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A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

GIST OF YOJANA

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Shankar IAS Academy™

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I N D E X

YOJANA JUNE 2019

1. YOGA : THE ART OF BEING AND SCIENCE OF WELL BEING	3
2. PROMOTION OF YOGA.....	4
3. YOGA AND MENTAL HEALTH	5
4. YOGA FOR LIFESTYLE CHANGES	6
5. ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE IN INDIA : AN OVERVIEW	7



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1. YOGA : THE ART OF BEING AND SCIENCE OF WELL BEING

What is yoga?

- Yoga is an inner science comprising of a variety of practices and methods through which human beings can achieve a union between the body and the mind to attain self-realization.
- The aim of Yoga practice (sadhana) is to overcome and endure all kinds of sufferings that leads to a sense of freedom in every walk of life with holistic health, happiness and harmony.
- Different philosophies, traditions, lineages and guru - shishya paramparas of Yoga led to the emergence of different traditional schools.
- These include Jnana Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Karma yoga, Patanjali Yoga, Kundalini yoga, Hatha Yoga, Dhyana yoga, Mantra yoga, Raja yoga, Jain yoga, Buuddha Yoga etc.
- Each school has its own approach and practices that lead to the ultimate aim and objectives of Yoga.

How Yoga works as an integrated mind body medicine?

- Cleanses the accumulated toxins through various shuddikriyas and generates a sense of relaxed lightness through Yogic sukshnavyayama (simple micro movements for all joints and ligaments of body).

- Adoption of a Yogic lifestyle with proper nourishing diet, creates positive antioxidant enhancement thus neutralizing free radicals while enabling a rejuvenative storehouse of nutrients packed with life energy to work on anabolic, reparative and healing processes.
- Steadies 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 that generate energy and enhance emotional stability.
- 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 creates psychosomatic harmony.
- Focuses the mind positively on activities being done, enhances energy flow and results in 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.



- 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 Yogic "health insurance" is achieved by normalizing the perception of stress, optimizing the reaction to it and by releasing the pent-up stress effectively through the practice of various Yogic practices.
- Yoga in school and at work places as part of promotion of good health.
 - Yoga in School Curriculum: In order to promote Yoga as a part of school curriculum, yoga Education was made compulsory by National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), a statutory body under Ministry of Human Resource Development, through its 15 Teacher Education programmes.
 - 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 e.g. B.Sc, M.Sc, and Ph.D. programmes in Yoga by constituting an Expert Committee.

2. PROMOTION OF YOGA

What measures were taken to promote Yoga?

- UNESCO inscribed Yoga in the representative- list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: Yoga was inscribed in the UNESCO's list of Intangible cultural Heritage of humanity during the 11th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 2016.
 - Inclusion of Yoga In National Health Policy 2017: In order to leverage a proper healthcare legacy, the National Health Policy 2017 recommended introduction of
- National Eligibility Test (NET) in Yoga has been conducted for Lectureship and Research Fellowship for the first time.
 - Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) under auspices of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) also deputed Yoga teachers to Indian Missions for imparting training to local students and teachers.
 - MEA also provides publicity material including videos, documentaries, coffee table books, instructional manuals on the different aspects of Yoga and yogic practices to Indian Missions for display and distribution.
 - The ICCR signed an MoU with Yunnan Minzu University, China for



establishment of yoga College named "India-China College of Yoga".

- Yoga Olympiad: NCERT has taken the initiative of "YOGA OLYMPIAD" for School Children.
- Yoga training to Central Armed Police Force (CAPF): Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India has introduced Yoga training to Central Armed police Force (CAPF) and more than 1385 Master Yoga Trainers have been trained by MDNIY.
- 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:-
 - (i) Up gradation of exclusive State Government AYUSH Hospitals and Dispensaries including yoga.
 - (ii) Setting up of up to 50 bedded integrated Ayush Hospital including yoga.
 - (iii) Under the flexible components of the scheme of NAM, provision has been made for Grant-in- aid to the Yoga Wellness centers.

3. YOGA AND MENTAL HEALTH

How Yoga and mental health are related?

