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NADANUSANDHANA - A TRUE TECHNIQUE OF MEDITATION



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ABSTRACT:

The word “Nadanusandhana” comprises “Nada” and “Anusandhana” in which nada means sound and anusandhana means “Aming at”, “Being intent upon” or “Attending to”. Therefore, the word nadanusandhana indicates the fixing of one’s attention upon the inner sound. But as the technique of nadanusandhana is used in Hatha Yoga, it is frequently neglected by the experts and practitioners of other school of Yoga by saying that it is purely a physical technique and useful only in the maintenance of physical health. It has no role in the upliftment of the state of mind and spiritual illumination. Infact, nadanusandhana technique involves a distinct method of meditation under which one should contemplate upon an inner sound by applying Sambhavi Mudra. Mind is withdrawn from externally received sensual information and entirely focused upon to hear internal sound. At the preliminary stage of practice, the Bhramari pranayama helps for achieving deep concentration to the sound. By

closing the ears with thumbs of each hand and using the fingers to close eyes, nostrils and mouth, one is intent upon the nada as 'bee' intent upon collecting the nectar of flowers by disregarding their 'perfume.' Hathayogic texts identify four separate stages of intra-psychic experiences in nadanusandhana practice. At each successive stage, practitioner experiences more subtle sound to which mind is absorbed and intensified and finally achieves the soundless (nihsabdha) state. This is the state of mind which gives self realization and the realization of the highest self. The whole process follows the basic principle of meditation i.e., the fixing of mind to a particular object and thereafter continuous perception of the object and followed by the objectless state of mind. Therefore, Nadanusandhana is an excellent technique of meditation which eventually reveal an expanded divinised sense of identify by alleviating all external sensual experiences.

KEYWORDS: Nadanusandhana, Hatha Yoga, Sambhabi mudra, Bhramari pranayama

INTRODUCTION:

Nadanusandhan is a technique of Nadopsana (practice of hearing an internally aroused sound produced without fiction of two objects and absorption of mind on it) which intended for attaining the knowledge of ultimate truth in Hatha Yoga. The technique originally declared by Goraksnatha: '**proktam goraksanathenam nadopasanamucyate**' (Hathapradipika-IV/65) and is considered as the best of all the Layas (means of cessation of mind) as mentioned by Sri Adinatha:

**sri adinathena sapadakotilayaprakarah kathita jayanti /
nadanusandhanakamekameva manyamahe mukhyatamam layanam//**
(Hathapradipika-IV/66)

Nadanusandhana is also termed as "Nada Dhyana" or "Yoga of inner sound" (Achyutanand, 2014). In fact, Sound has great attractive power with natural characteristic or inclination to draw its perceiver towards its source or origin. The sound which produced during the beginning of creation emanated from the supreme lord and hence, possesses the property of leading its perceiver to God (the ultimate reality). Similarly, the inner sound (anahat nada) is also saturated with the qualities of its source and hence essentially endows its perceiver as well with the same (Achyutanand, 2014). Thus, internally produced sound (anahat nada) involuntarily draws one's attention inward direction. In this way, nadanusandhana (deep contemplation on inner sound) is an excellent means of meditating upon the supreme state by cessation of movements in the consciousness (citta vrtti nirodhah) and thereby attainment of Samadhi.

The nada (sound) is perceived by the practitioners of Hatha Yoga during their deep inner meditative state. Once the mind of the practitioner gets fixed on nada, it becomes one with nada (sound) and by releasing and transcending consciousness from the attributes of nature, the mind (seed of death and rebirth) dissolves in the nada by which Yogi ultimately attained the supreme reality. Through the practices of pranayama and mudra specifically, the Moola Bandha mudra and Jalandhar Bandha mudra, practitioner becomes able to withhold or retain the 'prana' (vital energy) within the body which instigates profound 'inner heat' and 'pressure'. This state stirs up the sleeping Kundalini (dormant serpent power or primal force) from her slumber and it begins to rise up by piercing the chakras (Muladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Visuddhi and Ajna); granthis (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra) and Lingatrayas i.e., Sayambhu, Bana and Itara (Bharatbushan, 2008). Ascend of Kundalini through the path of susumna produce subtle vibration in the form of 'Nada' (inner sound) and a yoga

practitioner through his deep introspection becomes able to hear this 'subtle inner sound' by adopting Sambhavi Mudra. The nada is basically considered as Kundalini Shakti (energized and exaggerated vital energy) and it is manifested as sound or vibration, hence is called as 'Shabda-Brahma'.

