

## Yoga and Medical Sciences

*“What is the wisest among the human matters? The art of healing !” - Pythagoras*

*“The people go and beseech the gods for health and does not know, that they themselves have the power over it.”*

*-Democrat*

Modern medicine is galloping ahead riding the avalanche of technological advances. This march is too dependent upon systems approach, statistical jargon and mathematical interpretation to assimilate the nuances of human body being part of cosmos and craving for a basic healing touch.

Everybody is an individual masterpiece of art being in continuity with the universe and as that interwoven within the breath of existence<sup>1</sup>. “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and not merely the absence disease or infirmity” thus goes the WHO definition of health unchanged since 1948. The health care delivery system continues to address the three components of well being in somewhat disparate ways in insulation. Our knowledge of these is based upon the interpretation of our own state of mind and that there exists no absolute truth. Life is the process of continuous change of states of energy along the exist of time, which itself is considered to pass according to Issac Newton<sup>1</sup>.

This subjectivity in our knowledge of human body demands something holistic and objective across the existential spectrum of human observation and experience. While looking towards promise of future we need not turn our back to the wisdom of past. Assimilating input from existential past will surely make our vision more objective and effective. Yoga is seen not only as a set of esoteric exercise but also as a part of oriental culture. It's inherent non-invasiveness and harmlessness emanates from the test of time and voluntary integration. Biofeedback therapy, physiotherapy, psychotherapy and hypnotherapy etc are fragmented approaches to understand issues which have been addressed in totality by yoga for centuries. To the ancient Greeks exercise was linked to practice of medicine. The therapeutic benefits of gymnastics and exercise were propagated by Greek Paidotribe, Herodicus of Selymeria and followers. The first treatise in English on the use if therapeutic exercise was published in 1705 by French Fuller<sup>2</sup>. World's first sports medical institute was established in Dresden in 1911, and first congress of exercise and medicine was held in ovehof in 1912. French society of sports medicine published first medical was journal deviated to sprits medicine in 1922. International federation of sports medicine was than established at the second winter Olympics of St. Moritz in 1928. This marked the evolution of sports medicine from its early beginning in the gymnasia of ancient Greece. This evolution had its share of troubles and insecurities. Reports were already appearing about the adverse effects of exercise and criticizing the dearth of relevant scientific validity<sup>2</sup>. It was a major issue at the meeting in 1873 as reported by the British medical journal. Austin Flint advanced the

conclusion that “the muscular system may consume its own substance by exercise”. Yoga recognizes these concern and is based upon (*yoga's citta-vitti-nirodha*)[chittam = Mindstuff, Vrittis - Thoughts, fluctuations Nirodah - Restriction] Yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind [Sthira Sukham Asanam (Seated posture should be steady and comfortable)].

Yoga is largely based on the philosophy of Samkhya. Holding that the order so that a person reenters his or her state of purity and consciousness. Generally, the Yoga process involves eight stages.

- 1.) **Yama** (The five “abstentions”); non-vioence, non-lying, non-civetousness, non-sensuality, and non-possessiveness.
- 2.) **Niyama** (The five “observances”); purity, contnetment, austerity, study, and surrender.
- 3.) **Asana**; literally means “seat”,
- 4.) **Pranayama** (“Disciplining breath”); also interpreted as control of the life force.
- 5.) **Pratyahar** (“Astractoin”); Withdrawal of the sence organs from external objects.
- 6.) **Dharana** (“Concentratoin”); Fixing the sense organs from external objects.
- 7.) **Dhyana** (“Meditiation”); Intense contemplation of the nature of the object of meditation.
- 8.) **Samadhi** (“Liberation”); merging consciousness with the object of meditation.

Yoga recognized that life is not matter only, there is something more to it. Modern scientific thought centered on perceptible being is discovering the contraindications in its understanding. Theory of entanglement tells us that quantum mechanical state of any two objects are in communication even when they are separated in space like manner. We have been taught every particle has a similar anti-partial but if that were so then everything would be annihilated and neutralized by everything anti- everything. Professor Wilczek FA of MIT won 2004 Nobel for telling us about the most powerful force of nature (quantum chromodynamics) that turns off as the particles get close to one another and grows with distance. This is a truly gravitational paradox. Healing of human body deals with many scietific paradoxes. One always wondered if the big bang created an anti-universe.

Paracelsus said “He is not a physician who does not know the invisible, which has no name, no matter and yet its effect”. Yoga helps us deal not only with comprehensible paraboxes but also the invisible. Yoga allows us to harmonize the nuances of body, mind and spirit. It allows discovering the self to heal the self by attaining

an absolute equipoise by integrating our building blocks beyond matter and energy. It heals our five-layered existence of which the physical world is grossest (Annamaya). Next to that are the sheaths invisible, Pranayam (breath energy), Manmoya (mind being), Vijnanamaya (intellect, wisdom) and Anandamaya (Bliss, divinity). Yoga has been shown to minimize complication of surgery, improve patient reported outcomes after surgery, reduce analgesic requirements, reduce hospitalization and expedite recovery<sup>3,4,5</sup>. Prevention is better than cure and yoga is widely recognized as an effective tool in inculcating a healthy lifestyle thus acting as a vaccine against lifestyle related disorders. Apart from preventive and therapeutic, yoga is capable of elevating our abilities. Not only had these set of body disciplining practices help the patient but also the health care worker thus improving his/her efficiency and execution<sup>6</sup>. Even mental disciplining has been shown to improve the performance of surgical procedures<sup>7</sup>. Once again, healthcare is beginning to confront common sense practice that is routine in many other high stake professions” Satava RM<sup>6</sup>. Let us integrate the wisdom of Yoga into medical science. Evidence supports it and I have a strong intuition”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am perennially indebted with gratitude to Late Swami Dhirendera

Barahmachari Ji who took me as a disciple and trained me in Yoga in the year 1980 for the Diploma in Yoga Course.

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