YOGA SYNTHESIS OF „AXIS TIME” AND THE TIME AFTER IT

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ABSTRACT

The concept and methodology are the most important and indisputable part of the synthesis in Yoga theory. The concept of “Yoga” here is defined through analysis of two acts of the United Nations, namely: Resolution 69/131 of the United Nations General Assembly from 2014 and UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2016. The methodological issues arise from the interpretation of ancient and competent Yoga texts.

Research Methods: systematical analysis, research and interpretation of international acts and ancient yoga sources.

Aim: The author wants to create an adequate notion among sports circles about the theoretical basis of Yoga, about its unique but not sufficiently enough rationalized potential for practical implementation; about Yoga as a successful model of the imperative for interdisciplinary application and the synergy of the fundamental and scientific knowledge with practical implementation.

Discussion: Yoga is the widest and deepest synthesis of collective subjective reflection and the collective thousand-year old experience in different and seemingly irrelevant areas of human knowledge.

Conclusion: *Becoming clearer in time, called by Jaspers “axis time”, referring par excellence to philosophical issues and concepts, Yoga is the first in the human history complex, syncretic, synergetic, synthetic knowledge in its peculiar specific contents and form. At the same time, it is eminently scientifically valid and actual in the example it provides for creating relations and outlining criteria for enriching the value system of physical culture.*

Key words: *yoga, synthesis, “axis time”, international acts, physical culture*

*“There is no complete truth nor real salvation”
Karl Jaspers*

INTRODUCTION

The need of Truth and the need of Salvation are the two cream of the joke of the human nature, which intangibility disappointed Jaspers and not only him. But his book “The origin and goal of history” has another unique idea. He will go down in history with it and the universal significance he sought. He started from the realization that the appearance of the God’s Son was the axis of the world history for the western man. He introduced another axis which could be valid for all humankind, including Christians. He called it “axis time” and found it in those 500 years /between 800 and 200 BC) when the “deepest transformation” in history took place. “Axis time”, according to Jaspers, runs simultaneously and parallel, without a visible influence of one on another, in three historical cultures: ancient Chinese, ancient Indian, and east-west European culture /Iran, Palestine, Greece/. In all those “three worlds” something practically new appeared: “man became aware of the being as a whole, of himself, and of his borders. He experienced the formidability of the world impotence; asked radical questions;

stroved for liberation and salvation in the face of the abyss. ...During that age, the main categories we have been thinking in were created and the origins of the world religions people have been living with were commenced. A step towards *universal* was made in any sense.”

Yoga appeared at that time too. The truth and Salvation are united like the sun and the moon /ha-tha/ as a consequence and its reason. According to yoga both complete truth and salvation are possible and tangible by anyone and are an inevitable result from following the methods of this “exhaustive science for building of character” (Aiengar, 2003). *Its peculiarities are:* weaving thread after thread, processing, adding, building on, borrowing from but also sharing: concepts, empirical experience, beliefs, perceptions and ideas, rituals, customs, knowledge, practices, etc. by all Orthodox Hindi “darshan” recognizing the authority of the Veda and by non-Orthodox ones, which do not recognize it: Buddhism, Jainism, Lokayata, Charvaka, Tantra... The creative

character of this *process* – selection of the most useful and most needed; lack of any negative endorsement – through rejection, i.e. adopting the concept “live and let others live” (J. Neru); thousand-year old duration of this process; its democratic character – adding new chapters to the teaching by an unknown number of unknown and little known practitioners and theoreticians without any authorship claims... To reach the creation of Yoga as an organic whole, a dialectic, flexible, daily but sacral, intuitive but logical synthesis of theoretical knowledge and practices.

METHODOLOGY

I. The stage of re-examining the significance of this ancient treasure of thought woven into practice are two Acts of the United Nations. The first one is Resolution 69/131 of the General Assembly of UN from 2014, which we have mentioned before (Dobрева, 2018, 2019). The second one is the inclusion of Yoga in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO (called below just “the List”) which took place during the eleventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which took place in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Conference Centre in Addis Ababa, from 28 November to 2 December 2016. The list is made for the execution of the Convention for Preservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (accepted by UNESCO on 17th October 2003, ratified with a law, accepted by 40th NA on 26.01.2006, DV, issue 12 from 17.02.2006, valid for the Republic of Bulgaria as of 10.06.2006, called further on in the manuscript just “the Convention”).

