

# साहित्य के विविध विमर्श

उच्चतर शिक्षा निदेशालय, पंचकूला, हरियाणा से अनुमोदित एवं  
गुरु नानक गर्ल्स कॉलेज यमुनानगर हरियाणा द्वारा आयोजित  
एक दिवसीय बहुविषयक राष्ट्रीय संगोष्ठी में प्रस्तुत शोध पत्र

संपादक

डॉ. गीतू खन्ना

संपादक मण्डल

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## Yog in Indian Literature

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### Abstract

The concept of yoga can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilisation. Since then, it has undergone multiple modifications, and what we know as yoga today is vastly different from how yoga was originally practised. The Vedas are the most sacred book of India and are regarded as the earliest literary record of Indo-Aryan civilisation. With spiritual knowledge encircling all aspects of our life, they are the original scriptures of Hindu teachings for All the sections of hindus in particular and humanity in general.

### Introduction

Derived from the Sanskrit word 'yuj' meaning to 'unite', yoga is the union of the individual self with the supreme self. Yoga means controlling the modifications of the mind. There are various yoga styles, but the central idea of every style is controlling the mind.

### Yoga in Vedic Period

The Vedic period, also known as the Vedic age or the Vedic era, is a historical period in ancient India associated with the composition and preservation of the Vedas, the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism.

## **1. Pre-Vedic Period (Before 3000 BC)**

Until recently, scholars believed that yoga originated around 500 BC when Buddhism existed. Archaeologists found depictions of yoga postures at Harappa and Mohenjodaro.

## **2. Vedic Period (3000 BC to 800 BC)**

During the Vedic period, yoga was practised ritually to develop concentration and transcend the mundane. The rituals practised during this period differ from the current practices of yoga. The traditions of the Vedic period are close to the definition of yoga—the union of the individual self with the supreme self.

### **Yoga in the Rigveda**

The Rigveda is the oldest Veda and the most revered and essential of the four Vedas. According to writings and preachers, Rigveda's inspired hymns and mantras invoked courage, happiness, health, peace, prosperity, success, and wisdom.

Here, one also learns the Gayatri mantra, used today for its potent spiritual qualities and while meditating for yoga. Rigveda also found the first use and definition of the word yoga. These verses provide the foundation and material for the remaining Vedas.

### **Yoga and Vedic Rituals**

The Vedas are a collection of hymns received by the ancient rishis, i.e. sages as shruti, divine revelation. As hymns and mantras, these works were actively recited out loud to praise and invoke the powers of the spiritual realms. They had been verbally passed on for many generations before being written down on delicate palm leaves. These Vedic mantras were utilised in yajnas, i.e. ritual sacrifices and ceremonies to promote the well-being of individuals, society and the world. It's astounding that within these works, the foundations of yoga are established, with yoga being defined as yoking and a discipline.



## Four texts compose the Vedas:

### 1. Rig-Veda

The Rig Veda is the oldest, most revered, and essential of the four. In the Rig Veda, we learn about the Gayatri mantra, which is still used today for its potent spiritual qualities. We also find the first use of the word yoga. These verses provide the foundation and material for the remaining Vedas.

This veda also includes other hymns and verses that describe the use of breath control, meditation, and the pursuit of inner wisdom. These practices were intended to facilitate spiritual growth, self-realization, and the attainment of higher states of consciousness.

### 2. Sama-Veda

The Sama Veda is a devotional collection of melodies that elevate one's consciousness. The hymns in the Sama-Veda are combined with musical notes, and their content was heavily drawn from the Rig-Veda, providing no distinctive lessons of their own. This use of music combined with mantras formed the foundation for the Bhakti yoga practice of kirtan, devotional chanting.

### 3. Yajur-Veda

The Yajur-Veda is devoted entirely to the worship of the deities and the instruction for the technical aspects of ceremonies. The Yajur-Veda served as a handbook for the Vedic priests who executed sacrificial acts by chanting hymns and mantras while following the sacrificial formula (yajus).

It also provides instructions for performing rituals, including breath control exercises known as Pranayama.

### 4. Atharva-Veda

The Atharva-Veda consists of spells and charms to dispel evil, disease and misfortune. Its hymns are more diverse than the Rig-



Veda and were composed of a more straightforward language making them more accessible to the general population. This veda explores the nature of the mind, consciousness, and the interplay between the physical and spiritual realms. The Atharvaveda emphasizes the importance of self-discipline, self-control, and inner transformation as a means to attain spiritual enlightenment.

Additionally, the Upanishads, which are philosophical texts associated with the Vedas, delve further into the practices of meditation, self-inquiry, and the study of the self. They explore concepts such as the nature of the true self (Atman), the illusory nature of the material world (Maya), and the inter connectedness of all beings.

### **Conclusion**

The Vedic period laid down the foundation for the development and evolution of Yoga as a spiritual and philosophical system. It introduced various yogic practices, focused on the connection between the mind, body and spirit, and provided insights into the nature of consciousness and pursuit of self-realization. The yogic practices and concepts from the Vedic period served as building blocks for the subsequent development of different styles and approaches to the yoga in later period.

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