

YOGA FOR HEALTH OF CONTEMPORARY HUMAN LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Yoga is the ancient practice of India for human welfare. It is the biggest gift given to world by India. The contemporary human life is struggling from health problems like diabetes, asthma, respiratory problems, etc. Yoga is not only effective for physical health but also mental health. The contemporary human life is full of stress, tension and pressure affecting mental health. Yoga includes the yoga-asnas and meditation. The yoga-asnas increase flexibility and resistance power of humans. Meditation is good for mental health and increasing concentration. In covid-19 pandemic, many yoga-asnas found to be fruitful to increase the pulse rate and oxygen level of human beings. It also helped to increase resistance power against the virus. But it should be learned from a trained yoga teacher. Yoga is a science which should be taught logically. Every yoga-asana is a particularly designed exercise to be done as instructed. Any error in performing yoga can cause harm. Many organizations from India like ISHA foundation, Patanjali organization, etc have trained yoga teachers. We have to listen them properly and exercise as instructed. For exercising Yoga, one only needs yoga mate and obedience to the instructions given by yoga teacher. Yoga is a healthy lifestyle to follow for human beings. It helps humanity to live a balanced mental and physical life. Being human, we must inculcate yoga in our daily life programs.

KEYWORDS: Yoga, Human Life, Health, Yoga-Asana, Meditation.

Introduction

Yoga is the ancient practise for human welfare in India. Later this practise influenced whole world. According to manuscripts, the first practitioner and preacher of Yoga was Lord Shiva. Because of which He is call 'Adiyogi'. It is the misconception that Yoga is limited to physical health. Yes, it has influence on physical health of humans. But Yoga is beyond physical dimension of human life as well. We may say that Yoga is spirituality but still it is beyond spirituality. To define yoga in words is impossible. It is a method to understand and explore human nature.

Yoga is not a therapy. It is the discipline. If we are well-tuned within, everything will function well in this natural system. People knew spirituality but in fragments. We need to understand it entirely. Yoga is a ladder to the divine. It is a way to highest possibility within us. It is like approaching the Creator through the Creation. Without knowing all these facts about yoga, people are blindly practicing it. The word 'yoga' itself means 'union'. It is grand unification of existence. Even our beating heart is a kind of yoga. Our mind does Gyana Yoga which means yoga of intelligence. Our emotions do Bhakti Yoga which means yoga of devotion. Our body does Karma means yoga of action. Our energies do Kriya Yoga means yoga of transforming our energies. The realization of the creation happens when we approach these activities with certain understanding. Yogis sat for years because they are either engrossed in the process of creation or in the creator, who is within.

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The contemporary human life is struggling from health problems like diabetes, asthma, respiratory problems, etc. Yoga is not only effective for physical health but also mental health. The contemporary human life is full of stress, tension and pressure affecting mental health. Yoga includes the yoga-asnas and meditation. The yoga-asnas increase flexibility and resistance power of humans. Meditation is good for mental health and increasing concentration. Mindfulness is being aware of one's emotion, energies and body. It also means to respond unconditionally and non-judgementally. We need to be attentive to the surrounding.

Sadhguru's program "Inner Engineering" is based on ancient yogic science to create both inner and external well-being. His book "Inner Engineering" deals with the details of his own experiences. Sadhguru defines this program as: "Inner engineering is neither a religion nor a philosophy or dogma. It is technology for well-being. One does not have to believe or disbelieve, just have to learn to use. Technology will produce results irrespective of who you are." Through this technology, one finds joy in self-transformation by achieving limitless nature of who we are. Guru means 'dispeller of darkness'. Similarly Sadhguru is to guide us and teach us. There are many literatures about this concept but less is practised or experienced. The inner experience is needed for mindfulness.

In the first half of the book, Sadhguru shares his practise of observing things around him since early age. This observation can teach us many things. So he urges his readers and practitioners of program that instead of blindly believing him, one must experience it. The awareness only comes through conscious observation. The state of 'I don't know' leads us to the knowledge. Sadhguru not only used to observe his surrounding consciously but also the inner functioning of body like pumping of the heart. He started experiencing the mechanics of being human. He realised that if willing he could be everything beyond the limits of nature. He asks every reader to simply observe eating, drinking and breathing consciously. This experience would change our life.

In the later part of the book, Sadhguru explains what 'responsibility' in this practice is. In colloquial language we say take responsibility of the mistakes we have done in life. But here to respond does not mean that it's our fault. But it means that we should be willing to respond emotionally, mentally and physically. All living and non-living entities are connected one way or the other. So we have responsibility of each other. What we think as our body, is actually what we have ingested, mind is what we have sensed. But the emotions we have are the abstract things. It is the dimension beyond body and mind.

