

YOGĀṆGĀNUṢṬHĀNA WITH REFERENCE TO ĀSANA IN PĀTAÑJALA YOGA SŪTRA*

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ABSTRACT

Different commentators of Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra do not seem to differentiate the terms Abhyāsa and anuṣṭhāna of Āsana. In this article the authors have tried to establish that the postural training required in Padmāsana etc. is to be given as a part of Kriyāyoga training and this could be termed as the Abhyāsa of Āsana. On the other hand, the anuṣṭhāna of Āsana as a Yogāṅga manifests by itself along with other yogāṅgas..

Key words: anuṣṭhāna, yogāṅga, kriyāyoga, abhyāsa.

Patañjali uses only the term "anuṣṭhāna" with reference to "Āsana" in the context of the Yogāṅgas.¹ However, the traditional commentators of Pātañjala Yoga Sūtras (PYS) have chosen to interpret the term "anuṣṭhāna" merely as a synonym for "abhyāsa"². This seems to cause confusion regarding the intention of Patañjali, for, he had clearly avoided the use of the term "abhyāsa" while prescribing Yogāṅgas for the development of Vivekakhyāti.³ In this paper, therefore, an attempt has been made to examine the concept of "anuṣṭhāna" in the context of the eight Yogāṅgas.

According to Swami Digambarji, the term "abhyāsa" means "the process of becoming" whereas, the term "anuṣṭhāna" implies the process of remaining established in a particular state of being.⁴ Effort or "yatna" is implied in "abhyāsa" whereas "prayatna-śaithilya" seems to be essential in the anuṣṭhāna related to Yogāṅgas,⁵ particularly, in the case of "Āsana".

Āsana is the third one amongst the eight Yogāṅgas. The traditional commentators are unanimous in their assertion that the very foundation of the "Aṣṭāṅgayoga Sādhana" is laid by the first two Yogāṅgas, namely Yama-Niyama, which precedes the Āsana. The commentator

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Baldeva Mishra, for instance, asserts that the very effectiveness of all the Yogāṅgas depends on these two Yogāṅgas.⁶ Further, Patañjali has enumerated the various capabilities that get bestowed upon the sādhakas who have got well established in the "anuṣṭhāna" of Yama-Niyamas facilitate the onset of the later Yogāṅgas like Āsana. The various capabilities developed by a sādhaḥ due to Yama-Niyama are as given below :

- Kāyendriyasiddhi, i.e. total control and mastery over one's physical body and sense organs. (PYS II 43).
- Vairātyaga, i.e. giving up of all kinds of animosity (PYS II 38).
- Vīryalābha, i.e. accomplishment of concentrated strength (PYS II 38).
- Janmakathantāsambodhaḥ, i.e. ... a coherent and historical overview and perspective of one's present and previous lives. (PYS II 39).
- Svāṅga-jugupsā, i.e. disgust about one's physical body (PYS II 40).
- Satvaśuddhi, i.e. development of spiritual qualities in one's personality (PYS II 41).
- Saumanasya, i.e. development of pleasant frame of mind (PYS II 41).
- Anuttamasukhalābhaḥ, i.e. attainment of un-matched joy (PYS II 42).
- Indriyajaya, i.e. total mastery over one's sense organs (PYS II 41).
- Iṣṭadevatā-samprayoga i.e. development of contact with one's personal God (PYS II 44).
- Sarvaratnopasthāna, i.e. ready availability of whatever things that are valuable for one's progress in Yoga (PYS II 37).
- Ātma-darśana Yogyatva i.e. fitness for Self-realization (PYS II 41).
- Samādhisiddhi i.e. perfection in the state of samadhi (PYS II 45) and
- Cittaikāgrya i.e. Streamlined, one pointed, state of Ekāgratā of one's Citta (PYS II 41).

All these capabilities are inherent in the later Yogāṅgas listed as Āsana it cetera for the development of Vivekakhyāti. However, the "anuṣṭhāna" of Yama-Niyama is not easy for a sādhaḥ who is under the powerful grip of the Kleśas like Avidyā, Asmitā, Rāga, Dveṣa and Abhiniveśa. Prompted by these Kleśas, a beginner Sādhaḥ behaves with greed (lobha), anger (krodha), and infatuation (moha). These Kleśas are so powerful that they even intercept the "anuṣṭhāna" of advanced Sādhakas for which Patañjali has suggested "pratipakṣa-bhāvanā" as the remedy.⁷ Therefore, without a thorough weakening of these Kleshas, the "anuṣṭhāna" of Yama-Niyama does not come into being. Patañjali prescribes Kriyāyoga for weakening the grip of Kleśas.⁸

According to Swami Digambarji, Kriyāyoga is a synonym for "Abhyāsa Yoga" and through the practice of Kriyāyoga one develops one's spiritual inclination of "śraddhā" and "adhyātma-Prasāda". So it appears that with the development of śraddhā and Adhyātma-Prasāda through Kriyāyoga, one gains almost all the qualities and capabilities that are essential for the proper "anuṣṭhāna" of all Yogāṅgas.

Many of the traditional commentators seem to have interpreted "āsana" mostly in terms of bodily postures like padmāsana et cetera.¹⁰ However, according to Baldeva Miśra, a body posture like Padmāsana cannot be counted as a Yogāṅga unless it is closely linked to Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi.¹¹ No doubt, the postural techniques of Padmāsana and others have their use at the level of Kriyāyoga. For Swami Digambarji teaches that "Tapas" in the context of Kriyāyoga implies verily the practice of Prāṇāyāma.¹² Thus, all the postural trainings suggested by the "abhyāsa" of Āsanās takes place as a part of the Prāṇāyāma training required under Kriyāyoga.

In conclusion, therefore, we would surmise that in the context of the Sādhana Pāda in Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra, the postural training required in Padmāsana et cetera is to be given as a part of Kriyāyoga training and this could be termed as the "abhyāsa" of Āsanās. On the other hand, the "anuṣṭhāna" of Āsana as a Yogāṅga manifests by itself along with other Yogāṅgas due to the thorough weakening of Kleśas. Put in the paradigm of Hathāyoga training, we may take the first three stages of training progression, namely the Ārambhāvasthā (i.e. preliminary state), the ghaṭāvasthā (the assembling stage) and Paricayāvasthā (the conditioning stage) as "abhyāsa". The Niṣpannāvasthā (i.e. the stage of fulfillment) commensurate with the concept of "anuṣṭhāna" of Āsana wherein no effort (yatna) is involved in contrast to efforts implied in the "abhyāsa" of Āsanās.

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