



SURYA NAMSAKAR

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ABSTRACT :

Surya Namaskar or Sun Salutation is obeisance or prostrations to the rising sun god. It is ancient Indian Vedic tradition to pay respect to the Sun God bowing before him with the full feeling of gratitude and bring equilibrium and fitness to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the individual.

Healthy mind, body, and soul are crucial elements of life. although there are numerous methods to keep oneself healthy and fit but Surya Namaskar is the simplest method cited in our ancient scripts. It simplifies mind and thought process, keeps our body vigorous. This is being proved and experimentally linked by nowadays researchers all around the globe.



KEYWORDS : *Surya Namaskar, yoga, fitness, healthy mind, and soul.*

INTRODUCTION

Around 3000 B.C. a mystical, philosophical, and spiritual concept originated in Indian subcontinent adding weight to the ancient Hindu traditions. An entirely oriental in origin that followed typical Vedic traditions accompanied with mantras with each posture, based on metaphysical principles and hard to understand for nonbelievers. It was another numinous Indian gift to the world.

Though, it could be practiced any time. But the early rising sun, typically at 5-5:30 AM is best suited for it. In simple terms, it is nothing but a simplification of the daily calisthenics for the mind, the body, and the soul. It is the yogic training of twelve cyclic postures, one following another and ensures one's digestion, agility, rejuvenation, beauty, and longevity (figure 1). To conduct this, you only need a quite place in your room or park.

Since ages through thorough practice, multiple benefits of the Surya Namaskar (SN) are established. In the recent years, researchers are verifying its medical importance. Different ranges of experiments were conducted on various kinds of diseases to prove its benefit in the cure.

MEDICAL BENEFITS

Bhavanani and group (2011) demonstrated the effect of SN training when performed in a slow and fast manner. Slow SN significant decreased the diastolic pressure whereas Fast SN significantly increased the systolic pressure. Along with the significant increase in isometric hand grip (IHG) strength and handgrip endurance (HGE), Maximum inspiratory pressure (MIP) and maximum expiratory pressure in both the groups. They concluded the effects of Fast SN are similar to physical aerobic exercises, whereas the effects of SSN are similar to those of yoga training.

Mody et al 2011 experimented on Six healthy Asian Indian men and women (18-22 years) trained in Surya Namaskar for over 2 years and concluded the regular practice maintains or improves the cardio-respiratory fitness, as well as promote weight management.

Malhotra and group (2005) worked with 20 patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus for 40 days yoga routine (involved SN and few more yoga postures) by an expert yoga teacher. And they proved a significant decrease in the fasting glucose levels, waist-hip ratio and beneficial changes in insulin levels.

Bhutkar *et. al.* 2008 has proved that Surya Namaskar has improved breathing efficiency of cardio-respiratory patients by strengthening the respiratory muscles, increased the excursions of diaphragm, lungs and thoracic compliance. It is also beneficial for the cure of the diseases like TB and asthma.

Defense Institute of Physiology and Allied Science, India has proved that Surya Namaskar burns about 3.79 calories per minute aiding to weight loss. It activates and tones up the entire digestive system by the alternative stretching and compression of abdominal organs which include pharynx, oesophagus, and stomach, intestine and liver. It helps in the prevention of the digestive related diseases like gastric and stomach ulcers etc.

Surya Namaskar significantly improved the muscular endurance and flexibility in the experiment of Kanwaljeet *et. al.* other study conducted by Milind *et al* 2011, showed that it can improve the muscle strength, general body endurance and body composition to the optimum level in healthy individuals.

Godse and group worked on the effect of Stress management by SN and they was concluded it is effective in leading to R-Dispositions like physical relaxation, mental quiet, at ease/peace, rested and refreshed, strength and awareness and joy and reduces sleepiness, somatic stress, worry and negative emotion at a dispositional level. Similar experiment was conducted by the Sharma *et al* (2014) on group of 30 students for 30 days and they found it is one of the best tools to manage the stress level especially among the students. This concludes the SN provides the individual with refreshing experiences, and manages the stress to a great level and also helped the individual from getting rid of taking psychotic and mood refreshing drugs.