- Yoga brings about positive health by causing the relaxation of the whole body, slowing down the respiration (making it quiet and deep) and calming the mind, thereby helping in improving attention and concentration.
- It improves awareness of body, emotions and mind; and the flow of healing 'Pranic Life Energy'.
- It increases self-reliance and self confidence, thereby improving the ability to handle stress.
- It improves self-regulation there by helping us take the responsibility of our own health.
- Improvement in dietary habits and facilitating natural emanation of wastes is also an important part of yoga.
- Yoga practice has been reported to help depressive symptoms since a long time.
- It lifts the mood and improves interest in activities, attention / concentration / memory, sleep and appetite.
- It has been found to have effect on the cognitive/ behavioral aspects due to its mindfulness component.
- Research at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences has also shown that the practice of yoga has effects on biological parameters like increasing the parasympathetic tone, reducing cortisol levels and decreasing the neuro - inflammation patients with depression.
- In patients with psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia, yoga practice has been shown to improve socialization, motivation to do activities, occupational functioning, ability to recognize others emotions / feelings, and cognitive abilities.
- Yoga holds promise as a complementary therapy in cases of tobacco, alcohol and



opioid dependence along with routine medical intervention and psychosocial interventions, with effects during both the acute withdrawal phase and long term relapse prevention.

What are the components of Yogic way of Life for positive mental health?

- Ahara (Food) - Mitahara should be practiced.
- The quantity should be enough to fill two quarters of the stomach, another one quarter should be filled with liquid and the remaining quarter (one-fourth) should be left empty for free flow of air.
- Food needs to be eaten with positive state of mind with utmost concentration.
- We need to consume freshly cooked, nutritious, nourishing food in the natural form.]
- Vihara (Relaxation) - Yogic practices of asana, pranayama and meditation relaxes body and mind.
- Sound sleep, recreational activities are also important for relaxation.
- Achara (Conduct) - Positive emotions, positive attitudes, good habits and control on desires help in making us strong, both, individually and socially.
- Yogic principles of Yama (restraint) and Niyama (observance) help to develop control on our desires and emotions and bring about peace and harmony.
- Vichara (Thinking) - Yogic practices like pratyahara and dhyana (meditation) help us in controlling our thoughts and thereby promoting optimism in life.

- Vyavahara (Behavior or actions) - Karma Yoga proposes that we should perform right actions with full dedication without worrying about the results.

4. YOGA FOR LIFESTYLE CHANGES

What is the need for lifestyle changes?

- Physical inactivity is identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality.
- Unhealthy diet was the second biggest factor in India driving most deaths and disability combined, after malnutrition.
- According to World Health Organization, there is no improvement in global levels of physical activity since 2001.
- People with a sedentary lifestyle are twice at risk than the physically active ones.
- Bad lifestyle can raise levels of cortisol secreted in adrenal gland which in turn affect the secretion of dopamine, the mood elevating hormone in the brain.
- Over secretion of cortisol trigger physiological changes such as spikes in blood pressure, heart rate and blood sugar.
- How Yogic practice can help to maintain good health ?
- Prayer cleanses the blockages in the small intestine through brain signals and activates the vibrations in the brain particularly the hypothalamus; increases blood flow to the brain and promotes gamma waves.
- Kriyas perfect autonomous nervous system; balance three doshas (vata-



- uervous system; pita digestive system; Kapha respiratory system); eliminate toxins.
- Surya Namaskar and asanas balance the secretion of hormones (regulates specific human systems).
 - Mudras perfect cerebro spinal fluid to flush out waste products.
 - Pranayama maximizes endurance and removes toxins; cures all diseases; balances earth, water, fire and air elements and activates electrical activity.
 - Bandhas activate central nervous system.
 - Meditation is for the purification of mind; it activates space elements; leads to thoughtless stage; blood flow increases; set right biological clock: genes perfected by activating hypothalamus.
 - Yoga helps to get the qualities of total well-being.

What are the scientific findings on Yoga?

- Yogic practices enhance gray matter for cognition and white matter for communication; Enhance white matter to avoid depression which is the number one reason for ill-health.
- Yogic practices promote Neurogenesis in which stem cells become matured cells.
- Yogic practices improve the responsiveness of immune cells called neutrophils to a bacterial challenge.
- Yoga acts as the natural process of Optogenetics (technique that uses light to erase bad memory and to enhance good ones by controlling Neuron activity).

- Yoga promotes natural thermogenesis (Metabolic process of food and exercise).
- Yogic practices activate the natural process of preventing DNA damage as cells ageing and death is known as Chromatin silencing.
- Natural autophagy (cell recycling) occurs due to yoga.
- Yogic practices help to have more cortical thickness in the left prefrontal cortex of the brain to promote cognitive functions like memory and attention.
- Yogic practices help to form new angiogenic blood vessels in the body; maintains different parts of the body in a stable and balanced way to reverse aging (homeostasis).
- Promotes bio-energetics (transforms energy to the brain and the neurons).

5. ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS OF MEDICINE IN INDIA : AN OVERVIEW

What is the evolution of medicine since ancient times?

- Indian Medicine: Medicine in India originated around 3000 BC, when the practice of Ayurveda is considered to have started.
- 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, Atreya (about 800 BC) is considered as the first great Indian physician and teacher.
- Charaka (200 AD; also written as Iaraka) wrote Charaka Samhita and was the most popular physician of the time.
- Sushruta is referred to as the father of Indian surgery.
- He wrote Sushruta Samhita, a treatise on surgery (between 800 BC and 400AD).
- **Egyptian Medicine:** Egyptian civilization had well-advanced medicine, which is reported to have reached its peak in the days of Imhotep (2800 BC).
- **Chinese Medicine:** There are well-documented records of Chinese medicine since 2700 BC. Some of the medicinal practices of those times are still followed in various forms.
- **Mesopotamian Medicine:** The Codes of Hammurabi, in name of King of Baby Lone, were formulated around 2000 BC in the Mesopotamian civilization to govern the conduct of physicians to guide health practices.
- **Greek Medicine:** Greek Medicine was most evolved between 460 BC-136 BC and Aesculapius (around 1200 BC) and Hippocrates (460-370 BC) were amongst the leaders in Greek Medicine.
- Hippocrates is often termed as "Father of Medicine" and the oath drafted by him guides medical ethics even now.
- **Roman Medicine:** Roman Medicine was more about overall health with focus on disease prevention and control (and not restricted to curing illnesses, as was the predominant feature of some other medicines prevalent at that time or earlier).
- Galen (130-205 AD) was a famous Roman medical teacher, whose teaching lasted till mid of sixteenth century when some recent knowledge on anatomy and physiology emerged.
- Arab Medicine (Unani Medicine): From 500 AD to 1500 AD, Greeco-Roman medical literature was translated into Arabic.
- The local adaptation gave birth to the Unani system of medicines in schools of medicines and hospitals in Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo.
- The period of 800 - 1300 AD is often referred to as the golden period in Arabic medicine.
- Abu Becr (865 AD-925 AD; also known as Rhazes) and Ibn Sina (980 AD-1d37 AD; also known as Avicenna) are known as two leaders of Arab medicine.

What are the alternative systems of medicine in India?

- Ayurveda : It is made up of two words- Ayuh and Veda. Ayuh means life and Veda means knowledge or science.
- Thus "AYURVEDA' in totality means 'Science of life'.
- It incorporates all aspects of life whether physical, psychological, spiritual or social.
- What is beneficial and what is harmful to life, what is happy life and what is sorrowful life; all these four questions



and life span allied issues are elaborately and emphatically discussed in Ayurveda.

- **Yoga:** The concepts and practices of Yoga originated in India about several thousand years ago.
- Its founders were great Saints and Sages.
- The great Yogis presented rational interpretation of their experiences of Yoga and brought about a practical and scientifically sound method within every one's reach.
- 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
- Siddha system : Siddha system of medicine is practiced in some parts of South India especially in the state of Tamilnadu.
- The term 'Siddha' has come from 'Siddhi'- which means achievement.
- Siddhars were the men who achieved supreme knowledge in the field of medicine, yoga or tapa (meditation).
- According to the tradition eighteen Siddhars were supposed to have contributed to the development of Siddha medicine, yoga and philosophy.
- **Unani system:** Unani medicine has its origin in Greece.
- It is believed to have been established by the great physician and philosopher-Hippocrates (460–377 BC).
- The Arabian scholars and physicians under the patronage of Islamic rulers of many Arabian countries have played great role in the development of this system.
- In this system also prime importance is given for the preservation of health.
- **Naturopathy:** Naturopathy 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 also principle of treatment. Naturopathy is a very old science.
- We can find a number of references in our Vedas and other ancient texts.
- The morbid matter theory, concept of vital force and other concepts upon which Naturopathy is based are already available in old texts.
- **Homoeopathy:** 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".
- It was given a scientific basis by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843) in the early 19th century.
- It has been serving suffering humanity for over two centuries and has withstood



the upheavals of time and has emerged as a time tested therapy, for the scientific principles propounded by Hahnemann are natural and well proven and continue to be followed with success even today.

- **Sowa-Rigpa:** “Sowa-Rigpa” commonly known as Tibetan system of medicine is one of the oldest, Living and well documented medical tradition of the world.

- It 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”

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