**Why Yoga?**

**2.0 Introduction**

Any system or process will be accepted by the common man if it can prove its usefulness in his day-to-day aspects of life. In the past we have seen how the society accepted and adopted science as an integral part of its structure because technology solved the problem of providing the basic necessities of life and offering a more comfortable life to an individual. We have also seen that now society is all set for Yoga. Why?

**2.1 Objectives**

In this Unit you will be learning the benefits of yoga at the muscular level, breathing level, mental level, intellectual level, emotional level and the manifestations of divinity in all walks of life and the yoga way of life taking man from animal, level to perfection. The application of yoga in health, in-warding off executive tensions is also mentioned along with work for practitioner of yoga.

**2.2 Applications of Yoga**

‘Yoga’ offers man o conscious process to solve the menacing problems of unhappiness, restlessness and emotional upset, hyper-activity, etc., in the society and helps to evoke the hidden potentialities of man in a systematic and scientific way, by which man becomes a fuller individual. All his faculties – physical, mental, intellectual and emotional – develop in a harmonious and integrated fashion to meet the all-round challenge of the modern technological era with its hectic speed.

ALL ROUND PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

**2.3 YOGA FOR EDUCATION**

The aim of all education, undoubtedly, is the attainment of human excellence and perfection, not just in any field of knowledge or activity, but life in totality. Education should be the means to fathom excellent characters out of the very ordinary human raw material. This means culturing of the qualities of head and heart in a way congenial to the growth and development of oneself and others around him.

The specialty yogic processes is that, the faculties get sharpened in tune with the spiritual progress of man. Let us now try to understand what we mean by an integrated personality development with spiritual growth.

**2.3.1 Personality Development at Physical Level**

Physical personality development would not imply to a bulky body, weighing a 100 kg. An ideal body has the following features prescribed by Yoga:

1. A proportionate body with all the muscles relaxed in the normal state. It is soft like a flower and supple to the core.
2. Instantaneously it can acquire a diamond’s hardness. All organs and systems in the body work in harmony and with least abnormalities.
3. The chronic and acute ailments vanish or are absent in such a body.

These aspects of personality development at physical level make the body work most efficiently by harnessing the energies in the right direction. At resting periods all the muscles are relaxed and the joints remain loose to conserve energy and the metabolic rate is very low. During normal activities, just the necessary amount of energy is used by the body. At crucial times, under conditions of high stress, the functions or organs co-ordinate so nicely that the necessary energy gets evoked and flows profusely into those regions which need more energy. The body gets all the necessary strength to deal with the situation. This ‘stamina’ through harnessing of inner vital energies and training the different organs and systems to work in such co-ordination, can be effectively accomplished by yogic practices. It is in this area of application of Yoga that the specialists in physical culture, wrestlers, sportsmen, acrobat, gymnasts, etc., are keenly interested and are putting Yoga to their utmost use.

**2.3.2 Personality Development at Mental Level**

‘Creativity’ and steadfastness (Will power) are the two aspects of mind which come under this head of personality development. It has been well-recognized that creativity is the core of ‘Arts’ and ‘Technology’. It has been seen that yogic practices enhance the creative power of man. As such, many musicians, poets, film artists, engineers and technologists have been attracted to Yoga.

‘Will power’ is an essential requirement for all persons to accomplish any work, however, insignificant of great the task is. There is a fine Sloka in Niti satakam describing three types of people.

First Type of People: Fearing possible obstacles and difficulties, the lowest do not start the work at all.

Second Type of People: Having come to face obstacles one after another the middle type leaves the work incomplete.

Third Type of People: These people are those who reach out to completion of the task in spite of all odds that torture and crush them all through.

Yoga by its systematic and conscious process of calming down the mind erases the weaknesses in the mind and builds willpower into it. In such a mind each obstacle is conceived as a challenge and arouses tremendous energy to combat the situation. Bravery becomes a part of the personality. Steadfast to the core, such a person takes up the challenges with marvelous soberness in life and converts them into opportunities for accomplishing his mission.

**2.3.3 Personality Development – Emotional Level**

Our emotions control our behavior especially at crucial junctures. The challenges of the modern era pose a great threat to the emotional faculty of man. Yet the culturing of our emotions – development of our emotional faculties finds no place in the whole scheme of education. Man looks lost amidst the atrocities of life unable to overcome his emotional conflicts, blocks and turmoil. The result is deep unrest, agony and psychosomatic ailments.

Yoga trains us to

1. Systematically sharpen and sensitize our emotions.
2. Consciously expand and diffuse the overtones of such sensitization. Thus, Yoga offers a fine tool for the development of the emotional personality of man.

