

CHAPTER 14

*Yoga and meditation for mental health*K. N. Udupa¹*I. Yoga*

Yoga is a traditional science which helps us to coordinate body and mind more effectively. It enables a person to maintain tranquillity of mind and greater calmness in the conscious state and is perhaps the easiest and the safest method to promote mental health. It can also be used as a preventive and curative technique for the management of various psychic and psychosomatic disorders. Although yoga had been described in the Book of Wisdom—the *Veda*—about 4000 years ago, it was presented by Patanjali in an abridged form about 2500 years ago (*1*). Since then a large number of commentaries and books have been written to explain more clearly how one can promote mental health through the different practices of yoga.

More recently, the study of mental health has been given greater importance since conditions of stress in the modern world have greatly increased. Thus, while many people living in the developed countries enjoy great physical comfort, they are experiencing a lack of spiritual enlightenment. On the other hand, most of those living in the developing countries tend to lead more contented lives, even though they have to face starvation and other forms of deprivation as a result of poor economic and technological growth. Because of these difficulties, people all over the world are passing through severe stress and strain, leading to an increased incidence of psychosomatic disorders. In recent years, and in order to overcome such situations, several newer drugs described as sedatives and tranquillizers have been introduced. However, because of the risk of toxicity and habit formation they cannot be used for prolonged periods. On the other hand, the use of yoga, including various types of meditation,

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not only prevents the psychosomatic illnesses commonly seen in many countries but also promotes mental health with no harmful effects of any sort. It is therefore considered desirable that everyone should have a basic knowledge of yoga for better physical and mental development. Those who are interested and want to know more about yoga are advised to refer to an advanced treatise on the subject (2).

Integrated yoga

Among all the methods so far described, the sage Patanjali's methods of integrated yoga are the most important. These are (1) *yama* or improvement in our social behaviour; (2) *niyama* or improvement in our personal behaviour; (3) physical postures; (4) breath-holding practices; (5) restraining the sense organs; (6) contemplation; (7) meditation; and (8) attainment of superconsciousness.

(1) It has been stated that improvement in *social behaviour* can be achieved by the following five noble practices: (a) non-violence, both physical and psychological; (b) truthfulness; (c) non-stealing; (d) self-restraint in every sphere of life; and (e) non-hoarding.

(2) Similarly, our *personal behaviour* can be improved by: (a) maintaining a purity of body and mind; (b) developing a habit of contentment; (c) practising austerity in every sphere of life; (d) intensive study of relevant literature; and (e) daily practice of dedication to God. These are the ten basic requirements for attaining success in our daily practice of yoga and we are well advised to follow them as much as possible.

(3) *Physical postures*. A large number of yoga postures have been described by various authors. They are mainly meant to improve the bodily health, especially the functions of various organs such as heart, lungs, liver and other organs of the gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, endocrine system, etc. Normally, a person can practise 10 to 15 yogic postures such as cobra posture, plough posture etc. and including stationary types of exercises for all parts of the body for a period of about 15 minutes daily.

(4) *Breathing exercises*. This is an important part of yogic exercise in which one inhales fresh air to the maximum capacity through one nostril, holds it for a while, and exhales it through the other nostril, practising deep expiration. Normally this can be practised 20 times or more daily to improve oxygenation of all the organs and tissues of the body. Through such simple exercises one usually feels much refreshed and relaxed, possibly as a result of better circulation of oxygenated blood in the body.

After the behavioural practices and physical exercises one should continue to practise step by step what may be called the four mental exercises. The first two are touched upon in the next paragraphs; the others are considered later, in the section on meditation.

(5) *Control of sense organs*. In this procedure we have to restrain the

activities of all the sense organs which are the main gatekeepers of our body and mind. This can be achieved by minimizing the chances of having these sense organs stimulated by various external objects, and then by leading as simple a life as possible. Thus, these wise men who practise restraint in life remain much happier and more satisfied than those very rich men who, in spite of having all physical comforts, still remain dissatisfied with life. It is really hard to restrain the mind, but by constant practice with a definite goal one can restrain the sense organs and thereby the mind to a considerable extent.

(6) *Concentration of mind.* In this process one gradually learns how to concentrate on any object by avoiding all distractions. This practice of concentration on an object of one's choice will greatly help to calm any mental excitement and at the same time will induce tranquillity and serenity in the mind. In order to succeed we must have tremendous perseverance and will-power. As much time as possible should be devoted to concentrating on a chosen object and a strenuous, regular and continuous effort should be maintained until the desired goal is achieved.

Prevention of psychosomatic disorders

Studies have shown that the regular practice of the integrated type of yoga can not only prevent the development of various psychosomatic disorders but also improve a person's resistance and ability to endure stressful situations more effectively (3, 4). Studies on normal individuals have indicated that a regular practice of yogic postures leads to psychological improvement in the intelligence and memory quotient and a decrease in the pulse rate, blood pressure, respiration and body weight. The biochemical examination of the blood has shown decrease in blood sugar and serum cholesterol, and a rise in the serum protein level. A significant improvement in the functioning of the endocrine glands has also been found, as evidenced by the increased hormonal level of thyroid, adrenal medulla, adrenal cortex and gonads.

By practising breathing exercises alone similar results have been obtained except that the fall in serum lipids was much more marked than was noted in the practice of physical postures. After intensive meditation for 10 days, there was a marked rise of neurohumours and their enzymes such as acetylcholine, catecholamine, cholinesterases and monoamine oxidases; with a fall of plasma cortisol. When all the three integrated yogic practices, namely, physical postures, breathing exercises and meditation, were combined, it was found that there was a decrease in the neurohumours and their related enzymes, and an increase in the plasma cortisol level. Based on these findings, it can be postulated that the regular practice of integrated yoga can promote tranquillity of mind and increase resistance to stress.

Yoga for treatment of stress disorders

The integrated type of yoga has been used for the treatment of about 640 patients with different stress disorders such as hypertension, anxiety neurosis, mucous colitis, bronchial asthma, diabetes mellitus, thyrotoxicosis, migraine and rheumatic disorders of the spine, with gratifying results in about 78% of the patients. In the remaining 22%, when modern drug therapy was added, improvements were much quicker, with lasting benefits. The study of various neurohumoral changes occurring in these diseases before and after the yogic treatment revealed a marked increase in the content of one or more neurohumours in blood and urine. The yogic treatment would produce relief in these patients coinciding with the normalization of their disturbed neurohumoral systems. For example in bronchial asthma an increase in the acetylcholine and histamine contents was observed with a decrease in the serum adrenaline and plasma cortisol level. After a course of yogic and breathing exercises for a period of three months, these asthma patients had much relief along with normalization of neurohumours by a decrease of acetylcholine and histamine and an increase in the adrenaline and cortisol level. Similar results could be obtained in almost all the patients with stress disorders, thus indicating clearly the scientific basis for the mechanism of action of yogic practices in giving relief in such cases.

Promotion of mental health

In addition to the integrated practice of yoga, there are many other methods of yoga that can be used for the promotion of mental health. Among them, the practice of *Kundalini* yoga as described by Gopikrishna is the most important one (5, 6). In this method a person sits on the ground adopting a comfortable posture and meditates for a few minutes on the autonomic nerve centres from below upwards. Thus meditation begins at the inferior hypogastric plexus, then proceeds upwards to the superior hypogastric plexus, the caeliac plexuses, the cardiac plexus, the cervical plexuses, the hypothalamic region and the cerebral cortex. By this process a better voluntary control is gradually obtained over the involuntary functioning of organs and tissues. By reducing the visceral activities supplied by the autonomic nerves, the activity of the psychic centre of the brain can be promoted and enhanced. According to Gopikrishna, who gives his personal experience of *Kundalini* yoga in great detail, there is a remarkable improvement in psychic activity with a feeling of enlightenment in every sphere of activity. Therefore, if this method of yogic practice could be scientifically standardized, it could become an important method for promoting mental health in people all over the world.

