



Yogic Thoughts of Swami Rama: A Contemporary Study

-Mukesh Kumar Pathak¹

- Dr. Ishwar Bhardwaj²

- Dr. Satyanand³

Abstract-

Swami Rama was a great yogi of India. He has inspired millions of persons to walk on the yogic path leading to self realization. He is among a few great yogis who combined the western modern science with the ancient yogic practices to establish the importance of ancient Indian wisdom in light of modern scientific doctrines. He demonstrated yogic practices and principles in an interesting, simple and effective manner and insisted for establishing the yogic insights based on the rigorous scientific experiments. He considered yoga and meditation as the important practices through which an individual can find his hidden potential by enhancement of the inner consciousness. He inspired by his yogic thoughts to the modern generation to integrate the modern scientific techniques with the ancient yogic knowledge to attain maximum benefits from the yogic science. He integrated the ancient yogic philosophy and yogic psychology with the modern scientific doctrines to establish their efficacies in the contemporary world.

Key Words- Swami Rama, Yoga, Meditation, Yogic Psychology, Yogic Principles

Introduction-

Swami Rama was a great yogi and spiritual guru of India. He was born in 1925 in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand state of India. He spent many decades in learning the ancient yogic knowledge with the great ancient yogis living in the mountain region of Himalayas. He became expert in various yogic practices and disciplines which are propagated through the ancient lineage of yogis. He went to the United States where a lot of experiments were done on him in physiology and anatomy sectors linking the activities of body and brain with the effects of yogic practices like meditation and Yoga Nidra. The scientific community became astonished by seeing the efficacy of ancient yogic practices. Later, Swami Rama taught and inspired millions of people to walk on the path of yoga.

Yogic Thoughts of Swami Rama-

Swami Rama wanted that modern generation should understand the value of ancient discoveries that are mentioned in our ancient scriptures such as the Upanishads. He elaborated that the modern sciences although provide the

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Veda, Gurukula Kangri (Deemed to be University), Haridwar

² Dean, Academic, Dev Sanskriti University, Haridwar

³ Assistant Professor, Himachal Pradesh Central University, Dharamshala

physical luxuries and comforts to the mankind but inner happiness and harmony can be attained only by following the ancient wisdom given by our sages in Vedas and Upanishads.⁴ These scriptures make the person capable to fathom his inner potential and the capacity to realize himself. He considered that the teachings of these scriptures are transcendental and apply without the limitations of time and space.

Swami Rama always insisted to live fully in the present and he influenced persons with his transformative thought energy. His living insight is fully pragmatic which involves focusing on the present moment. This notion is immensely helpful for the thousands of students who live under the shadow of fear of results in the examinations. Swamiji loved to help the downtrodden who are in dire need of help. In his own words “I am in the habit of tending those who are full of thorns and are discarded by everybody. It gives me great joy when I see them blossom⁵”. This is the highest quality of a true saint like Swami Rama that they care for most underprivileged persons through their compassion and working.

It is an established notion of religion and spirituality that when there is decay of the dharma or religion, god manifests himself in a physical form to save the morality and ethics related with religion and in this course, he reestablishes dharma or religion. In Gita, Krishna declares that when there is decay of righteousness in the world along with rise in unrighteousness, I body myself forth to reestablish righteousness.⁶ Similar thing is found in Ramacharitmanas when Lord Shiva says to Goddess Parvati that god manifests himself in physical form to protect righteousness when there is rise in unrighteousness.⁷ If we apply this notion in the field of yoga, we can see that god has manifested in the form of great yogis when there is loss of yogic tradition. These great yogis reestablish the lost ancient tradition of yoga to continue the lineage of yogic knowledge. The whole life of Swami Rama depicts the same and we see that he has done great work by reestablishing the importance of ancient yogic practices by uniting them with western scientific methodology and experiments. As a matter of fact, the western worlds become astonished to realize the embedded potential of yogic practices when Swami Rama demonstrated it before the western experts.

Swami Rama adamantly believed that the philosophical doctrines should be backed up by the rigorous scientific experiments. Swami Rama was trained in the remote caves of Himalaya by the great yogi and he undergone rigorous scientific experiments by the western scientists and experts in the United States of America. He theoretically lived the death by stopping the heart activity and regulating brain waves while during the course, he kept himself fully conscious about the events occurring in the surroundings.⁸ In this manner, he lived and backed up the principle that the yogis can conquer the death.

