

ACOMPARATIVESTUDYOFYOGANGÂSINHATHA-YOGAANDPATANJALI YOGASUTRÂS

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A comparison between Hatha-yoga and Patanjali-yoga is worth studying owing the similarities and dissimilarities in both these systems of yoga. Strictly speaking even though the *Yoga Sûtras* of Patanjali is not a Hatha-yoga work, yet it provides a systematic codification of Yoga. Its principal practical doctrine revolves around *Astanga Yoga* (Yoga of Eight-limbs) system viz., *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Âsana*, *Prânâyâma*, *Pratyâhâra*, *Dhâraṇa*, *Dhyâna* and *Samâdhi*. Similar *Astanga yoga* system is broadly adhered to by most of the Hatha-yoga treatises.

The distinction between the two systems is primarily due to the fact that Patanjali-yoga is paired with the *Samkhya system* and they mutually shed light upon their philosophies by complimenting each other unlike Hatha-yoga. Secondly, we have neither textual evidence which provides any explicit reference to Hatha-yoga in Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* nor do we have any explicit reference to Patanjali's Yoga system in any of the principal hatha-yoga manuals. Despite their great similarity in their schemes, the Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* do not elaborate the hatha-yoga techniques described in hatha-yoga manuals.

The first major difference between Patanjali-Yoga and Hatha-yoga manuals is that the latter do not consider the necessity of the practice of *Yama* and *Niyama* which precede the rest of the limbs according to Patanjali. The lack of emphasis on *Yama* and *Niyama* in the hatha-yoga treatises should not be mistaken that it is less holistic in its nature towards the spiritual progress. It may be pointed out that even among hatha-yoga manuals the description of *Yama* and *Niyamas* is radically different from that of Patanjali. Many hatha-yoga manuals like the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the *Mandalabrahmanopanisad*, the *Yoga Yajnavalkya*, the *Vasistha Samhitha*, the *Hatha Ratnavali* and the *Yoga Marga Prakasika* enumerate the number of *Yamas* which vary from four to sixteen and *Niyamas* which vary from four to ten before the rest of the six limbs similar to Patanjali, its practitioner derives physical and psychological benefits respectively from them. Moreover, an intensive study of Patanjali's *Astanga Yoga* in the light of its Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries would enable us to understand that the key limbs of hatha-yoga are well known to Patanjali. In such



works as where *Yama Niyamas* are omitted or not made mandatory, the *Shatkarmas* (Six cleansing techniques) are suggested to replace *Niyamas* like 'sauca' (cleanliness) of Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*.¹

Similar to hatha-yoga texts proper viz., the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the *Gheranda Samhita*, the Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* do not touch upon certain key techniques of hatha-yoga viz., the six cleansing techniques (*Shatkarmas*), Seals and Locks (*Mudrâs* and *Bandhas*). Of these, the *Shatkarmas* or *Shatkriyas* comprise *Dhauti*, *Vasti*, *Neti*, *Trataka*, *Nauli* and *Kapalabhati*. Even though the primary aim of 'Shatkarmas' is to maintain balance among the three *doshas* (viz., *vata*, *pitta* and *kapha*) in course of one's *prânâyâma*, vide Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*² 'sauca' results in the purity of *sattva*, one-pointedness, mastery of one's senses and fitness for Self-realization which are compatible with the objective of 'shatkarmas' in hatha-yoga system. Similar to Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* according to certain important hatha-yoga manuals like the *HathaYoga Pradipika* and the *Yoga Marga Prakasika* the practice of the six cleansing techniques results in the sense-withdrawal from their objects; facilitates *prâna* to enter into *Susumna* and enables one to realize one's Self.

When compared with the hatha-yoga treatises the Patanjali *Yoga Sustras* do not either explicitly stress the two limbs namely *Âsana* and *Prânâyâma* or they give meager attention to these third and fourth limbs. In hatha-yoga literature the limb of bodily postures (*Âsanas*) are discussed in detail since the scheme of hatha-yoga consider 'Âsana' as the first and the foremost step which enables to develop steadiness and agility, endurance, vitality etc., and serves as an instrument in opening energy channels and psychic centers thereby helping its practitioner not only to conquer one's body but also ultimately leads to control of one's mind. In spite of there being no mention about any particular postures (*âsanas*) in Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*, we can not assume that Patanjali is unaware of the multiplicity of postures referred in Hatha-yoga manuals since the Commentaries of Vyasa and Vijnana Bikshu on Patanjali *Yoga sûtras*³ enumerate ten postures and refer to others of the same kind which can be practised comfortably beginning with the four most important ones namely the Lotus (*Padma*), the Hero (*Veera*), the Decent (*Bhadra*), and the Mystic (*Svastika*) postures. Vijnana Bikshu's Commentary states the characteristics of the above four postures quoting them from Vasistha. Even though Patanjali had the knowledge of all the above mentioned *âsanas* and perhaps all others enumerated in hatha-yoga manuals, due to the constraints of his *Sûtra* style, unlike his Commentators, we may assume that he did not mention any of them except by furnishing the bare definition of 'Âsana' (Bodily posture) and the objectives of its practice vide Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*.⁴



