

# ANAND YOGA : The Yoga for All

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Note: The curious *sadhaks* may please try this simple yet effective Yoga and email their experiences & comments. Also see "ScienceSpiritualitySymbiosis" on the websites.

(Last revised 4 July 2002; 5 December, 2002; 21 December, 2006, 07 June 2008)

## AANAND YOGA : The Immanent Meditation for all

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**Abstract:** This author has been practicing Aasan, Praanaayaam and Meditation since 1945 and can assume alpha and theta brain wave states at will as testified by Dr. Elmer Green, Director, Menninger Foundation, USA. With this Yoga ability he solved three outstanding problems and completed the work and writing of his PhD(London) thesis in 7 months after plan approval. For the benefit of others a simple yet effective mode of meditation, the Aanand Yoga, is described, which combines the merits of 5 popular techniques, namely the Gita Yoga of Lord Krishna, Vipashyanaa Yoga of Lord Buddha, Vishvaas Yoga of Swami Vishvaas, Transcendental Meditation (TM) of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and ancient Paatanjali Yoga.

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**Historical:** On a winter morning in 1973 Dr. C. Giri, the then incharge of the Yoga Centre in Chandigarh met me and said that a team of scientists led by Dr. Elmer Green, Director, Menninger Foundation, Topeka, USA is visiting Yoga Institutions in India to study Yogis. On my (Giri's) suggestion they want to do some experiments on you. I agreed. At the Yoga Centre, Dr. Green took me into a small room and put electrodes on my head. They were interested to see whether I could assume alpha brain wave state and how long could I stay in alpha state. Further if I could also assume theta wave state. Light and sound signals were there also to tell me the state which I was in. They were to monitor from the adjoining room. After explaining all this he started moving out very softly. I asked him to stay till I practice going into alpha, beta and also theta states. As I was doing this all other scientists from the monitoring room came in to watch me with surprise and said. "It is unbelievable and very unusual. There must be some other unusual feats and achievements in your life." I told that I completed the work and writing of my PhD thesis of the London University in seven months after approval of the thesis plan because the solutions to three outstanding problems flashed across my mind on which my thesis was based. They were not surprised to hear this.

Dr. Green, in his letter dated 30 December 1987 to Dr. Victor B. Eichler, Director, Fetzer Foundation, Kalamazoo, USA, wrote:

"... We first met Sharma in 1973 during our three-month yoga research trip to India. .... To our surprise, he proceeded to turn theta on-off-on-off, whenever he pleased and whenever I asked him to, filling theta-off periods with alpha. This was hard to believe. No one had ever been able to do this, even

those of our voluntary controls group who had practiced most. ...."

N.B. Various brain waves and their frequency bands as recorded on the Electroencephalographs (EEG) are: delta (0.5 to 3.0 Hertz), theta (4 to 7 Hz), alpha (8 to 13 Hz) and beta (14 to 30 Hz). The alpha state refers to the tranquility of mind and theta state is associated with creativity.

For the benefit of others I describe below an improved version of the Yoga practice I have been doing since 1945.

### **The Technique:**

The newly proposed 'Aanand Yoga' (AY) was first briefly described in the article "Universal Dharm" published in the Souvenir of the Senior Citizens' Council, Panchkula, which was released on 10 April 2002. It integrates the essential merits of Gita Yoga of Lord Krishna, Vipashyanaa Yoga of Lord Buddha, Vishvaas Yoga of Swami Vishvaas, Transcendental Meditation (TM) of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and ancient Paatanjali Yoga.

The ultimate goal and destination of all spiritual practices (*saadhanaa-s*) and hence of the Aanand Yoga is defined by the profound statement of the *Chhaandogya Upanishad*, viz. *Sarvam khalu idam Brahm* (surely all this is Brahm). The realization of Brahm is not possible without the mind nor with the mind. The pole-vaulter cannot cross the horizontal bar without the pole nor with the pole. The pole helps attain the height of the horizontal bar but thereafter it obstructs the crossing and so the pole is left behind. Likewise mind does help initially in figuring out and visualising the goal but it itself obstructs further progress because thoughts interfere in realizing the 'infinite Brham', which composes and pervades all inanimate and animate existence. Aanand Yoga helps to control thinking and thoughts without injuring the mind and brain.

Ordinarily the human mind has a multicentric tendency. It keeps on moving from one centre of attention to another. Our five senses of perception keep on sending information about the external world to the mind, which as a result keeps on shifting its attention. So the first step towards meditation is to minimize the number of interfering senses by focusing the mind on one sense object, say light, sound or thought.

