



RELEVANCE OF YOGA IN OUR DAILY LIFE

DR. SUBRATA DUARY

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

DEPT. OF PHILOSOPHY

KASHIPUR M. M. MAHAVIDYALAYA

KASHIPUR, W.B., INDIA

Abstract: It is believed that the practice of yoga began at the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga originated thousands of years ago, long before the birth of the first religion or belief system. Just as in ancient times, the novelty and uniqueness of the science of Yoga remain highly influential today. The field of Yoga is vast and profound. Due to the utility of its various methods, Yoga is currently being applied in diverse areas such as life and self-management, healthcare, education, sports, personality development and liberation. Indeed, Yoga not only offers solutions to various problems faced by individuals and society but also fosters the holistic development and advancement of life and social structures. In this paper I try to explain that how and why Patanjali's Yoga theory is relevance in today.

Index Terms - Yoga, life, society, health, liberation and personality development

I. INTRODUCTION

It is believed that the practice of yoga began at the very dawn of civilization. The science of yoga originated thousands of years ago, long before the birth of the first religion or belief system. The history of yoga can be divided into four major periods:

1. Pre-Vedic & Vedic Period (approx. 3000 BC – 500 BC). The earliest traces of meditative postures resembling yoga are found on various archaeological artifacts and seals from the ancient Indus Valley Civilization in northern India. The word 'Yoga' first appears in the Rigveda—an ancient collection of sacred hymns used by Brahmin priests. During this period, yoga was primarily confined to rituals centered on 'Yajna' (sacrificial offerings) and mental concentration.

2. Pre-Classical Period (500 BC – 200 BC). At this period ritual prayer shifts from external ritual to internal inquiry. During this period the Upanishads introduced the core yogic concepts of action, devotion (bhakti) and realization of the ultimate truth (Brahman).

3. Classical Period (approx. 200 BC – 500 AD). Sage Patanjali consolidated various scattered yoga practices into a coherent philosophical framework in his text, the 'Yoga Sutras'. He outlined the 'eight limbs of yoga' or 'Ashtanga'; this systematic approach included physical postures (asanas), breath control (pranayama), and meditation. Written around the same time, the epic text Bhagavad Gita popularized the various paths of yoga: bhakti (bhakti), jnana (knowledge), and karma (karma). This text integrated the philosophical principles of yoga with daily life and duty, leading to its widespread dissemination.

4. Post-Classical Period (approx. 500 AD – 1500AD). Sages like the medieval yogi Gorakhnath developed Hatha Yoga. Aiming to prepare the body and mind for prolonged meditation, they placed special emphasis on physical purification, achieved through asanas and pranayama.

5. Modern Period (late 19th Century – Present) In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Indian yoga masters like Swami Vivekananda introduced yoga to the West; they traveled abroad to propagate the practice.

II. Patanjali theory of Yoga

According to Hindu mythological tradition, Lord Shiva is regarded as the primordial proponent of yoga, or the 'Adiyogi'. However, from a historical and systematic perspective, Maharshi Patanjali is considered the father of yoga. Maharshi Patanjali—rightly hailed as the 'Father of Yoga'—systematically compiled and refined the various aspects of yoga in his 'Yoga Sutras' (aphorisms). In Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutra', we learn about the various principles, applications, and methods of practicing Yoga. This text is divided into four sections: Samadhi Pada, Sadhana Pada, Vibhuti Pada, and Kaivalya Pada. Together, these four chapters contain a total of 195 sutras.

In Patanjali's 'Yoga Sutra', 'Sadhana Pada' and 'Vibhuti Pada', Patanjali outlined an eight-step path of discipline known as 'Ashtanga Yoga'. These steps are: 'Yama' (restraint), 'Niyama' (observance), 'Asana' (physical posture), 'Pranayama' (breath control), 'Pratyahara' (withdrawal of senses), 'Dharana' (concentration), 'Dhyana' (deep meditation), and 'Samadhi' (ultimate absorption or oneness). True practice of Ashtanga Yoga fosters positive thinking, a disciplined lifestyle, compassion, respect for others, a spirit of altruism, purity, physical and mental health, spiritual growth, self-realization, liberation from worldly attachments, lasting peace, and tolerance towards diverse religions and cultures. Above all, through this practice, we attain liberation from worldly bonds. We all desire freedom from every form of bondage; therefore, it is essential for us to follow the path of yoga or take steps toward this goal. In practical life, self-realization—knowing one's true nature—is the primary objective and achievement. The individual self or 'Jivatma' (Purusha) remains bound by the five 'Kleshas' (afflictions): 'Avidya' (ignorance), 'Asmita' (egoism), 'Raga' (attachment), 'Dvesha' (aversion), and 'Abhinivesha' (clinging to life). When we take an interest in ourselves and inquire into the nature of our own being, we can realize the ultimate truth—that the soul is eternal and inherently free.

