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Yoga for HEALTHY and HAPPY Living

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Yoga holds that it depends on the individual himself to know if he is sick or healthy. The same condition that causes the disease condition can also cure it. What is called natural healing power is nothing but that. It is nothing mystical but an inherent inner capacity. All that is required is not to interfere with it.

Yoga therapy tries to re-establish the inner balance by various means, working from the gross to the subtle. On the physical level it uses the Yoga plan for total health which is a graded program.

Asanas: They energize the whole organism, create awareness of the body and its functions and stabilize the mind.

Kriyas: These are simple hygienic procedures which support the body's own cleaning mechanisms and draw the attention of the mind towards the affected area.

Pranayamas: These are breathing techniques which have very subtle influences on the whole organism.

Diet: Many diseases are directly or indirectly linked with wrong food habits. A change in diet can stimulate the whole system.

Simple Nature-cure Techniques: The elements sun, water, air and simple procedures like massaging or steam inhalation are used as a support.

The aim of Yoga however, is to train the body not to strain it. Hence Bull workers, push-ups and calisthenics are not for us. But Brisk walking and swimming naturally re-establishes the homeostatic balance, tones up the body and the entire system and restores mental equilibrium.

The second line of therapy is the work on the mind. Mental disturbances –anxieties, confusion, unsteadiness are the most important factors which can cause a diseased condition. Therefore, various techniques have been developed to create positive mind states. Among others there are:

Relaxation (both physical and mental).

Steadiness of mind.

Inner awakening.



Yoga is no more or no less than a better way of life. Wholesome dietary habits, positive forms of physical exercise, healthy routines of the day and right attitudes of the mind are indeed a guarantee against sudden and severe modern diseases.

Yoga is a direct physical, psychological, psychosomatic effort at self wellness. *Asanas* are a part of a process of gaining mastery. Here physical and psychological problems are involved. There are very difficult *asanas* for exercising the body muscles and joints. At the same time there are also simple *asanas* which bring about the same results. In our modern busy life we can easily fit in some simple *asanas* for good health requiring just ½ an hour a day. Yoga *asanas* need not occupy our whole day for its mastery and performance.

Besides *asanas* there are other techniques in Yoga like *bandhas*, *Kriyas*, *satkarmas*, *mudras*, *mahamudras*, *Pratyahara*, *dharna* and *dhyana*. Now a days we are more interested in training the body! We are also taking a little interest in *Pranayamas* which turns into respiratory exercises.

It would be proper to understand the physical and psychophysical exercise for promotion of health and prevention of disease. Yoga can help us with the mind also. In fact in our modern conditions, it is the psychosomatic disease that affects mankind. It would have been good if we had thought of this before. There is no change in the kind of *Asanas*- it is the attitude that has to change.

In *Asana* physiologic processes are involved. You sit in a predetermined posture, you do not shift, you are in a perfect fixed posture. You are immune to little discomforts without getting so affected. You relaxedly carry on for long hours and master the posture as well as yourself. Buddha just did one *asana* – lotus pose.

We should do the *asana* *dynamically* rather than suddenly in a strenuous way with long pause. We should use the mind while performing *asanas* so that the mind co-ordinates with our movement and breathing and is very poised and concentrated. In a static pause one should be lost in the *asana* – one with the *asana* – inwardly steady and poised. Full attention while performing an *asana* will thus provide a psychosomatic value. Body and mind becoming one! Ideo-neuro- muscular control is at its best in meditative *asanas* viz. *Sukhasana*, *Siddhasana*, *prathanasana*, *padmasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Konasana*, *savasana*.

Inwardness, steadiness, prolonged stay is the speciality of this kind of physical education against modern gymnastics and *Suryanamaskars*, etc. The change of attitude is a big thing. One starts looking inward, abstracts oneself from the sensory world and moves from the sensate “matter” of colour, form, speed and variety, to the idealistic world of a stable mind, deep understanding and peace.



The ultimate goal in Yoga is mastering oneself, in moral and self discipline in Yama & Niyama. Without this Yoga is futile, it also takes you to a great depth of subjective experiences. This kind of a mind maintains this attitude for a very long time as against the mind given to speed and jerks.

The Yoga student performing his or her asanas deepens the depth of awareness of the body, of the subtle changes occurring within the internal organs, and gains voluntary control over the autonomic system etc. It works out like an introspective experiment. The Yogi understands the changes occurring in his or her body, he or she can control the changes and even delay disease and death. We have examples of the kind in the biography of Devarha Baba, Madhavdhasji Swami Shraddhananda. Paramahansa Madhavdasji voluntarily gave up his body informing his students that he is leaving in twelve hours.

Let us keep to Yoga, not sports or physical culture. We keep to Yoga to help humanity, to become better humans.

The next stage of development besides health is the concept of happiness. Yoga is very much aware of the four Purusharthas (motivations of life).

(1) Duty, (2) Acquisition of material objects, (3) Pleasure and happiness, (4) the ultimate highest of life transcending the material for the spiritual. Yoga helps in all these areas too. Yoga does not mean running away from life or asceticism. Yoga leads to all round development and not just the physical. Yoga practices are standardized for such integrated development.

For example, Karma Yoga is considered Yoga. It means taking up work fully completely. "Excellence in work is Yoga". One can do this if the body is fully involved, just as the mind. The emotions, altruistic attitude etc. need to get creatively activated. Doing work gives a sense of fulfillment of life.

We feel being a part of the process of existence. We must carry out our role well. *Karmasu Kaushalam* (efficiency in work) is also Yoga.

Motivations involvement with work, concentration and building upon altruism in the end are all involved.

In fact, in the Gita, this aspect of work is highly praised. "You have right over doing work, You have no right over the results of work.

So a yogi is not a recluse running away from life. He is a responsible member- a healthy, wise and cheerful member.