Yoga as a rehabilitative measure

There are a number of yogic measures which can be used for the rehabilitation of persons exposed to too much stress and strain in life. These include praying through devotional songs daily for 30 minutes or so (*ghakti yoga*), undertaking missionary service to the poor, sick or deprived people (*karmayoga*), and educating people through philosophical lectures (*jnana yoga*). By following one or more of these measures, all those who are passing through intense mental stress and strain can rehabilitate themselves well enough to lead normal lives and render efficient service to people.

Thus, yoga is truly a very important preventive, curative, promotive and rehabilitative measure for maintaining sound mental health. There is therefore a great need to conduct extensive scientific studies on the subject and to standardize techniques so that many more people can make full use of them throughout the world.

II. Meditation

Meditation is a mental exercise in which we direct our mind to think inwardly by shutting our sense organs to external stimulations. Normally in a conscious state, we use our sense organs freely—seeing pictures, listening to music, eating sweets, smelling scents, or touching the nose with the hand. These sense organs continuously stimulate the brain, thereby producing various responses in the psychosomatic apparatus of the body depending upon the severity and extent of the external stimuli. However, by the constant practice of meditation one can voluntarily reduce these bodily responses to a bare minimum so that the mind can be directed to perform more useful and fruitful functions (7).

By the constant practice of meditation one can also gradually develop voluntary control over various involuntary vital functions of the body, such as the beating of the heart, the digestion of food or the absorption of oxygen from the lungs, which are normally carried out spontaneously under the control of the autonomic nervous system. By meditation a person can also learn to stabilize his emotional changes, thereby restraining abnormal functions of various vital organs of the body. Ordinarily, there are two planes in which the mind functions, the conscious and the unconscious. Yet there can be one more plane which is higher than both, one where the mind goes beyond the level of self-consciousness. This is called superconsciousness. How can this be attained? When a man goes to sleep he enters the plane of subconsciousness; on waking up he regains his

consciousness and becomes a normal person. But when a person has attained superconsciousness, usually through the prolonged practice of meditation, on returning to the conscious state he becomes a different person having acquired greater knowledge and wisdom. After practising the *Kundalini* type of meditation for many years, Gopikrishna described his great experience of attaining superconsciousness and the subsequent remarkable events that occurred in his life.

Thus, meditation can be used as a powerful instrument to restrain the sense organs, control the autonomic nervous system and also attain the state of superconsciousness.

Methods of meditation

There are many methods of meditation. The sage Patanjali describes eight steps to achieve the goal of superconsciousness. This cannot be reached suddenly or accidentally. One will have to gradually improve one's social and personal behaviour, by regular practice of yogic exercises, breath control and various mental exercises. Buddha, 2500 years ago, described the *vipasana* method of meditation in which a person sits in a comfortable posture with eyes closed and directs his attention to the tip of his nose to observe his breath continuously. By this simple procedure one learns to practise concentration of the mind. Gradually one can make use of this method for meditation on any noble object to attain peace and happiness. Recently, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi described a simple method popularly known as transcendental meditation. Here again, the person assumes a comfortable sitting position with eyes closed and turns his attention inwards to control his internal environment. Then he repeats certain sacred words called "mantra" and portrays the gods Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma for about 20 minutes. Throughout the period of meditation the person concentrates on prayer and communication with deity and avoids all mental distractions.

Taking into account all these different methods, Benson has described a simple method of meditation for beginners (8), as follows:

(a) A quiet environment: For this it is necessary to have a quiet room, one usually kept for worship. This helps to eliminate distraction.

(b) A passive attitude: One should not bother about any disturbing thoughts that come to one's mind during meditation but should try to concentrate on the objects chosen.

(c) A comfortable position: A comfortable sitting posture is desirable. If this is not feasible, one can also adopt a lying-down posture, but should not go to sleep.

(d) A mental device for concentration: In order to shift the mind from external objects to internal thoughts one should repeat silently sacred words known as "mantra" for about 20 minutes, with eyes fully closed.

Such meditation should be carried out twice a day—morning and evening.

In order to study the utility of these methods, and also to know the degree of attainment in each individual case, a biofeedback system has been introduced, using an electronic instrument that can amplify the various psychosomatic changes in the body such as blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, skin temperature and brain-wave patterns. By observing one's own bodily functions with this device, one can gradually, through meditation, develop a mental power to control the involuntary functions described above.

Results

Recently a number of studies have been conducted to assess the value of meditation during health and disease. Biochemical studies have indicated that after ten days of intensive *vipasana* type of meditation there was an improvement in mental activity with greater tranquillity of mind as evidenced by a significant increase in the neurohumoral contents of the blood such as catecholamines, histamine, acetylcholine and their related enzymes and with a decrease in the plasma cortisol level. Wallace and Benson, who conducted extensive studies on transcendental meditation (9), observed that the electroencephalograph showed an increase in the alpha-wave activity indicating greater tranquillity of mind. They also observed a decrease in the heart beat and a 20% decrease in oxygen consumption. There was also a marked increase in skin resistance. In several subsequent studies this method has been used clinically in cases of hypertension, drug addiction, alcoholism, etc. with beneficial results. By coupling meditation with biofeedback one can successfully treat a large number of patients with stress disorders.

The promotion of mental health can also be obtained by using other methods of meditation: *Zen* meditation as practised in Japan, Sufism as in the Middle East, and autogenic training as in Western countries. Recently, *Kundalini* meditation has also been used with great benefit not only for improving the level of consciousness, but also in the treatment of certain mental illnesses.

There is great scope for the use of meditation in the preventive, promotive and curative aspects of mental health. However, there is an urgent need to conduct scientific study and to develop standardization of this simple, inexpensive, yet powerful technique for the promotion of mental health, so that people all over the world can use it.

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YOGA

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अस्यग्य महावाहो मनोदुर्निग्रहं चलन् ।
अप्यामेन तु कौन्तेय वेत्तायेण च गृह्यते ॥

— *Humanity at the crossroads of its progress.*

It is difficult to control the mind since it is always very restless. However, by constant practice and renunciation one can restrain the mind to a great extent. This assumes even greater importance as we pass through a time of severe stress and strain leading to increased incidents of psychosomatic disturbances and social imbalances in society.

There are methods for improving the quality of life by attaining more and more divine consciousness in one's lifetime. It is in this context that the integrated methods of Patanjali's "Yoga" assumes great importance. Integrated because for a common man Yoga means only the asanas or yogic postures.

Yoga is one of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy. It is a pragmatic science. All the orthodox systems of Indian philosophy have one goal in view: the liberation of the soul through perfection. One method is Yoga which covers immense ground. Both the Sankhya and the Vedanta schools point to Yoga in some

from or the other.

Yoga was discovered more than four thousand years ago. Not originally conceived as a therapeutic science, it is only during the last two decades that a lot of interest has been shown in it all over the world due to its health potential. In fact, the term "Yoga Chikitsa" is not mentioned in any of the ancient Yoga treatises.

