

## YOGA: ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE, RELEVANCE & PROMOTION

The early medicine practices, around 3000 BC to 3500 BC, started independently in every culture, which then started influencing each other starting 200 BC, with a major convergence around 800 AD onwards with the evolution of Arab medicine.

The dawn of scientific or modern medicine started in the mid of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It evolved on the foundation created by the ancient systems of medicine over a period of 4500 years (2500 BC – 1500 AD).

Medicine in India originated around 3000 BC, when the practice of Ayurveda is considered to have started. In addition, the siddha system of medicine is also Indian in origin. The **period of 800 BC to 600 AD is regarded as the golden period for Indian medicine**, a period which coincides with widely accepted authorities in ayurvedic medicine, such as Atreya, Charaka and Sushruta. Of them, Atrya is considered as the first great Indian physician and teacher. Charaka wrote **Charaka Samhita** and was the most popular physician of the time. Sushruta is referred to as father of Indian surgery. He wrote **Sushruta Samhita**, a treatise on surgery.

### Alternative Systems of Medicine in India

**Ayurveda:** It evolved nearly 5000 years ago (3000 BC). The word Ayurveda means ‘Science of life’ and employs treatment modalities such as purification, palliation, prescription of various diets, exercises and the avoidance of disease causing factors. The Ayurveda medicine though practiced for a wide range of health needs, is more commonly used for preventive and health and immunity boosting activities.

**Unani Medicine:** Unani Medicine originated in the Arab world, though over a period of time it imbibed some concepts from other contemporary systems of medicines in Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Persia, India, China and other Middle East Countries. Unani medicine treats a patient with diet, pharmacotherapy, exercise, massages and surgery. Unani was introduced in India around 10<sup>th</sup> century AD.

**Homeopathy -** The word ‘Homoeopathy’ is derived from two Greek words, Homois meaning similar and pathos meaning suffering. Homoeopathy simply means treating diseases with remedies, prescribed in minute doses, which are capable of producing symptoms similar to the disease when taken by healthy people. It is based on the natural law of healing- "Similia Similibus Curantur" which means "likes are cured by likes".

**Siddha** – Siddha system is one of the oldest systems of medicine in India. The term Siddha is derived from the root word ‘Siddhi’ which means object to be attained or perfection. Siddha

literature is in Tamil and it is practiced largely in Tamil speaking part of India and abroad. The Siddha System is largely therapeutic in nature. It takes into account the patient, his/her surroundings, age, sex, race, habitat etc. to arrive at the diagnosis.

**Sowa-Rigpa** – The word combination means the ‘science of healing’. It has been originated from Tibet and popularly practice in India, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and Russia. The majority of theory and practice of Sowa-Rigpa is similar to “Ayurveda”. In India, this system is widely practice in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Dharamsala, Lahaul and Spiti(Himachal Pradesh) and Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir.

**Naturopathy** – Naturopathy is a drugless non-invasive rational and evidence based system of medicine imparting treatments with natural elements based on the Theory of vitality, theory of toxemia, theory of self healing capacity of the body and the principles of healthy living. The applied aspects of Naturopathy includes mainly fasting and diet supported by treatments with natural elements which includes Hydrotherapy, Chromotherapy, Mud Therapy, Manipulative therapy, Electrotherapy, Acupuncture, Magnetotherapy, Physiotherapy, Exercise & Yoga Therapy.

Yoga - The concepts and practices of Yoga originated in India about several thousand years ago. The literal meaning of the Sanskrit word Yoga is ‘Yoke’. Yoga can therefore be defined as a means of uniting the individual spirit with the universal spirit of God. According to Maharishi Patanjali, Yoga is the **suppression of modifications of the mind**.

