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INTROSPECTION IS MEDIUM FOR SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS – YOGA PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The introspection and transforming into various state of Consciousness is very much a part of Yoga. Material Consciousness is the state in which one lives by lure of senses and have attachment with men and materials. The Self-Consciousness is the state in which one realizes one's own 'Self'. Through introspection, emotional states can be converted into contentment, tolerance, charity, chastity, equanimity and magnanimity. The pacification of the unwanted emotions is prerequisite to elevate the man to the state of Self-Consciousness. This study focuses on understanding the possibility of transforming the Material Consciousness into Self-Consciousness through Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY). SKY Introspection is the practice which includes pacification, purification and transformation. This study also includes in understanding the same in terms of Bhagavatgita and yoga sutra perspectives.



KEYWORDS: Simplified Kundalini Yoga, Introspection, Vethathiri Maharishi, Self-Consciousness, Prathyahara, Pacification.

INTRODUCTION :-

When man starts inner activity of consciousness through the method of yoga, he first diverts him from the involvement with the visible to the inner self. This is termed as Withdrawal and which also encourages Introspection. Introspection means that the act of looking within one self, observation or examination of one's own mental and emotional state, mental processes, impressions, especially for long periods. The self-examination makes one to aware of the emergence of various emotions, their causes and effects. Emotion is defined as a mental state that arises spontaneously rather than through conscious effort and is often accompanied by physiological changes. The desire, anger, joy and sorrow are coming under the category of emotions. One can moralize his desires, neutralize the anger, eradicate worries and tries to know "who am I" through yoga. This sum total of activity can be called introspection.

Material Consciousness is the state in which one lives by lure of senses and have attachment with men and materials. The Self-Consciousness is the state in which one realizes one's own 'Self' and have 'detached-attachment' with men and materials. This study focuses on understanding the possibility of transforming the

Material Consciousness into Self-Consciousness through Simplified Kundalini Yoga (SKY). This Yoga of Modern Age which is popularly known as 'SKY', have been proposed by Vethathiri Maharishi (1911-2006) of South India. Even though SKY encompasses the concept of Prathyahara, Dharana and Samadhi of Classical yoga system, it is a yoga-technique of simplified and easily performable introspection and Meditation practices. This study also includes understanding the subject in terms of Bhagavatgita and yoga sutra perspectives.

BHAGAVATGITA PERSPECTIVE:

Bhagavatgita explains that the withdrawal is dispassion or desirelessness on external activity and it can be achieved by concentrating his mind living alone in solitude. One's mind can be truly assessed by one self when being alone in solitude (Bhagavadgita: 6:10) and restless mind can be curbed (Bhagavadgita: 6:35). It asserts that the disciplined mind leads to withdrawal and brings peace (Bhagavadgita: 6:15). Thus, Bhagavatgita advocates 'looking within oneself' and asserts that the relinquishment of possessions and idea of possessions through the practice of introspection is also prelude to good meditation (Bhagavadgita: 6:10).

Regarding the emotions, it explains that desire, passion and anger, are the emotions of sinful, and they manifest from rajoguna (Bhagavadgita: 3:37). The desire becomes greed, which covers the knowledge, becomes a destructive force and enemy to all human beings. The emotions delude man by veiling his wisdom (Bhagavadgita: 3:40). This results in taints in all his doing, due to his evil genius of distorted grasp of dharma and adharma (Bhagavadgita: 18:31), and view all things in perverted way. (Bhagavadgita: 18:32). Since the Knowledge and Realization by intuiting the Reality are impossible to a man of worldly desires which smother the splendor of Atman, the pacification of this is required. And also asserts that Supreme Bliss is attained by the yogi whose mind is calm after passions are pacified by introspection practice. (Bhagavadgita: 6:27). The one who works unattached without clinging to the fruits of work attains Supreme (Bhagavadgita: 3:19). It is assured that pacification accelerates one to attain Brahman. (Bhagavadgita: 5:6).

