

A DESCRIPTIVE PAPER ON PATANJALI'S YOGA SUTRAS IN TODAY'S CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC

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Abstract:

Pandemic crisis made all of us to investigate the root cause of human suffering and miseries. Patanjali Yoga Sutra is about psychology and it deals on the Mind and explains the root cause and way to overcome the problems faced by human. The root cause is identified as Klesa i.e. The actions based on ignorance (avidya). There are five klesas viz Avidya(ignorance), “Asmita (wrong identity), Raaga (Attachment to what we consider as sukam), Dvesha (repulsive to what we feel as dukha), abinivesha (fear to loose the one which one think belongs to him). Klesa vrttis will give pain. Avidya is the root cause for other four klesas and hence we can simply say Klesa means avidya which is the root cause of ones misery. By understanding our ignorance, learning to reduce their stranglehold on life and destroying them, we can reduce pain and suffering, distractions, afflictions, hindrances. Avidya is the major cause for ones action which is against to his body or to the society. Action through klesa vrttis leading to karma will have its reflection either immediately or later. Our body contains trillions of cells and we consider the total sum of cells as “one person”. In the same way all living beings need to be considered as “one” and I am just part of the whole world. When this truth is established, “Love” will blossom. But the reality is we have divided us from other living being, we have created border between countries, compete with each other and wars are the proof of selfishness. Mass outcome of actions from human being based on selfishness is the root cause of mass destruction to humanity. Therefore, cause of pandemic is due to covid 19 virus is only the last cause and not the root cause. Root cause is the mass karma of the entire humanity as a whole and its reflections. In this paper, the simplest solution identified are bringing awareness to oneself by imparting the Self Knowledge / “Who am I” and adherence to Yama (discipline towards society) and Niyama (discipline towards oneself) which are part of the Astanga Yoga (eight limbs of yoga).

Keywords: Patanjali, Yogasutra, pandemic, karma, cause and effect, sankhya, yama, niyam, klesha, astanga yoga, covid,

Introduction

The pandemic, unquestionably, presents an era-defining challenge to public health, both physical and mental. During the latest COVID-19 pandemic, we experienced extreme circumstances like stress, anxiety, fear, deaths, sadness, Negative emotions, mind poisons, life uncertainty and money struggle were and loneliness. The psychological and

psychiatric implications of this pandemic tend to underestimate and shakes our comfort level. The scientific world was unable to cope-up the issues even the developed countries USA, UK also struggled during this situation. Anxiety and distress are normal responses to such extreme circumstances for the victims and the other survivors. This makes us to investigate can a invisible virus do this, and why only 1% is the death % on the covid affected cases . Though scientifically we say this is due to lack of immunity, the root cause were identified and elaborated in yoga sutra.

Significance of the paper

1. Significance is to find out the major root cause of pandemics and the importance of self-disciplines mentioned in yogasutra viz Yama, Niyama.
2. In future this might help scholars to take this with subjects for detailed study to show that observance of yama and niyama allows for acceleration of this process.

Most of the spiritual text indicates that the cause of human misery is ones action and its reflection which is called as Karma. In this case whether the action belongs to one we did from the Day-1 of our birth or it has any carry forward effect. Everyone is aware of the answer that we are born with imprints as the astrology gives affirmation details generated based of date of birth and time (Horoscope). This truth is enumerated in sutra 4.9.

Original Text 4.9

जातिदेशकालव्यवहितानामप्यानन्तर्यं स्मृतिसंस्कारयोरेकरूपत्वात् ॥ ४.९ ॥

Transliteration

jātidēśakālavayavahitānāmapyānantaryam smṛtisaṁskārayorekarūpatvāt ॥ 4.9 ॥

Meaning

The imprints of the actions (samskaras) influences another action, and this belongs to **one person inspite** of actions done in the previous birth which would have taken in a different form of birth in different place or time. These samskaras, carry over from one life to the next by impressing upon the mind around the soul. When we try to explain about Karma, we introduce words like mind and soul which again needs to be explained. Yoga Sutra has defined what is mind and soul too through PYS 2.18.

