



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Physical Education

YOGA THE NEED OF THE HOUR

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ABSTRACT

"Health is wealth. Peace of mind is happiness. Yoga shows the way." – Swami Vishnudevananda Saraswati. Today's modern life patterns affect one's life physically and mentally, thereby affecting their family life causing pain and suffering to others. One's health and peace of mind is lost, leaving man with no happiness and only pain and suffering. No one wants pain and suffering today. Everyone wants good health and peace of mind. Only when one has good health and peace of mind he/ she will have happiness. Only 'YOGA' shows us the way to achieve it. Yoga promotes physical and mental wellbeing. It is a drugless therapy without any side effect.

INTRODUCTION:

Every human life is considered precious and unique. It is rare to get a human birth. Man has taken millions of years to come to a human form. He has been gifted with the sixth sense. The sixth sense gives man a discriminating faculty to lead a life of awareness and decide between the right and the wrong. The main purpose of human birth is to attain 'Perfection.' Perfection can be attained only if man works to eliminate his 'Karmas' Every human being when born comes as a pure soul on this earth. As he starts living he creates his own karmas. According to his karmas he has to suffer, which costs his life physically, mentally and financially.

Harsh Reality of Today's Modern Life, Society & People

The facts of today's modern life:

- Man has forgotten moral values. We see humans but no humanity.
- Our education system gives us knowledge to earn money, but lacks cultural and moral values in schools and colleges. The quality of education is also reducing day by day.
- We search for happiness with money, as it is the only thing we care for.
- Jobs have become more demanding, hence no time for family and life becomes more complicated and stressful.
- Technology is rapidly advancing today, at the same time making man more lazy and a slave to it.
- Social media was created to make people more close, but people now only care for the 'likes' on social media.
- Man is living a life full of ignorance.
- Jealously, Greed and Anger always exist.
- As we are in the 21st century where modern science has advanced and succeeded in a finding a cure for a big ailments. However various vaccinations, surgical techniques, can only cure disease, but cannot make a person healthy as they don't prevent disease.
- People have no time for their health. They feel going to doctors, undergoing various tests and by swallowing a tablet, life is simpler. They are ready to take tablets and undergo various side effects rather than do yoga or heal themselves in a natural way.
- In this Kalyug pampering the plate has become everyone's supreme indulgence. We live to eat rather than eat to live. Many people continue to believe that God created animals to provide food for man. If this is indeed so, why should animals scream and howl when they are slaughtered? Man lives to satisfy his stomach but has no love and compassion for animal life, thereby creating more 'karma' for himself!
- Apart from tensions people have adapted to an unhealthy lifestyle like junk foods, alcohol, smoking, drugs and also the increasing level of air and water pollution, use of pesticides in fruits and vegetables, more intake of dairy products would cause health related issues.
- Young children are more stressed today, thereby having no time for recreation and exercise. They are developing health problems from a young age, and also addicted to smart phones and social media.

Why Yoga?

"The groundwork of all happiness is good health." – L.Hunt. To have good health and happiness one must strive for it. Only 'Yoga' can help achieve it. Yoga originated from ancient India thousands of years ago, which has been forgotten by man. The true greatness of Indian spiritual inheritance consists of the secret and glorious methods, it has delivered to us for allaying life's sorrow and human unhappiness, and for acquiring the circumstance of human existence, the infinite peace and perfection of the Divine being. Human grief cannot be alleviated as long as the human individual is immured in ignorance and strives merely for his individual upliftment. Human behaviour flows from three main sources: Desire, Emotion and Knowledge. Yoga is a perfect practical system of self-culture. It aims at the harmonious development of the body, mind and soul.

Yoga aims at controlling the mind and its modifications. It brings in perfection, peace and everlasting happiness. The practice of yoga will help one control their emotions, passions and will give one will power to resist temptations and to remove disturbing elements from the mind. Yoga frees one from life's sorrows, from the diseases and from the fluctuations of the mind. It helps to understand our self, the purpose of life and our relationship with God.

The National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM, 2009) gives an overview: "Yoga is a mind body practice in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) with origins in ancient Indian Philosophy. The various styles of yoga that people use for health purposes typically combine physical postures, breathing techniques and meditation or relaxation." The NCCAM adds that the practice of yoga dates back, 5000 years and provides many physical, mental emotional and spiritual benefits for individuals that maintain a regular practice.

Yoga in Daily Life

"Yoga in Daily Life" is a holistic system, which means it takes into consideration not only the physical, but also the mental and spiritual aspects. The main goals of "Yoga in Daily Life" are:

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Social Health
- Spiritual Health
- Self-Realisation or Realisation of the Divine within us

These goals are attained by:

- Love and compassion for all living beings.
- Respect for life, protection of nature and the environment.
- A peaceful state of mind.
- Full vegetarian diet.
- Pure thoughts and a positive lifestyle.
- Physical, mental and spiritual practices.
- Tolerance for all nations, cultures and religions.

Physical Health

Good health is the fundamental objective of life. If one has good health, they can achieve anything, without good health nothing can be done. To preserve and restore good health there are: Physical exercises, Asanas, Pranayama and Relaxation techniques. Continued and proper practice of yoga could reduce the use of medicines by 20% to 100% within 6 months to 1 year.

The 2017 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) found the use of yoga by U.S. adults increased significantly from 2012 (from 9.5 percent in 2012 to 14.3 percent in 2017). The percentage of U.S. children who used yoga more than doubled than this time (from 3.1 percent in 2012 to 8.4 percent in 2017).

Among adults who practised yoga, 94 percent reported doing so for wellness related reasons – such as general wellness / disease prevention to improve energy and 18 percent said they use yoga to treat a specific health condition.

