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Benefits of Yoga and Naturopathy in Human Life

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Abstract

In Yoga and Naturopathy, meditation and different natural therapies are an integral aspect. With changing life style and global scenario, there have been changes in almost all the stream of traditional science to suit contemporary requirements. Various health clubs and training centers were opened up to help people get training and therapies comfortably. Now people do not have to really go into ashrams and forests to meditate. Traditional system like Naturopathy has also evolved from its traditional model. Nowadays, all kinds of electronic equipments are provided in these health clubs and training centers for physical exercises are prescribed by yoga. Naturopathic treatment also uses modern scientific machines to provide natural therapies. Individuals generally own these health clubs and training centers. They are registered under the Society's Act in jurisdiction of different states; no central regulations are there for these private institutes. These institutes are many in number and as such, no federal record is maintained. This is one of the most upcoming sectors. Many private training institutes also give training in yoga as free services, but most of them charge for their services. Their services are more popular in metropolitans and cities where people face problems like depression, stress, asthma, etc. due to pollution and conditions prevailing in cities. Multiple studies have confirmed the many mental and physical benefits of yoga. Incorporating it into your routine can help enhance your health, increase strength and flexibility and reduce symptoms of stress, depression and anxiety. Finding the time to practice yoga just a few times per week may be enough to make a noticeable difference when it comes to your health. Now-a-days, millions and millions of people across the globe have benefitted by the practice of Yoga which has been preserved and promoted by the great eminent Yoga Masters from ancient time to this date. The practice of Yoga is blossoming, and growing more vibrant every day. Naturopathy is a highly individualized treatment that involves facilitating effective restoring techniques, self-care decisions, and much more which can prevent future health problems. Naturopathy stimulates positive thinking, lowers stress, anxiety & depression, improves overall health, enhances outlook, boosts optimism, and improves one's ability to cope with health-related issues.

Keywords: Yoga, Pranayam, Benefits, Naturopathy, Human Life.

Introduction

Yoga is essentially a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science, which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and science of healthy living. The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', meaning 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, Man & Nature. According to modern scientists, everything in the universe is just a manifestation of the same quantum firmament. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga, and is termed as a yogi, having attained to a state of freedom referred to as Mukti, nirvana or Moksha. Thus the aim of Yoga is Self-realization, to overcome all kinds of sufferings leading to 'the state of liberation' (Moksha) or 'freedom' (Kaivalya). Living with freedom in all walks of life, health and harmony shall be the main objectives of Yoga practice. "Yoga" also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can realize this union and achieve mastery over their destiny. Yoga, being widely considered as an 'immortal cultural outcome' of Indus Saraswati Valley civilization – dating back to 2700 B.C., has proved itself catering to both material and spiritual upliftment of humanity. Basic humane values are the very identity of Yoga Sadhana.

There are many definitions of Yoga. According to Yoga classics, there are two meanings of Yoga.

If the word "Yoga" is derived from the root "Yujir Yoge", it means "to unite" or "to bind" or "to yoke". According to Yajnavalkya, Yoga means "the Union" i.e. union of the individual spirit (Jivatman) with the universal spirit (Parmatman).

If the word "Yoga" is derived from the root "Yuj Samadhau", it means spiritual absorption.

- According to Bhagwad Gita, the word Yoga means "Equanimity of Mind", which can only be acquired after getting established in discriminative wisdom (which is a consequent of strong meditation).
- While according to Maharishi Patanjali, Yoga is defined as the "cessation of modifications of Chitta, which results into individual soul abiding in itself and thereby attaining God Realization and Spiritual perfection." The system of Yoga is more than 5000 years old and Gita has rightly described it as ancient (Puratan) and eternal (Sanatan).
- It was the Samkhya Philosophers who evolved the concept of Yoga and its origin can be traced in Upanishads and ancient Vedic texts. According to them, Yoga is the process of self- culture, self-evolution, self-discipline and self-realization.

