

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Contribution of Yoga Vasishtha to Indian Tradition and Sanskaras: An Interpretive Study

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ABSTRACT

The Yoga Vasishtha, a major text of ancient Indian philosophy, is believed to have been written by Valmiki. Through a dialogue between Rama and Vasishtha, the text explains the concepts of Advaita Vedanta, Maya, Brahman, and Nirvana. This study presents an interpretative analysis of the Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to Indian tradition and culture. The literature review examines authoritative sources. The discussion section evaluates its philosophical, cultural, and social implications, while the conclusion highlights its contemporary relevance.

KEYWORDS

Yoga Vasishtha • Advaita Vedanta • Indian tradition • Guru-disciple dialogue
• Maya-Nirvana and cultural contribution

INTRODUCTION

The Yoga Vasishtha, also known as the Yoga Vasishtha Maharamayana, is a precious gem of Indian philosophy and spiritual literature. It is a comprehensive Sanskrit text, attributed to the sage Valmiki. The text's basic structure is based on dialogues in which the sage Vasishtha guides the young prince Rama on the profound mysteries of life, the path to self-realization, and salvation. Its composition is generally dated between the sixth and fourteenth centuries CE, although some traditions place it before the

Ramayana. The Yoga Vasishtha is grounded in Advaita Vedanta, which deeply embodies the fundamental principles of Vedic culture such as the unity of Brahman, the falsity of Maya, and the eternity of the soul. The text not only offers philosophical discourse but also takes the reader on a spiritual journey through narratives, metaphors, and thought-provoking questions and answers.

The Yoga Vasishtha is considered the second largest text in Sanskrit literature after the Mahabharata. It contains approximately

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twenty nine thousand to thirty two thousand verses, divided into seven books or chapters, although traditionally it is divided into six main chapters. These chapters are: Vairagya Prakarana, Mumukshu Prakarana, Utpatti Prakarana, Sthiti Prakarana, Upashama Prakarana, and Nirvana Prakarana. Each chapter sequentially develops philosophical concepts, where, through Rama's life's challenges such as the impermanence of life and the inevitability of suffering Vashistha explains the omnipresence of Brahman and the illusory nature of the world. For example, the Vairagya Prakarana depicts Rama's sense of indifference and detachment, which in Indian tradition symbolizes liberation from worldly attachments. The text predates the events of the Ramayana, where Rama, after returning to his father Dasharatha's court, is distraught in his search for the meaning of life. Vashistha's teachings become the means to remove this anxiety, ultimately preparing Rama as a warrior and king.

The philosophical depth of this text is inspired by Advaita Vedanta, propagated by thinkers like Shankaracharya. Advaita means "no two," meaning there is no distinction between the soul and the Brahman. This concept is explained in the Yoga Vasishtha through various stories, such as the story of Lilavati, where a woman experiences the multiplicity of the universe after the death of her husband, but ultimately everything is revealed to be a play of Maya. Maya is described here as an illusory force that makes the world appear real, but in reality, it is as fleeting as a dream. The Yoga Vasishtha presents the process of self-realization through meditation, discrimination, and detachment. Viveka means the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood, while detachment is detachment from worldly pleasures. These principles guide the journey from householder life to renunciation in the Indian tradition, where one can achieve spiritual progress while still performing daily duties.

The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to Indian tradition and culture is multifaceted. First, it is a perfect example of the guru-disciple tradition. In Indian culture, the guru is considered equivalent to God, and this text brings this tradition to life in the form of the Vashistha-Rama dialogue. Vashistha not only answers Rama's questions but also teaches him introspection through stories. This tradition

dates back to the Vedas and Upanishads, where the disciple sits at the feet of the guru and receives knowledge. The Yoga Vasishtha strengthened this tradition, which continues to this day in ashrams, schools, and spiritual communities. For example, the guru-disciple relationship in modern yoga movements is inspired by this text, where the teacher leads the student to self-awakening through yoga.

On a cultural level, the Yoga Vasishtha adds a spiritual dimension to Indian rituals such as Upanayana, marriage, and funeral. The Upanayana ceremony, which marks the beginning of celibacy, is influenced by the text's emphasis on celibacy. The text's discussion of Rama's youthful renunciation teaches young people to transcend worldly attachments, which is linked to the chanting of the Gayatri Mantra during Upanayana. In the marriage ceremony, where the couple is entrusted with the responsibilities of family life, the Yoga Vasishtha's teachings incorporate values such as truth and non-violence. The text teaches that family life can also be a path to salvation if one acts with discretion. Similarly, at funerals, the message of liberation from grief is conveyed by describing death as the end of Maya, which reinforces the belief in the immortality of the soul in Indian funeral rites.

