

YOGA PARICHAYA

(Theoretical aspects of Yoga)

Part -1

Atma Prem

SAMYAMA YOGA PRAKASHANA

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YOGA PARICHAYA

Yoga is not an ancient myth buried in oblivion. It is the most valuable inheritance of the present. It is the essential need of today and the culture of tomorrow.

- Swami Sathyananda Saraswathi



Yoga Sadhana begins with the body in the form of exercise, but it is a science to discover the sense of oneness with oneself. Yoga creates awareness of oneself by bringing the changes in one's lifestyle and is a way of life.

- ATMA PREM

PREFACE



Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. According to Rig Veda, “*Education is something which makes a man self-reliant and selfless*”. Swami Vivekananda says, “*Education is the process of manifestation of perfection already in man*”. Upanishad says, “*Education is that whose end-product is salvation*”.

Present education system doesn't seem to fulfill the required goal of ancient scriptures, i.e., integrated development of body, mind and spirit. Adding yoga as part of syllabus and curriculum in the educational system helps to fulfill all the above definitions and develops all-round personality to achieve the goal of life that is salvation or self-realization.

Yoga is getting more popular in this modern age. Though yoga is a spiritual science, its application and practice in all the fields is required and has become essential, because of its validity and efficacy. It works not only as a Health management practice, but also can be used for preventative and adjunct therapy.

Yoga is a philosophy, life-style and is a technique that evolves the whole person, the physical, vitality, mind and emotions, wisdom, ethics, a higher quality of relationships and the realization of the spiritual reality. Yoga has been established as a science of life which promotes health, peace and tranquility.

Yoga, a science not less than 5000 years old, has addressed a normal man to move towards higher states of harmony and peace, both as

an individual and also as a social being. The science of Yoga applies itself to all aspects of life.

This book gives a Yoga student a glimpse of the huge knowledge base from the relevant concepts and practices. It presents a brief introduction and theory of Yogic concepts, history and origin of Yoga, streams of Yoga, mind and body concept, concept of mantra, yogic concept of Health and Yogic way of life.

This book helps all Yoga Sadhakas interested in understanding the yogic concepts. When learning the practices of yoga, guidance from a competent Yoga teacher is recommended. So Yoga Sadhakas or Yoga students must be aware of these and apply the concept of theory while in practice.

It is my great honor and privilege to have blessings and Foreword note by our beloved Guruji Dr. H R Nagendra, Chancellor of S-VYASA Yoga University, and also to have the blessings of Sri Prakash Yogi Guruji, President of Patanjali Yogashrama Trust®.

We are indebted to Samyama Yoga Mahavidyalaya students and Yoga teachers for their help in preparing this book. Special thanks to Sri Raghavendra Prasad who is a true Karma Yogi for his valuable DTP work

Atma Prem

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FOREWORD



Yoga has evolved as an attractive lifestyle intervention that uses mind-body techniques to harmonize body, breath and mind thereby helping in prevention, management and rehabilitation of common non-communicable disorders. But, in reality, Yoga is a pure medical science which is research based and clinically proved. In the last

two decades, scientific researchers have brought yoga therapy into mainstream as an important lifestyle adjunct. Presently, Yoga is being popularized throughout the world because of its health and wellness benefits like physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects.

To understand the basic concepts of Yoga, its origin and history and the different streams of Yoga which is becoming a very essential to all the Yoga students and the Yoga Sadhakas. As Yoga was originated in India 5000 years back, now it is getting popularity because of its various branches like, Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and Karma Yoga etc... across the World. To understand the different concepts of Yoga and its importance in daily Sadhana is also important to a Sadhaka, which is clearly narrated by the author in this book.

This book gives a brief introduction about basics of Yoga and its streams. A student of Yoga can understand in a simpler way, and helps to pursue higher studies in Yoga. This book is not only useful to the students, but also a precise text for a Yoga Sadhaka to understand Yoga in a better way.

Author of the book with his spiritual name, Atmaprem, is a student of S-VYASA deemed to be University, has written this Yoga Parichaya in context with Vedanta and Bhagavadgita. It is very useful handbook for laymen as well as yoga enthusiasts. I congratulate the editorial team and wish the author to continue to publish more such books. I wish the readers an enlightening experience which would earmark a journey towards healthy life style.

Dr. H. R. Nagendra

Chancellor, S-VYASA

DEDICATION

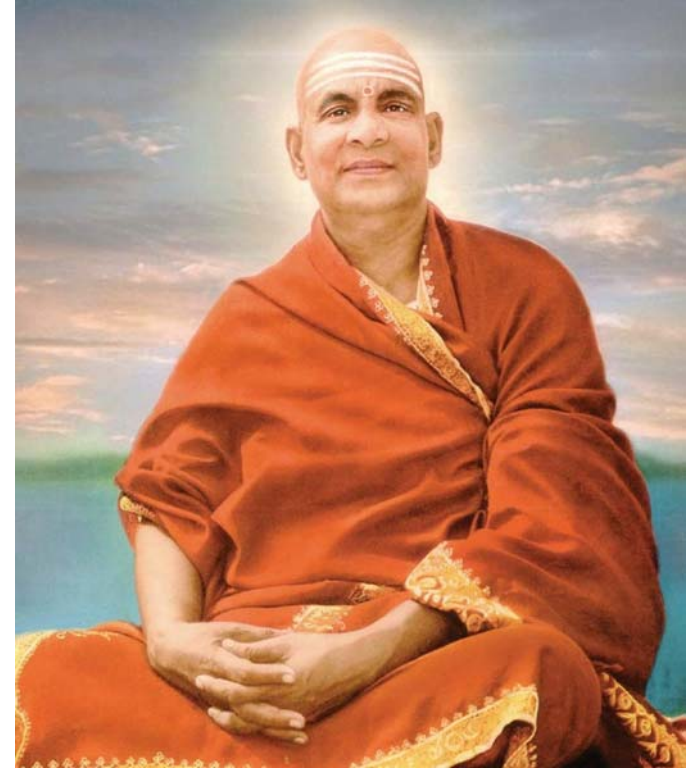


Dedicated to Parents

Smt Dr Gangambike

Vaidya Vidwan, Veda Brahma

Sri Dr SHM Basavaraja Shastriji



Yoga is taking care of body/mind/spirit, not seeking after fitness or beauty, or health. Yoga is finding the cause of our suffering and showing the way to get out of it – to be free from it.

Swami Shivananda

CONTENT



Strength is Life, Weakness is Death.

Swami Vivekananda

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Introduction

Yoga, is a science, as well as art of wellbeing, can be achieved by purifying and uniting the body, mind and the soul. Wellbeing is a state of being healthy and also being happy which can be achieved by using a tool known as Yoga.

Yoga literally means “union” and refers to the union of mind and body. Yoga is a holistic practice which emphasizes mind-body connectedness and involves postures, breathing, and meditation. Yoga is a 5,000 years old practice that began in ancient India. It is receiving growing recognition by western science and health professionals as a powerful tool for promoting mental and physical well-being. Essentially, Yoga is a preventative and cost-effective approach to overall well-being. Yoga is not a religion. Although Yoga sometimes interweaves philosophies such as Hinduism or Buddhism, it is not necessary to practice those philosophies in order to practice yoga. It is also not necessary to surrender your own religious beliefs to practice Yoga.

According to Maharishi Patanjali, Yoga is the way to control the subtle expressions of one’s own personality (*Atha Yoga Anushasana* PY-1). After attaining this control one can attain the ability to block or to channel the currents of consciousness, the vrittis. (*Tada Drstu swarupe Avasthanam* PY-2). Personality is the quality or state of being a person; personal existence, is the sum total of all the behavioral and mental characteristics by means of which an individual is recognized as being unique.

Yoga is a fantastic remedy for overcoming problems that a person is facing in their daily life. It helps to enhance the auto-immune system, to increase the vital energy in the body system. The practise of Yoga is not a course or exam which can be completed within a stipulated period of time. But it is based on the dedication towards their practice.

The root cause of all the physical, mental, emotional conflict and sufferings, which man experiences in day to day life, is disharmony and imbalance of mind and body. This imbalance and emotional conflict do not allow man to attain peace of mind. So, continuous imbalance in the mind and emotional conflict makes one to depress and lose mental clarity. This is where Yoga comes in as a way, as a means to eliminate the areas of imbalance and to obtain a greater inner clarity and harmony. This is the Aim of Yoga. Practising Yoga with this idea in mind, one can attain harmony automatically and remove many diseases and problems of our life.

There are many systems of Yoga to attain this harmony and to remove the ignorance of life. Hatha Yoga is one system through which one can obtain physical strength, mental strength and purity. Karma Yoga is a system by which one can become free from the effects of action from negative and positive inputs of life and maintain the inner balance. Bhakti Yoga is a method of channeling the pure energy of feeling and emotion for the discovery of the self, the inner being. One can discover the dormant areas of mind and consciousness by practicing Raja Yoga. Jnana Yoga is the highest path, to realize the self by adopting four fold qualification (Sadhana Chatustaya). In this way, the different Yoga practice helps one to direct one's efforts towards the discovery of the self. Thus, Yoga is a process of constant and continuous discovery of the self.

Yoga is not a magic or rope trick. It is not merely a set of Yogasanas, Pranayama or Meditation, but it is a science of holistic living consisting of a value system featured by Health and Wealth, Bliss and Poise, Harmony and Efficiency. Yoga is an ancient mind/body practice which originated in the Indian sub-continent that promotes overall Health and Well-being.

In this book, different streams of Yoga are described and elaborated widely.

1. Yoga - Meaning and Definition

The word Yoga is derived from Sanskrit verbal root 'Yuj', means "to join" or "to unite". (*Yujyate Anena Iti Yogah*). Literally Yoga means to unite mind and body, practicing Yoga leads to unite individual consciousness (*Jivatma*) with the universal consciousness (*Paramatma*).



Yuj has 3 meanings understood in the following senses:

- YUJIR YOGA* - Means to unite
- YUJ SAMADHAU* - Means to perfect concentration of mind
- YUJ SAMYAMAE* - Means to self-restraint

If derived from root '*Yujir Yoge*', it means to 'unite'. If it is derived from '*Yuj Samadhau*', it means 'perfect concentration of mind'. Combining these two senses one can say that it stands for the art and science of concentration of mind which helps the spiritual aspirant to ultimately unite his individual soul (*Jivatma*) with supreme soul (*Paramatma*). It means to attain Samadhi, which is to experience a deep meditative state of consciousness in which one stays connected to *Paramatma*. It is controlling thoughts in the mind to see the self within clearly. It is like cleaning the mirror of our mind to see our own self.

Definitions of Yoga

Maharishi Patanjali, one of the great rishis (seer), has compiled the essential features and principles of Yoga in the form of “*Patanjali Yoga Sutras*”. He defines Yoga as

‘*Yogah chitta vritti nirodah* (PYS 1:2)’, a process of gaining control or mastery over mind. It is also the objective of Yoga.



Maharishi Vasishtha defines Yoga as ‘*Manah prashamanopayah Yoga ityabhi dhiyate*’ – Yoga is called a skillful method to calm down the mind.

Swami Swatmarama says Hatha Yoga is the union of Sun and Moon or union of Prana and Apana. Hatha Yoga doesn’t mean physical yoga; it is a system of techniques which bring about a state of harmony between lunar and solar forces in the physical body.

Swami Swathmarama, the author of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, emphasized that Hatha Yoga is to be practiced for the role of the purpose of preparing oneself for the highest state of *Raja Yoga*, i.e., *Samadhi*.

Hatha Yoga (Yoga of Purification) is also one of the streams of Yoga which mainly concentrates on purification of internal organs and balancing the mind and body.

Katha Upanishad says

‘*Tam yogamiti manyante sthiramindriyadharanam*’ (2.6.11) it means, stability of senses is considered to be Yoga.

Srimad Bhagavadgita presents a very vast explanation of Yoga. In action, Yoga is a special skill which makes the mind reach its subtler state. In his teachings, Lord Krishna defined Yoga as

‘*Yogah Karmasu Kaushalam*’

Yoga is skill in action. Skill is in maintaining relaxation and awareness in action. Relaxed action is the process. Efficiency in action is an outcome. If the action is done without any thirst for reward, one gets purification of heart and ultimately knowledge of the self.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes an all round personality development; at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. It is a systematic process for accelerating the growth of a man in his entirety. With this growth, man learns to live at the higher states of consciousness. By culturing the mind, one can develop an all round personality.



Swami Vivekananda has interpreted and elaborated Yoga mentioned in Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita and Patanjali Yoga Sutra and preached four streams of Yoga, for the realization of soul’s freedom.

Four streams to Yoga are:

- *Karma Yoga* (Yoga of perfect action)
- *Bhakti Yoga* (Yoga of perfect devotion or worship)
- *Jnana Yoga* (Yoga of perfect knowledge or philosophy)
- *Raja Yoga* (Yoga of mind culture or psychic control)



Thus, Yoga is an expansion of the narrow constricted egoistic personality to an all pervasive, eternal and blissful state of reality.

2. Origin, History and Development of Yoga

Origin of Yoga

Yoga has its origin in the Sankhya philosophy of Indian culture which is about 8000 years old. Yoga, being widely considered as an ‘immortal cultural outcome’ of Indus Saraswati Valley civilization – dating back to 2700 B.C., has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity.



Archeological findings such as the yogi-like figures engraved on soapstone seals, verify the existence of Yoga during this period.



The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of Yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or *Adi Yogi*, and the first Guru or *Adi Guru*. Parvathi is his first disciple. Lord Shiva is widely considered to be the symbol or embodiment of supreme consciousness, Parvathi represents supreme knowledge, will and action, and is responsible for all creation. This force or energy is also known as *Kundalini Shakti*, the cosmic force which lies dormant in all human beings. Parvathi is considered as the mother of the universe. Individual soul is embodied and bound to the world of name and form, liberated from the bondage of the world and united with supreme consciousness through her grace. Out of love and compassion for her children, she imparted the secret knowledge of liberation in the form of tantra. The techniques of Yoga have their source in tantra and the two cannot be separated, like Shiva and Shakti.

History of Yoga

The tradition of Yoga is ancient and relates to Vedic era. The Yoga practices we know today was developed as a part of the Tantric civilization existed in all parts of the world and in India more than ten thousand years ago. Many statues have been found depicting deities resembling Lord Shiva and Parvathi, performing various Asanas and practicing meditation in archeological excavations made in the Indus Valley at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, now in modern Pakistan. According to mythical tradition, Shiva is said to be the founder of Yoga and Parvathi, his first disciple. Lord Shiva is considered to be the symbol of supreme consciousness and Parvathi, supreme knowledge.

Yoga arose at the beginning of the human civilization when man first realized his spiritual potential and began to evolve techniques to develop it. The Yogic science was slowly evolved and developed by ancient sages all over the world. Some traditions believe that Yoga

was a divine gift to the mankind to realize its divine nature. The beginning of Yoga cannot be traced with accuracy. Some trace back to over five thousand years, but some speculate that Yoga may be up to ten thousand years old.

The history of Yoga can be studied under four categories:

- Vedic period
- Pre-classical period
- Classical period
- Post-classical period

Vedic period (3000 BC to 800 BC)



During the Vedic period, Yoga was practiced ritually, to develop concentration, and to transcend the mundane. The rituals practiced during this period are quite different from the present practices of yoga. The rituals of the Vedic period are close to the definition of Yoga: union of the individual self with the supreme self. The ancient texts of Vedas are the oldest scriptures in the world. The Sanskrit word Veda means “knowledge” and rik means “praise”. Thus the Rigveda is a collection of hymns that are in praise of a higher power. Other three Vedas are Yajur Veda (knowledge of Yajña), Sâma Veda (Knowledge of chants), and Atharva Veda (knowledge of worldly affairs given by the sage Atharvâ). In Vedic period it was considered that the means to higher attainment was the Knowledge revealed to sages from the Universe through meditation. It comprises of three Yogas – Mantra Yoga, where the power of mantra, through which the mantra becomes active as a tool of transformation in the mind, Prâna Yoga – through Prânâyâma which energizes the vital force. Dhyâna Yoga – The word dhî’, which means Buddhi or intellect is the root for the term ‘dhyâna’ or meditation.