Two different set of researchers, Kumar (2011) and Kumar (2009) concluded SN plays a positive and significant role to decrease stress level and anxiety.

SURYA NAMASKAR MANTRAS AND THEIR BENEFITS:

The mantras chanted while performing the *Namaskar* generate minute vibrations in the body which helps and corrects functioning of all systems of glands in the body. The Namaskar process in itself tones up the working of all systems in the body like sensory, respiratory, circulatory, digestive and nervous systems. A balanced state of mind and concentration and wide memory powers also result.

There are 12 mantras with four parts to each mantra.

Om Hraam 'Udhyannadhyamitramahaha' Mitraya Namaha.

Om Hreem 'Aarohannuththaraamdivamm' Ravaye Namaha.

Om Hruum 'Hridrogam mama surya' Suryaya Namaha

Om Hraim 'Harimaanam cha naashaya' Bhanave Namaha

Om Hroum 'Shukeshu May Harimaanamm' Khagaya Namaha

Om Hraha 'Ropanaakaasu dhadhmasi' Pooshne Namaha

Om Hraam 'Atho Haaridrareshu May' Hiranyagarbhaya Namaha

Om Hreem 'Harimaanannidhadhmasi' Marichaye Namaha

Om Hruum 'Udagaadhayamaadithyah' Adityaya Namaha

Om Hraim 'Vishwena Sahasaa Saha' Savitre Namaha

Om Hroum 'Dwishantham Mama Randhayann' Arkaya Namaha

Om Hraha 'Mo Aham dwishatho Rattham' Bhaskaraya Namaha

Practitioners having a problem in reciting the full form on mantras drop the Rik part shown in quotes. Few people only chant 1st, 3rd and 4th part of the mantra.

Understanding the mantras and their effect on the body and the soul:

Each mantra is divided into four parts:

1. The first part is the chanting of Aum (Om),
2. The second part is the chanting of a 'bija mantra',
3. The third part is a part of a Rik from the Rig Veda, and
4. The fourth part is one of the 12 names of Sun.

1. AUM or Om: The chanting of AUM mantra activates stomach, heart, brain and the overall body/mind, thus creating vibrations in the associated chakras. Digestion, respiratory and sensory activities go through the powerful lens of AUM turning intellect and memory into sharp and powerful tools. Those who meditate chant AUM separately too owes its endless mental, spiritual, and physical benefits.

Most of the AUM chanting benefits are established overages through regular practice and minute observations. Below we are dividing it into major segments to understand it properly.

Chanting AUM cleanses the mind and heart and slowly removes the negative thoughts, traits, and habits. This includes any kind of laziness, hatred, ego factor, upcoming from sorrow, arrogance, etc. thus converting them into cheerfulness, enthusiasm, attentiveness, and self-enjoyment. Extending the exhalation and inhalation process during AUM chanting reduces the rate of respiration and improves any lung related diseases. Prolong effect of each syllable has been deduced during the course of time.

- **A** creates vibrations that affects the spinal cord.
- **U** creates vibrations that stimulate the thyroid glands and
- **Prolonging the M:** reduces the rate of respiration and will cause deep and slow breathing. It creates vibrations that increase the efficiency and reduces the reaction time of the brain, thus increases level of concentration. The body is free of depression, fatigue and thus acts as a tranquilizer. It also extracts negative outlooks of life from the heart and mind.
- **Prolonging the O:** (in OM) acts as a painkiller.

There are long and detailed positive parts of practicing AUM which is divided into below different categories for the ease of paper understanding.

PHYSICAL BENEFITS:

Concluding from extensive research on vocal vibrations, Dr Leser-Lasario, found that emission of vowels during exhalation process massages the internal organs. The vibrations reach deep in the body and intensify the flow of oxygen and bloods, which in turn stimulates pituitary, thyroid, and other hormonal glands. The overall process makes the body potent, vigorous and dynamic.