The stories and allegories of the Yoga Vasishtha have formed the basis of Indian folklore and moral education. For example, the story of Akampana, where a king adopts renunciation to protect his kingdom, reflects the balance of kingly duties and spirituality in Indian tradition. These stories have been incorporated into festivals such as Diwali and Ramanavami, where Rama's journey is linked to the teachings of the Yoga Vasishtha. The symbolism of the victory of light over darkness in Diwali is linked to self-knowledge, inspired by the text's teaching of victory over Maya. Similarly, the education system has adopted the thought-provoking question-and-answer method of the Yoga Vasishtha, which encourages debate and reflection in modern Indian schools.

Historically, the Yoga Vasishtha has enriched Indian philosophy. It was a key text of yoga culture before the 12th century, establishing yoga as a spiritual discipline rather than a physical practice. The yoga practices described in it such as meditation and pranayama are associated with the six schools of yoga in the

Indian tradition (Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta). The Yoga Vasistha influenced later spiritual movements, such as the thoughts of Kabir and Tulsidas during the Bhakti period, where the influence of Advaita is clearly visible. In modern times, thinkers such as Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa considered it the essence of Indian spirituality, which helped spread yoga in the Western world.

Yoga Vasishtha preaches eternal ideals in Indian culture. Values such as truth, non-violence, and asceticism are central to this text. Truth is described as the pursuit of Brahman, which became the basis for movements like Satyagraha in the Indian tradition. Non-violence is associated with renunciation, where violence is described as the result of Maya. Asceticism, meaning a pure life, is rooted in rituals such as fasting and fasting. This text lays the foundation for spiritual communities where individuals can achieve self-liberation while living in community. The statue of sage Vasishtha located at the Vasishtha Ashram Temple in Guwahati symbolizes this reverence, where devotees worship in remembrance of his teachings. This temple, located in the natural beauty of Assam, brings to life Yoga Vasishtha's teachings of the unity of nature and soul.

The influence of the Yoga Vasistha is also evident in Indian art and literature. In the tradition of Sanskrit poetry, the poetic brilliance of its verses inspired later writers. For example, the works of poets like Kalidasa reflect Advaita. Music and dance, such as the Rama tales in Bharatanatyam, incorporate philosophical elements from the Yoga Vasistha. In social rituals, the text also touches upon gender equality, where the stories of women reflect spiritual potential, which connects to women's empowerment in modern Indian society.

In the contemporary context, the relevance of Yoga Vasishtha has increased. At a time when the world is grappling with stress and materialism, this text suggests a path of detachment and meditation for mental health. International Yoga Day, celebrated at India's initiative, is inspired by the teachings of Yoga Vasishtha, where yoga is made more spiritual than physical. This text reflects the resilience of the Indian tradition, connecting ancient wisdom with modern challenges.

The purpose of this study is to provide an interpretative analysis of these contributions of the Yoga Vasishtha, demonstrating how this text remains the soul of Indian culture. The following sections will explore its depths through a literature review, discussion, and conclusion. Overall, the Yoga Vasishtha is not only a text but a vibrant reflection of Indian philosophy of life, providing spiritual light to generations.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The literature review analyzes authoritative sources. Each review is based on original interpretations. These sources focus on the philosophical, cultural, and social contributions of the Yoga Vasishtha.

Tools of Enlightenment: Indirect Instruction in the Yoga Vasistha - This study presents the Yoga Vasistha as a mature work of Indian philosophy, written between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries. Researchers emphasize the indirect teaching method, where spiritual knowledge is imparted through narratives and dialogues. The Yoga Vasistha's contribution is to make Advaita Vedanta accessible to the Indian tradition, explaining the illusion of Maya and the concept of liberation through narrative. This text strengthens the guru-disciple relationship at the cultural level, which is the foundation of the Indian education system. Overall, this source demonstrates that the Yoga Vasistha popularized spiritual contemplation in Indian culture, where indirect teachings show the path to liberation from life's suffering. However, more historical context is lacking (McGee, 2007).

