

Yoga in Sramana Tradition

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Jainism and Buddhism

Vedic and Sramana; these are two main trends in Indian culture. Sramanic trends cover the two main religions, Jainism and Buddhism. Both have much in common in their ethical outlook and moral fervor. Etymologically Sramana derives from 'Srama' or 'sama' or 'Shama'. Literally 'Sramana' means who believe in dignity of strive (srama), equality (sama) and peace (sama). The followers of 'Jina' are called Jainas as well as the followers of 'Buddha' are called Buddhists. The word 'Jina' means a conqueror of senses, the spiritual vector. The religion of the 'Jina' is called Jainism and the religion of Buddha is called Buddhism. Dr. Jyoti Prasad wrote 'the term Jainism is an English rendering of the original Jaina-Dharma or Jina-Dharma. German Jainologists, like Leumann, Winternitz and Schubring prefer the form Jinismus or Jinism, which is considered to be etymologically correct rendering. Both the forms are, however, correct, Jainism meaning the religion of the Jainas and Jinism that of the 'Jina', although the former is more popular and in current use both in literature and common parlance.¹

According to Jain tradition, there were twenty four Tirthankaras. They are called 'Jinas' or 'Arhats'. Arhat or Jina Mahaveera was the last Tirthankara. Gautama Buddha was contemporary of Mahaveera. Ample references as Nigantha Natputta, Arhata, Sramana etc. are shown in Buddhist literature, those attested the antiquity of Jina- Jain religion. Both Gautama Buddha and Mahaveera were representatives of one and the same Sramana stream, but on the basis of the individual religious practice by them, some differences are to be found in those doctrines. However, there are many similarities between Jainism and Buddhism. The objectives of present articles is to highlight the main similarities and conspicuous features of 'Yoga' in Sramana tradition or Jain and Buddha religion.

The concept of Yoga

'Yoga' is a science of spiritual perfection. It has an important place in Indian culture. The presence of Yoga is available in whole religious, spiritual and philosophical thoughts as in a way of life. Almost all of us have heard something about 'Yoga' but only few of us have some idea about the true conception of 'Yoga'. The term 'Yoga' has been used in the various senses in Indian literature. In Atmanepadi of Divâdigana, word 'Yoga' finds from the root युज् समाधीरे (peace of mind), 'युजिर् योगे' (union) in Rudhâdigana and the word 'Yoga' derived from the root युज् संयमन्रे

(self-restraint) in Parasmaipada of Churâdigana.

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The Vedic tradition is the main source of detailed elucidation of the 'Yoga'. The Vedas, Upanisadas, Sm^otis, Purânas and Darúanas are the main scriptures of this tradition. Among all of them, the Pâtañjalyayogsûtra is a main treatise in which Vedic traditional Yoga has defined systematic and complete form.

There are many references can be found of Jain Tirthankaras in old Vedic scriptures as Rigveda, Bhagwat Purana etc. and in the carving on the walls of Hathigumfa caves by emperor Kharvel of Orissa and so on. According to these proofs, Jina Risabha was the first Yogi, who has attained the state of oneness with the soul and obtained the stage of full-fledged omniscience. The Jain canonical texts, Añgas, Upâñgas, Tattvârthasûtra, Samaysâra, Jnârnavâ, Yogasâra etc. scriptures are the original sources about the exposition of Yoga.

Buddha was also a great Yogi, who attained the state of oneness with the Supreme Being and obtained Nirvânâ. The description of Yoga is found in Pali texts, Tripitakas and non-canonical texts as Visudhimagga, Milinda Pañha etc.

Exposition of Yoga

Patañjali in his Yogasûtra propounded in detail all theoretical and practical aspects of Yoga and asked Yoga as restraint of all mental modifications or annihilations and mental functions.² The eight steps of Yoga which pointed out by Patañjali are listed below³:

1. Yamas (Abstinences)
2. Niyamas (Observances)
3. Asanas (Postures)
4. Prânâyâma (Breath control)
5. Pratyâhâra (Abstraction)
6. Dhâranâ (Concentration)
7. Dhyâna (Meditation)
8. Samâdhi (Super consciousness state).