- It normalizes the blood pressure thus improves the functioning of the heart and the old age veins problems. Strengthens muscles, spinal cord, and more energy to counter the fatigue problems.
- Improves metabolism, thyroid and other endocrine glands, vocal cords, and humming of the AUM massages tummy, chest, spine, head, glands and other organs of the body.
- It helps in removing toxins from the body, like sinus symptoms, increased production of Nitric Oxide.
- Experienced ones say that rhythmic pronunciation of AUM sweetens your voice.
- It helps in activating the dysfunctional body parts too. The person rubs his palms together while chanting and then moves over to the dormant body part (stomach, spine, throat, nasal, and brain) it activates sequentially as the energy moves up to the brain.

MENTAL

- Experiments have proved that AUM induces alpha brain activity by stimulating the pituitary gland. Which in turn eases the deep meditation requirement, rejuvenates the mind and increase the concentration power, decreases the blood pressure, calm the nervous system and improves the health of your heart.

- While acting as a tranquilizer it removes any kind of nervousness, anxiety, scare, uneasiness, sorrow, stress, anger and boosts creativity.
- It helps in controlling the emotions and thus maintains the peace of mind. Continuous chanting augments the intuition power and consciousness level.
- If the practitioner only chants AUM for fifteen minutes twice daily then that is equivalent to eight hours of REM sleep.

SPIRITUAL BENEFITS:

Enchanting AUM cleanses the aura and helps in deeper penetration inside towards the soul. It also stimulates mystical chakras and thus making increased release of cerebrospinal fluid that regulates the vigor and energy in the body. it boosts the self-healing power by creating all positive energy.

ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS:

Chanting also charges the environment with positive energy and thus purifies the surrounding. Thus it is fruitful for all the creatures living around including animals, birds, trees and other members.

2. Bija Mantra: There are six Bija Mantras. Each bija mantra, 'hraam', 'hreem', 'hruum', 'hraim', 'hroum' and 'haha' is further composed of four subparts i.e. Bija Akshara.

- H
- R
- Vowel: where the vowels are 'aa', 'ee', 'uu', 'ai', 'ou' and 'visarga or hah', and
- M, in the last.

And each part has different effects on the body and the soul.

'h' – it is focused or pronounced through the heart make heart powerful to perform all its functions. this Bija Akshara directly influences and controls the functions of the heart. And improves, smoothenes all its working.

'r' – it is focused or pronounced through the center of the forehead. It vibrates the palate i.e. the taste organs and the brain to function smoothly. The outcome is better intellect, normal functioning of the brain, better control over the sensory organs and the taste pallets.

'Swar (vowel)' – 'a', 'i or e', 'u', 'ai', 'ou', 'ha' – different vowels have influence on singular organs by the vibrations, making these organs strong and sensitive. Each vowel affects different organs systematically going down in the body.

* Long aa as in 'hraam': arouse brain, heart & respiratory organs.

* Long ee as in 'hreem': stimulate palate, vocal cord & nasal area.

* Long uu as in 'hruum': vibrations work on the stomach, small intestine, pancreas (make digestive system strong).

* Combined Vowel 'ai' as in 'hraim': vibrations work on the kidney and urinary passage making the organs strong and sensitive.

* Combined Vowel 'ou' as in 'hroum': vibrations work on the excretory system making organs strong and sensitive.

'Visarga' (hah) as in 'haha' – sound vibrations work on the chest and the vocal cord.

'Anunasik' – hummed in the nasal area, the vibrations keep the nasal passage clean, soft and wet.

3. Meaning of Rik(s): These are more of the Vedic chants performed as the prayer to the Lord Surya. In the Indian tradition, Surya (Sun) is resembled as the God who blesses all creatures with its light, energy and sustains life. The respective meanings of all the Riks are stated below:

Meaning of 1st Rik: "O one radiant with benevolent light, rising this day, You ascend to the supernal Heaven. O Surya, you remove the malady of my heart, And the yellow pallor (of my body)."

Details: Well-being, inner and outer is attained by the grace of Surya rising towards the great Heaven. The Seers hold that some perfection of the external body is also needed. The material body is the foundation for the God-aspiring mortal. Hence the Sages prayed to be cured of the heart disease which causes the yellow pallor.