Yoga enhances muscle strength, coordination, flexibility and help keep our body fit, control cholesterol level, reduce weight, normalise blood pressure and improve cardiovascular performance. Yoga has a lot to offer in terms of psychosomatic disorders and in stress related disorders such as diabetes, asthma, irritable bowel syndrome, epilepsy, hypertension, back pain, and other functional disorders. It can help reduce and in some cases eliminate drug dosage dependence in patients.

Another important factor for the maintenance of good health is the food we eat. The phrase “You are what you eat” – the food we eat influences our physical wellbeing, but also our emotions and thoughts. Food is the source of physical energy and vitality. One should have balanced and healthy food. They include grains, vegetables, pulses, fruits, nuts, milk and milk products, as well as honey, sprouts, salads, seeds, herbs and spices either raw or freshly cooked.

Mental Health

“The mind is responsible for the feelings of Pleasure and Pain. Control of mind is the highest yoga.” – Swami Sivanada. Mind is not daily made, but hourly made. In every minute it changes its colour and shape like a chameleon. It is very wavering and unsteady. It is like a wheel which revolves endlessly with tremendous velocity and generates new thoughts with every revolution. There is no man without the mind. Everything starts with the mind. In life we are led through our mind and senses, we need to control them and not allow them to rule us. We must do an inner analysis to purify it. Meditation helps the process of quietening the mind. It empowers the mind, and streamline its potential to be conscious, to prevent it from evils. Meditation helps attain an inner state of awareness and intensify personal and spiritual growth. For good mental health, one should meditate daily at least for 20 minutes.

Meditation enhances awareness. Improves memory power and will power. Increases concentration. Helps one to lead a life without causing pain to self or others.

Change of thought, relaxation of mind by dwelling on thoughts of pleasant objects, cheerfulness, sattvic food, mental recreation of sattvic nature are necessary for mental health – Swami Sivananda Maria Camara, PhD, a Spanish psychologist and mindfulness expert, shares her views on the science of meditation in her Mind works Mind Talk. She says that meditation trains the mind to stop grasping at issues; instead, it learns to accept and let go. That's precisely the idea behind mindfulness: remaining anchored in the present and allowing distracting thoughts to enter and leave the mind without clinging to or rejecting them.

According to a research published in the journal *Frontiers of Human Neuroscience*, it has been established that 'meditation is effective in enhancing a persons attentiveness. That is because meditation can help have better control over your emotions and other distracting feelings such as pain.

Social Health

Every individual should maintain a good relationship with each and everyone in the society. Social health is how you get along well with other people, how other people react to you, and how you interact with the society. To have a good social relationship in the society one should have good character, follow morality, duty, charity and introspection in daily life. One should balance his emotions and ego.

- **Morality:** It is not causing pain to self or others physically or mentally.
- **Duty:** It is responsibility to self and society. Society contributes for individuals to grow, and individuals contribute for society to grow. A scoop of rice is the result of the efforts of so many individuals. Thus it becomes imperative for man to repay his debt to the society in the form of good deeds. “Repay your dues in the form of deeds.” – Vethathiri Maharishi
- **Charity:** Showing kindness and generosity towards people who are poor, sick, and in difficulties is an act exclusive for human beings. This is charity. Without charity humanity cannot survive.
- **Moralisation of Character:** It is an exercise to train oneself to follow the path of righteousness. It is a character building exercise. Habits decide one's character. Good habits and good behaviour makes a man qualitatively and morally sound person. “To attain salvation and to get exonerated from all sins one has to get rid of his bad qualities and try to acquire moralized character.” - Vethathiri Maharishi
- **Introspection:** It is an effort to identify the blemishes in the mind and cleanse it consciously. Through introspection one analyse his thought, moralise desires, neutralize anger and eradicate worries.

Spiritual Health

According to WHO, “Spiritual health refers to that part of the individual which reaches out and strives for meaning and purpose in life.” Yoga is beyond caste, creed and religion. It is Universal. Our spiritual health depends on how well we are nurturing our personal relationship with God. To nurture our relationship with God and grow, we must get to know him. Prayer, meditation, mantra, positive thinking and tolerance lead to spiritual health. Chanting the name of the Lord is the best medicine or tonic in the world. One should follow tolerance, understanding, love and compassion in life.

Self-Realisation

When one practices yoga daily with utmost faith and sincerity, there will be a change in that person. There will be a development in physical health, mental health, social health, and spiritual health, the human mind becomes free from all traits and he reaches perfection. The goal of life is God Realisation. The union of individual soul with God. Only when an individual attains Perfection he can attain Self Realisation.

Analyse your thoughts. Scrutinize your motives. Remove selfishness. Calm passions. Control the Indriyas (senses). Destroy egoism. Serve and love all. Purify your heart. Cleanse the dross of your mind. Hear and reflect. Concentrate and meditate. Attain Self Realisation – Swami Sivananda.

CONCLUSION

“Yoga uses the body to discipline the mind and reach the soul.” – BKS Iyengar

Yoga brings a balance between the body, mind and the soul. It helps one achieve the purpose of birth. Yoga can be practiced anywhere and at any time. It is a simple inexpensive drugless therapy without any side effects. Through this art everyone can experience the Divine and enjoy the ecstasy of freedom from pain and ignorance apart from other gracious rewards like longevity and happiness. It changes the way of thinking, by bringing in a state of awareness, and helps one analyse life, to live it the right way. It helps us to face every challenge in life, also brings a change in one's personality, and makes one courageous. Yoga is a Divine Pill when practised with utmost faith it brings in a Divine

Intervention. Overall one would have a healthy and happy life physically, mentally and holistically. Yoga is the best treasure and a priceless Gift for Mankind! Everything is in Man's hands. It is he who has to make determined efforts to transform himself for the good and achieve the purpose of birth.

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