Dhî is the higher and interior portion of the mind (manas), which enables us to perceive the eternal truth. This cultivation of dhî or buddhi, the main faculty of discrimination, is the main characteristic of Yoga, Vedânta and Buddhism.

Pre-classical period (800 BC to 250 BC)

The Upanishads, Mahabharata and the Bhagavad Gita contain several references to yoga. In the Maitrâyanî Upanishad; Yoga is spoken about as: Sadanga-Yoga – The uniting discipline of the six limbs (Sad-anga), as expounded in the Maitrâyanî-Upanishad:

1. Breath control (prânâyâma),
2. Withdrawal of senses (pratyâhâra),
3. Meditation (dhyâna),
4. Concentration (dharanâ),
5. Recalling and examination (tarka), and
6. Transcendental state (samâdhi).

Yoga is the state in which all our Indriyas are beheld steadily i.e., a state of mastery over senses and mind, as portrayed in Katopanishad (2.5.4). The state of samâdhi is preceded by the indiscriminate impressions such as fog, smoke, sunlight, wind, crystals, etc. (Svetâsvatara Upanishad 2.11).

One of the most outstanding Yoga scriptures is the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, which was composed around 500 B.C. According to the Bhagavadgîtâ, there are four paths which lead to establishing a relationship with the Supreme. These have been designated as the Yoga of perfect actions (Karma Yoga), the Yoga of perfect devotion (Bhakti Yoga), the Yoga of perfect knowledge (Jñâna Yoga), and the Yoga of will power (Râja Yoga). The Bhagavadgîtâ consists of 18



chapters. Each chapter is called a form of Yoga. Each chapter is a highly specialized Yoga revealing the path of attaining realization of the Ultimate Truth. Bhagavadgîtâ gives specific knowledge regarding the purpose of human existence, the immortality of the soul and our eternal relationship with the Supreme. This knowledge applies to each and every one of us without exception.

Classical period (184 BC to 148 BC)



Patanjali's Yoga Sutra have been credited as the foundation of classical Yoga. During the classical period, around 2nd century BCE, Patañjali systemized the practice of Yoga and documented in his work, the Yoga Sûtra, comprising 196 aphorisms, elucidating the eight steps (Astanga) to reach the

goal of human life which is freedom from miseries of death and birth. This is known as the Yoga of willpower or *Râja Yoga* or *Ashtanga Yoga*.

Patanjali set out the following as a means for living a life of purpose and meaning.

- Yama – Social discipline.
- Niyama – Self-discipline.
- Asana – Physical postures
- Pranayama – Controlling of the breaths
- Pratyahara – Controlling the senses
- Dharana – Concentration.
- Dhyana - Meditation.
- Samadhi - Enlightenment.



Buddha who existed a few centuries before this period taught us an eight fold path emphasizing on meditation. Vipâsanâ is one of India's most ancient meditation techniques. Long lost to humanity, it was revived by Gautama, the Buddha more than 2500 years ago. The word Vipâsanâ means seeing things as they really are. It is the process of self-purification by self observation.

One begins by monitoring the natural breath to concentrate the mind. With a sharpened attentiveness one proceeds to observe the changing nature of body and mind and experiences the universal truths of the mortal and miserable life.

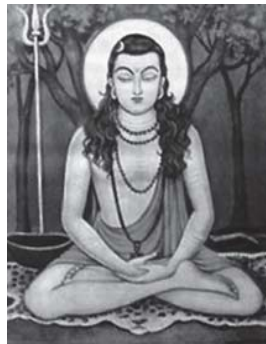
Pratyâhâra and cintana (contemplation) are two important wings of Yoga in Jainism.

Post-Classical period (800 AD to 1700 AD)

A few centuries after the classical period, Yoga masters created a system of practice that was designed to rejuvenate the body and prolong life. The physical body and its upkeep started gaining its significance because the body was considered as the vehicle for the soul to attain the enlightenment.

Tantra Yoga was developed with revolutionary techniques emphasizing upon the cleansing practices for strengthening psycho-physiological structure of the human being so that it becomes fit to reach higher states of consciousness. The exploration of physical, spiritual connections and body center practices led to the creation of what is referred to as Hatha Yoga. Buddha (around 6th century B.C.) had popularized meditation on the entire subcontinent.

However, there was a point of disagreement that one cannot start the spiritual practices with meditation immediately. One has to prepare oneself for meditation. During the 6th century A.D, when the influence of Buddhism had declined, some great Yogis like Matsyendranâtha and Gorakanâtha set out to purify the system. There were many treatises on Hatha Yoga written during this time. The main texts written during this period are Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Svâtmârâma, Gheranda Samhitâ a conversational treatise, Hatharatnâvalî by Srinivâsa Yogî which also discusses Âyurveda along with Yoga, Siva Samhita, Siddha Siddhânta Paddhati by Nityanâtha etc.



Guru Gorakanâtha is believed to be the founder of the Nâtha Sampradâya and it is stated that the nine Nathas and 84 Siddhas are all human forms created as Yogic manifestations to spread the message of Yoga and meditation in the world. They were yogis, who revealed samâdhi to mankind. Guru Gorakanâtha is thought to have authored several books including: Goraka Samhitâ, Goraka Gîtâ and Yoga Cintâmani.

Evolution of Yoga - Yoga in modern times (1700 AD onwards)

Yoga was developed as a way to achieve harmony between the body and mind and the path to divine enlightenment. Modern age of Yoga was set to begin from the last part of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Yoga travelled to the west with some renowned Yoga masters, the most prominent among them being Swami Vivekananda. From the 1970s the modern Yoga spread across many countries of the world. Yoga and its tradition received strong inspiration and impulse due to the pioneering efforts of several legends in India.

1. T Krishnamachari – Ashtanga Yoga [Father of Modern Yoga]
2. BKS Iyengar – Iyengar Yoga
3. K Pattabhi Jois – Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga
4. TKV Deshikachar – Viniyoga [Modern Yoga]
5. Swami Shivananda – Shivananda Yoga.
6. Yogendra Ji – Yoga Institute.
7. Swami Kuvalyanandji – Kaivalyadhama Health and Research.
8. Swami Sathyananda – Bihar School of Yoga.
9. Swami Rama, Maharshi Mahesh Yogi
10. Sri Sri Ravishankar – Art of Living
11. Swami Ramdev – Patanjali Yoga
12. Dr. HR Nagendra – SVYASA Yoga University.
13. Jaggi Vasudev Ji – Isha Yoga Foundation
14. Shri Aurobindo – Integral Yoga.



Swami Vivekananda summarized the Vedanta's teachings as follows:

- Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, both external and internal.

- Do this either by action (Karma Yoga) or worship (Bhakti Yoga), or psychic control (Râja Yoga) or philosophy (Jñâna Yoga)—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.
- This is the whole of religion. The doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

Theoretical Background of Yoga

Yoga is one of the oldest and one of the most perfect sciences of the world originated from India, which is very useful for both attaining and maintaining physical, mental and moral health. Yoga is a perfect Indian science and one of the orthodox branches of Indian philosophy. Yogic science is based mainly on the principles of Physiology and Physics. According to one of the classical Hatha Yoga text, Yoga started with the development of civilization. As per Hatha Yoga Pradeepika, Lord Shiva is the first teacher of Yoga, whereas as Bhagavad Gita says, Lord Krishna is the first teacher of Yoga. According to Indian Philosophies, Veda is considered to be a reliable source of knowledge of reality. These schools accept the idea that knowledge can be transmitted from higher authority, and therefore, they base their philosophical systems on the scriptures. Some historical researchers have proved that Yoga was present during the time of Vedas. Yoga in the sense of spiritual means, it is inseparable from the Indian philosophical tradition, hence it is known as **‘Yoga Darshana’**. However, Vedas are the primeval source of Yoga. After the period of Vedas, a great saint called Maharishi Patanjali codified and systematized Yoga, its meaning and its related knowledge through the techniques (sutras) known as **‘Patanjala Yoga Sutras’**, which consists of four padas (chapters). After Patanjali, many sages have contributed greatly to the field of Yoga through their practices and literature. Various traditions of Yoga are found in other religions like Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

Misconceptions of Yoga

The word Yoga refers to different things in today’s modern age. It is understood by some categories of people as a typical religion which is not correct, because Yoga is a way of life. It has nothing to do with any religion, because Yoga teaches one to understand the purpose of life and lead a healthy happy life.



Some have understood Yoga as an Indian form of exercise which has to do with specific body postures. But, Yoga is not restricted to physical postures, so it is beyond body concept. Body is known as Annamaya Kosha in Yoga and Yoga basically begins with the physical practices which prepare the body to attain the goal of Yoga.



Some have also mis-understood Yoga as a breathing practice and relaxation technique. Though in Yoga Practice, breathing and relaxation techniques are introduced, they are not just restricted to this, but Yoga is beyond Prana concept. Yoga helps to understand the concept of Prana and Mind.

Yoga Therapists may understand it as an alternative therapy system which helps in recovery from illness. Though Yoga helps to prevent, cure and manage psychosomatic disorders, it goes one step beyond to understand life and the self.



Yoga is not a magic or trick and as it was understood by the common man as Yoga is for only the persons who are away from social culture and live without a family, which is also not right. Anyone can practice Yoga and adopt Yogic way of life and fulfill the purpose

of life Yoga is much more than the above, which is the integration of mind- body-spirit into one harmonious whole. Yoga strives to attain inner peace and union with the environment by means of quietening the constant fluctuations of the mind, creating a healthy body and being at peace and harmony.

Relevance of Yoga to Modern Society

Modern era is the era of science and technology filled up with stress and tension not only physical, but also mental and emotional aspects. Human beings, searching for techniques and methods to come out and also to manage this stress and tension, are failing in this due to ignorance of the self or wrong understanding of life. Our present day life is so hectic and stressful.



The lifestyle of human beings with the passage of time has gradually changed. Science has dominated the present age and modern man fully depends on it. Physical labor has reduced and ultimately the health of modern man has weakened due to lack of workout. In this age of competition, life is so hard and stressful, man is unable to cope up and hence suffering from various psychological and physiological disorders.

Our ancient seers have given us a lot of methods and techniques of Yoga to manage both physical and mental stress. But, human beings are unaware of this and sufferings with lot of psycho-somatic disorders which are the major global health problems.

India is emerging as a leader both in science and technology, and culture. Yoga is based on the philosophy that is practical and useful for our daily lives. Yoga constructs desirable, physiological alterations and has a sound scientific foundation.

The importance of Yoga in modern life can be categorized under physical, mental and spiritual benefit. Yoga is base. No other science, except Yoga, deals with these problems altogether. Yoga manages all problems simultaneously and develops all-round personality.

The aim of Yoga is achievement of physical, mental and spiritual harmony. It is an internal expedition that creates an awareness and understanding of the self, and leads to self-transformation. Yoga is a science of controlling mind, body and breath by unlocking the hidden potential energies through different methods like Yogasanas, Pranayama and Meditations. Many human beings with their busy schedule have even forgotten the correct way of breath, which causes so many psychosomatic disorders. Pranayama is the fourth limb of Ashtanga Yoga which helps to correct the breathing.

In today's modern age, adopting Yoga as a way of life, and practicing the method or techniques regularly helps the human kind to solve all the problems. Regular Yoga practice builds mental lucidity and coolness, boosts body awareness, relieves stress patterns, relaxes the mind and sharpens concentration.



Yoga is multi-dimensional aspect and its scope has increased in modern life. Hence, Yoga is a boon to human kind which acts as a preventative, curative medicine to overcome all the modern age problems.

Modern research has recognized the scientific roots of Yogic practices. Now, Yoga is internationally recognized and 21st June is celebrated as International Day of Yoga. Hence there is an urgent need to popularize Yoga and to reach common man for its best utilization.

3. Streams of Yoga

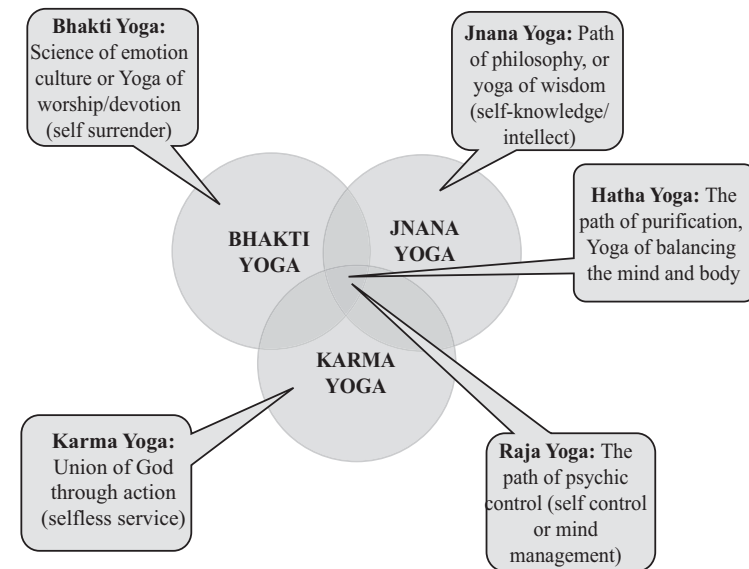
Ways of Liberation

Yoga philosophy is one of the important philosophy among the six Indian philosophies. Different philosophies based on different interpretations of the scriptures in world religions, there are different schools in the world of Yoga. The idea of Indian Philosophy is self-realization, which can be attained through various ways. Accordingly, the living science of Yoga has been organized into different paths or approaches over the centuries. Human beings with so much diversity of thoughts and feelings would find several paths to their spiritual development in the realm of Yoga. There are a number of recognized paths of Yoga, of which five have gained prominence in the ancient culture of India.

Traditional Schools of Yoga

There are various traditional schools that teach different philosophies, lineages, traditions, and Guru-Shishya parampare in Yoga. The different traditions include Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Patanjala Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Dhyana Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Laya Yoga, Raja Yoga, and so on. Each school has its own way of teaching and practices that led the seekers their aim and objectives.

- Hatha Yoga – The path of purification, Yoga of balancing the mind and body.
- Jnana Yoga – The path of philosophy, or Yoga of wisdom
- Raja Yoga – The path of psychic control (self-control or mind management)
- Karma Yoga – Union of God through action (selfless service)
- Bhakthi Yoga – Science of emotion culture or Yoga of devotion



All these five main streams of Yoga, utilizes the body and mind, intellect, will, instruments of knowledge, action and emotions, respectively. Yoga is thus the generic name of all the above methods which bring about realization, which leads to liberation at the end. According to the temperaments of different people, these streams of Yoga can be practiced.

Other streams of Yoga like Kundalini Yoga, Mantra Yoga, Japa Yoga, and Laya Yoga are either parts of any other main streams or permutation and combinations of them. All the paths of Yoga are complementary to one another, have the same goal to achieve, namely realization of the potential divinity within us. This carries the basic message of unity in diversity, which forms the essence of Indian Culture.

Swami Vivekananda condensed the entire basis, essence and streams of Yoga in a single proclamation.

Each soul is potentially divine; the goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy by one or more, or all of these and be free.

4. Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga is method of preparing the human system for spiritual awakening but it is also a very important science of health. Hatha Yoga is a science which everyone can practice a few techniques according to his or her own capacity. The word Hatha is made up of two Bhija mantras Ham and Tham. Ha means 'Sun' and Tha means 'Moon'. Hatha Yoga is the balancing of these two energy systems in the human being. Hatha practices lead from the body to the mind and spirit.

Hatha represents the force of mind and Prana, or vitality, which constitutes the body and mind. Moon is the mental energy of Chitta, whereas Sun is the pranic force or dynamic force. These two create the extremities of introversion and extroversion. It is the practice of Hatha Yoga which enables the fluctuations between these two energies to become harmonious and unified into one force.

In Hatha Yoga, Ida (Chandra Nadi) represents the negative force, the flow of consciousness, while Pingala (Surya Nadi) represents the positive force, the flow of vital energy. Sushumna Nadi represents the neutral force, the flow of spiritual energy. Hatha Yoga is not only the union of Prana and Mind, in fact it means the union of Prana and Mind with the self. So, the union of Ida and Pingala Nadi with Sushumna Nadi is Hatha Yoga.