In Gita Yoga (Gita 6/13) one concentrates on the tip of the nose and in Vipashyanaa Yoga on the breath (coming in & going out) near the nose tip. In Vishvaas Yoga one watches the thought and in Transcendental Meditation attenuates thought. The Paatanjali Yoga has eight organs of yogic practice: *yam* (don'ts for social harmony), *niyam* (do's for personal discipline), *aasan* (easy, stable posture), *praanaayaam* (breath control), *pratyahaar* (withdrawal of the senses from their objects), *dhaarnaa* (attention), *dhyaan* (meditation) & *samaadhi* (continued single point meditation on the object with the awareness of the self fading away).

The Gita Yoga, Vipashyanaa Yoga, Vishvaas Yoga, Transcendental Meditation and Paatanjali Yoga stop at providing guidelines, leaving the *saadhak* in unfamiliar terrain to find, reach and recognize the 'unknown' destination.

However, the scriptures describe both the individual *aatmaa* (i) and the universal *parmaatmaa* or *Brahm* (I, *adwait*) as *sat-cit-aanand* (blissful awareness of existence). Basically all the Yoga-s aim at uniting and identifying the *saadhak's aatmaa* with the *parmaatmaa* or *Brahm*.

The Paatanjali Yoga is to restrain thought (*cittavritti nirodhah*) i.e. to follow single thought-stream, since the 'seer' then said to stay in its own nature. So, in Aanand Yoga the **first** object of *exclusive* meditation is the transcendental experience of the pure consciousness or the only 'am-feeling', by fading away **both** the 'i' of 'i am' feeling and the awareness of any object, sound or light. Further destinations

would be to realize or recognize the individualized self, then the immanent universal self (*parmaatmaa* or *Brahm*).

The Paatanjali Yoga emphasizes that for success in concentration (*dhaarnaa*, *dhyaan*) the deceneration or withdrawal is an important help. That is one should practise *pratyahaar* and be able to withdraw the senses from their objects. Since thought mediates perception and mind is the master sense, thoughtlessness is the most effective and best form of *pratyahaar*. The Gita Yoga, Vipashyanaa Yoga, Transcendental Meditation and Paatanjali Yoga follow a single thought stream. The Vishvaas Yoga watches the thought and Transcendental Meditation attenuates it. *Praanaayaam* (in Paatanjali Yoga) controls breathing. Since thinking and breathing are inter-related, breathlessness and single-thought state mutually help. The Aanand Yoga therefore, incorporates into itself, all these operationally essential concepts and merits of all the above five Yoga-s.

For practice of Aanand Yoga, sit in a comfortable and stable *aasan* (Paatanjali Yoga), aligning back, neck and head (Gita Yoga). Close the eyes and mouth. Breathe through the nose. Relax the body by mentally scanning and de-tensing the muscles of head, forehead, eyes, cheeks, neck, chest, arms, legs and feet. Go back relaxing from feet to head. Repeat this process twice.

Take three rounds of *bhraamari Praanaayaam*. For this take a deep breath, exhale slowly producing at the same time an audible humming sound as of a bumble bee.

Now empty the mind of all thoughts (as with *pratyahaar* in Paatanjali Yoga). After gently inhaling, exhale slowly while producing an inaudible feeble mental sound. Gradually slow down exhalation and attenuate this mental 'sound' but keep the attention on it. As soon as one starts exhaling and concentrating on the inner feeble mental sound the mind purges all thoughts instantly and effortlessly. This, in Paatanjali Yoga is the *dhaarnaa* stage leading to the *dhyaan* stage.

This will take and keep the 'i- consciousness' interiorized inwards. In Paatanjali Yoga, this state is achieved by *aasan*, *praanaayaam*, *dhaarnaa* & *dhyaan*. The Vishvaas Yoga also takes to the same state. Now, like Transcendental Meditation, continue attenuating the mental sound. Try not to hear but to watch and see the mental sound attenuating and fading it away. When this mental 'sound thought' disappears only the 'infinite vacuum' remains in which consciousness of the self appears.

Merge the remnant 'i am' consciousness with the infinite 'I-expanse' (*dwait-to-vishistaadwait*), which is the unlimited *Brahm* consciousness. The all-exclusive but effortless concentration in this 'i/I am' state will fade out the 'i/I' from the 'infinite i/I am' and bring in the blissful (*aanand*) and wakeful experience of only 'am' i.e. of *sat-cit-aanand*.

Because a thought has two associated attributes, the image and the sound, this will then take to the state of seeing no mental images and hearing no mental voices i.e. of 'no thinking'. Continuation of this experienced state will bring in the effortless no-breathing i.e. neither inhaling nor exhaling (*kewal kumbhak* in Paatanjali Yoga), to be detected by the deep inhalation on coming out of the state. *One then observes that the self-conscious life principle i.e. soul (aatmaa) for existence does not need the breath or the body.* Repeat these steps again and again.

