

Role of Yoga in Health

Dr. Vinod Kumar

*Assistant Professor, Sociology, Government Degree College,
Drang at Narla District, Mandi, Himachal Pradesh, 175012, India*

Abstract: Yoga is one of the most ancient metaphysical sciences, which investigates the nature of soul and, through its discipline, awakens the super conscious mind of the man which unites the moral being with the immortal supreme spirit. Yoga leads to balance and also provides both a philosophy and a religion. The real joy of life appears when we can unify nature and culture, wealth and poverty, movement and stillness, attachment and detachment. Yoga can serve both the individual and society. Yoga blends the two states of tension and relaxation. Life always seeks to restore balance and the ideal state is that in which static force and dynamic power are in harmony. In this state, the deepest relaxation is found within the highest tension and this forms the basic for the new life of service and cooperation. The basic characteristic of yoga is its use of meditation, for by utilizing this discipline, the mind and body are purified and adjusted and personality is heightened. Yoga enables everyone to move towards that state of developed consciousness which is oneness with the sacred. The first step is to harmonize, purity and strengthen both body and mind.

Introduction

Yoga is the science of life and the art of living. It is the common sense answer to overall physical and mental fitness. Basically yoga is a system of physical and mental self improvement and final liberation, that people have been using for thousands of years. Yoga arose in the age of the Vedas and Upanishads. It is India's oldest scientific, perfect spiritual discipline. Yoga is a method of training the mind and developing its power of subtle perceptions so that man may discover for himself the spiritual truths on which religion, beliefs and moral values finally rest. It is realization of our hidden powers. Swami Shivananda said, "He who radiates good, divine thoughts does immense good unto himself and to the world also". Yoga is science of life, it offers us simple, easy remedies and techniques and methods of health and hygiene to assure physical and mental fitness with a minimum of time, effort and expense.

Yoga in other term Preksha Dhyan invented by prominent Jainacharya Mahaprajna is such an uncomplicated, easy to learn technique of meditation. It comprised of the following—

- (i) Kayotsarga (Total relaxation)
- (ii) Antaryatra (Internal trip)
- (iii) Svash Preksha (Perception of breath)
- (iv) Sharir Preksha (Perception of body)
- (v) Chaitnya-kendra Preksha (Perception of psychic centers)
- (vi) Leshya Dhyan (Perception of psychic spectrum)
- (vii) Perception of the present moment
- (viii) Perception of thoughts
- (ix) Self-discipline
- (x) Bhavna (counter-vibrations)
- (xi) Anupreksha (contemplation)
- (xii) Concentration.

Yoga is one of the most ancient metaphysical sciences, which investigates the nature of soul and, through its discipline, awakens the super conscious mind of the man which unites the moral being with the immortal supreme spirit. Yoga leads to balance and also provides both a philosophy and a religion. The real joy of life appears when we can unify nature and culture, wealth and poverty, movement and stillness, attachment and detachment. Yoga can serve both the individual and society. Yoga is neither a sect nor an ideology but a practical training of mind and body. Broadly speaking, it has three main outcomes: it makes us more aware of our natural wisdom, it strengthens the body's ability to recover from illness or injury; it teaches us how to co-operate with others. Yoga teaches us truth through mind and body rather than theory, it brings about deep change of attitude. The entire thrust of our life is to devote total attention to every action and, at the same time, to trust in the power of sacred. Eight stages of Patanjali yoga are:

- (i) Yama: The universal moral laws.
- (ii) Niyama: Personal moral roots of conduct.
- (iii) Asan: Yogic postures.

-
- (iv) Pranayama: Acquiring and controlling prana or energy, by means of the breath. (
 - (v) Pratyahara: The withdrawal of the senses from the outer environment.
 - (vi) Dharana: Concentration.
 - (vii) Dhyana: Meditation.
 - (viii) Samadhi: Enlightenment.

Yoga is also a technique for achieving purest form of self awareness, devoid of all thoughts and sensations. Today some kind of reconstruction of thought is necessary to understand clearly what the great yoga teachers of the past have taught. Patanjali, the systematiser of Yoga, has explained the thoughts through Yogasutra. In the Gita and Upanishads we find a broader and positive expression of yoga. Our ancient masters through yoga teach us an art of living a life for eternally blissful experiences of even flow of happiness by removal of miseries and sufferings of our limited life. The term yoga means a systematic practice and implementation of mind and body in the living process of man to keep harmony with in self, within the society and with nature.

