



YOGA: A THERAPEUTIC APPLICATION

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ABSTRACT

Yoga means the experience of oneness or unity with inner being. This unity comes after dissolving the duality of mind and matter into the supreme reality. The aim of all yoga practice is to achieve truth where the individual soul identifies itself with the supreme soul or God. Yoga has the surest remedies for man's physical as well as psychological ailments. Yoga therapy involves employing a variety of yoga practices to try to improve a health condition or to ease a natural process, such as pregnancy or menopause. Among the yogic tools used therapeutically are asana (physical postures), Pranayama (breathing exercises) and Meditation.

KEYWORDS: *yoga practice , health condition , psychological ailments.*

INTRODUCTION

According to the International Association-

"Yoga therapy is the process of empowering individuals to progress toward improved health and well being through the application of the teachings and practices of Yoga."

Yoga plays a very important role in shaping one's life. Ancient texts prove that longevity which is based on systematic life practices, good eating habits, control over mind and body, concentration are the real source to live long and happy life. This is the real aim of yoga.

Therapeutic yoga is an inherently holistic approach, simultaneously working on the body, mind and spirit. Various yoga practices systematically strengthen different body systems.

Yoga is a holistic science promoting specific techniques for integrated development of human being. Unfortunately most people think that yoga is only physical exercise, but it is not the truth. Yogic science contains concepts, methods and regulations to lead a well knit life. Regular practice of yoga ensures good health, sharp intellect, compassion, harmony, happiness and spiritual awareness. Yoga is generally known to be a Hindu spiritual and ascetic discipline, a part of which includes simple meditation, breath control and adoption of specific body postures.

The origin of yoga is very old. The oldest archaeological evidence of yoga can be traced back to 5000 years ago in seals and sculptures of Yogi in Indus-Saraswati civilization. The oldest text regarding yoga is in all the four Vedas. In Mahabharata sage Kapil (Hiranyagarbh) is said to be the oldest preacher of Yoga, but during the course of time the yogic principles of Kapil were vanished. About 300 AD sage Patanjali wrote the traditional text on Yoga which is popularly known as **YOGA SHASTRA**. This is the first authoritative text on yoga. The main theme of yoga shastra is based on achieving **Atma Sakshatkara** (Self realization) and obtaining control over mind and body through self discipline and a systematic way of life. Besides Yoga

Shastra, there are also some important books and texts containing extreme knowledge of YOGA i.e. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Goraksha Samhita, Shiv Samhita, Yoga Vasistha, Bhagavadgita etc.

The term yoga is derived from the root word **yuj** which means 'to **join or yoke**'. This means yoga is a systematic and methodical process to control and develop the mind and body to attain good health, balance of mind and self realisation. The sages have explained the meaning of Yoga in their own ways. Patanjali in Yoga sutra says "yogas citta vritta nirodhah (yoga is the stilling of the fluctuation of the mind) In Bhagvad Gita it is stated- "bhuddiyukto jahatiya ubha sukritdushkrite;tasmmadhyogay yujyasva yogah;karmasu koushalam" that is the work done with dexterity artistically in harmony with the environs and by and large for the benefits of all creations is real yoga.'

In the **Bhagavad Gita Sri Krishna explains to Arjun** the meaning of yoga as a deliverance from contact with pain and sorrow. When a man becomes one in communion with God, when his mind, intellect and self are under control freed from restless desire, so that they rest in the spirit within only a yogi can control his mind, intellect and self, being absorbed in the spirit within him, as a lamp does not flicker in a place where no winds blow. The yogi by the grace of the spirit within himself finds fulfilment, when the restless of the mind, intellect and self is stilled through the practice of yoga. Then he feels the joy eternal which is beyond the pale of senses. He finds the treasure above all others. There is nothing higher than this. He, who has achieved it, shall not be moved by the greatest sorrow. So we can say the real meaning of yoga is deliverance from contact with pain and sorrow.

Yoga can be very helpful in order to eradicate all the miseries and evils and attain **PARAMAANANDA** which is the real aim of one's life .It is evident from the studies and researches that Yoga is helpful in curing several diseases, developing the concentration of mind and easing stress and tension. Yoga ultimately eliminates all the health hazards and miseries of human life. Dr. Tiwari rightly says "Yoga is the best way to evolve oneself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually; it is not a religion to be imposed. It is a tried and tested natural system to improve various facets of our personality and focus the mind on the Supreme through concentration". The real Yoga has been structured on eight organs or parts steps ,components, levels etc which are to be done stepwise to attain the real victory over mind and body. Patanjali in his thoughts and teaching prescribed these ways and means to attain yogic perfection which helps a person to realise self and attain perfect state of mind. He calls it **ASHTAANG YOGA**. They are universal in nature and mostly shared by all religious philosophers of the world. These eight fold path of yoga are very relevant even today. They are-

1. Yama (Social Discipline)
2. Niyama (Individual Discipline)
3. Asana (Body Postures)
4. Pranayama (Breath Control)
5. Pratyahara (Discipline of the senses)
6. Dharana (Concentration)
7. Dhyana (Meditation)
8. Smadhi (Self – realisation)

All the above eight yogic concepts provide pathways for cleaning the body and mind to attain perfection. In order to attain the utmost peace of mind Yoga has been classified mainly into following categories-

1. Karma Yoga is the yoga of action.
2. Bhakti Yoga is the yoga of intense devotion.
3. Laya Yoga is the yoga of conscious dissolution of individuality.
4. Jnana Yoga is the yoga of knowledge and wisdom.
5. Hatha Yoga is the yoga of attaining physical and mental purity. (shuddi).
6. Mantra Yoga is the yoga of freeing the mind by utilizing a second vibration.

7. Raj Yoga is the yoga of awakening the psychic awareness and facilities.

So, Yoga as a whole is a positive practice for realisation of powers of the body, mind and the intellect. It is a science of the human mind and body with an aim to achieve oneness [union] with the self and the Supreme.

There are common requirements for best results in Yoga. These can be classified in the following points--

1. Basic knowledge and techniques of Yoga
2. Perfect time and place
3. Good food habits
4. Cleanliness
5. Proper guidance
6. Relaxation

Systematic Yogic practices give both physical and mental perfection. The real object is to learn Yoga systematically and adopt them in our life then only the real benefits of yoga can be experienced. These days yoga therapy has become so popular, that even doctors are promoting it. Various researches have proved that yoga is a therapy. It can be used to treat: stress, depression, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, back pain, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, insomnia, arthritis, respiratory disease and many more.

Yoga therapy is a growing field and scientific evidence has begun to emphasize its efficacy. It is used to treat existing mental and physical health issues, but can also be used as a self-care strategy for prevention and maintenance.

Yoga therapy is well established as a treatment for depression and anxiety. A meta-analysis cited in the Primary Care Companion for CNS Disorders found that yoga therapy also shows promise for the treatment of posttraumatic stress and schizophrenia. Additionally, yoga therapists have begun to develop treatment modalities to suit children with autism.

Yoga therapy is used in different methods. Yoga therapy practice can resemble physical therapy, rehabilitative therapy and psychotherapy. Potential benefits from yoga therapy include stress reduction, psychological well being, improved diet and efficient functioning of bodily systems.

There have been many researches revealed that the yoga as a treatment therapy for multiple disease. The practice of yoga is not as easy or as quick as taking medication, but mounting evidence suggests it is worth the effort and investment. Yoga helps one to reconnect with oneself. Yoga is very essential in day to day life. The benefits of yoga are unlimited. It is the means to achieve complete self realization. Yoga is a re-education of one's mental processes, along with the physical ones.

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