The word 'Nada' is comprises with the letters 'Na' and 'Da.' Na means 'prana' (vital energy) and Da signifies 'Agni' (fire). In this way, Nada (sound) is the outcome of the union of Prana with Agni:

**"Nakaram pranamahuh dakarnnamalam viduh /
Jata pranagni samyogat tena nadoabhidhiyate"//** (Samgeet Ratnakar-I/3-6,p.64)

With the ascent of Kundalini through the way of Susumna, nada (sound) gradually becomes more spectacular, more intensified and subtlest and the whole body, breathe, mind and consciousness of the practitioner becomes fully absorbed in this anhat nada (internally produced sound).

The word 'Anusandhana' on the other hand, means 'Aiming at', 'being intent upon' or 'attending to.' Hence, the word Nadanusandhana indicates the fixing of one's attention upon the internally aroused sound. Nadanusandhana deals with the technique of listening to the 'Anhat' nada and deep absorption of mind into it. It is a very powerful and effective technique of mental transformation by restraining the fluctuations (vrttis) of the mind which brings about stillness, deep silence with awareness. By contemplating on Nada, a practitioner experiences the state of Samadhi along with the perception of ultimate reality which gives rise to indescribable joy in his heart:

**nadanusandhanasamadhibhajam yogisvaranam hrdaye prarudham//
anandamekam vacaso'pyagamyam janati tam srigurunatha eva//** (Hatharatnavali-IV/5).

However, the practitioners of other schools of Yoga, particularly Raja Yoga display their apathy and indifference to the technique of Nadanusandhana fearing to be merged into physical and materialistic attachment. Because the technique of Nadanusandhana is used in Hatha Yoga as a core technique of self evolution and spiritual development, so it is frequently neglected and mistreated by saying that it is purely a physical technique and useful only in the maintenance of physical health and for achieving body related supernormal accomplishments. It has no role in the purification of mind, in the cessation of movements in the psyche (citta vrtti nirodhah) and in the realization of ultimate truth. Thus, in accordance with practitioners of Yoga except Hatha Yoga, Nadanusandhana technique is only a preparatory step of lowest level to achieve the absolute state of Raja Yoga. Having acquainted with this prevalence and lacuna, the present investigator became interested to consider this research problem with a view to find out whether Nadanusandhana is a true technique of meditation or not.

Objective of Study:

The objective of this theoretical study was (1) to deal with the conceptual base of Nadanusandhana by mentioning its various textual references, in order to get confirmation whether the technique of Nadanusandhana follows the principles of meditation or not and also (2) to compare it in perspectives of meditation technique with a view to bring about clarity about its real characteristics.

Material and method:

In order to study the problem scientifically, the theoretical data was collected from various Texts of Yoga. To analyse data, analytical and comparative methods were adopted.

Textual concept of Nadanusandhana:

With the practice of recaka, puraka and kumbhaka of prana, all the nadis are purified and prana enter in susumna, which enables the practitioner to hear the various kind of anhat nada (internal sound):

**sarecapurairanilasya kumbhaih sarvasu nadisu visodhitasu /
anahatakhyo bahubhih prakarairantah pravartteta idanimahuh//** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/2)

During the practice of Nada, a practitioner by closing his all the openings like ears, mouth etc. deeply concentrates on the anhat nada. By seating in a muktasana and adopting Sambhavi mudra, the practitioner always listens to the internally aroused nada in his right ear:

**muktasanasthito yogi mudram sandhaya sambhavam /
srnuyaddaksine karne nadamantargatam sada //** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/28).

By closing his ears the practitioner listens to the sound by concentrating on the void till he attains the undisturbed state of stability:

**karnau pidhaya sunyena yam srnoti dhvanim munih/
tatra cittam sthiram kuryad yavatsthirapadam bhavet//** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/29).

