



YOGA AS LIFE: CONCEPT AND PRACTICES

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Abstract

The present article gives an overview on yoga. The meaning and understanding on yoga has been presented. The benefits of yoga has been highlighted. Further the prospects of yoga has been presented briefly. Lastly the article has been concluded with the highlighting the significance of yoga for today's youth.

Keywords: Yoga, Importance of Yoga, Benefits of Yoga.

INTRODUCTION

The term yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word 'yuj' meaning union. Yoga is a natural way of living healthy and happily. It is the ancient wisdom for realizing full potential. It is a wholesome discipline for taking care of the body, mind & spirit and maintaining harmony between them. In this state of harmony you experience oneness within yourself and feel united with the whole creation. The knowledge of yoga can be found in ancient scriptures dating back more than 5000 years. There are many scriptures that contain knowledge of Yoga. Some of the scriptures are Patanjali yoga sutra, Bhagvad Geeta, Hatha Yoga praddipika, Gherand Smitha, In these scriptures many different paths of yoga have been prescribed [Verma K, 2015; F. George, 1995]. Some of them are:

Bhakti yoga (Path of Devotion): Acknowledging, honoring and serving God.

Karma yoga (Path of Action): Putting 100% effort skillfully and with good intentions, and serving humanity selflessly.

Gnana yoga (Path of Knowledge): Studying of scriptures, receiving knowledge directly from your spiritual master and applying the knowledge in day to day life.

Hatha yoga (Hatha means strong determination): Making a determined effort to achieve wellbeing of body and mind, where emphasis is on practicing Asanas, Pranayamas without a struggle.

Astang Yoga-The Eight Limb of yoga discipline: The mind is constantly engaged in all kind of mental activity; most of the time without awareness. The more activity there is without awareness the more clouded the mind becomes. With increased awareness the mind becomes calmer. The calmer mind perceive more clearly and remains free from fears and worries.

Patanjali, an ancient sage, defined Yoga as the ‘restraining of thought waves. He compiled ‘Patanjali’s Yoga sutra’; the aphorisms of Yoga, in which he provides eight-limbed approach for the wellbeing and purification of body, mind and soul. This eight –limbed approach, known as Ashtanga Yoga, is not to be mistaken as a step-by-step approach. It is multidimensional approach .in which all eight limbs are practiced simultaneously [Yog Sutra Patanjai, 2013].

^The Eight Limbs of Yoga;

1. **Yamas –the five social ethics or the universal vows**
 - (a) Ahimsa- non violence in action, speech and thoughts.
 - (b) Satyam –truthfulness in intention, remaining established in the higher truth.
 - (c) Asteya – non stealing physically and mentally
 - (d) Brahmacharaya – has two meaning ; continuously abiding in the awareness of divineconsciousness and celibacy
 - (e) Aprarigraha – not accumulating things unnecessarily.
2. **Niyamas – the five personal ethics.**
 - (a) Shaucha- cleanliness of the body and mind.
 - (b) Santosha- contentment and happiness.
 - (c) Tapas- austerity and self – discipline.
 - (d) Swadhyaya- study of the self and abiding in the self.
 - (e) Ishwarapranidhana- honouring and surrendering to the Divine.
3. **Asanas- Yoga poses**
4. **Pranayamas – proper regulation of life – force(prana) through certain breathing techniques.**
5. **Pratayahara – taking the awareness inwards.**
6. **Dharana- one pointed focus.**
7. **Dhayana – meditation.**
8. **Samadhi- merging with the self, a super – conscious state beyond words.**

The Benefits of Yoga

Just as the knowledge of Yoga is vast and deep, so are its benefits. The practice of Yoga benefits the body, mind spirit. While some of these benefits can be expressed in words, others are beyond description and can only be experienced.

Yoga and Body

On the physical level, some of the reported benefits of Yoga are;

Improved flexibility of muscles.

Improved range of motions of the joints.

Improved strength and condition of muscles and bones.

Improved pose and body alignment.

Improved digestion, circulation and immunity.

Improved function of neurological and endocrine organs.

prevention and relief from many physical illnesses and chronic pain.

Overall the body feels healthier, full of the life and more energetic.

Yoga and mind

If the mind is well, all else feels well. That is why in Yoga a great importance is given to the wellness of the mind. With regular practice of yoga, some of the benefits one experiences are- Increased peace of mind
Improved alertness and clarity. Increased ability to deal effectively with short and long term stresses.,
Increased concentration of mind and Improved self- esteem and Decreased reliance on drugs, Greater energy and enthusiasm for life.

Yoga and spirit

Yoga gives proper understanding of our self, the spirit in us. It allows us to see divine presence in ourselves and others as we begin to experience oneness with everyone. This brings us fulfillment and unconditional inner joy, and gives a meaningful purpose to our lives. It is out of this fulfillment that we are able to share our joy with others through service.

