while the Guru has commended the core of the Yoga system of concentration, meditation and identification of the soul with the Supreme - the path which is the eclectic essence of the spiritual ideals enunciated by the ancient sages - and while his way is the way of *Sahaja* (enlightenment), he does not approve of the approach, and still less of the details or the ends to be obtained in *Ratha Yoga*. The Guru's path is, should one choose to define it in yogic terms, the path of *Raja Yoga*; that is, the path of *Sahj* or attaining poise of the mind after abstracting it from the desires for material objects. This path involves, he says, neither renunciation of the life passed among human beings, neither retiring to mountain cave or darkness of forest, nor inflicting excruciating torture on oneself for self-purification, of which hundreds of varieties are well-known to any one familiar with religious practices in India.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Gurbachan Singh Talib, *Guru Nanak His Personality and Vision*, p. 193.

It must be noted here that Guru Nanak, though accepted some basis of ethical psychology of Samkhya and Yoga, in his spiritual path has certainly not followed the lines of any of the systems of Indian philosophy exclusively. The Sikh scriptures have accepted the existence of Kundalini<sup>1</sup> as also the existence of as many as 72,000 nadis (nerve channels).<sup>2</sup> The names of the famous nadis Ida, Pingla and Sushumna, also called Gangā, Jamnā and Sarasvati, are also frequently mentioned.<sup>3</sup> But the Hathayoga techniques employed to awaken the Kundalini are strongly rejected. Similarly, the idea of nine gates (nav-grah), dasam dvār and Turivaṅvsthā is accepted in the Sikh theology.<sup>4</sup> According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, the principles of Nāda-Yoga are accepted and the experiences of anahata-nāda are vividly and repeatedly described in Sikh scriptures. The chakras are recognised as lower seats of cosmic energy existing in latent state. The physiological findings of Samkhya-Yoga thinkers, he says, are accepted by Guru Nanak very much as philosophers and historians accept scientific data now-a-days. The Gurus accepted the Samkhya-Yoga physiological data to the point they could be verified. There is much they have ignored.<sup>5</sup> It is to be noted that the three traditional gunas : sattva, rajas and tamas have an important place in the theory and practice of Sikh mysticism.

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 1402.

2. Ibid., p. 783.

3. Ibid., pp. 973, 974.

4. Ibid., pp. 1036, 1069.

5. Dr. Trilochan Singh, Sikhism and Yoga, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings, organized by Punjabi University, Patiala, p.5.

As has already been made clear that Guru Nanak denounced renunciation, asceticism and ritualism and insisted on truthful living while having Nam (the Name) as the basis of worship. By stressing Nam-simrana he sought to wean away people from the empty formalism of religion. The Guru discarded the elaborate rituals of Hatha yoga which were devoid of the substance of the spiritual and moral life. The practice of Yoga was more or less physical in nature and the Guru disapproved it because it no way helped a yogin to free himself from selfishness and egoism, and in the attainment of the spiritual goal.

Though Guru Nanak has not condemned the Yoga philosophy in principle, he certainly had no faith in the Astānga Yoga and Hatha Yoga techniques. He has vehemently opposed Yogic formalism and rituals. He found the Yogis so tied to these rituals and formalism that in a hymn in Raga Suhi he denounced the empty formalism to which they attached so much importance and gave them a true definition of the concept of Yoga. The Guru says :

"Yoga is neither in the patched coat, nor in the  
Yogi's staff, nor in besmearing oneself with ashes,  
Nor in wearing the ear-rings, nor close-cropping the  
head, nor in blowing the horn;  
If one remaineth Detached in the midst of attachments,  
One attaineth to the (true) state of Yoga.  
One becometh not a Yogi by mere talk.  
If one looketh upon all the creation alike, he, yea,  
is acclaimed as a true Yogi.

Yoga is not in abiding at the tombs or the crematoriums, nor in entering into a pseudo-trance.

Yoga consists not in roaming the world, nor in bathing at the pilgrim-stations.

If one remaineth Detached in the midst of attachments then, verily, one attaineth to the (true) state of Yoga.

If one meeteth with the perfect Guru, one's Doubt is shattered, and cease the outgoings of one's mind; And then ozeth (Nectar) out of the (mind's) spring and one is Attuned to the Music of Bliss, and one See-eth one's Lord in one's very Home.

If one remaineth Detached in the midst of attachments then, verily, one attaineth to the (true) state of Yoga.

Sayeth Nanak: Die thou to thy self while yet alive; yes, practise thou such a Yoga,

That without being blown, the horn ringeth and one Attaineth to the state of fearlessness.

Yes, if one remaineth Detached in the midst of attachments then, verily, one attaineth to the (true) state of Yoga.<sup>1</sup>

The guise of the Yogis who give up their homes, smear their bodies with ashes, put on a patched coat, huge ear-rings, a horn (singi) and certain other outer symbols, has been condemned in Guru Nanak's hymns. While addressing the Yogis the Guru asked them to have some inner moral worth and character element corres-

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 730.



ponding to their hypocritical forms. In stanza (naudi) 28 of the Japuji, the Guru suggests :

"Thy ear-rings Contentment, Utility thy bowl, thy wallet,  
 'Intent on God' - the ashes thou smear,  
 And thought of Deat, the Coat thou wear.  
 Chastity thy way and Faith, thy Staff.  
 And if thou seekest the Āyee's want,  
 The One in each and all thou hast to see,  
 And conquer the self in thee.  
 The world then would thine be.  
 Nail, Nail to Him, 'I'-Nail; the Primal Being, the  
 Pure Light, sans Beginning, sans End, for ever alike.<sup>1</sup>

At another place, in R. gr. Gauri, Guru Nanak has prescribed, in almost similar words, the following Yagya praxis for the attainment of the true Yoga.

