

Yoga and Lifestyle

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Abstract—If we talk about lifestyle, it simply means a way, a path through which a person leads his life. In this modern world every person has a very busy lifestyle especially those living in metropolitan cities. People have so much work-pressure that they are bound to live a very fast life, have fast food and spend lots of time on internet thinking about materialistic side of life only. For them money has become everything. Ultimately all this has turned their life very unhealthy and stressful. We are working day and night to earn happiness but in reality we are losing the real sheen of life. Here what a person can do? What should be the way out? And the answer of all this is that a person has to choose the path of Yoga.

Now, what is Yoga? Maharshi Patanjali defines yoga as "yogaścittavṛttiNirodhaḥ". Here, yoga means to join, to unite. Chitta means consciousness, Vṛtti means fluctuations or modifications, Nirodhaḥ means quieting of.

To put it simply, the term yoga is restraint of the activities of mind. Yoga mainly deals with mind control. Physical Asanas are one of the eight steps to achieve that mind control or ChittaVṛttiNirodhaḥ. Thus the emphasis of yoga is more on mind than on physical positions.

Yoga energizes, relaxes, strengthens and promotes correct breathing. After the physical posture one feels benefitted in many ways. Yoga improves self-confidence by transforming stress into peace. It teaches right art of living. One may learn patience, forgiveness and the value of gentleness through Yoga. One who achieves the ultimate goal of yoga surrenders oneself to the divine. Basically one who leads one's life in a yogic way is always benefitted physically, mentally and spiritually.

1. WHAT IS LIFESTYLE?

Lifestyle describes a complex behavioural strategies and routines attitudes and value, norms assumed in order to individual or group to score as convenient in a social context. More broadly lifestyle is the way a person or a wider group of people choose to live, this being referred to their economic, occupational level and types of

activities they practice during leisure. Lifestyle can be healthy or unhealthy, in terms of diet, level of exercises, some habits and mode of activity alternating with periods of relaxation. A healthy lifestyle is correlated with good health and a high perception of well-being, while an unhealthy lifestyle leads to depression and isolation. Unhealthy behaviour such as smoking, alcohol abuse, overeating in combination with level of stress, lead short and long term too many diseases. [1].

Nowadays most of the people are leading this type of unhealthy lifestyle. If we talk about the people of metropolitan cities, they are living a very fast life, our diets largely consists of fast food, lack essential nutrients, while the hustle and bustle of a busy schedule leave little time for an active, health promoting way of life. If we will unfold the lifestyle of metro cities people we would know that they are preferring money rather than family. People everywhere seem to have surrendered to sensual values that are merely materialistic in nature. God is replaced by money. Here, we can say that money has become a thing of greed in place of need for men. They want money by hook or by crook. Without spiritual light our senses are directed only to the pursuit of worldly pleasure. These pleasures spring from desire, greed and illusion. [2]. Because of the greed of money we have stopped thinking whether it is coming in a moral way or not. And due to all this there has been a continuous mental stress and all these are telling upon our health.

2. THE BEST PATH TO GET RID OF UNHEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Now, here the question arises what we are doing for the removal of stress from our life, to make ourselves healthy? One can say physical exercises, jogging, more over we are opting western ways like gym culture and aerobics. But this is not the perfect way to make

ourselves healthy. Gym and exercises can only make you physically fit not mentally and spiritually. The best way or path for having a perfect lifestyle is Yoga. Yoga permits man a complete creative realization of himself. Yoga is so very practical that can be lived every moment in life. Yoga is neither a sect nor a religion nor merely an abstract philosophy. If philosophy is the vision of truth then yoga is its practical side making for its realization. [3]. Yoga is not only a view of life but also a way of life. Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. it is an art and science of healthy living- physically, mentally, ethically and spiritually. Geraldine Coster observes: "Yoga is a practical method of mind-development, as practical as analytical therapy and for more closely related to life than the average university course." [4].

3. ORIGIN OF YOGA

The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root "yuj" meaning to bind, join, attach and yoke, to direct and concentrate one's attention on, to use and apply. It also means union or communion. It is the true union of our will with the will of God. The yoking of all the powers of body, mind and soul to God; it means the disciplining of the intellect, the mind, the emotions, the will which that Yoga presupposes; it means a poise of the soul which enables one to look at life in all its aspects evenly. [5]. The aim of yoga is self-realization, to overcome all kinds of suffering leading to 'the state of liberation' (*Moksha*) or 'freedom' (*kaivalya*). Living in freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of yoga practice. The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origins thousands of years ago. Yoga is originated from Veda, oldest scripture of India. In the yogic lore Lord Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi and systematically presented by Sage *Patanjali* in *Yogasutra* in around 150 B. C.

