



The Concept of Yoga: Spiritual Guideline to Salvation

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Abstract

Yoga plays a very important role in shaping one's life. Ancient texts prove that longevity which is based on systematic life practices, good eating habits, control over mind and body, concentration are the real source to live long and happy life. This is the real aim of yoga. This paper is an attempt to understand the main concept of yoga for the wellbeing of mankind.

Keywords-Yoga, Yogashastra, Patanjali, Shri krishna, Salvation, Asanas

Yoga is a holistic science promoting specific techniques for integrated development of human being. Unfortunately most people think that yoga is only physical exercise, but it is not the truth. Yogic science contains concepts, methods and regulations to lead a well knit life. Regular practice of yoga ensures good health, sharp intellect, compassion, harmony, happiness and spiritual awareness. Yoga is generally known to be a hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which includes simple meditation, breath control and adoption of specific body postures.

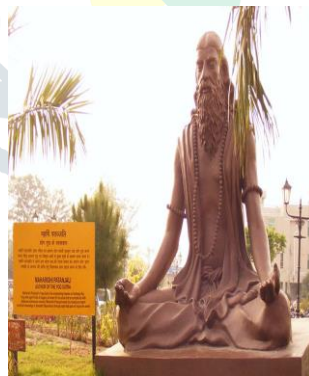
The origin of yoga is very old. The oldest archaeological evidence of yoga can be tracked back to 5000 years ago in seals and sculptures of Yogi in Indus-Saraswati civilization¹.



<https://nroer.gov.in/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pashupati_seal#/media/File:Shiva_Pashupati.jpg

The oldest texts regarding yoga is in all the four Vedas. ² In Mahabharata³ Sage Kapil (Hiranyagarbh) is said to be the oldest preacher of Yoga, but during the course of time the yogic principles of Kapil were vanished. About 300 AD sage **Patanjali** wrote the traditional text on Yoga which is popularly known as **YOGA SHASTRA**. This is the first authoritative text on yoga. The main theme of yoga shastra is based on achieving **Atma Sakshatkara** (Self realization) and obtaining control over mind and body through self discipline and a systematic way of life. Besides Yoga Shastra, there are also some important books and texts containing extreme knowledge of YOGA i.e. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Goraksha Samhita ,Shiv Samhita ,Yoga Vasistha, Bhagvadgita etc.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patanjali>

The term yoga ⁴ is derived from the root word **yuj** which means ‘to **join or yoke**’. This means yoga is a systematic and methodical process to control and develop the mind and body to attain good health, balance of mind and self realisation. The sages have explained the meaning of Yoga in their own ways. Patanjali in Yoga sutra says “yogas citta vritta nirodhah⁵ (yoga is the stilling of the fluctuation of the mind) In BhagvadGita it is stated- “bhuddiyukto jahatiya ubha sukritdushkrite;tasmmadhyogay yujyasva yogah;karmasu

koushalam’’⁶ ‘ that is The work done with dexterity artistically in harmony with the environs and by and large for the benefits of all creations is real yoga.’



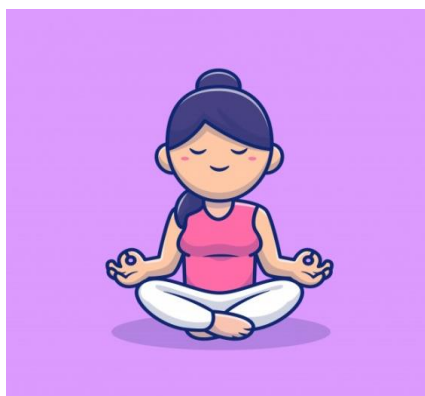
<https://www.mahanidhiswami.com/2018-gita-jayanti>

In another place Shri Krishna says to Arjun -

Natyasnatastu yogosti na chikantam anasnath;
Nacatisvaphasilasya jagrato naivacarjune⁷

“O Arjun --yoga is not for one who over eats neither for one who over fasts, nor for those who sleep too much and also not for one who over wakes”

And then he (Krishna) gives the answer and explains the real essence of yoga - “Yukta laraviharasya yukta cestasya kavmasu ,yukta svapnavabodhasya yogabhagvati dukkhaha”⁸ That is “yoga is for him who is moderate in eating and recreation, in actions , systematic in sleeping and working and more than that it is yoga which ultimately destroys all miseries of human life.



