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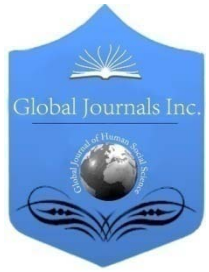

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The Role of Yoga in Health and Wellness

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Abstract- Modern life style is posing a series challenge to human health. The fast change of ever changing trends in modern life is causing physical, moral, mental, and spiritual problems. Chaos and confusion, stress and tension, commercialization and competition in every walk of life has lead to a situation where man is finding itself helpless regarding his personal health and hygiene. An individual who comes to this earth has every right to enjoy each and every gift of nature, to live freely and happily. Technological advancement has resulted in reduction of physical labour and increased mental labour. Tough labour in turn has resulted in psychosomatic disorders such as hyper tension, diabetes, insomnia acidity, gastric problems etc. Basically these disorders are caused due to faulty eating habits, stressful working conditions lack of physical exercises and proper rest.

Yoga is the only possible remedy to counter these hazardous habits. Practice of yogic principals and virtues are the only means wherein an individual can make his life happy and free from miseries.

Keywords: *yoga, health & wellness.*

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The Role of Yoga in Health and Wellness

Sunil M. Labde

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Health and wellness is the concern of each and every person. The condition of modern life offers us much less in spite of our material wealth, than it did to the previous generations. We suffer from the modern disease-stress stress created by selfishness, competitiveness, acquisitiveness and insensitivity to the destruction of our human relations and environment. As a result we suffer from all sorts of physical and mental illness which evens our modern schools of medical science cannot alleviate. Instead, many people are turning to a far older tradition, a tradition that appears to be steeped in religion and mystery, but, in facts, are much more pragmatic in its application to our everyday lives than it would first appear.

Yoga should not be considered as an antiquated myth of yesterday because it has as much validity and value now as it had ever before and can offer guidance and help to the modern man. There are many people practicing yoga today who are still unclear about the relevance of certain aspects of yoga. Much of the confusion has arisen from the very age of yoga. Its origins are lost in time, so that though we may be clear about the essence, that is, the purpose of yoga and its underlying concept, we may yet be very hazy about just what to do when and under which circumstances.

Through yoga, any person, man, women or child, old or young, infirm or healthy, can apply himself /herself to the task and experience the sublime peace of the ancient yogis without retiring to cave or forest. Yoga has something to offer everyone and however little you are able to do, provided you practice sincerely and diligently, you cannot fail to get result.

Keywords: yoga, health & wellness.

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I. Introduction

Aim of Yoga: Yoga have goal of aiding man to solve his problems so that he is better integrated in life. It is fairly evident from the evolutionary history of man that he has been in constant search for happiness. This search has led the modern man to new creations and luxuries. The grave for sensual pleasures, more comforts, better jobs, name, fame and power are all aimed to get more and more happiness. This may be called the western approach of modern civilization to life, very much discernible throughout the world today. This is hopefully designed around desires and their fulfillment.

On account of too much of competition, conflict, unrealized ambition and maladjustment in social life, a large number of people all over the world today, suffer from various kinds of mental diseases caused by frustration and depression. The basic reason for mental illness is a wrong philosophy, a mistaken and narrow view of life, and its dimensions, purposes and values. A sound philosophy of life based on its proper comprehension and factual understanding of life and the world and their proper relationship can lessen the number and prevalence of mental disorders, maladjustments and frustration. The modern man is badly in need of inner peace and calmness and security, which can come from self –knowledge and self –realization alone. We need to be Sthitaprajna, people of steady mind, as conceived by Shri Krishana in Bhagavad Gita.

It is universally recognized that Indian yoga constitutes one of the oldest and most significant scientific-spiritual legacies of mankind. It has been propagated and practiced since the dawn of human history. But the beginning of the yoga tradition is shrouded in the mists of antiquity. Seals portraying deities in meditative postures suggest that the yoga tradition is not only very very old but were accorded special recognition and sanctity in the Indian society.

Yoga is made up of those elements and aspects of science and spirituality which have a direct bearing on the integrated growth and fulfillment of the human being at all levels– physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. It is most important sector of knowledge because it is needed by all and can be cultivated according to inclination and capacity by any one and at any age. Through the practice of yoga the human body becomes strong, supple and healthy. The emotions and passions are controlled and the mind is

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freed from the adverse impact and interference of the senses.