Kundalini Yoga is a systematic and integrated practice for body and mind and its thrust to make a man creative. By a new method, which is wholly safe, one can get the Kundalini power aroused in minutes. Hence this method is called the simplified Kundalini Yoga, abbreviated to "SKY". Kayakalpa is the culmination of Kundalini Yoga and its objective is to enable the practitioner to postpone the ageing process and death. In all sky centers in India, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Japan and USA, Kayakalpa yoga is now being taught at regular intervals. These two yogic practices are very important in karma yoga, the world religion.

Health

Health is precisely, that condition in which human being has full sensitivity and in which all his faculties are operating fully. To actively work towards this condition is to cure illness and to develop maximum health. Yoga is both a philosophy and a living religion, believes that the body is so important and trains it so strictly. Without health we can neither practice meditation nor attain enlightenment. For total health one should seek the truth by skepticism. The body mind system possesses the innate power of recovering health and the yogic method of curing human ills aims at stimulating it. Prominent health specialist Ben Jonson said, "O, health! health! the blessing of rich! the riches of the poor! who can buy thee at too dear a rate, since there is no enjoying the world without thee!"

Preksha (means to see inside with full concentration) may appear to mean different things to different people because it contributes to increase physical, nervous as well as spiritual energies. As per prominent Jainacharya Acharya Mahaprajna inventor of Preksha Dhyan Yoga total health consists of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health.

- (i) On physical level, it helps each bodily cell to revitalize itself; it facilitates digestion, it makes inspiration more efficient and improves circulation and quality of blood.
- (ii) On mental level it proves to be an applied method to train the mind to concentrate; it offers way to treat serious psychosomatic illness without drugs; it is an efficient tool for ending addictions and other bad habits; it reveals to one the mysteries of his mind by the realization and real experience of the inner consciousness which includes the subconscious and the unconscious.
- (iii) On the emotional level, the strengthening of conscious reasoning controls reactions to environmental conditions, situations and behaviour of others; harmonization of the functioning of nervous and endocrine system results in control and ultimate eradication of psychological distortions.
- (iv) On spiritual level, regulation and transformation of bloodchemistry through proper synthesization of neuroendocrinal secretions, dispassionate internal vibrations leads one to attain the power to control the mind and to become free from the effect of external forces compelling one to lose to equanimity.

The following table shows the relation between endocrine glands and the Chaitnya-kendras:

| Endocrine glands | Chaitnya-kendras |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pineal | Jyoti-kendra |
| Pituitary | Darshan-kendra |
| Thyroids | Vishudhi-kendra |
| Adrenals | Taijas-kendra |
| Gonads | Swasthya-kendra and Shakti-kendra |

Constant triggering overreaction of the lower endocrine glands viz. adrenals and gonads result in pernicious habits, effecting our physical and mental health. For good physical health Dr Dastur recommends:

- Sleep on a thin firm mattress with a wooden board underneath. Don't sleep on foam rubber mattress.
- Prolonged standing in one place puts great pressure on the spine, shift your weight from one foot to other to relieve the strain.
- Learn to relax when under stress.
- Do not lift a heavy load with straight knees from the floor. Bend your knees and lift it up.

Jainacharya Acharya Mahaprajna inventor of Preksha Dhyan Yoga inspires for maintenance of total health:

- (i) For maintenance of physical health one should always walk in morning fresh air and should observe Asans and Pranayama.
- (ii) For maintenance of mental health one should get rid of worries and should deep dive in meditation and kayotsarga.
- (iii) For achieving emotional health one should think positive and should always live in present and not in past or future.

South health and peaceful mind are a must for man to enjoy the material world and develop the consciousness to its perfection. In order to achieve this purpose of birth one has to maintain harmony between body and life force, life force and mind, between individuals and society and between nature and will. Practicing appropriate exercises of body and mind and a virtuous way of living to maintain the harmonies described above constitute yoga. Thus Karma Yoga is a system of life utilizing the full potential of the body and mind with understanding and awareness for a happy, prosperous and peaceful life. All experiences in life are enjoyed only by the mind. Mind is the peripheral stage of consciousness. In the infinite state, the consciousness itself in the truth. As a man is endowed with the sixth sense which inherits the purpose of the realization of self, in time he should realize the self, which is consciousness. By realizing consciousness man can live with satisfaction, harmony and peace. Realization of consciousness is the only one perfect and higher knowledge by which one can know everything in the universe. The mind is nothing but the extended and perceptual activity of the consciousness.

One should do every action, whether thought, word or deed, with a perspective awareness not to inflict pain to self or others, at present or in future, to the body or mind. Physical and mental health are important for a happy and successful life. One has to maintain these with due care, following moderation in the following five aspects of life : (i) Food, (ii) Work, (iii) Rest, (iv) Sex, (v) Use of thought-force. These five should not be neglected, over-indulged or improperly dealt with. The proportional requirements of daily food are 10% protein, 10% fat, 40% carbohydrates and 40% vegetables and fruits. Protein, the essential food-element, is best provided by milk, curd, soyabean, drynuts, pulses and lentils. Carbohydrates are starchy food consist in rice, chapatti, grains, maize, oats, potatoes etc.