There are several schools of Yoga, Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga being the two major ones. Raja Yoga shows how to concentrate the mind, to discover its innermost recesses, how to generalise its contents and draw our own conclusions from them. Hence its concern with spiritual development.

Hatha Yoga deals with physical positions and aims at acquiring a strong body through various asanas. Its chief objective is to make one live long and in good health.

There are also other schools of Yoga — Bhakti Yoga (Yoga through devotion), Jnana Yoga (securing knowledge and wisdom) and Karma Yoga (by performing one's duty through committed service).

The word 'Yoga' is a Sanskrit term derived from the root 'Yuj' which means to unite or connect or yolk or harness. It aims to unite

The practise of Yoga aims at achieving a full and integrated development in an individual. Its potential as an effective and safe method for achieving good health has, however, reduced it to its modern-day conception as a purely physical and curative science. In this article, Dr. T.N. Manjunath gives details of the philosophy of Yoga from which its methodology evolves — a methodology aimed at achieving deep and far reaching changes in the human mind.

the individual consciousness with cosmic consciousness or the individual soul with the super soul. According to Patanjali, Yoga is defined as: Yoga is restraining the mind (chitta) from taking various forms (vrittis). For example, the bottom of the lake cannot be seen if it is covered with ripples. It is only possible to catch a glimpse of the bottom, when the ripples have subsided and the water is calm. If the water is muddy then, too, the bottom cannot be seen. The bottom of the lake is our own true self. The lake is the chitta (mind) and the waves the vrittis (the mind, taking various forms). Yoga helps us to cleanse our mind. Chitta tries to get back to its natural pure state, but the sense organs draw it out. To restrain it, to check this outward tendency and to start it on the return journey to the essence of intelligence is therefore the first step in Yoga. Again Patanjali explains how this can be achieved: Restraining or controlling the mind is achieved through practice and non-attachment. To detach the mind from the materialistic aspects of

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the world and to guide it in a clear, good and rational direction is one of the objectives of Yoga.

According to Patanjali, Yoga is eight-fold or has eight steps (Ashtanga Yoga). They comprise: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Yamas are moral codes or universal commandments transcending caste, creed, sex, race and religion. These moral codes are Ahimsa (non-killing), Satya (Truthfulness), Asteya (non-stealing), Brahma Charya (continence) and Aparigraha (non-receiving).

Niyamas are more personal in nature and are meant to be followed by all aspirants. They are saucha (internal and external purification), Santosha (contentment), Tapas (dedication), Swadhyaaya (study of the self), and Ishwara pranidhana (worship of gods or self lessness). Third are the Asanas (physical postures) which people commonly consider synonymous with Yoga. Asanas are a part of integrated Yoga followed often the observance of Yama and Niyama.

According to Patanjali: Asana (posture) is that which is firm and pleasant. One should enjoy performing asanas. There are a large number of asanas described by various authors in treatises on Hathayoga for example Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Gheranda Samhita.

These asanas are mainly meant to improve bodily strength, endurance and lungs. Asanas increase the cardio-respiratory



functions in the body and thereby increase the intake of oxygen. Through increased blood circulation to the muscles, they increase muscles and strength. This is in contrast with physical exercises which mainly concentrate on the upper and lower extremities and to a lesser extent the chest and abdominal regions. By a regular and sustained practice of asanas one can achieve a certain level of physical well-being and tranquility of mind which keeps individuals healthy.

Yoga has evoked international interest because of its potential as a safe and effective measure for achieving good health. The practice of asanas has a great bearing on the maintenance of positive health and in the prevention of constitutional disorders. Hence it has generated great interest among medical scientists the world over as a result of which scientific investigations are being undertaken to find out how these asanas produce such benefits. Anand and Chinna were the first to conduct scientific studies on different states of bodily and mental activity among Yogis. These Yogis, by constant practice, have achieved good control over their autonomic nervous system. Pranayama is rhythmic and sustained breathing. It has also

been observed that by a regular practice of Pranayama one feels calm. This state of mind ultimately helps one to concentrate and meditate which is the ultimate aim of Yogic practice. Prathyahara is the withdrawal of mind from worldly affairs or drawing the mind inwards. When one succeeds in preventing the mind taking various forms, one will be able to hold the mind on a specific object. This is Dharana. When the mind continuously flows towards the object it becomes Dhyana. Samadhi is the last step where the object identifies itself with the subject attaining super consciousness. It is unfortunate that this ancient technique of keeping the body, mind and senses in perfect condition towards attaining spiritual enlightenment has been reduced to a mere keep fit type of Yoga. The latter emphasises only the physical aspects for curative purposes ignoring completely the spiritual component.

Today's research on Yoga is tending to mislead the common man by causing confusion about the role of Yoga as a purely physical culture or therapy. It is therefore in order to remember our spiritual giants through our long and chequered history.

We have to restructure our present day life style by using Yoga wisely and in its right perspective. Abandonment of the rat race philosophy and a search for integration are the two cornerstones for which Yoga could well in provide direction through its long-tested methods. □

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MEDICAL SCIENCE & YOGIC SCIENCE

The topic of discussion today is "Medical Science and Yogic Science".

At the outset, it would ~~be imperative~~ ^{seem correct} to clarify some of our own concepts. When we say 'Medical Science', it usually refers to the Allopathic or Western or Cosmopolitan system of Medical Science.

In our country, the availability and utilization of alternative systems which are formalized and recognised by the Govt. of India compounds the problem. These systems are, Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga & Naturopathy, Homoeopathy, Acupuncture and Tibetan Medicine (Amchi system). We also have a plethora of non-formal systems like Tribal, Folk, Home and Herbal remedies which are ^{also widely used.} ~~prevalent~~. Therefore, in our Indian context, it becomes a plural "Medical Sciences".

The Allopathic system has dominated the Indian scene in terms of Health programmes of the Government and a high-profile for various reasons. I believe that this is what we are referring to as "Medical Science" and not the alternatives cited earlier.

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This Allopathic system is based on Western scientific concepts and has evolved a 'BIOMEDICAL' ^{CHEMICAL} model of the human being. It is constrained by the Cartesian paradigm and has developed with advances in other sciences like physics and chemistry. Essentially, the approaches are 'reductionistic' and look at the human as an evolved thinking machine which can be understood and ^{thought of as} repaired in a better ^{way} as one learns more and more of its parts. The mind has also been separated from the body in this process of ~~learning~~.

The evidence of this line of thinking is open to all to see. We have more specialists and super-specialists confining themselves to narrower and narrower fields to the exclusion of the ^{rest of the} whole human being and her/his problems. Advances in the health of people is more related to their social, economic and living conditions than to medical science. The system has been so pre-occupied, that it fails to recognise its "disease" orientation as opposed to "health" and the enormous costs to individuals and society it entails. The advances which are coming into this system are from spin-offs in other areas like space-technology, ^{behavioural} ~~management~~ sciences, and frontiers of pure sciences. In fact the potential seen for any

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progress in any field is in the interface between various sciences which are now being researched.

In fact, frontiers and interfaces in the understanding of CHAOS and its implications, (like the 'Butterfly-effect', FRACTALS in nature and the utility of BIOFEED BACK in practice are being avidly pursued as the understanding of human-health is being widened. Maybe, I need to explain what these mean.

CHAOS - Butterfly effect

FRACTALS

BIOFEED BACK

} explain.

Further, Environment and Ecology in addition to the social, economic and political aspects of health seem to be the deeper issues when one pursues the causes of and effects of health and disease deep to a more adequate understanding.

