

Yoga Education

(Bachelor of Education)

Unit 1: Introduction to Yoga and Yogic Practices

Yoga: meaning and initiation

The term Yoga has its verbal root as *Yuj* in Sanskrit. *Yuj* means joining (*Yujyate anena iti Yogah*). Yoga is that which joins. What are the entities that are joined? In the traditional terminology it is joining of the individual self with the universal SELF. It is an expansion of the narrow constricted egoistic personality to an all pervasive, eternal and blissful state of REALITY.

Pātañjala Yoga is one among the six systems of Indian philosophy known as Śaḍdarśanas. One of the great *Rishis* (Seer), Patañjali, compiled the essential features and principles of Yoga (which were earlier interspersed in Yoga Upaniṣads) in the form of 'Sūtras' (aphorisms) and made a vital contribution to the field of Yoga, nearly 4000 years ago (as dated by some famous western historians). According to Patañjali, Yoga is a conscious process of gaining mastery over the mind field (The Citta).

The scope of Yoga as portrayed in the *Bhagavadgītā* and *Upaniṣads* is far more comprehensive. As Swami Vivekananda puts it "It is a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few months or even a few hours of one's bodily existence". In general, there is a growth process due to interactions with nature in all creation. But it may take thousands and millions of years for this natural growth; that is the long, instinctive way in animals. Manas, endowed with discrimination power, conscious thinking faculty, the intellect (*Buddhi*) and well-developed voluntary control systems, aspires to accelerate his growth. Yoga is that systematic conscious process which can compress the process of man's growth greatly.

Sri Aurobindo emphasizes on all-round personality development; at the physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual levels. He means by Yoga a methodical effort towards self-perfection by the development of the potentialities latent in the individual. It is a process by which the limitations and imperfections can be washed away resulting in a Super human race.

Thus, Yoga is a systematic process for accelerating the growth of an individual in his or her entirety. With this growth, one learns to live at higher states of consciousness. Key to this all-round personality development and growth is the culturing of mind.

sufferings. Yoga can be applied in any/every human endeavour – personal, professional, social, family and spiritual.

Basis of Yoga

The basis of Yoga is search for happiness. But we search for happiness out there in the objects of senses. The happiness is right within us. It is in silencing the mind. It is the state devoid of thoughts. It is a state of *Bliss, Freedom, Knowledge* and *Creativity*. The Upaniṣads also propound that this original state of *Silence* is also the causal state of the entire creation. All those who are in search of greater and permanent happiness and bliss, those who seek knowledge, those who want to be totally free and who aspire to

become more and more creative will have one single aim to reach, that is *Silence*, a state with no thoughts! This happens when we tune ourselves to that blissful inner awareness.

Origin and history of development of Yoga

Yoga means the classical Yoga system as set forth by Patañjali in the Yoga Sūtras. Patañjali taught an eightfold (aṣṭāṅga) system of Yoga emphasizing an integral spiritual development including ethical disciplines (*Yama* and *Niyama*), postures (*Āsana*), controlling and harmonizing the breath (*Prāṇāyāma*), control of the senses (*Pratyāhāra*), concentration (*Dhāraṇā*), meditation (*Dhyāna*) and absorption (*Samādhi*). This constitutes a complete and integral system of spiritual training.

However, classical Yoga was part of the Vedic tradition. Patañjali was only a compiler of the teachings at a later period. Yogic teachings covering all aspects of Patañjali Yoga are common in literature prior to Patañjali like in the Purāṇas, the Mahābhārata and the

Upaniṣads. The instigator of the Yoga system is said to be Hiranyagarbha, who represent the creative and evolutionary force of the universe.

Yoga can be traced back to the Ṛgveda itself, the oldest vedic text which speaks about yoking our mind and insight to the light of Truth or Reality. Great teachers of early Yoga include the names of many famous Vedic sages like Vasiṣṭha, Yajñavalkya, and Jaigīśavya. The greatest of the Yogis is always said to be Yogeśvara Krishna himself, the propounder of Bhagavadgītā, which is called as Yoga Śāstra – an authoritative work on Yoga.

Origin of Yoga and the Indus Valley Civilization

The stone seals excavated from the sites of the Indus Valley Civilization (3000 B.C.) depicting figures in yogic postures indicate that Yoga was being practised even during 3000 B.C.