Hatha Yoga is also interpreted as "forceful yoga" since, for all Yoga forms, it calls for the most physical exercises. It focuses on the practice of physical postures (Asanas) and breathing exercises (Pranayama) to vitalize the subtle channels (Nadis) in the human being.

Swami Swatmarama goes on to explain that the Purpose of Hatha Yoga is for the purification of the body and to create complete harmony

between the body systems and the brain. Hatha Yoga is to be utilized as a means of preparing oneself for *Raja Yoga*, which leads to the state of *Meditation* and *Samadhi*.

Meaning

Hatha Yoga is a science of purification that integrates various branches of Yoga and brings harmonious development of an individual.

The word Hatha is made up of two Bhija Mantras Ham-Tham. Ham represents 'Surya', vital, solar energy in the human system. Tham represents 'Chandra', mental, lunar energies. This is symbolic of the twin energy forces which exist in everything.

Science of Hatha Yoga

Hatha Yoga though is more body oriented, starts with body, prepares the ground for reaching higher states of consciousness and the final goal of Unmani avastha. (No mind state) or Manonmani avastha (without mind state). The body is first purified with Shodhana Kriyas, made free of toxics so that the energy channels are streamlined. Asanas strengthens and makes the body disease free. Pranayama practices with Bandhas to enable the Kundalini awakening leading to the state of self-realization.

Aims and objectives and purpose of Hatha Yoga

The main aim of Hatha Yoga is purification. In order to purify the mind, body has to be purified, not just one type of purification but in six different ways for six different impurities. When the body is purified the Nadis function and energy blocks are released. Energies move throughout the channels within the physical structures moving right up to the brain.

Objectives of Hatha Yoga

The main objective of Hatha Yoga is to create an absolute balance of the interacting activities and process of the physical body, mind

and energy. When this balance is created, the central force, Sushumna Nadi will awaken which is responsible of evolution of human consciousness.

Purpose of Hatha Yoga

In ancient India, Hatha Yoga was practiced for many years as a preparation for higher state of consciousness, but now the practice of Hatha Yoga is used in a limited sense for management of health. The true purpose of Hatha Yoga practice is to develop the total personality at physical and mental health and the purpose of Hatha Yoga is not just becoming free from disease, but also freedom from bondage and the unexpected changes of mind.

Goal of Hatha Yoga

The goal of Hatha Yoga is to discover and experience the universal spirit within oneself and not merely practiced to improve or restore health, or to reduce stress, or to prevent the body from ageing or to build up the body.

Hatha Yoga can be considered as the preliminary practice for success in Tantra, Raja Yoga, Kundalini Yoga and Kriya Yoga.

History of Hatha Yoga

Historical period of Hatha Yoga

Systematic form of Hatha Yoga began to emerge in India during the 6th Century AD. However, there are evidences of Hatha Yoga being found in the pre-Columbian culture of the Americas, there are large stone figures and carvings depicting the Hatha Yoga practices. Many sects were formed in India, Nepal and Tibet on the basis of Hatha Yoga.

After about 500 years after Buddha, the popularity and influence of Buddhism declined and so did the tantric sects and practices. Some

great Yogis like Matsyendranath and Gorakhnath separated the Hatha Yoga and the Raja Yoga practices of Tantra. They picked up some useful and noble practical practices from the tantric system. Though Buddha was a great personality, his teachings remained as psychological experiences.

To re-introduce a proper system of meditation Hatha Yoga was established. Matsyendranath founded the Natha culture which says before taking the practices of meditation, one must purify the body and its element.

Lineage of Hatha Yoga

According the Puranas, human being deserves to study the science of Hatha Yoga. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras have the authority to practice Hatha Yoga. This practice bestows peace and pleasure to the mind of the practitioner.

It is believed that the Natha sect came into the existence in the middle of the seventh century, when the influence of Tantra Shastras was prevalent in India. The Natha sect was established to save the society from the heinous practices that were being carried out in the name of spirituality. Adinatha was the first of the Natha Sect who was called Adiguru. Matsyendranath and Gorakhnath were emerged to propagate the message of Yoga.

Swatmarama, writer of Hatha Yoga continued the work of Gorakhanth in Sanskrit language, originally Hatha Yoga was in the form of prose and poetry. Swami Swatmarama shows the lineage of the siddhas of Hatha Yoga. Gorakhnath, who was probably the guru of Swatmarama, belonged to the popular yoga sect called the Nath panth. Nath is a general term meaning 'master'. Members of the Nath sect are commonly called kanphata Yogis. Kanphata means 'split-eared' and refers to the Yogis' unique practice of having the cartilage of the ears pierced for the insertion of huge earrings.

The lineage of Natha, headed by Adinath, preceded by Matsyendranath, who is generally identified with Shiva. With his name at the head of the list, that would indicate that the origins of the sect can be traced back to the greatest of the Yogis, Lord Shiva.

Puranas say that while Lord Shiva was instructing secret Sadhanas of Yoga to Parvathi on the seashore, a large fish overheard all this, and from this fish Matsyendranath was born.

Later Gorakhnath, who was the disciple of Matsyendranath became the founder of Hatha Yoga and the founder of the Nath sect.

The effect of the Nath Yogis was felt worldwide and their influence of the Nath sect was felt all over India and Nepal, particularly around Gorakhpur and Nepal border.

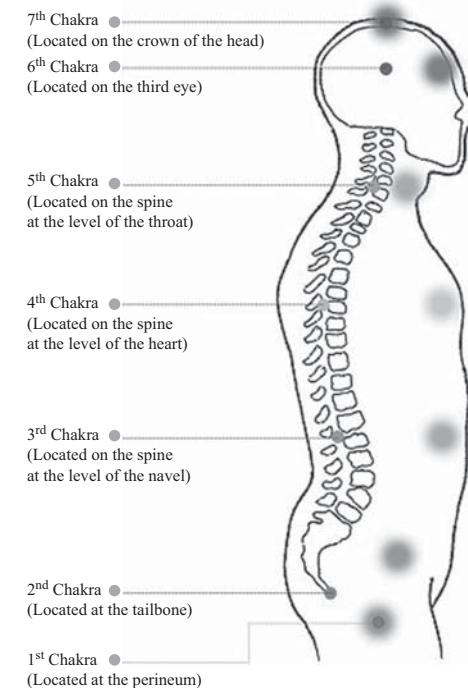
Swami Swatmarama was the disciple of Gorakhnath who was the author of Hatha Yoga Pradipika. He emphasized that Hatha Yoga is to be practiced for the sole purpose of preparing oneself for the highest state of Raja Yoga, i.e., Samadhi.

Mahasiddhas are great beings who attain powers through the perfection of Sadhana. Sadhana in Sanskrit means “to practise”, Sadhana means spiritual effort, not physical or mental effort. It is the effort made to open the doors beyond which there is enlightenment. Sadhana is a highly developed science of evolution and it is practiced for the evolution of oneself. Sadhana is not the end but a means.

A practitioner is known as “*Sadhaka*” and the practices are known as “*Sadhana*”. When Sadhana has matured, the results which are accomplished as known as “*Siddhis*”. According to Raja Yoga, Siddhi means perfection of mind and Sadhana means to train and perfect the crude mind.

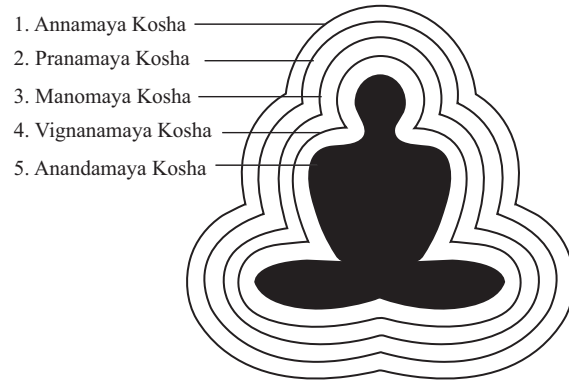
Following eight major siddhis have to be mastered by a Sadhaka to call him as Siddha.

- *Anima* – The ability to become as small as an atom.
- *Laghima* – The ability to become weightless.
- *Mahima* – The ability to become as large as the Universe.
- *Garima* – The ability to become heavy.
- *Prapti* – The ability to reach any place.
- *Prakamya* – The ability to stay under water and to maintain the body and youth.
- *Vashitva* – The ability to have control over all objects, organic and inorganic.
- *Ishatva* – The ability to have the capacity to create and destroy at will.



According to Yoga, human body is the union of five sheaths (*Pancha Kosha*) or there are five bodies existing together:

- Annamaya Kosha (the body of physical matter)
- Pranamaya Kosha (the body of energy)
- Manomaya Kosha (the body of mind)
- Vijnanamaya Kosha (the body of higher intelligence)
- Anandamaya Kosha (the body of bliss)



Hatha Yoga involves in balancing, managing and directing the energies that control the body and guide the mind to achieve well-being.

Swami Swatmarama has completely eliminated *Yama* (moral codes) and *Niyama* (self-restraints), which are the starting points of Buddhists and Jain systems as well as in Patanjali Raja Yoga.

Hatha Yoga emphasizes the methods of bodily control and regulations of breath. It deals with:

1. Shat Karma (Six acts of purification of the body)
2. Asana (Steady posture)
3. Pranayama (Control of breath, prana)
4. Mudras (Sealing)
5. Bandhas (Binding)
6. Exercises on concentration and meditation.

Texts on Hatha Yoga

Sl. No.	Hatha Yoga Texts
1	Hatha Yoga Pradeepika
2	Yogasana Mala
3	Rudraya Mala
4	Hatha Ratnavali
5	Kapala kooranthaka Hatha abhyasa paddati
6	Hatha Sanketha Chandrika
7	Yoga Siddantha Chandrika
8	Gheranda Samhitha
9	Narada Purana
10	Yoga Pradeepyaka (Hindi)

Though there are so many Hatha Yoga texts available, the main four classical and popular texts are as follows:

- Hatha Yoga Pradeepika – Swatmarama
 - Gheranda Samhita – Gheranda
 - Hatha Ratnavali – Srinivasa Yogi
 - Shiva Samhita – Dialogue between Lord Shiva and Parvathi.
1. Hatha Yoga Pradeepika by Swami Swatmarama, a disciple of Swami Gorakhnath, is said to be written in the 15th century in Sanskrit. Swami Swatmarama's Hatha Yoga Pradeepika is known as Chaduranga Yoga, Yoga with four limbs. These four limbs are Asanas, Pranayama, Mudras and Bandhas and Nadanusandhana.
 2. Gheranda Samhita by Gheranda written in the 17th century is one of the most popular texts on Hatha Yoga. Gheranda Samhita is a manual of Yoga taught by Gheranda to Chandra Kapali. This Yoga is known as Saptanga Yoga and these are Shatkarma, Asanas, Mudras, Pratyahara, Pranayama, Dhyana and Samadhi.

3. Hatha Ratnavali by Srinivas Yogi written somewhere between 1625 and 1695AD. This text elaborates the description of Mudras and 84 Asanas.
4. Shiva Samhita is a dialogue between Lord Shiva and Parvathi. The author is unknown. It includes various philosophical points Asanas, Meditation, the different energies in the body and the importance of Guru, the four paths of Yoga, the various methods of liberation and the means to overcome the obstacles in the path of emancipation.

Success and Failure in Hatha Yoga

Causes of Success on the path of Yoga

The science of Hatha Yoga is stated not only for the physical practice intended for the health and fitness but also for awakening vital energies within us (Prana, Chakras, Kundalini Energy).

Hatha Yoga is considered as foundation of all the Yoga and Swatmarama considers the real purpose of Hatha Yoga is to open the gate to self-realization and success has the ability to unlock the gate which leads us there. This success is called as Sadhaka Tattva and is explained in Verse 16 of the Hatha Yoga Pradipika as follows.

1. Enthusiasm (*Utsaha*) – Positive attitude
2. Perseverance (*Dhairya*) – No matter what happens externally, but Sadhana must be done regularly.
3. Discrimination (*Tattva Jnana*)
4. Unshakable faith (*Nishchaya*)
5. Courage (*Sahasa*) – To face the inner fear
6. Avoiding the company of common people.

These six factors can be cultivated anywhere, whether living in a city with family, or alone in a hermitage, a householder should modify them to suit his lifestyle.

Causes of Failure on the path of Yoga

Yoga is destroyed by the following six causes.

1. Overeating (*Atyahara*)
2. Exertion (*Prayasa*)
3. Talkativeness (*Prajalpa*)
4. Adhering to rules (*Niyamagraha*)
5. Company of Common people (*Janasangha*)
6. Fickle mindedness (*Laulya*)

All the six factors result in the dissipation of energy and one of the principles of Hatha Yoga is conservation of energy. Hence Yoga Sadhaka can be aware of these failure factors and must be careful in the path of Sadhana. This failure factors are called as Badhaka Tattva.

In today's world, Hatha Yoga is both the most widely practiced and most widely misunderstood branch of Yoga. In the popular mind, Yoga and Asana have become synonymous. This view not only devalues Hatha Yoga, which is a system of great variety and depth, but also Yoga itself. Hatha Yoga, mainly Asanas, are taught as physical techniques purely for the flexibility and fitness of the body, without understanding the importance of Prana or the Nadis, which are the basis of the science of Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga finds a foundation for other branches of Yoga, as the practitioner evolves towards the transcendence of the mundane mind. Hence Hatha Yoga is not just a physical practice, but a divine blessing to attain success in any field. Though a perfect body is a wholly fit instrument for the mind, one can achieve it through the practice of Hatha Yoga. In the perfect mind, Samadhi passes into pure consciousness itself. Hatha Yoga combats the diseases of body and mind, and helps in attaining radiant health and God realization (Self-realization), which is also the eighth limb of Ashtanga Yoga. So, Hatha Yoga is the basic practice of all other branches to strengthen our physical, mental and spiritual capacity.

Misconceptions about Hatha Yoga

MYTH	FACT
Yoga is a physical exercise	Yoga is a holistic discipline
Before starting Yoga practices, flexibility is important	Fact is Yoga can help anyone gain flexibility with regular practice.
Yoga is not for pregnant women.	Yoga is one of the best practices for pregnant women who can stay healthy during pregnancy.
Yoga practices should be avoided during menstrual cycle.	Specific Yoga techniques can be practiced under the Yoga expert guidance.
Yoga needs too much time.	Any practice of Yoga can be done sitting on the chair for a short duration will have benefits.
Yoga is a religion or Hindu Tradition.	Yoga is a technology that any person who is willing irrespective of caste, colour, and creed can make use of it.
Yoga therapy can cure all diseases	Actually, Yoga is a preventative discipline which has some thereupatic effects in some cases of diseases. It is not a panacea for all ailments.
Yoga is a magic or a rope trick	Yoga is a way of life.
Yoga is understood to be a physical system with spiritual element	Yoga is a physical element in a spiritual system.
Yoga is an early morning regime.	Yoga is not about the time, it is about discipline.
Yoga is universal and same to everyone	Yoga practice is individual temperament, can be modifies (Asanas), to a certain extent keeping in mind the requirement of each person.

Questions**I. Fill in the Blanks**

1. Yoga is derived from Sanskrit verbal root _____
2. Yoga is gaining mastery over the mind is defined by _____
3. Yoga is skill in action; Skill is maintaining _____ and _____
4. Union of prana and apana is _____ Yoga
5. Integral Yoga is defined by _____
6. Yoga is an expansion of _____ personality to an _____ state of reality
7. Yoga has its origin in _____ philosophy of Indian Culture
8. _____ is considered as first yogi or Adi Yogi
9. Veda means _____
10. International Day of Yoga is celebrated on _____ of every year

II. Explain in one or two sentences

1. What is Yoga and its meaning?
2. Define Yoga according to Maharishi Patanjali
3. Skill in Action
4. Aim and Objective of Yoga
5. Name any 6 Yoga masters of Modern times
6. Mention different streams of Yoga

III.Explain in detail

1. Explain the Concept of Yoga in different senses.
2. Origin and History of Yoga
3. Integral Yoga
4. Misconceptions of Yoga
5. Define Yoga according to Swami Vivekananda
6. Relevance of Yoga in Modern Society

5. Jnana Yoga - The path of knowledge

Jnana Yoga is the path of analysis of self, which is known as Yoga of Wisdom. It shows the path of self-realization through discerning the real from the unreal or illusionary. *Jnana* in Sanskrit means “knowledge” or “intellect”.