YOGA SUTRA PERSPECTIVE:

Patanjali provides a place for withdrawal and appreciate as one of the limbs of Astanga yoga, Prathyahara. He elucidates that withdrawal is the condition where in the sense organs are not coming in contact with object and become one with mind (Y.S:2:54), leads to pacification or harmonizing the emotion. It inclines an individual to turn into self.

The introspection is very much advocated by Patanjali that Svadhyaya is part of Kriya yoga (Y.S.2:1) and the self-observation is brought under the category of Niyama of Astanga yoga (Y.S.2:32). The scope of introspection is elucidated that, which tunes our own self towards personally chosen divine imagery. (Y.S.2:44). The method of introspection is interpreted that when wrong impulses assail, through right thoughts they must be countered (Y.S: 2:33). During the practice of yama and niyama discipline, the yogi must counter the impulses like hatred, anger and covetousness through reflection in opposite manner.

Patanjali elucidates that illusion associated with worry, miserliness, attachment and anger are emotions and they result in suffering. He also explains that the urges to injure, kill, utter falsehood done by oneself or caused to be done through others, or approved by one are arising from greed, anger and delusion, of mild, moderate and extreme kind cause sorrow, delusion and endless distress. (Y.S:2:34). The emotions are arising due to the dispositions, rooted from the kleshas of ignorance, claim for self, attachment, aversion and clinging to life (Y.S.2:3). Patanjali asserts that the emotions need to be pacified because the strong impulses of positive emotion lead to the threshold of transcendental state, and awareness of Purusha happens when desires transcend the qualities. (Y.S.1:16). This is possible by pacification. He also pronounces that since the five elements function as a tool for the manifestation of emotions, (Y.S.2:18) one has to practice only the primordial element to remove emotions. (Y.S.1:32). Thus, withdrawal helps the bio-consciousness to realize its own 'Self' through bringing in stability. It is also observed that withdrawal is training the bio-consciousness after the primordial module. Svadhyaya promotes the unison with the personified divine imagery. Thus, transcending senses and being at the state of Spiritual Consciousness is possible.

SIMPLIFIED KUNDALINI YOGA PERSPECTIVE:

Vethathiri Maharishi clarify that detachment from men and materials mentally is withdrawal. It is advocated that it can be achieved by following awareness of limit and method principle in enjoyment. Since the mind is neither get involved with materials nor making undue attempts to avoid them with full awareness of the nature, this state is called as ‘detached attachment’ or ‘true detachment’ or Nishkamy karma. He places the withdrawal as part of meditation. Withdrawal is the deviation from the body and also silence; the first step towards the Brahman; a rehearsal for perfection. Vethathiri Maharishi asserts that withdrawal makes introspection effective. Thus, both introspection and withdrawal is complimentary to each other.

Introspection means not only just examining and understanding thoughts but also regulates and corrects them. Vethathiri Maharishi defines that introspection is the practice of examining oneself, discovering the unwanted imprints and purifying them by clarity of knowledge or super imposition through proper virtuous deeds. In this process, thoughts should rise with awareness, watching over itself, and making corrections all the time. Thus it involves analyzing and reviewing the results of every action immediately it is performed earlier. Introspection process precede for understanding the functioning of mind by constantly observing the thoughts that arise in the mental plane and trying to trace the source from which they arise. Vethathiri Maharishi brings out organs of introspection which encompasses six subjects viz. (a) Philosophy of life (b) Analysis of Thoughts (c) Moralization of Desires (d) Neutralization of Anger (e) Eradication of Worry (f) Self-Realization.

a) Philosophy of life:

The human activity will be fruitful only when one realizes the purpose of life. Vethathiri Maharishi says that the purpose of life is the purification of sin imprints, realizing the Divine State, and enjoy the worldly pleasure with limit and method. Man is not living as separate entity without influence of surroundings and other living beings. He lives in society and his life is interdependent with other fellow humans. Understanding the philosophy of life is prerequisite for understanding the purpose life and living accordance with philosophy of life promotes the achievement of purpose of life, perfection.