The Medical sciences are becoming very 'objective' too in their 'scientific' pursuit. The subjective elements of human nature and suffering are being bracketed into quantifiable, observable phenomena. If they do not fit in they are ignored. As more things become quantifiable, the science changes. No wonder, that the west sees 'change' as the essence of progress! As observed earlier, the focus on disease has not only made 'Medical Science' a costly adventure, it has also focused on "curative" medicine in the process and ~~shouldered~~ ^{pushed} "Preventive" cost-effective health efforts out of the limelight. Anyone is more fascinated with a Brain-surgery than the Sanitary latrine!

Now, to look at Yogic science alongside-
Yoga is a science of the body, mind and soul.
It is a science of instruction (upadesha-shastra) as laid out in Patanjali's Yoga-sutra - the recognised text on Yoga. It instructs, as in an exact experiment, the procedure to be followed to arrive at a particular result. This has withstood the test of time - it does not change. Now, contrast this with the western Medical science.

Not a Panicle-shastra (science of cure)

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The term 'Yoga' has several meanings in Sanskrit. If it is derived from the root "yujir" (to unite), it means union; but if it is derived from the root "yujā" (to meditate), it means meditation. It is both; and, in terms of the spirit and matter i.e. purusha and prakriti it enables the sadhaka to understand these concepts by experiencing them - not merely in words.

How does it do this? It helps an individual go "inwards" into herself/himself, utilize the body as a vehicle of sadhana, harmonise the interactions of the individual (mind/body/soul) with nature and lead them on to a spiritual plane. It means, that the person's striving in life is facilitated. The "jeevatma's" quest of integration with the "paramatma" is promoted step by step.

If we want to see what this does to the body at a mundane level, it acts both as a "preventive" and "curative" to almost all illnesses. There are enough studies on Yoga's beneficial effects on Hypertension, Diabetes, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Bronchial Asthma and many other chronic as well as psycho-somatic ailments in human beings.

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To be further practical, it helps in tackling the 'stress' and 'tension' of life in an individual. All these do not seem to have adequate answers from 'Medical science', except, may be an explanation at the Biomedical model level as to what happens in the body at such times. Even then, the "preventive" effects of Yoga are well documented by the Western sciences.

~~The cause of its effects seem to be spiritual in origin,~~

The manifestations of Yoga are essentially spiritual in origin, with measurable biological effects. The concepts of CHAOS, FRACTALS and BIOFEEDBACK are integrated in a Holistic perspective.

An example from 'Medical Science' can help illustrate this. In hypertension, BIOFEEDBACK is a method utilized. A person is connected to a B.P. ^{with heart rate} monitor ~~and and~~ with audio-visual clues (i.e. it keeps on showing graphs). He is told to think of / act out stressful situations where the B.P. goes up. These are emotions of anger / frustration / lust / desire, etc. Then, he learns to reduce the feedback signals from the monitor to 'normal' levels by actively & consciously willing it and so, learns to control the B.P. and heart-rate.

As a sadhak practises yoga, the elements of Kama, Krodha, lobha, moha etc., which are the cause of her/his physical problems are tackled at a spiritual plane without conscious effort. The B.P./heart rate and stress thereof are thereby eliminated.

Here, we do not see the process, but the effect is highly visible. Contrast this with the Bio-feed back cited earlier, ~~and~~ ^{to} understand that Yoga is able to tackle many of these at planes beyond the present knowledge of medical sciences.

~~I think I would rest my talk with this.~~ Since my knowledge and practice of Yoga ~~being~~ ^{is} limited, I would prefer other yoga ^{wider} experts in this gathering to enlarge on the ~~other~~ aspects of Yoga.

In conclusion, I would like to share a personal feeling of mine that we are looking at two sides of the same coin when we talk of 'Medical Sciences' and 'Yogic sciences'. It is only that ~~the~~ ^{the} perspectives differ, the bases of comparison are dissimilar and levels of evolution of these sciences are disparate. Yet, we are all looking at the same human and her/his problems, hoping to evolve acceptable solutions. May our quest succeed.

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MEDICAL SCIENCE & YOGA

Medical Science usually refers to the Western, Cosmopolitan or, so called 'Allopathic' medical science. I propose to speak today in that ~~context~~ perspective.

When we think of this in the context of our country, the concept expands tremendously. We have a heritage of many formalized as well as non-formal systems of Health Care. The Government of India officially recognises Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani, Yoga and Naturopathy, and Homoeopathy as part of the National Health Policy. In addition, we have Acupuncture a system from China and the Amchi system from Tibet practised in several areas of the country. We also utilize ^{non-formal} folk, tribal, herbal and home remedies which have ~~been~~ provided sources of sustenance and rejuvenation to the indigenous systems of Medicine. In short, we have a truly plural "Medical Sciences" systems prevalent in India.

The Western or Allopathic medical sciences has dominated the Indian scenario due to various historical and colonial reasons of the past. The Govt. of India also bases its Health policy and programs on this system, while it has maintained a high-profile in the private sector too for similar reasons, ~~as well as that of commerce, and~~ and also for the economic benefits it brings to the practitioners of the system.

What are the hall-marks of this system?
This system is based on Western philosophy, and

developed along with other sciences in the West, like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, etc. It has been influenced by the thinking of Descartes, a French Philosopher, and called the Cartesian model.

Therefore, the approaches are generally Reductionist, i.e. things are broken into smaller and smaller parts and studied. It is assumed that putting the knowledge of these parts together makes the whole more understandable. This is seen in the specialization and super-specialization of experts in this system, in narrower and narrower fields.

Objective signs and symptoms are given prime importance, and everything is sought to be measured or made measurable. This obsession with quantifiable parameters has not only given them undue importance, but also taken away from understanding the utility of subjective parameters which are qualitative.

This has led to a "disease" orientation of the science as opposed to "health" ^{*}; a "curative" approach as against "prevention" and the development of a BIOMECHANICAL model of the human. This BIOMECHANICAL human is considered a thinking machine, just more evolved than the animals in the Darwinian paradigm. It is interesting to note here, that even the mind has been separated from the body in the dealings of this science.

Most important, as newer discoveries are made, the science keeps changing. This has been extrapolated to mean that change means progress and nothing is considered unchangeable. This is a part

* Since 'disease' is a definite abnormality, while health has a range in measurability.

isem of the dynamic nature of li c.

(3)

So far, I have purposely projected an extreme model to make understanding easier. Things are not all that bad or clear-cut.

The World Health Organisation defines Health as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. This was done in 1948 in the preamble to its constitution.

Here, health is not only defined, but goes beyond the physical aspects, recognising social and mental causes of ill-health. The inclusion of the term "spiritual well-being" has been mooted but not yet found place due to lack of a satisfactory definition. Behavioural sciences and sociology have been adding a lot to the understanding of human health. Also, preventive, promotive and rehabilitative measures are gaining adequate recognition in public health. The human species is being forced to address environmental and ecological issues for survival. This is also bringing in an understanding that the deeper issues of health ~~se~~ lead to the Environment.

Developments in Allopathic science stem from research progressing and experimentation progressing from animal to human models or, ~~from~~ ^{are} spin-offs from research in other sciences. Also, massive projects like the "Human Genome Project" which attempt to map every gene in the body are being conducted.

All these make this science a costly adventure indeed, evident in the unaffordable costs even for people living in developed countries.

(4)

The experience has been that more benefits have accrued to this Medical Science from areas of sociology, behavioural sciences, space-age technology and a simple improvement in living conditions of human beings. Certain frontiers where medical applications and implications are expected are in interfaces of sciences in relation to nature and natural phenomena.

