



THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATH SAMPRADAYA

DR. ANUKRITI RAJ

Ph. D. in English,
University of Lucknow
(UP) INDIA

ABSTRACT

The writeup is the discourses on several narratives, institutions, establishment and the cultural consciousness, specially located in the city of Gorakhpur, Uttar-Pradesh and the country at large. It aims at representing in miniature, the forms, and receptions of ideology, political upheavals, economic responses, and the social construct that played a pivotal role towards the 'National Movement' and the 'National Consciousness'.

Keywords: Nath Sampradaya, Siva-cult, Adiyogi, Gorakhnath Temple, Nath- Yogi, Siddha-Yogi, Aughars.

INTRODUCTION

Down the ages since the time immemorial, the aim of greatest Indian saints and sages had been to teach the primary need of the physical existence in accordance with the spiritual conception of the 'life' and 'world'. In every possible manner, they tried to bring together the Supreme Metaphysical Reality and the Ultimate spiritual ideal of human life, even in the most ordinary human lives. By making people God-conscious, they tried to awaken the spiritual consciousness of the world. And so do, the 'yogis' and the 'sanyasis', of the 'Siva-cult', who tried to spiritualize the outlook, by feeling the presence of 'Siva' among them.

The Hindu Upanishads depicts 'Siva' as the Supreme spirit presiding over the 'tamas', or the absolute darkness. He is one of the three 'trinity', the principal aspects associated with the Supreme Spirit, personified as 'Brahma', 'Vishnu' and 'Rudra'. Where 'Rudra' is 'Siva' himself. They are the Supreme spirit, manifested in the three different forms, in relation to the three aspects of world process. That is the 'Creation', 'Sustenance' and the 'Destruction'. The creation is associated with Brahma, sustenance with Vishnu and the idea of destruction is associated with Siva. Along with, there is a divine power, 'Maha-Sakti', which is the

DR. ANUKRITI RAJ

1 Page



dynamic source of the cosmic process. That 'Sakti' consists of three gunas- 'Rajas', 'Sattwa' and 'Tamas', manifested in the creative, sustenance and the destructive aspects of the cosmic process. Accordingly, there are three types of people, who are charmed by one or another of the three deities- Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. The Brahma and Vishnu are the favorite Gods of 'Pravritti-Marga', while Siva is the favorite God of the 'Nivritti-Marga'.

The 'Nath-Panthei Sampradaya' is one such sect, that follows the 'Nivritti-Marga' to attain 'Nirvana' or 'Moksha'. 'Nivritti' means, retiring within or a complete cessation of the mind. And through the practice of 'Yoga', they achieve the complete mastery over the mind. It is one of the most widespread religious sects of India. The sampradaya considers Adinath, Maha-Yogishawara or the Siva himself, as their 'Adi-Guru'. Matsyendranath was seen as his direct disciple, and in-turn Gorakhnath was the disciple of Matsyendranath. And these two Maha-yogis, are seen as the most glorified incarnation of Siva. As Siva himself in the 'Mahakal Yog-shastra' said -"Ahāmevāsmigrorākshō mādrūpā tāññīñbōdhātā; Yogā-mārgā prāchāryā māyārōpīdām ghrītām". Siva says that, in order to propagate the path of Yoga, He himself has taken birth as 'Goraksha'. He, therefore, is considered to be the embodiment of Sachidananda Siva. And the most meditative man in all the yugas.

The Monastic order founded by Yogi-Guru Gorakhnath is generally known as 'Nath-yogi' or the 'Siddha-yogi'. According to the belief of the sect, Guru Gorakhnath was born in Peshawar, in 'Sat-yuga', in Gorakhpur, in 'Treta-yuga', in Dwaraka in 'Dvapara-yuga' and in Saurashtra in 'Kali-yuga'. As Professor G.W Briggs testifies, that the 'Nath-yogis' or the 'Kanphata-yogis' are the widely scattered ascetic orders, found everywhere in India. Since centuries, the Yogi-Guru and his followers have exerted upon the religious and cultural life of the vast sub-continent.

The ultimate aim of all the Yogis, is to become 'Natha', God, by having a complete mastery over the Nature. For this, the yogis undergo a systematic course of physical, psychical, moral and spiritual discipline, to attain the mastery over 'Prakriti'. In the process, they look at its objective aspects, which is to control the mind, body, senses and intellect, along with to win over the concept of 'time' and 'space'. And attain 'Siddhi' realizing, all possibilities of his inner nature. Rising above all the bondages, limitations and sorrows, they win over and conquer the death.

Removing the veil of ignorance, they acquire certain 'darshan' the true vision of the Absolute Truth, with which they become one with. Thus, the name 'Nath' continuously reminds them, of the highest spiritual ideal to which they have entered, adopting the path of Yoga. Very often, by the name they are reminded not to channelize their energy to any lower plane, or in attaining any mystical power practicing Yoga. Rather, the power acquired in the course of the practice, is directed for their own self-elevation on to a higher plane. Finally, attaining the



spiritual perfection and the Absolute knowledge, leads them in gaining the Absolute freedom, bliss and the experience of 'Mukti' or 'Kaivalya' in this bodily life. And such bodily spiritualization known as 'Kaya-Siddhi' transcends beyond the temporal and spatial planes, attaining immortality.