In the early age of twenty four, he served as the prestigious Shankaracharya at the Kavirpitham in southern India that was a revered position of a monastic head to look after and propagate the ancient lineage attached with that position. He was asked by his guru to go to revered masters living in the Himalayas and Tibet and he spent many years to learn the yogic secrets related with various schools of yoga.

Swami Rama was a great thinker. He had an extensive and deep knowledge of yoga psychology and he was the best expert in combining the aspects of yoga therapy and yoga psychology to solve the mysteries of subconscious mind and human behavior. In his view, the body and mind are the two levels of functioning of human existence. Both these levels have different functioning in terms of appearance. We can simultaneously be aware about both these

⁴ Rama, S. (1990). *Wisdom of the Ancient Sages: Mundaka Upanishad*. Himalayan Institute Press.

⁵ Rama, S. (1999). *Living with the Himalayan masters*. Himalayan institute press.

⁶ Bhagwad Gita, 4.7

⁷ Ramcharitmanas, Bal Kand, 120.3

⁸ Rama, S., Ballentine, R., & Hymes, A. (1998). *Science of breath: A practical guide*. Himalayan Institute Press.

levels. Yoga Psychology says that both these levels are interlinked with each other. Through the practice of yoga, both these levels can be improved in terms of functioning.

Swami Rama recognizes various yogic paths of devotion, knowledge and action. Among these paths, he considers the Rajyoga as the most scientific, comprehensive and pragmatic yogic system.⁹ As a matter of fact, he always insisted to apply a pragmatic and scientific approach in all our actions. When we have a pragmatic and scientific approach in our actions, we can perform those actions with optimum perfection that is considered as yoga by lord Krishna in Gita where he says that Yoga is the perfectness in actions.¹⁰ In the life of Swami Rama, we see the characteristic of equanimity in his action which is the clear symbol of yoga since lord Krishna has said in Gita that yoga is equanimity in the actions.¹¹

Swami Rama has praised Bhagwad Gita in extensive manner since it practically teaches the methods to transform our inner existence to lift our consciousness to higher levels. In his view, Gita combines the streams of psychology and philosophy in an aesthetic manner and helps us to realize our inner potential for the purpose of self realization. There are eighteen lessons in this book and each lesson progresses us towards inner journey to attain the transformational bliss. Swami Rama says that Bhagwad Gita is the essence of all the philosophical and psychological knowledge mentioned in the Upanishads.¹² Analogically, it is said that Krishna has milked all the Upanishads to prepare the essence in the form of Gita that he has provided to his disciple Arjuna.

Swami Rama has described his thoughts about the ancient practice of meditation in a very scientific and practical way. He regards meditational practice as a specified technique for the resting of mind and attaining simultaneously a state of consciousness.¹³ This state is different from the normal waking state of an individual. This state is drifted inwards in the relaxed manner. Swami ji said that we should observe our thought pattern that we follow in our day to day life before trying to explore the spiritual principles and practices. Firstly we should understand our individual philosophy then only we can understand our thoughts and mind. Once we understand our inner being, we come into position to utilize our hidden potential. Swami Rama adamantly says that man is the maker of his own destiny both in subconscious and conscious manner.¹⁴ In present state, man can control only his conscious mind but with the practice of yoga and meditation he can regulate the subconscious mind also and in that circumstance, he can constitute his own destiny with his conscious and focused efforts. This notion of Swami Rama is very effective and applicable in those individuals who are struggling hard to get success in their lives. For them, Swami Rama shows a simple but effective way to observe the thoughts to live in the present so as to focus fully on the present circumstances.

Swami Ji Considered Himalayas as the seat of stronghold for ancient wisdom and knowledge and he met with many sages to attain the ancient knowledge of yoga, science and spirituality. In fact, he regarded Himalaya as his spiritual parent who guided him towards the path of wisdom and knowledge. In deed he was very inquisitive and this attribute is praised in Upanishads that say that the attainment of divine wisdom requires an inquisitive person who is sincere in searching the truth.¹⁵ Gita also says that it is the man full of devotion that becomes able to receive the knowledge.¹⁶ We find that the life of Swami Rama is ideal for those persons who want to search the truth with characteristics of inquisitiveness and sincerity. Atharvaveda says that a ideal guru is although specialist in his

⁹ Rama, S., Ballentine, R., & Ajaya, S. (2007). *Yoga and psychotherapy: The evolution of consciousness*. Himalayan Institute Press.