A Brief History and Development of Yoga

The practice of Yoga is believed to have started with the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga has its origin thousands of years ago, long before the first religions or belief systems were born. In the yogic lore, Shiva is seen as the first yogi or Adiyogi, and the first Guru or Adi Guru.

Several Thousand years ago, on the banks of the lake Kantisarovar in the Himalayas, Adiyogi poured his profound knowledge into the legendary Saptarishis or "seven sages". The sages carried this powerful yogic science to different parts of the world, including Asia, the Middle East, Northern Africa and South America. Interestingly, modern scholars have noted and marvelled at the close parallels found between ancient cultures across the globe. However, it was in India that the yogic system found its fullest expression. Agastya, the Saptarishi who travelled across the Indian subcontinent, crafted this culture around a core yogic way of life.

The Number of seals and fossil remains of Indus Saraswati valley civilization with Yogic motives and figures performing Yoga Sadhana suggest the presence of Yoga in ancient India. The phallic symbols, seals of idols of mother Goddess are suggestive of Tantra Yoga. Presence of Yoga is available in folk traditions, Indus valley civilization, Vedic and Upanishadic heritage, Buddhist and Jain traditions, Darshanas, epics of Mahabharat and Ramayana, theistic traditions of Shaivas, Vaishnavas, and Tantric traditions. In addition, there was a primordial or pure Yoga which has been manifested in mystical traditions of South Asia. This was the time when Yoga was being practiced under the direct guidance of Guru and its spiritual value was given special importance. It was a part of Upasana and Yoga Sadhana was inbuilt in their rituals. Sun was given highest importance during the vedic period. The practice of 'Surya Namaskara' may have been invented later due to this influence. Pranayama was a part of daily ritual and to offer the oblation. Though Yoga was being practiced in the pre-Vedic period, the great Sage Maharshi Patanjali systematized and codified the then existing practices of Yoga, its meaning and its related knowledge through his Yoga Sutras. After Patanjali, many Sages and Yoga Masters contributed greatly for the preservation and development of the field through their well documented practices and literature.

Clearing Misconceptions

For many, the practice of Yoga is restricted to Hatha Yoga and Asanas (Postures). However, among the Yoga Sutras, just three sutras are dedicated to Asanas. Fundamentally, Hatha yoga is a preparatory process so that the body can sustain higher levels of energy. The process begins with the body, then the breath, the mind, and the inner self.

Yoga is also commonly understood as a therapy or exercise system for health and fitness. While physical and mental healths are natural consequences of yoga, the goal of yoga is more far-reaching. "Yoga is about harmonizing oneself with the universe. It is the technology of aligning individual geometry with the cosmic, to achieve the highest level of perception and harmony."

Yoga does not adhere to any particular religion, belief system or community; it has always been approached as a technology for inner wellbeing. Anyone who practices yoga with involvement can reap its benefits, irrespective of one's faith, ethnicity or culture. Traditional Schools of Yoga :These different Philosophies, Traditions, lineages and Guru-Shishya Paramparas of Yoga lead to the emergence of different Traditional Schools of Yoga e.g. Jnana-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, Dhyana-Yoga, Patanjala-Yoga, Kundalini-Yoga, Hatha-Yoga, Mantra-Yoga, Laya-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, Jain-yoga, Bouddha-Yoga etc. Each

school has its own principles and practices leading to ultimate aim and objectives of Yoga.

Pranayama consists in developing awareness of one's breathing followed by willful regulation of respiration as the functional or vital basis of one's existence. It helps in developing awareness of one's mind and helps to establish control over the mind. In the initial stages, this is done by developing awareness of the 'flow of in-breath and out-breath' (Svasa-Prasvasa) through nostrils, mouth and other body openings, its internal and external pathways and destinations. Later, this phenomenon is modified, through regulated, controlled and monitored inhalation (Svasa) leading to the awareness of the body space/s getting filled (Puraka), the space/s remaining in a filled state (Kumbhaka) and it's getting emptied (Rechaka) during regulated, controlled and monitored exhalation (Prasvasa).