The program 'Inner Engineering' conducted by Sadhguru emphasised the regular practice of Shambhavi Mahamudra, a yogasana to awaken the Ajna Chakra. Ajna Chakra is the third chakra manifesting mindfulness. In this one has to focus on the eyebrow gesture and settle eyeballs into a fixture. Sadhguru adds to this yogasana, 21 minutes breathe practise after Up-yoga to align practitioner's entire system of body, mind and emotion in harmony and experience bliss within. On the official website of this program, the benefits of this program are greater peace and joy, improved sleep quality and energy levels, purification of body, relief from chronic ailments and access intelligence of source of creation. To study the effects of Sadhguru's Inner Engineering medical studies were conducted at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi on Shambhavi practitioners. The results have shown 90% reduction in anxiety symptoms, 95% reduction in depression symptoms, 50% stopped regular medication while 25% reduced medication. In covid-19 pandemic, many yoga-asnas found to be fruitful to increase the pulse rate and oxygen level of human beings. It also helped to increase resistance power against the virus.

Sadhguru says 'Mandala' is the time duration of minimum 40 days of yogasana practice for its optimum results. After this duration yogasana is imbibed in our system and functions in completely different level. Sadhguru gives emphasis on not taking break while doing it. The further research has been done on the regular and irregular practitioners of Shambhavi Mahamudra twice a day for 40 days. It is a psychological test on the controlled groups: Group A for Regular practitioners, Group B for Irregular Practitioners and Group C for Non- Practitioners. The test was called "Five Facet Mindfulness test" and the questionnaire for this test was called "Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire". In this test, analysis was done on five factors: observing, describing, acting with awareness, non-judging of inner experience and non-reactivity to inner experience. The study was conducted on people aged from 16 to 24 years of all genders. The average score of each group was: Group A – 136, Group B – 128 and Group C – 114. The medical study shows that regular practitioners of Shambhavi Mahamudra are really benefitted with health recovery and mental illness.

The only obstacle that arises when a disciple is practicing yoga, meditation or Sadhana, is when he doubts his Sadhana. In such a situation, hope may be a solution. But with hope comes the fear of losing hope. So we should never doubt. The yoga, meditation or Sadhana are ultimately for complete physical and mental wellbeing as well as experiencing spiritual bliss. We have to overcome the restrictions of devotion. It is the devotion and faith of disciple which enlighten him/her.

Sadhguru makes it clear that there is difference between exercising blissful life with drugs as opposed to experiencing it with Sadhana. There are harmful effect of drugs on psychology and chemistry of a person. The destructive nature of the ecstasy produced by drugs is very harmful. In history of Indian ancient classical texts like Puranas, we get evidences that people on spiritual path used drugs but that was a wrong practice. Even lord Siva was the first to use drugs. But we should understand that He is God not human being. To make this topic clear, he tells about an anecdote where Shiva drinks gallons of liquor and his disciples blindly followed Him. Later he drank molten iron and resumes his journey. Now should his disciples drink molten iron? No, we cannot. We should keep in mind this difference.

Sadhguru tells us that the distinction of inner and outer conflict is trivial. Our life is our responsibility. We have developed science and technology which can control the outer world. But nobody thinks of inner world. In fact, if we control our inner world, the outer problems would be automatically solved. Inner peace is solution to all the problems. But peace does not mean stagnant but dynamic life. The technology which can maintain inner peace is "Yoga". There is significance of yoga in human life. We say we don't have time for yoga and for ourselves; but actually we are pre-occupied. If we really want to do something in life, we would definitely do that, without any hassle. If our mind become more organised, the unnecessary words, actions and things will disappear.

Many say disease or disability cause misery; but they don't. It's right that some situations are out of our control. A mentally retarded person is always happy but other people's attitude towards him, make him suffer. If we allow our humanity to function, then the misery would disappear. We should overcome our prejudices. We are doing this unconsciously. Our basic faculties like our mind and body are not in our control. Otherwise, we would be joyful all the time; without misery. Bad things do not happen to us; things happen. Some situations may be out of control. If we believe in God then what is happening is his creation. We should not doubt whether it is good or bad. Even if death comes, we should think that God has invited us to heaven, then that experience would be joyful.

But it should be learned from a trained yoga teacher. Yoga is a science which should be taught logically. Every yoga-asana is a particularly designed exercise to be done as instructed. Any error in performing yoga can cause harm. Many organizations from India like ISHA foundation, Patanjali organization, etc have trained yoga teachers. We have to listen them properly and exercise as instructed. For exercising Yoga, one only needs yoga mate and obedience to the instructions given by yoga teacher.

Conclusion

Yoga is a healthy lifestyle to follow for human beings. It helps humanity to live a balanced mental and physical life. Being human, we must inculcate yoga in our daily life programs. It has to be understood with logical base. Yoga, Sadhana, Meditation, Mindfulness and Spirituality are all connected to each other. It is the ancient technology of India for human wellbeing.

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