The first indication of body-culture in Yoga is to be traced through the word Āsana (posture) and Prāṇāyāma (the regulation, conservation and control of bio-energy). But since, we are concerned primarily with postures, let us go to its origin. This involves not only how posture training came to be regarded as a physical requisite for Yoga but also how its later development aided the most comprehensive evolution of namely physical training, hygiene, social medicine, and therapeutics.

In the evolution of Āsana and its synthesis, besides the original prayer and meditative poses, certain other postures have also been included which have been found to be definitely useful in the development of the physical and meditative aspects of the individual's personality. A series of dynamic variations has been added to the static Āsanās to enlarge the scope of application and meet the varied requirements.

Yoga has been part of man's activities directed towards higher spiritual achievements in India. The history of Yoga is divided into five categories:

- Vedic period
- Pre-classical period
- Classical period
- Yoga in Medieval Times
- Yoga in Modern Times

Psychological aspects leading to origin of Yoga

There are some psychological reasons which contributed to the origin of Yoga. These reasons could be attributed to: 1. Desire for *Sukha-pravritti* (attainment of happiness) and *Dukha-nivritti* (termination of sorrow and misery) and 2. Curiosity to know about self and the realities of life.

There was a realization that suffering, misery, frustration and the consequent pain were permanent in life, while the enjoyment, if any, was a temporary feature. This realization led the philosophers to gain knowledge about the nature, type and cause of suffering and pain, and also to find out ways that could end them and help in attaining permanent happiness and bliss in life. Consequently, Yoga originated and evolved as a way/means to overcome the pain the suffering and attain permanent bliss in life. Thus, the existence of pain, suffering, misery etc. in life was major psychological reason which helped in the origin of Yoga. Yoga says that suffering is inevitable as long as you are in the state of *Avidya* (ignorance). There are three kinds of suffering (*Tapatrayas*) which are categorized in the Sāṃkhya Karikā.

1. Physical suffering or **Ādi-Bhautika Tapa** which is manifested in physical body and can be caused by troubles/obstacles coming from the external world, such as from wild animals, people, infections etc.
2. Divine or **Ādi-Daivika Tapa** is the suffering caused by coming from extra-sensory world/divine power, natural calamities like earthquake, flood, planet position (grahamandal prabhava) etc.
3. Internal or **Ādhyātmika Tapa** is the trouble/obstacle arising out of one's own body and mind, such as loneliness, depression, stress-related disorders etc.

Vedic period

The ancient texts of Vedas are the oldest scriptures in the world. The Sanskrit word Veda means “knowledge” and *rk* means “praise”. Thus the R̥gveda is a collection of hymns that are in praise of a higher power. Other three Vedas are Yajur Veda (knowledge of Yajña), Sāma Veda (Knowledge of chants), and Atharva Veda (knowledge of Atharva). In Vedic period the means to higher attainment were through Knowledge or revelation from the Universe through meditation. It comprises three Yogas – Mantra Yoga, where the power of mantra, through which the mantra becomes active as a tool of transformation in the mind, Prāṇa Yoga – through Prāṇāyāma which energizes the vital force. Dhyāna Yoga – The word *dhī*’, which means Buddhi or intellect is the root for the term ‘dhyāna’ or meditation. Dhī is the higher and interior portion of the mind (manas), which enables us to perceive the eternal truth. This cultivation of dhī or buddhi, the main faculty of discrimination, is the main characteristic of Yoga, Vedanta and Buddhism. To keep the mind solely on one object is contemplation. "Contemplation is that state in which the tendencies of the concentrated mind begin to flow around one single notion like an uninterrupted stream of oil, and the mental faculties (manas) remain without any outward object." The five characteristics of Dhyāna are: single thought, effortless, slowness, wakefulness, effortless expansion. Any state of mind having these five characteristics can be said to be in Dhyāna.

In the Maitrāyanī Upaniṣad; Yoga is spoken about as: Ṣaḍanga-Yoga – The uniting discipline of the six limbs (*ṣad-aṅga*), as expounded in the Maitrāyanī-Upaniṣad:

- (1) breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), (2) withdrawal of senses (*pratyāhāra*), (3) meditation

to spread the message of Yoga and meditation in the world. They were Yogis, who reveal samādhi to mankind. Guru Gorakṣanātha is thought to have authored several books including: *Gorakṣa Samhitā*, *Gorakṣa Gītā* and *Yoga Cintāmaṇi*.