- The highlight of this manuscript is not the international legal protection of Yoga as part of the world intangible heritage. But the use of the legal definition in the Convention of the term “intangible heritage”, as well as the abovementioned list for introducing the term and methods of Yoga by an authoritative, internationally recognized source. Such an approach towards *the term and methods* of Yoga was not achieved until its inclusion in the List in 2016.
- The difficulties in introducing of an actual and indisputable term about Yoga are

obvious, as well as the benefits from the normative acceptance of certain indications and characteristics (Dobрева, 2019). The above-mentioned two international acts try to *discern and identify* the subject of Yoga mainly through analysis, disregard, and summary. These are two tasks which should be solved by the term as a way of thinking (Stefanov, 1995). We know that these Acts do not give a legal definition of the term but have the advantage to contain its important characteristics, “the thought in the word”.

- In the motives to Resolution 69/131 of the General Assembly of UN all the 175 members arrived at the agreement that Yoga is: “*a way of life*”, “*free of superfluity of any kind*”, “ensures a *complex approach* to health and wellbeing”, and that “the information about the benefit of Yoga activities would be for the welfare of the whole world population”.
- A similar characteristic is included in the dossier of the application for inclusion of Yoga in the List. The initial point is the criteria of the jury to recognize it as “a masterpiece of the creative human genius”. We do not need to, and we do not follow the features of the typological form. We take the main out of them ignoring the insignificant indexes of the object and subject for the aims of this study.
- It is a sign of respect to start with the well-known that Yoga was created on the territory of the Asian continent and nowadays India, and in this sense, it is “ancient Hindi” although it existed long before the appearance of Hindi as civilization. This is proven by the circumstance that a Yoga element can be found in the philosophical beliefs, medicine, education, literature, health, traditional Indian dances and theatre, all of which are based to a great extent on yoga practices. The creation of Yoga is related in the Indian mythology to Shiva, and its existence was documented in Rigveda (rg-veda-knowledge of the anthems) in 1500-1200 BC, in the philosophical treatises of Upanishadite, in Bhagavad Gita dating from V or IV century BC. Both the Veda and Upanishadite were not a creation of particular authors but of the collective thought of several generations of Rishi (Rishi – an inspired sage) who gave their interpretations regarding the authors of the previous ones. The sage Patandjali systematized the texts in his treatise “Yoga Sutra” (YSP) dating from 400 AD

(Maas, 2006). The date is not certain and changes from 500 BC to 300 AD (Desmare, 2008). Afterwards, many other sages and Yoga teachers contributed to the popularization of the system and its practices through their works. The most famous ones are by the disciples of the so-called tradition of Kanphata Yoga, namely: hatha (yoga) pradipika (HP), gheranda samhita (GS), and Shiva samhita (ShS).

Therefore, the first significant indicator of Yoga is that it is a product of a *collective intellectual work*.

From the first sutra of YSP (“Atha yoga-anusasanam”), and to-day, Yoga is considered not to have been created by Patandjali, but nobody claims it to be so. He arranged in one whole the then known and scattered sources different elements. That work, however, was a real feat of a brilliant mind who built systematically and structured internally and logically the elements of Yoga – by showing them in their interrelation and interdependence. It was so “supremely made” that immediately Yoga was recognized in India as a separate “darshana” along with the other orthodox systems. Since Patandjali, Yoga has been considered “a system”. Until 12th century it was translated in 40 Hindi languages and two non-Hindi ones – Arabic and Java. After the revival of the interest towards Yoga at the end of 19th century, related to the name of Vivekananda up to present days, *YPS has been considered to be and has been learnt as fundamental Yoga treatise*. It is hardly a coincidence that the dedication to Patandjali, attributed to Bhodjaradja (Tsar Bhodha, 11th century), has been preserved to present days. It says: “Salutation to the sage Patandjali who removes the impurities of the mind through Yoga, the impurities of the language through grammar, and the impurities of the body through medicine!” It was written in Sanskrit – the language of Yoga.