Let us examine some of these ^{terms} and what they mean -

a) Psycho-neuro-immunology is the understanding that the mind, ~~especially~~ especially emotion, is responsible for the levels of immunity to a disease in humans. Ways and means of manipulating this for positive outcomes are being explored.

b) CHAOS - From Astronomy to Zoology, researchers have been detecting a kind of randomness in natural systems; a complex behaviour that is inherent in the systems themselves, even in simple ones.

Though the systems are random, they fall into definite ^{limited number of} patterns underlying their behaviours. Chaos and Chaotics is a branch of mathematics (they ^{now} call themselves chaoticians) used to predict weather patterns, marine life systems, to genetic patterns ~~and functioning of the heart and brain.~~

c) FRACTALS: - named so, in 1975 by IBM mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot - has been popular with mathematicians and laymen alike. One of their surprising properties is their extreme

(5)

complexity, despite which, they have the same detail in any scale. For example, a 1 minute, 1 hr and 1 day. E.E.G. when brought to equal size, looks the same. This is seen in the branching of the bronchiae in the lung to coastlines and their patterns.

d) the GAIA principle - this believes that the earth is one huge organism, of which we are all the parts.

e) BIOFEEDBACK: - this is a practical application of monitoring systems of human organs. A medical example will illustrate this better. A person is fed with audio-visual clues of his/his body function during normal and disease phases. ~~She~~ He learns to bring these to a 'normal' level by consciously and actively willing them to do so. - this getting over the illness.

All these are bringing in the understanding that health and disease are complex in nature and multi-dimensional and multi-factorial in manifestation and cause respectively. There are patterns more than rigid parameters, and interacting systems rather than isolated organs or functions.

Does this mean that health and disease is beyond our understanding? Do we give up? Definitely not - This brings us to YOGA and ~~the~~ its basis, which is Oriental thought and science.

(6)

Laying no claim to expertise in Yoga I would gladly hand over discussions and elaboration on this to august members of this gathering who know more about it. I have been experimenting with Bhakti yoga to understand spirituality and health. ^{my readings and other studies} I would only like to bring to your notice some aspects of Yoga (based on Indian thought and Philosophy) that makes it a unique system ~~to~~ with particular reference to ASHTANGA YOGA of Patanjali.

a) Yoga and Indian philosophy have a more holistic perspective of health and disease. They recognise the spiritual nature of humans and its role in disease and health.

b) The multi-dimensional / multi-factorial nature of health and disease are adequately recognised and measures devised to tackle them in a systematic manner.

c) Subjective and qualitative parameters are given prime importance - those neglected by modern science.

d) Yoga recognises the dynamic nature of "prakriti" ^(or matter) and the unchanging "purusha" ^(Shashtra) (or spirit). The science ^(Shashtra) does not change.

Yoga is not a 'pariksha-shastra' (Science of enquiry). It is a science of instruction - 'upaadesha shastra'. It instructs as in an exact experiment, the procedure to be followed to arrive at a particular result. It has withstood the test of time.

e) The term 'yoga' has several meanings in Sanskrit. If it is derived from the root "yujir" (to unite) it means union; but if it is derived from the root "yujja" (to meditate) it means meditation.

- In ASHTANGA Yoga, it helps the sadhaka to utilize ^{his} his body and mind as vehicles in ~~his~~ ^{the} sadhana to go "inwards" into the self and experience the harmony of life as one develops spiritually.

f) It acts both as a "preventive" and "curative" - ~~more of the former~~ - to almost all illnesses. Its beneficial effects have been recorded in ~~the~~ "Allopathic" terms for various chronic illnesses like Hypertension, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Bronchial Asthma, etc.

Most important, it tackles the stresses and strains of life which are implicated in diseases.

g) The frontier concepts in Western Scientific medicine, ~~which~~ which I have quoted earlier are already integrated in its teaching and practice.

I would like to conclude with a personal observation of mine, that we seem to be looking at two sides of the same coin with these two sciences. The perspectives are therefore different, the bases of comparison

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are dissimilar, and the levels of evolution of these sciences are disparate.

Yet, our quest is to evolve acceptable solutions to the human life and its problems. May our quest succeed.

DR-8.

YOGA

• *a way of life*



YOGA

A Way Of Life



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PRAKASHAN

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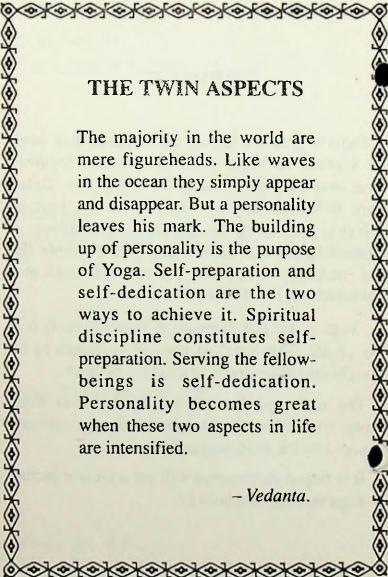
PREFACE

India's greatest legacy to mankind has been the Science of Yoga. Unfortunately, its legatees have, over the years, diluted its importance. Today there is hardly any awareness, on the part of Indians, of its value. There is therefore, a compelling need to drive home to the people the true meaning, scope and purpose of Yoga and regenerate the lost awareness.

Yoga is not just Yogasan or Pranayama. *It is a way of life.* This cardinal concept is sought to be brought into sharp focus in this tiny booklet.

The major portion of this booklet has been drawn from 'Yoga – its basis and applications' authored by Dr. H.R. Nagendra.

It is hoped that readers will get a clearer picture of Yoga through this booklet.



THE TWIN ASPECTS

The majority in the world are mere figureheads. Like waves in the ocean they simply appear and disappear. But a personality leaves his mark. The building up of personality is the purpose of Yoga. Self-preparation and self-dedication are the two ways to achieve it. Spiritual discipline constitutes self-preparation. Serving the fellow-beings is self-dedication. Personality becomes great when these two aspects in life are intensified.

— *Vedanta.*

YOGA A WAY OF LIFE

During the last few years, there has been tremendous progress in Science and Technology. There is allround material development. New and better gadgets are coming into the market. Man has set foot on the moon. In spite of all this progress man is feeling uneasy. He is getting bewildered. This is the paradox of modernity. We have created a society which is rich and scientific while it is, at the same time, most unhappy and ugly. While richness is there, deep down, there is poverty, absence of contentment and no satisfaction. While there is movement there is no direction. There is an explosion of drug abuses, crimes and sex offences. There is psychic breakdown and without tranquillisers, without alcohol, drugs and L.S.D., people are getting sleepless.

Though the wheels of progress are moving faster and faster, decade after decade, man is feeling dazed. In spite of all the light and entertainment outside, there is darkness inside. He is searching for light. He wants to come out of this enveloping gloom. He is searching for a path. He is looking towards the East, towards India, towards Yoga.

WRONG CONCEPT OF YOGA

What is Yoga? There are many definitions and many expositions-some correct and most other incorrect.

Those who claim that they can perform rope tricks, or drink acids or eat broken glass pieces, or stay in totally enclosed spaces for a long time or perform miracles of producing something from mid-air claim that they are all Yogis and it is often given credence by the layman because he himself cannot perform such feats. A Yogi does not perform miracles or do anything showy either for publicity or for bread or for fame. He never exhibits his talents to prove his claims. These pseudo-Yogis are a different lot with whom we are not concerned. It will require another chapter to deal with and does not merit any space in this booklet.

