



## Book Review

Pinto Ian. *The Concept of Yogic Liberation: Mokṣa in Patañjali Yoga*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishing House, 2021. ISBN: 978-93-91024-84-0 (Hardcover) ISBN: 978-93-91024-45-1 (Paperback). pp.iii+144. Price: ₹.250.

Yoga is an integral part of Indian culture and religion. What began as a sadhanā (practice) associated with a religious system and operated as the practical limb of Indian philosophy gradually morphed into a philosophical system of its own accord thanks to the groundbreaking work of Patañjali. Yoga has become a global phenomenon today and its popularity is ever increasing. It is largely known to be a form of exercise that keeps body and mind healthy and fit provided they are practised in right earnest. However, it also has a philosophical background which is the theme of this book.

The primary goal of yoga is the liberation of the individual and since this also happens to be the goal of traditional Indian philosophizing, yoga found itself becoming an integral part of Indian religious practice. Pinto has made a bold attempt to do the exegesis of the concept of *Mokṣa* in Patañjali Yoga which has often been debated and interpreted differently by various schools of Indian philosophy. The topic is certainly relevant in Eastern and specifically in Indian thought as it deals with us human beings holistically in our religious and rational aspects. Considering

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yoga's growing popularity among people from all faiths, backgrounds,

cultures and walks of life the study becomes all the more relevant in today's context.

The book is divided into four chapters. The first chapter offers a history of yoga and touches on key aspects like its origin, aim, scope, sources and development through the ages right up to the present day. The second chapter lays the groundwork upon which the edifice of the yoga system stands. Hence it deals with the metaphysics, epistemology, theology, anthropology and psychology of yoga. The reflection on these themes provide the background for the soteriological doctrine that is expounded in the next chapter. Chapter three deals exclusively with the topic of liberation. It explores the concept of bondage, *mokṣa* and finally suggests the *Aṣṭāṅga Mārga* as the path of liberation as given by Patanjali. The fourth chapter deals with the mystical dimension of yoga by exploring the concept of *samādhi* as a way of being and its by-products the *vibhūtis*.

In the conclusion while offering a critical Christian critique of Yoga, Pinto addresses the fundamental question 'Can a Christian be a Yogin?' that has inspired him to do the research in this book under review. While such question needs much more in-depth study and understanding of the matter, he has boldly proposed to initiate a dialogue between Christian faith and the Yoga in one's personal life. He has made a good effort in his conclusion to show some similarities between Yoga and Christianity as well as the differences. While certainly a Christian cannot be a Yogin on a religious plane, in Pinto's words, "A Christian adaptation of the meditation techniques of classical yoga could be a welcome offering of Indian Christianity to the rest of the world."

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