Sage *Patanjali*, an Indian sage is the compiler of yoga science. He wrote '*Yogasutra*' containing 195 verses divided in four chapters. These four chapters are *Samadhipada*, *Sadhanapada*, *Vibhutipada* and *kaivalyapada*. In *samadhipada* the forms, aims, characteristics and way of yoga is explained. The description of *karma*, *kleshas*, and *karmaphala* is presented in *Sadhanapada*. In *kaivalyapada*, the form of

kaivalya is explained. The description of the siddhis obtained from the practices and paths of yoga is found in *Vibhutipada*.

The most popular definition of yoga as given in *Bhagavad Gita* are:

1. Yoga is skilfulness in action, "*yogaḥkarmasukauśalam*" (Ch. II. 50),
2. Perfect equilibrium, Evenness (of mind) in Yoga "*samatvaṁ yoga ucyate*" (ch. II. 48).

According to *Yogasutra* of *Patanjali* 'Yoga is restraint of the activities of the mind.'

"*yogaścittavṛtti Nirodhaḥ*" ||Sutra 2||

The above definition of Yoga projects three key words Viz

1. *Chitta* (mind-stuff)
2. *Vṛitti* (modifications) and
3. *Nirodhaḥ* (control)

This aphorism has been translated in several ways as follows:

- Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (*Chitta*) from taking various forms (*Vṛittis*).
- Yoga is the control (*Nirodhaḥ*. e regulation, channeling, mastery, integration, coordination, stilling, quieting, setting aside) of the modifications (gross and subtle thought patterns) of the mind field.
- Yoga is the restraint of the modifications of the mind.
- Yoga or concentration is the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle.
- Union (Yoga) is restraining the thought-streams natural to the mind.

To put it simply, the term Yoga means controlling the thought waves in the mind. It is the prevention of the mind from its wanderings, to use common man's language.

It, therefore, *Patanjali* prescribes several *sadhanas* or directions which are called *ashtanga yoga* or eight steps of yoga to realize one's essential nature and get instantly free from *samsara*, the cycle of transmigration, and attain

kaivalya or *Moksha* or nirvana. This realization of the Atman is nothing other than attaining the infinite Brahman.

Patanjali Yoga Sutras mainly deal with mind control to achieve concentration and physical Asanas are one of the eight steps or one of the eight limbs of the Yoga system (ashtanga yoga) to achieve that purpose of mind control or *ChittaVrittiNirodhaḥ*. Thus the emphasis of *Patanjali* is more on mind than on physical positions.

4. EIGHTFOLD PATH OF *PATANJALI* (ASHTANGA YOGA)

- Yama (Restraints)
- *Niyama* (Observances)
- Asana (Body Postures)
- *Pranayama* (Regulation of Breath)
- *Pratyahara*(Abstraction of senses)
- *Dharana*(Concentration)
- *Dhyana*(Meditation)
- Samadhi (Self-realization)

5. YOGA-THE PATH FOR PHYSICAL FITNESS

For Physical fitness, for healthy body we have to need balanced healthy diet, balanced physical activity and balanced sleep. These are the three sub pillars of healthy body, which helps to maintain three pillars (three dosh) of living body. So, the best way to increase the general life force of the body is by good nutrition, sufficient deep sleep, a positive mental attitude and Yoga.

Our Diet is an essential factor for the formation of our body. Charak says that consuming improper diet in improper way is the main cause of diseases. Due to busy life schedule, improper diet people are suffering from many diseases like cancer, diabetes, heart problems, osteoporosis, weak immunity system etc. The way people eat today is far different the people ate before. Hundred years ago people use to include a lot of fruits and vegetables in their diet. This gives a lot of nutritional value to their meals and decreases the risk of getting cardiovascular diseases which is related to the less fat content of these foods. These days people have very bad nutritional habits, especially with the fast widespread of fast food culture. People don't spend enough time to eat and choose correct and healthy meals. In addition to the

poor eating habits, consumption of fatty food, lack of physical activity is the problems in this today's life. Smoking and drinking are also two major bad habits of people in this modernization and it will lead to disastrous effects on person's health. So, one has to move towards yogic diet.

5. 1 Yogic diet

The main principle of a 'yoga diet' is to up your consumption of fruits and vegetables with the aim of ultimately moving to pure vegetarian fare. The premise is that, such a diet being healthy, it will help develop a stronger body and a calmer, more peaceful state of mind.

In yoga, food is traditionally classified by to its effect on the mind and body, using the 3 GUNS (attributes)-*satvik*, *rajsik* and *tamsika*.

Sattvic is defined as the quality of purify and goodness. Sattvic food is that which is pure, clean and wholesome. A *sattvic* diet is food that gives life, strength, energy, courage and self-determination. In other words, sattvic food gives us more than the gross physical requirements of the proper mix of proteins, carbs and fats etc.