Vethathiri reveals that the philosophy of life comprises the needs, protections, harmonious relationship with others and finally the transformation towards the purpose of life. The needs arising from the sensations related to hunger and thirst, needs born of variations in the climate and needs arising from the pressure of excretory forces are to be satisfied. The protection against the enmity of other living beings, protection against natural disasters and protection against accidents need to be taken care of for achieving the purpose life.

To live in a society without problems, the cooperation and goodwill of the others is necessary. So disciplines including certain virtues are essential. They are understood as morality, duty and charity. They are known as not giving pain, repay the debt incurred from society in life time by working for the benefits self and others without expectation, and assist or help persons of inability. The practice of morality will create the awareness in action and promotes the process of pacification. Charity unburdens the mind, reducing the emotional moods and so promotes pacification.

The development of consciousness is identified through three stages viz. Faith, Understanding and Realization. These are revealed by Vethathiri Maharishi as, “Faith is following the edification of the wise; Understanding is when one begins to realize the Laws of Nature, the social values, and the greatness of man, through deep analysis, as well as the insight gained from others, and living in accordance with it, without harming anyone; Living in accordance with the Philosophy of Life, the laws of Nature, and the knowledge regarding the greatness and origin of the Consciousness, gained through realization. Thus the purpose of life of man, completion of the journey consciousness, will be achieved through realizing one’s own self.

b) Analysis of Thoughts:

Vethathiri Maharishi reveals that thoughts are arising from the mind, mind is the compilation of many thoughts. It is necessary to analyze the quality, power, consequences and diversity of thoughts to make them favorable for transformation of individual of animal tendencies to human and divine. The character transformation may happen only when the contents of mind, thoughts, are transformed. But it is natural that man is slave to the thoughts which are in higher strengths. Thus weakening of evil thoughts and strengthening of good thoughts will be possible only when one knows what kinds of thoughts are emerging.

Introspection paves the way for purification of mind which is spoiled due to piling up of blemishes

accrued through sinful actions and resultant emotions. Nurturing good thoughts of which results in causing no pain or injury to oneself or others, in body or mind, immediately or later can be entertained and is possible all the time, through constant awareness.

When we have close look on our actions it is preceded by our thoughts. If we want regulate our actions we need to observe the thought process and must have effective control over underlying thoughts. The observation and analyzing of the thoughts ultimately help to overcome desires, anger, worries, and helps in realizing the Self, through constant awareness.

c) Moralization of Desires:

The desire becomes a mood only when it gets emotionally attached with men, material or enjoyment. It then becomes inordinate desire or greed. The roots for desire is need and is very much necessary for survival of living being and is a proof of the life energy working within the individual. Desires cannot be eliminated, for where there are no desires there is no life. But, the unchecked desire is the cause for all miseries. The pain or pleasure is in the method of pursuit and limitation of desire in life. When desire is kept under watch and awareness, it will result in a creative and purposeful life. The uncontrolled desires turn to greed, and greed when thwarted, becomes anger. The desire to accumulate things even at the cost of others' welfare is miserliness, and an inordinate desire for the other sex, immoral sexual passion. Unrestrained desire for wealth, fame and prestige is vanity and the tendency to give vent to anger, through use of strength, vengeance. Thus moralization of desires brings peace in individual.

d) Neutralization of Anger:

Anger is the aggravated state of mind to overcome the hindrances when desires are thwarted. This generates a force, which often is stronger than the desire or the obstruction, and is sufficient to remove it. This emotion also passed on through the generations. When it is suppressed, since it does greater harm than when given vent to, the neutralizing of anger in introspection is advocated because of it promotes the character of forgiveness and patience. Introspection leads to realizing the reasons for anger and the steps taken to eradicate them with constant auto-suggestions and blessings. Anger which obstructs advancement in spiritual progress, is pacified.

e) Eradication of Worry:

