

Preface

Yoga has been a subject of interest from my student days at Andhra University. This book represents the culmination of that interest. First, the interest was at a theoretical level recognizing the fundamental role of consciousness in the functioning of humans. Once I was in a position to pursue my own research interests, it took very soon an empirical turn. One of the early attempts was a survey of people reputed to be yogins who are able to provide evidence of the claims made on their behalf. This took me nowhere. Some simply claimed no outstanding abilities. A few have given some bizarre accounts of their experience. For example, one of them claimed that he teleported himself to the moon and began narrating what he saw, which was no more than some published accounts of moonscape.

The next step was to investigate the psychophysiological states of yogins in their deep meditative states. We investigated one such yogin at Andhra University. He was closeted in an airtight wooden compartment with a glass front, and we monitored the psychophysiological changes in him as the oxygen in the box had become increasingly diminished. The yogin was able to sit in the box much longer than what one would expect, indicating that he was consuming less oxygen than what one normally requires. Elmer Green from the Menninger Foundation, Topeka, USA, with all the instrumentation available to him monitored the physiological changes taking place.

We moved on to test for parapsychological abilities of people practising meditation. Mr. H. Dukhan from Trinidad joined our team at Andhra University. He was able to have the cooperation of an Ashram in Pondicherry (not the Sri Aurobindo Ashram) and tested meditators before and after meditation. He found significant differences in pre-and post-meditation ESP scores.

It was the time when biofeedback was making its waves. Joe Kamiya operating from the West coast of USA had earned for himself the reputation of being the fastest guru with his popular biofeedback techniques. This led me to travel to Berkeley, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and visit Kamiya and Barbara Brown. While these visits were very helpful, I was not able to find the answers I was seeking.

Then, under the influence of J.B. Rhine, I got myself involved in experimental investigation of ESP. This has consumed a major part of my mature professional career. My interest in yoga receded into the background to be resurrected only after my return to India after nearly quarter of a century of continuous stay in the USA.

The focus of my study of yoga is now centered around yoga in its relation to consciousness studies and psychic abilities. The result is what some have described as my magnum opus *Cognitive Anomalies, Consciousness and Yoga* published in 2011. Much of the material for the present book is drawn from it.

The focus in this book is on yoga psychology as central to Indian psychology. Rooted in classical Indian thought, Indian psychology is considered as providing a new paradigm for studying and understanding human nature. In the process we glean what seem to be the basic postulates of Indian psychology and go on to develop the Trident Model of the person as a unique composite of body, mind, and consciousness.

Further, we provide in this book a psychological rendering of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* intended for students of psychology in the East as well as in the West. We follow it up with drawing their implications for study of and research into various facets of yoga. It is our hope that this volume would provide an instructive introduction to yoga psychology.

In writing this book, I learned much from several of my colleagues engaged in promoting Indian psychology. The foremost among them is Dr. Anand Paranjpe of Simon Fraser University in Canada. I acknowledge my indebtedness to him and to several others I have not named. Ms. Shinjini Chatterjee of Springer is a source of constant encouragement and support. Indeed, I am fortunate to associate myself with a person like her who is always willing and ready to help.

Back at home, I acknowledge the help of Mrs. Ramalakshmi, Librarian, GITAM School of Gandhian Studies, and Mrs. Prasanna, my secretary who is always there to help beyond the call of duty.

Yoga is no longer limited to India. It has international currency and appeal. The United Nations declared 21st June as International Yoga Day. But, then, yoga is more than practising certain physical postures. It has a wholesome psychology behind. If the publication of this book could serve to stimulate interest in scientifically studying yoga as a foundational source of a new paradigm by psychologists, where ever they may be situated, it would have served its purpose.

Visakhapatnam, India

K. Ramakrishna Rao

Foundations of Yoga Psychology

Rao, K.R.

2017, XV, 261 p. 2 illus., 1 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-981-10-5408-2