Jnana Yoga is described by tradition as a means to obtain the highest meditative state and inner knowledge. It is the knowledge of essential divinity and knowledge of the Atman. It is the knowledge of the freedom from worldly miseries which are caused due to bondage, which in turn is due to ignorance.

Ignorance → Bondage → Misery → No Freedom

Ignorance will be dispelled, once the soul realizes its true nature, which is perfection and freedom. Realization of the soul and consequently knowledge about Absolute is achieved through pure reason. Self-realization consists of knowing the immortality, divinity and freedom of the soul or Atman. The aim of Jnana Yoga is to dispel the ignorance of the self.

Objective of Jnana Yoga

Main objective of Jnana Yoga is the process of getting to the very basis of intellect through analysis. It is also a process of converting intellectual knowledge into practical wisdom.

Requirements to follow the path of Jnana Yoga are:

- a. Selflessness (Karma Yoga)
- b. Love of God (Bhakthi Yoga)
- c. Strength of Body and Mind (Raja Yoga)

So, the seeker of God or practitioner of Jnana Yoga must fulfill the above requirements before beginning the path of Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga is strictly a non-dualistic (Advaita Vedanta), path that encourages the Yogi to separate the real from the unreal, and the self from the non-self.

According to the Advaita Vedanta philosophy, Sri Adi Shankaracharya says *Jnana* as the '**Knowledge of the Absolute**' (Brahman).

According to Sri Ramanujacharya in his Vishishtadvaita philosophy, regards knowledge as a condition of Devotion

In Bhagavad Gita (13.3), Krishna considers *Jnana* as properly understanding **kshetra** (field of activity – that is the body) and **kshetrajna** (the knower of the body – that is, the soul)

Knowledge of self leads to knowledge of Supreme, which removes the Ego of a person with the identification of the body as Self.

Goal of Jnana Yoga

The fundamental goal of Jnana yoga is to become liberated from the illusory world of maya (thoughts and perceptions) and to achieve union of the inner Self (Atman) with the oneness of all life (Brahman).

Techniques of Jnana Yoga

The principal techniques involved in this path are contemplation and meditation.

Sadhana Chatustaya – Basic Qualifications of Jnana Yoga

Sadhana Chatustaya is four fold basic disciplines or qualifications and helps in the preparation of intellect, emotion and will, trains the students to begin the study of Vedanta. Sadhana Chatustaya makes the mind pure for grasping the subtle philosophy, without which the

truths of Vedanta will not go deep inside. Practicing Sadhana Chatustaya prepares the mind to study the Atma or the soul.

The four fold qualifications are explained in **Tatva Bodha** and **Viveka Chudamani** of Sri Shankaracharya and are as follows:

1. Viveka or differentiation
2. Vairagya or dispassion
3. Shat Sampat or six disciplines of mind
4. Mumukshatvam or desire for liberation

Viveka – Viveka is the very basis of all other three aspects of Sadhana Chatustaya. It is the intellect which differentiates between the right or wrong, real and unreal, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonor, permanent and impermanent. The differentiation determines the quality of knowledge one has attained (race, caste, material, wealth). Vedanta differentiates between the permanent and ephemeral; Viveka is the understanding that Brahman alone is permanent and everything apart (Universe, body, mind, intellect) it is ephemeral or temporary.

Vairagya – The second aspect of Sadhana Chatustaya is Vairagya or Dispassion. Vairagya means absence of desire to enjoy pleasure i.e., mental detachment from all worldly objects. When Viveka is strong and everything is temporary other than the *Brahman*, Vairagya happens automatically. When the mind doesn't pursue after the infinite pleasure of the senses, then it turns towards the *Self*. A finite pleasure doesn't leave the mind without causing pain.

Without Viveka there can be no Vairagya, and without Vairagya, no spiritual life is possible. Both of these are indispensable

Shat Sampat – Six virtues or disciplines are cultivated to stabilize the mind and emotions allowing the deep practice of contemplative meditation to be performed.

- a. Shama (Tranquility or calmness) – Preventing the mind from running towards the world of objects is called Shama. Mind is a continuous flow of thoughts. It is to make the mind introvert, so that it helps the Spiritual progress. Shama comes automatically when the mind is clear about the temporary nature of the worldly pleasures.

Tranquility of mind can be brought about by eradicating of *vasanas*, which are desires or conditioning in a broader sense. Shama is not suppression; it is the inner training of the thoughts which require prolonged and continuous practice, but it must be attained.

- b. Dhama (Control or Training of the senses) – Dhama means training of the senses or the indriyas in positive useful directions, both in our actions involved and nature of inner thoughts. It corresponds to *Pratyahara* in Raja Yoga. Here it is also not suppressing the senses, but to train the senses to discover the truth.
- c. Uparathi (Withdrawal or renunciation of worldly activities) – Uparathi means satiation or turning the mind resolutely away from desires by seeing everything through awakened wisdom rather than conditioned mind. When wisdom has awakened in one, there is a natural inner satisfaction knowing the defects of the temporal and that fulfillment can only be had in the permanent and unchanging reality.
- When Uparathi is established, one is unaffected in the midst of change and distraction as one is always self-centered.
- d. Titiksha (Power of endurance or forbearance) – Mind always experiences the opposite pairs like heat and cold, pain and pleasure, insult and honour. The mentality to take the pain, sorrow and insults in their stride without becoming overly preoccupied with them is called Titiksha. When the mind has a definite goal, then it faces all the challenges, difficulties and obstacles with ease. It is

an internal and external adjustment so that there is no grief over ever changing situations.

- e. Shraddha (Faith in the words of scriptures and teacher) – Faith is very important in the Spiritual path. Faith is belief with deep understanding. Blind belief is belief with no proper reasoning or understanding.
- f. Samadhana (Concentration of the mind) – It is the mental balance, equipoise which gives a balanced inner life. It is the concentration of the intellect on the ever pure Brahman, is what is called Samadhana or self-settledness. The practice of Samadhana is to concentrate the mind on the Self.

Mumukshutva – Intense longing for Liberation. It makes the real difference by practicing the Spiritual disciplines of discrimination, renunciation and self control. Eight restrictions that bind the soul and make the soul forget its real nature are:

- Shame
- Hatred
- Fear
- Pride of caste
- Pride of lineage
- Pride of Good Conduct
- Grief
- Secretiveness

Only through intense longing for liberation, one can overcome all bondage and attain liberation.

Qualities of Student

PRANIPATA: Total Surrender (to overcome the ego tendency)

PARIPRASHNA: Questioning to the core (by submissive enquiry)

SEVA: Service to the teacher

Bhagavad Gita – Chapter 4 – Text 34

*tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darsinah*

Meaning: If you want to know the Transcendental Science, seek that enlightenment by surrendering (pranipatena) or approaching by question or by service Bhagavad Gita, Krishna advises Arjuna, the essential requirement or qualities of any Jnana Yoga seeker, student must select a person, where one can surrender self, by asking questions and by doing service to the Guru, who has realized the truth.

Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized soul can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the truth.

Qualities of Guru

Jnana Yoga Teacher must be well versed with all Shastras, i.e., theoretical knowledge and having realization or experience of the truth.

Obstacles in Jnana Yoga

The path of Jnana Yoga is for rationally and philosophically minded Spiritual seekers. Such seekers confront obstacles that make it difficult for them to stay on path. These obstacles are

- **Argumentation:** Seeker likely to indulge in arguments in the practice of discrimination which make them unfit for the practice of concentration and meditation. The seeker is advised not to express his/her philosophical views unless asked and to refrain from the habit of contradicting others
- **Egotism:** Egotism is an obstacle that makes the path of yoga very difficult for most aspirants. Egoistic people often take pride in their own abilities and ignore the rules that govern the practice

of meditation. They fail to realize that they also have faults and that it is not demeaning, but a sign of maturity to seek guidance

- **Loss of faith:** Loss of faith in the practice of yoga is one of the obstacles which seeker can gradually give up their practice of meditation. So, faith in the practice is essential
- **Intellectual Understanding:** Sometimes seeker can mistakenly understand the Self as intellectual understanding; this is due to *Maya* or illusion. Seeker must continue to practice meditation until the seeker realizes the Self truly
- **Selfishness:** Seekers often become selfish and insensitive, despising (hating) all expressions of human emotions as unspiritual and enemical to the knowledge of Self. Hence it is advised to practice Karma Yoga principles
 - ♦ Four distinctive obstacles in Jnana Yoga Meditation
 - ♦ Inertia (Dullness or laziness or lethargy)
 - ♦ Lack of control over the mind
 - ♦ Mistaking lower stages of Samadhi, as higher stages
 - ♦ Dis-taste for meditation itself

Above all, only awareness of all the above obstacles, combined with earnestness, patience and perseverance, will lead us toward the Ultimate. An ancient yogic text declares: “I am spotless, tranquil, pure consciousness, and beyond nature. All this time I have been duped by illusion.” Once we realize this truth, we can see the divine light in ourselves and others.

3 Stages of Jnana Yoga Practice

The study of Vedantha under a realized Guru consists of three stages: Shravana, Manana and Nidhidhyasana. Sadhana Chathustaya helps in the preparation of the intellect, emotion and will; with such preparation, Sadhaka (or practitioner) should begin the study.

Shravana: In Jnana Yoga, the first phase is Shravana or hearing. Hearing a lecture or reading a book or watching a video, all comes under Shravana

Manana: Logically understanding the lecture or recapitulate that again and again, questioning it to the maximum possible extent is *Manana*.

Nidhidyasana: Nidhidyasana or Contemplation – Dwelling on the truths which have been enunciated and logically accepted. This is the Sadhana or Deep Meditation of Jnana Yoga.

7 Stages of Jnana

1. Subheccha (Good Desire)
2. Atma Vichara (Enquiry of soul)
3. Tanu Manasi (Free from attractions)
4. Sattvapati (Owner of purity)
5. Asamshakthi (Unlimited power)
6. Padartha Bhavana (Knowledge of Truth)
7. Turiya (State of super-consciousness)

Bhagavad Gita – Chapter 4 – Text 39

*sraddhavan labhate jnanam tat-parah samyatendriyah
jnanam labdhva param santim acirenadhigacchati*

Meaning: A faithful man who is absorbed in transcendental knowledge and who subdues his senses quickly attains the supreme spiritual peace.

The person with faith, who follows the Vedic instructions of the Spiritual Master and who wholeheartedly, believes in the knowledge of the Vedic scriptures and who is self-controlled; only such a person receives Spiritual realization and none other. After Spiritual realization is attained, and one has become Muktha or liberated, need not perform any action. (Commentary by Sri Sridhara Swami of Rudra Sampradaya)

Marks of a Jnani

Swami Vivekananda gives marks of a true Jnani as

- Sense-control
- Patience
- Courage to suffer anything without complaints
- An intense longing for freedom
- Knowledge that reality only one and rationality

One's will and reason helps to attain the knowledge and liberation in the end. The nature of the Self that Jnani realizes is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Knowledge and Bliss)

Conclusion

Jnana (wisdom or knowledge) is considered the most difficult of the four main paths of Yoga, requiring great strength of will and intellect. In Jnana yoga, the mind is used to inquire into its own nature and to transcend the mind's identification with its thoughts and ego. The fundamental goal of Jnana yoga is to become liberated from the illusory world of maya (thoughts and perceptions) and to achieve union of the inner Self (Atman) with the oneness of all life (Brahman). This is achieved by steadfastly practicing the mental techniques of self-questioning, reflection and conscious illumination that are defined in the Four Pillars of Knowledge (Sadhana Chatushtaya – Viveka, Vairagya, Shat Sampada and Mumukshatva). Through these Jnana Yoga practices, one can attain liberation.

Once a Jnani realizes that Brahman alone is true, everything else is false and that he is no different from Brahman, and therefore all the immortality properly belongs to him and he would realize his true Self. The moment this Self-realization dawns, man becomes liberated. Swami Vivekananda called such a man *Jeevan Muktha* - one who is liberated in this life only.

Questions

I. Fill in the Blanks

1. Shrvana, Manana, _____
2. _____ is the root cause of Bondage, Misery
3. Jnana Yoga is strictly a _____ path
4. Principal techniques involved in the path of Jnana yoga are contemplation and _____
5. Qualities of Student – Pranipata, _____, Seva

II. Explain in one or two sentences

1. What is the goal of Jnana Yoga?
2. What are the requirements of Jnana Yoga?
3. Mention the four basic qualifications of Jnana Yoga.
4. What are the qualities of a Guru?
5. What are the three stages of Jnana Yoga?

III. Explain in detail

1. Obstacles in the path of Jnana Yoga
2. 7 Stages of Jnana
3. Explain Sadhana Chatustaya
4. Explain the Qualities of Student according to Bhagavad Gita
5. Marks of a true Jnani according to Swami Vivekanand

6. Raja Yoga - The path of will power

Raja Yoga is the path of will power. As Swami Vivekananda rightly said, “Man is the maker of his own destiny. Techniques needed to systematically channelize the will power and to solve these problems form the core of Raja Yoga”



Bhagavad Gita – Chapter 6 – Text 5

*uddhared atmanatmanam natmanam avasadayet atmaiva hy
atmano bandhur atmaiva ripur atmanah*

Meaning: Let a man raise himself by his own self, let him not debase himself and he is the friend of himself and the also enemy of the self.

We are responsible for our own elevation or debasement. Nobody can follow the path of God realization for us. Saints and Gurus show us the way, but we have to travel it ourselves.

Maharishi Patanjali presents the seeker the eight limbed practice to reach the goal of Yoga. The first two limbs are *Yama* and *Niyama* for achieving moral purity through strict self control. The third limb is *Asana* which constitutes directions for Yogic postures in order to gain mastery over the body. The fourth limb, *Pranayama*, is the control of breath, by which the Yogi seeks to awaken the mind. The fifth limb is *Pratyahara*, which is the practice of withdrawing the mind from the sense objects. The sixth limb of Raja Yoga is *Dharana* or Concentration which focuses the awakened mind on a certain part of the body to the exclusion of all others. The seventh limb is *Dhyana* or Meditation, on one single thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts. The eighth limb of Raja Yoga is *Samadhi*, when the mind becomes completely absorbed in the object of meditation.

Raja Yoga is called as 'Royal Yoga', where in Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga is known as 'Supreme Yoga' because almost all other systems of Yoga have their fundamental tenets incorporated in very subtle ways, in seed form in Patanjali's Yoga.

Hatha Yoga emphasizes the physical aspects; whereas Ashtanga Yoga emphasizes the mental aspects. Both lead to the same goal.

Goal of Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga aim to be understood as Yoga propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. Patanjali's Yoga is mind oriented and meditation is the highest practice therein. The final goal of all forms of Yoga is to have a healthy body and healthy mind. In order to transcend the mind and go to the no mind state or Unmani or Manonmani Avastha, where there is an experience of Self-realization. So in Maharishi Patanjali's words it is,

Tada drustuhu swarupe avastanam
(Patanjali Yoga Sutra – Chapter 1 – Sutra 3)

Raja Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali aims at restraining to the point of cessation of mental modifications, so that the real Self is restored to its perfect purity.

The goal of Raja Yoga is to realize the Self through mind control by adopting Ashtanga Yoga

Patanjali Yoga Sutra – Chapter 1 – Sutra 2, says
Yogah chitta vrittih nirodah

Meaning: Yoga is gaining mastery over the mind

Objective of Raja Yoga

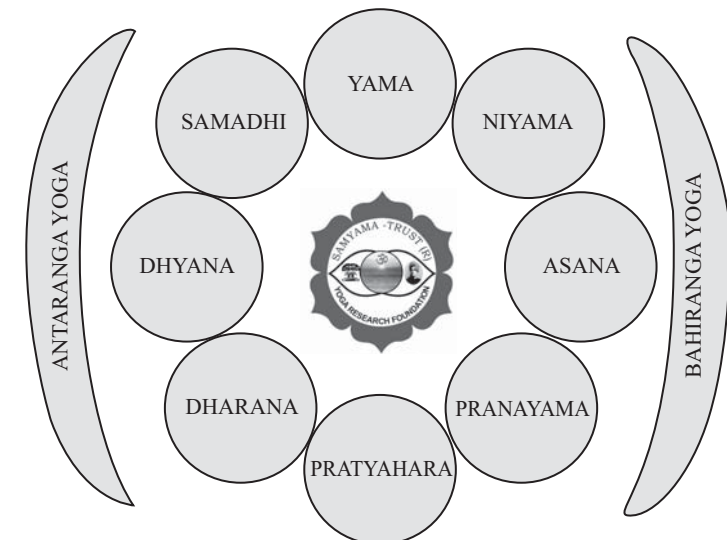
Basic theme of Raja Yoga is to develop the dormant potential within the human personality. Raja Yoga advocated and recognized that the human personality contains a deep psychic potential within its framework. This potential is within the reach of everyone, provided they have knowledge of a particular system by which it can be tapped.