Yoga in modern times

Integral Yoga or Pūrṇa Yoga by Śrī Aurobindo emphasised surrendering to the Divine and an opening to the Divine Force so that it may work to transform one's being. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, records for the path of Bhakti Yoga and Divine love. To Ramakrishna all religions are revelations of God in His diverse aspects to satisfy the manifold demands of the human mind. One of the greatest contributions of Śrī Ramakrishna to the modern world is his message of harmony of all religions. Swami Vivekananda summarised the Vedānta's teachings as follows:

- Each soul is potentially divine.
- The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, both external and internal.
- Do this either by work (*Karma Yoga*) or worship (*Bhakti Yoga*), or psychic control (*Rāja Yoga*) or philosophy (*Jñāna Yoga*)—by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.
- This is the whole of religion. The doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga or Rāja Yoga

The Yoga of Patañjali is also called Aṣṭāṅga which comprises 8 limbs. These are: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāyāma*, *Pratyahāra*, *Dharā*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samāhi*.

• ***Yamas and Niyamas – The Observances and Restraints in Pātañjala Yoga***
Yoga is more than just a physical discipline. It is a way of life—a rich philosophical path. And the *yamas* (restraints) and *niyamas* (observances) are ten good commonsense guidelines for leading a healthier, happier life for bringing spiritual awareness into a social context. They are for you to think about and ponder over with a rational mind, because Yoga is not about mindlessly accepting externally imposed rules—it is about finding the truth for yourself—and connecting with it.

Yamas

The *yamas* as described in Patañjali's Yoga Sūtra are only five, which are also known as the great universal vows or the *sārvabhauma mahā vratas*, because they are not limited by either class, creed, time or circumstances. They are the guidelines for how we interact with the outer world, the social disciplines to guide us in our relationships with others. These five *yamas* are:

- *Ahiṁsā* (non-violence),
- *Satya* (truthfulness),
- *Asteya* (non-stealing),
- *Brahmacarya* (celibacy), and
- *Aparigraha* (non-covetousness)

According to the Yajñavalkya Samhitā, ahimsā or non-violence is the awareness and practice of non-violence in thought, speech and action. It advocates the practices of compassion, love, understanding, patience, and worthiness.

Patañjali describes truthfulness as: "To be in harmony with mind, word and action, to conduct speech and mind according to truth, to express through speech and to retain it in the intellect what has been seen, understood or heard." A perfectly truthful person is the one who expresses in his speech exactly what he thinks in his mind, and in the end acts according to it.

Non-stealing or *asteya* is the third constituent of the *yamas* of *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*. It upholds forgoing the unauthorized possession of thought, speech and action. *Asteya* stands against covetousness and envy. It advocates the cultivation of a sense of completeness and self-sufficiency in order to progress beyond base cravings.

The Vedas, Smṛtis and Purāṇas all glorify the fourth constituent of celibacy. It is believed to be a behaviour, which brings man nearer to the Divine. This *yama* believes in avoiding indulgence in all sensual pleasures, whether mental, verbal or physical.

The literal meaning of *aparigraha*, the fifth *yama*, is the non-accumulation of worldly objects, caused by covetousness and attachment. The commentator Vyāsa says that this last state of *yama* is attained when one remains totally detached from sensual pleasures of all kinds and so effectively refrains from committing himsā or violence of any sort.

Niyamas

The *niyamas* are the second constituents of *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*. It tells how we should interact with ourselves, our internal world. The *niyamas* are about self-regulation—helping us maintain a positive environment in which to grow. Their practice harnesses the energy generated from the cultivation of the earlier *yamas*. Patañjali names five *niyamas*:

- *Śauca* or purity,
- *Santoṣa* or contentment,
- *Tapa* or austerity,
- *Svādhyāya* or self-education, and
- *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* or meditation on the divine/surrendering to His Will

Śauca implies both external as well as internal purity. In the words of sage Manu, water purifies the body; truthfulness the mind; true knowledge the intellect and the soul is purified by knowledge and austerity. It advocates the practices of intellectual purity, purity of speech and of the body.

The second *niyama* is that of contentment, which is described as not desiring more than what one has earned by his honest labour. This state of mind is about maintaining equanimity through all that life offers. *Santoṣa* involves the practice of gratitude and joyfulness—maintaining calm at all costs. This state of mind does not depend on any external causes.