Development of science and technology in 21st century has made men highly mobile, creative and busy. Various electronics equipments such as mobile phone, T.V, motor vehicle and their pollution changed the life style of human being. On the other hand in the present scenario, first priority of person is earn a money rather than to create moral and ethical values. In Bhagwat Geeta, It is stated- Society have achieved the higher stage not through mechanical and technological forces but through practising moral and ethical values. Therefore one should create conducive atmosphere of value based education in society so that peace and harmony can be established. Due to nonethical practices, lack of awareness of using technology, mental tension, lack of vision, various diseases and increased rate of crime visible. Our society has become too stressful and violent. Such problems rooted through Yogic philosophy and its regular practices. According to our modern science- there is linkage between mind, body and soul. Such linkage can be harmonized by practicing yoga. Yoga word came from Hindi word- yog e.g summation. Thus yoga practices helps in purifying human values, peace, devolvement and happiness in the society. Patanjali said that there were eight limbs of Yoga, just as a chair has four legs. They were Yama, Niyama, Aasana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samaadhi. Each leg is connected to the whole, if you pull one, the whole chair will move. The whole body

and organs develop together. It is not that the nose develops first, and then eye, lips, chest etc. That is why Patanjali called them the limbs of Yoga.

According to Upanishads, three qualities are essential to succeed in life, passion, stability and strength. There can be no achievement without passion or a vision. Along with a vision, you also have to have stability. Your emotions must be stable, otherwise your dreams will keep changing and it would lead you anywhere. Therefore Yoga practices bring these qualities [Rishimukh, 2015]. Yoga is something that can unite people across the globe, across nations, across religious divides. Everyone can come together with the spirit of togetherness. Yoga is not just about asanas, it is a state of mind where you have a sense of belongingness, responsibility for the whole planet and a sense of connectivity and harmony. This is one thing which can unite and bring solace to people across the world. What we need is humanness and humanness can blossom when people are free from stress, tension and depression

Yoga and Promising career

As mentioned in previous sections that Yoga practices are recognized by the global community. The international Yoga day proclaimed by the United Nations reminds billions of minds across the world for a healthy mind, healthy body and connectivity to nature for peace, harmony and intellectual growth. On the occasion of international Yoga day, the demand of yoga teachers across the world was very high level demands. The recent job opportunity in Yoga was found in Education, health, hotel & Picnic resorts, gymnasium & laughing club, Visual & print media, Jail administration, Sports administration, in various public & Private sectors and various others. This was reported by some sources. To the best of knowledge, there are some institutions in India, where Yoga based certificate/diploma/degree courses are being offered. These institutions details are followings-

1. Sri Sri University Cuttak, Orisha
2. Bihar Yog Vidyalaya, Munger(www.biharyoga.net)
3. Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, New Delhi(www.Yogamdniy.nic.in)
5. Rammani Ayanger Memorial Yog Institute, Pune, Maharashtra(www.bksiyengar.com)
6. Sri K. Pattabhi Jois Astanga Yog Institute, Mysur Karnataka(www.kpjai.org)
7. International Shivanand Yog Vedanta Center(www.sivananda.org)
8. Indian Institute of Yoga, Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna
9. Purple Valley Assagao, Goa
10. Ananda in the Himalays, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand(www.dotannadaspa.com)
11. Permarth Niketan, Rishikesh, Uttarakhand(www.permarth.org)

These institutions are also Yoga tourism centers in India

Some more recent report of Importance of Yoga on health and sharpness of mind

1. According to various reports in newspapers reported by some yoga practitioners reported that one minute pranayam gives 50 liter fresh air as subtle life force energy. Such fresh air is extremely high compared to jogging. Most of the people prefer to walk in the morning due to maximum absorption of oxygen for a healthy mind

cum healthy body. As reported that in the morning percentage level of oxygen is 21% and decreases sharply to 4% to evening.

Yoga Practices for holistic development and Ancient Indian Text

It is mentioned in Yoga sastra (Patanjali Yog sutra etc.) that there are three important linked organs/glands in the body that generates expectations, creativity, sadness and related symptoms. behaviour of mind at different time is shows different attitude. Mind and time are interlinked. Our forfathers or Seers have suggested/developed a technique that control behavior of mind, body and soul. Addition of mind, mind and soul is called Yog. But in recent one decade yoga is being practiced for disease treatment by some well known yoga person and himself called Yoga-Guru. But Yoga concept was came into existence by not for disease. It is holistic approach for overall development of human civilization. All three important glands mentioned above are in harmony by practices yoga. Recent scientific research also reported some finding related to this (-). Now a days attraction of youth are found toward wealth generation, sports activities, electronics gadget etc. Such activities for a partime time can be tolerated but after certain extent of time , it is harmful for young people. Even as reported in various newspaper that most of the parents are worried for engaging their children in such activities. Yoga practices can be helpful in such scenario so that children can become global personality for betterment of society.

CONCLUSION

Thus we can see in the modern time where health is many times more than that of wealth , yoga can be the best option for living a healthy and wealthy life. Yoga is affordable to everyone as it does not involve any investment to start practicing it. The only thing which is required is the zeal and dedication to practice it. The current pandemic situation also demand that we take care of our health and practice yoga on urgent basis. Yoga has immense benefits and should be a part of every educational program so as to make the young mass and future generation healthy.

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