**2.3.4 Personality Development at Intellectual Level**

In the modern era of science, a sharp intellect plays a key role in scheme of education. Rather than mechanical cramming up of information, thinking and understanding are valued more in the learning process. The children are thought right from the primary level to think logically and scientifically. The capacity to analyze and correlate relevant information forms the function of the intellect; ***concentration is the expression, precision is the outcome.***

However, this enhanced power of the sharpened intellect associated with deep powerful concentration among the intellectual cream of the society has also bound man into the whirlpool of intellectual slavery. He finds himself unable to come out of the strong clutches of deep concentration. Though it is torturous and he very much wants to come out of it, finds himself stuck. His worries and attachments do not release him. The development of personality at intellectual level should not only result in an intense sharpening of the intellect but also include a mastery to come out of the enslaving power of the sharpened intellect. Swami Vivekananda there rightly emphasized ***“concentration and detachment”*** as the vital parts of education. Not only should it be possible for one to dive deep into any subject but also be able to come out of it at any moment. It is again the specialty of Yoga that can bring about this comprehensive development of intellect. As we have seen, yoga emphasizes the skill to calm down the mind and it is this skill to pacify the mind that brings the capacity to detach. Hence yoga is attracting the attention of many ‘intellectual sufferers’, bringing them into its fold.

**2.3.5 Personality Development – Spiritual Basis**

A man may have a very sturdy physique, amazing creative power, a powerful intellect and a highly sensitized emotional grasp, yet may have not an idea of spiritual progress. Hey may not possess even an inkling of the spiritual dimension. What then can be said to characterize this development? Kathopanisad defines the same thus:

***Paranci khani vyatrnat svayambhu - stasmatparanpasyatu nantaratman |***

***Kasciddhirah pratyagatmanmmaiksudavrtta – caksuramrtatvamicchan***

***|| kathopanisad-2-1-11 ||***

The self-existent Lord made the senses out-going. Therefore, one sees the outer things and not the inner Self. A rare, courageous person, desiring immortality, turns his eyes away and then see the indwelling Self.

Normally all of us are so structured that we look mostly outside of ourselves – at the environment. The senses grasp things around them – predominantly we spend the whole life in understanding the grandeur of the world outside, solving the problems associated with it; unravelling the mysteries there in; using such knowledge to make our life more comfortable and enjoyable; bringing up our children to perpetuate and sustain the society around us; striving to set patterns of behavior and etiquettes of transactions, and so on. In spite of this pattern of life, some glimpses into the depths of our inner dimension occasionally flash in all our lives. Very few catch these glimpses but some are awfully struck by the hitherto unknown dimensions hidden within. ***The Search begins; The Quest starts.***

Then, that person in on the march towards spirituality. Thus the spiritual dimension of man concerns itself with the inner world - the move towards the causal state of mind, the root of the intellect and the substratum of the emotions. Man starts looking inwards. It is this inward journey that marks the beginning of the spiritual quest. Introspection, an inward look, an inner awareness, features the quest. The subtler layers of mind unfold themselves – the inner dimensions of the personality open out.

**2.3.6 Benefits as mentioned in Patanjali Yogasutras, Hatha Yoga Pradipika etc.**

Yoga is a process of all-round personality development by

1. Deep relaxation at muscular level,
2. Slowing down of breath and maintaining balance at Pranic level,
3. Increasing creativity and willpower at mental level,
4. Sharpening the intellect and calming down the mind at intellectual level,
5. Enhancing the happiness in life and equipoise at emotional level, and
6. Manifesting the innate divinity in man in all aspects of life.

Yoga is not only a process for leading man towards this astounding hidden inner personality of man by bringing mastery over the body, mind, intellect and emotional faculties, but also a powerful tool to manifest those hidden potentialities in him.

As the man progresses, his zeal to perfect himself grows. In the process, he learns and under-stands the expressions of nature around him. The inner growth and outer expression go hand in hand. He starts manifesting the inner divinity in his behavior. His lower animal nature pulls and emotions – Arishadvarga, the six major enemies of man namely,

* Kama(Intense desire)
* Krodha(Anger)
* Lobha(Miserliness)
* Moha(Infatuation)
* Mada(Arrogance)
* Matsarya(Jealousy)

diminish continuously. His slavery reduces. He starts becoming the master by gaining control over them. And that is the growth process which is in tune with spiritual growth.

Great scientists as great seekers of reality hesitate not, to open themselves to unknown regions as well. There is an adventure in it for them. The new glimpses of the inner world draw them within. It is this openness, humbleness and humility among the highly developed researchers of the modern scientific era that is making them use Yogic practices in their quest. They know no prejudices. Appreciation of such developments by earlier seekers characterizes them. Yoga is leading them to open up their spiritual dimensions. Thus, Yoga can accomplish an all-round personality development by solving the problems of man and by bringing bliss into his life. It is for this reason that yoga is also becoming popular day by day in all parts of our globe just as science and technology grew popular in the society. Yoga is a science applicable to all, irrespective of age or sex, caste or creed, religion or sect.

**Arishadvarga**

The six major enemies of man

Gaining control over them

Slavery reduces

*That tunes with spiritual growth.*

**2.4 YOGA AND HEALTH**

Yoga is to prevent disease, Yoga is to promote positive health, bring in economics, pleasure and joy, at the same time, in the framework of ethics, not taking off the freedom, with proper understanding and that is Yoga for all. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) the state of health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well-being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. Svasthya in Sanskrit means peace, satisfaction and comfort and that is healthy.

