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**COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ON PATAÑJALI YOGA AND
VIVEKANANDA’S RĀJA YOGA**

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Introduction:

Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras*, composed around the 2nd century BCE, is considered one of the foundational texts of classical yoga philosophy. Patañjali’s work provides a profound philosophical interpretation of yoga, outlining a systematic path toward spiritual liberation (*mokṣa*) through the practice of yoga. Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras* consist of 196 aphorisms (*sūtras*) divided into four chapters (*pādas*) that cover various aspects of yoga philosophy and practice. Yoga as the Cessation of the Fluctuations of the Mind: Patañjali defines yoga as “*yogaḥ cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*”¹ which translates to the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. According to Patañjali, the human mind is constantly agitated by thoughts, desires, and emotions, leading to suffering and bondage. By stilling the mind and attaining a state of mental tranquility, one can achieve self-realization and liberation. Patañjali outlines the eight limbs of yoga, also known as *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*, which forms the practical framework for spiritual practice. These limbs are “*yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyān-samādhayaḥ aṣṭau aṅgāni*”² means *Yama* (ethical restraints), *Niyama* (observances), *Āsana* (physical postures), *Prāṇāyāma* (breath control), *Pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses), *Dhāraṇā* (concentration), *Dhyāna* (meditation), and *Samādhi* (absorption or union with the divine). These limbs progressively guide practitioners toward self-discipline, ethical living, physical well-being, and the realization of higher states of consciousness.

Patañjali describes the mind as consisting of different levels or layers. These layers include the conscious mind (*manas*), the thinking faculty (*buddhi*), the ego or sense of “I” (*ahaṁkāra*), and the deeper unconscious mind (*citta*). By understanding the different aspects of the mind and their functions, practitioners can gain insight into the nature of their own consciousness and ultimately transcend the limitations of the mind. *Samādhi* is the ultimate

¹¹ *Yogasutra* – 1.2.

²² *Yogasutra* – 2.29.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

goal of yoga and represents a state of profound absorption and union with the object of meditation or the divine. Patañjali describes different stages of *Samādhi*, progressing from a focused concentration on an object to a state of complete transcendence, where the meditator and the object of meditation merge into one. In *Samādhi*, the practitioner experiences pure consciousness and liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Patañjali emphasizes the importance of ethical living and moral conduct in yoga practice. The *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, the first two limbs of yoga, provide guidelines for personal and social ethics. They include principles such as non-violence (*ahimsa*), truthfulness (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), self-discipline (*tapas*), contentment (*samtoṣa*), and others. Practicing these ethical principles helps purify the mind, cultivate virtues, and create a conducive environment for spiritual growth.

Vivekananda and Yoga:

The Rig Veda is one of the four main Vedic Sanskrit scriptures known as Vedas that were discovered in ancient Indian culture. The Rig Veda, the world's oldest religious sacred literature, contains the word yoga for the first time. From then on till the present, prominent yoga masters have transmitted their teachings throughout the world. The influence of Swami Vivekananda, a well-known Hindu philosopher from India, may be seen throughout Indian history. He placed a lot of stress on the four yogas of *Bhakti*, *Karma*, *Jñāna*, and *Rāja*.³ Swami Vivekananda played a significant influence in the global dissemination of yoga during his tour to America in the nineteenth and late twentieth centuries. He did this by giving lectures that had a significant impact all over the world. The word “yoga,” derives from the ancient Sanskrit language, meaning “union” (the original verb is Yuj, which means to connect). Yoga is to join a man (which means an individual awareness). Yoga master Vivekananda modified yoga in the traditional manner and popularized yoga in the West without using asanas. Outside of India, it has evolved into a relaxation, stress-relief, and physical fitness approach focused on posture. According to Vivekanand's well-known book *Rāja Yoga*, *Rāja Yoga* is the royal path and the

³ Vivekananda, S. (2016). *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, pp. 77-78.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

yoga of meditation.⁴ Its main goal is to calm the mind. He has translated the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali for a Western audience.

