



HISTORY OF MEDITATION IN ANCIENT TIMES (VEDIC PERIOD TO 7TH CENTURY)

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Abstract



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Dhyan means to deeply concentrate the mind and heart on a single point. It has vital importance. Different methods of Dhyan are in practice in different parts of the world from ancient times of human history. Every person aspiring for salvation should meditate, dhyan & worship at least for an hour everyday. The worries of this world are thus destroyed and we experience the supreme soul of God. We should remember that the sole aim of life is merging the individual soul with supreme soul and reaching God.

The various concepts of dhyana and its practice originated in the vedic era of Hinduism and the practice has been influential within the diverse traditions of Hinduism. It is in Hinduism, a part of self-directed awareness and unifying Yoga process by which the Yogi realizes self (Atman, soul) One's relationship with other living beings and ultimate reality. Dhyana is also found in other Indian religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. These developed along with Dyana in Hinduism, partly independently.

That was a evolutionary history of meditation in ancient times. Dhyana is associated with every moment of life according to Dhyana supports each action of our daily life. We can lead a happy and bliss feel life only with Dhyan / meditation our lives are incomplete without Dhyan.

Different social customs and rituals in India and world reflect a love for ecological balance tolerance towards other systems of thought and a compassionate outlook towards all creations. Mediations practice of all hues and colours is considered panacea for a meaningful life and living. Its orientation to comprehensive health, both individual and social makes it worthy practice for the people of all religions, races and nationalities.

Now-a days, millions and millions of people across the globe have benefited by the practice of meditation in that part of Yoga which has been preserved and promoted by the great ancient Yoga masters from ancient time to this day.

Introduction

Dhyan means to deeply concentrate the mind and heart on a single point. It has vital importance. Different methods of Dhyan are in practice in different parts of the world from ancient times of human history. My article focused on History of meditation in Ancient World. It is very interesting to study of meditation. Every person aspiring for salvation should meditate, dhyan & worship at least for an hour everyday. The worries of this world are thus destroyed and we experience the supreme soul of God. We should remember that the sole aim of life is merging the individual soul with supreme soul and reaching God, everything else is secondary. Therefore Yog and Dhyan are the necessities of our life.

Some of the definitions of meditation

1. Tatra Pratyayaiktamatra Dyanam
(Yog darshanam 3:2)
2. Tasya Vachakaha Pranavah
(Yog darshanam 1:27)
3. Tajipasta Aarthabhavanam
(Yog darshanam 1: 28)
4. Omityekaksharam Bramha
(Gita 8.13)
5. Om Kham Brahcha
(Yajurveda)

Meditation involves concentration and relaxation both of which are enhanced by Yoga. Just as there are many styles of Yoga, so too are there a variety of ways to meditate. The first state of meditation is to find a focal point or method of focusing in order to free oneself from distractions... *Yoga pedia*.

There is a evidence in Bhagadgita, Srikrishna Bhagavan teaches Yoga & Meditation to Arjuna. In Ramayana Vashista Maharshi also teaches meditation to Rama.

Aims & Objectives of History meditation in Ancient times:

The practice of meditation is a longer history. Meditation is of prehistoric origin and is found throughout history. It can be divided ancient, medical and modern period. In this article I have written mediation in ancient times.

The aim of mediation is to go beyond the mind and experience our essential nature. Which is described as peace, happiness and bliss. The meditation aim is to foster well-being and ultimately end suffering.

Wide-ranging holistic benefits are there.

Meditation has been practiced since antiquity in numerous religions traditions and beliefs.

Meditation may be used with the aim of reducing stress, anxiety, depression and pain and increasing peace, perception, self – concept and well being and focused the history of mediation in ancient times vedic times to 7th Century A.D. The knowledge is needed to every person its aims at reveals the chronicle of History of meditation.

Methodology:

Methodology follows mostly ancient scriptures of Vedas, Upnishads, Buddhist, Jain Literature, Yoga sudras of Pathanjali, The Hebrew Bible and recent journals of Yoga. So many books has released on Yoga & Meditation. This books were not focused its history. This books we can find, interesting facts, which can use the readers and the future generations. It can reveal the education of history of meditation in ancient times.

The practice of meditation is of prehistoric origin and is found throughout history especially in religious context. Some

of the earliest written records of meditation (Dhyana) come from the Hindu traditions of Vedantism around 1500 BCE.

Dhyana / Meditation in Hinduism means contemplation and meditation. Dhyana is taken up in Yoga exercises and is a means to Samadhi and self-knowledge. Dhyana was one of the main limb of Ashtang Yoga.

The various concepts of dhyana and its practice originated in the vedic era of Hinduism and the practice has been influential within the diverse traditions of Hinduism. It is in Hinduism, a part of self-directed awareness and unifying Yoga process by which the Yogi realizes self (Atman, soul) One's relationship with other living beings and ultimate reality. Dhyana is also found in other Indian religions such as Buddhism and Jainism. These developed along with Dyana in Hinduism, partly independently. Partly influencing each other.

The term Dhyana appears in Aranyak and Brahmana layers of the Vedas but with unclear meaning, while in the early Upanishads it appears in the sense of "Contemplation, Meditation" and an important part of self-knowledge process. It is described in numerous Upanishads of Hinduism and in Patanjali Yogasutras a key text of the Yoga school of Hindu Philosophy.