<https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector>



<https://www.free-meditation.ca/>

Yoga can be very helpful in order to eradicate all the miseries and evils and attain **PARAMAANANDA** which is the real aim of one's life. It is evident from the studies and researches that Yoga is helpful in curing several diseases, developing the concentration of mind and easing stress and tension. Yoga ultimately eliminates all the health hazards and miseries of human life. Dr. Tiwari rightly says "Yoga is the best way to evolve oneself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually; it is not a religion to be imposed. It is a tried and tested natural system to improve various facets of our personality and focus the mind on the Supreme through concentration".⁹ The real Yoga has been structured on eight organs or parts steps, components, levels etc which are to be done stepwise to attain the real victory over mind and body. Patanjali in his thoughts and teaching prescribed these ways and means to attain yogic perfection which helps a person to realise self and attain perfect state of mind. He calls it **ASHTAANG YOGA**¹⁰. They are universal in nature and mostly shared by all religious philosophers of the world. These eight fold path of yoga are very relevant even today. they are-

1. Yam- {Self discipline}
2. Niyam- {Observance}
3. Asan- {Body Posture}
4. Pranayam- {Control over breath}
5. Pratyahar -. {Control over mind}
6. Dharna - { Concentration of mind}
7. Dhyaan- {Meditation}
8. Samaadhi- {Salvation}



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashtanga_\(eight_limbs_of_yoga\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashtanga_(eight_limbs_of_yoga))

All the above eight yogic concepts provide pathways for cleaning the body and mind to attain perfection. In order to attain the utmost peace of mind Yoga has been classified mainly into following categories-¹¹

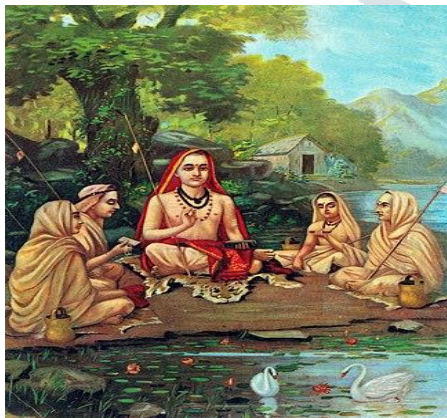
1. Bhakti Yoga [emphasises on devotion]
2. Karma Yoga [emphasises on action]
3. Jnana Yoga [emphasises on knowledge]
4. Hatha Yoga [emphasises on systematic physical exercises]
5. Raja Yoga [emphasises on yoga of mind and will power]
6. Mantra Yoga [emphasises on enchanting of mantras]



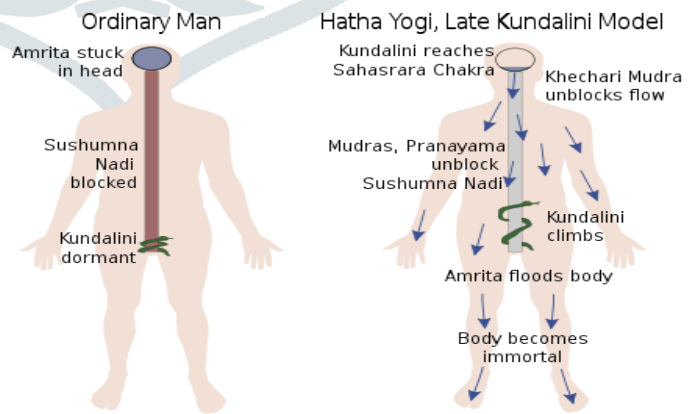
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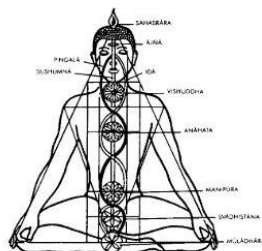
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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jnana_yoga