The Timeless Wisdom of Yoga: Connecting Philosophy, Science, and Liberation - This research explores yoga as a bridge between philosophy, science, and liberation, citing the Yoga Vasishtha as a key text. The researchers discuss its historical development, comparing the Yoga Vasishtha with Hatha Yoga and the Patanjali Yoga Sutras. Its contribution to the Indian tradition is its teachings of self-realization and liberation from illusion, integrating meditation and detachment into cultural practices. The text connects the concept of non-duality with a scientific perspective, which impacts mental health in modern Indian culture. The source's strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which makes the Yoga Vasishtha the essence of

Indian philosophy. (Agrawal & Nagraj, 2025)

Importance of Yoga in Indian Philosophy

- This article focuses on the role of Yoga in Indian philosophy, where the Yoga Vasishtha is linked to the Vedanta and Upanishads. Researchers highlight the contribution of Badarayana, who elaborated on the number system. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to provide spiritual depth to Indian culture, where detachment and discretion guide the rituals of life. The text reinforces traditional ethics, such as non-violence and contentment. Sources indicate that the Yoga Vasishtha diversified Indian philosophy, which is part of the cultural identity. (Singh, 2022).

History of Indian Philosophy: Volume 2

- This book provides a detailed account of the history of Indian philosophy, discussing the philosophical foundations of the Yoga Vasishtha. Researchers compare it with medical schools and other traditions. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to explaining the complexity of Indian culture, where metaphysical principles are intertwined with cultural practices. This text integrates diverse philosophical currents, bringing unity to the Indian tradition. The authenticity of the source lies in its detail. (Dasgupta, 1932).

Indian Philosophy: Volume 1 - This book outlines Indian philosophy, incorporating the Yoga Vasishtha into a metaphysical framework. The authors are inspired by the work of Brajendranath Seal. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to bridge traditional and modern interpretations of Indian culture, where spiritual contemplation influences cultural customs. This text makes non-duality accessible. (Sinha, 2016).

Recent Trends in Indian Philosophy - This research critiques contemporary Indian philosophy, highlighting the Yogavashistha's Advaitaphilosophy. The researchers emphasize metaphysical evidence through dialogue. The Yogavashistha's contribution is to preserving diversity in the Indian tradition, encouraging cultural dialogue. This text provides a cultural foundation for non-dualism. (Dubey, 1978).

Indian people's values regarding teaching philosophy in schools This article discusses philosophical teaching in the Vedic period, citing the Yoga Vasishtha as crucial in preserving yogic culture. Researchers criticize modern efforts. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to bring continuity to Indian education,

where spiritual values shape cultural identity. (Venkatasubramanian, 2020).

Illusion and Reality in the Yoga Vasishtha

- This article explores illusion and reality in the Yoga Vasishtha, using Indian metaphors. Researchers emphasize Vasishtha's dialogues. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to explain Maya and Mukti in Indian philosophy, which is reflected in cultural practices. (O'Flaherty, 1981).

Philosophy, Politics, and Knowledge Systems in Ancient India

- This book examines ancient Indian knowledge systems, discussing individual agency in the Yoga Vasishtha. Researchers highlight the intersection of free will and determination. The Yoga Vasishtha contributes to the understanding of human agency in Indian culture. (Ramanathan & Aithal, 2025).

The Indian Science of Consciousness: Chronological Relevance to Indian Knowledge Traditions and Modern Science

- This research by Rukmini chronologically analyzes the science of consciousness in Indian knowledge traditions, citing the Yoga Vasishtha as a major source of spiritual insight in the Treta Yuga. The researchers argue that the concept of "Chitta-Vritti Nirodha" described in the text has similarities with modern neuroscience and quantum physics, which establish consciousness as a non-physical entity. The Yoga Vasishtha contributes to the discourse of consciousness in Indian culture. It aims to enrich the Indian spirituality by providing a scientific basis for the practices of meditation, samadhi, and introspection. At the cultural level, the text inspires the exploration of consciousness through pilgrimages, fasts, and yoga sessions, promoting mental clarity and spiritual awakening in Indian society. The strength of the source lies in its interdisciplinary approach (Rukmini, 2020).

The Mind and Soul of India - Devaraj's book offers a profound analysis of the struggles of the Indian mind and soul, using various episodes from the Yoga Vasishtha as religious motifs. The researchers argue that Rama's depression and Vasishtha's teachings in the text are symbolic journeys of spiritual quest in the Indian tradition, keeping alive the practice of guru-disciple dialogue and self-reflection at the cultural level. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to give a human dimension to religious exploration in Indian philosophy,

inspiring devotion in marriage, prudence in education, and compassion in social life. The text presents spiritual crisis as a universal experience. The authenticity of the source lies in its psychological analysis. (Devaraja, 1967).

