

Yoga

Meaning of Yoga

- Founder of Yoga Patanjali Rishi.
- Word Yoga derived from Sanskrit Word “Yuj” which means to Unite or to Join.
- In Spiritual terms, this joining or unite means Union of Soul with God.
- Sage Patanjali the author of an ancient book Yoga Sutras explains Yoga as a method of concentrating the mind.
- It is also described as a way of life for the harmonious development of the body, mind and soul.
- As per Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras Yoga is “**Yogas Chitta Vriti Nirodha**”.
- Yoga – **To Join, to unite**, Chitta – **Consciousness**, Vritti – **Fluctuations**, Nirodha – **Quieting of**.
- So, Yoga is a practice to remove the fluctuations in mind and to attain mental peace.

Definitions of Yoga

- According to Swami Digamberji, “**Yoga is the union of Aatma and Paramatma.**”
- Ved Vyas, “**Yoga is attaining the pose**”.
- Patanjali, “**Checking the impulses of mind is Yoga**”.
- Dr. Sampurnanad, “**Yoga is spiritual Kamdhenu, which gives what we wish for**”.

Aims and Objectives of Yoga

- ❖ The main aim of yoga is to have control over the world.
- ❖ The other main aim of yoga is to unite the body, mind and thoughts for good work.
- ❖ Through systematic and continuous yogic practices, we can be healthier and immunity can be increased to fight against diseases.

Importance of Yoga

- **Physical Importance:** The performance of yoga asana encourages body movement in different directions.
- **Mental Importance:** Apart from the physical benefits, one of the best benefits of yoga it helps to manage mental health. Yoga helps to deal with stress, sleeping problems, inability to concentration and improves creativity.
- **Improve Postures:** Yoga teaches how to balance or control. With regular practice, our body automatically assume the right stance.
- **Uplifts Mood:** Practice Yoga on regular basis uplifts our mood instantly as it leaves our body with refreshing energy.
- **Emotional Control:** Yoga sadhana develops right control over emotions and inculcate the capacity to keep emotional balance.
- **Prevention of diseases and improves immunization.**

Elements of Yoga

- ❖ Yoga advocates control over the body, the senses and the mind.
- ❖ In Patanjali's Yoga Sutra the eightfold path of life is called **Astanga**. It means “**Eight Limbs**”. **Astha means Eight and Anga means limbs**.
- ❖ These eight steps or limbs ultimately act as a rules or guidelines on how to live a purposeful and meaningful life.

1. **Yama**
2. **Niyama**
3. **Asana**
4. **Pranayama**
5. **Pratyahara**
6. **Dharana**
7. **Dhyana**
8. **Samadhi**

1. **Yama (Self Restrained):** Yama means restraint or abstention. Yama is the control of the body, mind and speech. It has five moral practices.

- ❖ **Ahimsa (Non-Violence):** It means not to hurt any creature mentally or physically through mind, speech or action
- ❖ **Satya (Truth):** Truth is to be exact in mind and speech. It is abstention from falsehood.
- ❖ **Asteya (Non-Stealing):** Abstention from stealing. Not taking or stealing another's property.
- ❖ **Bramacharya (Celibacy):** Bramacharya does not means lifelong celibacy but abstention from lust.
- ❖ **Aparigraha (Non-Possession):** Abstention from avarice. Not to accept any unnecessary things.

2. **Niyama (Positive Rules of Conduct):** Self purification by discipline. Physical and mental rules of conduct towards oneself.

- ❖ **Saucha (Purity):** It includes both internal and external purifications. External Purification through bath, hygiene and pure diet etc. Internal Purification through sympathy, friendliness, detachment.
- ❖ **Santosha (Contentment):** Satisfaction in whatever is attained by sufficient and suitable effort.
- ❖ **Tapas (Right aspiration):** Practice of tolerance of cold and heat. Taking over all the desires or sensual pleasures by purity in thought and accomplish knowledge.
- ❖ **Swadhaya (Study of Philosophical text):** Reading of religious scriptures useful in the spiritual advancement.
- ❖ **Ishwar Pranidhana (Devotion to God):** To remember God and to surrender oneself to God.

3. Asana (Postures)

- ❖ To sit comfortably without any movement for long in one pose.
- ❖ To master the asana, one should be able to sit comfortably atleast for three hours.
- ❖ It emphasizes the importance of correct and comfortable bodily posture before one begins meditation.

4. Pranayama (Breathing)

- ❖ It means control of breath and it deals with regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath.
- ❖ It connects the breath and mind to attain peace and good health.
- ❖ Yogis believe pranayama not only revitalizes the body but also extends the life itself.
- ❖ Highly conducive to the concentration of mind.

5. Pratyahara (Withdrawal)

- ❖ To withdraw our attention from outer world and stimuli and concentrate on ourselves.
- ❖ When our sense organs become detached, they settle down in the heart.

6. Dharana (Concentration)

- ❖ Fixing of the mind on the object of meditation,
- ❖ The mind is steadied by making all our thoughts flow in single unbroken channel.
- ❖ The mind is to be tied to a particular object in order that it may become steady and unmoving.
- ❖ Any object like the tip of the nose or the midpoint or image of the deity may be chosen for meditating upon in this stage.

7. Dhyana (Meditation)

- ❖ Undisturbed flow of thought.
- ❖ The aspirant marches forward continuously and without pause towards his goal and becomes inseparable from his/her aim.
- ❖ At this stage, the mind has been calmed and, in the quietness, it produces few or no thoughts at all.

8. Samadhi (Absorption)

- ❖ Highest attainment or ecstasy.
- ❖ The mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation.
- ❖ Oneness of worshipper and worshipped. One soul become the integral part of God.
- ❖ It is the ecstatic state in which the connection with the external world is broken and through which one has to pass before liberation.