If we persist in this practice, we will arrive at our personal version of the sattvic diet. The Bhagavad Gita describes the sattvic diet as "promoting life, virtue, health, strength, happiness and satisfaction. " Sattvic food are "savory, smooth, firm and pleasant to the stomach. " By contrast, the Gita describes the rajsic diet as "excessively pungent, sour, salty, hot, harsh, astringent and burnt, " leading to pain, misery and sickness. "The tamasic foods are described as tasteless, smelly, left over, rotten and foul. "

5. 2 Asana and lifestyle

Yoga Asana plays an important role in improving Yoga – Asana is a method of preparing the system for spiritual awakening but it is also a very important science of health. Since ancient times it has been used by yogis and Rishis for the relief and elimination of all kinds of diseases and defects. There are 15 *Yoga*- Asanas described in Hathapradeepika. They are given as below.

1. *Swastik* Asana
2. *Gomukh* Asana
3. *Veer* Asana

4. *Koorm* Asana
5. *Kukkut* Asana
6. *Uttankoorm* Asana
7. *Dhanur* Asana
8. *Matsyendr* Asana
9. *Paschimottan* Asana
10. *Mayur* Asana
11. *Shav* Asana
12. *Siddh* Asana
13. *Padm* Asana
14. *Simh* Asana
15. *Bhadra* Asana

It is true that the Yoga- Asana required more time and effort on the part of the patient than conventional therapies, but in terms of permanent, positive results, as well as saving the enormous expenditure on medicines, they are certainly more worthwhile. What makes *Yoga*-Asanas so powerful and effective is the fact that it works according to the principles of harmony and unification, rather than diversity. The three important principles on which physical and mental therapy is based are as follows:

1. Conferring absolute health to one part or system of the body thereby influencing the rest of the body:
2. Balancing the positive and negative energy poles (Ida/Pingala, Prana/Apana)
3. Purifying the body of the three types of wastes (Dosas).

Ill health of one system created ill health in the rest of the both. You cannot say that your stomach is bad and everything else is all right. Therefore, a sick person with a number of ailments should generally be given treatment for only one of them. If you are able to create health in one system of this body, gradually the whole body begins to improve. This is how *Yoga*- Asanas should be prescribed.

6. YOGA-THE PATH FOR PEACE OF MIND

In this competitive era, everyone's life is full of deadlines and demands. Survival of the fittest-this is how the competition in this era is usually described. Work can be

stressful place, whether in an office, or a factory, or a school. These days we have so many things to do. We have different priorities in different fields like social, career, health, family etc. In the middle of all these things man has become a machine and therefore he has to undergo both mental and physical stress. After a certain point these stresses starts causing major damage to our mood, productivity, relationships and quality of life. It can alter health and emotions as well. It can effect cognitive functions, impairs concentration, attention, decision making ability and creativity. In this condition, a person will start over-reacting, getting into frustration, increasing consumption of alcohol etc. Depression, anxiety, stress have become a part of one's life these days. If we want to come out of this condition, yoga will prove quite helpful for us. After adopting yogic lifestyle one can rule out stress and other mental problems from one's own life.

6. 1 How yoga work on stress

In yoga breathing is done using the diaphragm. As you breath, it can stimulate the vagus nerve and help reduce stress. Vagus nerve is the main nerve of parasympathetic nervous system, extends from the medulla through the diaphragm to abdomen and responsible for slowing respiration, reducing heart rate, lowering blood-pressure, stimulating digestive activity etc. Asanas for stress relief-*uttanasan*, *adhomukhsvanasan*, *paschimotanan* Asana, *bal* Asana and *shrav* Asana.

6. 2 Pranayama for stress relief

Pranayama does not mean just breathing in, keeping the breathed air in and exhaling it. It also means establishing control on the entire breathing process, and maintaining equilibrium and concentration of mind. The inefficient functioning of the lungs affects the process of blood purification. It is for this reason that the importance of *Pranayama* has come to be recognized, for a healthy long life. Process of *Pranayama*-*puraka*, *kumbhaka*, *rechaka*. *Important pranayams*-*Bhastrika*, *Kapalbhati*, *ujjaye*, *Anulom-vilom*, *bhramari*.

Here, we can say that *yog Asana* and *Pranayama* appears to blunt the harmful effects of heightened stress by influencing the body's response to stress. There is also evidence that Asana helps increase heart rate variability, an indicator of the body's flexibility in responding to stress.

6. 3 *Patanjali's* fourfold remedies or virtue for peace of mind

Along with Asana and *Pranayama* to overcome the obstacles and to achieve happiness, *Patanjali* offered several remedies. According to *Sri Patanjali, Maitri, Karuna, Mudita and Upeksha* are the four great virtues, one needs to cultivate in order to gain peace of mind.