Conceptions of Nature in Traditional Hinduism - This chapter by Michaels explores the concept of nature in traditional Hindu perspectives, highlighting the commonality of consciousness among all living beings in the Yoga Vasishtha. The researchers argue that the resonance of "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma" described in the text lays the foundation for ecological consciousness in Indian culture, providing a philosophical basis for the tradition of sacred pilgrimage sites, forests, and rivers. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to Hindu ecology is its message of unity and conservation, inspiring cultural practices such as tree worship, water conservation, and non-violence. The text teaches balance between humans and the environment by portraying nature as part of Maya. The strength of the source lies in its ecological relevance (Michaels, 2003).

A Review of the Yoga Vasistha - An Ancient Hindu Text: Interdisciplinary Perspectives for Contemporary Research - This review by Jayaram and Sivasubramanian presents the Yoga Vasistha as a pioneering work of Indian philosophy and yoga, integrating Advaita, Shaiva, and Buddhist streams. The researchers argue that the universal truths contained in the text such as maya, atman, and nirvana are a subject of research for modern science, psychology, and philosophy. The Yoga Vasistha's contribution is to inspire interdisciplinary research in Indian culture, incorporating spiritual insights into education, medicine, and the arts. The text promotes dialogue, tolerance, and coordination at the cultural level. The authenticity of the source lies in its contemporary approach, which makes the Yoga Vasistha part of the global knowledge tradition. (Jayaram & Sivasubramanian, un.).

The Essence of Yoga: Essays on the Development of Yoga Philosophy from the Vedas to Modern Times - This collection of essays by Feuerstein and Miller portrays the Yoga Vasishtha as a key link in the Vedanta tradition, citing specific verses to trace the journey from Vedic origins to classical yoga. The researchers argue that the synthesis of "jnana-yoga" and "karma-sannyasa"

described in the text lays the foundation for spiritual balance in Indian culture. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to synthesize Vedic and Tantric elements in Indian spiritual culture, integrating the practices of meditation, devotion, and karma. This text establishes yoga as a philosophy of life at the cultural level. The source's strength lies in its historical continuity. (Feuerstein & Miller, 1997).

The Reality of the Yoga Vasishtha - This article by O'Flaherty analyzes the duality of illusion and reality in the Yoga Vasishtha through Indian metaphors, such as the "city in a dream" and the "story of Lilavati." The researcher argues that by presenting Maya as a psychological and philosophical reality, the text deepened the search for truth in the Indian tradition. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to transform Advaita principles into a cultural understanding, which keeps alive the symbols of victory over Maya in festivals, stories, and plays. The text describes self-realization as a gradual process. The authenticity of the source lies in its literary analysis, which establishes the Yoga Vasishtha as a mirror of Indian consciousness. (O'Flaherty, 1981).

History of Indian Philosophy, provides a detailed account of the various streams of Indian philosophy, describing the Yoga Vasishtha as a symbol of philosophical diversity and synthesis. Researchers argue that the text's incorporation of elements from the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Tantras highlights the complexity and syncretic nature of Indian culture. The Yoga Vasishtha contributes to cultural unity, enhancing the acceptance of Advaita across various sects, languages, and regions. The text incorporates spiritual values into education, art, and social order. The source's strength lies in its comprehensiveness and authenticity, establishing the Yoga Vasishtha as a central text of Indian philosophy. (Dasgupta, 1932).

Indian Philosophy - Sinha's treatise presents the structure and development of Indian philosophy, citing the Yoga Vasishtha as its metaphysical foundation and source of continuity. Researchers argue that the text's premise of "Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithya" provides a philosophical framework for the search for reality in the Indian tradition. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to Indian culture is to bridge Vedic and modern thought, encouraging prudence in education, devotion in marriage, and morality in social life. The

text teaches a balance between spiritual and practical life. The authenticity of the source lies in its structural analysis, which establishes the Yoga Vasishtha as the backbone of Indian philosophy. (Sinha, 2016)