Methods of Practice

Raja Yoga is also known as Patanjali Yoga where Patanjali gives eight limbs called Ashtanga Yoga for Self realization.

Ashtanga Yoga

Ashtanga Yoga, where Ashta means Eight and Yoga means Union. So, in total Ashtanga means eight limbs through which one can realize the Self. This Ashtanga further divides into two methods – one is Bahiranga Yoga (also known as external practice) and second is Antaranga Yoga (known as internal practice). Ashtanga Yoga mainly emphasizes on mental aspects.



Bahiranga Yoga

Bahiranga Yoga consists of the first four stages: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana* and *Pranayama*. They are known as external Yoga as they change the external personality, behavior and actions that are related to interactions in the world, through which one is able to control the *vrittis* or modifications which are affected by external stimulations and the environment.

Yama: The first aspect of Raja Yoga is *Yama*. In general it is known as “moral code of conduct”. Maharishi Patanjali defines Yama as

|| *Ahimsa Satya Asteya Brahmacharya Aparigraha Yama* ||

The five Yamas are external disciplines are – *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Satya* (Truthfulness), *Asteya* (Honesty), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy) and *Aparigraha* (Non-possessiveness)

- **Ahimsa** or non-violence is not an external act of violence from our actions, but the absence of violent nature in our personality. Anything that disrupts the natural flow of human perception (emotion, thought, desire, feeling, motivation or ambition) and consciousness is known as *Himsa* which is the quality of *Tamas* or Ignorance. Ahims is non-violence in thought, word and deed. An aspirant must not directly or indirectly injure any living being. This absence of violence in one’s personality transforms *Tamasic* personality into *Sattvic* personality.
- **Satya** means Truth, which reflects the external behavior during the interaction of an individual. Abiding to the nature of truth, one is able to purify and remove the conflicts from the mind. Here Satya refers to awareness of what is correct, right and true. Satya is the practice of truthfulness in our thoughts, speech and action. But truthfulness is not just being literally true. One should speak truthfully without causing pain or injury to any other being. For the motive of truthfulness must be the welfare of all being.

So one should not speak unpleasant truth or cause harm to others by speech or action or even thought.

- **Asteya** or honesty is the practice of non-appropriation of anything that belongs to another person, whether it is a material object, a privilege or an opportunity.
- **Brahmacharya** is the practice of continence, which is most important of all virtues. Following higher reality is known as *Brahma achara* and *Brahmacharya* is to establish oneself in the higher consciousness.
- **Aparigraha** means non-attachment or non-possessiveness. When there is attachment or self-motivation, there will be the feeling of possessiveness. Possessiveness should not be influenced by Ego or Selfish nature. Developing the quality of non-possessiveness means to become non-attached. Non-attachment means not being affected by whatever happens or wherever one finds oneself.

Niyama: After *Yama*, comes *Niyama*, which means “inner discipline”. The *Yamas* are meant to harmonize one’s social and external interactions, whereas the *Niyamas* create a sense of discipline in one’s inner Self. Maharishi Patanjali defines Niyama as

|| *Saucha Santosha Tapas Svadhyaya Ishwara Pranidhanani Niyama* ||

Niyama are also five in number, which are *Saucha* (Cleanliness), *Santosha* (Contentment), *Tapas* (Austerity), *Svadhyaya* (Self-study) and *Ishwara Pranidhana* (Worship of God).

- **Saucha** - Apart from physical cleanliness or environmental cleanliness, cleansing the mind is also important in the path of Yoga. If one lives in a clean environment, it affects the frame of mind and helps one overcome the different conflicts and dissipations

- **Santosha** means enjoying life in the present moment without craving or desiring anything more. Maintenance of constant state of self-satisfaction and fulfillment. Satisfaction transfers the craving aspects of the mind. True contentment is found in detaching oneself from the sufferings caused by *Prakruthi* and attaining oneself from the purity of *Purusha*.
- **Tapas** means Austerity, which is the process of change and transformation for the better. In Yoga, the process of Tapas burns the impurities of personality so that the true essence can manifest itself. Tapas is not for the sake of suffering, but suffering for the sake of Yoga or the realization of one's goal. So instead of becoming frustrated, angry or depressed, the Raja Yogi faces the harsh realities of life with calmness. Controlling the palate, minimizing the personal needs, reducing the hours of sleep, sacrificing the luxuries, owing silence, engaging in selfless activities, devoting time to spiritual practices are some of the *Tapas* practices. Tapas is essential to reduce one's ego and desires, and has been compared to a fire that burns to ashes, the harmful habits one has cultivated by reckless living.
- **Svadyaya** is the study of sacred text or self-study. It means the analysis and knowledge of our own personality in order to make our life open book, being aware of our individual qualities, strengths and weaknesses in order to know who we are. *Svadyaya* also includes repetition of a sacred word or *Mantra*, by which a Yogi purifies the body and mind. Repetition of *Mantra* is considered as the most purifying preparatory practice for concentration and meditation in Yoga.
- **Ishwara Pranidhana** is the cultivation of faith, sometimes it is also translated as "Surrender to God". Worship of God allows a seeker to grow in devotion and concentration on the chosen ideal and the Self.

Asana:

Definition of Asana: In Sanskrit, *Asana* literally means 'position' or 'posture' or 'state of the body'. Therefore *Yogasana* means 'Yogic state of the body'.

According to Raja Yoga, Maharishi Patanjali defines *Asana* as

|| *Sthiram Sukham Asanam* ||

It means 'stable, comfortable posture'. It is a physical posture where one can remain steady and comfortable. It is the ability to sit comfortably in one position for an extended period of time necessary for meditation.

According to Hatha Yoga, *Asana* is a specific position which opens the energy channels (*Nadis*) and psychic centers (*Chakras*).

According to Swami Niranjanananda – A position without any tension or physical pain for a longer period of time; that state is called *Asana*.

Goal of Asana: *Sthiram* means stability, represents the state of harmony between the different systems of the body. *Sukham* means comfort, represents the state of harmony between the body and mind. By achieving comfort and stability, one can experience physical health. The experience of equanimity (*Samatva*) in both body and mind, the generation and attainment of this quality must be aspired for in life, not just perfection in *asana* or in meditation.

Purpose of Asana: Attainment of higher consciousness cannot be considered when there is disease or mental depression. So the initial purpose of practicing *Asana* is to eliminate these disturbances and afflictions.

Meaning of the term Asana: As we understood, the word Yoga means union of the individual soul (*Jivatma*) with the Supreme soul (*Paramatma*). The term *Yogasana* means certain postures which bring about the union of the individual soul with the Supreme soul.

Concept of Asana in classical Hatha Yoga: Concept of Asana is to influence the body, mind and consciousness which merge together to constitute one's whole being and moulding, yoking them into a harmonious whole.

Pranayama: Pranayama is the fourth limb of Ashtanga Yoga. Maharishi Patanjali defines Pranayama as

|| *Tasmin sati shvasa prashvasa yoh gatih vichedah*
Pranayamah ||

After having perfection of Asana, Pranayama alone can be practiced with *Kumbaka*. It is the control of inhalation and exhalation of the breath. It means the cessation of the outgoing and ingoing movements of the breath is Pranayama. Pranayama demands a very high precision of control and cessation of breath – *Kevala Kumbaka*. Breath is the gross vital representation of the subtle, most vital force within the body.

Patanjali explains four types of Pranayama:

1. Rhythmic pure inhalation (*Puraka*)
2. Exhalation without retention (*Recheka*)
3. Inhalation with retention (*Antara Kumbaka*)
4. Exhalation with retention (*Bahya Kumbaka*)

Pranayama removes the veil of impurities, enabling *Sattva Guna* to manifest itself to the fullest extent. Pranayama is an aid to the spiritual evolution of the entire human personality, as the mind and prana are closely interconnected. In order to reach the highest purity of the mind, one should control the mind slowly step by step. With such purity of the mind, the veil of impurities can be removed effectively. So Pranayama plays a very important part in achieving maximum Sattva throughout the entire human system.

Prana is the basic fabric creation of the universe. It is a vital life force. A comprehensive knowledge on *Prana* and its function is must for Pranayama practice and after proper practice of *Yama*, *Niyama* and *Asana*, and then the practice of *Pranayama* has to be done.

Pranayama is an aid to make the mind fit to *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*.

Pratyahara: Pratyahara is the fifth limb of Ashtanga Yoga. The first four angas constitute the preparation of the actual Yoga properly, such preparations become the ground work. Right enquiry leads to right discrimination from which right knowledge arises. The basic tendency of the mind, which is to always go outward, should be absorbed and then the mind has to be controlled by withdrawing it inward and diverting the flow of thoughts within. This essential aspect of Yoga is known as *Pratyahara*.

Maharishi Patanjali says,

|| *Sva vishaya samprayoge chittasvaroopaanukara*
ivendriyanam Pratyaharah ||

The imitation of the mind by the senses which comes by the withdrawal of the senses from their objects is known as *Pratyahara*. It is the way of silencing all functions of the brain. With this, the discerning mind becomes free from fluctuations and temptations.

Pratyahara acts as a bridge to cross from the external sheaths of investigation, cleansing the inner sheaths for further investigation. It is the space to establish stability in *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana* and *Pranayama* and then to move with attention towards *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*.

Through perfection in *Pratyahara*, the greatest obstacles to enlightenment are overcome and obtain mastery over the senses.

Sum up of Bahiranga Yoga

The moral defects in one's nature due to emotions are to be removed by the practice of *Yama* and *Niyama*. The disturbances of the physical body are to be removed by the practice of *Asana*. Irregular flow of vital forces in the *Pranic* sheath and their disturbances are to be removed by the practices of *Pranayama*. Lastly, the major source of disturbances coming through the sense organs is removed by the practice of *Pratyahara*. All these five steps – *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Asana*, *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara* constitute the external form of Yoga practice or *Bahiranga Sadhana*. Only through the mastery of these five limbs one is capable of moving the path of further stages – *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*; these three limbs constitute *Antaranga Yoga*.

Antaranga Yoga

Antaranga Yoga consists of 3 stages – *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, which are the internal or *Antaranga* aspects of Yoga, and as such, Patanjali uniting them together as *Samyama*.

Dharana: According to Maharishi Patanjali Sutra, in Vibhuthi pada, first sutra,

|| *Deshah bandhah chittasya Dharana* ||

Meaning of Dharana: Fixing the mind on something either external or internal is known as Dharana – Concentration

Dharana is Concentration or Focussing, whereas the mind is fixed internally or externally on any picture of *Ishta Devatha* (Ex. Lord Hari, Rama, Shiva or Jesus etc.) or *Swarupa of Guru* and internally can be fixed on any *Chakra* or any part of the body. After having controlled *Prana* through *Pranayama* and all the *Indriyas*, including the mind, through *Pratyahara*, one should fix the mind on some kind of object for Dharana.

Effects of Dharana: Maintaining a thoughtful attention (*Dharana*), then prolonging that attention leads in time to total absorption (*Dhyana*).

Dhyana: According to Patanjali Sutra,

|| *Tatra pratyayaikatanata Dhyanam* ||

Patanjali defines *Dhyana* as a method for bringing the senses, mind and intelligence to think and reflect through a continuous, single flow of attention and awareness. *Dhyana* is completely objective; the experience cannot be expressed in words.

Effects of Dhyana: *Ahankara* is subdued through *Dhyana* and when it is subdued, one experiences the effects of Dhyana.

Samadhi:

|| *Tadevaarthamatranirvhasam svarupasunyamiva Samadhih* ||

Samadhi means absorption or self-realization. When consciousness of subject and object disappears, and only the meaning remains; this is known as *Samadhi*. It is merging of the mind into the essence of the object of meditation.

Effects of Samadhi: *Samadhi* helps in eradicating all types of afflictions, if this is not possible, it can atleast minimize them. This is the external effect of the *Bahiranga* state of *Samadhi*.

Obstacles (Antaraya) in Raja Yoga

|| *Vyadhi styana samshaya pramada alasya avirati bhranti-darshana alabdha-bhumikatva anavasthitatva chitta vikshepa te antarayah* || [P.Y.S – 1.30]

Maharishi Patanjali identifies 9 obstacles in the path of Raja Yoga

1. Disease
2. Mental Laziness
3. Doubt
4. Lack of enthusiasm
5. Lethargy
6. Clinging to sense enjoyments
7. False perception
8. Non-attaining of concentration
9. Falling away from concentration, when attained

These are the obstructing distractions in the path of Raja Yoga. Companions to these major obstacles are:

|| *Duhkha daurmanasya angam-ejayatva shvasa prashvasah vikshepa sahabhuva* || [P.Y.S – 1.31]

1. Mental and physical pain
2. Sadness and frustration
3. Unsteadiness of the body
4. Irregular breath

In addition to the above, there are several other minor obstacles that are encountered in the path of Raja Yoga

1. Attractions for yogic powers
2. A mechanical view toward meditation
3. Overemphasis or over simplification of certain limbs of yoga
4. Sharp turns of the mind
5. Irregularity of practice
6. Aimless wandering of the mind
7. Egotism

How to overcome the Obstacles?

Swami Vivekananda reminds, a Raja Yogi must be vigilant in Yoga and never give into shortcuts out of laziness. If one faithfully stays in the path of yoga, one receives the highest reward. If, however, one doesn't practice Raja Yoga in a disciplined way, one forfeits the attainment of eternal peace and happiness. Maharishi Patanjali gives solutions to overcome the obstacles to practice continuously (*Abhyasa*) and to detach from the attachment of the worldly materials (*Vairagya*).

|| *Abhyasa vairagyabhyam tat nirodhah* || [P.Y.S – 1.12]

Abhyasa and *Vairagya* are two of the most important foundation principles of Yoga. *Abhyasa* means practice and *Vairagya* means non-attachment. Balancing the two companions is a key to spiritual life, allowing one to pursue the subtler meditation practices.

Abhyasa involves cultivating a strong conviction, persistent effort to consistently choose practices with action, speech and thoughts that lead in the direction of a stable tranquility (*sthitau*)

Vairagya involves learning to actively and systematically encounter, explore and let go of the many attachments, aversions, fear, and false identities that are clouding the true Self.

They work together – Practice leads one in the right direction, while non-attachment allows one to continue the inner journey without getting sidetracked into the pains and pleasures along the way.

|| *Tat pratisedha artham eka tattva abhyasah* || [P.Y.S – 1.32]

One-pointedness is the solution. There is a single, underlying principle that is the antidote for these obstacles, and that is one-pointedness of mind.

Ultimate Goal of Raja Yoga

The aim or ultimate goal of Ashtanga Yoga is *Kaivalya*, a state where man attains to freedom from miseries and sufferings of life permanently. Patanjali's Yoga deals with mind management to achieve concentration; this concentration leads to awareness to reach *Kaivalya* state. In reaching the *Kaivalya* state Yoga practices give several benefits in this modern world – physical, mental health being the most important among them.

Conclusion

Raja Yoga is the art of concentrating the mind by purifying it of all distortions or *vrittis*. One's mind is thus purified, it is easy to make it concentrate on self-realization, which leads to liberation in the end.

According to Ashtanga Yoga, the first five angas of Raja Yoga (Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Pratyahara) are meant for the purification of body, prana and the senses. The rest of the three angas (Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi), are practices to purify the mind. All these three angas constitute the very basis of Yoga. The Yogis with *Antaranga* practice, gets the knowledge of the Self. The entire process from Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi is known as *Samyama*.

