

A Quiet Moment: Meaning of Yoga according to Jain Philosophy?

There are two differing interpretations of the meaning of the word Yoga:

The first is that put forward by Patanjali Rishi in his world renowned text Yoga Darshan. Here Patanjali Rishi interprets the meaning of yoga as being stopping one's mind from being active, that is achieving a state where there is a cessation of thoughts and action (*Nivrutti*) and retreating in to one's inner self. The second interpretation is that of Acharya Hemchandra, who has stated that in Jain philosophy yoga means activity (*Pravrutti*) of 3 types:

- a. Activity of mind – *Mana yoga*
- b. Activity of speech – *Vachan yoga*
- c. Activity of body – *Kaya yoga*

According to Patanjali Rishi, one needs to stop thoughts and move inwards. However, one has to also recognize that the cessation of the activities of mind, speech and body does not in itself lead to immediate inner peace and tranquility as our mental state remains disturbed due to the effect of the *kashayas* (passions of anger, greed, ego, deceit) which are within us. Just as we cannot control the wind, in the same way we cannot control our thoughts which remain free and take us here and there and everywhere in the shortest of moments.

Acharya Hemachandra has therefore concluded that true spiritual practice is not to stop our thoughts, but instead to focus on getting rid of the negativities, the vices which are within us. It is the negative actions which we do as a result of the fruition of our *kashayas* which gives rise to new karmas. We have to stop yoga of this negative type and rid ourselves of these negativities. Mind, speech and body are only a conduit but ones which can take us either to bliss (*moksha*) or to hell. They are the vehicles to cross the ocean. So how can we even talk about quieting these activities? No, it is their very nature – mind's nature is to think, body's nature is to act and speech's action is to speak. Can we ever stop our thoughts? Can we stop the wind? Just as we cannot get rid of the wind, so our thoughts, our speech and our bodily actions cannot be stopped.

The speech and words directed at us by others, who is it that is taking heed of these words and accepting them? It is the *kashayas* within us which are attracted by and hold on to these words, will not forget them and then lead us to react to what was said by the other person. Just as the camera captures a photo, in the same way our *kashayas* capture that which we see and hear. It is important to remember that we should try not to keep these resulting imprints stored inside us. We need to keep ourselves 'light' and vigilant. Then when we see or hear something, there will be clarity rather than negativity. Otherwise even during meditation, we will visualise and recall only the negativities residing within us. So what should our yoga be? According to Jain philosophy, there are 4 types of *dhyān* – *Artha*, *Raudra*, *Dharma* and *Shukla*. In each of these 4 types of *dhyān*, there is an intensity of focus and concentration directed in a certain way.

Arthadhyān – Here the concentration is inward looking, focusing on looking at ourselves and on the unhappiness and sadness we are experiencing which arise from our own actions and perceptions. We have forgotten our true nature and our self-respect. Why accept negativities directed at us by others and make ourselves unhappy? One day spend time to reflect from morning until night and observe what happens inside you if someone insults you. Who is connecting with this insult? No one else but you! The person has not forced this insult on to you! It is up to you whether you want to receive and ingest this insult. It is open to you to refuse! For instance, if you go to the market and there you see a lot of unneeded items for sale, do these items end up in your home without effort? No, not unless you take the step to buy them and bring them home, which only you can do.

In the very same way you are standing in this worldly market– when sadness comes in then consider who has 'bought' this. Remember it does not come free, it requires 'money'. Our normal reaction is to listen to what has come our way, think about it, reflect on it and make it into something 'juicy' and then store it within you. This is just waste of energy! This is *arthadhyān* where the intense concentration is directed on yourself and your needs.

Raudradhyān – On the other hand the focus of *raudradhyān* is on blaming others or external things. He did this, he did that, he did not do this, he does not listen, it is hot, so cold, so much sun, so much rain, such peoplethe list is endless. Those who become saddened by looking at others is *raudradhyān*. There is no passion to do any good work, just to keep on complaining and only on thinking about how to put others down. If Duryadhan had not had this intense concentration of *raudradhyān*, then he would not have been empowered to humiliate Draupadi.

Dharma Dhyan – To see good in this world and appreciate all is to nurture *dharma dhyan*. If our concentration is on looking at what is good in the world, have a desire to be part of this goodness and try to walk on this path of goodness – all these are *dharma dhyan*.

Shukla Dhyan – All the negativities, the goodness is all within you, not outside. This is reality. Everything externally is neither good nor bad. It is how you conceive everything. Everything is so transparent; there is no distinction between inside and outside. This is *shukladhyan* and arises only after kevalgyan is achieved. To achieve both worldly bondage and liberation, requires intense concentration and focus. In our spiritual practices we need to move away from *arthadhyan* and *raudradhyan* and move towards *dharma dhyan*. *Shukla dhyan* is still too distant for us. We cannot still discriminate between good or bad. All we can endeavor to do is to work on this and ensure we do not spend this precious human existence spending a lifetime collecting – through the yoga of mind, speech and body – only garbage rather than that which is good and wholesome.

In our conduct we should endeavor to disengage from all negative activities: we should not harm anyone; we should not hurt anyone; we should not cause damage; we should not put anyone into difficulties; we should not cheat anyone. We can stay silent or stay away but we should certainly not harm anyone. Can we eradicate the thorns in this world? No we cannot, but we can strive not to get affected by the thorns by taking support from spiritual practices and to move forward.

There are only two points where you can get hurt from thorns – on your feet for which the solution is to wear shoes or in your heart for which you need to wear the shoes of *dharma dhyan*. To strive towards this should be our yoga.....

Source: Pujya Acharya Shri Chandanaji Maharaj