"(O Yogi) pierce thy heart, (not ears), for thy rings,  
 And let thy body be thy Coat.  
 And discipline thy Five Disciples, O Yogi, and let  
 thy mind be thy staff (to lean upon).  
 Thus wouldst thou find the key to (true) Yoga.  
 "The Lord alone is eternal; the rest passeth away",  
 Let this be thy mind's food of roots.  
 Thou shavest thy head (at the Ganga's banks) to enter  
 into the field of thy Guru;  
 But I've made the Guru my Gange.

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1. Ibid., p.6.

Why thou, o Blind one, rememberest not thy Master,  
the Saviour of the three worlds?

Why all this (Pious) show then? Why engage  
thyself in (false) prattle, which removes not thy  
mind's doubt? Why run about in greed to here and there.  
Why not fix thy mind on the Feet of the one Lord alone?  
Saturate thy mind with Him and dwell thou on Him,  
thy Immaculate Lord.

Why then, O Yogi, thou makest thy false claims?<sup>1</sup>

The eight-fold Yoga of Patanjali (Astanga Yoga) is nowhere mentioned systematically in the writings of Guru Nanak. Evidently, the Guru had no faith in the eight limbs (angas) of the Yoga of Patanjali. Guru Nanak laid great stress on the moral and ethical values. Hence, it may be noted that the first two limbs of Astanga Yoga, namely yama and niyama, form in a way part of the essential characteristics of the ideal man of the Guru. The essential elements of physical purity are applied to mental life in the writings of the Guru. brahmacarya (physical and mental purity), santosa (serenity) and tapa (control over the senses and passions) are common features of the Guru's teachings and Yoga niyamas. Yoga lays great stress on the purification and control of the body and believes in the theory that if the body is pure and under control the mind will automatically be controlled. According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, Sikhism believes that if the mind is pure and under control, the body will easily

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1. Ibid., pp. 155-156,

be controlled. Mere physical purity is in no way instrumental in attaining mental and spiritual purity. Hauli and Rhoti which are so important for practising Yogis are considered of no importance in Sikhism. Fasting and mortification of the body which is employed by the Yogis is also rejected by Guru Nanak as dangerously egoistic, and in no way helpful to healthy spiritual life.<sup>1</sup> In Raga Māru (Solhē), Guru Nanak elucidated the hollowness of mere ritual performances, fasting, physical feats and Prāṇāyāma techniques :

"One besmears one's body with the ashes,  
 But within one are the demons of wrath and ego:  
 Yea, through contrivances one attaineth not Yoga:  
 without the true Guru, one attaineth not the  
 unfathomable God.  
 One goeth on a pilgrimage and fasts and observes a  
 set code of (religious) conduct, and liveth in the woods,  
 And discourses on wisdom and practiseth chastity,  
 austerity and self-control,  
 But, without the Lord's Name, one attaineth not Bliss,  
 and, without the true Guru, one is rid not of Doubt.  
 The inly-cleaning and the passing of the breath  
 through the furnace of the Aluvangama vein,  
 and the inhaling and exhaling and the holding of the  
 breath by forcing one's will,  
 This showmanship of religion God loveth not; yea, it is  
 through the Guru's Word that one reacheth-in the Quintessence  
 of God."<sup>2</sup>

1. Dr. Trilochan Singh, Sikhism and Yoga, a paper read at International Seminar on Guru Nanak, Punjabi University, Patiala, p.12.

2. Adi Granth, p. 1043.

Guru Nanak did not believe in the practice of the Siddhis. He was of the view that the miraculous powers attained through siddhis only caused the ego in the mind of a seeker and did not lead to Spiritual Bliss. They would lead only to ignorance, worldliness and duality.<sup>1</sup> In Var Mahj he has condemned the uselessness of such practices and elucidated that the real powers could be attained only through true wisdom and the Guru's grace. He says:

"If I clothed myself with fire, and abided in the  
house of snow and chewed iron for my food,  
and I gulped down all pain like water, and drove  
the world before me,  
Yea, and weighed the earth and the skies in the  
scales with a mere copper.  
and if so great I be that I contained not myself  
within me, and all were driven by my will,  
and so powerful be my mind that I did what I willed  
while others followed.

(But, vain would this be all:) For as Great is the  
and, so is His Mercy which He bestoweth in His Will  
Nanak, he on whom is His Grace, he attaineth the  
glory of the True Name.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly, the Guru had no faith in the theory and practice of Āsanas. In Anand Chandrori he has discarded Āsanas as mere physical feats. Describing a Yogi, seated in Padmasana, the Guru states that the Yogi catches the nose with the thumb and two

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1. Japuji, pauji 29, Sri Granth, p. 6.

2. Sri Granth, p. 147.

adjoining fingers and pretends that he (the Yogi) has obtained the knowledge of the three worlds through this āsna (posture). But, in reality, he is unable to perceive even the things placed behind him. The Guru says:

These times are past when men knew the true way of Yoga and truth.

All places of worship are now polluted and is the world being drowned.

In the Kali-age, the most sublime thing is the Lord's Name,

But the men beguile others by closing their eyes and nostrils (to pass for a Yogi).