The Yogi, transcending all the 'Vikaras' of Prakriti, in order to attain the highest state of Self-realization is referred to as 'Avadhuta'. As he has risen above the natural laws, so he, remains unaffected by all the changes, impurities, limitations and the sufferings of the world. With perfect freedom and the bliss, he consciously lives identifying with the Supreme-Self or the self of Siva, the Creator, the Governor and the Destroyer of the Universe. Such an 'Avadhuta' are the 'Siddha' or 'Nath', whom other yogis aspire to become like.

The Sect also carries few distinctive qualities for the monastic members, symbolizing its spiritual importance. The most visible among them is their split-ears, wearing 'Kundal', ear-rings in them. It is because, the members of the sect are known as 'Kanphata', the split-eared yogis. The painful initiation seems to test the seriousness of the disciple, for living the severe ascetic life, devoting all their energy and time in the practice of esoteric Yoga. And the ring symbolizes the absolute self-surrendering of the disciple, to the Guru. In completely surrendering to the Guru, the living embodiment of the Ideals, does not negate the freedom of the disciple. Rather, the spiritual union with the Master, leads one to gain the freedom from all worldly egoistic desires. The process itself purifies the mind and the body of the disciple, freeing one from all the desires and preconceptions, so to perceive the direct vision of the Brahman or Siva the Supreme-Self.

The followers who enter the Monastic Orders after renouncing their worldly connections does not immediately undergo the process of split-ears. At first, they are known as 'Aughars', which is the phase of completely renouncing their worldly life and earnestly abiding to the instructions of the Guru. And once they have completely abandoned the worldly life, and vowed never to turn back, from the path of esoteric Yoga till they reach their end goal. Those yogis are then categorized as the 'Darsani yogis'.

Both the 'Aughars' and the 'Darsani Yogis' wear a sacred thread 'Upavita', attached with a ring 'Pabitra', a whistle 'Nada' along with a 'Rudraksha berry'. The 'Nada' is the symbol of continuous and unbroken mystic sound called the 'Anahata dhvani' or the 'Om'. The same undifferentiated sound rises within the individual's heart, as well as in the Universal heart, representing the sound of the Brahman. The 'Rudraksha' representing the eye of the Siva, is the symbol of the vision of Jnana. It illuminates the human consciousness, by directly experiencing the Brahman. According to the 'Yoga-system' of the sect, the yogis concentrate on the 'Anahata Nada' located at the center of the heart. With every breath, they are practiced to repeat the 'Pranava', the 'Om'. The practitioners believe it to be the most potent means, for



illuminating their consciousness to such a plane, where the vision of 'Brahman' is revealed. This way, the practitioners are continuously being reminded of the course of discipline they have to undergo, in order to experience the 'Truth'.

The course of discipline, includes the practical aspects of the 'Yoga system' of the Gorakhnath's school. It is a system of physical and psychical self-discipline, as a means of worship. As the sect of worshippers, Gorakhnath's followers are principally 'Saiva', that is they worship 'Shiva' and 'Shakti', as the Absolute source of existence. But the sect never denies to pay homage to other Hindu God's and Goddess, because they believe all of them to be the self-manifestations of Shiva-Shakti in diverse names and forms. The worship and the complete surrender to the Guru's also becomes, the most important part of the yogic scripture. Because it is only that the Guru kindles the light of spirituality in his Sadhaka, and progresses him on to the path of Yoga to attain the true spiritual light. The Guru is respected and worshipped as identical to Siva. Thus 'Guru-Vada' appears to be a special feature of the teachings of Gorakhnath.

Then comes the system of psycho-physical self-discipline known as the 'Shadanga-Yoga'. Basically, it is the six principals that includes 'Asana', 'Pranayama', 'Pratyahara', 'Dharana', 'Dhyana' and 'Samadhi'. 'Asana' refers to the steadiness of the posture, 'Pranayama' refers to the controlling of breath and nerves, 'Pratyahara' refers to the withdrawal of the senses and mind from the worldly objects, 'Dharana' refers to fixing the attention upon definite objects, 'Dhyana' refers to the meditation and 'Samadhi', is the mind absorbed in the ideal. It is the Absolute Truth that is realized only in the state of 'Samadhi', where there is the union of 'Shiva' and the 'Shakti'. And the yogis then attain 'Kaivalya' or the perfect Oneness. He becomes one with Siva, the Creator.

The discourse on Yoga, classifies its practice into 'Mantra-yoga', 'Raja-yoga', 'Laya-yoga', and 'Hatha-yoga'. The Gorakhnath's sect is seen as the fonder and the propagator of the 'Hatha-yoga'. Gradually they developed it into a science, detailing the account of various physical and psychical process to gain over the mastery of body and mind. It is an end in itself, from which arises all other forms of yoga. The Nath-yogi sects are the ones, who have been reputed to have mastery in the 'Hatha-yoga'.