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hatha_yoga



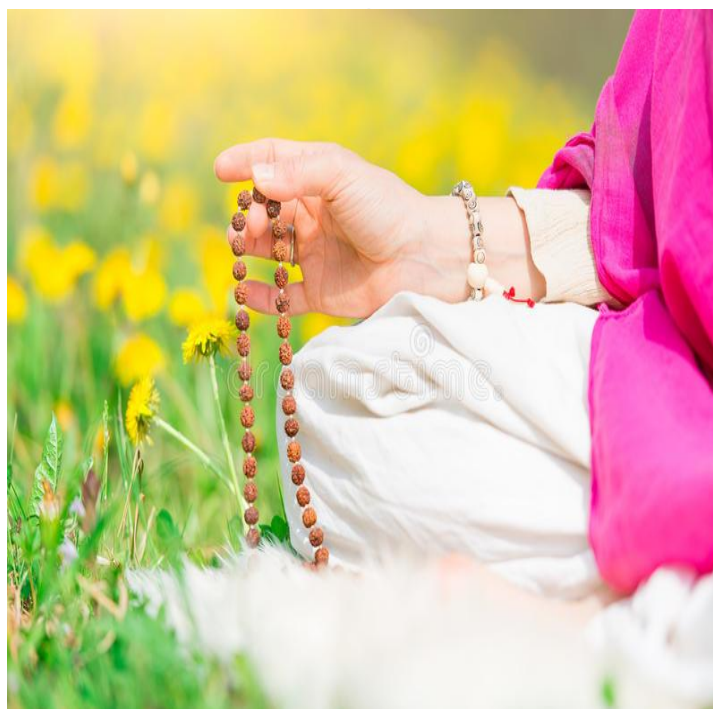
RAJA YOGA

The Yoga Sutra's of Patanjali

according to Shri Yogacharya Ajita

This book is the basis of the age old, classical Yoga. It describes this whole science in an astonishing brief way; there are only 195 Sutra's or verses. Up until now the translations and interpretations were incomplete or simply wrong. With the help of his soul Shri Yogacharya Ajita explains all Sutra's for the first time clearly. You feel as if you are in his class room. You are carried away by his enthusiasm. His hands on approach let your Yoga practice make a leap forward. You quickly understand the enormous importance of Yoga in our overheated world.

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/11174849/rajayoga>



<https://www.dreamstime.com/stock-photo-mantra-yoga>

So, Yoga as a whole is a positive practice for realisation of powers of the body ,mind and the intellect. It is a science of the human mind and body with an aim to achieve oneness[union] with the self and the Supreme.

There are common requirements for best results in Yoga. These can be classified in the following points--¹²

- 1.Basic knowledge of Yoga
- 2.Perfect time and place
- 3.Good food habits
- 4.Cleanliness
5. Proper guidance
6. Relaxation

Some yogic exercises or yogasanas are Tadasana, Ardhakati Chakrasana, Trikonasana, Veerbhadradasana, Utkatasana, Vrikchsana, Padahastanasana, Garudasana, Natarajasana, Ardhchandrasana, Padmasana, Siddhasana, Vajrasana, Veerasana, Paryankasana, Sukhasana, Simhasana, Matyasana, Kukkutasana, Parvatasana, Mayurasana, Kurmasana, Navasana, Halasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanushasana, Shirshasana, Chakrasana, Shavasana etc.¹³

<https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/cartoon-girl-in-yoga-poses-with-titles-vector-20272136>

YOGA

POSES FOR BEGINNERS



5 BEGINNER YOGA POSES FOR Relaxation

+ a FREE poster with more modifications



Child's Pose | Balasana



Wide Child's Pose | Balasana II



Banana Pose



Reclined Goddess Pose | Supta Baddha Konasana



Reclined Twist Pose | Jathara Parivartanasana



SocialHermit | Yoga + God's Word

These systematic Yogic practices give both physical and mental perfection. The real object is to learn Yoga systematically and adopt them in our life. Then only the real benefits of yoga can be experienced. The very purpose of Yoga is to give complete knowledge of values of human life and also give insight of self awareness and self discipline. Yoga should be performed with utmost devotion, determination and perfection. Krishna says to Arjun-

“-Freedom {salvation, liberation, Moksha }is our goal. Permanent happiness can come only through this path , along with meditation upon Him. The world is a play for Supreme. The moment you get established in this state of wisdom , the world of pleasure and pain dissolves ,this is salvation.’¹⁴ so it is rightly said that Yoga presents a spiritual guideline to salvation which is the ultimate goal of human being.



Benefits of Yoga

For Body

- Increased Core Strength
- Lowers Blood Pressure
- Weight Management
- Improved Digestion
- Improved Circulation
- Body Detoxification
- Pain and Tension Relief
- Increased Flexibility
- Improved Posture
- Increased Immunity

For Mind

- Improved Intuition
- Increased Self-Acceptance
- Improved Concentration
- Neutralised Stress
- Improved Memory
- Increases Mental Awareness
- Focus On the Present
- Increased Confidence
- Unlocked Energy Flow
- Balanced Brain Hemispheres

