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Introduction

Welcome to the lecture of Physical Education. Students in this lecture I will be talking about Ashtanga Yoga.

The influence of the mind on the body is far more profound than the influence of the body on the mind. The physical training in yoga will give the desired result only when it is backed up by mental training through the cultivation of correct psychological attitudes. This is exactly why in Yoga, Yama and Niyam are placed as the first and second items correspondingly in the yogic curriculum and has assigned asana the third place.

The goal of yoga can be achieved only through the physical and mental discipline. Morality of higher order is essential, mainly because the human mind is full of hatred, dishonesty, deception, sensuality possessiveness and many other voices. And as long as these emotional disturbances continue to effect mind, it is useless to undertake the advanced practice of yoga.

Regarding the constituents of yoga the teachers are of different opinions. Daksha Samriti only mentions six constituents of yoga. i.e Pranayama, Pratyabhar Dharana, Dhayan, Trataka & Samadh.

Vishanu Purana also mentions only Six Constituents i.e Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan & Samadhi.

In Gheranda Samhita there are seven constituents and they are-shatkarmas, Asanas, Mudra-Bandha, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhayana & Samadhi.

In Ashtanga Yoga, eight limbs or eight constituents are described, i.e. Yama, Niyama, asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan & Samadhi.

Actually there is no any rule that yoga must have a certain number of limbs.

In Hathyoga Pradeepika of yogi Swatmaran, four limbs of yoga are given.

The Yama & Niyama were originally a part of the yog sutras, which are a series of short sentences of wisdom through which sage patanjali conveys his teachings. Patanjali explains the steps through which even an ordinary person can realize God. According to yog sutras the Yama & Niyam are the first two steps in the eight fold path of yoga. The Yama & Niyam are the eternal and can be applied in people's lives always.

The Yama & Niayama are the self-disciplinary qualities that everyone should have and observe for their own spiritual development.

They are the code of conduct for anyone seeking spiritual development.

It would not be beneficial to practice the other steps of ashtanga yoga without mastering the Yama & Niyam simultaneously, as they are the bases of the ladder leading to self-realization.

One may practice Asana and have a fit body. One may practice Pranayama and balance the Pranic energy in the Nadis. One may practice Pratyabhara and Dhayans reach deeper states of consciousness, but it result with no use without the practice of Yama & Niyam. The Yama & Niyama create a fit & balanced mind. Most of all they establish a mental & physical Sanyam in our mind, actions & behavior.

Through the practice of yama & niyama, one is also awakening the Kundalini shakti. Hatha Yoga does not place much emphasis on yama and niyama must be practiced before commencing hatha yoga.

Yama

The Yama are mainly qualities that are spiritual aspirant should have in order to communicate and interact with the outside world and people in it. They are also self-restraints from performing actions of the weaker lower mind.

Yama are also known as the great universal because they are not limited by class, country, time and circumstances.

According to raja yoga and maharishi patanjali there are five types of yama:-

“ahimsaa- Satyaasteya- Brahmacharyaa-Parigrahaa yamaah”

The five moral rules of social conduct are:-

- Ahimsa (Non- Violence)
- Satya (Truthfulness)
- Asteya (Non - Stealing or Honesty)
- Brahmacharya (Continence)
- Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)

Ahimsa (Non- Violence)

Yoga philosophy is based on the doctrine of unity of life and life should not be given pain in any way.

Ahimsa, non-violence not only means not causing harm or pain to any creature in thoughts, word or action, but also not having a hint of aggression within your being.

The practice of the vow of non-violence is first law giver of human race, has considered ahimsa to be the highest means of liberation. According to him, study of the Vedas, knowledge of self, control of senses, non-violence and service of guru are the best means of attaining liberation.

Ahimsa means not acting with the will to violate anything, even the atmosphere.

Harmony and serenity have to be maintained. In India, Jain sect is very firm in this code of conduct. It is a process of self-control, self-awareness and awareness of everything that is around you. If you harm another person intentionally, and you lose control of your mind and action you are creating an imbalance in yourself. Ahimsa means coming closure to the pure spirit. Mahatma Gandhi was a living example of this doctrine.

Christ, Krishna, Rama, Prophet Mohammed, Buddha and all other saints were great followers of ahimsa

There are three aspects of ahimsa: -

- A. Ahimsa in thoughts (Intellectual non- violence)
- B. Ahimsa in words (non –violence of speech)
- C. Ahimsa in action (Physical non – violence)

A. Ahimsa In Thoughts

Thoughts play a vital role in life. They are the products of thinking process, which takes place in mind. They reflect the kind of thinking that takes place in mind. Every change in thoughts is accompanied by mental vibrations. Creative, peaceful and helpful thoughts bring harmony in the body and the yoga-practitioner should first of all have to practice good thoughts. Hence, complete renunciation of violation in thoughts, speech and body is perfect non- violence. When yogi realizes that all is self, he becomes fully established in non- violence.