They close the nostrils with their three fingers and say they've seen the three worlds,

but they see not even what's behind them;

O, strange is this lotus-posture.<sup>1</sup>

In Hatha Yoga the spiritual discipline centres round sat-karma, muḍrās and prāṇāyāma techniques employed to awaken the Kundalini. Guru Nanak has not shown any leanings towards the theory of awakening the Kundalini and piercing of sat-cakras (six centres or lotuses in the body). He refers to these centres only contextually. He opines that the body (of six cakras) is the seat of the detached mind within whose consciousness rings the melody of the Word.<sup>2</sup> According to him the self-restraint through the austere Hatha-yogic practises only leads to wearing off the body. In ARGE NĀKALI he points out:

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1. Ibid., pp. 691-693.

2. Ibid., p. 903.

"To subdue desire through Hatha-Yoga weareth off the body:  
Through fasting and penances, the mind is subdued not.  
Mark, ho, there's nothing that equals the Lord's Name.

.....

The Yogi sucketh-in his breath and (his Tenth Door),  
the seat (of the Self), openeth up;

and through inly-washings and six other practices.

he cleanses his within.

But, without the Lord's Name, vain is the breath he  
breathes.<sup>1</sup>

To differentiate between the Hatha-yogic practices and the path shown by Guru Nanak Dr. Trilochan Singh enunciates that Guru Nanak's spiritual discipline is based on natural, humanly possible, and easy method based on singleminded devotion, meditation with a pure and dedicated love, and steady moral and spiritual effort through service, dedication, and inner illumination. While classical Yoga works fundamentally through egoistic will, self-love, and lust for inner powers, Guru Nanak's spiritual discipline begins with humility, self effacement, dedication of mind, body and soul to the cause of Truth. While the spiritual discipline of Yoga aims at extinction of active life, and absorption in Samādhi, Guru Nanak inspires the disciples with what is called hos-nasti: widely-awake in ecstasy.<sup>2</sup> The spiritual aim can be attained through higher inspiration of the divine Word (Sabdā) which can bring the mind to equipoise and stability.

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1. Ibid., p. 905.

2. Dr. Trilochan Singh. Sikhism and Yoga, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 15,16.



The spiritual practice attributed to Guru Nanak, according to J.R.Puri, may be called 'Surt-Sabda Yoga'. It has also been described by other names such as simply 'Sabda Yoga', a 'Sahaja' Yoga' or 'Sabda Abhyās'. In it the individual withdraws his attention and soul current from all over his body to a point behind the two eyes called 'the Third Eye'. He must shut all his sense-organs which serve as windows for the outside world. The Third Eye focus is supposed to be the seat of the soul in the waking state. By assiduously concentrating his attention at this centre, which might be called, 'the headquarters of the soul', the devotee is able to attain the state of pure consciousness and which yields bliss and peace.<sup>1</sup>

Before we proceed further, it would be better to understand what the term Sabda means. Ordinarily, it means 'sound'. It also stands for a hymn. But so far as the mystical meaning of the term is concerned, it connotes 'a super-conscious transcendent entity' which transcends human understanding and goes beyond all duality and relativity. In Vedic literature it has been termed Ṛd or heavenly sound. In Guru Nanak's hymns, the word 'Sabda' has been expressed by many other terms, such as Nam and Bani.

True Sabda is ultimately the Supreme Reality itself. According to J.R.Puri, Sabda is God's very being and essence. It reverberates in all planes and is the source of all life and fountain head of all consciousness. It may be taken as the omnipresent form of God. And, since in essence the soul and Sabda are one,

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1. J.R.Puri, Mystic Teachings<sup>n</sup> of Guru Nanak, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak's Life and Teachings, Punjabi University, Patiala, pp. 22-23.

it draws the soul upward as a magnet attracts a needle, That is why this method is called 'Surat Sabda Yoga', i.e. union of the soul with the transcendent Sabda.<sup>1</sup> Speaking of this method says Guru Nanak:

"As the lotus liveth detached in waters, as the duck floateth care-free on the stream,  
So doth one Cross the Sea of Existence, his mind Attuned to the word."<sup>2</sup>

.....

This Sea of the world one swimmeth across through the Guru's Word.

And then one's Duality is burnt down within one,  
And one aims the five arrows at the Yam; stretching the bow (of the Word) in the (mind's) sky.

How can the worshipper of Maya get consciousness of the Word?

And without being conscious of the Word, one but cometh and goeth.

Sayeth Nanak: 'tis the God-conscious being who getteth the Refuge of Deliverance, yea, 'tis by good fortune that one Attaineth unto God".<sup>3</sup>

Evidently, Guru Nanak emphasised on the effectiveness of Sabda as the vehicle of transmission of spirituality to the Gurmukh, the esoteric truths revealed to the Guru by God.

According to Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, the practice of Yoga for

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1. Ibid., p.26.  
2. Adig Granth, p.938.  
3. Ibid., p. 1042.

the ideal man of Guru Nanak - the Gurmukh - is to concentrate upon the Word (Sabda), for the concentration of the mind upon the Word is the supreme way.<sup>1</sup> The term Sabda, as we have discussed in the previous chapter, is common both in Yogic theology and Gurmat. In Nath sampradaya it refers to the mystical sound called anahad Sabda or simply Anahat. It is a 'soundless sound' audible only to the yogin who has succeeded in awakening the Kundalini and caused it to ascend to Susurna nadi. In Guru Nanak's theology there is no place for Kundalini, no cakras and no Ida, Pingala and Susurna. According to the Guru, the basis of the Sabda is Brahman, rather, he treats both as one.<sup>2</sup>

According to W. H. McLeod, Kabir's usage distinguishes Sabda and Anahad Sabda. The Sabda is the Guru's 'Word', the revelation of God which is given in the depths of the human soul. Anahad Sabda, however, he uses in a sense very close to that of the Naths, although the experience which it expresses is, for him, in no way dependent upon the practice of hatha-yoga. In the case of Guru Nanak, he says, we find that, as with all such words which have Nath antecedents, the term has travelled even further from its source. The expression anahad sabda has moved away to the periphery. It has become a useful figure of speech, a convenient means of conveying some impression of an experience which is strictly inexpressible.<sup>3</sup> Hence, the Guru's emphasis on the concept of the Word is wholly as the medium of revelation whose function is to provide means whereby a seeker may secure release from the

1. Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak di Vichārābhāsā, p. 413.