Meaning of Rik 2: "Place my yellowness in parrots and starlings In trees of this color cast this yellow hue"

Details: In humans yellow color is inappropriate, but it is beautiful in some (mobile) birds and (immobile) trees.

Meaning of Rik 3: "Here is Aditya arose with all might On my behalf, he destroys me foe I strike not at the enemy"

Details: "The lord it is who does what is needed. I have placed all burdens on him." Here is the seed of the idea of complete surrender to the Divine developed in detail, in the philosophy of Sri Ramanuja.

4. Twelve names of the Surya: Mitra, Ravi, Surya, Bhanu, Khaga, Pushan, Hiranyagarbha, Marichi, Aditya, Savitha, Arka & Bhaskara. Chanting names of the Lord Surya induces positive vibrations, dissolves and removes negative thoughts, impacts of any nature, and purifies the aura. Positive benefits also include long life, cure of diseases, physical and mental well-being, cure of skin diseases and improvement in vision, ultimate wisdom to the practitioners.

The importance and belief behind these names is to show gratitude towards them. They should be chanted with gratefulness. Each mantra and thus names has specific meanings. Practitioners do not need to delve deep into the specific meanings of the mantra.

Names, their meanings and feelings during each mantra chanting:

Mitraaya - one who is friendly/ affectionate to all. We should feel that we are looking at this glowing ball as our friend

Ravaye - The shining one/ the radiant one/ who is the cause for change.

Suryaya - Who is the dispeller of darkness and responsible for bringing activity/ who induces activity

Bhaanave - One who illumines, the bright one/ who diffuses light. feel a sense of deep gratitude to the Sun for giving us light and making life possible on Earth

Khagaya - Who is all-pervading/ one who moves through the sky

Pooshne - Giver of nourishment and fulfillment.

Hiranyagarbhaaya - Who has golden color brilliance/ who contains everything.

Mareechaye - The giver of light with an infinite number of rays.

Aadityaaya - The son of Aditi – the cosmic divine Mother/ who the god of Gods is.

Savitre - One who is responsible for life/ who produces everything.

Aarkaaya - Worthy of praise and glory/fit to be worshiped.

Bhaaskaraya - Giver of wisdom and cosmic illumination/ cause of lustrous.

Surya Namaskar Postures and Physical Benefits of each posture:

1. **Pranamasana (Prayer pose):** Posture 1st and 12th. It induces a state of relaxation and calmness.
2. **Hastauttanāsana (Raised Arms pose):** Posture 2nd and 11th. This maintains the flexibility of the spine by stretching stretches the chest, abdomen, and spine and lifts the prana (energy) upwards to the upper parts of the body.
3. **Hasta Padasana (Hand to Foot pose):** Posture 3rd and 10th. This posture have varies benefits ranging from loosening the fat, overweight to massaging the abdominal organs like liver, kidneys, pancreas, uterus, ovaries. This creates a good flow of blood to the brain. The most important aspect of this pose is

that it helps in blood making by squeezing the stomach and assisting in digestion to extract any vitamins and nutrients in one's food.

4. **Ashwa Sanchalanasana (Equestrian pose):** Posture 4th and 9th. It ensures flexibility of the spine and boosts immunity from diseases in the left leg muscles and ligaments.
5. **Parvatasana (Mountain pose):** Posture 5th and 8th. Maintains the flexibility.
6. **Ashtanga Namaskara (Salute With Eight Parts/Points):** This posture develops the chest and strengthens arms.
7. **Bhujangasana (Cobra pose):** This posture helps relieve tension in the back muscles and spinal nerves.

CONCLUSION

Surya Namaskar is nothing except an alternating backward and forward bending postures. It flexes and stretches the spinal column giving a profound stretch to the whole body. SN helps to promote sleep and calmness, improves muscles flexibility, cardio-respiratory problems, strengthens abdominal muscle, ligament, and spinal cord and improves the human organ capacities. It also maintains the ease of the mind.

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