Although *Prânâyâma* is considered as the most important limb in both the systems of hatha-yoga as well as the Patanjali Yoga, their connotations vary to some extent. Whereas based on the nature of *Kumbhaka* Patanjali distinguishes the nature of different *prânâyâmas*, the hatha-yoga manuals draw a distinction between different *kumbhakas* based on the nature of ‘*recaka*’ and ‘*puraka*’. Unlike in Patanjali the hatha-yoga manuals consider *Mudrâs* as an important limb since it awakens the *nâdi* centers and facilitates *prâna* to enter *Susumna*. In hatha-yoga literature the range of number of *Mudrâs* vary from one to twenty-five out of which ten have been regarded as most important. *Mudrâ* an essential component of *prânâyâma* which is otherwise known as “prolonged retention of *prâna*” has been omitted in Patanjali’s Yoga system. But among the four modes of retention of breath referred in Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* and VijnanaBikshu’s Commentary on them namely (i) the external retention (*Bahya Vritti*), i.e. absence of movement after exhalation, (ii) the internal retention (*Abhyantara Vritti*), i.e., absence of movement after inhalation, (iii) the static retention (*Stambha Vritti*), i.e. absence of movement of both exhalation and inhalation, and (iv) the kind of *prânâyâma* which transcends the internal and external spheres, the third type of *prânâyâma* is nothing but the static retention (*Kumbhaka prânâyâma*) in hatha-yoga as elucidated by Vyasa’s Commentary on Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*.⁵

According to many hatha-yoga manuals, the third type of *Prânâyâma* viz., *Kumbhaka Prânâyâma* is sub-divided into two types viz., *Sahita Kumbhaka* (combined retention) and *Kevala Kumbhaka* (absolute retention). Among these, the intense practice of *Sahita Kumbhaka* precedes *Kevala Kumbhaka* which is equivalent to Patanjali’s fourth type of *prânâyâma*. In hatha-yoga perspective, its chief objective is to rouse the sleeping *kundalini* by using *Sushumna* as a vehicle which pierces the *Shat Chakras*. Through the practice of *prânâyâma* the posterior portion of the *Sushumna* is activated or awakened. Of the three phases of the *prânâyâma* viz., *kumbhaka*, *recaka* and *puraka* the first is divided into *Sahita* and *Kevala* and again the ‘*Sahita*’ is classified into “*Asta kumbhakas*” (or eight varieties of pranayamas). The “*Sahita kumbhaka*” is further sub-divided into ‘*Sagarbha*’ and ‘*Nigarbha*’. Whoever masters the *Kevala Kumbhaka* is said to have attained the goal Raja-yoga. According to Patanjali, of the above modes of *prânâyâma*, the first three kinds are regulated by place, time, number, prolonged and subtle. Hatha-yoga refers to four pre-requisites of *prânâyâma* viz., Place (*Sthana*), Time (*Kala*), Moderate diet (*Mithahara*) and Purification of *Nâdis* (*Nâdi suddhi*) by fulfilling which an aspirant who practices *Prânâyâma* successfully controls the movement of the mind. The fourth kind of *prânâyâma* does not arise instantly by single effort as it progresses gradually stage by stage. The hatha-yoga manuals too describe the three stages in the *Kumbhaka prânâyâma* viz., perspiration, tremor and levitation. The fourth and the highest kind of *prânâyâma* referred by Patanjali⁶ is the outcome of the successful practice of the



first three kinds of the breath retention. In other words the practices of the first three kinds of *prânâyâma* are only different stages of preparation to undertake the real *prânâyâma* which cannot be practiced until a *Sadhaka* acquires the capacity to practice *Kumbhaka* for fairly long period of time without any strain. According to Vyasa's Commentary on Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*⁷ the practice of fourth kind of *prânâyâma* involves the transcendence of inhalation as well as exhalation and the retention of breath is not subjected to spacial, temporal and the numerical factors. Due to its complete and indefinite duration it is called "absolute retention" (*kevala kumbhaka*). Hatha-yoga manuals unanimously point out that as long as a *Sadhaka* cannot achieve the state of *Kevala Kumbhaka*, such a person should continue the practice of *Sahita Kumbhaka* (combined retention). Hence we may hold that like Hatha-yoga manuals, Patanjali too did not disregard *Kevala Kumbhaka*. On the other hand, like Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*, Hatha-yoga manuals clearly specify 'Time' and 'Number' with regard to *Kumbhaka Prânâyâma* by pointing out that one should practice static retention four times a day namely the early morning, the midday, evening and mid-night by raising their number eighty times during the four stipulated hours.