2. Siddha Gostā, 59.

3. W. H. McLeod, Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion, p. 192.

worldly bonds and so attain union with God. By contemplation of the Word he will be capable of destroying ego-sense (haumain) through meditation on the Word he will make himself free from the range of Time (kala).<sup>1</sup> The Word is for Guru Nanak the revelation of God and so the only proper object of man's contemplation.

Guru Nanak's usage of the word Surt, according to Dr. Jai Ram Mishra, is many sided. It connotes 'devoted worship', 'knowledge', 'thought-wave' and śruti etc.<sup>2</sup> But in the present context the mind attuned to Guru's Word may be called 'Sabja-Surt'.

Surt-sabda Yoga, according to Dr. Pitambar Datt Barathwal, is that in which the union of Surt and Sabda is proved and the bonds of Time, cause and effect merged.<sup>3</sup> Guru Nanak, for the attainment of Supreme Reality, has suggested the Surt-Sabda Yoga. Guru Nanak's Surt-Sabda Yoga does not recommend any sort of hatha-yogic practices but lays stress on Nām-sādhā. It is through Sabda-Surt that one attains the true bliss without which one cannot be released of his bonds.<sup>4</sup> The mind can be attuned to Nām spontaneously. Hence, in the Yoga of Guru Nanak the Nām-sādhā has the highest place and without the Name there can be no Yoga. In Siddha Gosta the Guru says:

"Without the Name, one can practice not the Yoga:

Reflect in the mind on this and see".

1. Ādi Granth, p. 21, (Giri Raga, 18).

2. Dr. Jai Ram Mishra, Nanak Vani, pp. 834-835.

3. Dr. Pitambar Datt Barathwal, Hindi Kavya men Nirguna Sampradaya p. 275.

4. Ādi Granth, pp. 1031, 1042, (Maru Solhe, 11.8, 21.10).

"This is the Quintessence of the word, here ye O Yogis,  
that without the Lord's Name, Yoga is practised not;  
That he alone attaineth Bliss who's ever Imbued with  
the Name.

All things become manifest through the Name; through  
the Name is all Wisdom,

Without the Name, one may wear a myriad garbs, but one  
is strayed from the Path.

It is through the true Guru that one attaineth the  
Name, and the Way of Yoga.<sup>1</sup>

It is the Guru through whom God reveals the Truth. The  
Guru is an object of devotion and his voice is the voice of God.  
To Nanak Guru himself is God and Sabda His Lord - the Divine  
Word. With him, at the same time, Guru is the Lord.<sup>2</sup> According  
to him it is only through the Lord that one dwells on God and  
so through the Guru the haumain is destroyed.<sup>3</sup>

Nām-simarana is also of vital importance in this context.  
The Sabda and Nām expressions, for all practical purposes, are  
synonymous as both signify the Essence of God and His Qualities.  
Truth as meditated by the Guru is referred to as the Sabda and  
Truth as received and meditated on by the seeker tends to be  
expressed as the Nām. Nām-sadhna has the significant place in  
the Yoga of Guru Nanak. Consequently, Guru is an important  
factor in Sabda-Surt Yoga or Sahaaja Yoga of Guru Nanak.

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1. Siddha Gōṣṭa, 68, 72.

2. sabda guru surti dhuni chela. (Ādi Granth, p.943).

3. Siddha Gōṣṭa, 44.

At places, Guru Nanak has described the various aspects of true Yoga. A perfect Yogi, according to him, is he who looks upon all the creation alike,<sup>1</sup> who serves the true Guru and becomes the fearless while living in God's Fear,<sup>2</sup> and who has full control upon his mind and the senses.<sup>3</sup> In Rāga Gauri, Āstpadis, the Guru has elaborated the characteristics of a true Yogi as follows:

"The Yogi is he who thinketh of the Way.

To slay the Five (Demons) and to enshrine the Truth within,  
He in whom abideth the Truth,

None values the true Way to Yoga.

To him the moon and the sun are alike; as are the  
fire and the words.

In the praise (of the Lord) is to him the way of works.

He dwelleth on the Word and asks for nothing but  
the one Name.

All wisdom, all meditation, all ways (of religion)  
are for him to awaken to Truth.

He is absorbed in the (Lord's) Fear and he goeth  
not away (from it).

Yea, he who is attuned to the Lord, O, who can value  
(his part)?

1. 'Ek dristi kar samasari jane jogi kahley sei.' Ādi Granth, p. 730  
(If one looketh upon all the creation alike, he yea, is  
reclaimed as a true Yogi).

2. 'satguru seve so jogi hoe, bhai rach rabe su nirbhau hoe.'  
Ādi Granth, p. 223.  
(The Yogi is he who serveth the true Guru.  
He who is imbued with the Lord's Fear becometh fearless).

3. Siddhā Gostā, 8.



He, the Lord Himself, Unites us with Himself,  
 stilling all our Doubts,  
 And, by the Guru's Grace, one attaineth to the  
 highest State (of Equipoise).<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, in Raga Ramkali, while addressing to Machhindra-  
 nath Guru Nanak laid stress on the suppression of the evil  
 mental faculties. The Guru also gave new meanings to Yogic practi-  
 ces, such as samādhi and āsana adopted by the Yogis:

Hear thou, O Machhindra, Nanak speaketh to thee;  
 A Yogi is he who disciplines his five (desires)  
 and wobbles not.