The interiorized feeble sound for meditation in Aanand Yoga can be produced in different ways. First, by mentally reciting *aum*. Secondly, it can be a humming nasal sound. Thirdly, it is the subtle inaudible mental sound.

As mentioned above when one starts exhaling and concentrating on the inner feeble mental sound the mind purges all thoughts instantly and effortlessly. This, in effect, instantly combines the stages of *Praanaayaam*, *Pratyahaar* and *Dhaarnaa* leading to the *dhyaan* stage of the Paatanjali Yoga. This state is similar to the concentration on the object of meditation in Gita Yoga, Vipashyanaa Yoga, Vishvaas

## Yoga & Transcendental Meditation.

With the gradual and continued attenuation of the feeble mental sound to feebler to feeblest state the sound ultimately disappears to transcend thought and mind as in Transcendental Meditation. Then follows the experience of the consciousness, the *saadhak's* own self-consciousness, separate from and beyond the mind. Then it merges with *sat-cit-aanand* (blissful awareness of universal consciousness).

During the practice of Aanand Yoga the *saadhak* (practioner) passes through the states of the *kewalya* state of Paatanjali Yoga. That is, with single point awareness of the object of meditation and that of the self faded away. It then transcends mind/thought/feeling (*bhaav*) as in Transcendental Meditation.

Finally the *saadhak* reaches the blissful realization of the individualized self (*aatmaa*) and thence to that of the immanent universal self (*parmaatmaa*) or all-self (*sarvaatmaa*). Therefore Aanand Yoga, in effect is an IMMANENT MEDITATION (IM).

Traditionally, single thought stream (*cittavrittinirodhah*, Paatanjali Yoga) itself is Yoga. In Aanand Yoga mind becomes thoughtless (*aanandyoge cittanirvrittah*) but it does not stop there. It continues with the thoughtfree 'infinite vacuum' till the *saadhak's* *aatmaa* unites with the all-self (*parmaatmaa*) and *buddhi-aatmaa* experiences their common nature of blissful 'awareness of existence' (*sat-cit-aanand*).

The mind (*man-buddhi*), in this state and even after coming out of this lofty experience, has *aanand*, tranquility, peace, purity and freedom from desires (Gita 2/55), *raag-dwesh*, *yog-kshem*, *duand* (dualities) and three *gunaas* (Gita 2/45). Aanand Yoga thus helps purify and stabilize *buddhi* and attain the *brahmi*-state (Gita 2/71, 72). The *saadhak* can now intuit and visualize original ideas. Great thoughts and solutions to great problems, spiritual, scientific or mundane, can now flash freely through it. Concentrating on, understanding and learning, new ideas and texts become now easy and facile. The unwanted thoughts do not disturb any more. Full mental and intellectual capabilities open up and become available for ready use. Continued practice of Aanand Yoga weakens the habitual forces of lust, anger, greed and other aberrant tendencies. One does no longer 'only want to be' but actually becomes and remains happy habitually.

Since Aanand Yoga follows the individual *saadhak's* own single stream of mental sound as a form of thought, it has an all-time universal appeal irrespective of gender, religion, caste, nation, region etc. It therefore is 'the Yoga for all'.

One can do light mind-tranquilizing Aanand Yoga even while sitting in a chair or traveling. It can also be done in a lying position before going to sleep. Nay it relaxes and helps inducing sleep. It attenuates anxiety and promotes mental peace. One can do it while waiting or while doing nothing otherwise.

But deep practice of high stage should be done in a secluded place regularly with great respect and faith to develop the right biological rhythm.

Its soothing effect is pleasing and full of joy (*aanand*). With daily practice of this simple but effective Yoga one can remain tension free and solve problems easily and unwaveringly.

Its continued practice gives the taste of Spirituality and it itself becomes a way of life when its undercurrent goes on imperceptibly with and beneath other activities.

Serious and regular practice of Aanand Yoga has the potential to bestow the combined benefits of *Gyaan* (knowledge) *yoga*, *Nishkam Karma* (desireless action) *yoga* and *Bhakti* (devotion) *yoga* as envisaged under the *Sanyukta yoga* (Integral Yoga) of Sri Aurobindo

In the above form of Aanand yoga the infinite Brahm is the ultimate object of meditation. In the second version of the Aanand yoga (mentioned in sec. 18.8.2) *Aatmaa-Buddhi* is the first object of meditation, which leads to the meditation on the infinite Brahm and then to the realization of *Aatmaa-Parmaatmaa* unity or identity.

The yogi mentally scans the brain and locates the site of 'i-am' consciousness within it (the brain). Meditation on this site with the consciously attempted feeling of self Aatmaa merging with the infinite all-composing and all-pervading '*sat-cit-aanand*' Brahm generates the 'experienced knowledge' i.e. the *vigyaan* of *Aatmaa-Parmaatmaa* unity or identity.