Swami Vivekananda *Rāja Yoga* offers a scientific analysis of yoga philosophy in addition to being a practice of meditation and mind control. Yoga outlines techniques for mental growth, focus, and the release of the soul from the physical bonds of the body to the world. Yoga incorporates breathing exercises, meditation, and movement. That word is helpful. The father of traditional yoga was Patañjali. Yoga was described as the cessation of mind modification. *Rāja Yoga* is defined as the “*Rāja Yoga*,” which is the ultimate earthly authority known as the “king,” and “yoga,” which is “self-control.” We can therefore conclude that a monarch acts independently, with assurance, and self-confidence on the planet. *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* (*aṣṭa* is eight, and *aṅga* is limbs) is another name for *Rāja Yoga*. It breaks down yoga’s eight limbs or steps into eight sections. All of them lead to a person’s inner tranquility, mental cleanliness, mental clarity, mental control, and realization. These eight steps essentially serve as a roadmap for how to lead a meaningful life. They focus emphasis on one’s health and also assist us in acknowledging our spiritual essence. Vivekananda discusses all *āsanas* for maintaining both physical and mental wellness. The first limb of *Rāja Yoga*, “*Yama*,” deals with one’s ability to control or limit oneself or one’s activities. According to Patañjali, “*ahiṃsāsatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ*”⁵ means Yamas are five: Nonviolence (not injuring other living things) is known as *Ahiṃsā*. Truthfulness (non-falsehood) is known as *Satya*, Non-stealing is known as *Asteya*, *Brahmacarya* means sexual restraint, marital fidelity, or continence, and *Aparigraha* is a lack of avarice or possessiveness. one. Even those who are really angry, terrified, thrilled, etc., appear to be calm. Self-control is achieved through the practice of yoga and the acquisition of breathing skills. Self-control is an essential component of any meaningful yoga achievement. When all of the brain’s regions interact and function together, control results. The concentration is focused and directed as the conscious and subconscious states merge. On a physical level, the breath is extremely important because it regulates the heart rate into a steady beat, delivers oxygen to the brain on a regular basis, and stimulates the development of a stronger link between the mind and body. Everything is

⁴ Vivekananda, S. (1993). *Raja Yoga*. Stockholm, pp. 11-12.

⁵ *Yogasutra* – 2.30.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

feasible when the mind is clear, and decisions may be made precisely and clearly. It is a difficult situation that allows him to stand out from the crowd, become concentrated, and exercise control. Balance, calmness, resolve, confidence, and strength are the five main components of self-control. Yoga aims to help us become aware of and in control of our thoughts rather than allowing them to rule us. Better self-control leads to experiences that are both completely delightful and blessings. A person who is calm and in control creates positive energy and benefits society. The second section of Patañjali's *Yogasūtras* is called *niyama*. *Niyamas* refers to human behavior that is disciplined. In yoga, there are five disciplines: "śauca sañtoṣa tapaḥ svādhyāya īśvarapraṇidhānāni niyamāḥ",⁶ which are *Śauca* (cleanliness of thought, speech, and body) is the act of purifying oneself. *Sañtoṣa* (contentment): Accepting others or one's circumstances as they are in order to move past or change them and having hope for oneself. *Tapas* (heat; spiritual austerities): self-discipline Self-study – *Svādhyāya* (studying the holy book) *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*(surrender to God) is the act of self-surrender.

Yoga only has two objectives: self-control and self-awareness. We would manage our actions and follow regulations by exercising and training our minds and bodies. Regardless of the type of yoga one does, self-discipline is the most critical and important necessity since without it, yoga cannot produce its beneficial effects. The Patañjali *Yogasūtra* refers to self-discipline as *tapas*. *Svādhyāya* is self-study. Self-education or autodidacticism is learning without the direction of a teacher or institution. Human curiosity and the desire to pursue lifelong learning lead to autodidacticism. In meditation, a yoga aspirant gives up the ego and allows it to dissolve into transcendental consciousness. In many Hindu systems, *svādhyāya* is a *Niyama* that denotes reflection and an examination of the individual self. The term "self-surrender" refers to *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*, which is the surrender of one's volition to an outside force, an emotion, or another person. In spirituality and religion, surrender implies entirely giving up one's own will and submitting one's actions, ideas, and thoughts to the dictates of a higher force. Such a self-surrendered individual makes the environment worth living in and never gets involved in arguments with others over insignificant issues, which promotes harmony in the community.