Yoga is perceived and used as a practical teaching both from the representatives of all philosophical schools and from the religious teachings throughout India. Yoga is a century-old practice. Long before being systematized as an “eight road” by Patandjali, it was taught as a practical teaching in the Janian and Buddha schools. It is its indisputable characteristic recognized by the world authorities (Smirnoff, 1963; Radhakrishnan, 1956).

The representatives of the most influential objective-idealistic philosophical school Vedanta also practice Yoga. S. Abedananda is the most definitive. According to him “the philosophy Vedanta includes the field of science called “Yoga” (Abedananda, 1928). The contemporary science much more deeply realizes that Yoga, as an applied discipline, uses extremely detailed knowledge about the person as a bio-psychic creature. The means, methods, and technologies of Yoga were obtained and experimentally tested in a process of unseen in its scale and duration experiment. We emphasize – it is a unique, therefore - unrepeatability experiment in the cultural march of humankind. This was the premise for outlining the extremely important characteristic of Yoga in the two Acts, namely that Yoga is what we will nowadays call “*a complex applied science or discipline*”.

- The transference of experience in this process is specific. This happened through a constant live tradition known as “param-para”. In this system “Guru-Shishya” (a spiritual teacher-student) continuity was ensured through a personal transference of knowledge. This is one particular, typical of the ancient Indian conception of the world connection. It is symbolic that two classical works in Yoga canon were built as a dialogue between a Guru and a Shishya. Namely: between Yama – the God of Death and Nachiketa (literally: “ignorant”) in Katha Upanishad, as well as between Shri Krishna and Arjuna in Bhagavadgita. A Guru is a spiritual teacher who teaches way of life, says Aiengar; that is why the relation between a Guru and a Shishya transcends that between a parent and a child, a husband and wife, or between friends. A Guru removes darkness and brings in enlightenment (Aiengar, 2013). Especially in ancient times Guru performed the indispensable role to *interpret* the ancient texts and to guarantee the purity of this deep knowledge. The sutras, for example, are a symbolic “letter” and only Guru had the code for their unlocking. In all 4 chapters (“padi”) of YSP, consisting of a total of 196 verses (“sutras”) there are 4 verbs. In the basis of the tradition “param-para” is respect to the Teacher as the bearer of Spirit. That is how the first lesson in HP begins: “Showing respect to our respectable Guru, Svatmarna introduces the teaching of hatha Yoga only (as a

preparation) for Radja Yoga” (hatha Pradiptika by Svatmarmar, 2017). And further on in verse 11 we read: “Yoga people, who are filled with desire to succeed in Yoga should keep the acquired knowledge a secret... It bears fruit when hidden and is useless when revealed”. To sum up, the symbolic language of the ancient Yoga sources is an eternal part of the live tradition “param-para” being an accompanying written knowledge, a mnemonic technique for a quick going into practice, rationalized by the relation Guru-Shishya.

Yoga can be an individual practice or a group work and, in both cases, the specific space for the purpose are *ashrams* (cloisters). They follow different live traditions (schools) of Yoga and bear this knowledge.

Because of the universal values which yoga offers, it goes beyond “the barriers of casts, religion, ethnoscience, age, gender, culture, nationality, and language and respects differences”.

- II. The tasks of the term are *discerning and identification* from all the other subjects along a significant and distinctive index. In order to solve the tasks, therefore, an answer about the rich of matter characteristic of Yoga is required, “the thought in the word” (Stefanov, 1995). The major question is: what exactly gives the confidence for the perception of Yoga as a science, an “applied” discipline, and being such, it ensures a complex approach to health and wellbeing. The answer is, as we can say today: in its specific means and methods subjected to one Purpose. This “triad” of means, methods, and purpose is the bearer of the major meaningful and identifying, i.e. an essential and distinctive from the other forms of culture mark. And mainly – from the other forms of physical culture. This enabled some authors to confine it to the term “*Yoga training complex*” (Stanev, S., 2014).

The selected means, methods, and purpose in the Representative list include:

1. *Personal self-modeling* – through Yama (ethical and moral rules for self-regulation and restriction) and Niyama (strict control).
2. *Body self-discipline and purification*: Asana (postures). Pranayama (regulation of breathing), Bandha (*bandha-grip, hold and fixation*; *psycho-physical techniques for locking*

the energy paths in different parts or organs in the body), Mudra posture, hold, seal; *psycho-physical technique, kind of compilation between asana and pranayama*), Shat-karma (*satkarma, literally “six activities”, yoga purifying practices*).