III. Concept of Liberation in the view of Patanjali Yoga

Different Indian philosophies offer various paths to liberation. According to Yoga philosophy, 'Ashtanga Yoga' is the means to attain liberation or 'Samadhi'. We derive a threefold benefit from the practice of Yoga. The first two stages of Ashtanga Yoga (Yama and Niyama) guide us along the path of morality; the next two stages (Asana and Pranayama) help maintain physical health and improve both physical and mental well-being. The final four stages are primarily concerned with the attainment of liberation or Moksha. Thus, it can be unhesitatingly stated that Ashtanga Yoga holds not only philosophical importance but also profound significance for human life. Practicing Yoga is essential for cultivating positivity and concentration.

Patanjali defines Yoga in the second aphorism of his Yoga Sutras—'Yogaś-citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ' (Yoga Sutra 1.2). This aphorism implies that the state of Yoga is attained when all 'vṛttis'—or mental fluctuations—arising from the 'citta' (mind) are restrained or brought under control; in other words, we transform into a 'Yogi.' Yoga is a form of spiritual practice and discipline that plays an effective role across all dimensions of our being—the gross body, the senses, and the mind. According to Patanjali, the practice of the eight limbs of Yoga—known as 'Ashtanga Yoga'—is essential for attaining 'Viveka-khyāti' (the realization of the distinction between 'Purusha' or the true Self and 'Prakriti' or material nature). It is precisely the practice of this Ashtanga Yoga that leads to the attainment of 'Moksha' or 'Kaivalya' (liberation).

IV. A brief analysis of Ashtanga Yoga

1. Yama (Restraint): This is the practice of abstaining from harmful actions. There are five types of Yama, namely:

a. Ahimsa (Non-violence): This means refraining from hurting or harming anyone through physical, verbal, or mental actions. Ahimsa embodies compassion, caring for others, and harboring love for all living beings. This aspect of yoga is highly relevant today, given the rising trend of violent activities in our society.

b. Satya (Truthfulness): This means speaking the truth, thinking truthfully, and shunning falsehood. It is a form of ethical conduct. We should always avoid making false statements. However, if speaking the truth would be offensive or harmful, it is better to remain silent.

c. Asteya (Non-stealing): Asteya entails not accepting or taking what does not belong to you. It represents virtuous behavior and a noble mindset. Greed is a highly negative trait; therefore, it must be controlled.

d. **Brahmacharya** (Celibacy or Sensory Control): This refers to controlling one's senses regarding worldly matters. It is crucial for yogis. It is the process of restraining oneself from uncontrolled emotions, lust, and greed. Brahmacharya signifies self-restraint and a temperate lifestyle.

e. **Aparigraha** (Non-possessiveness or Non-greed): This involves remaining free from the desire for excessive indulgence or greed. A simple lifestyle is preferable to one of opulence or luxury.

2. **Niyama** (Observances): Niyama is the second of the eight limbs of Yoga. It is essential for practitioners of Yoga. The practice of Niyama leads to self-purification. Patanjali mentions in the 'Sadhana Pada' that there are five types of Niyama. They are:

a) **Saucha** (Purity): This has two forms—external and internal. External purity refers to practices such as daily bathing and a vegetarian diet; internal purity involves keeping the mind free from attachment, greed, and anger.

b) **Santosha** (Contentment): Maintaining a positive mindset, the ability to accept others, and feeling satisfied with what one has attained. This is crucial for the practice of Yoga.

c) **Tapas** (Determination and Austere Discipline): Tapas signifies maintaining discipline, sense restraint, steadfast practice, and regular Yoga practice.

d) **Svadyaya** (Study of Scriptures): This refers to the chanting or repetition of 'Om' (AUM), the realization of the true self, and the regular study of scriptures.

e) **Ishvara Pranidhana** (Contemplation of the Divine): Devotion to God, surrender to God, faith in God, and acknowledging God as the Supreme Being. These five observances are essential for anyone seeking lasting peace or liberation.