Man's existence is connected with physical cells, brain, biomagnetism, life force and sexual vital fluid. If he neglects, over-indulges or improperly deals with food, work rest, sex and use of thought-force, he has to suffer from illness and sorrow. As every action brings an appropriate result, he should deal with all the five aspects of life in moderation. Following the principle of limit and method in every enjoyment is detachment. Keeping the physical body in a healthy condition and the mind is highly culturally enlightened level and thereby leading a creative life so as to be a useful member of the society throughout the span of one's life is the chief aim and thrust of karma Yoga. An integrated practice of reorganizing and restructuring the body and the mind for a newly planned life is Kundalini Yoga. Kundalini is the life force. For all human beings the working centre of the life force is in the sexual gland called technically and mooldhara called in spiritual terminology. Only when the working centre is shifted to the point between the eyebrows (Agya chakra), the mind can perceive its existence and functions. So in yoga practice, raising the working centre of the life force and making the aspirant to feel it at the Agya chakra point is initiation.

Role of Yoga in total health

Yoga blends the two states of tension and relaxation. Life always seeks to restore balance and the ideal state is that in which static force and dynamic power are in harmony. In this state, the deepest relaxation is found within the highest tension and this forms the basic for the new life of service and cooperation. The basic characteristic of yoga is its use of meditation, for by utilizing this discipline, the mind and body are purified and adjusted and personality is heightened. Yoga enables everyone to move towards that state of developed consciousness which is oneness with the sacred. The first step is to harmonize, purity and strengthen both body and mind. In yoga we find people practicing fasting, celibacy, the renunciation of wealth and possessions as well as living home, loved ones and society. The aim is always same to control desires and since desire is

mental and emotional, there are many ways of doing it. Fasting is the most natural and fundamental) training for the control of desire, being practiced instinctively by animals and primitive men who live close to nature.

There are seven centres for meditation in the body. Each centre is connected with its relevant endocrine gland as below. Meditation on any Chakra should be learnt and practiced under the guidance of a master in Kundalini Yoga. Self effort in this yoga should be strictly avoided as it could lead to complications.

| Chakra | Endocrine Gland |
|---------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mooldhara | Sex gland |
| Swadhisthana | Connecting sex gland and adrenals |
| Manipuraka | Adrenal gland |
| Anahata | Thymus gland |
| Vishuddhi | Thyroid Gland |
| Agya | Pituitary |
| Brahmarandhra | Pineal |

A regular practice of yoga 30 to 50 minutes daily with faith in "self", proves a blessing in the form of spiritual illumination which slowly develops into awareness of reality.

The main purpose of practice of Preksha Dhyan Yoga (To see inside with deep concentration) is to purify the mental states. Mind is constantly chocked by contaminating urges, emotions and passions. This hampers the flow of wisdom. The hurdles of uncleanliness must first be removed. When the mind is cleaned, peace of mind automatically surfaces. Balance of mind, equanimity and the state of well-being are also experienced simultaneously. It should always be remembered that the ultimate aim of Sadhna is purity and equanimity-freedom from contamination of passions. The state of well-being is not our ultimate aim; it will inevitably ensure; nevertheless, it is not the objective. Similarly peacefulness is also a secondary benefit and will always be achieved, but not the aim. We have to transcend both these mental states to reach our ultimate purpose. Viz. total purity of mind and goodness.

Realization of truth is the birthright of everyone; everyone has the natural potential within. Karma Yoga will add all people to realize the Truth when they wish for it. A karma Yogi can do immense good to himself and others by blessing self, life-partner, children, sisters and brothers, closefriends, bosses and assistants and enemies too, if any, the whole world of humanity for individual peace, harmony in the society and peace among all nations. One should steadfastly observe five duties in life towards : (i) self, (ii) family, (iii) relatives, (iv) society and (v) world community, giving importance to each in the above order without neglecting any of the other four. One should allot at least 1% of his income to be spent only for the help and welfare of the needy. In order to achieve the purpose of life and develop one's consciousness, one must learn and practice meditation on the lifeforce, which will result in peace of mind, physical health and enlightenment of consciousness.

Yoga Maharshi Swami Deva-Murti offers to every earnest seeker his seven master keys which will also ensure realization of his spiritual goal and destiny.

