Yoga for Health and Healing

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Introduction and statement of the problem

• There is a surge of interest in health and healing all over the world. Humankind has an increasingly sharp awareness of threats to the health of the earth and its inhabitants, however, if we observe the

• General Health state of mankind today and

• Health restoring means, then we have to say that

• We are lacking some where and not reaching to the roots and therefore there is a need to think over.

• In this talk will try to understand the concept of Health as well as of Healing and then will discuss about dis-ease and Yogic Healing methods.
Concept of Health

As regards the concept of health there is a difference in Western and Indian understanding of Health-
Western thinking tends to regard health in physical and psychological terms but Indian views of person and body substantiate a broader interpretation of health embracing all dimensions of well being.

W.H.O.
Defines ‘Health’ as a state of complete physical, mental, emotional and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease.

Ayurvedic Concept of Health.
In Susrut Samhita we find a complete definition of health-

samdosha samagni samdhatu malakriya
Prasannatmendriya svasth ityavadgiyate

(Sutrasthanam XVI/44)

a. Physical - Balance in humors & Dhatus, elimination of waste material from the systems
b. Mento-spiritual - Feeling of well being
Yogic Concept of Health

- In Yogic understanding the term **Health** encompasses all dimensions such as physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and spiritual well-being as yoga does not divide man in watertight compartments it considers man as a whole encompassing body, mind and spirit.

- Yoga visualizes health as human resource par excellence in accomplishing highest end, which again is the highest form of Health (svasthya or svasthata – sva = oneself & stha = to stand i.e. the prime goal of yoga svarupavastha = self-abiding (pysl/3).
Concept of Healing

• The word “Heal” carries the meaning of restoration from an undesirable condition and at the elemental level pertains to saving, purifying, cleansing and repairing to bring about restoration from evil, suffering or unwholesomeness.

• Reference to ‘Healing’ in the domain of human physicality and psychology is the most common use of the word but the fundamental meaning of healing is recovery of wholeness which spiritual liberation entails.

• The term ‘Cure’ and ‘Restore’ reveal two perspectives on healing -
  • ‘Curing’ refers to alleviating impaired functioning and discomfort while ‘restoring’ connotes returning to an original state of well being.
  • These two meaning support a conception of healing as having yogic and medical implications. The close relationship between healing and yoga is well substantiated in Indian tradition where liberation is often construed as return to the un-impairing state of one’s true nature which is reflected in the Sanskrit term svasthta- self-abiding i.e. TRUE HEALTH.
Yogic Science

• Yogic science has recently been widely recognized as a science of Health and Healing, not only in India but throughout the world for managing various psycho-physiological problems of man.

• *Sage Patanjali* (about 200 BC), the author of *Patanjala Yoga Sutra*, whose work in the field of Human Psychology is today recognized in the West, provides a systematic approach to understand the root causes of our psycho-physiological problems.

• Conditions such as fickleness of mind, passion, hatred, greed, anger, depression, tremor of the body limbs and breathing disturbances etc. are well documented and *Patanjali* provides healing / purifying techniques/practices for curing, preventing such conditions of mankind and can restore the true Health.
# Upanishadic Concept of Health & Dis-ease

{PANCHA KOSHA}

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>KOSHA</th>
<th>NATURE</th>
<th>STATE OF HEALTH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anandamaya</td>
<td>Highest State of Health</td>
<td>Perfect harmony &amp; balance</td>
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<td>2. Vijnanamaya</td>
<td>Power of discrimination</td>
<td>Movements but channelized in right direction</td>
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<td>3. Manomaya</td>
<td>Creative power</td>
<td>Imbalances start, liking and disliking come to play</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pre-dominates</td>
<td>Mental illnesses (Adhis)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Subtle body)</td>
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<td>4. Pranamaya</td>
<td>Life principle</td>
<td>Disturbances in Pranamaya kosha -wrong thoughts, feeling, action starts-untimely</td>
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<td></td>
<td>wrong channels</td>
<td>eating, association with wicked thoughts and persons</td>
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<td>5. Annamaya</td>
<td>Gross</td>
<td>Manifested physical disorders.</td>
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<td>Physical &amp; Physiological</td>
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Yoga Vasishtha

AILMENTS

Anadhijah
(Not caused by adhis)
Infections, Contagious

↑

Mantra
Medicine
Good action
Satsanga, Prayer

Psychosomatic ailments
caused during interaction
with world (in & out)

