



A Critical Study to Rejuvenate and Revitalize the Process of *Astang Yog* by Adding the Positivity of Brahmasutra

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Abstract

We have seen or read until today, the concept of sage Patanjali and his very famous process of *astang yog* and have seen very few people succeeding to reach the 8th stage of *Samadhi*. *Samadhi* has never been researched as the tool to achieve human excellence but rather a godly thing or sagely thing. Instead of achieving the 8th level of *astang yog*, i.e., *samadhi*, it has been hyped as mystical or cosmic experiences which occurs rarely. Billions of people in this world try yoga in their life but only a few (countable on fingers) reach the stage of *Samadhi* and dwell beyond that. The question is- why? The clearly mentioned pathways lead to destinations when followed. But why people are not reaching *Samadhi* after following *Astang yog*? Does the pathway lead to the dark, diverting its followers? Or is it the toughest way to climb, similar to the Everest? Though, Everest can be reached easily by air. The practitioners of *astang yog* know that the process is inexpensive and doable. Then, why practitioners have not thought about the non-achieving of *Samadhi* despite of thorough practise? Can this problem be solved by Inter-religion critical study? Could it be solved by inter-subject critical analysis? This research paper, through critical study, tries to present the rejuvenation and revitalization of *astang yog* process of Patanjali's *yogsutra* by adding the positivity of Brahmasutra; which is helpful in achieving human excellence inclusive of physical, mental, spiritual excellence.

Keywords: Rejuvenate, Revitalize, Positivity, *astang yog*, brahmasutra.

A critical study of *Astang Yog* in Patanjali's Yog-sutra

Patanjali's Yog-sutra mentions eight stepped path way to achieve wisdom which leads to salvation or liberation of soul which has been referred as *Kaivalya/Nirvana*; liberating us from birth-death cycle, i.e. sufferings. The following are the eight steps mentioned by Patanjali in his book Yog-sutra: 1. Yama; 2. Niyama; 3. Asana; 4. Pranayama; 5. Pratyahara; 6. Dharna; 7. Dhyana and 8. Samadhi. Where he mentions through his sutras that first five steps are to be performed externally and last three are internal practice. But the problem is: Practicers reach first four steps easily and they fully understand the process as well as their benefits, and, next four steps are not easy to perform, practicers do not understand. First four steps have become world famous due to its physical, mental and spiritual well-being traits but next four steps have become delusional, diverting and least understandable. The process to achieve highest level of human excellence through wisdom and kaivalya/nirvana remains difficult. Billions of people have half-benefitted by first four steps of *astang yog*. A few or none reach eighth step of *samadhi/prajna/kaivalya*.

This research paper, through critical study of *astang yog* analyses all the eight steps, having thrust on last four steps; to find the real issues which are making these steps difficult to understand as well as followed.

Wisdom in this world is worshipped as the highest human excellence achieved till date, and, humans are measured on the scale of wisdom. The Wisest is excellent and the non-wise is poor. According to Sage Patanjali, Wisdom i.e. *Prajna* develops and grows in *Samadhi*. Then why till date, we have not seen wisest human being on Earth. The process had been practised by billions of people. We should have seen millions of wisest human beings till date but none or a few (to be counted on fingers) exist. Human excellence had not been achieved despite of the available pathways as well as practitioners. It has happened due to difficulty towards the steps of *samadhi* after four steps of *astang yog*. The problem arises at fifth step, that is, *Pratyahara* or Reverse-food method. *Pratyahara* according to sage Patanjali is to give reverse-food to the senses such that they detach from outside world and act inwardly. For example, think that physical body of human beings have many pores and all pores releases bad things/ hateful stuffs, that is why, an intelligent should not fall for the beauty of bodies. Patanjali says that this step of *pratyahara* would lead us to move towards *samadhi*/wisdom while practice. Theoretically as well as in thoughts, it is possible; But practically, the practitioner falls for the beauty of bodies even after prolong practice. This 5th step, we can say, is negative feeding to the senses and mind. Every time practitioner feeds according to Sage Patanjali's *pratyahara* step, it is evident, even cannot be denied by practitioners or sages and saints available, that, they fall for beauty of bodies despite practising *pratyahara*. Why it happens; no one has found a suitable answer for that till date. Worst of the matter is- when it happens, practitioners feel cheated; they are filled with remorse; they regret choosing the pathway of yoga. Internally they regret but socially they deny. They live

whole of their life with *ahamkara*/ proudness of practicing and knowing first four steps of *astang yog* or simply, choosing the pathway of yoga, but internally they are fragmented due to non-achieving of *samadhi* /wisdom/ *prajna/kaivalya/nirvana*. This case has not been presented or addressed till date, though, millions of yoga teachers, seers and sages, as well as practicers face this difficulty and issue every day. No one researched till date about this plight of yoga practitioners including seers and sages. No one suggested a solution or tried to suggest a solution. This research paper's critical study, tries to address this problem as well as tries to suggest a solution.

Why they have been unable to move forward to and beyond this 5th step? Why humans have not achieved highest excellence/wisdom/*kaivalya/nirvana* easily, despite following the pathways? The highest good or the ultimate human excellence cannot be achieved even a pinch of negativity is there. The fifth step of *pratyahara* is negative feed/hate feed to the senses and mind, regarding beauty of physical bodies. This negative feeding to the senses and mind in the name of reverse-food/*pratyahara* should be replaced with positive feeding to the senses and mind about the beauty of physical bodies.

A critical study of human excellence through the positivity of Brahmasutra

First and second sutras combined of Maharshi Badarayan Vyas's Brahmasutra is "*Athato Brahmajigyasa*" and "*Janmadayasya Yatah*" is filled with positivity. Instead of giving negative food to the senses and mind, practitioners can give positive food to the senses and mind as a replacement to *pratyahara*. There is a Brahma, we should generate an interest to know Brahma (*Athato Brahmjigyasa*); that is responsible for creation as well as destruction (*Janmadayasya yatah*) and everything comes out of that and merges to that. Nothing is untouched of Brahma. Behind the beauty of physical bodies, Brahma is responsible. So, think about that Brahma. Behind everything there is Brahma (Ref. *Prashna Upanishad*). Do not feed negativity or hatred about beauty of physical bodies to the senses and mind because Brahma is responsible for everything. This feeds the senses and mind positivity (we can name/call it *sad-ahar*). Now, practitioners won't hate external subjects to focus on internal subjects. One would see Brahma even in the beauty of bodies; hate would be pacified with neutrality and normalcy towards the beauty of bodies. The next process/step towards *samadhi* would be *ahamkarmukta*/ego-free and human excellence that has remained delusional/mystical till date, can be achieved.

Conclusion

While the Yoga Sutra and the Brahma Sutra differ in their metaphysical frameworks—dualism versus non-dualism—they are not contradictory but rather complementary. Yoga refines the inner instrument (mind), and Vedanta reveals the ultimate truth. Together, they

present a holistic path for *manav utkarsh* (human upliftment), integrating practice and knowledge into a unified spiritual vision.

To rejuvenate and revitalize the process of *astang yog* of Patanjali's Yog-sutra, the first two sutra of Brahmasutra combined, can be added as "*sad ahara*". Replacing the fifth step of *pratyahara* (reverse-food) with *sad ahara* (positive food) removes the negativity from fifth step of *astang yog*. It brings the positivity in the process of achieving *samadhi/wisdom/prajna/kaivalya/nirvana* and induces new dimension as well as practice to achieve human excellence including physical, mental and spiritual excellence.

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