⁶ *Yogasutra* – 2.32.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

In yoga, *āsana*, or bodily poses, makes up the third limb. According to the *yogic* perspective, the body is a temple of the spirit, and taking care of it is a crucial part of spiritual development. We acquired the disciplined habit and the capacity for concentration needed for meditation through the practice of *āsanas*. It is the practice of a certain activity to improve or maintain our health and physical fitness. It frequently refers to having athletic talent or ability. “*Haṭha Yoga*” refers to a collection of physical postures, or *āsanas*, and combinations of asanas intended to align our skin, muscles, and bones. The positions are also intended to allow free passage of energy by opening the body’s numerous channels, particularly the major conduit, the spine. A culture that practices *āsanas* is healthier both physically and mentally. That’s why Patañjali says “*sthira sukhamāsanam*”.⁷

The fourth limb, or breathing exercise, is called *prāṇāyāma*. According to Patañjali, “*tasmin satiśvāsa praśvāsayoḥ gativicchedaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ*”⁸ *Prāṇāyāma* is a technique for controlling breathing while acknowledging the interdependence of the breath, mind, and emotions. In yoga, the power of deep breathing can actually prevent damage. Additionally, deep breathing might help us discover our inner selves. Breathing regularly induces a flow that prompts a shift in the body and mind, washing and purifying them so that our genuine nature shines through. In yoga, *prāṇāyāma*, or breathing exercises, form the basis of our practice. The three-part breath is used to start, followed by more difficult breathing techniques like *Kapalabhāti* and the alternate nostril breath. The *prāṇāyāma* practice complements the *āsanas*. The first four stages of Patañjali’s *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* focus on enhancing our personalities, mastering our physical selves, and becoming energetically aware of who we are, all of which get us ready for the journey’s second half, which is a higher state of consciousness. As a result, *prāṇāyāma* practice may help society combat diseases linked to air pollution, such as bronchitis and asthma, while also promoting social awareness.

Withdrawal of the senses from external objects is known as *pratyāhāra*. According to Patañjali’s canonical text, the *Yogasūtras* of Patañjali, it is the fifth of the eight levels. He said about the *pratyahara*, “*svaviśaya asaṁprayoge cittasya svarūpānukāraḥ iva indriyāṅām*

⁷ *Yogasutra* – 2.46.

⁸ *Yogasutra* – 2.49.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

*pratyāhātah*⁹ In accordance *pratyāhāra* literally translates as “control of *āhāra*” or acquiring control over outside forces. It has been likened to a turtle that retreats into its shell; the turtle’s shell represents the intellect, and its limbs represent the senses. Usually, the term is translated as “withdrawal from the senses,” although it actually means much more. One of the most popular techniques is to turn one’s focus inward toward the breath, monitoring it without trying to regulate it as the connection to internal perceptions and stimuli is progressively lost. According to the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, Just as the tortoise retracts its limbs, so when a man retracts his senses from the sense objects, his wisdom becomes steady. That is to say, When the consciousness dissociates from the senses, it becomes more sensitive. The intuitive mind awakens while the senses close. This technique limits overindulgent consumption, which ultimately regulates the collapse of humanity.¹⁰