He who practises his Yoga thus

Saveth himself, and saveth his whole lineage.

That detached one then is blest with such a wisdom

That he Mergeth for ever in the Absolute Lord.

He should beg for the Loving Doration of God and

Live in His Fear:

and should content himself with contentment which is  
 indeed a priceless treasure.

Let this be his posture that he remains absorbed in God,

and attunes himself to the True Name.

Nanak uttereth but the Nectar-Word;

Hear thou, then, O Machhindra, the signs of the detached  
 Yogi:

He passeth his life without hope in the midst of hope,  
 and then, forsure, he Meeteth with his Creator-Lord.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 223.

2. Ibid., p. 877.

The Yoga of Guru Nanak does not have any narrow scholastic outlook and is not limited to any particular traditional branch of Yoga. On the other, the Yoga of Guru Nanak is vivid, re-oriented, human and fundamentally socialistic. <sup>we</sup> We may assign it many names, viz., Sahaja Yoga, Surt-Sabde Yoga, Nam-Yoga, Gurmat Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and above all Raja Yoga. The expressions, such as, Raja Yoga, Sahaja Yoga, Nam Yoga, Bhakti Yoga etc. are to be found in the Guru's hymns themselves very frequently. It would, however, not be appropriate to confine the scope of Guru Nanak's Yoga to any particular division of Yoga since the Yoga of Guru Nanak is a balanced and creative synthesis of Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. For practical purposes we shall discuss here the expressions used by Guru Nanak himself, such as, Nam Yoga, Sahaja Yoga and Raja Yoga.

According to Professor Karnam Das, Guru Nanak was a unique Nam Yogi. He based his yogas of Raja, Surt Sabad and Sahaja on his Nam-Yoga alone, he even said that these yogas were in reality the three great aspects of Nam-Yoga. According to him, Guru Nanak's path of Name-evolution in life is three-fold: (i) Simran of the Name, i.e., the practice of Nam with the spirit of devotion, purity and dedication, (ii) Manan of the Name, i.e., setting up Nam in mind and practising it constantly with the bloom of self-enlightenment, (iii) Gā-in of the Name, i.e., musical expression of Name in creative, constructive and progressive deeds in the spirit of disinterestedness.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Karnam Das, Raj Yoga of Guru Nanak, an article in The Sikh Review, Guru Nanak Number, Vol.III, Jan. -March 1970, p.47.

Guru Nanak sets forth the significance of Nām in his writings without which there can be no Yoga. He elucidates that the mercurial mind is controlled and abides in Truth when Nām is one's support. Through life of active service and meditation on Nām one attains perfect union with the Lord. In Siddha Gostā, Guru Nanak comments:

"Imbued with the Name one knoweth the Way of (true) Yoga;  
 Yes, Imbued with the Name, one is emancipated;  
 And knoweth one the Mystery of the three worlds,  
 And is ever in Bliss.

Imbued with the Name, one converses (truly) on Yoga;  
 For, he, who's Imbued with the Name, practiseth true  
 austerity.

.....

"Tis through the perfect Guru that one is blest  
 with the Name,

And to Merge in Truth is the true Way of Yoga.<sup>1</sup>

.....

"Without the Name, one can practice not the Yoga;  
 Reflect in the mind on this and see".<sup>2</sup>

Besides Nām, Guru Nanak has frequently used the term 'Sahaja', for, in his view, spiritual wisdom may be attained through Sahaja, that is through a life guided by the enlightened poised mind. The true Yoga, thus, can be achieved through dispassion and sacrifice of desire and not mere learning. Through

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1. Siddha Gostā, 32-34.

2. Ibid., 63.

wisdom one must put an end to hope and despair, and emancipate his mind from the attachments created by three qualities (gunas). According to Dr. Niharranjan Ray, what Guru Nanak says about Sahaja, its nature and experience, the words and phrases, symbols and images, phrase and similies he uses in this connection, are all of a piece which is common to Kabir and the Nathapanthis who in their turn derived it from the Buddhist Siddhacharyas, especially those of the Sāhājāyāna ... The Sāhājāyāni express the condition of Sāhaja through the symbol of anahata dhvani (unstruck sound.)<sup>1</sup> Both Kabir and Guru Nanak not only used the term Sahaja but also described the nature of the experience. Kabir characterises it as the ultimate human experience of Bliss and Peace. He calls it Sahaja-samadhi which, according to Dr. Hazari Prasad Dvivedi, is distinct from that of the sahajavastha of the Yogis.<sup>2</sup> Kabir characterises Sahaja as Sunya-sahaja - a state of supreme peace (mahasukha).<sup>3</sup> Guru Nanak emphatically discarded the interpretation and image of Sahaja of the Nathapanthis and also differed from Kabir. What is then the nature of Sahaja Yoga of Guru Nanak? We has elucidated the same in Raga Āsa. While addressing to Bharthari, he says:

"Let the Guru's Word be thy mind's ear-rings,

and compassion thy Coat.

And submit thou lovingly to His Will;

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1. Dr. Niharranjan Ray, The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh Society, Lecture II - The Message; Nanak Prakash Pattrika, September 1969, p. 19.

2. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dvivedi, Kabir, p. 73.

3. sahaj-sunni men jin ras chakhya satguru thai sudhi pai.  
-Kabir Granthāvali, page 74.

yea, thus thou Attainest to the Glory of Sahaja-Yoga.