Upanishads says– "The first sign of advancement in yoga are lightness of body, good physical and mental health non-covetousness, clearness of complexion, pleasing voice, agreeable body order and scantiness of excretions."

Maharishi Patanjali gave a tangible order to the various yogic practices and traditions. He gave eight steps viz, Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharna, Dhyana and Samadhi known as ashtang. (Goyandka). To get the knowledge of the self, the ultimate aim of yoga. These steps are:-

- Yamas or eternal vows
- Niyamas or observances
- Yogasanas or postures
- Pranayamas or breath control exercises
- Pratyahara or withdrawal of senses from distractions of the mundane world.
- Dharna or concentration
- Dhyana or continuance of dharana
- Samadhi or ultimate stage of meditation

Patanjali's yoga deals with the training of the mind to become pure being and to acquire dispassionate outlook to come out of the mess of intellect and emotions and thereby kill one's 'I'. Yogic practices make man objective in outlook and for him all opposing forces of this world lose charm.

Studies and investigations conducted on physiological and psychological aspects of yoga system of exercises have revealed that yogic practices tone up body and many diseases inflicting the body disappear. These practices bring about perfection of biological equilibrium in normal persons and lead to the recovery of homeostatic dysfunction in the ailing and sick persons. (Jain, 2000).

II. Mental Disposition and Related Disorders

'A sound mind in a sound body'-The ancient thinking of India reflects on these important aspects of our life. 'The mind is the creator of the body', it can change the body in any way it likes, into any form it chooses. It is the cause of all diseases and health of the body-declares Yogavasishtha. Most of the diseases in our body can be traced to the disturbances within the mind-complex.

The sprouting of diseases calls attention to the very notion of 'freedom' of the mind. As substantive causes, the 'antagonistic thoughts' disrupt the mental freedom .They work as the mis adherents to the mind in the form of dispositions.

The Upnishadic seer had found six hitches which when well-attended will make man strive for a healthy life. These are rightly the determinants of all 'irregularities' within the universal domain also. They are: kama (desire or sexual passion), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (attachment or delusion), mada (egoism or pride), and matsarya (envy). Again tere is another classification of the causes of mental infection. They are: raga (sexual attraction), matsarya (avarice), aparigraha (desire for appropriation of other's property), trishna (longing for worldly objects and enjoyments), lobha, dambha (arrogance), dvesa including krodha, irshya(envy), asuya (jealousy), droha (hatred) ,amarsha (revengefulness) and abhimana (pride), moha (delusion), viparyaya (false knowledge or doubt), bhaya (fear) and shoka (worry).

For the ancient people, the mind is constituted of three gunaas-sattva, rajas and tamas. These three are considered as the root of all emotions. A mind with predominance in sattva is in its complete tranquility or balanced state that signifies blissful state of existence. The rajas has a disposition to activity that is the cause of pain or injury whereas tamas characterizes inertia. The last one makes one struggle in delusion or moha. In as much as these three are in equilibrium, a multitude of imperfections to the mind as well as the body will result. The suppressive activity of tamas over rajas and even satva is an extreme position of reciprocal antagonism.

Yoga can play a significant role by providing the psychological disciplines needed to purify the personality in order to realize the highest truth, namely, the self. This brings about gradual bearing out of ego and its replacement by truth 'consciousnesses.

III. Benefits of Yoga

a) Negative aspects

- Reduction in stress-induced addictions.
- Reduction in anti-social behavior of youth.
- Reduction in negative motivation like suicidal tendency and incidences.
- Reduction in negative traits like neuroticism and tendency to cause injuries to self and others.

b) Positive aspects

- Improvement in efficiency of work and job satisfaction.
- Development of positive outlook in life through positive motivation.
- Development of positive traits like self-confidence, self sufficiency and sociability.
- Improvement in healthy inter-personal relationship.
- Improvement in handling various problems in life.
- Remarkable improvement in the self-concept and proper evaluation of others.
- Improvement in necessary tenacity and perseverance essential for success in life.

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- Control and prevention of psychosomatic disorders and peace of mind. (Shankar, 2007)

IV. Conclusion

Through yoga, any person, man, women or child, old or young, infirm or healthy, can apply himself / herself to the task and experience the sublime peace of the ancient yogis without retiring to cave or forest. Yoga has something to offer everyone and however little you are able to do, provided you practice sincerely and diligently, you cannot fail to get result. Yoga is the only possible remedy. Practice of yogic principals and virtues are the only means wherein an individual can make his life happy and free from miseries.

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