Knowing the causes
changing the outlook

↑

Adhijah

Samanya
(Ordinary)

Psychosomatic ailments
caused during interaction
with world (in & out)

Knowing the causes
changing the outlook

↑

Sara
(Essential)

Responsible for the
cycle of Birth & death

↑

Self realization
Disease according to Yoga

• Generally in Indian Philosophy the term Duhkha i.e. Pain/ suffering is more popular which is classified under three heads:
  i. Adhyatmika Duhkha  
  ii. Bhautika Duhkha  
  iii. Daivika Duhkha
• The threefold suffering can be overcome permanently only by realizing the Self.
• Nature has provided a homeostatic mechanism in body mind complex which contributes in balancing their functioning even in the face of external and internal stimuli. Every stimulus, from within or without, (whether it is mechanical, chemical, electrical, biological or psychological) does bring some amount of psycho-physiological disturbance
• Thus Yoga regards no disease as a local affection but as a change in the body mind complex.
Dis-ease according to Patanjali

To Patanjali dis-ease in the form of inner disturbances which may be of two kinds:

1. **Inborn** – “kleshas”– Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesha and Abhinivesha. They are responsible for this birth and also for further birth if they remain functionally operative in this life.

   When one identifies himself with that which actually he is not (vrttisaruya) due to Avidya. he develops Evil Tendencies (Vitarkas) due to Greed, Anger, Infatuation done, caused or approved that leads him to the inner disturbance (Antarayas) they can be termed as -

2. **Acquired** – in the form of Vyadhi, Styana, Samshaya, Pramada, Alasya, Avirati, Bhrantidarshana, Alabdhbhumikatva and Anavasthitatva.

   We acquire these problems as we grow because of the restless state of Citta and this, in turn, leads us to Psycho-Somatic disorders at gross level called-

   Duhkha(pain), Daurmanasya (depression), Angamejayatva (Tremor in body limbs) and Svasaprasvasa (problems related to breathing)
Disease according to Hatha Yoga

1. Malfunctioning of Vayu – resulting into different diseases
   bhavanti vividha rogah pavanasya prakoptah (H.P.II/17)
   Mind is dependent on Vayu
   ‘chale vate chalam chittam (H.P.II/2)

2. Non observance of Mitahara (balanced diet)
   Mitahara vina yastu…nanaro go bhavettasya (G.SV/I6)

3. Improper practice of Yoga.
   ayuktabhyasayogena sarvarogasamudbhava (H.P.II/16)

4. Imbalance in Humors – (on the bases of references)
   1. ashesh-dosha-mayashoshni (H.P.II/35)
   2. kapharogashcha vinshati (H.P.II/25)
   3. vatapittakaphodbhava (H.P.II/28)
Deductions

For Patanjali-
Inner disturbances are fundamentally mental, later on they manifest on body. So they are psychophysical.

For Hatha Yoga-
1. Disturbed functioning of Vayu is responsible for dis-ease and thus vayu is to be set right/controlled – in order to control the mind and to avoid dis-ease.

2. One must take care of food that one consumes from the view point of quality and quantity, since they have bearing on mind.

3. Right technique of Yoga practices must be learnt from a proper person.

4. Yogic practices can remove imbalance in humors.
Yogic Healing

i. Yoga tradition provides us two sets of mechanisms in human body.
   a. Cleansing the body - Shat Kriyas - Neti, dhauti etc.

   b. Nourishing the body – Ancient Yogis have given us the concept of Mitahara which represents nutritious and balanced diet.

ii. Yogasnas (Yogic postures) - Revitalization, deep relaxation = calmness of Mind

iii. Emotional Regulation
   a. Pranayama, Prayer, Chanting of Mantras, devotional sessions etc.
   b. Dos & Don’ts (Yamas & Niyamas)

iv. Thinking regulation
   a. Analysis of one’s existence
   b. Meditation
Conclusion

Yoga helps us by way of-

1. Balancing and harmonizing the functioning of body and mind complex.
2. Body becomes highly flexible and mind accepts.
3. Strong will power, love, compassion, universal brotherhood etc.
4. Body relaxation, slow breathing, Calmness of the mind.
5. Relaxation in action hence energy conservation-Shraddha, Virya etc.
THANK YOU