The absence of *Mudrâs* in the Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* should not be mistaken that Patanjali did pay little or no attention to the former because again due to the nature of brevity of *Sûtra* style in which the *Yoga Sûtras* are composed, he did not explicitly refer to them. Further, Locks (*Bandhas*) which are the essential component in the application of Seals (*Mudrâs*) have been made explicit in hatha-yoga manuals where as Patanjali who took the *Mudrâs* for granted by making them implicit component suggested them in rudimentary terminology. According to hatha-yoga manuals the expiration and retention of breath constitute the "Mahabandha" which comprises the performance of three *bandhas* viz., *Jalandhara*, *Uddiyana* and *Mulabandha*. Therefore, we may safely contend that *bandhas* (locks) are also implicitly contained in Patanjali's *Astanga Yoga*.

It is quite interesting to note that despite there being no reference to six energy centers (*Shat-chakras*), conduits (*nâdis*), winds (*vâyus*) in the *Vibhuti Pada* of Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*,⁸ we come across terms like Naval channel (*nabhi-chakra*), the Well of the throat (*Kanta-kupa*) which have their parallels in *Mani puraka* (Navel wheel) and *Visuddhi chakra* (Throat wheel). Vide Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*⁹ we come across other terms such as Tortoise channel (*Kurma nâdi*), radiance in the head (*murdha jyoti*), the Upbreath and Localized winds (*Udana* and *Samana Vâyus*) all of which imply Patanjali's knowledge of the concept of 'Kundalini'.

As distinct from the Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* which consider 'Pratyâhâra' as an external limb (*bahiranga*), Hatha-yoga manuals regard it as an internal limb (*abhyantara*) by viewing it in five-fold dimension. As distinct from Patanjali hatha-



yoga manuals regard 'Dharana' as concentration of mind and vital breath on five elements or on their corresponding deities within the human body. As distinct from Patanjali hatha-yoga manuals specify the particular object and the place of 'Dhyâna' in the human body. Hatha-yoga manuals commonly agree that 'Dhyâna' is two-fold: *Saguna* and *Nirguna* of which the former is the meditation on one's own 'chosen' or 'prescribed' deity or on the *Nâdi* centres while the latter includes the meditation on either *Brahman* or *Nâda*, the inner Sound.

All the Orthodox and most of the heterodox Indian philosophical systems, commonly affirm the possibility of release from *Samsara*. In consonance with this spirit, all the yoga systems denote their respective techniques for attaining liberation. Hatha-yoga as well as Patanjali Yoga systems in particular involve a kind of training of the mind designed to bring an adherent to a state of realization. One of the common spiritual purposes of hatha-yoga as well as Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras* is *kaya sadhana*. Vide his *Yoga Sûtras*¹⁰ Patanjali holds that constraint (*Samyama*) upon the gross and subtle elements results in the attainment of the "perfection of the physical body (*kaya sampat*) endowed with strength and "adamantine hardness" (*bala-vajra-samhnavani*) which have parallel in *Natha* ideal of *Jivan mukti* through *Pinda Siddhi* (immaculate body) which is nothing but "*Kaya siddhi*". Patanjali also refers vide his *Yoga Sûtras*¹¹ a kind of bodily perfection attained through austerity which is stated as lower in status to the bodily perfection (*kayendriya siddhi*) referred in Patanjali *Yoga Sûtras*.¹² Whereas according to Patanjali¹³ bodily perfection is viewed as a consequence of meditative discipline (*Samyama*), in the hatha-yoga context it is considered as the outcome of the *Prâna*-retention accomplished especially through *Kumbhaka* and *Mudrâ*.