Questions

I. Fill in the Blanks

1. Raja Yoga is path of _____
2. Man is the maker of his own _____
3. Third limb of Ashtanga Yoga is _____
4. Dharana, _____, _____
5. Hatha Yoga emphasizes _____ aspect;
6. Ashtanga Yoga emphasizes _____ aspect

II. Explain in one or two sentences

1. What is the goal of Raja Yoga?
2. Definition of Asana, according to Patanjali Maharishi
3. What is Samyama, according to Patanjali
4. What is the goal and purpose of Asana
5. What are the effects of Samadhi?

III. Explain in detail

1. Difference between Antaranga and Bahiranga Yoga
2. Obstacles in the path of Raja Yoga
3. Explain Pranayama according to Patanjali
4. Explain the remedies to overcome the obstacles of Raja Yoga
5. How is Raja Yoga practice relevant to Modern Society?

7. Karma Yoga - The path of action

Karma Yoga is the path of action. This path involves doing action with an attitude of detachment to fruits of action. This makes man release himself from the strong attachments and thereby brings in a steadiness of mind which verily is Yoga. When *Anandamaya Kosha* is perfectly centered by the lower bodies then *Samatvam* or equanimity will exist.



|| *Samatvam Yoga uchyate* || (Bhagavad Gita – 2.8)

Sri RamaKrishna regards Karma Yoga as concentrating the mind upon God through work.

Karma Yoga is the offering of the results of one's duties at the feet of *Paramatman*. The aim of Karma Yoga is also like that of the other Yogas – is *Moksha*. In the path of Karma, the final goal is *Moksha* itself and never mere work. Work without attachment towards its results and performed as worship of God becomes a means for *Moksha*.

The system of Karma Yoga has grown out of the concept of *Karma*, hence understanding the nature of Karma is a foundation for the effective practice of Karma Yoga.

Essence of Karma Theory

According to Bhagavad Gita (B.G – 3.5)

|| *Na hi kashchit kshanamapi jaatu tishthatyakarmakrit
Kaaryate hyavashah karma sarvah prakritijair gunaih* ||

Meaning: There is no one who can remain without action even for a moment. Indeed, all beings are compelled to act by their qualities born of material nature (the three Gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas).

Action means work and it not only refers to professional work. Every activity performed with body, mind and sense organs is considered as Karma. It includes daily activities like eating, drinking, sleeping, waking and thinking. Lord Krishna says to Arjuna that complete inactivity is impossible even for a moment, since the body-mind-intellect mechanism is compelled by its own make-up of the three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*) to perform work in the world.

When these activities are performed, the result will be either pleasure or pain. To avoid pain, one strains to perform only those actions which bring more and more pleasure. But, pleasure and pain are like two sides of a coin, pleasure always comes with pain. This leads us in the path of action till death. One has to bear the consequences of the actions performed in one life or next life. In the next birth, new actions are performed. Actions lead to births and births lead to further actions, which goes on like a cycle. The soul (*Atman*) which gets trapped in the birth and death cycle cannot achieve liberation. This soul or *Atman*, once masked or suppressed by bad Karmas gets engaged in fulfilling desires of the body, striving for pleasures and avoiding pain. It forgets its essential *Divine* nature. This is ignorance which is brought about by the Karmas. Even good Karmas do the same as bad Karmas. Good Karmas which bring happiness good *Atman* to do those actions which bring pleasure. Since all pleasure and pain are concerned with body only, the Soul becomes slave of the body. This is the essence of Karma Theory.

|| *karmano hy api boddhavyam boddhavyam ca vikarmanah
akarmanas ca boddhavyam gahana karmano gatih* || (BG 4.17)

Meaning: The true nature of action is very difficult to understand. Therefore, one should know the nature of attached action (*Karma*),

the nature of detached action (*Akarma*), and also the nature of forbidden or wrong action (*Vikarma*).

Life is a series of experiences, the interaction of *object or thoughts (Druk)*, *observer or thinker (Drushta)* and the *observation or thinking (Drushya)*. Union of these three is known as ‘*Tripities*’ results in action or Karma, creating disturbance in the mind. More the experiences, more are the disturbances, resulting in stress, strain and unhappiness.

Krishna says, be an ‘observer’ to the activities of the sense organs, *see* what the eyes are *seeing*, *hear* what ears are *hearing*, *smell* what nose is *smelling* and so on. Observer or thinker (Consciousness) should be inactive (*Akarmic*), while the mind and its sense organs are in action (*Karmic*). But when the observer or thinker (consciousness) mingles with the mind and sense organs, the third great force called the *Vikarma* meaning the ‘*reaction*’ is created, which is the source of all problems of an observer or thinker.

Expectations of results are the reactions created from the union of *Karma* and *Akarma*. So one has to analyze the Self, when he receives a stimulus and how the mind, consciousness process the stimulus. Learn to be in action yet away from the results ‘*Ma phaleshu kadaacana*’ this analysis and practice is the Sadana generally referred as Jnana Yoga.

Four major Laws of Karma

According to Bhagavad Gita,

- Work with a sense of duty
- Work without getting intensely attached to the work
- Never allow the anxieties about the results interfere with the mind while working on the job
- Accept failure and success with equanimity

Obstacles in Karma Yoga

There are a number of obstacles that make the practice of Karma Yoga extremely difficult. The most common obstacles are:

- Attachment
- False success
- Loss of right perspective
- Egotism
- Loss of meditative balance

Essence of Karma Yoga: Lord Krishna, in the third chapter of Bhagavad Gita – 3.5 says,

“No one can live on this earth for even a single moment without performing some action or other, driven by the Trigunas of nature namely, Sattva, Tamas and Rajas”

So, actions are inevitable and unavoidable. How do we turn something inevitable and unavoidable into a benefit; this is what Karma Yoga says. It gives us a method by which we can face life boldly and turn all actions we perform into a means for self-growth, self-development and self-realization.

According to Bhagavad Gita chapter 2, sloka 47 (BG 2-47):

|| Karmanyevadhikarasthe maa phaleshu kadachana Maa karma phala heturbhuh maathe sangostu karmani ||

Meaning: You have the right to perform actions, but you have no claims on the fruits. Do not become the cause of the attachment to fruits. Do not also shun activities.

This sloka has been interpreted in several ways depending upon the context. It makes four statements – we have only the right to perform actions. He later says, no human being can survive without performing

actions. In this sense, action is inevitable and should be performed. In the second statement, he says that we have no claim on the fruits of our actions. So, the question arises if there is no motivation in the form of a result, why should we engage ourselves in the action. A proper answer for this question can be seen in chapter 18, sloka 14 (BG 18-14).

|| *Adhistanam thatha karthaa karnam cha pruthvidham*
Vividhashcha pruthakcheshta daivam chaivaatra
panchamam||

Meaning: Five things are needed for the completion of any action. They are the physical body, vitality, sense organs and the motivation. But, the last and most important of these is Destiny. Human body cannot act without life force; therefore vitality is essential for the body to act. The organs of knowledge motivate the mind to act; this in turn motivates the organs of action. There must be some intangible factor beyond these four which plays a role. This is what Lord Krishna refers to as Daiva or Destiny. The fifth factor is called *Prarabdha Karma*.

Karma is of three kinds –

- a. *Sanchitha* or the accumulated work of the past. Part of it is seen in the character of man, in his tendencies, aptitudes, capacities, inclinations and desires.
- b. *Prarabdha* or the fructifying (good) work. It is that portion or part of Karma which is responsible for the present body. It is the right for reaping. It cannot be avoided or changed. It is only exhausted by being experienced. You pay your past debts.
- c. *Aagami* or the current work. It is Karma which is made for the future. It is also called Vartamana or Kriyamana.

The practice of Karma Yoga prepares the aspirant for the reception of knowledge of the Self. It makes him a proper aspirant (*Adhikari*)

for the study of Vedanta. Ignorant people jump at once to Jnana Yoga without first having preliminary training on Karma Yoga; this is the reason why they fail miserably to realize the truth.

Two things are indispensable requisites in the practice of Karma Yoga

- a. Non-attachment to the fruits of action
- b. Surrendering attitude – *Ishwara Pranidhana*

Conclusion

Bhagavad Gita proposed Karma Yoga which is doing actions in disinterested manner (*Nishkama Karma*) so that the fruits of the action cease to influence the doer. In Karma Yoga practice, when a karma yogi relegates the fruits of the actions to God, he detaches from materialistic temptations like wealth, power, beauty, happiness etc. Once this detachment is achieved, the soul attains liberation which is known as *Jeevan Mukthi* – moksha or liberation in this life only. In this *Jeevan Mukthi*, the soul realizes its true nature (Divine).

Questions

I. Fill in the Blanks

1. Karma means _____ Yoga means _____
2. Samatvam Yoga Utchyate is the verse from _____
3. Sanchita, Prarabda, _____
4. Yoga Karmasu _____
5. Sattva, Rajas, _____

II. Explain in one or two sentences

1. What is Karma Yoga?
2. What are the 2 basic requirements in the practice of Karma Yoga?
3. How is selfless service useful in modern life?
4. Name few Karma yogis

III. Explain in detail

1. Explain the essence of Karma Theory
2. Explain the four major laws of Karma
3. Obstacles in Karma Yoga practice and how to overcome them?
4. Explain the 3 kinds of Karma
5. Explain any one Bhagavad sloka of Karma Yoga

8. Bhakti Yoga - The path of devotion

Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion and science of emotion culture. It is called union through love and devotion. Like any other form of yoga, Bhakti Yoga is a path to self-realization, to having an experience of oneness with everything

What is Bhakti?

The term Bhakti comes from the root 'Bhaj', which means 'to be attached to God'. Bhajan, worship, Bhakti, Anurag, Prem, Priti are synonymous terms. Bhakti is love for love's sake. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is no selfish expectation here. There is no fear also. Therefore it is called 'Parama Prem Rupa'. The devotee feels, believes, conceives and imagines that his Ishtam (tutelary deity) is an Ocean of Love or Prem.

Bhakti is the slender thread of Prem or love that binds the heart of a devotee with the lotus feet of the Lord. Bhakti is intense devotion and supreme attachment to God. Bhakti is supreme love for God. It is the spontaneous out-pouring of Prem towards the Beloved. It is pure, unselfish, divine love or Suddha Prem. There is not a bit of bargaining or expectation of anything here. This higher feeling is indescribable in words. It has to be sincerely experienced by the devotee. Bhakti is a sacred, higher emotion with sublime sentiments that unites the devotees with the Lord.

Mark how love develops. First arises faith. Then follows attraction and after that adoration. Adoration leads to suppression of mundane desires. The result is single-mindedness and satisfaction. Then grow attachment and supreme love towards God.

In this type of highest Bhakti all attraction and attachment which one has for objects of enjoyment are transferred to the only dearest object,

viz., God. This leads the devotee to an eternal union with his Beloved and culminates in oneness.

Types of Bhakti

Bhakti is of various kinds. One classification is **Sakamya** and **Nishkamya Bhakti**. Sakamya Bhakti is devotion with desire for material gains. A man who wants wealth with this motive practices Bhakti.

Another man wants freedom from diseases and therefore does Japa and offers prayers. A third one wants to become a Minister and does Upasana with this aim. This is Sakamya Bhakti. Whatever you want the Lord will certainly give you, if your Bhakti is intense and if your prayers are sincerely offered from the bottom of your heart. But you will not get supreme satisfaction, immortality and Moksha through Sakamya Bhakti.

Your Bhakti should always be Nishkamya Bhakti. God has already given you a good position, a good job, wife and children and enough wealth. Be content with these. Aspire for Nishkamya Bhakti. Your heart will be purified and the Divine Grace will descend upon you. Be in communion with the Lord, you will become one with the Lord and you will enjoy all the Divine Aisvaryas (Divine attributes like wisdom, renunciation, power, etc.). All the Vibhuti (Special forms in which the Lord manifests) of the Lord He will give you. He will give you Darsan. He will help you to dwell in Him. At the same time He will give you all the Divine Aisvaryas also.

Another classification of Bhakti is **Apara-Bhakti** and **Para-Bhakti**. Apara-Bhakti is for beginners in Yoga. The beginner decorates an image with flowers and garlands, rings the bell, offers Naivedya (food-offerings), wave lights; he observes rituals and ceremonies. The Bhakta here regards the Lord as a Supreme Person, who is immanent (operating or inherent) in that image and who can be propitiated through that form only.

He has no expanded heart. He is sectarian. He dislikes other kinds of Bhaktas who worship other Devatas. Gradually, from Apara-Bhakti, the devotee goes to Para-Bhakti, the highest form of Bhakti. He sees the Lord and Lord alone everywhere and feels His Power manifest as the entire universe. "Thou art all-pervading; on what Simhasana shall I seat Thee? Thou art the Supreme Light, in whose borrowed light the sun, the moon, the stars and the fire shine; shall I wave this little Deepa or light before You?" - thus the devotee recognizes the transcendental nature of God. Para-Bhakti and Jnana are one. But every Bhakta will have to start from Apara-Bhakti. Before you take your food, offer it to God mentally; and the food will be purified. When you pass through a garden of flowers, mentally offer all the flowers to the Lord in Archana (offering flowers in worship). When you pass through the bazaar and see a sweetmeat shop, offer all the sweetmeats as Naivedya to the Lord. Such practices will lead to Para-Bhakti.

Bhakti is also classified into **Gauna-Bhakti** and **Mukhya-Bhakti**. Gauna-Bhakti is the lower Bhakti and Mukhya-Bhakti is the higher type of Bhakti.

Go from stage to stage. Just as a flower grows in the garden, so also gradually develop love or Prem in the garden of your heart.

The enemy of devotion is egoism and desire. Where there is no Kama or desire, there alone will Rama (the Lord) manifest Himself. The enemies of peace and devotion are lust, anger and greed. Anger destroys your peace and your health also. When a man abuses you, keep peaceful. When blood begins to boil, it is impoverished. You lose vitality if you become a prey to fits of temper.

How to Cultivate Bhakti?

It would be a gross mistake if you consider Bhakti as merely a stage of emotionalism, while it is actually a thorough discipline and training

of one's will and the mind, a sure means to intuitive realization of God Almighty through intense love and affection for Him. It is a means to thorough apprehension of the true knowledge of Reality, beginning from the ordinary form of idol worship right upto the highest form of cosmic realization of your oneness with Him. You can achieve this by following the eleven fundamental factors which Sri Ramanuja had prescribed.

They are Abhyasa or practice of continuous thinking of God; Viveka or discrimination; Vimoka or freedom from everything else and longing for God; Satyam or truthfulness; Arjavam or straightforwardness; Kriya or doing good to others; Kalyana or wishing well-being to all;

Daya or compassion; Ahimsa or non-injury; Dana or charity; and Anavasada or cheerfulness and optimism.

People put a question: "How can we love God whom we have not seen?"

Live in the company of saints. Hear the Lilas of God. Study the sacred scriptures. Worship Him first in His several forms as manifested in the world. Worship any image or picture of the Lord or the Guru. Recite His Name. Sing His glories. Stay for one year in Ayodhya or Brindavan, Chirakut or Pandhapur, Benares or Ananda Kutir. You will develop love for God.

Every act must be done that awakens the emotion of Bhakti. Keep the Puja(worship) room clean. Decorate the room. Burn incense. Light a lamp. Keep a clean seat. Bathe. Wear clean clothes. Apply Vibhuti (sacred ash) or Bhasma, and Kumkum on the forehead. Wear Rudraksha or Tulasi Mala. All these produce a benign influence on the mind and elevate the mind. They generate piety. They help to create the necessary Bhava or feeling to invoke the Deity that you want to worship. The mind will be easily concentrated.

Practice of right conduct, Satsanga, Japa, Smarana, Kirtan, prayer, worship, service of saints, residence in places of pilgrimage, service of the poor and the sick with divine Bhava, observance of Varnashrama duties, offering of all actions and their fruits to the Lord, feeling the presence of the Lord in all beings, prostrations before the image and saints, renunciation of earthly enjoyments and wealth, charity, austerities and vows, practice of Ahimsa, Satyam and Brahmacharya - all these will help you to develop Bhakti.