Pratyahara indicates dissociation of one's consciousness (withdrawal) from the sense organs which helps one to remain connected with the external objects. Dharana indicates broad based field of Attention (inside the body and mind) which is usually understood as concentration. Dhyana (Meditation) is contemplation (Focused) attention inside the body and mind) and Samadhi – integration.

Bandhas and Mudras are practices associated with Pranayama. They are viewed as (the) higher Yogic practices mainly consisting on adopting certain body (psycho-physical) patterns along with (s well as) control over respiration. This further facilitates control over mind and paves way for higher yogic attainment. Shat-karmas are de-toxification procedures, help to remove the toxins accumulated in the body and are clinical in nature.

Yuktahara (Right Food and other inputs) advocates appropriate food and food habits for healthy living. However practice of Dhyana (Meditation) helping in self-realization leading to transcendence is considered as the essence of Yoga Sadhana (The Practice of Yoga).

The Fundamentals of Yoga Sadhana

Yoga works on the level of one's body, mind, emotion and energy. This has given rise to four broad classifications of Yoga: karma yoga, where we utilize the body; Bhakti Yoga, where we utilize the emotions; Gyana Yoga, where we utilize the mind and intellect; and Kriya Yoga, where we utilize the energy.

Present days, Yoga Education is being imparted by many eminent Yoga Institutions, Yoga Colleges, Yoga Universities, Yoga Departments in the Universities, Naturopathy Colleges and Private Trusts & Societies. Many Yoga Clinics, Yoga Therapy and Training Centers, Preventive Health Care Units of Yoga, Yoga Research Centers etc. have been established in Hospitals, Dispensaries, Medical Institutions and Therapetical setups. Different social customs and rituals in India, the land of Yoga, reflect a love for ecological balance, tolerance towards other systems of thought and a compassionate outlook towards all creations. Yoga Sadhana of all hues and colours is considered panacea for a meaningful life and living. Its orientation to a comprehensive health, both individual and social, makes it a worthy practice for the people of all religions, races and nationalities.

Benefits of Yoga

It incorporates breathing exercises, meditation and poses designed to encourage relaxation and reduce stress. Practicing yoga is said to come with many benefits for both mental and physical health, though not all of these benefits have been backed by science. There are 13 Benefits of Yoga, which are given below:

- **Can Decrease Stress**

Yoga is known for its ability to ease stress and promote relaxation.

In fact, multiple studies have shown that it can decrease the secretion of cortisol, the primary stress hormone. One study demonstrated the powerful effect of yoga on stress by following 24 women who perceived themselves as emotionally distressed. After a three-month yoga program, the women had significantly lower levels of cortisol. They also had lower levels of stress, anxiety, fatigue and depression. Another study of 131 people had similar results, showing that 10 weeks of yoga helped reduce stress and anxiety. It also helped improve quality of life and mental health. When used alone or along with other methods of alleviating stress, such as meditation, yoga can be a powerful way to keep stress in check.

- **Relieves Anxiety**

Many people begin practicing yoga as a way to cope with feelings of anxiety.

Interestingly enough, there is quite a bit of research showing that yoga can help reduce anxiety. In one study, 34 women diagnosed with an anxiety disorder participated in yoga classes twice weekly for two months.

At the end of the study, those who practiced yoga had significantly lower levels of anxiety than the control group. Another study followed 64 women with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is characterized by severe anxiety and fear following exposure to a traumatic event. After 10 weeks, the women who

practiced yoga once weekly had fewer symptoms of PTSD. In fact, 52% of participants no longer met the criteria for PTSD at all.

It's not entirely clear exactly how yoga is able to reduce symptoms of anxiety. However, it emphasizes the importance of being present in the moment and finding a sense of peace, which could help treat anxiety.

- **May Reduce Inflammation**

In addition to improving your mental health, some studies suggest that practicing yoga may reduce inflammation as well. Inflammation is a normal immune response, but chronic inflammation can contribute to the development of pro-inflammatory diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

A study divided 218 participants into two groups: those who practiced yoga regularly and those who didn't. Both groups then performed moderate and strenuous exercises to induce stress. At the end of the study, the individuals who practiced yoga had lower levels of inflammatory markers than those who didn't.