He who is Attuned to the Great Quintessence is forever a Yogi,

For, he tasteth the Nectar-Name of the immaculate Lord,

And his body bathes in the Essence of Wisdom.

I have my seat in my Self and have forsaken all

disputation and desire,

And my horn is the Guru's Word and its music ever

ringeth in my mind.<sup>1</sup>

The Sahaja yoga, according to the Guru, says Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli, consists in subduing the mind through the grace of the Guru and in the extinction of all troubles and ills in the company of the Guru and the saints.<sup>2</sup> The different aspects of the Guru's Sahaja Yoga, so to say, are abstraction from the desires for material objects, observance of righteous endeavour, attainment of the true Guru and his grace through loving devotion, and finally Nān-sādina. A few texts relating to Sahaja may not be out of place here:

By Meeting with the Guru that one Conquers one's self:

and he ever Believes in the Yoga of God's Devotion.

Associating with the Guru-Saint, one is rid of all one's maladies.

Sayath Nanak: "This Yoga (through the Guru) is one

Blest with the Yoga of Equipoise.<sup>3</sup>

.....

By the Guru's Grace, the Pain and Pleasure seem alike to

to me, yea, I am now above Joy and Sorrow. And, obliterat-

ing my selfhood, I have Attained to God, by the Guru's

Grace, and thus Merge in Equipoise.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ādi Granth, pp. 359-60.

2. Dr. Surinder Singh Kohli, Philosophy of Guru Nanak, p. 72.

3. Ādi Granth, p. 1170.

4. Ibid., p. 907.

According to Dr. Trilochan Singh, the Sahaja is used to connote any thing attained in a natural, spontaneous, easy way. The word is applied to all Sikh doctrines to emphasise its importance in every phase. We have, he says, Sahaja-Āsana, sahaja samāchi, sahaja ananda, and sahaja sunya. Sikhism is Sahaja Faith in the sense that none of the agonising torturous practices of the ascetic cults are recommended in it.<sup>1</sup>

Guru Nanak, in his verses, has used meaningfully the various yogic terms and phrases relating to Sahaja, such as, anahad-nād, sunya, dasam dvār, amrit ras, ajana iān etc., but the use of these words has invariably different context than that of the Yogic background. Anahad-nād of Guru Nanak, according to Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi, is different than that of Yogic one. The Yogic nād is to be heard through hatha-sādhanā whereas the nād of Guru Nanak is audible mainly through Nām-sādhanā.<sup>2</sup> In other words, in Yoga a Yogi may hear anahad nād before attaining the experience of dasam dvār whereas in Guru Nanak's faith the Bliss of anahat can be attained only after gaining that experience. In Guru Nanak, the phrase does not seem to have any yogic association. The same may be said about the term dasam dvār. In it the 'tenth door', having no yogic significance, signifies the last stage to be crossed before one can attain the Sahaja experience. The opening of the 'Tenth Door', i.e., awakening the mystical faculty may follow after disciplining the mind. The component which is admittedly a

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1. Dr. Trilochan Singh, Sikhism and Yoga, op.cit., p. 25
  2. Rattan Singh Jaggi, Guru Nanak Ji Vichārābhārā, p. 406.
  3. 'Inau ghar thāpe thāmanhāre, dasve vāsā alakh apāre'  
Aei Granth, p. 1030.



yogic one, says Dr. Biharranjan Ray, seems to have been used by the Guru more as an image, a symbol which had a meaning for those to whom his words were being addressed. Indeed all such yogic technical terms and concepts that Guru Nanak makes use of, including that of Sahaja, seem to have been, for him at any rate, nothing more than just a convenient means of communicating an idea of a mystical experience which was otherwise incommunicable.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the Guru uses the term amrit in the sense of nectar of Immortality, but no where do we find him using the term in the sense of yogic bindu or mahārasa. Unlike Yoga, the Guru <sup>simply</sup> has not used the images of sun and moon in regard to amrit, rather the term is found used in association with the Nām (nāmanrita). In Raga Parbhāti, the Guru states the experience of Bliss:

Within the Tenth Door is the Well, the sky (of  
Consciousness) draweth out of it the waters (of Vision),  
and the mind sucketh this Nectar in,  
and, through the Guru, one Reliseth this Truth that  
He, whose creation we are, He alone Knoweth the Way.<sup>2</sup>

The term Sunya has also been frequently used in the Guru's hymns. It has been elaborated in Siddha Gosta (51 to 53). Sunya, according to the Guru, is the root cause of the creation of the universe.<sup>3</sup> Sunya of Guru Nanak, according to Dr. Jai Ram Mishra, is symbolic of Brahman of the Upanisads, Paramātmān of the

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1. Dr. Biharranjan Ray, The Concept of Sahaja in Guru Nanak's Theology, op.cit., p.26.  
2. Ādi Granth, p. 1331-32.  
3. Ibid., 1037.

Yogis and Om of the Vedas.<sup>1</sup> At places, it has been called sunya-samādhi, and sometimes it is used in the sense of asampra-ināta samādhi.

There should be no hesitation in accepting that the Guru has provided us with Yoga, but it is certainly not the Yoga of the traditional Yogis. It is Raja Yoga, but not one which was expounded by the sage Patanjali, and which included āsanas and prāṇāyāma. Raja Yoga of Patanjali deals largely with the process of stilling the mind and insists on the methods of concentration. It stresses that the eight limbs (aṣṭāṅga) of Yoga are necessary for the cessation of mental functions or modifications. There is, however, considerable stress on stilling the mind in Guru Nanak's hymns, but the main point of difference is that Raja yoga of Patanjali gives the eight-fold means consisting of the disciplines of yama, niyama, āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyahāra, dharmā, dhyāna and samādhi, and is primarily a system of psychic discipline, whereas the Yoga of Guru Nanak insists on Nām-sādhanā as a means of disciplining the mind to attain the Ultimate Reality.