According to Patanjali Yoga 'Samadhi' is classified primarily into two kinds: 'Samprajnata' (Conscious) and the 'Asamprajnata' (Supra-conscious). Among these *Samprajnata Samâdhi* is defined¹⁴ as a state of *sampatti* in which one's *citta* merges either in a gross or a subtle object or in bliss (*ananda*) and the "True Self" (*asmita*). *Samprajnata Samâdhi* is accompanied by four states of consciousness viz., *Vitarka* (Reasoning), *Vicara* (Reflection or Deliberation), *Ananda* (Bliss or Joy) and *Asmita* (Sense of Pure being or individuality or I-am-ness). In contrast to the above, 'Asamprajnata Samadhi' is devoid of the four states of consciousness. *Samprajnata samapatti* or *samâdhi* is of two kinds viz., *Sabija* and *Nirbija*. Of these, *Sabija samâdhi* has four forms viz., *Savitarka*, *Nirvitarka*, *Savicara* and *Nirvicara*. Whereas "Sabija Smadhi" is permeated with the partial truth, due to the 'seed' which prevents the mind from shining with the whole truth, *Nirbija Samâdhi* consists of only bliss (*ananda*) and *asmita* (the self or I-am-ness).



According to Patanjali¹⁵ after passing through the two preliminary stages of *Dhârana* and *Dhyâna*, having cut off completely from the physical world, one's consciousness passes through beginning with the lower mental plane (*Manomaya kosa*), Casual plane (*Vijnanamaya kosa*), plane of bliss (*Anandamaya kosa*) and ending with the *Atmic* plane (*asmita*). The progressive succession of consciousness with its characteristic 'pratyaya' in *Samprajnata samâdhi* and *Asamprajnata samâdhi* without 'pratyaya' are practiced by a yogi until one is established in one's 'svarupa' wherein one's consciousness becomes one with the consciousness of *Purusha* called as *Dharma Megha*.¹⁶ According to this *sûtra* the combined practice of "Vivieke Khyati" and "Para-Vairagya" results ultimately in the culmination of "Dharma-Megha Samâdhi" which completely burns up the seeds of *Samskaras* which obscures Reality like a cloud. The attainment of "Dharma-Megha Samâdhi" completely destroys *Avidya* for ever and leads to the cessation of the union (*samyoga*) of *Purusha* and *Prakrti* referred by Patanjali.¹⁷ "Dharma-Megha Samâdhi" is the final goal of *Purusha* who attains the full Self-realization or *Kaivalya*. According to Patanjali 'Kaivalya'¹⁸ is the ultimate state of enlightenment attained at the end of a long evolutionary process which extends over innumerable lives. In the state of *Kaivalya*, *Purusha* gets established in his Real nature of "Pure Consciousness" which is the utmost transcendent state of consciousness characterized by acme of bliss. Similar to Patanjali's classification of different categories of *Samâdhi* referred above, Hatha-yoga manuals also characterize *Samâdhi* by varied description. Whereas according to Patanjali's definition of Yoga as "Cittvrtti nirodha"¹⁹ the term 'nirodha' may be understood as a restraint of modification of the mind which facilitates the retaining of the vital principle within one's body, in the hatha-yoga context it is the suspension of the flow of the *prâna* which results in the same goal of the realization of the Self.

Based on their individual experience great Seers and Teachers of Hatha-yoga described different means of *Samadhi*²⁰. Treatises of Hatha-yoga proper viz., the *Yoga yajnavalkya* the *Siddha Siddhanta paddhati*, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the *Gheranda Samhita* while enumerating the synonyms of the state of liberation declare that *Samadhi*, *Unmani* or *Manonmani*, *Sahajavastha*, *Raja-yoga* and *Jivanmukti* besides several others are identical in their essential nature²¹. The above famous treatises on Hatha-yoga characterize *Samadhi* as the state of liberation or enlightenment wherein the noose of existence is destroyed;²² the state of identifying individual self with Supreme self;²³ as equanimous state of all the elements withdrawn from the objects of senses;²⁴ merging of the mind with the self similar to the salt in water;²⁵ the state of harmony where in due to steadiness of *prana* in *kumbhaka* one's mind absorbs in the self;²⁶ the state of equilibrium wherein due to termination of ideation *Jivatman* unites with *Paramatman*;²⁷ the state of quiescence of *prana* in the Void, i.e., *Brahmarandhara*;²⁸ the absorption of one's mind in the Void resulted from



the flowing of prana in the *Sushumna* and awakening of *Kundalini*;²⁹ integration of the mind which is devoid of subject-object duality and perfect Bliss resulted from absorption;³⁰ as detachment of *manas* from the body and its identification with atman as the state of '*nirlipta*' and realization of the identity of Atman and Brahman.³¹ The goal of entire Hatha-yoga discipline viz., Raja-yoga is attained by abandoning all objects of knowledge and absorption into absolute Being, Consciousness and Bliss when a Yogi's mind dissolves in Reality like Camphor in fire and Salt in water³² one attains the state of 'absoluteness (Kaivalya)³³ which corresponds to the ultimate state of enlightenment or '*Kaivalya*' discussed by Patanjali.

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