**Concept of Body According to yogic lore**

***Taittireya Upanisat* has presented this systematically. Man has 5 major sheaths of existence.**

**Annamaya Kosa**

In the tradition of Yoga and Upanisads, this concept of Panca Kosas is described in Taittiriyopanisat. Everything in the universe is sustained by Anna and everything dissolves into Anna. This matter (Anna) based aspect of our physical personality is called Annamaya Kosa. Annamaya Kosa consists of five elements ( Panca Bhutas ) namely,

* Earth ( Prithvi )
* Water ( Jala or Apa )
* Fire ( Agni or Tejas )
* Wind ( Vayu )
* Space ( Akasa )

This is normally nourished by the gross food that we consume.

**Pranamaya Kosa**

Prana is the basic fabric of this universe, both inside and outside our body. A uniform harmonious flow of Prana to each and every cell of the Annamaya Kosa keeps them alive and healthy.

**Manomaya Kosa**

Mind, which is defined as a conglomeration of thoughts responds to the input through sense organs. For example, you see a big red flower; eyes sent the image to the brain and the mind (Manah) perceives it as a beautiful rose. Within the next fraction of a second your memory (Citta) deciphers that it as a very rare variety of rose which you wanted to see badly. The thought circulates in mind and Citta which soon goes on to make you feel ‘O it is so beautiful! I like it, I love it, and I want it!’ this component of the Manomaya Kosa in which this rapid recycling takes place and gathers momentum is called the ‘Emotions (Bhavana). This is characterized by feelings such as ‘likes or dislikes’, ‘love or hate’, backed by the heavy ‘I’ (the ego). It is this emotion that is the root cause of all human joy and distress. When the emotions become powerful, they start governing our actions against what is right. This ‘going against cosmic laws’ leads to imbalances called Adhi or Stress. Long standing Adhis get pushed into Pranamaya and Annamaya Kosa causing Vyadhis.

**Vijnanamaya Kosa**

Vijnanamaya Kosa is the fourth layer of our existence. The conscience within that continually guides us to do a thing or not do a thing is the Vijnanamaya Kosa. It is this component of the mind that has developed in human race greatly that differentiates man from animals. The Vijnanamaya Kosa is the discriminating faculty.

**Anandamaya Kosa**

The knowledge of the final truth ‘Ananda’, is the basic stuff of this universe from which everything has been created. This is called Anandamaya Kosa-the bliss layer of our existence. This is the most subtle aspect of our existence which is devoid of any form of emotions; a state a total silence – a state of complete harmony and perfect health.

**CONCEPT OF DISEASE**

In Anandamaya Kosa a man is healthiest with perfect harmony and balance of all his faculties. In Vijnanamaya Kosa, there are movements but they are channeled in the right direction. As such, it is in the Manomaya level the imbalances start, say the Yoga texts. Likes and dislikes have come to play at this level. The imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illness called ‘Adhis’-At this stage there are no symptoms at the physical level. The preponderance of Ajnana (Ignorance about one’s real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, doing hinges in untimely hours, association with wicked, evil thoughts, inflicting injuries etc. These breed physical diseases called Vyadhis or the secondary diseases.

The Adhis (primary diseases) are twofold Samanya (ordinary) and Sara (essential). The former includes the diseases incidental to the body while the latter is responsible for rebirth to which all men are subject. The Samanya are normally produced during the interactions with the world. These may be termed as psychosomatic ailments.

Yoga can enable one to relax fully, and promotes sound sleep; it also improves digestion and stimulates circulation. It frees the practitioner physically and mentally, often heightening intuition and creativity. Yoga creates a perfect balance between the activities and process of body, mind and soul. Although Yoga has proved to be very effective in the treatment of many impossible and incurable diseases, the therapeutic effect of Yoga is only a byproduct and incidental. The final goal is of course the spiritual well-being.

All begins in Manomaya Kosa

**ON THE PATH OF YOGA**

As one proceeds with the practice of Yoga, the first symptoms of progress show-up. Svetasvataropanisat puts it thus:

**Laghutvamarogyamalolupatvam varnaprasadah svarasauthavam ca |**

**Gandhah subho mutrapurisamalpam yogapravrttim prathamam vadanti**

**|| svetasvataropanisat-2-13 ||**

‘It is said that the first signs of entering Yoga are lightness of body, health, un-thirst mind, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable odour and scantiness of excretions.’

Hatha Yoga Pradipika also portrays a set of similar characteristics:

**Vapuh krsatvam vadane prasannata nada-sphutatvam nayane sunirmale |**

**Arogata bindu-jayo’gni-dipanam nadi-visuddhirhatha-siddhi-laksanam || Hatha Yoga Pradipika-2-78||**

When the body becomes lean, the face glows with delight, (divine sound) manifests, and eyes are pure, body is healthy, sexual discharge under control, the appetite is increased; the one should understand that the Nadis are purified and success in Hatha Yoga is approaching.