*maitrikaruṇāmudito-pekṣaṇām-sukha-
duḥkhapuṇyā-apuṇya-viṣayāṇām
bhāvanātaḥcitta-prasādanam
(sentence-33, samadhipada)*

It means that "All that is mutable in human beings (*Chitta*) is harmonized through the cultivation of love (*maitri*), helpfulness (*karuna*), conviviality (*mudita*) and imperturbability (*upeksha*) in situations that are happy, painful, successful or unfortunate".

7. YOGA- THE PATH TO ATTAIN ONE'S REALITY

As life on this earth is characterized by incessant change and nothing here seems to have the character of reality, nothing here can satisfy man completely. The Bhagavad Gita has referred to this world as "Impermanent, unhappy, the abode of sorrow, transient". The stages of yore declared with immediate that "Truth is one" and that the goal of human life is the realization and the experience of this truth. [6].

The ideal of conduct for a yogi is the removal of ignorance and the realization of the true nature of the self and thus ultimately to dissociate the soul from the bondage of matter. This end can only be attained when even the last germ of avidya potency has been removed. For such a complete removal it is first necessary that the yogi should safeguard himself against the inrush of any new emotions of pleasure or self-love by dissociating himself completely from all attachments. [7].

We cannot find true and ultimate bliss (*ananda*) in the outside world. It lies within our self. Real and ultimate bliss may only be gained through wisdom, meditation and divine grace. To realize God and to be conscious of his grace, we must drive away the clouds of ignorance from our consciousness.

The four path of yoga lead us to this goal:

1. *Karma yoga-Karma yoga* is one of the main streams of yoga. "karma" literally means action. The aim of Karma yoga is attaining union with the higher self by

harmonizing the actions. karma yoga exhorts the person to perform his work to the best of his/her abilities without any attachment to the results. In karma yoga, the frame of mind with which the actions are performed is important. In Bhagavad Gita lord Krishna says-

*"karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭe
māphaleṣukadācana
mā karma-phala-heturbhūr
mātesango 'stvakarmani'". [8].*

It means do your duty and be detached from its outcome, do not be driven by the end product, enjoy the process of getting there.

2. *Bhakti Yoga*-The path of devotion and worship is a systematic method of engaging the mind in the practice of divine love. This mode of worship consists of unending and loving remembrance of God. Bhakti means selfless, unconditional and pure love. It is characterized by tyaga (sacrifice). The person merges himself with the God. The attitude of love and devotions calm down the mind. Devotional sessions are good tools which are used in yoga. The highest form of Bhakti does not crave for the fulfilment of any desire and is unconditional.
3. *Raja Yoga-Raja Yoga* is the practical method of self-realization and God realization that enables you to create new attitudes and responses to life, giving you a clear spiritual understanding of yourself and supreme.
4. *Jnana yoga*-The path of knowledge is related to the "self" and the world and realization of ultimate reality. jnana means knowledge and wisdom. In *Jnana yoga* the person uses his intellect and helps gain knowledge and keep the person away from avidya-the root cause of the sorrows. *Jnana yoga* is the process of learning to discriminate between what is real and what is not. Though realization of the distinction between real and unreal, one develops into a Jnana yogi.

8. AFTER ADOPTING YOGIC LIFESTYLE-THE WAY OF LIFE"

After living in a yogic way of life we can feel the change of our mindset and outlook of life-develop compassion to other beings, perform selfless service, develop

contentment, contribute to society and community, develop inner happiness. Now a person will not only think about himself he will think of others also.

sarve' bhavantusukhinaḥ,
sarve' santuniramayāḥ
sarve' bhadraṇipashyantu,
mākaśchid_duḥkha-bhāg-bhave't
Om shantih, shantih, shantih,

Yoga can change the personality of a man in this way-animal man to normal man, normal man to great man, great man to superman, superman to divine man. Here, we can say that yoga is the conscious process for accelerating this growth.

9. CONCLUSION

Yoga is meant to lift the aspirant from lower levels of renunciation where objects are renounced to loftier heights where desires are dead, and where the yogi dwells in a calm and ceaseless contemplation, while his mind and body are actively employed in discharging the duties that fall to his lot in life. Yoga is the discipline of the mind, senses and physical body. Yoga helps in the co-ordination and control of the subtle forces within the body. Yoga brings in perfection, peace and everlasting happiness. Yoga can help in your business and in your daily life. You can have calmness of mind at all times by the practice of yoga. You can have restful sleep. You can have increased energy, vigour, vitality, longevity and a high standard of health. Yoga transmutes animal nature and raises you to the pinnacle of divine, glory and splendour.

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