Similarly, a small study showed that 12 weeks of yoga reduced inflammatory markers in breast cancer survivors with persistent fatigue.

Although more research is needed to confirm the beneficial effects of yoga on inflammation, these findings indicate that it may help protect against certain diseases caused by chronic inflammation.

- **Could Improve Heart Health**

From pumping blood throughout the body to supplying tissues with important nutrients, the health of your heart is an essential component of overall health.

Studies show that yoga may help improve heart health and reduce several risk factors for heart disease.

One study found that participants over 40 years of age who practiced yoga for five years had a lower blood pressure and pulse rate than those who didn't.

High blood pressure is one of the major causes of heart problems, such as heart attacks and stroke. Lowering your blood pressure can help reduce the risk of these problems.

Some research also suggests that incorporating yoga into a healthy lifestyle could help slow the progression of heart disease.

A study followed 113 patients with heart disease, looking at the effects of a lifestyle change that included one year of yoga training combined with dietary modifications and stress management.

- **Improves Quality of Life**

Yoga is becoming increasingly common as an adjunct therapy to improve quality of life for many individuals. In one study, 135 seniors were assigned to either six months of yoga, walking or a control group. Practicing yoga significantly improved quality of life, as well as mood and fatigue, compared to the other groups.

A similar study looked at how eight weeks of yoga affected women with breast cancer. At the end of the study, the women had less pain and fatigue with improvements in levels of invigoration, acceptance and relaxation. Other studies have found that yoga may help improve sleep quality, enhance spiritual well-being, improve social function and reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in patients with cancer.

- **May Fight Depression**

Some studies show that yoga may have an anti-depressant effect and could help decrease symptoms of depression. This may be because yoga is able to decrease levels of cortisol, a stress hormone that influences levels of serotonin, the neurotransmitter often associated with depression. Based on some previous results, yoga may help fight depression, alone or in combination with traditional methods of treatment. s hormones in the body.

- **Could Reduce Chronic Pain**

Chronic pain is a persistent problem that affects millions of people and has a range of possible causes, from injuries to arthritis. There is a growing body of research demonstrating that practicing yoga could help reduce many types of chronic pain. Although more research is needed, incorporating yoga into your daily routine may be beneficial for those who suffer from chronic pain.

- **Could Promote Sleep Quality**

Poor sleep quality has been associated with obesity, high blood pressure and depression, among other disorders. Studies show that incorporating yoga into your routine could help promote better sleep. In a 2005 study, 69 elderly patients were assigned to practice yoga, take an herbal preparation or be part of the control group.

Though the way it works is not clear, yoga has been shown to increase the secretion of melatonin, a hormone that regulates sleep and wakefulness. Yoga also has a significant effect on anxiety, depression, chronic pain and stress — all common contributors to sleep problems.

- **Improves Flexibility and Balance**

Many people add Yoga to their fitness routine to improve flexibility and balance.

There is considerable research that backs this benefit, demonstrating that it can optimize performance through the use of specific poses that target flexibility and balance. A recent study looked at the impact of 10 weeks of yoga on 26 male college athletes. Doing yoga significantly increased several measures of flexibility and balance, compared to the control group.

- **Could Help Improve Breathing**

Pranayama, or Yogic breathing, is a practice in yoga that focuses on controlling the breath through breathing exercises and techniques. Most types of yoga incorporate these breathing exercises, and several studies have found that practicing yoga could help improve breathing.

- **May Relieve Migraines**

Migraines are severe recurring headaches that affect an estimated 1 out of 7 Americans each year. Traditionally, migraines are treated with medications to relieve and manage symptoms. Researchers suggest that doing yoga may help stimulate the vagus nerve, which has been shown to be effective in relieving migraines. ith conventional care.

- **Promotes Healthy Eating Habits**

Mindful eating, also known as intuitive eating, is a concept that encourages being present in the moment while eating. It's about paying attention to the taste, smell and texture of your food and noticing any thoughts, feelings or sensations you experience while eating.