Another misconception is that Yoga is considered as a form of exercise to promote good health and this finds great acceptance due to wide publicity through different media. Yoga is much more than this.

DEFINITION OF YOGA

Yoga is one of the six systems of Indian

philosophy and Sage Patanjali is credited with its authorship. He compiled the essential features of Yoga which were obscurely interspersed in the different Upanishads, in the form of **Sutras** (aphorisms), thus making a vital contribution. The scope of Yoga is well portrayed in the various Upanishads and in the Bhagwad Gita.

1. The term Yoga has its verbal root 'Yuj' in Sanskrit which means joining.

युज्यते अनेन इति योगः ।

'Yujyate' anena iti yogah : Yoga is that which joins. What are the entities that are joined ? In higher terms, it means the joining of the individual with the Universal, i.e., *Jivatman* with the *Paramatman*. It is an expansion of the narrow constricted egoistic personality to an all-prevailing and pervading state of Reality. In ordinary terms, it means living with equanimity in the situation one is placed as ordained by Destiny!

2. Swami Vivekananda put it this way :

"It is a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few months or even a few hours of one's bodily existence".

There is a growth process in all creations due to interaction with one another in nature. Among living beings, man has been endowed with discriminating power, intellect and well-developed voluntary controls to accelerate his growth. Yoga is that systematic, conscious method, which can greatly compress the process of his growth.

3. Shri Aurobindo emphasizes an all-round personality development - at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. By Yoga, he meant a methodical effort towards self-perfection by the development of potentialities latent in the individual.

4. Let us now see what the author Patanjali himself says on Yoga.

योग : चित्तवृत्ति निरोधः ।

Yogah Citta Vritti Nirodhah'

Yoga is a process of gaining control over the mind. Then he says :

तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपे अवस्थानम् ।

Tada drastuh svarupe avasthanam'

i.e., then the seer establishes himself in his causal state.

Control involves two aspects. One is to concentrate solely on a given object or subject, wiping off all traces of other things and a capacity to remain absolutely quiet any time. One can concentrate on a given subject or object easily : but, to remain calm and silent is to be learnt by practice. This is a skill, subtle process and not a mechanical effort.

5. In Yoga Vasistha, one of the best text books on Yoga, it is said:

मनः प्रशमनोपायः योग इत्याभिधीयते ।

'Manah Prasamanopayah Yoga Ityabhidhiyate' - It is an *'upayah'* to calm down the mind.

A skilled worker does not fidget while working because he knows what he should do. On the other hand, an ignorant one fumbles and falters at every step and does more damage than good. Skill comes through knowledge and this is acquired by practice.

6. In the words of Shri B.K.S. Iyengar, Yoga is Education. It is character - building. The term Education has been derived from Latin 'Educare' which means to unfold the latent , the potential, i.e., drawing the best in man. It is also character-building as it ensures unity and

harmony of the body, mind and soul, a well integrated personality which is at peace with itself and with society.

7. Acharya Rajneesh defines Yoga as unknottin of the mind by which we can reach the state of pure consciousness.
8. Shri J. Krishnamoorti terms Yoga as awareness.

But the problem is that the awareness is not total. It is just intellectual. There is an error of parallax in our personality. That's why we talk or think something but act differently. There is Dr. Jekyll as well as Mr. Hyde within us. When this error will be zero, we will reach the state of Yoga.

Thus Yoga is the path to bridge the conscious with the unconscious.

9. The Gita says : योग : कर्मसु कौशलम् ।

'Yogah Karmasu Kausalam'

Yoga is dexterity in action. The dexterity is bou to keep one ready for action in a relaxed attitude and efficiency is the outcome of all such actions performed.

10. Yoga is that state in which all *Indriyas* are

beheld steadily, i.e., state of mastery over senses and mind as portrayed in the *Kathopanishad*.

तां योगमिति मन्यते स्थिराम इन्द्रिय धारणाम् ।

Katha 2.5-4

'Tam Yogamiti manyante sthiram indriya dharanam'.

11. Krishna tells Arjuna that Yoga is the state of *Samadhi*.

श्रुतिप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिः तदा योगमवाप्स्यसी ॥

*'Srutivipratipanna te yada sthasyati niscala,
Samadhavacala buddhih tada yogamavapsyasi.'*

(Gita 2-53)

"Even in the midst of assailing, confusing and conflicting statements, if your mind is steadfast and undisturbed in a state of *Samadhi* then you shall attain Yoga. *Samadhi* does not mean loss of consciousness but the highest form of consciousness, in total communion with the inner-self!"

12. Again, Krishna exhorts Arjuna thus :

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि संग्रह्यक्त्वा धनंजय ।
सिद्धय सिद्धयो समोभूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥

*'Yogasthah kuru karmani sangam tyak
Dhananjaya,*

*Siddhyasiddhyoh samo bhutva samatvam yoga
uchyate.'*

(Gita 2-48)

Perform action, being fixed in Yoga, renouncing attachment, unmindful of success or failure, for evenness (equanimity) of mind is Yoga.

13. The Gita further portrays Yoga as the power of creation:

विस्तरेणात्मनो योगम् विभूतिं च जनार्दन ।
भूयः कथय तप्तिर्हि शृण्वतो नास्ति मे मृतम् ॥

*'Vistarenatmano Yogam Vibhutim ca
Janardana,*

*Bhuyah, Kathaya tptirhi srnvato nasti
me'mrtam.'*

(Gita 10-18)

Krishna, tell me, once more in detail, your power of Yoga and Your glory; for I derive no satisfaction in hearing your nectarous words.

Krishna, through his power of Yoga, shows Arjuna the 'VISWARUPA DARSANA' - the vision of the Universal Being, by giving him divine sight.

In the 'Svetasvatara Upanishad', this is

नीहार धूमार्कानलानिलानां खद्योत विद्युत्स्फटिक शशीनाम् ।
एतानि रूपाणि पुरः सराणि ब्रह्मण्याभिष्याक्तिकराणि योगे ॥

(Svetasvatara Up. 2.11)

*'Nihara dhumarkanalanilanam khadyota
vidyutsphatika sasinam*

*Etani rupani purahsarani brahmanya-
bhivyaktikarani Yoge'*

Thus, Yoga is

- (i) a process of elevating oneself by calming the mind,
- (ii) also, the very states of higher, subtler layers of mind, and
- (iii) conceived as a creative power in man and that of the Reality itself.

WHY YOGA

If we look around we find the world is full of chaos, because man has forgotten his self and just

exists at a lower animal stage of acquiring power and self for his own happiness. Towards this aim, he works hard, sets aside all opposition and is yet in an agitated state of mind. His personality is one-sided towards his individual happiness instead of contributing towards universal happiness. Yoga helps him acquire a well-integrated personality at all levels, physical, mental, emotional, intellectual and spiritual.

(a) PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Physical Level

Physical personality development would not imply a bulky body weighing a 100 kg. An ideal body has the following features brought out by Yoga :-

- (i) A proportionate body with all muscles relaxed in the normal state. It is soft like a flower, flexible to the core.
- (ii) Instantaneously, it can acquire the hardness of diamond. All organs and systems in the body work in harmony and with the least abnormalities.
- (iii) Chronic and acute ailments vanish or are absent in such a body.