The Timeless Wisdom of Yoga - Agarwal's work describes yoga as an eternal bridge between philosophy and science, with the Yoga Vasishtha as the synthesizing point of ancient and modern knowledge. Researchers argue that the trinity of "vairagya-viveka-samadhi" described in the text is the foundation of mental health, emotional balance, and spiritual awakening in Indian culture. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to the Indian tradition is to elevate yoga from a physical practice to a philosophy of life, giving scientific and philosophical validity to the practices of meditation, pranayama, and karma-renunciation. This text is an ancient solution to modern stress management. The strength of the source lies in its contemporary relevance, making the Yoga Vasishtha a relevant text for 21st-century Indian culture. (Agrawal, 2025)

Yoga Vasishtha: A Study of Advaitic Idealism - This study presents the Yoga Vasishtha as the pinnacle of Advaitic idealism, serving as a bridge between Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. Researcher Christopher Chapple argues that the concept of "mind alone" described in the text is an early form of the science of consciousness in the Indian tradition, institutionalizing the practice of introspection and meditation at the cultural level. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is the incorporation of "witness-consciousness" into Indian rituals, which keeps alive the memory of the soul's eternity in rites such as marriage, upanayana, and funeral rites. The text establishes Maya as a psychological reality, providing ancient techniques for stress management and emotional balance in Indian society. The strength of the source lies in its comparative approach, which connects the Yoga Vasishtha to modern psychology. However, more clarity is needed on the text's historical date. Overall, this source proves the Yoga Vasishtha to be a source of profound analysis of Indian consciousness, adding spiritual depth to cultural practices. (Chapple, 1984).

The Concept of Maya in the Yoga Vasishtha Ramayana - This work by Mainkar offers a nuanced analysis of the concept of Maya in the Yoga Vasishtha, portraying it not only as

a philosophical but also as a cultural reality. The researchers argue that by describing Maya as a "dreamlike world," the text laid the ideological foundation for liberation from worldly attachment in the Indian tradition, inspiring the "dispassion" inherent in festivals, fasts, and pilgrimages. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to establish the discernment of "truth and falsehood" in Indian rituals, which guides moral judgment and social behavior in the education system. The text presents Maya as a psychological force, explaining the root cause of mental disorders such as fear, greed, and anger in Indian society. The authenticity of the source lies in its verse-based analysis. This demonstrates that the Yoga Vasishtha established a balance between spiritual and practical life in Indian culture. (Mainkar, 1977)

Yoga Vasishtha: A Reappraisal - Venkatachalam's reappraisal contextualizes the Yoga Vasishtha in a modern context, presenting it as a "universal masterpiece" of Indian philosophy. The researcher argues that the process of "dissipation of passions" described in the text is the cornerstone of mental health and emotional maturity in the Indian tradition, providing a scientific basis for the practices of meditation, yoga, and pranayama at the cultural level. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is to deepen the understanding of "karma-phala" in Indian rituals, which inspire a sense of duty in marriage, discipline in education, and selfless service in social life. The text presents self-awakening as a gradual process, keeping the guru-shishya tradition alive in Indian society. The source's strength lies in its contemporary relevance, making the Yoga Vasishtha an ancient solution to modern stress management. (Venkatachalam, 1993)

Karma and Rebirth in Indian Classical Traditions - Sharma's comparative study connects the Yoga Vasishtha with the philosophies of Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, and Buddhism, portraying it as a "synthetic masterpiece" of Indian philosophy. The researchers argue that the dissolution of the "Triputi" (knower, known, and knowledge) described in the text represents a scientific method of introspection in the Indian tradition, providing a philosophical basis for the practices of meditation, chanting, and asceticism at the cultural level. The Yoga Vasishtha's contribution is its incorporation of the concept of "ego-dissolution" into Indian rituals, providing spiritual meaning to celibacy

in Upanayana, dedication in marriage, and self-surrender in funerals. The text presents Advaita as a practical life philosophy, promoting tolerance and coordination in Indian society. The authenticity of the source lies in its comparative framework. (Doniger & O'Flaherty, 1980)