Because now his mind gets fixed on it and becomes one with it (sound). Through penetrating the core of the unstuck sound (anhat nada), Yogi can hear the subtlest nada (sound) and his mind achieved the state of deep silence and tranquillity on account of the unification of mind with the nada (sound). Because Nada is a noose for capturing the inner deer (mind) and it is also the hunter who can kill this captured deer:

**nadontarangasarangabandhane vagurayate/
antarangakurangnya vadhe vyadhayate'pi ca//** (Hathapradipika-IV/94).

Hearing nada, the mind like a cobra, immediately forgets all its distractions and does not run aimlessly:

**nadasravanatah ksipramantarangabhujangamah/
vismrtya sarvamekagrah kuttracinna hi dhavati//** (Hathapradipika-IV/97).

In this way, due to continuous practice of nada, all external sounds are subsided and the practitioner becomes happy by overcoming all the mental distractions in a fortnight:

**abhyasyamano nado'yam bahyamavarttayad dhvanim/
paksadviksepamakhilam jitva yogi sukhi bhavet//** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/30).

By losing the natural unsteadiness, perturbations and emotional insurgence, the mind gets stability as it gives up its fickleness and thus moves about in the void called niralamba (i.e., Brahman):

**baddham vimuktacancalyam nadagandhakajaranat/
manah paradamapnoti niralambakhyakhe'tanam//** (Hathapradipika-IV/96).

This is why, in the process of nadanusandhana, giving up all thoughts, a practitioner should listen to nada attentively which brings forth the situation just like a bee which while relishing the nectar, does not care for fragrance, so also, the mind being absorbed in the nada, does not thirst after the objects:

**makarandam piban bhrngo gandham napeksate yatha/
nadasaktam tatha cittam visayannaiva kanksati//** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/41).

Once, the mind absorbed in the internal nada, it forgets everything else, and it does not wander no longer, because the sharp goad of nada is capable of controlling :

**nadasravanatascittamantarangakurangkah/
vismrtya visvamekagrah kutracinna hi dhavati //** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/44).
niyamane samartho'yam ninadanisitankusah // (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/45)

At the initial stage of practice, loud and voluminous sounds of various types are heard. But as the practice progresses, sharper subtler sounds are heard:

**sruyate prathamabhyase nado nanavidho mahan/
tato'bhyase vardhamane sruyate suksmasuksmakah//** (Hathapradipika-IV/84).

In the beginning, the sounds of the roaring of ocean, thunder, a big drum, cymbals is heard; at the intermediate stage, the sounds of small drum, a conch, a bell and a gong are heard, and at the end, tinkling of small bells, flute, vina and the humming of bee is heard. The practitioner tries to contemplate only on the very subtlest sounds (Hathapradipika-IV/ 84-87). In other words, initially the mind gets absorbed on gross nada, and with the advancement of nadanusandhana (nada dhyana) process, the nada gradually gets subtler to subtlest and the mind of the practitioner contemplates on it and finally merges into it:

**yatra kutrapi va nade lagati prathamam manah/
tatraiva susthiribhutva tena sardham viliyate //** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/36).

Just as fire in the burning wood extinguishes along with the wood, similarly, citta which is concentrated on nada, merges with nada itself:

**kasthe pravartito vahnih kasthena saha liyate /
nade pravartitam cittam nadena saha samyati //** (Hatharatnavali-IV/15).

Consequently, wandering nature of mind terminated just like a bird with clipped off wings, becomes ineffective-‘prayati sutacittendrah paksacchinna ivaprabhah’ (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/ 43). So long as the nada (sound) exists, mind also exists and at absolute soundless state, mind also loses its existence. This mindless state is the state of Samadhi-“ Samadhanam citta manena iti samadhih.”

Hence, nada is an absolute means of laya (dissolve).