- **Maharishi Patanjali**, rightly called "**The Father of Yoga**" compiled and refined various aspects of Yoga systematically in his "Yoga Sutras" (aphorisms).
- He advocated the eight folds path of Yoga, popularly known as "**Ashtanga Yoga**" for all-round development of human beings. They are:- Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.
- These components advocate certain restraints and observances, physical discipline, breath regulations, restraining the sense organs, contemplation, meditation and samadhi.
- Yoga is a discipline to improve or develop one’s inherent power in a balanced manner. It offers the means to attain complete self-realization.
- Yoga is now being **adapted to correct lifestyle** by cultivating a rational, positive and spiritual attitude towards all life situations.
- Yoga today, is **no longer restricted to hermits, saints, and sages**; it has entered into our everyday lives and has aroused a worldwide awakening and acceptance in the last few decades.
- The science of Yoga and its techniques have now been **reoriented to suit modern sociological needs and lifestyles**.
- Experts of various branches of medicine including modern medical sciences are realizing the role of these techniques in the prevention and mitigation of diseases and promotion of health.
- Yoga is universal in character for practice and application irrespective of culture, nationality, race, caste, creed, sex, age and physical condition.

## Increasing Relevance of Yoga in Modern Times

- **Panacea for Modern Diseases** – It is an important tool in controlling diabetes, obesity, cancer, hypertension and other non-communicable diseases.
- **Yoga and Youth** – Indian youth form more than 50% of the total population, they should practice yoga for overall development and promoting ageless Indian culture and tradition.
- **Physical Inactivity** – It is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. According to WHO, there is no improvement in global levels of physical inactivity since 2001.
- **Unhealthy Diet** – It is the second biggest factor in India driving most deaths and disability combined after malnutrition.
- **Mental Health** – Yoga has been used as a sole treatment for patients with mild to moderate depressions, schizophrenia and psychotic disorders. It improves socialization, motivation to do activities and cognitive abilities.
- **Health Cost** – Global Healthcare is dominated by modern medicine. Its cost is going beyond the reach of poor and middle class people. Yoga offers necessary wisdom, experience and capabilities that are crucial for transformational change.
- **Help Reduce Attention Deficits** – Yoga produces state of calmness and contentment which is lacking in children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.
- **Healthy Elderly Individuals** – Yoga has been found to be effective in improving the domains of quality of life and sleep quality along with memory which can alleviate concerns of the ageing world.
- Yoga holds promise as a **complementary therapy in cases of tobacco, alcohol and opioid dependence** during both the acute withdrawal phase and long term relapse prevention.
- Yoga is the science of a being's evolution that activates inner energies blossoming human potential to its fullness. It is a health insurance at zero budget.
- Yoga reflects love for **ecological balance, tolerance** towards other systems of thought and a **compassionate outlook** towards all creations.
- India can emerge in yogic and spiritual planes and earn the encomium of **yoga vishwa guru** (world yoga preceptor) among the comity of nations in the coming years.

## How Yoga Works

- **Cleanses the accumulated toxins** through various shuddi kriyas and generates a sense of relaxed lightness through jathis and vyayama type activities.
- **Free flow in all bodily passages** prevents the many infections that may occur when pathogens stagnate therein.
- **Creates positive antioxidant enhancement** through adoption of a Yogic lifestyle with proper nourishing diet, thus neutralizing free radicals while enabling a rejuvenative storehouse of nutrients packed with life energy to work on anabolic, reparative and healing processes .
- **Stadies the entire body** through different physical postures held in a steady and comfortable manner without strain.
- **Physical balance and a sense of ease** with oneself enhance mental / emotional balance and enable all physiological processes to occur in a healthy manner.

- **Improves control over autonomic respiratory mechanisms through breathing patterns.** The mind and emotions are related to our breathing pattern and rate and hence the slowing down of the breathing process influences autonomic functioning, metabolic processes as well as emotional responses.
- **Integrates body movements with the breath** thus creating psychosomatic harmony. In Yoga the physical body is related to our anatomical existence and the mind to our psychological existence. As our physiological existence sustained by the energy of the breath lies in between them, the breath is the key to psychosomatic harmony.
- **Focuses the mind positively** on activities being done, thus enhancing energy flow and resultant healthy circulation to the different body parts and internal organs.
- **Creates a calm internal environment** through contemplative practices that in turn enable normalization of homeostatic mechanisms. Yoga is all about balance or samatvam at all levels of being.
- **Relaxes the body-emotion-mind complex** through physical and mental techniques that enhance our pain threshold and coping ability in responding to external and internal stressors.
- **Enhances self confidence and internal healing capacities** through the cultivation of right attitudes towards life and moral-ethical living through yama-niyama and various Yogic psychological principles.
- **Yoga works towards restoration of normalcy in all systems of the human body** with special emphasis on the psycho-neuro-Immuno-endocrine axis.