Valmiki's Yoga Vasistha and Plato's Republic - Valmiki's Yoga Vasistha and Plato's Republic are both great philosophical treatises on human life, society, and the search for truth. Yoga Vasistha focuses on Advaita Vedanta, where Vasistha teaches Rama the falsity of Maya, the path to self-realization, and nirvana. It emphasizes inner peace and detachment. Plato's Republic, on the other hand, envisions an ideal state characterized by justice, a philosopher king, and a balance of the three components of the soul (reason, courage, and desire). The dialogue style in both is similar the Yoga Vasistha portrays a guru-disciple relationship, while the Republic portrays a Socrates-disciple relationship. Yoga Vasistha emphasizes spiritual liberation, while the Republic emphasizes social justice. Both emphasize liberation from illusion (the metaphor of Maya/the cave) in the search for truth, but Yoga Vasistha leads to the Nirguna Brahman, while the Republic leads to a virtue-based society. (Sridevi, 2021)

A Comparative Study of Dharana According to Vasishtha - According to Vasishtha, Dharana is the primary means of concentration and truthfulness in the Yoga Vasishtha. It is deeply connected to Dharana (fixation of the mind on a single point) in the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, but Vasishtha elaborates it in the context of Advaita. According to him, Dharana is not merely sense control but rather the stabilization of the mind in Brahman, free from the illusions of Maya. It arises from detachment and discrimination, where the practitioner sees the world as a dream. The result of Dharana is Samadhi and self-realization, not siddhis. Comparatively, Dharana in Buddhist meditation is momentary concentration, while Vasishtha's Dharana is the eternal contemplation of Brahman. It lays the foundation for stabilization of the mind in meditation, worship, and rituals in Indian culture, surpassing modern mindfulness. (Shah & Dave, 2023)

Applying the principles of Yoga Vasishtha to improve the study methods and academic performance of today's students

- The principles of Yoga Vasishtha can be revolutionary in improving the studies and academic performance of today's students. Viveka teaches us to distinguish between truth and falsehood and to deeply understand the subject, rather than memorizing it. Vairagya relieves stress and distractions (social media), thereby enhancing focus. Dharana is the practice of concentration fixing the mind on a single point while studying, which is beneficial for problems like ADHD. Samadhi-Bhava, like a flow state, inspires deep study. Maya-Drishti, considering failure as an illusion, maintains self-confidence. Karma-Sanyasa, treating hard work as worship, inspires. Applying these principles reduces exam fear, sharpens memory, and increases creativity. If teachers adopt a guru-disciple communication style, academic excellence will become natural. (Joshi, 2025)

DISCUSSION

Insights gained from the literature review make it clear that the Yoga Vasishtha has been a major pillar of spiritual and philosophical knowledge in the Indian tradition. This text not only strengthens the fundamental concepts of Advaita Vedanta, but many scholars have considered it equivalent to ancient texts such as the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. The Yoga Vasishtha's role in the Advaita Vedanta tradition is exceptional, as it elaborately explains the unity of Brahman, the illusory nature of the world, and the process of self-realization. For example, the concept of Maya described in the text is presented as an illusory force that makes worldly experiences appear real, but in reality, it is as fleeting as a dream. Thus, the Yoga Vasishtha provided a framework for Indian philosophy that transcends dualities and guides the individual towards eternal peace. Scholars believe that this text served as a precursor to the teachings of thinkers like Shankaracharya, simplifying the theoretical complexities of Advaita through narrative. This served to popularize the philosophy in the Indian tradition, making it accessible to the general public rather than limited to scholars. The contribution of Yoga Vasishtha goes beyond philosophy and is evident in its strengthening of the cultural tradition of the guru-disciple relationship. The text's basic structure, based on the dialogue between Vasishtha and Rama, represents an

ideal representation of the ancient Indian educational system. Here, the guru not only imparts knowledge but also, by understanding the disciple's inner anxieties, leads him to introspection. This tradition dates back to the Vedas, where the disciple learns the profound truths of life through a gurukul. Yoga Vasishtha further deepens this tradition by resolving Rama's youthful apathy through detachment. Vairagya, which is detachment from worldly pleasures, symbolizes the balance between renunciation and householder life in Indian culture. Life values such as adherence to dharma, morality, and restraint are presented in practical terms in Yoga Vasishtha, which are reflected in the rituals of daily life. For example, in Indian families, children are taught detachment and discernment through moral stories inspired by the teachings of this text. This fosters moral strength and spiritual balance in society, laying the foundation for social harmony.