¹⁰ Bhagwad Gita, 2.50

¹¹ Bhagwad Gita, 2.48

¹² Rama, S. (1985). *Perennial psychology of the Bhagavad Gita*. Himalayan Institute Press.

¹³ Rama, S. (2007). *Meditation and its Practice*. Himalayan Institute Press.

¹⁴ Rama, S. (1986). *Path of fire and light: Advanced practices of yoga* (Vol. 2). Himalayan Institute Press.

¹⁵ Kathopanishad, 1.2.9

¹⁶ Bhagwad Gita, 4.39

particular subject but it is good for him to have knowledge about the contemporary subjects.¹⁷ This enables the teacher to propagate his academic concepts in an effective manner. We notice this excellent pedagogical characteristic in the teaching insights of Swami Rama.

Swami Rama insisted to love and respect the nature since when the person lives the voice of nature; his soul attains harmony with the surroundings.¹⁸ The internal resonances with the outer nature awaken our senses to perceive the immortality among the mortality and we understand that the god has manifested itself into the various forms that we see in nature. The person who loves and respects the nature tends to conserve the resources without wasting them. The Upanishads resonates with the notion that we should opt for the controlled consumption of the resources.¹⁹ This characteristic is observed in all the great yogis and saints that they have insisted to conserve and respect the nature. It is the core belief of Upanishads that all living and non living beings and all the sciences are originated from the Supreme Being or god.²⁰ Vedas say that it is a righteous duty of a guru to motivate his followers and students towards the divine along with enhancing their intelligence.²¹ We see it in the teaching style of Swami Rama that he motivated his learners towards the inner awakening to attain the knowledge of their inherent potential.

Swami Rama has given much importance to have clarity of mind since it is the base on which we make decisions after observing the things. When, we don't have the clarity of mind, we cannot truly interpret the data that is received through our senses and this makes our mind clouded with ignorance thus making us unable to decide the right path. The clarity of mind comes with the practice of rational observation, meditation and truthfulness. In all our actions, it is the truth which wins at the last, as said in the Upanishads.²²

The life of Swami Rama is based on the Selfless action. He did not opt for individuality but he always cared to protecting and propagating the lineage of knowledge given to him by his guru.²³ He was much conscious and zealous for the ancient tradition of sages that he revered and belonged. He said that the nature becomes peaceful for those persons who love and respect the nature. He was a selfless man living for the higher aims and in this context; he was a true karma yogi. Gita says that the person, who remains unattached with fruits of action and performs selfless actions, excels in the actions.²⁴ Swami Rama lived this example aesthetically.

Swami Rama was well known for his excellent and simple way of teaching and he narrated complex ideas in such a simple and interesting manner that every individual was able to understand it irrespective of his knowledge level. Swami ji regarded that the world is itself a story and all our experiences are part of it. He prayed to god that everyone can learn from the experiences that he taught to them. He always said to his students that "what is that which is mine and what is that which I have not given to you!". This shows his simplicity and compassion towards the students walking on the path of yoga and spirituality.

Mahatma Gandhi has said that human life is a great 'yajna' and it lies in the art of life to make the offering of actions in this 'yajna'.²⁵ The person who is living life for the welfare of others is actually doing the yajna of actions by offering his mind, wealth and physical actions in the service of mankind. Swami Rama did the same by living his whole life in the service of nation and humankind.

¹⁷ Atharva Veda, 1.1.2

¹⁸ Rama, S. (1999). *Living with the Himalayan masters*. Himalayan institute press.

¹⁹ Ishwashyopanishad 1.1

²⁰ Mundakopanishad, 2.1.7

²¹ Atharva Veda, 11.5.24

²² Mundakopanishad, 3.1.6

²³ Rama, S. (1999). *Living with the Himalayan masters*. Himalayan institute press.

²⁴ Bhagwad Gita, 3.7

²⁵ Gandhi, Mahatma, Hindu Dharma Kya hai, National Book Trust of India, New Delhi, 2009, Page-46

Conclusion-

Swami Rama was a great yogi, thinker, writer and philosopher who lived all his life for the welfare of society and nation. His life is a vibrant example of a true yogi whose teachings transcend the boundaries of time and space. He inspired millions of persons to walk on the path of yoga. He combined western science with the ancient Indian traditional wisdom in the sectors of philosophy, psychology and yogic science. He established the importance of ancient yogic practices before the western experts. His yogic thoughts are highly rational, practical and pragmatic to apply in our lives to get success in life in physical, social and spiritual dimensions.