B. Ahimsa In Words: -

Thoughts are expressed through words. Words have very powerful force to affect others behavior and conduct. Injurious words produce retaliation and the whole relationship is disturbed by them. Violence of speech is practiced by bad abusive words, by speaking angrily permitting injury to someone and advising someone to harm another. Harmful, pain giving, negative emotions arousing words should not be spoken by the yoga practitioner.

The methods of getting rid of such habits of violence are to speak sweetly and softly without hypocrisy and to observe silence according to one's circumstances and capacity. One should use such type of words and languages that do not show any pride and that may produce peaceful and soothing effect on others as also on the speaker. It is a familiar experience to all that everyone is hurt by harsh words. A wound caused by a weapon can heal in course of time, but one caused by bitter words lasts till death, and there is a best example of this quote is found in the Mahabharata. When Draupadi remarked to Duryodhan "the sons of the blind are also blind" in order to avenge this

So in the last we can only say, one should speak lovingly, gently and softly or he should remain quite. Silence fulfills all purposes. Silence prevents violence caused by speech.

C. Ahimsa in action

Nobody can ever remain, even for an instant, without performing action. Action is the insignia of life in an organism. So long as we live and breathe in our bodies, we have to act and work. Our action should not in any way harm others because harmful actions generate destructive thoughts and instability in mind.

So the practitioner who wishes to perfect himself in the practice of ahimsa should keep a strict watch over his mind, emotions and actions. As he succeeds in putting his ideals into practice, the cruelties and injustices involved in his thoughts, actions or words will gradually be eliminated and his vision will be clear.

Satya (Truthfulness)

Satya, or truth is the second yama, and also a very important qualification. Satya means factual expression of what actually exists in reality. Swami Sivananda says “God is truth, and he can be realized by observing the truth in thought, word and deed.”

According to him there are so many forms of truth: truthfulness, equality, self-control, absence of jealousy, forgiveness, thoughtfulness and self-possession. Satya is not merely abstinence from telling lies, but also the ability to see the truth, to be aware of the truth behind everything. The characteristics of truth are thus described: the words that are meant to impart wisdom to another person without any intention of deluding him are truthful. Such words should conduce to the happiness of all creatures. The words that harm living beings are not truthful but sinful. So, one should examine the words before they are spoken and utter them if they are for the good of all beings. When a person thinks over a matter in his mind, expresses it in his speech and in the end acts according to it, he is considered perfectly truthful. Under certain circumstances, telling a lie to produce immense good is also regarded as truth.

Honesty is something we rarely find in this modern world of corruption. If you make a habit of fooling or cheating others, you start to believe the lies yourself, you are only being dishonest with yourself. Basically, honesty means being truthful with yourself and not aiming to cheat others for your own personal gain or to discredit them. Truthfulness is essential for a yoga practitioner because it helps in concentrating the mind. Untruthfulness is a circular process. Usually one lie requires a number of other lies for its support. In spite of all efforts, sooner or later, a lie gets exposed. Efforts to keep up falsehoods and false appearances cause much stress and strain in the sub-conscious mind and provide solid ground for all kinds of emotional disturbances. A person, who starts practicing yoga without first acquiring the habit of uttering truth, is like a man going for fishing without net.

Truthfulness unfolds *budhi* which helps in solving many known and unknown problems or we can say *satya* helps in overcoming the petty mind.

A person, observing the vow of truthfulness, should always remember that he should speak truthfully and cautiously and whatever he speaks should be for the good of others. One should speak the truth not speak unpleasant truth, nor pleasant falsehood. For example, it is also truth to call a thief a thief. But truth should be courteous; hence a blind man is addressed as Surdas, a great blind saint, prajnachakshu, a possessor of the eye of wisdom etc. In shantiparva of mahabhartar it is said- “which helps all being is the truth” it is well known fact that one who speaks truth is respected at all places, by all people of all sects.

There are three aspects of truth of Satya also: -

- Satya in Thoughts
- Satya in Words
- Satya in Action

So truth must be same in all these three aspects.

Conclusion

Today we discussed about the ashtanga yoga and its first limb yama. Ashtanga yoga literary means “eight limbed yoga: as outlined by the sage Patanjali in the yoga sutras. These eight limbs are: -

1. Yama (Moral codes)
2. Niyama (Self-purification and study)
3. Asanas (Postures)
4. Pranayama (Breath control)
5. Pratyahara (Sense control)
6. Dharna (Concentration)
7. Dhyana (Meditation)
8. Samadhi (Absorption into the universal)

I discussed about the first part of the Yama and its two major parts i.e. ahimsa, satya, In our next lecture we will discuss about remaining three parts of Yama asteya, brahmacharya and aparigraha. Thank you