Original Text PYS #2.18

प्रकाशक्रियास्थितिशीलं भूतेन्द्रियात्मकं भोगापवर्गार्थं दृश्यम् ॥१८॥

Transliteration

prakāśakriyāsthitiśīlam bhūteन्द्रियात्मकam bhogāpavargārtham dṛśyam

Meaning / Commentary

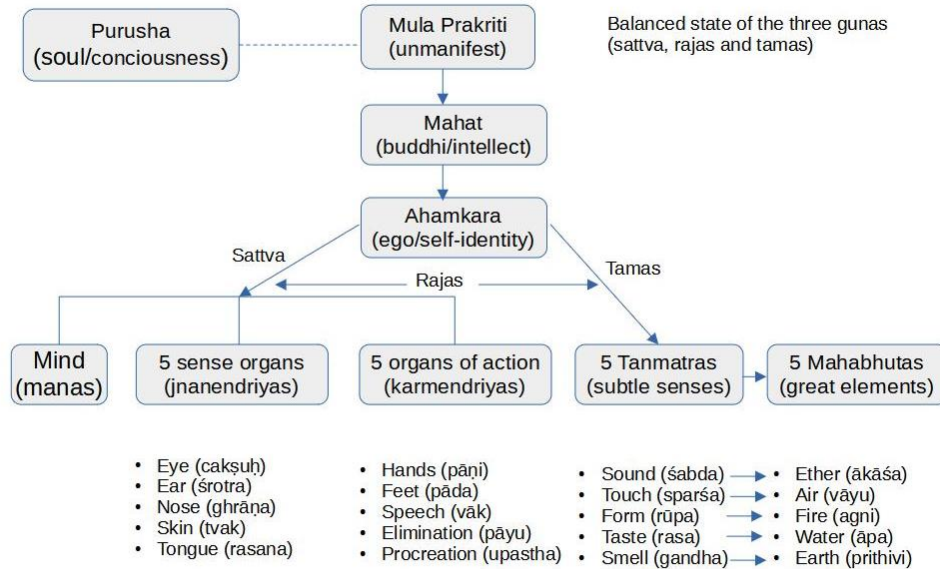
Brightness (sattva- harmony) activity (rajas-activity/passion), inertia (tamas – darkness and chaos) is referring to the three gunas are the basic elements of formation of Universe.

Iswara (Vishesapurusha)



+

25 Tattvas (elements)



“Manas, Ahamkar and Buddhi are considered as mind”. It is clear that the manas, budhi indriyani and karma indriyani are the outcome of sattvic energy from Ahamkar (tools for the soul) for its liberation. This truth clearly indicates that the nature of humanbeing is “satvic”. However, when one interacts with nature with klesha vrittis, one absorbs the tamasic gunas of nature similar to iron gets the property of the magnet when it interacts. There is another option to interact with nature in Nirguna (without gunas) too which is the quality of the “soul” as every one in this world has this potential. In order to interact in Nirguna state, one needs to develop satvic qualities and then transcend. Life is a choice. Satvic nature of activities decides whether the tool buddhi (intellect) leading to actions of Dharma (human values/discipline), Jnanam (wisdom), Vairagya (non-attachmen), Aiswaryam (excellence). If the actions are based on Tamas, buddhi will act in an opposite way i.e adharma, ajnanam, raaga, aneeswaryam. Why do human clinging on to Tamas activities and root cause is “Klesa vrttis”. Introduction of new words like Klesa vrttis needs more explanation quoting yoga sutra.

Yoga Sutra 2.3 explains about five Kleshas viz. Avidya(ignorance) being the parent of all. Thus we can say Avidhya as klesha. The *kleshas* of ego, attraction, aversion, and fear, are reactions of the mind to almost every situation leading to pain

Original Text

अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेषाभिनिवेशः क्लेशाः ॥२.३॥

Transliteration

avidyasmitaragadveshabhiniveshah kleshaah //2.3//

Meaning

Ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life - are the five Klesas. Patanjali Yoga sutra also indicates that the Avidya is the like root of the tree and others are its branches through YS-2.4

Now we need to know what exactly “Avidya” denotes. Yoga Sutra 2.5 explains the same.