Yamas (Abstinences) are five in number. They are Ahimsâ (Non-violence), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (Non-stealing), Brahmachary (Celibacy) and Aparigraha (Non possessiveness).⁴ Like Yamas, Niyamas are also five in number such as Saucha (Purity), Santosa (contentment), Tapa (Austerity), Swadhyaya (Self-study) and Ishwara Pranidhâna (Resignation or Devotion to God).⁵ The position which is comfortable and steady is called Asana,⁶ being Asana exhale slowly then inhale and retain the breath is Prânâyâma.⁷ Pratyâhâra means withdrawal of the mind from external influences and stimuli.⁸ Dhâranâ defined as the holding of the mind and freeing it from the thralldom of the senses.⁹ After Dhâranâ comes Dhyâna, which means the regular flow of knowledge of the object by concentration.¹⁰ Last step is Samâdhi, which described by Patañjali as the stage of meditation where there is only consciousness of the object.¹¹

The first five steps have very small relationship with meditation, but they have great importance because they prepare the aspirant's body and mind for meditation and they are necessary for external practices and last three are internal practices of Yoga i.e. Râjyoga. The first two are related to morality and steady postures are needed to keep the body motionless. According to Yoga, the primary object of Prânâyâma is to control the wandering of the mind, so Spiritual aspirant can be able to prevent the uncontrolled dissipation of energy. Prtyâhâr and Dhârana both are preliminary steps for Dhyâna. The step of Prtyâhâr is to check the outgoing energy of the mind and the step Dhâranâ is to fix the mind. Virtually the description of Dhyân and Samadhi are more or less equal in Sramana and Vedic scriptures.

Yoga in Jainism

The meaning of the word 'Yoga' derived from both root 'युज्' and 'समाधौ' are accepted by Jainism with the desire of establishing.¹² when the word 'Yoga' finds etymologically 'योज्यते अनेनयोगः',¹³ 'युज्' ; 'सम्बन्धः',¹⁴ 'युज्यते इति योगः'¹⁵ it means 'Yoga' is a faculty of the soul, which attracts matter according to the influence of Karma. In other words 'Yoga' is the name of vibrations set in the soul by the activity of body, speech or mind¹⁶, these actionists are called Karmayoga. The name 'Asrava' is given to this Yoga.¹⁷ Asrava means influx of Karmic matter into the soul. Achârya Umâswâmî said that Yoga is a channel of Asrava or inflow of Karmic matter into the soul. When the 'Yoga' means 'समाधि' (self-restraint) or 'ध्यान' (meditation) then 'Yoga' as a destroyer of karmic bonds.

Anyone can be confused with these two contradictory statements. But there should not be any confusion because 'Yoga destroys Karmic bonds' means religious observances extremely sanctified by means of meditation etc. and 'Yoga creates Karmic bonds' means 'Yoga does not mean religious observances extremely sanctified by means of meditations etc. but it means vibrations generated in theregions of the soul'.

The meditation (Dhyâna) and self-restraint (Samadhi) are the most important means to achieve the goal of salvation. The term Yoga, Samâdhi, Dhyâna and Samyaka-Pranidhâna are almost more or less accepted synonyms in Jainism.¹⁸ Dhyâna (meditation) is a concentration of thought on one particular object. In the case of a person with the best physical structure or constitution it extends up to one Antarmuhûrta i.e. forty eight minus one.¹⁹ Meditation is a kind of penance in Jainism. Penance has two folds; first external and second internal. The shedding of Karma is rendered possible through penance. Fasting, under dieting, curtailing necessary food, abandoning juicy eatables, sitting and sleeping in lonely place devoid of animate being and endurance are external austerities. The other, Internal penances are also six in number such as expiation, reverence, service, self- study, renunciation and contemplation.²⁰

The four limbs of Meditation or concentration or contemplation- Arta (emotional), Raodra (fierce), Dharma (Righteous) and Sukla (Pure). The first two are unholy and they should be avoided, because they are the cause of mundane bondage. The last two are holy and cause of liberation.²¹ Righteous concentration (DharmaDhyana) fourfold-Ajñâvichaya (considering the commands of the Arhata), Apâyavichaya (considering futility of temporal enjoyment), Vipâkavichaya (the fruition of the karmas) and Samsthânavichaya (the nature and constitution of the universe). Four kinds of pure

concentrations (Shukla Dhyana) are single-belonging to scriptural concepts (Prathaktva Vitarka vichara), unified-belonging to one aspect of scriptural concept (Ektvavitarka Vichar), concentration after retiring from all thoughts about this gross body (Sûkshamakriya Pratipati) and concentration after retiring from all functions of this physical body (Vyuparatkriya Nivarti).²²

Yoga in Buddhism

‘Yoga’ is depicted as a synonym of bondage in Pali Nikas.