3. **Asana** (various postures for sitting comfortably): This is a crucial component of yoga practice. Asanas are essential for maintaining control over the mind and body. Among the various postures described by Patanjali are Padmasana, Bhadrasana, Virasana, Swastikasana, Dandasana, etc.

4. **Pranayama** (breath control): Pranayama is the fourth stage of the eight limbs of yoga (Ashtanga Yoga). It is practiced after the successful mastery of asanas. Pranayama consists of three main phases: inhalation (Puraka), exhalation (Rechaka), and breath retention or prolonged breath control (Kumbhaka). Regular practice of Pranayama enables one to gain self-control. It is one of the best ways to attain Samadhi.

5. **Pratyahara** (disengaging the senses from external objects and cultivating self-awareness): Through continuous yoga practice, the yogi's mind comes under control, and the senses become calm. The mind remains steady and serene. At this stage, there is no interaction between the senses and the external world. Pratyahara involves withdrawing the senses from the material world and bringing the mind under complete control.

6. **Dharana** (concentration): The positive state of mind that arises in the yogi following—or during—Pratyahara is known as Dharana. At this stage, the yogi's mind remains pure and tranquil.

7. **Dhyana** (meditation): Dhyana is the deepest and most sustained stage of Dharana. While concentration in Dharana may occasionally be interrupted, Dhyana is an unbroken and continuous process of mental stillness. There is no interruption or break in the meditative state at this stage.

8. **Samadhi** (liberation): Samadhi is the highest state of meditation. The Yoga Sutras state: "Tadevarthamatanirbhasam svarupashunyamiva samadhih" (meaning: when nothing exists other than the object of meditation and the sense of the self dissolves, it is called Samadhi). At this stage, the mind attains its true nature, and awareness of only a single object remains. Samadhi is of two types—Samprajnata Samadhi and Asamprajnata Samadhi. Samprajnata Samadhi is object-oriented (centered on a specific subject or object), whereas Asamprajnata Samadhi is object-independent or objectless. Therefore, Ashtanga Yoga is essential for attaining lasting peace, mental growth, positivity, physical well-being, control over the mind, mental purity, a life free from depression, pure love within, the realization of truth, and liberation. Practice yoga and be happy. Yoga is a powerful remedy for discovering one's true self.

V. Importance and Benefit of Yoga

We all know that human beings are the supreme creatures on Earth. Among the various human needs, the primary aspirations are mental tranquility and freedom from suffering. Yet, in today's world, a lack of mental peace or contentment is evident in almost all of us. People across the globe are seeking solutions to this mental unrest and these associated problems. Ancient sages have provided significant solutions to the various challenges of our daily lives; however, many remain unaware of the remedies they prescribed. By following the principles or paths laid down by the ancient sages of India, it is certainly possible to overcome the problems we constantly face in our lives today. Here, to discussed ways to resolve mental unrest and related issues. We can discover this path by turning to Yoga Philosophy; the practice of Yoga aids us in attaining mental peace as well as physical fitness.

Yoga is not merely physical exercise; it signifies union—specifically, the connection between the individual Self and the Supreme Self. In daily life, yoga enhances our physical, mental, socio-economic-political, and spiritual well-being. When we fall prey to fear, depression, anxiety, mental instability, violent tendencies, and intolerance in society, yoga emerges as our sole support and remedy. In today's world, attaining true peace without yoga is difficult. Yoga helps refine our thinking, brings mental tranquility, and leads to supreme bliss.

Yoga offers a holistic approach to harmonizing the body, mind, and breath. Its daily relevance lies in reducing stress, improving posture, and enhancing focus. By combining physical postures (asanas), breathing exercises (pranayama), and meditation, it combats a sedentary lifestyle and builds long-term mental and physical resilience. Incorporating yoga into your daily routine offers several specific benefits:

1) Stress Management: Deep breathing techniques actively lower cortisol levels, directly helping your central nervous system manage daily anxiety.

2) Posture and Pain Relief: It alleviates stiffness caused by desk-bound work by strengthening core muscles, increasing joint mobility, and relieving chronic back pain.

3) Increased Energy and Better Sleep: Morning practice boosts blood circulation and alertness, while gentle practice before bed prepares your body for deep, uninterrupted sleep.