The Vedas also discuss the meditative traditions of ancient India. Vedas called sruti literature. The Veda for orthodox Indian theologians are considered revelations seen by ancient sages after intense mediation, and texts that have been more carefully preserved since ancient times. The various Indian philosophies and denominations have taken differing positions of the Vedas. Schools of Indian philosophy which cite the Vedas as their scriptural authority are classified as orthodox. The Sramana tradition includes Jainism,

Buddhism and other such as the Ajivakas and Carvakas.

Around 6th to 5th centuries BCE, other forms of meditation developed in Taoist China. The Taoism or Dawism is a religious or philosophical tradition of Chinese origin which emphasizes living in harmony with the Tao. The Tao is fundamental idea in most Chinese model schools. In Taoism, however it denotes the principle that is the source, pattern and substance of everything that exists. Taoist ethics are simplicity, naturalness, spontaneity, but in general tend to emphasize WU Wei (action without intention) Taoism was deeply influenced Chinese culture.

The origins of Buddhist meditation are subject to debate among scholars. Early written records of the multiple levels and states of mediation in Buddhism in India are found in the sutras of Pali canon, which dates to 1st century BCE. The Pali Canon records the basic four hold formula of salvation via the observance of the rules of moralities, contemplative concentration, knowledge and liberation, thus planning mediation as a step along path of salvation. By the time Buddhism was spreading in China, the Vinalaksiti Sutra which dates to 100 CE included a number of passages on mediation and enlightened wisdom, clearly pointing to Zen.

In the West by 20 BCE Philo of Alexandria had written on some form of "Spiritual Exercises" involving attention and concentration. The thought of philo was largely inspired by Aristobulus of paneas and the Alexandrian School. Concerning his work 'Wisdom of Solomon' and the occupations of the Therapeutic and the essences. Philo has never been claimed as a saint nor doctor of the church.

In the 3rd century Plotinus had developed meditative techniques, which

however did not attract a following among Christian mediators. Plotinus taught that there is a supreme, totally transcendent 'one', containing no division, multiplicity or distinction, beyond all categories of being. His "One" cannot be any existing thing nor is it merely the sum of all things (compare the stoic doctrine of belief in non-material existence) but is prior to all existences". Plotinus identified his "one" with the concept of 'Good' and the principle of 'Beauty' saint Augustine experimented with the methods of Plotinus and failed to achieve ecstasy.

Silk Road transmission of Buddhism:

Buddhism entered Han China via the silk road, beginning in the I or II century CE. The first documented translation efforts by Buddhist monks in China (all foreigners) were in the 2nd Century CE under the influence of the expansion of the Kushan empire into the Chinese territory of the Tarim Basin under the Kanishka. This contact brought Gandharan Buddhist culture into territories adjacent to China proper.

Direct contact between Central Asian and Chinese Buddhism continued throughout the 3rd to 7th century, well into the Tang period. From the 4th Century onward, with Faxian's pilgrimages to India (395-414) and later Xuanzang (629-644), Chinese pilgrims started to travel by themselves to northern India. Their source of Buddhism in order to get improved access to original scriptures much of the land route connecting northern India (mainly Gandhara) with China at that time was ruled by the Kushan empire, and later the Hephthalite Empire.

The Indian form of Buddhist tantra Vajrayana reached China in the 7th century. Tibetan Buddhism was likewise established as a branch of Vajrayana in the 8th century. But about this time, the silk road transmission of Buddhism began to decline with the Muslim

conquest of Transoxiana. Bodhidharma is traditionally considered the transmitter of the concept of Zen to China. The aim of Zen (zen) is just sitting, that is suspending all judgemental thinking and letting words, ideas, images and thoughts pass by without getting involved in them.

However, the first "original school" in East Asia was founded by his contemporary Zhiyi in the 6th Century in central China. Zhiyi managed to systematically organize the various teachings that had been imported from India in a way that their relationship with each other made sense. Wonhyo and Uisang promoted Korean Buddhism in the 7th Century.

There is evidence that Judaism has inherited meditative practices from its predecessor traditions in Israelite antiquity. The history of Judaism spans more than 3,000 years. Judaism has its roots in organized religion in the Middle East during the Bronze Age. Judaism is considered one of the oldest monotheistic religions. The Hebrews and Israelites were already referred to as "Jews" in later books of the Tanakh such as the Book of Esther, with the terms Jews replacing the title "Children of Israel". Judaism's texts, traditions and values strongly influenced later Abrahamic religions including Christianity, Islam and Bahai faith. Many aspects of Judaism have also directly or indirectly influenced secular Western ethics and civil law. Judaism was just as important a factor in the ancient era development of Western civilization as Hellenism and Christianity, as the background of Christianity, has considerably shaped Western ideals and morality since early Christianity, for example, in the Torah, the Patriarch Isaac is described as going "Lusach" in the field a term understood by most commentators as some type of meditative practice (Genesis 24:63). There are indications

throughout the Tankah that Judaism always contained a central meditative tradition.

Conclusion:

That was a evolutionary history of meditation in ancient times. Dhyana is associated with every moment of life according to Dhyana supports each action of our daily life. We can lead a happy and bliss feel life only with Dhyana / meditation our lives are incomplete without Dhyana.

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