Guru Nanak has, thus, laid considerable emphasis upon the feasibility of a house-holder attaining the highest spiritual accomplishment by cultivating purity of mind, earnestness of purpose and loving devotion. He should, according to J.J.Karma, understand the inner meaning of Nām, obey the injunctions of his Guru, rely upon God and discern oneness in all. This is the

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1. Dr. Jai Ram Mishra, Nanak Vāni, p. 834.

unique reconciliation of worldly life and spiritual aims. Motiveless, selfless and disinterested discharge of duty as a householder, is acceptable to and approved of by the Almighty, because they are performed in the spirit of self-denial and self-surrender. He lives with and acts in the physical world as a witness, as a passing show, as an effect of his previous personality, without any feelings of attachment, agitation, elation or aversion, for, he knows that he belongs to no one and no one belongs to him.<sup>1</sup>

To be more exact and vivid, we may refer to the Bhagavad-gita which is a mandate for action. It raises the fundamental question whether action or renunciation of action is better and concludes that action is certainly supreme. The disciplined activity is said to be more vital than the mere renunciation. The great contribution of the Gita, says Gurbachan Singh Talib, was to present to the imagination, the man of Righteous Action typified by Arjuna, as a Yogi. Centuries later, Guru Nanak effected a somewhat similar orientation and synthesis of the prevailing negative doctrines and barren rituals, including those which went under the name of Yoga.<sup>2</sup>

The ideal man of the Yogis was one who abandoned home and worldly life and indulged in specific exercises in order to become a part of the Void (sunya). Guru Nanak differed with them and insisted that the ideal conduct consisted in leading a life

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1. J.J.Karam, Guru Nanak Dev and His Message, a paper read at the International Seminar on Guru Nanak, Punjab University, Patiala p.15-16.
  2. Gurbachan Singh Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p. 139.

of non-attachment amidst the worldly objects. According to him, the man, living in the world and actively participating in daily routine life, should remain unobsessed. In Raga Rāmkali, Guru Nanak states:

"As the lotus liveth detached in waters, as the  
duck floateth care-free on the stream,  
So doth one Cross the Sea of Existence, his mind  
Attuned to the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

Since Guru Nanak recommends that religion must be practised in the socio-political context, he has re-oriented the Yoga ethics so as to make it convenient and practicable for a person to pursue it simultaneously while engaged in earning his livelihood. According to Gurbachan Singh Talib, it would, therefore, not be an inappropriate understanding of the Guru's view-point to say that the Guru recommends basically the path of Raja Yoga, with certain emphasis like 'personal service' (sewā) and 'life centred among duties' (grihastha) as the sovereign scheme for the most fruitful kind of human life.<sup>2</sup>

The Yoga of Guru Nanak strongly advocates restraint of the highest order without having to renounce society. He denounced the hatred for the women in the yogic society. Guru Nanak asked the Yogis that they renounced women and yet they secretly thought of possessing and loving women.<sup>3</sup> The Guru also condemned the escapism and pessimism prevalent in the Yogis.

1. Ādi Granth, p. 938.

2. Gurbachan Singh Talib, Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision, p.200.

3. 'istri tai kar kām vyāpā cit lāvā pārnāri.' Ādi Granth, p.1013.

He pleaded activism in its wide sense of man embracing responsibility, thus showing 'Home' within our Home<sup>1</sup> (Consciousness within consciousness). In place of katha yogic practices, he underlined the importance of the five virtues, truth, contentment, compassion, righteousness and patience. In Raga Malār the Guru says:

Seated in the house of Sushmana, one heareth this  
Melody, Attuned to the state of Desireless Void,  
And one Dwelleth upon the Unutterable Utterance and  
one's desires are dissolved in the mind.

The inverted heart-lotus is upturned to receive the  
Nectar of God, and cease the outgoings of the mind,  
And one is devoted to that tongueless Speech through  
which one Mergeth in the Primeval Lord.

The five (virtues) are imbibed by the five knowing  
faculties, and by the Guru's Grace, one abideth in  
one's Self.<sup>2</sup>

In the Bhagavadgita, the Yoga is explained as evenness of mind (samatvam) in success or failure.<sup>3</sup> The renunciation, there, is an inward attitude, it has little to do with outward works. While defining the character of the true Sanyāsi the Guru also pleaded this type of samtava.

1. 'ghar mahi ghar dikhāe dāe so satguru purakh sujān'.  
Ibid., p. 1291.

2. Ādi Granth, p. 1291.

3. The Bhagavadgita, II. 48.

He alone is a Sanyāsin who serveth the true Guru,  
 dying to his self.

.....

O Blessed is such a householder, yea, a Sanyāsin, a  
 Yogi, who's Attuned to the Lord's Feet.

The Sanyāsin remaineth hope-less in the midst of hope,  
 being at one with the one alone,  
 And is comforted in Drinking the Lord's Essence, and  
 liveth within, wropt in a holy trance.<sup>1</sup>

An ideal man or yogin of Guru Nanak may thus be called a  
Gurmukh-Yogi since the Guru elucidated at length in about  
 sixteen stanzas of the Siddha Gostā, the qualities and character-  
 istics of a Gurmukh which are not distinct from that of a Yogi  
 as stated by the Guru in various hymns in the Ādi Granth, Dr.  
 Manmohan Sehgal is of the view that the qualities and character-  
 istics of the Gurmukh of Guru Nanak and the Karma-Yogi of the  
 Bhagavadgita are almost the same.<sup>2</sup> A perfect Gurmukh is, however,  
 far better than a classical Yogi who only sticks to formalism  
 and wanders about without moral virtues and self-restraint. The  
Gurmukh, according to the Guru, through the Nām-simaranā and  
 also the Guru's grace attains the state of Unalloyed Bliss  
(Parna-nāḍ).