These aspects of personality development at the

physical level make the body work most efficiently by harnessing the energies in the right direction. At resting periods all the muscles are relaxed and the joints remain loose to conserve energy and the metabolic rate is very low. During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body. At crucial times, under conditions of high stress, the functions of organs so nicely co-ordinate that the necessary energy gets generated and flows profusely into those regions which need more energy. The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation. This 'stamina' through harnessing of inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such co-ordination, can be effectively accomplished by yogic practices. It is in this area of application of YOGA that the specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen, acrobats, gymnasts, etc., are keenly interested and are putting YOGA to the utmost use.

(b) PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

Mental Level

The power of imagination - Creativity' and steadfastness - 'Will Power' are two aspects of mind. It has been seen that Yogic practices enhance

the creative power of man. As such, many musicians, poets, film artistes, engineers and technologists have been attracted towards Yoga.

'Will power' is an essential requirement for all persons to accomplish any work, however insignificant or great the task may be. There is a fine *sloka* in *Niti-Satakam* describing three types of people :

प्रारभ्यते न विघ्न भयेन नीचैः

प्रारभ्य विघ्न विहताः विरभान्ति मध्याः ।

मुहुर्मुहुरपि प्रतिहन्यमानाः

प्रारभ्योत्तमजनाः न परित्यजन्ति ॥

Prarabhyate na vighna bhayena nicaih

Prarabhya vighna vihatah viramanti madhyah

Muhurmuhurapi pratihanyamanah

Prarabhyacottamajanah na parityajanti.

(Niti Satakam)

Fearing possible obstacles and difficulties, the lowest kind of people do not start the work at all. Having started the work, when they come to face obstacles, the middle type of people leave the work incomplete. But the best are they who, in spite of all the obstacles and odds torturing and crushing them, complete the task undertaken.

Yoga, by its systematic and conscious process of

calming down the mind, erases the weaknesses in mind and builds the will power of the mind. By such a mind, each obstacle is taken as a challenge. It gets tremendous energy to combat situations. Bravery becomes a part of the personality, and steadfast to the core, such a person takes up with marvellous sobriety the challenges in life and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission.

(c) PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT Emotional Level

Our emotions control our behaviour especially at crucial junctures. The challenges of the modern era pose a great threat to the emotional faculty of man. Yet, the culturing of our emotions -- development of our emotional faculties finds no place in the whole scheme of education. Man looks lost amidst the atrocities of life, unable to overcome his emotional conflicts, blocks, and turmoils. The result is deep unrest, agony and psychosomatic ailments.

Yoga trains us

- (i) to systematically sharpen and sensitize our emotions.

(ii) to consciously expand and diffuse the overtones of such sensitization.

Thus, YOGA offers a fine tool for the development of the emotional personality of man.

(d) PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT - Intellectual Level

In the modern era of science, a sharp intellect plays a key role in the scheme of education. Rather than mechanical cramming up of information, thinking and understanding are valued more in the learning process. Children are taught right from the primary level to think logically and systematically. The capacity to analyse and correlate relevant information forms the function of the intellect manifesting as concentration with precision as an outcome.

However, this enhanced power of the sharpened intellectual associated with deep powerful concentration among the 'intellectual cream' of society has also pulled man into the whirlpool of intellectual slavery. He finds himself unable to come out of the strong clutches of deep concentration. Though it is torturous and he very much wants to come out of it, he finds himself

stuck. His worries and attachments do not release him. The development of personality at intellectual level should not only result in an intense sharpening of the intellect but also include mastery to come out of the enslaving power of the sharpened intellect. Swami Vivekananda, therefore, rightly emphasized, "Concentration and Detachment" as two vital parts of education. Not only should it be possible for one to dive deep into any subject but also to be able to come out of it at any moment. It is again the speciality of YOGA that can bring about this comprehensive development of intellect. As we have seen, YOGA emphasizes the skill to calm down the mind and it is this skill to pacify the mind that brings the capacity to detach.

Hence YOGA is attracting the attention of many "Intellectual sufferers", bringing them into its fold.

(e) PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT - Spiritual Level

A man may have very sturdy physique, amazing creative power, a powerful intellect and a highly sensitized emotional grasp - yet he may not have an iota of spiritual progress. He may not even

possess an inkling of spiritual dimension. What, then, can be said to characterise the development of personality at spiritual level? The *Kathopanishad* defines the same thus:

परां च खानि व्यतृणात् परिभूः स्वयंभूः तस्मात् परान्
 पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।
 कश्चित् धीरः प्रत्यगात्मानं मैक्षत आवृतचक्षुः
 अमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥

*'Paranci khani vyatrnat Paribhooh
 swayambhuh tasmat paraan pasyati
 nantaratman,
 Kascit dhirah pratyagatmanamaiksata avrtta
 caksuh amrtatvamicchann'* (Katha 2.1.1.)

The self-existent Lord structured the senses as outgoing. Therefore, one sees the outer things and not the inner self; a rare, discriminating one, desiring immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the indwelling Self.

Normally, all of us are so structured that we look mostly outside of ourselves - at the environment. The senses grasp the things around them predominantly, viz. the objects of the world outside. We live the whole life understanding the grandeur of the world outside, solving the

problems associated with it; unravelling the mysteries therein using such knowledge to make our life more comfortable and enjoyable, bringing up our children to perpetuate and sustain the society around us; striving to set patterns of behaviour and etiquettes of transactions, and so on. We are busy throughout. Notwithstanding this pattern of life, some glimpses into the depth of our inner dimension occasionally flash in all our lives. Very few catch these glimpses but some are wonderfully struck by the hitherto unknown dimension hidden within. The search begins; the quest starts.

Then, that person is on the march towards spirituality. Thus, the spiritual dimension of man concerns itself with the inner world - the move towards the causal state of mind, the root of the intellect and substratum of emotions. Man starts looking inwards. It is this inward journey that marks the beginning of the spiritual quest. An introspection, an inner awareness features this quest. The subtler layers of mind unfold themselves - the inner dimension of personality opens out.

Thus, YOGA is a process of all-round personality

development by :

- i) deep relaxation at muscular level
- ii) slowing down of breath and maintaining balance at Pranic level
- iii) increasing creative and will power at the mental level
- iv) sharpening of intellect and calming down the mind at the intellectual level
- v) enhancing the happiness in life, and equipoise at the emotional level and
- vi) manifesting the inner divinity in man in all aspects of life.

YOGA is not only a process of leading man towards this astounding hidden personality in him by bringing mastery over the body, mind, intellect and emotional faculties, but also a powerful tool to manifest those hidden potential powers in him. As man progresses, his zeal to perfect himself grows. In the process, he learns and understands the expressions of nature around him.

The inner growth and outer expressions go hand in hand. He starts manifesting the inner divinity in his behaviour. His lower animal pulls and the six major inimical foes - (*arisatvarga*) get diminished

continuously. His slavery reduces. He starts becoming the master by gaining control over them. That is the growth process which is in tune with spiritual growth.

Thus YOGA can accomplish an all-round personality development by solving the problems of man and by bringing bliss into his life. It is for this reason that YOGA is becoming popular day by day in all parts of our globe just as science and technology have done. YOGA is a science applicable to all irrespective of age or sex, caste or creed, religion or sect.

THE FOUR STREAMS OF YOGA

There are a large number of methods of YOGA catering to the needs of different persons in society to bring about the transformation of the individual. They are broadly classified into four streams. Swami Vivekananda puts them as Work and Worship, Philosophy and Psychic Control. Let us discuss them briefly :

1. The path of work (*Karma Yoga*) involves doing action with an attitude of detachment from the fruits thereof. This releases man from strong attachments and thereby brings in him a

steadiness of mind which verily is YOGA *Samatvam yoga ucyate* (Gita 2.48). Instruments of action and understanding (*karmendriyas and jnanendriyas*) get cleansed.