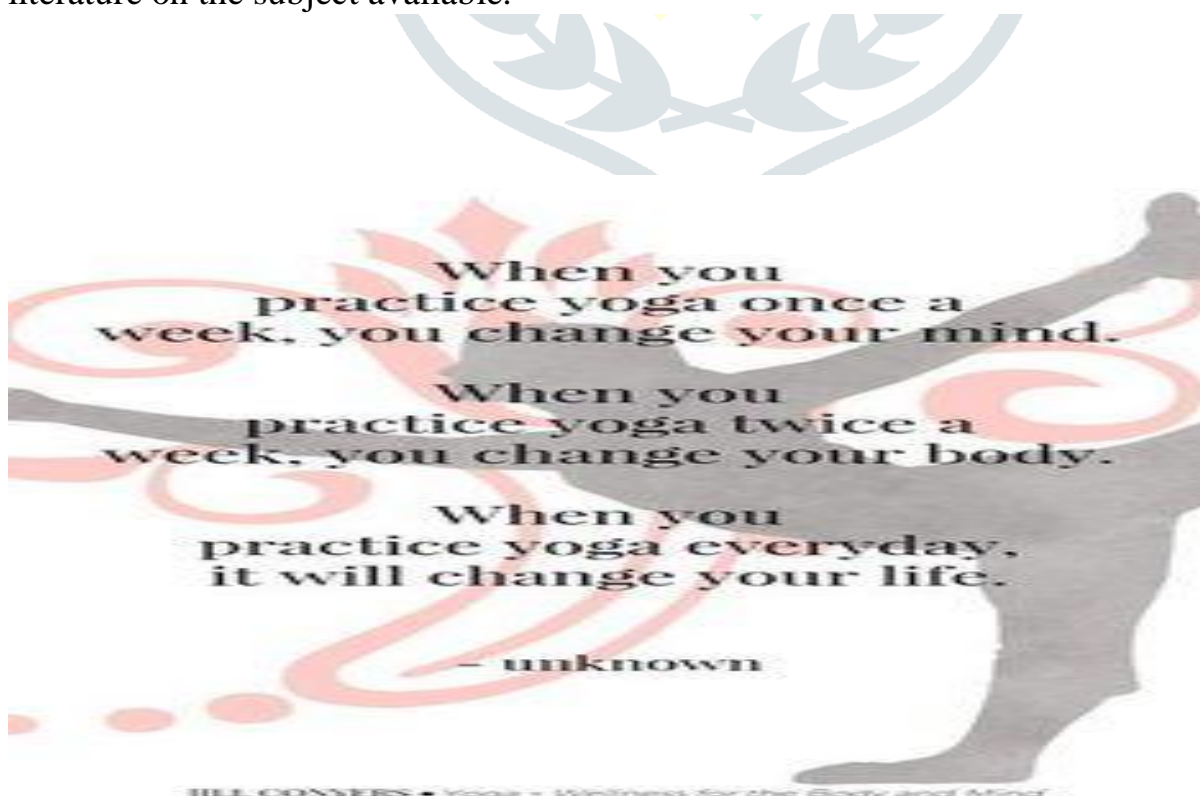
Yoga Makes You Happy!

<https://hwb.focusonuk.co.uk/benefits-of-yoga/>

In the modern times, the new generation has a lot of interest in Yoga. **International Yoga day** is celebrated every year on 21 June from 2015 with the efforts of Prime minister Narendra Modi. This proves the acceptance of ancient Indian Yogic concepts worldwide. **The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has formally inscribed Yoga in its representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.** The declaration describes Yoga, an ancient Indian practice as a Human Treasure. It was unanimously supported by all the 24 members of inter-governmental Committee.¹⁵

The proposal for inclusion of Yoga in this list was forwarded by the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) immediately after the first International Yoga Day was on 21st June 2016. The dossier in this regard was forwarded by MEA through the Sangeet Natak Akademi. India's proposal for nominating Yoga had stressed upon its pan-Indian and global expanse, health benefits and practised by people from all communities.¹⁶ "The philosophy behind the ancient Indian practice of yoga has influenced various aspects of how society in India functions, whether it be in relation to areas such as health and medicine or education and the arts. Based on unifying the mind with the body and soul to allow for greater mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing, the values of yoga form a major part of the community's ethos." UNESCO posted on its website.¹⁷

In conclusion it can be said that Yoga itself is a divine knowledge which if understood properly, without any bias, one can achieve total happiness and fulfilment in life. If a person follows even a few directives, he can win the battle against adversities and live a peaceful life here and hereafter. He can attain freedom and become one with pure consciousness, that is **SALVATION**. Yoga consists of a series of poses, meditation, controlled breathing, word chanting and other techniques designed to help individuals build self-realization, ease any suffering they may be experiencing and allow for a state of liberation. It is practiced by the young and old without discriminating against gender, class or religion and has also become popular in other parts of the world. Traditionally, yoga was transmitted using the Guru-Shishya model (master-pupil) with yoga gurus as the main custodians of associated knowledge and skills. Nowadays, yoga ashrams or hermitages provide enthusiasts with additional opportunities to learn about the traditional practice, as well as schools, universities, community centres and social media. Ancient manuscripts and scriptures are also used in the teaching and practice of yoga, and a vast range of modern literature on the subject available.



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