4) Enhanced Focus: The mindfulness inherent in yoga sharpens concentration, thereby improving overall productivity.

Yoga is essential in both the external and internal spheres of life. 'Internal Yoga' refers to harnessing the strengths of one's own self or 'Atman,' while 'external Yoga' involves strategies to skillfully handle external circumstances—such as family, business, and the workplace.

Through various yogic processes, an individual can develop, control, and channel their inner capabilities to their fullest potential; this is precisely what constitutes Internal Yoga. Similarly, in today's era of fierce competition and rapid information exchange, the principles and concepts of yoga can play a highly effective role in ensuring efficient management within the industrial and business sectors.

VI. Conclusion

In contemporary times, Internal Yoga has become a matter of critical importance. Due to increasing irregularities and flaws in dietary habits and lifestyles, people often struggle to maintain a disciplined life. A chaotic lifestyle makes it impossible to effectively organize or manage external affairs. The solution to this challenge lays in various yoga practices.

Consequently, as life becomes disciplined through these practices, an individual's innate capabilities—such as work efficiency, the development of mental attributes, time management, leadership qualities, and communication skills—begin to flourish.

These capabilities form a foundation that enables individuals to achieve excellence and attain high levels of proficiency in any professional field. This is why prominent figures and organizations worldwide are increasingly adopting yoga-based methods for self-management. Yoga has emerged as a unique tool for management and administration across various commercial, industrial, and educational institutions. The primary objective of integrating yogic methods and practices in these sectors is to maintain the physical, mental, and emotional balance of employees while simultaneously enhancing their capabilities to ensure maximum productivity and quality.

Yoga has gained immense global popularity as a means of curing diseases and maintaining good health. In modern times, much like other medical systems, yoga is recognized as a highly effective alternative therapeutic approach. This recognition stems from various scientific studies; active research is being conducted on treating diverse ailments through yoga-based methods, with findings consistently being presented.

'Yoga Therapy' is currently being developed based on various yogic techniques. Indeed, yoga possesses the capacity to restore an individual to a state of holistic well-being. The techniques involved in this practice aid in alleviating and curing various diseases and physical ailments, effectively establishing it as a reliable therapeutic method. Yoga therapy addresses crucial aspects of human life—including physical, mental, behavioral, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Extensive research has been conducted on the therapeutic utility of yoga, and the results consistently point to positive outcomes.

Yoga is proving to be highly beneficial as a complementary therapy for conditions such as obesity, diabetes, arthritis, asthma, and other physical ailments. It is also being employed to address mental health issues, including stress, anxiety, depression, and phobias. Today, people of all ages and backgrounds are reaping the benefits of yoga to maintain good health.

From the perspective of health improvement, those who practice yoga regularly easily reap benefits such as good health and a vibrant physique. As a means of treating diseases, yoga serves as a highly effective

alternative therapeutic method. When the appropriate yoga techniques are selected according to individual needs, the practice entails no side effects; it is a universal and beneficial approach suitable for people of all ages and walks of life.

REFERENCES

- [1] Sharma P. C. 2005, Patanjali Darshan, Kolkata: West Bengal State Book Board.
- [2] Bhattacharyya D. C. 2006, Shaddarshana : Joga, Kolkata: West Bengal State Book Board.
- [3] Bandyopadhyay K. 1999, Sankha – Patanjali Darsan, Kolkata: West Bengal State Book Board.
- [4] Bhattacharya A. 2016, Bharatiya darsan Ruparekha, Kolkata, Sanskrit Book Dipo
- [5] Chattopadhyaya D. 2020, Bharatiya Darsan, New Delhi, National Book Agency Pvt. Ltd.
- [6] Dasgupta S. N. 2022, A History of Indian Philosophy, Vol-1, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas Pvt. Ltd.
- [7] Sharma C. D. 2016, A Critical Survey of Indian Philosophy, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas Pvt. Ltd.
- [8] <https://www.gita-society.com/wp-content/uploads/PDF/Patanjali-yogasutra.IGS.pdf>
- [9] <https://dn760107.eu.archive.org/0/items/yogasutrasofpata00pata/yogasutrasofpata00pata.pdf>
- [10] <file:///C:/Users/Laptop/Downloads/PatanjaliYogaSutras.pdf>