Bhavas in Bhakti

When the devotee grows in devotion there is absolute self-forgetfulness. This is called Bhava. Bhava establishes a true relationship between the devotee and the Lord. Bhava then grows into Maha-Bhava wherein the devotee lives, moves and has his being in the Lord. This is Parama-Prema, the consumation of love or Supreme Love.

There are five kinds of Bhava in Bhakti. They are

- Shanta
- Dasya
- Sakhya
- Vatsalya
- Madhurya Bhavas.

These Bhavas or feelings are natural to human beings and so these are easy to practice. Practice whichever Bhava suits your temperament.

In **Shanta Bhava**, the devotee is Shanta or peaceful. He does not jump and dance. He is not highly emotional. His heart is filled with love and joy. Bhishma was a Shanta Bhakta.





Sri Hanuman was a Dasya Bhakta. He had **Dasya Bhava**, servant attitude. He served Lord Rama whole-heartedly. He pleased his Master in all possible ways. He found joy and bliss in the service of his Master.

In **Sakhya Bhava**, God is a friend of the devotee. Arjuna had this Bhava towards Lord Krishna. The devotee moves with the Lord on equal terms. Arjuna and Krishna used to sit, eat, talk and walk together as intimate friends.



In **Vatsalya Bhava**, the devotee looks upon God as his child. Yasoda had this Bhava with Lord Krishna. There is no fear in this Bhava, because God is your pet child. The devotee serves, feeds, and looks upon God as a mother does in the case of her child.



The last is **Madhurya Bhava** or Kanta Bhava. This is the highest form of Bhakti. The devotee regards

the Lord as his Lover. This was the relation between Radha and Krishna. This is Atma-Samarpana. The lover and the beloved become one. The devotee and God feel one with each other and still maintain separateness in order to enjoy the bliss of the play of love between them. This is oneness in separation and separation in oneness. Lord Gauranga, Jayadeva, Mira and Andal had this Bhava.



A Caution: Madhurya Bhava is absolutely different from conjugality of earthly experience. One should not be mistaken for the other. Earthly conjugality is purely selfish and is undertaken only because it gives pleasure to one's own self. But in love for God it is because it gives pleasure to God and not for the sake of the devotee. Divine love is not selfish. It is born of sattva. But earthly lust is born of rajas

and attachment to bodies. Earthly conjugality is the outcome of egoistic self-regarding egoistic feeling, while divine communion is the outcome of other-regarding feeling devoid of egoism. Strong selfishness is the root of worldly passion; divine love is the product of loss of egoism. This is the greatest difference between lust (kama) and divine love (prema). The two are related as darkness is related to light. No development of earthly affection, however perfect it may be, can lead one to supreme joy of divine communion. Lust lurks in the heart due to the passion that burns in the core of things. Divine love is unknown to the man of the world, however religious he may be. The secret of divine love cannot be understood, and should not be tried to be understood, so long as man is only a man and woman only a woman. The austere transformation of the human into the divine is the beginning of true love for God.

Nava Vidha Bhakti

Devotion to God is developed in nine different ways. It is supreme attachment to God through a Bhava predominant in the devotee. Intense love is the common factor in all the nine modes. Exclusive love for God is expressed through various methods. All Bhaktas of this type are above the formalities of the world. They are untouched by the laws of human Dharma and are out and out concerned with God.

Good conduct which is in accordance with perfect moral law is an auxiliary to pure Bhakti and it follows the true Bhakta wherever he goes. One cannot develop true devotion to God if he is crooked in his heart, if he has got objects of love in this world, if he is tempted by charming worldly things, if he wishes to take care of his wife, children and relatives, if he wishes to feed his body well, if he wishes to earn a great name in the world, if he wants to establish a permanent fame on earth, if he does not like to part with the alluring contents of the world. Perfect detachment from all objects is a preliminary to real devotion. Vairagya is the product of real love for God. One who has

love for the world cannot have love for God. Where there is Kama, there cannot be Rama and where there is Rama there cannot be Kama. Love for the world and love for God are diametrically opposite things. One has to be renounced for the attainment of the other. This renunciation can be acquired through the nine forms of Bhakti.

In the Srimad-Bhagavata and the Vishnu Purana it is told that the nine forms of Bhakti are

1. Sravana (hearing of God's Lilas and stories),
2. Kirtana (singing of His glories),
3. Smarana (remembrance of His name and presence),
4. Padasevana (service of His feet),
5. Archana (worship of God),
6. Vandana (prostration to Lord),
7. Dasya (cultivating the Bhava of a servant with God),
8. Sakhya (cultivation of the friend-Bhava) and
9. Atmanivedana (complete surrender of the self).



A devotee can practice any method of Bhakti which suits him best. Through that he will attain Divine illumination.

Sravana is hearing of Lord's Lilas. Sravana includes hearing of God's virtues, glories, sports and stories connected with His divine Name and Form. The devotee gets absorbed in the hearing of Divine stories and his mind merges in the thought of divinity; it cannot think of undivine things. The mind loses, as it were, its charm for the world. The devotee remembers God only even in dreams.

The devotee should sit before a learned teacher who is a great saint and hear Divine stories. He should hear them with a sincere heart

devoid of the sense of criticism or fault-finding. The devotee should try his best to live in the ideals preached in the scriptures.

One cannot attain Sravana-Bhakti without the company of saints or wise men. Mere reading for oneself is not of much use. Doubts will crop up. They cannot be solved by oneself easily. An experienced man is necessary to instruct the devotee in the right path.

King Parikshit attained Liberation through Sravana. He heard the glories of God from Suka Maharishi. His heart was purified. He attained the Abode of Lord Vishnu in Vaikuntha. He became liberated and enjoyed the Supreme Bliss.

Kirtana is the singing of Lord's glories. The devotee is thrilled with Divine Emotion. He loses himself in the love of God. He gets horripilation in the body due to extreme love for God. He weeps in the middle when thinking of the glory of God. His voice becomes choked, and he flies into a state of Divine Bhava. The devotee is ever engaged in Japa of the Lord's Name and in describing His glories to one and all. Wherever he goes he begins to sing and praise God. He requests all to join his Kirtana. He sings and dances in ecstasy. He makes others dance.

Smarana is remembrance of the Lord at all times. This is an unbroken memory of the Name and Form of the Lord. The mind does not think of any object of the world, but is ever engrossed in thinking of the glorious Lord alone. The mind meditates on what is heard about the glories of God and His virtues, names, etc., and forgets even the body and contents itself in the remembrance of God, just as Dhruva or Prahlada did. Even Japa is only remembrance of God and comes under this category of Bhakti. Remembrance also includes hearing of stories pertaining to God at all times, talking of God, teaching to others what pertains to God, meditation on the attributes of God, etc. Remembrance has no particular time. God is to be remembered at all times without break, so long as one has got his consciousness intact.

Padasevana is serving the Lord's Feet. Actually this can be done only by Lakshmi or Parvati. No mortal being has got the fortune to practice this method of Bhakti, for the Lord is not visible to the physical eyes. But it is possible to serve the image of God in idols and better still, taking the whole humanity as God. This is Padasevana. Padasevana is the service of the sick. Padasevana is the service of the whole of humanity at large. The whole universe is only Virat-Swarupa. Service of the world is service of the Lord.

Archana is worship of the Lord. Worship can be done either through an image or a picture or even a mental form. The image should be one appealing to the mind of the worshiper.

Worship can be done either with external materials or merely through an internal Bhava or strong feeling. The latter one is an advanced form of worship which only men of purified intellect can do. The purpose of worship is to please the Lord, to purify the heart through surrender of the ego and love of God.

Vandana is prayer and prostration. Humble prostration touching the earth with the eight limbs of the body (Sashtanga-Namaskara), with faith and reverence, before a form of God, or prostration to all beings knowing them to be the forms of the One God, and getting absorbed in the Divine Love of the Lord is termed prostration to God or Vandana.

The ego or Ahamkara is effaced out completely through devout prayer and prostration to God. Divine grace descends upon the devotee and man becomes God.

Dasya Bhakti is the love of God through servant-sentiment. To serve God and carry out His wishes, realizing His virtues, nature, mystery and glory, considering oneself as a slave of God, the Supreme Master, is Dasya Bhakti.

Serving and worshipping the Murtis in temples, sweeping the temple premises, meditating on God and mentally serving Him like a slave, serving the saints and the sages, serving the devotees of God, serving poor and sick people who are forms of God, is also included in Dasya-Bhakti.

To follow the words of the scriptures, to act according to the injunctions of the Vedas, considering them to be direct words of God, is Dasya Bhakti. Association with and service of love-intoxicated devotees and service of those who have knowledge of God is Dasya Bhakti. The purpose behind Dasya Bhakti is to be ever with God in order to offer service to Him and win His Divine Grace and attain thereby immortality.

Sakhya-Bhava is the cultivation of the friend-sentiment with God. The inmates of the family of Nandagopa cultivated this Bhakti. Arjuna cultivated this kind of Bhakti towards Lord Krishna.

To be always with the Lord, to treat Him as one's own dear relative or a friend belonging to one's own family, to be in His company at all times, to love Him as one's own self, is Sakhya-Bhava of Bhakti-Marga. How do friends, real friends, love in this world? What amount of love do they possess between one another? Such a love is developed towards God instead of towards man; physical love turned into spiritual love. There is a transformation of the mundane into the Eternal.

Atma-Nivedana is self-surrender. The devotee offers everything to God, including his body, mind and soul. He keeps nothing for himself. He loses even his own self. He has no personal and independent existence. He has given up his self for God. He has become part and parcel of God. God takes care of him and God treats him as Himself. Grief and sorrow, pleasure and pain, the devotee treats as gifts sent by God and does not attach himself to them. He considers himself as a puppet of God and an instrument in the hands of God.

This self-surrender is Absolute Love for God exclusively. There is nothing but God-consciousness in the devotee. Even against his own wishes, the devotee shall become one with God and lose his individuality. This is the law of being. The highest truth is Absoluteness and the soul rises above through different states of consciousness until it attains Absolute Perfection when it becomes identical with God. This is the culmination of all aspiration and love.

The nine modes of Bhakti are the ways in which a devotee attains the Supreme Ideal of life. A devotee can take up any of these paths and reach the highest state. The path of Bhakti is the easiest of all and is not very much against the nature of human inclinations. It slowly and gradually takes the individual to the Supreme without frustrating his human instincts. It is not direct assertion of God, but a progressive realization of Him.

Fruits of Bhakti

Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It infuses joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge. All cares, worries and anxieties, fears, mental torments and tribulations entirely vanish. The devotee is freed from the Samsaric wheel of births and deaths. He attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.

The fruits of Bhakti are Jnana. Jnana intensifies Bhakti. Even Jnanis like Sankara, Madhusudana and Suka Dev took to Bhakti after Realization to enjoy the sweetness of loving relationship with God.

Knowledge or wisdom will dawn by itself when you practice Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti is the pleasant, smooth, direct road to God. Bhakti is sweet in the beginning, sweet in the middle and sweet in the end. It gives the highest, undecaying bliss.

Kindly love divine in thy heart, for this is the immediate way to the Kingdom of God.

Pray to the Lord. Sing His glory. Recite His Name. Become a channel of His grace.

Seek His will. Do His will? Surrender to His will. You will become one with the cosmic will.

Surrender unto the Lord. He will become your charioteer on the field of life. He will drive your chariot well. You will reach the destination, the Abode of Immortal Bliss.

Conclusion

Bhakti Yoga is “systematized devotion for the attainment of union with Absolute”. It consists of love for the object of devotion, which is none other than God himself. Since, love, by nature needs reciprocation by the beloved, God in its abstract form is hardly to be loved. Unconditional devotion to God brings liberation or Mukthi. Thus, Bhakthi Yoga is the way towards that self-realization, which is considered to be the easiest path among all other streams of Yoga.

Questions

I. Fill in the Blanks

1. Bhakti yoga is the path of _____
2. Bhakti comes from the root _____
3. Bhakti is supreme love of _____
4. Devotee is _____ in Shantha Bhava
5. Bhakti = Prema + _____

II. Explain in one or two sentences

1. What is Bhakti Yoga?
2. What is Bhakti? Mention the types of Bhakti
3. Mention 5 types of Bhavas in Bhakti

III. Explain in detail

1. Explain Nava Vidha Bhakti
2. Explain different bhavas in Bhakti
3. Explain the steps involved in obtaining the fruits of Bhakti
4. How is Bhakti yoga useful in Modern society?
5. Methods to cultivate Bhakti

9. Concept of Body and Mind

Introduction

Yoga understands man as a multi-bodied, multi-dimensioned mind; a universal being, rather than simply body, mind and spirit. Western science limits this dimension as one body or eka kosha. According to Taithreya Upanishad, man has five bodies known as *Pancha kosha*. Understanding this Pancha Kosha is called *Pancha Kosha Viveka*. The physical body is called *Annamaya Kosha*, the body or kosha composed of cells (*Anna*). *Pranamaya Kosha* is the body made out of *Prana*, the vital forces of nature organized into the physical body by the pumping action of the breath (*Prana*). This body is also known as the life-force body or emotional body. *Manomaya Kosha* is made up of the lower memory mind of *chitta* or the conscious mind, *manas*. *Vijnanamaya Kosha* is the body permeated by the super conscious mind or the *buddhi* and *ahankara* of the higher mind. *Anandamaya Kosha* is the body of bliss or the cosmic body.

Physical body represents homeostasis or organic equilibrium. It represents *Samabhava*, mental equipoise for the mind with all senses balanced and under control of the *Buddhi*, the higher spiritual intellect. When *Annamaya Kosha* is mal-aligned with other four bodies, physical disassociation or diseases appear.

The concept of the mind (also known as *Antahkarana*) varies in the different systems of Indian Philosophy. Mind, according to Yoga, is a conglomeration of thoughts or a bundle of thoughts. Mind, according to Yoga and *Sankhya Philosophy*, is the size of the body. According to Advaita Vedanta, mind is the subtle substance; it is neither atomic nor infinite substance (*Dravya*). The mind which is called as internal organ or *Antahkarana*, is produced from the *Sattva* form of all five elements together. It is known by four different names according to

the functions. Four names are – *Manas*, *Buddhi*, *Chitta* and *Ahankara*. The function of cogitation is known as *Manas* or mind. When determination is made, it is known as *Buddhi*. The function of storing experiences in memory is known as *Chitta*. Egoism is *Ahankara*.

According to *Chandogya Upanishad* (6.5.1), the food that is eaten is divided into three parts – the grossest part becomes excreta, the medium constituent becomes flesh and the subtlest part becomes mind (*Antahkarana*).

Mind is the cause of bondage as well as liberation. Mind is the cause of happiness and unhappiness.

Psychosomatic nature of disease

Disease, in modern medical perspective is considered as dysfunction of organs and systems, which may be of various conditions like external atmosphere agents, like allergents, toxins, or pollutants or infectious germs or may be due to congenital or defects. Modern science also recognizes internal imbalances like mental restlessness, emotional upsurges or intellectual conflicts that lead to stress reactions could be the factor and major cause of diseases.

Concept of disease, according to Yoga, is found in the text called *Yoga Vasishtha*. Modern diseases also known as lifestyle disorders such as Asthma, diabetes, anxiety, hypertension etc. are called *Adija Vyadhis* (stress born diseases). The origin of disease, according to Yoga, starts in the mind, percolates in the breathing and ends up with the body. These diseases arise in the mind due to strong likes and dislikes rather than what is right or what is wrong i.e., going against what is right, which is known as *Prajnaparadha* in Ayurveda (a mistake at the level of inner consciousness). That causes an imbalance, a disease at the *Manomaya Kosha*, called *Adi*.

If *Adi* (mind or *Manomaya Kosha*) is not remedied, it will bring imbalance in *Pranamaya Kosha* shows up as breathing jerks, imbalances and speed. This inturn creates stress reactions causing autonomic endocrine imbalances, leading to diseases in the body called *Vyadhi*. Such diseases are called *Adija Vyadhis*. *Anadija Vyadhis* are another category of disease such as infections and injuries that are of physical nature that can be tackled by the modern medical system effectively. *Adija Vyadhis* are multi-dimensional, not merely physical in nature. So, the whole man has to be treated. So, the integrated approach of yoga therapy (IAYT) provides techniques for correcting the problem at both the physical and subtle levels. Yoga practices help in bringing about the balance at the level of the five koshas, so that complete health can be restored.