The HathaYogic texts specifically, 'Hathapradipika', 'Hatharatnavali' and 'Hathatatvakaumudi' have recognized four intra-psychic experiences (stages) in Nadanusandhana practice i.e., (1) Arambhavastha, (2) Ghatavastha and (3) Paricayavastha and (4) Nispattyavastha (Hathapradipika-IV/69). In Arambhavastha, the practitioner becomes able to control his citta (Hathatatvakaumudi- LIV/18) and in Ghatavastha, vayu courses through the middle path (susumna) in the body and yogi attains stability, his wisdom becomes like God (Hathatatvakaumudi- LIV/19) and he knows past, present future (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/ 20). In the third stage, the practitioner can control mind and attains mental bliss and peace and gets complete relief from desires, anger, blemishes, suffering etc. (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/ 22-23). In the last stage, mind dissolves in the sound and the practitioner enters into the state of 'Unmani' which ultimately leads to samadhi (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV /25-26). The practitioner having surpassed all these three stages achieved the elevated level of unified consciousness and by virtue of this he is liberated:

**sarvasthavinirmuktah sarvacintavivarjitah /
martavattisthate yogi sa mukto natra samsayah //** (Hathapradipika-IV/107).

In Hatha Yogic literature, nada has been considered as 'Sakti'. Whatever is heard in the form of Nada is only Sakti while perception of nada is ever blissful (Sadashiva). Through the consistent practice of nadanusandhana, all cravings are attenuated and both maruta (air or prana) and mind are certainly merged into niranjana (Brahma):

**sada nadanusandhanat samksine vasanaksaye /
niranjane ca liyeta niscitam cittamarutau //** (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/52).

By constant practice of Nadanusandhana, the accumulated evils destroyed and Citta and Prana certainly get merged in Caitanya i.e., pure consciousness (Hathapradipika-IV/ 105). When the perception of nada comes to an end the state of 'Unmani' prevails (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/51). At this stage, there is no sensation or thoughts because of achieving the state of Unmani (thoughtless mind). The ultimate reality is formless and that alone is Paramesvara (Hathapradipika- IV/106,102) or the supreme soul. Hence, in the last stage of Nadanusandhana, the practitioner attains the state of samadhi which brings forth inexplicable joy in Yogi's heart.

Nadanusandhana in Perspectives of Meditation Technique:

In the process of nadanusandhana, practitioner's consciousness flows continuously and unbrokenly on Nadakar (dhyeyakar) vrtti (thought of sound or object of meditation). This is comparable with the sutra of Patanjali-'A steady, continuous flow of attention directed towards the same point is meditation' (Patanjali Yoga sutra-III/2). In the state of Nadanusandhana, consciousness is gradually purified and becomes transcendental as it destroys all the evils of mind (Hathapradipika-IV/105). As in nadanusandhana, emphasis is done on the maintenance of profound and steady attention on nada (Hathatatvakaumudi-LIV/36, 37). Similar technique is followed in meditation. Iyengar (2000, p.169) stated that "In dhyana, the emphasis is on the maintenance of steady and profound contemplative observation." As long as the nada (nada) exists, Nadakar vrtti (sound) is also perceived due to the existence of mind. When the absolute soundless state is emerged, the mind loses its existence as the yogi transcends himself with nada by losing self existence and thus achieved the

state of Brahma i.e., union of individual consciousness with the unified consciousness (Hathatavakamudi-LIV/49 and 51). This state devoid of "I" ness because the individual consciousness merges with Niranjana i.e., Barhma or superconsciousness (Hathapradipika-IV/105). This verse is alike to the sutra of Maharishi Patanjali-'tadeva arthamatranirbhasam svarupasunyam iva samadhi' (Patanjali Yoga sutra-II/3). In other words, uninterrupted flow of attention dissolves the separate existence between the object seen (dhyeya) and the seer (dhyeta).

Discussion:

The whole process of nadanusandhana is identical with an ideal meditation technique. The theoretical data expressed a very close similarity and affinity of nadanusandhana with meditation which can be explained in several ways: (1) Meditation, in general is a continued attention on a particular subject to attain the knowledge of self and supreme self (Rajapurkar, 2006, 11-15). Likewise, in the process of nadanusandhana, an individual intent upon a particular nada (sound) continuously in order to merge in Brahman (the supreme Reality) after destroying the accumulated evil:

**sada nadanusandhanat ksiyante papasancayah /
niranjane viliyete niscitam cittamarutau //** (Hathapradipika-IV/105).

(2) At the initial stage of meditation, the object of meditation remains very gross and with the advancement of the process, it gradually becomes subtler to subtlest and finally the object becomes suspended. Consequently, the mind gets the status of void or loses its existence and enters into the state of Samadhi (**Mahesh Yogi,**). Similarly, the sound is perceived by the practitioner of nadanusandhana during deep inner meditative state and maintains an uninterrupted flow of his attention on nada (sound). This unbroken flow of attention on anhat nada restraints all the fluctuations in the psyche which brings forth stillness and deep silence with awareness. The sound on which mind remains attach, gradually become subtler to subtlest and finally disappear (Hathapradipika-IV/84). Consequently, the mind also loses its existence due to lack of alamban (support). This event dissolve the split between the nada (sound) and the mind of a practitioner who hears it. Therefore, it is with the practitioner, when his object of contemplation (nada) becomes himself, devoid of himself, he experiences samadhi. Practitioner's individual or split consciousness merged into unified or universal consciousness-'**nadanusandhanasamadhibhajam yogisvaranam hrdaye prarudham/** //(Hathatavakamudi-LIV/27) and '**niranjane viliyete niscitam cittamarutau //** (Hathapradipika-IV/105). (3) Many physical processes are suspended in the highest state of meditation because mind achieved the state of unique stability and calmness. When the mind enters the subtler levels of experience, the activity of all the senses decreases and finally stops, the breath also becomes more refined and eventually comes to standstill. Mental equanimity and restful alertness state reduced the physiological tumultuousness. Exactly, the similar case is happening in case of nadanusandhana practice. When the nada (sound) is deeply perceived by an individual, his mind gets fixed on it and becomes one with it. This deep inner meditative state removes myriads of thought waves (vrttis) which generally produce upheavals in the mind because silencing of mind's agitation and suspension of usual thought processes is the basis of meditation. And when mind becomes calm and quiet, physiological perturbation also becomes stable. Meditative state of mind becomes free from psychopathological situation which removes all existential miseries (Bhagavad Gita-II/64), so also in the case of nadanusandhana, a practitioner remains free from psychological disturbances as is reflected by the feeling of inexplicable joy in his heart (Hathapradipika-IV/81). (5) The whole process of

nadanusandhana is a non-reactive and non-judgemental mental state with deep awareness which finally leads an individual towards the transcendental state. The state of meditation is also a non-reactive, non-judgemental and restful alertness state (Bhogal, 2006). (6) Meditation takes the mind into inward exploratory journey in order to attain the elevated level of pure consciousness-‘tatah pratyakcetana adhigamah api antaraya abhavah ca’ (Patanjali Yogasutra-I/29). Similarly, the technique of Nadanusandhana also transcends one to subtler to subtler domains of consciousness. According to Svātmanāma (Hathapradipika-IV/96), on account of nadanusandhana practice, the mind of a practitioner by losing natural unsteadiness gets stabilized and gives up fickleness and moves about in the void called nirālambha (Brahma or Pure consciousness). The experience of pure bliss consciousness puts an end to all sufferings. In fact, during meditation, the mind by entering the subtle phases of a thought becomes more collected and more peaceful. As the mind evolves to higher levels of consciousness during meditation, it experiences increasing degree of happiness. In this way, analysis of various textual references of nadanusandhana and its comparison with general techniques of meditation leads the investigator towards positive conclusion.

CONCLUSION:

It is viewed that ‘Nadanusandhana’ technique of Hatha Yoga is a means of fixing one’s unbroken and continuous flow of consciousness on particular nada (sound) without any interruption. This attentive awareness moves from one type of subtler nada (sound) to another subtlest nada (sound). Maintenance of steady attention on specified nada, in this way, is the symptom of meditation. This process ultimately leads the practitioner to the soundless state where his mind also loses its existence. The practitioner at this state merges with the unified consciousness after losing his previous fragmented individual consciousness which is the state of ‘Samadhi’. Like other systems of meditation, it has systematic approach to spiritual attainment and eventually reveals a divine sense of identity. These states are analogous to the technique of meditation of Raja Yoga which also culminates into the state of Samadhi. Therefore, the findings of this study display that process of nadanusandhana follows the basic principles of meditation and hence, is concluded that the technique of ‘Nadanusandhana’ is undoubtedly a complete, reliable and true technique of meditation.

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