- (i) One mother, one wife/husband,
- (ii) Jaisa Anna Taisa Man,
- (iii) Spinal twelve Exercises,
- (iv) Netra-Jyoti-Prakashini Neti,
- (v) Pranayama,
- (vi) Nauli Kriya,
- (vii) Firm belief in God (spirituality).

Yogis and mysties have proclaimed that coiled serpentine power lies locked in Kundalini, and that the spinal chord with its seven chakras is the mystic reservoir of human energy. A very large percentage of human illness can be attributed to the wrong posture and consequent distortion or malfunctioning of the spinal chord. So, figuratively speaking, charging the spinal chord is recharging the human battery and build up an immense reservoir of human energy. Right physical and mental posture for effective meditation are:

- (i) Physical—A stabilized posture which is, in fact, the natural body. Balanced breath and the practice of right diet.
- (ii) Mental—Original mind, detached, purified, strengthened and active. The mind of faith arising from a developed physical and emotional centre of the body Yoga began at least six thousand years ago and has continuously been enriched by the wisdom accumulating from humanity's struggle for survival. But such practices as right posture, correct breathing and sound diet have a wider relevance, for they

can be seen as the factors necessary for maintaining the integrity of the life-force, health, society and even the cosmic laws.

Those people who use yoga just for exercise or relaxation or to calm the mind, fail to understand the aims of yoga. Aims of yoga are:

- (i) To bring us to greater humanity.
- (ii) To awaken in us the mind of service.
- (iii) To bring us to true meditation.

Most of the yoga that is taught today is not real Yoga. That is because it neither pursues nor maintains these aims. Furthermore, because most yoga is unbalanced, it actually harms people by developing them one sidedly. If a human being can live strictly according to nature he will have total health and happiness, because such a way of life is balanced. One sided training makes people unbalanced and neurotic. The blessing of total health comes to those who find their own individual life-style and adhere to it. It does not come to those who merely accept this or that readymade system.

Conclusion

Yoga is the science of life and the art of living. It is India's oldest scientific, perfect spiritual discipline. Yoga is a method of training the mind and body for discovering spiritual truths. Yoga is science of life, it offers us simple, easy remedies, techniques and methods of health and hygiene to assure physical and mental fitness with a minimum of time, effort and expense. Yoga is neither a sect nor an ideology but a practical training of mind and body. Yoga is also a technique for achieving purest form of self awareness, devoid of all thoughts.

Health is precisely, that condition in which human being has full sensitivity and in which all his faculties are operating fully. According to prominent Jainacharya Mahaprajna inventor of Preksha Dhyan Yoga—total health consists of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health. Sound health and peaceful mind are a must for man to enjoy the material world and develop the consciousness to its perfection. By realizing consciousness man can live with satisfaction, harmony and peace. Realization of consciousness is the only one perfect and higher knowledge by which one can know everything in the universe. The man is nothing but the extended and perceptual activity of consciousness keeping the physical body in a healthy condition and the mind in highly culturally enlightened level and thereby leading a creative life so as to be a useful member of the society throughout the span of one's life is the chief aim and thrust of karma yoga.

Yoga blends the two states of tension and relaxation. Yoga enables everyone to move towards that state of developed consciousness which is oneness with the sacred. The main purpose of practice of Preksha Dhyan Yoga (to see inside with deep concentration) is to purify the mental state. A regular practice of yoga 30 to 50 minutes daily with faith in "self", proves a blessing in the form of spiritual illumination which slowly develops into awareness of reality. If a human being can live strictly according to nature he will have total health and happiness, because such a way of life is (xii) balanced. One side training makes people unbalanced and neurotic. The blessing of total health comes to those who find there own individual lifestyle and adhere to it. It does not come to those who merely accept this or that ready made system

References:

- [1]. Meditation and Yoga—Masahiro Oki, published by Oki Yoga publications, Japan, first edition, 1978.
- [2]. Yoga and Health—Swami Manuvaryaji Maharaj, Dundubhi printers, first edition, 1994.
- [3]. Preksha Dhyan Basic Principles—Acharya Mahaprajna, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun (Raj.), January-2003.
- [4]. Preksha Dhyan Theory and Practice—Acharya Mahaprajna, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun (Raj.), January-2003.
- [5]. Preksha Dhyan Human Body (part-II), Health Care—J.S. Zaveri, Jain Vishva Bharati, Ladnun(Raj.), edition 1993.
- [6]. Karma Yoga—Yogiraj Vethathiri Maharshi—Vethathiri publications, Erode (T.N.), third edition, 1995.
- [7]. Yoga-Praxis—Yoga Maharshi Swami Deva Murti, 1971-72, International Yoga Centre, Schloss Aubach, West Germany.