A unique feature of the text is its use of stories and metaphors, which nurture the moral and spiritual values of Indian folk life. The Yoga Vasishtha contains dozens of stories, such as the tale of Lilavati, where a woman experiences the multiplicity of the universe, but ultimately finds everything to be an illusion. These metaphors simplify complex philosophical concepts, making them popular in both rural and urban societies. Such metaphors are found in Indian folktales, conveying the message of the transience of life and the immortality of the soul. The text added spiritual depth to rituals such as the Upanayana ceremony, where young men are taught celibacy. Similarly, the marriage ceremony teaches couples to practice renunciation in family life, which is influenced by the Yoga Vasishtha. The promotion of morality through metaphors also spread to Indian literature and art, such as plays and comics. This woven a fabric of culture where philosophy and daily life became one.

The Yoga Vasishtha's place in the guru-disciple relationship remains exemplary even today. In ancient India, this tradition was the foundation of the Gurukul system, and Yoga Vasishtha gave it philosophical depth. Vasishtha's teachings impart not just knowledge to Rama, but also experience, the equivalent of mentoring in modern education. It inspired the tradition of considering the teacher as a guru in Indian culture, where

knowledge transfer occurs at an emotional and spiritual level. Great saints like Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramatirtha have called it an ocean of self-improvement, as it describes the path to salvation in simple language. This has enhanced the Yoga Vasishtha's prominence in the Indian pilgrimage tradition, where pilgrims travel with the text's teachings in mind. For example, its teachings remain alive in places like the Vasishtha Ashram, inspiring spiritual tourism. The non-dualistic teachings of Yoga Vasishtha remain highly relevant even in the contemporary era. Today, when the world is grappling with materialism, stress, and environmental crisis, this text teaches that spiritual development is possible only by transcending the world's memory and manifestations. That is, one must free oneself from the trap of Maya and become established in Brahman. This concept resonates with mindfulness and meditation in modern psychology, which teach living in the present moment. This relevance in Indian culture is reflected in events like Yoga Day, where yoga is being adopted globally. The teachings of detachment can serve as a digital detox in the age of social media, while discernment enhances decision-making. In environmental conservation, the text's concept of "Sarvam Brahman" conveys the message of unity among living beings, which enhances sustainability. It inspires us. In education, its principles can teach students stress management, where they should maintain self-confidence by considering exams as illusions. In health, its interpretation of adhi-vyadhi is useful in treating mental illnesses. Overall, Yoga Vasishtha demonstrates the resilience of Indian tradition, connecting ancient wisdom with modern challenges. This allows culture not only to be preserved but also to evolve.

CONCLUSION

The Yoga Vasishtha stands as a multifaceted contributor to Indian tradition and culture, providing not only philosophical depth but also enriching the practical values and spiritual disciplines of life. This text presents the Purushartha-Bodh of Vedanta philosophy, which considers self-knowledge and liberation as the ultimate goals of life. The Yoga Vasishtha explains the core concepts of Advaita Vedanta the unity of Brahman, the illusory nature of the universe, and the eternity of the soul with

such simplicity and depth that it becomes accessible to everyone, from the common man to the learned. The process of self-realization described in the text develops gradually through discrimination, detachment, and meditation, elevating the individual above worldly dualities and leading to eternal peace. Thus, the Yoga Vasishtha provided a framework for Indian philosophy that is not only theoretical but also applicable to practical life. This understanding of Purushartha shows the way to balance the four Purusharthas Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha in Indian culture, where Moksha has been given the highest place.

Yoga Vasishtha's contribution to the promotion of morality and life values is also unparalleled. The text's stories and metaphors bring to life values such as dharma, compassion, contentment, non-violence, and truth. For example, the story of Lilavati explains the falsity of Maya, while the story of Akampana depicts the balance between Rajadharma and Vairagya. These stories became the basis of moral education in Indian folk life, which is taught to children through stories. Yoga Vasishtha's teachings are embedded in Indian rituals, such as celibacy in Upanayana, a sense of duty in marriage, and the remembrance of the soul's immortality in funerals. The text links the value of compassion to the unity of Brahman in all beings, which inspires non-violence and empathy. Contentment is described as true happiness, which is particularly relevant in an age of materialism. These values provided Indian society with a moral framework that maintains social harmony and personal balance.

In short, the Yoga Vasishtha is an integral part of the ideological and cultural fabric of the Indian tradition. This text not only preserves ancient wisdom but also offers solutions to modern challenges. Its influence remains today in yoga centers, pilgrimage sites, education, and daily life. In the future, further application of its principles will provide humanity with spiritual and social balance. The Yoga Vasishtha symbolizes the resilience and universality of Indian culture, continuing to show generations the path to self-awakening.

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