The **concept of positive health** is one of Yoga's unique contributions to modern healthcare as Yoga has both a preventive as well as promotive role in the healthcare of our masses. It is also inexpensive and can be used in tandem with other systems of medicine in an integrated manner to benefit patients.

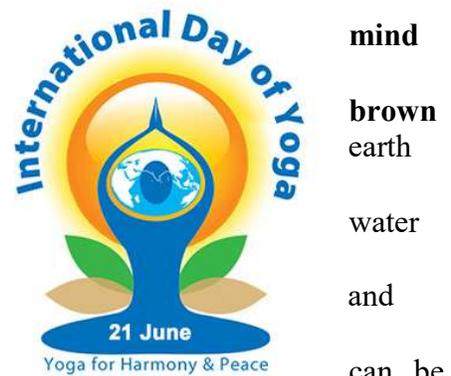
### Promotion of Yoga

- **UNESCO** inscribed Yoga in the representative list of **intangible cultural heritage of humanity** in 2016.
- **UNO** declared June 21<sup>st</sup> as **International Day of Yoga (IDY)**, celebration of this IDY has become global phenomenon.
- **Inclusion of Yoga in National Health Policy 2017:** In order to leverage a proper healthcare legacy, the national health policy 2017 recommended introduction of Yoga in school and at work places as part of promotion of good health.
- **Yoga in School Curriculum:** To promote yoga, yoga education was made compulsory by National council for teacher education (NCTE), a statutory body through its 15 teacher education programme.
- **Yoga Certification Board:** Established by Ministry of AYUSH for certification of yoga professionals and accreditation of Yoga institutions and personnel certification body.
- **UGC has established Yoga Departments:** In six central universities and framed standard yoga syllabi for various courses by constituting an expert committee.
- **National Eligibility Test in Yoga:** Has been conducted for lectureship and research fellowship for the first time.
  - **MEA deputed Yoga Teachers to Indian Missions:** For imparting training to local students and teachers.

- **India-China College of Yoga:** ICCR (Indian council for cultural relations) has signed an MoU with Yunnan Minzu university of China for establishment of college.
- **Yoga Olympiad:** NCERT has taken the initiative of “Yoga Olympiad” for school children.
- **Yoga training to CAPF:** Ministry of AYUSH has introduced yoga training to CAPF.
- **PM Awards on IDY:** Four awards, two national and two international have been announced in the field of yoga.
- **National AYUSH Mission:** It inter alia makes provision for the following:
  - Upgradation of exclusive state government AYUSH hospitals and dispensaries including yoga.
  - Setting up of upto 50 bedded integrated AYUSH hospital including yoga.
  - Under the flexible components of the scheme of NAM, provision has been made for grant in aid to the yoga wellness centers.
- **Common Yoga Protocol** – Union government with the advice from yoga gurus in the country has developed a common yoga protocol which can be used worldwide by people.

### About the International Day of Yoga Logo

- The logo is etched on a white background representing a pair hands stretched outwards from the body and joined together.
- The joining of both the hands symbolizes the **union of individual consciousness** with that of the universal consciousness. This symbolizes a **perfect harmony between the body, and the soul** which is the ultimate aim of any yogi.
- Below the human art form, there are **2 pairs of and green leaves**, symbolizing the elements of and nature.
- The **blue human figure** symbolizes the element of and the orange halo above head, symbolizing the element of fire, which is the source of all energy hence commands the topmost spot.
- Behind the human figure, a **picture of the globe** seen which symbolises solidarity and oneness.
- Below the logo the words “**Yoga for harmony and peace**” are inscribed which is believed to be the essence of Yoga.



There is a focus, both globally and in India, on strengthening primary healthcare (PHC) and advancing UHC, which would require interventions at all levels of health systems. This is possible if the potential contribution of alternative systems of medicines to improve health



services and health outcomes is fully used and by ensuring that users are able to make informed choices about self-healthcare.

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