Original Text

अनित्याशुचिदुःखानात्मसु नित्यशुचिसुखात्मख्यातिरविद्या ॥ २.५॥

Transliteration

anityāśuciduḥkhānātmasu nityaśucisukhātmakhyātiravidyā .. 2.5..

Meaning

True potential of humanbeing is to interact with nature is “Nirguna”. To be in that state, one need to interact with nature in Satvic nature as manas, buddhi & karma indhriyani are having predominant satvic guna. However, if a humanbeing interact with nature with “Tamasic “ nature, it leads to have wrong perception and hence he considers permanent as impermanent, pure as impure, painful as happy, non-eternal as eternal and vice versa. Addiction to alcohol, tobacco products are considered as joyful against its reality of “painful” .

In the competitive world because of tamasic guna with kleasha vritti, one identifies himself as his body and involves in the things that are against the human disciplines : Violence, telling lies, Stealing, Non-self control, possessing things. Similarly impure, unhappiness, undisciplines, no self-control which are the root cause for the pandemic mass misery to the humanity, If situation arises then follow the medical and scientific inputs prescribed by Local Government and WHO. But Prevention is better than cure; to avoid such instances to occur in future. Patanjali Yoga Sutra 2.16 clearly indicates that one need to forget the past and needs to be in the present moment and take action to avoid further miseries in our life.

Original Text 2.16

हेयं दुःखमनागतम् ॥२.१६॥

Transliteration

heyam duhkham anagatam //2.16//

Meaning

The misery which is not yet come is avoidable. Certainly, the virus is a reminder of the age-old saying, As you sow so shall you reap, or, every action has an equal and opposite reaction.

Patanjali Yoga Sutra not just identifies the root cause of our issues. It also provides simplest solutions. One of its advice to humanity is that first two parts of astanga yoga viz. yama and niyama needs to be adhered by all of us.

YAMA - (First limb of yoga) – Discipline towards society.

These are Social Ethics or the basic rules of ethical conduct that should be practiced at all times they are the don'ts. The yamas are abstaining from harming others, from falsehood, from theft, from moral infidelity, and from greed.

Original Text PYS 2.30

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥३०॥

Transliteration

Ahimsāsatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ||30||

Meaning / Commentary

Non-injury --harmlessness-- (ahimsā), Veracity --truthfulness-- (satya), Abstention from stealing (asteya), Continence --dwelling in Brahma-

NIYAMA- (SECOND LIMB OF YOGA)– Discipline towards oneself.

Personal Ethics - These are the dos, the observances and virtuous behaviours. The niyamas are purity, contentment, tapas (mortification), svadhyaya (self-study), and devotion to Ishwara (God).

Original Text PYS # 2.32 & 2.32

शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥३२॥

वितर्कबाधने प्रतिपक्षभावनम् ॥३३॥

Transliteration

Śaucasantoṣatapahsvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ||32||

Meaning / Commentary

YS-2.32. Purity, contentment, austerity, introspection and devotion to the Īśvara are the Niyama.

Conclusion

Though Patanjali has given the astanga yoga for ones liberation, the first two part of the astanga yoga – Yama and Niyama, if practiced, the situation even like the pandemic can also be avoided. The reason for non-adherence to Yama and Niyama are out of ignorance as both of them will give various benefits to the individual as well to the society. This indicates that right attitude is important for us to begin working with our body. Tools for cultivating happiness are Yamas and Niyama. Moreover, this study suggests that last pandemic might make people turn to the ancient traditions to find wisdom and understanding to their experiences. The theory of gunas, pancha klesha, Karma, and the study and understanding the importance of Yama and Niyama for ones own benefit can help us develop better habits to be friendly to oneself and humanity. Perhaps we are being reminded to love and respect God's creation, for it provides us with unlimited abundance, regardless of our religion, country, language, colour, creed, position, or wealth. To contemplate his gifts is truly humbling. Optimistically we can consider this pandemic to help us appreciate nature and one another more, to be more giving, more caring, more loving. Many cultural and social changes have come across post pandemic like online classes, and usage of emedia and digital world for education as well professional services, good relationship between the colleagues, better employer &employee relationship have

contributed to the improving self discipline and make people realize action is love and love is god. When the entire humanity follows yama and niyama, we could see the swarg (considered as a place dukha less experiences) in earth.

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