The 'Hatha-Yoga' means "Hathena valatkarena yogah" that is, the yoga accomplished by force. Technically 'Ha' means 'Surya' the Sun, and 'Tha' means 'Chandra' the Moon. It refers to as the 'Ida' and 'Pingala' Nadis. According to their Yoga-Shastra, the human body is operated by a network of 72,000 nadis, all of which are controlled by three central nadis. They are 'Ida', 'Pingala', and 'Sushumna'. The 'Sushumna nadi' is in center, passing from the 'Muladhara-Chakra', at the base of the spinal cord, to the 'Sahasrara-Chakra', at the top of the brain. Ida-Pingala, are the two nadis, flowing on the left and right side of the spine,



meeting Sushumna at few points known as 'Chakras'. Together they are responsible for, the operation of the vital forces, along with all minor nadis. 'Hatha-yoga' aims at, uniting this Ida and Pingala with the Sushumna. It becomes possible only when, there arises a union with the 'Prana' and 'Apana', the vital force operating within the body. Thus, their union represents, the union of the Siva and Shakti, in their highest plane of consciousness. And this Supreme Spiritual Power, revealed in the Universe is called the 'Maha-Kundalini Sakti'.

The Sushumna Nadi, itself is conceived to be the connecting link between the Kundalini-Shakti reposing at its lowest end, and the transcendent Siva, shining in Himself at its highest end. Also, the Nadi acts as the path to the re-unite, the Siva and Shakti. Gaining such unimaginable energies, the Yogis 'life-power' and the 'mind-power' transcends from the lowest to the highest supra-mental spiritual plane, of the so called 'plane of the Divinity'. And the 'life-mind' completely get soaked, in the blissful union with the Divine spirit. By the progressive elevation of the life and mind, leads them to have full control and will, over their vital organs and the nervous system. Gradually, the mind is washed-off from all impurities, fickleness and undesirable thoughts, emotions, desire and impulses of the lower planes, and rise to the higher planes of wisdom and power.

A variety of vast literature that talks about these 'Nath-Yogis' and the principles and practices of 'Yoga', are available in Sanskrit. Guru Gorakhnath, himself is reputed to be author of great treatise like, *Goraksha-Satak*, *Gorasha-Sanhita*, *Yoga-Siddhanata-Paddhati*, *Siddha-Siddhanta-paddhati*, *Hatha-Yoga*, *Jnanamrita* and many other Sanskrit texts. Some other important books on Yoga, whose author is believed to be the member of the sect includes '*Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika*', '*Siva-Samhita*' and '*Gheranda-Samhita*'. While '*Goraksha-Sgita*', '*Goraksha-Kaumundi*', '*Goraksha-Saharsranama*', '*Yoga-Sangraha*', '*Yoga-Manjari*' are some works based on the teachings of Gorakhnath.

WORKS CITED:

Banerjee, Akshaya Kumar. *NATHA YOGA*. Digvijaynath Trust, Gorakhnath Temple, Gorakhpur.

Banerjee, Akshaya Kumar. *Philosophy of Gorakhnath*. Edition 2015, Mahant Digvijaynath Nyas, Shri Gorakhnath Mandir, Gorakhpur (U.P.)

Briggs, George Weston. *Gorakhnath and the Kanphata Yogis*. Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Limited, Delhi.

Gupta, Sadananda Prasad, and Pradeep Kumar Rao. *Rashtriyata Ke Ananyay Sadhak Mahant Avidyanath*, vol-1. Prabhat Prakashan, Delhi.



Gupta, Sadananda Prasad, and Pradeep Kumar Rao. *Rashtriyata Ke Ananyay Sadhak Mahant Avidyanath*, vol-2. Prabhat Prakashan, Delhi.

Gupta, Sadananda Prasad, and Pradeep Kumar Rao. *Rashtriyata Ke Ananyay Sadhak Mahant Avidyanath*, vol-3. Prabhat Prakashan, Delhi.

Rao, Pradeep kumar. *Brahmaleen Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Vyakhyan-Mala 17 se 23 August, 2010; Vimarsh-2010*. Maharana Pratap Sanatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Jangal Dhusardh, Gorakhpur.

Rao, Pradeep kumar. *Brahmaleen Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Vyakyan Mala-6, Vimarsh-2012*. Maharana Pratap Sanatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Jangal Dhusardh, Gorakhpur.

Rao, Pradeep kumar. *Brahmaleen Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Vyakyan Mala, Vimarsh-2011*. Maharana Pratap Sanatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Jangal Dhusardh, Gorakhpur.

Singh, Bhagvati Prasad. *Shree Mahant Digvijaynath Smriti Grantha*. Mahant Digvijaynath Trust Gorakhnath Mandir, Gorakhpur.

Shri Gorakhnath Mandir. 15 June 2021, 10:30am., <http://www.gorakhnathmandir.in/>