This practice has been shown to promote healthy eating habits that help control blood sugar, increase weight loss and treat disordered eating behaviors. Because yoga places a similar emphasis on mindfulness, some studies show that it could be used to encourage healthy eating behaviors.

- **Can Increase Strength**

In addition to improving flexibility, yoga is a great addition to an exercise routine for its strength-building benefits. In fact, there are specific poses in yoga that are designed to increase strength and build muscle. A study had similar findings, showing that 12 weeks of practice led to improvements in endurance, strength and flexibility in 173 participants.

Based on these findings, practicing yoga can be an effective way to boost strength and endurance, especially when used in combination with a regular exercise routine.

Naturopathy

There is a growing awareness today about health and fitness among the masses. Large sections of health conscious people have started reviewing and questioning the modern life style. Most healthcare specialists today believe that many diseases from which the mankind is afflicted today are the outcome of the wrong living style and the food habits and of the increasing pollution of the environment. That is why a system like Naturopathy is gaining more and more acceptance across the globe.

Nature cure is an art and science of healthy living and a drugless system of healing based on well-founded philosophy. It has its own concept of health and disease and the principles of treatment. Nature cure is defined as a system of man developing in harmony with the constructive principles of nature on physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of living. It has a great health promotive, curative and rehabilitative potential.

Nature Cure is a very old method of living and curing diseases. The fundamental difference between nature cure and other systems is that its theory and practice are purely based on a "Holistic View point" unlike the latter's approach, which is specific. Nature Cure does not believe in the specific cause of disease and its specific treatment but takes into account the totality of factors responsible for the disease such as one's unnatural habits, thinking, working, sleeping, relaxation, sexual indulgence, etc. It also considers the environmental factors involved that disturb the normal functioning of the body and lead it to a morbid, weak and toxic state. For treatment purpose, Nature Cure primarily tries to correct all the factors responsible for the disease and allows the body to recover itself. A nature cure physician simply helps in nature's effort to overcome disease by applying correct natural modalities and controlling the natural forces to work under safe limits. The five main modalities of treatment in nature cure are Air, Water, Heat, Mud and Space.

Naturopathy is a simple, unsophisticated, accommodative and cheap system of health care when

compared to other systems of medicine. Its origin dates back to our ancient texts on health and longevity. Most of the principles and practices of naturopathy like Morbid Matter theory, fasting, nutrition, dietetics, cleansing acts, massages, exercises etc and the concepts of vitality, panchamahabhutas (five great elements) were familiar to our Vaidyas, and Rishis and have been in use in our country over the past many years. This is not the case with other countries where Naturopathy as a system of medicine gained popularity much later after pioneering works of Louis Kuhne, Adolf Just and Henry Lindlahr. In India, Naturopathy owes its revival of sorts to Mahatma Gandhi who adopted Nature Cure not only in his personal life but also in his national program, giving it a great fillip. His active interest inspired a number of thinkers and consequently, led to the establishment of many Nature Cure hospitals and centers.

Nature Care movement started in India when Louis Kuhne's book "New Science of Healing" was translated in Hindi, Urdu and Telugu. With the concepts being more or less familiar, Kuhne's philosophy and practices were easily grasped and imbibed by the practitioners.

Naturopaths believe that the human body is composed of five great elements (or pancha Maha Bhutas) imbalances of which create diseases. These five elements include Air, Water, Mud, Heat and Space. Treatment by these is what is called Nature Cure. The general treatment modalities and diagnostic methods employed in Nature Cure are the following:

- **Water Therapy:** Also called Hydrotherapy, it is the most ancient remedial method. Water is employed in different forms in the process of treatment as it produces several types of physiological effects depending on temperature and duration. This method is the most widespread and is used in almost all treatments.
- **Air Therapy:** Air is amongst the most important sources in life. Fresh air is essential for good health. Air Therapy is employed in different pressures and temperatures for different diseases.
- **Fire Therapy:** In Nature Cure treatment, various temperatures are employed through different heating techniques to produce specific effects. It believes that existence of all the living beings depend upon "Agni" (or Fire).
- **Space Therapy:** Naturopaths believe that congestion in the body causes disease. The best way to avoid congestion of mind and body is by fasting (or what is called Fasting Therapy).
- **Mud Therapy:** Mud is employed in the treatment of various diseases like constipation and skin disease because it absorbs, dissolves and eliminates the toxic materials and rejuvenates the body.
- **Food Therapy:** Naturopaths believe that one's eating habits are reflected in one's physical and mental health. Most of the diseases are tractable through Food Therapy.
- **Massage Therapy:** Massage is generally employed for tonic, stimulant and sedative effects. It is an effective substitute for exercise.
- **Acupressure:** This therapy utilizes the fact that there are different points on hands, feet and body, which are associated with different organs. By applying pressure on these selected points, related organs can be diagnosed and consequently liberated of their ailments.
- **Magneto Therapy:** Magnets of different powers and shapes are used in the treatment, by direct application on different parts of the body or through either charged up oil or water.
- **Chromo Therapy:** This therapy makes use of the fact that sunrays comprise seven colours of varying wavelengths, each affecting the body differently. These colours are employed through irradiation on body or by administering charged water or oil and pills.

Naturopathy is a holistic approach to treating illness & disorders of all kinds, by stimulating a body's self-healing mechanism. It is a combination of multiple therapies including acupuncture, herbs, massage, physical manipulations, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, nutritional counseling & much more following the Naturopathic principles. This treatment offers benefits to maintain a long term optimal health.

One of the principle tenets of Naturopathic medicine is credence in treating the whole person, or boosting a person's general well-being in order to treat a root cause of a disease. This treatment is often invigorating & provides the patient with energy & strength that they initially lacked, all through natural techniques.

The practices & principles of Naturopathy are older than those of conventional medicine & are globally known for promoting & maintaining body's long-term optimal health. There are few naturotherapy centers in India which help to cure disorders. Following are a few of the many benefits of Naturopathic treatment:

- **Disease Prevention:** Preventing the disease from developing in the first place, is the most effective way of combating it. In Naturopathy, prevention of disease is at the forefront of the field, followed by proper nutrition in order to gain a healthy body & a healthy immune system.
- **Treatment of Disorders:** Naturopathy has the power to holistically treat many of the common ailments by traditional medicine. Some of the most common types of disorders & disease treated using naturopathy treatment are digestive disorders, allergies, headaches, common colds, skin conditions like eczema & psoriasis. The key part of managing the symptoms is nutrition & another part of the naturopathic process.
- **Sleeping Aid:** Naturopathic medicine offers solution to overcome insomnia & other sleep disorders. Herbal treatments offered in Naturopathy combined with a nutritional regimen ultimately helps better sleeping habits.
- **Alternative Therapies:** Naturopathy offers multiple treatments depending on the individual requirements. It employs the use of natural supplements, herbs, botanical remedies, homeopathy, performing reiki & acupuncture, or facilitates a powerful combination of these treatment options.
- **Increases Self-Awareness:** Naturopathy treatment helps connect the patients with their inner self. It helps the patients better understand their bodies. As when one gets to know their body, they better understand what it's trying to communicate in the form of symptoms. It eventually helps one listen to their body as to what it's telling when they experience aches, pains or other symptoms.
- **Changes the Way One Think:** Naturopathy is an approach that emphasizes on a combination of emotional, physical & spiritual wellness, so one is exposed to a holistic path to health. It helps one recognize the importance of spiritual, psychological & social elements to one's well-being.
- **Safe & Effective Treatment:** Naturopathic practice aims at treating the underlying disease & disorders & restoring the natural body functions by encouraging the body's own healing capacities. It assist's the body's healing powers by using safe & effective non-pharmaceutical approaches.

It is a highly individualized treatment that involves facilitating effective restoring techniques, self-care decisions, and much more which can prevent future health problems.

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