Dhāraṇa, also known as *Rāja Yoga* or *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* in Patañjali’s *Yogasūtras*, is the sixth of Patañjali’s eight stages or steps and is a form of focus. In the words of Patañjali “*deśa bandhaḥ cittasya dhāraṇā*”¹¹ means “collection or concentration of the mind,” “the act of holding bearing, wearing, supporting, maintaining, retaining, keeping back a good memory,” or “firmness, steadfastness, concentration.” Concentration refers to the capacity to focus one’s attention, among other things, in line with one’s will. It denotes attentional control. It is the capacity to concentrate the mind on a single idea, object, or subject while blocking out all other irrelevant thoughts, feelings, or sensations. This behavior contributes to the success of society. *Dhyāna*, also referred to as meditation, is the seventh limb of yoga “*tatra pratyaya ekatānatā dhyānam*”.¹² Meditation is the process of calming the mind so that you can focus on your thoughts for a while for leisure, spiritual, or religious reasons. In reality, meditation is concentrating one’s attention on an object, such as a sound, sight, or emotion. Both focus and relaxation are involved in meditation. It is the true union experience. Patañjali provides instructions on how to meditate and outlines the elements that make up a meditation practice in the *Yogasūtra*. In the Patañjali *Yogasūtra*, meditation is also referred to as *dhyānas*. As a

⁹ *Yogasutra* – 2.54.

¹⁰ Kuppuswami, A. (1983). *Bhagavat Gītā*. Varanasi: Chaukhambha Orientalia, 2.58.

¹¹ *Yogasutra* – 3.1.

¹² *Yogasutra* – 3.2.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

pure state of consciousness, it is defined. Yoga, which focuses on mental relaxation and concentration, includes meditation. Here, the focus is on the breath, ideas, and concentration. Breathing is automatically controlled by awareness, which completely soothes the mind. Everyone in today's world experiences stress whether they are men, women, elderly people, or even children. The practice of meditation may aid in lowering mental tension and enhancing focus.

The eighth and final step of yoga's eight-fold path is called *samādhi*. According to Patañjali "*tadeva arthamātranirbhāsam svarūpaśūnyam iva samādhiḥ*,"¹³ is a form of spirituality. It is a mental condition in which each person's awareness merges with the vast whole. It is a state of oneness with the meditation subject, which could be any object, person, place, or even God. The boundary between actor, action, and being acted upon becomes less clear. The actor's mind is so thoroughly absorbed that it no longer recognizes itself. A type of spirituality known as *samādhi* occurs when the thinker, the thought process, and the thought merge with the object of the contemplation. Complete realization is a term used in Western psychology and philosophy, and realization refers to complete openness to the supreme. Swamiiji used the word "*Rāja Yoga*" to refer to the practice of mental concentration. In our current physical state, we are incredibly distracted, and the mind is wasting its power on a wide variety of things. Thousands of unwanted impulses rush into the mind and disrupt it as soon as one attempts to quiet their thoughts and focus on any one piece of knowledge. The entire focus of *Rāja Yoga* studies is on how to check and manage the mind. *Rāja Yoga* is the psychological yoga and method of union as a result. Every guy who seeks information uses the same way of learning, which is the concentration of mind, whether he is a chemist, an astronomer, a professor sitting in his chair, a student with a book, or any other type of learner.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, let me state that Patañjali's yoga is dualistic, recognizing the distinction between *puruṣa* (the spiritual self) and *prakṛti* (the material universe). On the other hand, the *Rāja Yoga* of Vivekananda, which was influenced by *Advaita Vedānta*, emphasizes a non-dual reality in which the personal self and the supreme self are one. Vivekananda's *Rāja Yoga* places

¹³ *Yogasutra* – 3.3.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

a special emphasis on meditation as a useful way to obtain *samādhi*, in contrast to Patañjali's method, which equally promotes all eight limbs of yoga, from moral conduct through meditation and *samādhi*. In a different historical and cultural setting, Patañjali wrote the *Yogasūtras* with the intention of offering a comprehensive framework for spiritual liberation. In contrast, Vivekananda's *Rāja Yoga* was presented in a contemporary setting to both Eastern and Western audiences with the goal of making spiritual practices approachable and useful in daily life. Both ideologies strive for liberation, but they have different ideas about what liberation is. It is *kaivalya*, the understanding of one's independence from *prakṛti*, that is central to Patañjali's Yoga. *Rāja Yoga*, which reflects the *Advaita Vedānta* impact of Vivekananda, is the realization of the union of the individual self with the Supreme Self

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