2. The control of emotions is the key to the path of *Bhakti Yoga* (Worship). In the modern world man is tossed about due to emotional onslaughts. The path of *Bhakti* is a boon to gain control over emotional instabilities by harnessing the energy involved properly.
3. The age of science has made man a rational being. Intellectual sharpness is imminent. Analysis forms the tool, the path of **Philosophy** (*Jnana Yoga*) is apt for the keen intellectuals and is centred around the analysis of 'Happiness', the vital contribution of Upanishads. Also, many other fundamental questions regarding mind, the world outside and inside and reality are taken up. Basic questions are raised even involving the intellect itself to reach the very basis of the intellect.
4. Culturing of the mind is the key for success in almost all endeavours in our lives. The Yoga of mind culture of **Psychic Control** (*Raja Yoga*) gives a practical and easy approach to reach

higher states of consciousness. It is based on the *Antaranga Yoga* of Patanjali's *Ashtanga Yoga* system.

One of the major contributions of "*Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras*" is the eight-limbed Yoga, popularly known as the '*Ashtanga Yoga*' which gives a comprehensive and systematic approach for developing the mind. The eight limbs are:

1. यम - *Yama* (The disciplines)
2. नियम - *Niyama* (The injunctions)
3. आसन - *Asana* (The posture of the body)
4. प्राणायाम - *Pranayama* (The control of *Prana*, the life force)
5. प्रत्याहार - *Pratyahara* (Restraint of the senses from their objects of enjoyment)
6. धारणा - *Dharana* (Focussing of mind)
7. ध्यान - *Dhyana* (De-concentration)
8. समाधि - *Samadhi* (Superconsciousness)

The first limbs come under a general heading

बाहिरंग योग *Bahiranga Yoga*. In this बहिरिन्द्रियाणि the *Bahirindriyas* are used. It is used for indirect control of the mind.

The *Bahirindriyas* are in two groups:

- (a) कर्मेन्द्रियाणि - *Karmendriyas*: Hands, feet, organs of speech, excretion and procreation.
- (b) ज्ञानेन्द्रियाणि - *Jnanendriyas*: Eyes, ears, organs of smell (nose), taste (tongue) and touch (skin).

The last three limbs are referred to as *Antaranga Yoga*; the mind is used directly for culturing itself. It may be worth mentioning that many of the instrumentations used in modern research have detectors which are really extensions of *Jnanendriyas*!

Thus, the four streams of Yoga help man to develop the personality at four different levels—physical, mental, intellectual and emotional simultaneously bring about spiritual progress. Most of the other methods of Yoga – *Laya yoga, Japa yoga, Mantra yoga, Hatha yoga, Kundalini yoga*, etc., are permutations and combinations of these basic methods of Yoga.

ON THE PATH OF YOGA

As one proceeds with the practice of Yoga, the first symptoms of progress show up. The *Svetasvatara Upanishad* puts it thus:

लघुत्वमारोग्यलोलुपत्वं वर्णप्रसादं स्वरसोष्टवं च
गन्धः शुभो मूत्रपुरीषमल्पं योगप्रवृत्तिं प्रथमां वदन्ति

*'Laghutvamarogyamalolupatvam varna-
prasadam svarasostavanca,
Gandhah subho mutrapurisasatpam
yogapravrttini prathamam vadani.'*

It is said that the first signs of entering Yoga are lightness of body, health, thirstlessness of mind, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable smell and scantiness of excretions. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (H.Y.P.) also portrays a set of similar characteristics.

युक्तरात्वं वदने प्रसन्नता नादस्फुटत्वं नयने सुनिर्मले ।
अरोगता त्रिन्दुजयोऽग्निदीपनं नाडीर्विशुद्धिः हठयोग लक्षणम् ॥

(H.Y.P.2.78)

*'Yapukrsatvam vadane prasannata
Nadasphuratvam nayane sunirmale,*

*Arogata, bindujayo gnidipanam
Nadirvisuddhih hathayogalaksanam'.*

When the body becomes lean, the face glows with delight, *anahata nada* (divine sound) manifests, eyes are pure, body is healthy, sexual discharge is under control, the digestion process is powerful, and then one should understand that the *Nadis* are purified and success in *Hatha Yoga* is approaching.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Fascinated by the results, one may start overdoing yogic practices. Deep sensitivities may sometimes increase the selfishness of man. Unless precautions are followed, he may end up in disaster. Yoga could become dangerous. न ह्यत न बलात् *Na hathat nabalat,* 'Not by excessive brutal pursuits, not by force' is the formula for quick progress. It is an intelligent management, a skilful process that hastens growth. That is the guidance in Yoga.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

It is quite likely that a beginner gets confused looking at a host of yogic texts enumerating several methods of yogic practices. Though the systematic classification of most of them into four distinct streams helps him, he wonders which one

to choose and which one will suit him and so on. For this purpose one has to understand the basic unity in these methods.

'Unity in Diversity' forms the core of Indian Culture which offers a grand note of cohesiveness among various practices. With this catholicity of understanding when persons follow any one or more of these paths, they allow a harmonious and total growth of the personality. Thus Yoga is a vital tool for the development of man, probably more relevant in the modern scientific era than ever before.

VIVEKANANDA KENDRA

- Swami Vivekananda has been at great pains to lecture everywhere that India will be raised not with the power of flesh, but with the power of spirit, not with the flag of destruction but with the flag of peace and love. These can be done only when we are at peace with ourselves and love others as we should. That is why Vivekananda Kendra which was established to put into practice the teachings of Swamiji, chose Yoga as the core of its life and is trying to popularise Yoga and through it, "*The art of living in tune with others*"

YOGA IS TO KNOW THYSELF

Once a lioness delivered a cub and died thereafter. This cub was brought up by a flock of sheep like one of them. He lived with them, learnt to grass and even bleat like sheep. Though he grew up to be a young lion, he imagined he was a sheep and behaved like one.

One day another lion came in search of prey and was surprised to see this young lion also running away with the sheep in great fear of him. The lion wanted to catch the young and tell him his real identity. But he could not as he had run away.

On another occasion, he managed to catch the young lion and rebuked him that a lion like him should not run away like a sheep. But the poor young lion bleated and said that he was only a sheep. The bigger lion dragged him towards a pool of water and asked him to look at his reflection in the water and then look at him and decide himself as to who he was. The young lion looked into the water, saw his own image and then looked at the bigger lion who resembled himself. The truth dawned on him that he was a lion and he shook his



mane and roared like a lion. The bleating was gone.

Likewise, you are lions, you are souls, pure, infinite and perfect.

— From a story by Swami Vivekananda.

YOGA

To be one with all Nature and all beings is
Yoga.

– *Aurobindo*

Yoga means to be conscious of the truth of
one's being.

– *Mother*

Yoga is self-perfection, not self-
annulment,

To perceive all things as God,

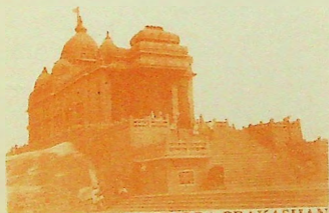
A methodology to reveal the truth.

It is the science of being in the here and
now

To encounter the reality as it is.

It is a pure mathematics of the inner being.

PATHEYA SERIES



VIVEKANANDA KENDRA PRAKASHAN