As have already been stated, there are some basic differences  
 in Yogic and Sikh mysticism. Since Sikhism is theistic and the

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1. Ādi Granth, p. 1013.

2. Dr. Manmohan Sehgal, Guru Nanak Bāni tathā Śri-maḍ-Bhagavadgite,  
 an article in Nanak Prakāsh Patṭrikā, June, 1969, p.62.



Yogism a believer in Sunya theory, Guru Nanak has reinterpreted Sunya as Brahman. The Guru, for the attainment of Gurmukh-pad, according to Dr. Taran Singh, has shown the path of Pravrtti whereas the Yogis believed in Nivrtti-mārga.<sup>1</sup> They believed in the concept of personal emancipation but the Guru laid a great stress on the idea of social emancipation through active striving. In Japuji, he has indicated the five evolutionary stages for God-realisation, namely, 1. Dharma-khanda (field of Action), 2. Jnana-khanda (field of Knowledge), 3. Sarna-khanda (field of Effort), 4. Karma-khanda (field of Renunciation), 5. Sach-khand (field of Divine Truth).

In spite of the differences, says Dr. Sher Singh, there are some points which seem to have come down from these Yogis to the faith of the Sikhs. Some of them are common because of the general characteristics of the age. These Yogis did not recognise caste, had no scruples about food and ate meat. Some of them led married lives too. Many of them in the Western India still open free kitchen to all twice a day. They also had the system of discipleship. In short most of the Sikh practices are found among the Yogis. I am inclined to say, he puts, that the influence of Siddhism on Sikhism has been greatest of all the sects in India. The Granth sometimes speaks of the Guru in the term of a Yogi: 'My true Guru, the Yogi, is free from all disease'. (rag rahat mera satguru jogi). Still the two systems remain distinct.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dr. Taran Singh, Jog-mat ate Nanak-mat, an article in Guru Nanak: Jivan Darshan ate kav-kala, p.92.

2. Dr. Sher Singh, Philosophy of Sikhism, p. 127.

By going through the hymns of Guru Nanak, we do not find anywhere any evidence of Guru Nanak's being a practitioner of any kind of traditional yogic exercises. He did not seem to have prescribed for his followers any such practices. Yet, asserts Dr. Niharrenjan Ray, Guru Nanak was certainly a Yogi in the best and most perfect sense of the term, but his Yoga or discipline was not a physiological one in the Tantrik yogic sense; it lays altogether in the disciplining of the mind and the senses through their concentration in meditation directed towards God, the Ultimate Reality. Indeed, he seems to have laid down a systematic process for the purpose.

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1. Dr. Niharrenjan Ray, *The Concept of Sahaj in Guru Nanak's Theology*, op.cit., p. 27.

CONCLUSION

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In the world of materialism and externalism where outward symbols are mistaken for substance, Guru Nanak cautioned the man against the dead formalism, meaningless rituals and superstitious beliefs. He emphatically discarded the orthodox dogmas and fake learning which ignored the true spirit of Knowledge. Hypocrite worship and supernormal miracles were observed in the society at large during his times. Guru Nanak felt the meaninglessness of the superfluous performances. He was all along for the quest of True Knowledge, True Religion and True Worship.

Guru Nanak observed the vast influence of the Siddhas and Nathayogis upon the common people of India. He held several discourses with the heads of many yogic centres of repute. Through his writings and these discussions Guru Nanak condemned the austere Natha-yogic practices and exercises. He ascertained that these exercises were merely physical and that they had nothing to do with the spiritual uplift of the seeker. Bodily purificatory systems, different yogic postures and yogic techniques to awaken Kundalini etc. are of no avail if the seeker does not lead a virtuous, egoless and balanced life. This is the essence of the Guru's Sahaja Yoga.

Guru Nanak agreed with Patanjali so far as the main object of Yoga is concerned but he certainly differed with the observances of Patanjali's Astānga - Yoga. The Guru did stress the need of Surt-sabha and Nām-simarana to poise the mind. Physical restraint is secondary to the mental restraint in Guru Nanak's theology. By disciplining the mental faculties through sabha, Name-worship, sevā (service of the Guru) and Guru-kimā (grace of the guru) one may attain the realisation of Supreme Knowledge. The mind, according to the Guru, has to be emptied of all its innate desires and filled with loving devotion to God.

Guru Nanak was a true Karma-Yogi first and the last. His concept of Yoga is much nearer to that of the Yoga of the Bhagavadgita. Guru Nanak did not approve of the asceticism, escapism and pessimism of the Yogis. He, however, was a great exponent of activism who believed in the feasibility of a householder attaining the highest spiritual accomplishment. He emphasised the earnestness of adopting the grahistha and bhakti simultaneously. This way he was a unique Raja-Yogi who waged a war against the anti-social, unhealthy, dogmatic and escapist forms of traditional Yoga, and infused in it the powerful, spontaneous, socialistic and humanly possible elements which were highly spiritual as well as ethical.

In short, the discipline of Yoga which Guru Nanak teaches us consists of a creative synthesis of the three well-known paths to liberation, namely, Karma-Yoga (the path of disinterested action), Bhakti-Yoga (the path of devotion), and Jnana-Yoga (the path of Knowledge).

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