Worry is an emotion arising from inefficiency or lack of peace, on account of imagination by wrong calculation of happenings. The causes are inefficiency to understand the Law of Nature and lack of basic training in thinking and achieving to solve problems, and fear of the consequences of one's own actions always into bad or painful results or to imagine about the possible adverse events. Vethathiri Maharishi assures that worries can be overcome by developing the ability to analyze problems, building self-confidence, hard work, and courage. Problems can be solved and worries eradicated through awareness regarding the Laws of Nature, the prevailing social customs, the purpose of life, and living in accordance with the knowledge. Since one who understands the onset and end of problems and learns to bridge them with his knowledge, proceeding unhindered on his journey towards sublimation, the eradication of worry is prerequisite for the spiritual transformation.

f) Realizing 'Self' – Transformation into Self-Consciousness:

Vethathiri Maharishi elucidates that Ego is the main root cause of emotions and has two aspects of aggression and possession. The effects of emotions are lose of physical health, mental health, social health through chain actions, inviting the curse from those affected, affecting spiritual progress due to not able to attain subtler frequency during meditation practice and finally the early death due to the loss of life energy. The trail of this introspection process obtain the tactics of extricating ourselves from the six temperaments of greed, anger, miserliness, immoral sexual passion, vanity and vengeance which rule our minds, through proper analysis of our habits and knowledge. Through introspection, greed can be converted into contentment, anger into tolerance, miserliness into charity, immoral sex passion into chastity, vanity into equanimity and vengeance into magnanimity.

Even though the purpose of the sixth sense is to attain salvation through realization of the Truth, which exists beyond the five senses, the emotions are barriers to realize divinity. Since ignorance of truth engenders emotions, understanding the philosophy of Nature and Self (who am I?) will help man to be free of emotion, and keep his mind expanded so that he is aware of consequence of his actions, moralize his behavior.

The analysis about 'I' initially bring the answer that the "I" is a combination of a body, a mind and a soul. It further results in knowing the consciousness. Everything in the universe is understood as association of energy particles. A combination of the five elements resulted in the physical body, within which the Akash particles are present in the form of the life energy, 'Chithakash'. Thus objects and entire universe is physical manifestation of the Divine, and it is possible to see God Himself in the form of the objects. This assures that even 'I', 'Self' is Brahman. Thus, the knowledge about 'I' pacify the emotions and motivates one to get the experience of 'Self' and which in turn promotes transformation into Spiritual Consciousness.

Since every movement and action in the universe reflects on mankind and affects the body and mind appropriately, knowing the sciences of astronomy and astrology will be helpful to regulate one's activities, get expansion of mind to a greater extent which will give mental relaxation and freedom from undue attachments and emotions, such expansion helps in realization of truth.

Vethathiri Maharishi observed that the supreme impact of above said introspection practice is the transformation of Material Consciousness to Spiritual Consciousness. In material consciousness, bio-consciousness bound by desires, functioning from within the limits of the gross body and mired in sensory pleasures. But, the achievement of strength and discipline, is the state of bio-consciousness where in it has blossomed by withdrawing from the pursuit of pleasures, results in realizing itself, that is, Self-Consciousness. Self-Consciousness in which the object of consciousness is 'Self' or some aspect of the 'Self'. This is achieved by the withdrawal and introspection which are prerequisites for the liberation of the bio-consciousness.

CONCLUSION:

Withdrawal is an important step in understanding and managing the consciousness for the promotion of introspection. Introspection, is pacification of the emotions which are thwarting inner search. Once the man substantiates himself in the process of pacification through the introspection which sublime the harmful emotions, he totally can concentrate on the inner Self. In this process of pacification, the Material Consciousness transforms into Self-Consciousness. In the line of our ancient yoga scriptures of Bhagavadgita and Yoga sutra, the practice of Simplified Kundalini Yoga which includes the systematic practice of Introspection pacify and purify the unwanted emotions and elevate the man to the state of Self-Consciousness, which is also called Spiritual Consciousness.

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