

Yoga, the Science of Joyful Living

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Introduction

Health & happiness is an inherent desire of every living being. But are we really happy?

Happiness is a relative perception and its parameter changes from person to person and in the same person from time to time.

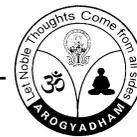
Change is the law of nature. Everything changes every minute. The change may be apparent or hidden. It may be for progress or deterioration; it may be for health or disease and it may be for life or death. When the change is for progress, health and life we all become happy but when the change is for deterioration, disease and death we all become sad.

Technological advances have increased dramatically in the last decade and each passing year brings a revolutionary surgical procedure or a new wonder drug. Advancement in electronics and computers have revolutionized every sphere. A robot and rocket can be manipulated on Mars. Sheep clone has been produced and human clone is a possibility. All this development and materialism in life should have made life very comfortable and happy. But the fact remains that even those who are at the top in any field are seldom satisfied and happy.

Yet despite all these discoveries the attainment of physical health eludes our grasp.

A new epidemics is fast emerging:

- Coronary Artery Diseases: 10% of adults
- Hypertension (BP >140/90): 20% of adults
- Diabetes Mellitus: >10% of adults



We blame the deteriorating state of our health and society to external factors –Stress. But the truth is “All suffering that afflicts the mind or the body has its cause, and all happiness has its basis in clear, scientific knowledge.”

Why yoga today?

“To believe that doctors and hospitals help keep people healthy is plain rubbish”- Denis Burkitt

“More people make a living OFF hypertension than die OF It”- Sir George Pickering

Antihypertensive drugs robbed the patient of all that is enshrined in the American Constitution of: “Life, Liberty and Pursuit of Happiness”.

These prophetic statements has now been ratified by newer studies that showed that many of the complications in those helpless patients are brought on by long-term drug therapy and not by their elevated pressures.

There is nothing like pill for every ill. Physicians have started realizing that medicine “cures rarely, comforts mostly, but consoles always”. Recent data on the important role played by the human mind in the causation of major physical illnesses like heart attacks and cancer, have rekindled our interest in the intricacies of the working of the human mind vis-s-vis the human body.

It is to this specific issue I shall make an attempt to address on the guide lines laid down by our Gurudev H.H.Swami Rama.

Five thousand years ago our ancient yogi’s could appreciate what we have started realizing today: Illness and wellness are two sides of the same coin. Eighty to ninety percent of the diseases are psychosomatic in origin and that man is born with all the necessary in-built repair mechanisms to correct most, if not all, deviations in health. Yoga is a complete science. “Science needs yoga, Yoga doesn’t need science”

What is yoga?

The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root yuj which means “to unite”- Union between individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness. Yoga is more than mental or physical fitness .It is a state where one understands the purpose of life. The goal of each of us is to realize. Who are we? Why are we here? The journey is difficult but not impossible.

Yogic Concept of a Body

The 5 sheaths & 3 Bodies:

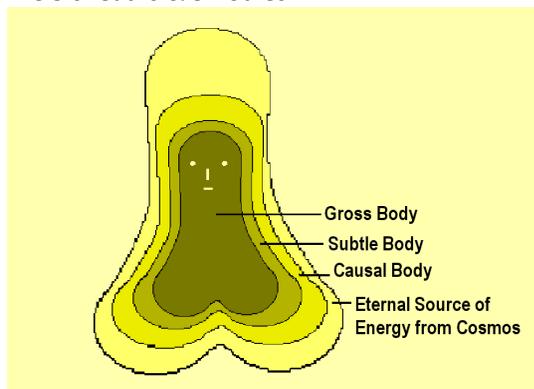


Fig-1

Physical Body: Food Sheath

Subtle Body: Prana + Mind + Intellect

Causal Body: Bliss Sheath



Integration of an Individual

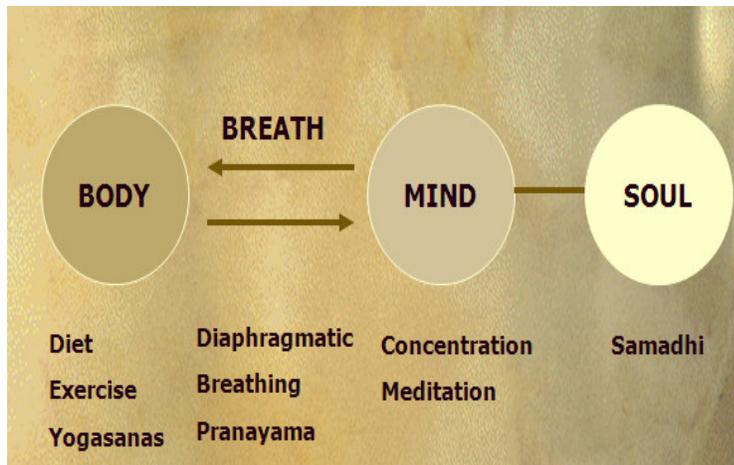


Fig-2: Body-Breath-Mind-Soul Model

“If this is my body, it should be under my control.” Swami Rama

Self-Transformation of an individual, can be achieved if one learns to integrate between body, mind and soul.

Body: One needs to treat body as a temple of His creation by taking care of:

(1) **Diet:** “Let the yogi eat moderately and abstemiously; otherwise however clever, he cannot gain success.”
Siva Samhita

“What good is that education which does not impart the knowledge of diet, nutrition & the proper way of cooking & eating” H.H.Swami Rama

We are what we eat : Food is of course necessary for our physical well being. But it has subtle effects on our minds, since the essence of food forms the mind.

“By the purity of food follows the purification of the inner nature” Swami Sivananda

Hence one needs to differentiate between Satvic, Rajasic & Tamasic foods.

The purpose of eating is not merely to get the bulk of the food but rather take food value from the food. If the food is fresh and natural, selected and prepared properly, neither overcooked nor undercooked and if that food is chewed well than one will not over eat or have weight problems.

(2.) **Exercise:** “The Yogi regards the physical body as an instrument for his journey towards perfection” There are two types of exercises (a) Aerobic exercises (b) Hatha Yoga

(a) **Aerobic exercises:** Aerobic exercises releases blocked muscular energy.



The aim of Aerobic exercise should be to double the resting heart rate and should be done for 20 to 30 min. It should be at a rhythmic pace, sustained and continuous with attention and one needs to breathe through nose.

Advantages: Increases vital capacity, circulation, heart, tone of muscles, burns calories, resets the appetite mechanism and reduces residual volume.

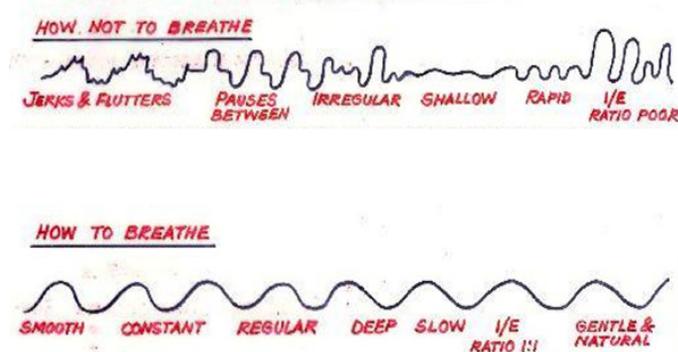
Effects: Decreases depression, major psychosis, anxiety, and Increases concentration, clarity and sleep.

(b) **Hatha Yoga:** "Asanas make one firm, free from maladies and light of limb" - Hathayoga Pradipika

Effects of Postures: Restores elasticity and tone, natural shape of body, stimulates circulation, revitalises the internal viscera, increases respiratory system performance, increases toxin liberation, helps endocrine system, increases resistance to fatigue, relieves tension and reduces weight. The energizing effect of the Yoga postures is clearly revealed by Kirlian photography.

Doing regular combination of aerobic and yogic exercises after understanding advantages and precautions to be taken while doing them is best way of keeping one self physically and mentally fit.

Mind: Prana is the first unit of vital energy of the universe and breath is the vehicle of Prana. If we can learn to control the breath we can control our Prana and finally our mind. The mind is fastened to Prana like a kite to its string. When the string is held skillfully, the mind is controlled. This can be achieved by learning science of diaphragmatic breathing and art of meditation.



Meditation:

Meditation is a means to achieve inner balance, mental and spiritual well being and a method to re-establish yourself in your essential nature (SAT, CHIT, ANANDA).

And thus rediscover everlasting peace by harmonizing your breath, taking proper diet, doing regular exercise and practicing regular meditation. It's a privilege of a human being that he has the power of choice to transform his personality; he can build a new destiny and he can exercise his birthright: freedom from all pains & miseries. Hence, Arise! Awake! and Attain knowledge!