3. *Yukta-ahara* – Yoga nutrition;
4. *Emotional stability (“ichcha shakti”)*: *ishvara-pranidhana, ritual, prayer, Mantra Djapa*.
5. *Prahtyahara* (*withdrawal of senses*).
6. *Dharana* (*concentration*).
7. *Dhyana* (*meditation*).

The daily repeated “*anushtana*” (program) of these combinations (“*anga*”) of body yoga (i.e. the abovementioned means) leads to enlightenment of knowledge which is developed to the stage of “*vivekakhyaati*” or “*different knowledge*” (YSP, 2.28). This program, adjusted to the particular follower, called *sadhana* (*a feat, an achievement*) is generally said the method through which the means are used to achieve the Goal.

8. *Samadhi or kayvalya*, liberation, a complete mental freedom of any conditionality. In yoga it is *Self-realization* and the means are its “servants”. It is the Truth and Salvation which tangibility on this earth Jaspers denied.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Samadhi is neither a means nor a method. It is the Goal. Its distinctive characteristic which is still explained by the words of the India researcher Kuncho Kunev, namely: that “the unique Samadhi is one of the most important achievements of the ancient Indian psycho-physiology and gnoseology. But its reappraisal, new interpretation, and eventual connection to similar contemporary research is at its initial stage and a forthcoming important scientific task” (Kunev, 1984).

In an attempt to define a term for yoga on the basis of its normatively attached marks in Resolution 69/131 of General Assembly of UN from 2014, the Representative list of intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO from 2016, and ancient sources, we can summarize the above stated in the following way: *Yoga is an ancient Indian interdisciplinary applied science for psycho-physical self-education of a person, formed as a way of life through daily repeated “anushtana” (program) of the specific Yoga means and methods with the aim of achieving Self-realization, systematized by Patandjali in “Yoga sutra” and perfected as a result of its practice*

and as a continual live tradition “param-para”. As a result of a collective intellectual work, enabling a complex approach to health and wellbeing and using detailed knowledge about man as a bio-psychic being, acquired and tested in a process of an unseen in scale and duration experiment, it has been recognized and protected as an element of the intangible cultural heritage of humankind through its inclusion in the representative list according to the Convention for preservation of the intangible cultural heritage of UNESCO from 2003.

CONCLUSION

By taking into account the historically imposed fact of the existence of different schools, one united, modern, scientifically well-grounded system Yoga should be built – an overall science for self-building of one’s character. The classical work “Yoga Sutra” of Patandjali should be in its basis. Along the process, the profound scientific philosophical interpretation of the categorical apparatus of Yoga should continue in order to solve the main task before it at this stage of the development of the society, namely: a scientific explanation of its subject and tasks, its place in the knowledge about humans among the great number of special sciences and similar applied disciplines. We should stem from the understanding that its object is man and because of its complexity, the subject overlaps part of the subject of one or more special medical-biological, social and humanitarian sciences or disciplines such as anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, psychology, pedagogy, history, science of art. As one of the closest disciplines to yoga subject areas, sports science in accordance to its purpose – maximum manifestation of the potential abilities of athletes has to consider it from a scientific point of view. This work has no borders: starting from the moral-ethical “codes” and the most supreme facts of psyche to the experimental research in conditions of sports training of Yoga means for enhancing the counter influence of psyche and person’s awareness of his body. For instance – increasing the role of intuition as a means for foreseeing (the popular “anticipation” in sport), the degree and forms of influence of Yoga breathing – pranayama on athletes’ physique and psyche; of “strong strain”, “maximum, final stretch” (Mateev, 1965) in asana for prevention of injuries in sport and muscle relaxation; of meditation – dhyana for the most needed prevention of fatigue and fast recovery... The deep reconsid-

ering of the richness of Yoga in every respect is about to happen. It should be responsible, obeying the principle that “cultures are in a constant evolution” and other universal principles and values mentioned in the Convention and in Acts of UN. This is the only way the unlimited potential of this knowledge, recognized as “a masterpiece of the creative genius of humankind” can serve a person.

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