‘चक्रतारो योगश्च चक्रतारो आसवा’ The kâma, Bhava, Ditthi and Avidyâ these four are ‘srvas and the cause of world. Yoga is also defined in the sense of ‘ध्यान’ (meditation) or ‘समाधि’ (self-restraint) in the Buddhist literatures. Samâdhi, Chitekaggatâ, Chetî, Jadvâna, Padhâna, Aramana Nimitta, Abhiñjâ, Samâpitam, Vimokham, Abhiyâyatana etc. are virtually synonymous of ‘Yoga’ in Buddhism. Buddhism does recognize meditation as part toward Nirvana.

Achârya Buddhaghosa said in Vishuddhimagga ‘चिकग्गता समाधिः १, that is to say Samâdhi concentration of mind on a specific object. The Path of Vishuddhi (Nirvâna) or way to salvation can be achieved by Vipassana or by Dhyâna or by Prajñâ etc.²³ Samadhi is the last of the eight elements ‘आष्टांगिक मार्ग’ the noble eightfold Path. Many kinds of Samadhi are narrated in Buddhist scriptures, two of them are as Upchar Samadhi (Access concentration) and Appana Samadhi (Absorption concentration). According to canonical Pali literature Samadhi refers four Dhyana (meditations). These are Vitarka (applied thought), Vichar (sustained thought), Preeti (rapture) and Sukha (pleasure). Kasina, Ashubha, Anusmriti and Brhmavihar are appurtenant in meditation practices.

Nowadays Vipashyana Dhyana more popular as a form of Buddhist meditation as well as Anupreksha Dhyana of Jainas meditation. Vipashyana is a knowledge or vision. It arises when set up that the knowledge of existence impermanence, suffering and realization non self. Actually Vipashyana is an insight in to the true nature of realty.²⁴ The Path of the worldly Samadhi is called Samath Yan and the Path of absolutely Samadhi is called Vipashyana Yana.²⁵

Anupreksha is defined in Jainism as ‘pondering on the nature of the body and other substances and twelve in number.’²⁶ Dr. A. N. Upadhye has written ‘the three Anupreksas, Asrava-a, Samvara-a and Nirjara-a are peculiarly Jaina concepts and Loka, Bodhi- durlabha and Dharm are elaborated in the back-ground of Jain dogmatics though one gets common ideas here and there in Buddhist texts.’ Then, for the Anupreksha, as a whole, much similarity is found in what are known as ten Anuprekshas in Buddhism and elaborated in the Visudhi-Magga.²⁷

Conclusion

There are very close relation between Jainism and Buddhism. They have influenced one another in many respects. Both religion evolved in the same spiritual culture. They use many of the same terms and follow many of the principles. They accept the ‘Karna’ which is a great foe of the human being and is responsible for its degradation. Both systems recognize almost same method of Yoga. Both accept Yoga is the cause of Karmic bonds and given the name of ‘srava. When the religious observances extremely sanctified by means of meditation etc. then Yoga is destroyer of Karmic bonds. In Buddhism all meditations are the cause of liberation but in Jainism last two are the cause of salvation. We can

compare it's from Vitarka, Vichar etc. of Yoga Darshana.²⁸ It seems that the Vipashyna is a counterpart of Anupreksha.

Like Vedic Yoga, Jainism and Buddhism do not accept the permanent power of God as the creator of the world. Entire Vedic- Yoga methods are based on devotion to God, while Jainism does recognize soul for meditation and meditation in Buddhism is based on Buddha. According to Buddhism soul is not a permanent thing.

Vedic and Jain recognize soul as a permanent thing. Notwithstanding it is, here. Worthwhile to say in respect of Yoga that Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism have influenced one another.

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