10. Concept of Mantra

The word *Mantra*, in general, translated as sound vibration. Mantra is the fifth Yoga described in Yoga Upanishads. Literal meaning of mantra is the force that liberates the mind from bondage. In Sanskrit, the word mantra is derived from several roots.

|| *Mananaat Trayate Iti Mantrah* ||

Mananaat – bondage of mind, *Trayate* – freed or liberated, *Iti* – through or thus, *Mantrah* – force of vibration.

What is the force that liberates the mind from bondage?

According to Yoga, the gross mind has two attributes which hold it in bondage. First is “*Mala*”, which means impurities. Attraction to *Tamasic* and *Rajasic* aspects of life is “*Mala*”. Second is “*Vikshepa*”, which means dissipation. Feeling of dissatisfaction with our present life is “*Vikshepa*”. So the manifest mind contains impurities and it is dissipated.

The purpose of Mantra is to free the mind from the pattern of amusement it constantly seeks.

Mantra is vibration. The ultimate mantra is *Anahada Nada* (soundless sound). Mind is one aspect of Mantra Yoga, psychic body is another aspect and sound vibration is the third aspect.

Types of Mantra

Two types of Mantras are recognized traditionally:

- a. Universal Mantra
- b. Individual Mantra

Maha Mrutyunjaya Mantra and *Gayathri Mantra* are examples of **long universal mantras**. Examples of **universal mantra of intermediate length** are *Om Namah Shivaya* and *Om Namo Narayanaya*. Some common **short universal mantras** are *Om* and *So Ham*. Individual mantras or personal mantras are utilized for specific purposes according to the need. Examples are *Bija Mantras* (such as *Hram*, *Hrim*) which gives an understanding of a particular faculty of mind, *Tantrik Mantras* (such as *Hreem*, *Kleem*) create dynamic change within the energy pattern of the personality and *Vedic Mantras* (such as *Aham Brahmasmi* and *Tatvamasi*) alter the normal state of consciousness and withdraw the senses by internalizing the mental faculties.

Anyone can adopt the universal mantras and practice without direct guidance. So, individual mantras are generally given to the aspirant by the teacher according to the personality type and the kind of change or stimulations needed to awaken the different compartments of the personality.

How Mantra is practiced?

The process of using Mantra is known as *Japa Yoga*. Japa Yoga is part of Mantra Yoga. There are four different stages of Mantra Japa.

- a. *Baikhari* (or verbal repetition),
- b. *Upamshu* (or whispered sound),
- c. *Manasika Japa* (or mental repetition) and
- d. *Para* (or transcendental repetition).

Baikhari is the initial stage of Japa Yoga, where there is a continuous verbal repetition with a steady tone without any fluctuations. In *Baikhari Japa*, mantra repetition can be practiced either alone or in a group, which is repeating the same Mantra.

Madhyama or Upamshu Japa is the second stage, and can even be chanted in groups with whispering by lip movements without sound. Whispering also helps to keep awareness of Mantra, when the mind becomes introverted, but there is a still lot of mental activity.

Manasika Japa is the third stage, where mental repetition on concentration of a single Yantra or a Deity or Guru is clear.

Para is the last stage. It has only one form, which is *Ajapa* or effortless and continuous Mantra repetition.

11. Concept of Health and Disease

Health is not merely absence of disease but the proper management of diseased conditions. There are four aspects of life which are unchangeable: birth, disease, old age and death.

When one is born in life, one has to accept whether he likes or dislikes. In between, birth and death, disease and old age cannot be avoided. Each individual has taken birth and will suffer from disease. Once the body is accepted, it is bound to have disease, old age and death is a reality that cannot be avoided.

Yoga does not say that one should never suffer from any kind of disease: rather there will be suffering as that is the natural law. If the disease can be managed, that management is Health. Hatha Yoga aims to bring this management.

According to World Health Organization, the state of health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity.

It is evident that Health is dynamic and multi-dimensional state, so, to achieve optimum Health one must use the holistic approach which caters to each dimension.

Many Research studies show Healthy Life is a byproduct of Yogic Way of Life. It has been observed that practicing Yoga techniques, practitioners are physically and mentally healthier, they have better coping skills than other normal population.

Dimensions of Health

Health is multi-dimensional. According to WHO, the four dimensions are physical, mental, social and spiritual.

Physical dimension of health is probably easiest to understand as it implies the notion of perfect functioning of the body.

Mental dimension of health is not mere absence of mental illness, it is the ability to respond to the varied experiences of life with flexibility and a sense of purpose. It is the state of balance between the individual and the surrounding world.

Social dimension of health is harmony and integration within the individual, between each individual and other member of society. This includes levels of social skills one possesses, social functioning and the ability to see oneself as a member of a larger society.

Spiritual dimension of health refers that part of the individual which reaches out and strives for meaning and purpose in life. It includes integrity, principles and ethics, the purpose in life.

Yogic perspective of Health

From a Yogic perspective, it is heartening that the WHO definition gives importance to well-being that is a vital aspect of being healthy as well as feeling happy. Health is a process of continuous function indicating the state of well-being.

Health is a state of equilibrium between the three humours of the body – vata, pitta, kapha; wind, bile and phlegm – wherein the mind and organs of the body work in harmony, one enjoys peace and happiness and performs life's duties with comfort and ease.

Health is fundamental aim of Hatha Yoga. Disease is an obstacle to progress in the Yoga Sutras (1:30)

According to the theory of Yoga, Health is not the absence of disease, but the proper management of disease. In general sense, Health can be defined as a common resistance to infection, the absence of disease, flexibility of mind and body, mental peace, perfect coordination and condition of all organs and nerves in the body together with a perfectly functioning Pranic body.

Yogic concept of Health

Yoga is first and foremost a Moksha Shastra meant to facilitate the individual to attain the final freedom, liberation. One of the important by-products of Yogic way of living is attainment of Health and well-being. This is brought about by the right usefulness of the body, emotions and mind with awareness and consciousness.

The concept of Health in Yoga is to realize the natural stamina, strength and ability of the body, mind and emotions. If one is nearer to the self, there will be less problems with illness or disease. Most illnesses and diseases are caused by imbalance in the system – malfunction of organs, imbalance in the nervous or hormonal system, and imbalance in the emotional structure.

Qualities of physical health according to *Shvetaasvatara Upanishad* are lightness of the body, health, thirstlessness of mind, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice and agreeable odour and scantiness of expressions. (*Shvetaasvatara Upanishad: II-13*)

According to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, slimness of body, luster on face, clarity of voice, brightness of eyes, freedom from disease, control over seminal ejaculation, stimulation of gastric heat and purification of subtle energy channels. (*Hatha Yoga Pradipika: II-78*)

According to *Patanjali Yoga Darshana*, it is bodily perfection (Kaya Sampat). It is said in *Vibhuti Pada* that perfection of the body includes beauty, gracefulness, strength and adamant harness. (*Patanjali Yoga Darshana*)

Qualities of mental health (*Sthitha prajna*) according to Yoga are enumerated in Bhagavad Gita are as follows:

- Beyond passion, fear and anger
- Devoid of possessiveness and egoism
- Firm in understanding and unbewilder
- Engaged in doing good to all creatures

- Friendly and compassionate to all
- Pure hearted and skillful without expectation

Qualities of spiritual health according to Yoga: Bhagavad Gita also delineates qualities of a spiritually healthy person:

- Fearlessness
- Purity of inner being
- Steadfastness in the path of knowledge
- Charity
- Self-Control
- Spirit of sacrifice
- Self-analysis
- Disciplined life
- Uprightness
- Non-violence
- Truthfulness
- Freedom from anger
- Spirit of renunciation
- Tranquility
- Aversion to defamation
- Compassion to all living creatures
- Non-covetousness
- Gentleness
- Modesty
- Vigour
- Forgiveness
- Fortitude
- Cleanliness of body and mind
- Freedom from malice
- Absence of pride

Components of Healthy Yogic Lifestyle

1. *Ahara* – Healthy and balanced diet, adequate intake of fresh water, food prepared and served with love and affection.
2. *Vihara* – Right kind of relaxation (*Yoga Nidra*), recreational activities along with group activities, selfless service (*Karma Yoga*).
3. *Achara* – Right conduct, Right behavior.
4. *Vichara* - Right thought and attitude towards life. Following the moral restraints and ethical observances (*Yama and Niyama*).
5. *Vyavahara* – Right interaction between individuals.

Yogic concept of Disease

Impairment of Health is a condition of the body on which the optimal functioning is disrupted or damaged is called as Disease. *Patanjali Maharshi* describes Disease as the first obstacle in the practice of Yoga. Five Kleshas are described which are the root of mental illness. It includes – Ignorance, Ego, Desire, Aversion and Fear of Death. Ignorance is the root cause of all the affection.

Yogic text describes the origin of Disease is in the mind where the mind which is called “*Adhi*” influences the body, thus creating “*Vyadhi*”. *Adhis* are preliminary disease.

The disease “*Adhi*” are twofold:

- *Samanya* – Ordinary.
- *Sara* – Essential.

Samanya, an ordinary disease could be termed as “Lifestyle non-communicable Disease” since they are produced during interactions (Mental Conflicts) with the world. These may be termed as psychosomatic ailments.

Sara is the Essential disease of being caught in the birth-rebirth cycle that has to be understood in the modern terms as “Congenital Diseases”. The *Sara* does not cease until the knowledge of the self is attained.

“*Vyadhi*” are of 2 types:

- *Adhija Vyadhi* – Stress borned related diseases, known as psychosomatic ailments like Asthma, Hyper tension, Diabetes, Arthritis, Gastritis, Skin diseases and so on, where Integrated Approach of Yoga Therapy (IAYT) comes into picture for management.
- *Anadhija Vyadhi* – Non-stress related diseases caused by external injuries, infection and toxins, where the modern medical systems are required for treating these ailments.

Concept of Yoga Therapy

Yoga Therapy is the process of empowering an individual to progress towards an empowered Health and well-being through application of teachings and practices of Yoga.

According to the tradition of Yoga and Upanishads, man has five sheaths of bodies called as *Pancha Koshas*. The first and foremost is the physical body called *Annamaya Kosha*, the next subtler body is the *Pranamaya Kosha* featured by the predominance of *Prana*.

Manomaya Kosha is the psychic body responsible for the functions of Mind, namely perception, analysis, memory and emotions.

The *Vijnanamaya Kosha* is the fourth sheath characterized by discrimination and the capacity to judge, aimed at channelizing the human behavior towards perfect Health.

Lastly, *Anandamaya Kosha*, man is established in perfect harmony, bliss and freedom from fear.

According to Yogic texts, the root cause of stress is the disturbance in the *Manomaya Kosha*, percolated into *Annamaya Kosha* (Physical Body) through disturbed *Prana* force. Hence the management of stress induced Diseases or ailments should correct imbalances at all these levels (Physical, *Prana* and Mind). This helps the patient to establish himself in his *Vijnanamaya Kosha* and *Anandamaya Kosha* which is the statement of freedom from illness.

An Integrated approach of Yoga Therapy (IAYT) is a set of Yogic techniques offered at all these levels to correct the imbalances.

IAYT practices to manage psychosomatic illness.

1. Practices at *Annamaya Kosha*
 - A Healthy Yogic diet
 - Kriyas
 - Loosening Exercises
 - Yogasanas
2. Practices at *Pranayama Kosha*
 - Proper Breathing
 - Kriyas and *Pranayama*
3. Practices at *Manomaya Kosha*
 - *Dharana* / *Dhyana* / *Samadhi*
 - Emotion culture: Devotional session – Prayer, Chants, Bhajans, Namavali
4. Practices at *Vijnanamaya Kosha*
 - Happiness analysis – correction of wrong notions
5. Practices at *Anandamaya Kosha*
 - Karma Yoga – Secret of Action.

Yoga is a form of Holistic mind body medicine, use of *Yogasanas* (Physical postures), *Pranayama* (Breathing techniques), *Dhyana* (Meditation), *Yoga Nidra*, (Relaxation technique) and Lifestyle management helps to combat the psychosomatic illnesses.

12. Yoga - A Way of Life

Yoga not only provides techniques for the growth of man from his animal level to heights of perfection, it carves out a way of life for him. Yoga is not only a lifestyle, but also a philosophy of life that give strength to mental character. Thus, Yoga is a technique, a way of life and philosophy. The underlying current of all these three aspects of Yoga is the personal effort that one puts into the *Sadhana*.

Yoga is not only the practice of *Asana* and *Pranayama*, *Kriya* and *Kundalini* techniques, *Hatha Yoga* practice and *shat-karmas*, it is also imbibing a way of life, improving the quality of life, as indicated in the *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. Awareness and Adherence to certain qualities and ideas which can uplift the human mind, emotions, character, sight and personality are known as *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. Each Yama and Niyama will highlight a character of a human personality. When that character is highlighted, then it becomes part of expression, understanding actions, behavior, attitude and life. Therefore Yoga is not only a technique, but also a lifestyle, known as *Yogic Lifestyle*.

Yoga way of life offers a newer understanding of social dynamics for the construct of an ideal society. Not only does the Yoga way of life provide a framework for the intelligent management of forces within, but it also provides the right basis for the macro transitions in the society. Yoga way of life answers the question of man and has been proved to be as vital to human growth and well-being, to social harmony and peace which alone can make an ideal society.

13. International Day of Yoga



At the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** on the 27th of September, 2014, while addressing the 69th session, the Honorable Prime Minister of India Sri Narendra Modi pressed the world community to establish **International Day of Yoga**. On the 11th of December, 2014, the 193 member UNGA approved the proposal by consensus with a record 177 co-sponsoring countries a resolution to establish 21st June as “**International Day of Yoga**”.

Importance of International Day of Yoga

International Yoga Day is celebrated on **June 21st** every year. The United Nations has marked the day to raise awareness about the many benefits of practicing Yoga for people all over the world.

Why Yoga

Yoga is a systematic discipline and is an asset of ancient Indian tradition to humanity. Yoga, literally means to “Unite”, is derived from Sanskrit root. The word “Yuj” means to “Join”.

Yoga embodies the union of:

- Mind and Body.
- Thought and Action.
- Restraint and Fulfilment.
- Harmony between Nature & Man (Prakruti & Purusha).
- Health and Well-being.

Yoga is not just a physical exercise, but also a science to discover the sense of oneness with oneself. Yoga is a way of life and change one’s lifestyle by creating awareness.

Importance of Yoga

Yoga is an art of practice. This art helps in controlling an individual's mind, body and soul. Yoga is a boon to a person who suffers from anxiety and tension. Yoga helps in relaxing and achieving peaceful body and mind. Yoga helps in increasing flexibility, muscle strength and endurance.

In today’s modern age, adopting Yoga as a way of life, and practicing the method or techniques regularly helps the human kind to solve all the problems.

Regular Yoga practice builds mental lucidity and coolness, boosts body awareness, relieves stress patterns, relaxes the mind and sharpens concentration.

Yoga is multi-dimensional aspect and its scope has increased in modern life. Hence, Yoga is a strength to human kind which acts as a preventative, curative medicine to manage the modern age problems.

Why International Day of Yoga on 21st June

21st June is the longest day in the Northern Hemisphere, technically this day is referred to as Summer Solstice. In Delhi, the day length is around 14 hours. The amount of light received by a specific area in the Northern Hemisphere during the summer solstice depends on the latitudinal location of the place. Therefore, 21st June is also observed as the International Yoga Day.

First International Day of Yoga

The Ministry of AYUSH successfully organized the 1st International Day of Yoga on the 21st of June, 2015 at Rajpath, New Delhi and from then onwards there is no looking back when it comes to the celebrations of the International Day of Yoga.

International Day of Yoga Themes:

There have been various themes on the occasion of the IDY.

So far the themes are as follows:

- 2015: Yoga for Harmony and Peace.
- 2016: Connecting with Youth.
- 2017: Yoga for Health.
- 2018: Yoga for Peace.
- 2019: Yoga for Heart.
- 2020: Yoga at Home and Yoga with Family.
- 2021: Yoga for Well-being.

21st June, 2022 marks the 8th consecutive year of the International Day of Yoga with the Theme “**Yoga for Humanity**”.

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