Austerity, the third *niyama*, is described in Yoga philosophy as power to withstand thirst and hunger, cold and heat, discomforts of place and postures, silent meditation and ritual fasts. It also maintains that the perfect man is he who practices both mental as well as physical austerity.

According to the commentator Vyāsa, self-education or *svādhyāya* consists of scriptural studies. The scripture being, the Vedas and Upaniṣads together with the recitation of the Gāyatri Mantra and the Om mantra.

Commentators describe *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*, the last of the *niyamas*, as the dedication of all our actions, performed either by intellect, speech or body to the Divine. The results of all such actions are by definition, therefore, dependent upon Divine decision. The mortal mind can simply aspire to realize the Divine through dedication, purification, tranquility and concentration of the mind. This Divine contemplation spills over to all aspects of the yogi's life.

The benefits of practising yamas and niyamas

The *yamas* and *niyamas* help in managing our energy in an integrative manner, complementing our outer life to our inner development. They help us view ourselves with compassion and awareness. They help in respecting the values of this life, in balancing our inner growth with outer restraint. In short they help us to lead a conscientious life.

Yamas and *niyamas* are not about right and wrong. *They are about being honest with the true Self.* Living according to these principles are about living our lives in a better way, about moving towards an understanding, about making it possible to 'connect' with the Divine.

- **Yogāsanas**

‘*Sthirasukhamāsanam.*’ (P.Y.S. 2.46)

Āsana is to stay in a position firmly with ease.

That's how Patañjali defines it. The purpose of *āsanas* or *Yogāsanas* or physical postures is to use the body to gain health and the mastery over the mind.

Yogāsanas are practised slowly and the positions are maintained for longer durations. By doing so there is a reduction in the muscle's tone. The main characteristic of this type of practice is **deep relaxation**. There is conservation of energy, reduction of *rājasika* (active) temperament, and reduction of excessive speed of the mind and it leads to stress release. **This is the key feature of āsanas.** *Āsanas* make the mind tranquil – *Manah Praśamana* takes place, which in turn brings harmony in the brain. All the cells in the brain start working in cohesion and the alpha rhythm is induced. It brings a balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system. It also brings a balance in the autonomic nervous system and in the endocrine system, which in turn is responsible for the reduction of stress. **Āsanas can also lead us to a meditative state.** By doing *Yogāsanas* one can gain mastery over one's own desires and this can lead us to overcome worries, anxieties and tensions. It works at the deeper and subtle levels. Physical exercises merely burn out the calories but do make you feel hungry all the time and makes you gain weight in no time. But *Yogāsanas* **reduce this craving of food and hunger** by gaining mastery over mind. **There is physical personality development and leads towards selflessness and promotion of positive health and bliss.**

There are three stages in *Yogāsanas*: *Sthira*, *Cira*, and *Sukha*. *Sthira*, the first step, is to make the *āsanas* more stable. There is a lot of effort involved and it should be done with full concentration and will-power. Once the desired and right position are achieved, the position is maintained without undesirable movements and bending of the body for certain duration of time. Slowly and steadily, the duration is increased for a longer period of time. This is the second stage known as *Cira* which is featured by relaxation. Patañjali has given the trick as how to be steady with relaxation in the form of a sūtra, ‘*Prayatna Śai thīlya*’ (PYS : 2. 47.) *i. e.*, to withdraw oneself from the

effort. That is the reason why the Yoga instructor keeps telling repeatedly to relax

the whole body and enjoy the pain with a smile on the face. One should keep telling to oneself, “Let me relax, let me relax, let me not become tensed up, let me not get anxious”, while doing the āsanas i.e. to relax by withdrawing the effort. The next stage or Sukha is a stage of bliss. Once one starts maintaining the āsanas effortlessly with relaxation for longer duration, the general tendency is that the mind starts wandering which is against the whole objective of āsanas. So, how does one overcome that? Patañjali gives yet another trick: ‘*Prayatna śaithilyānantasamāpatti bhyām* (P.Y.S.: 2.47) i.e. to imagine the vast beautiful blue sky or infinite ocean and allow the mind to stay to resonate, and to tune with the total infinite object. It keeps the mind above dualities, ‘*Tato dvandvānabhighātaḥ*’ (P.Y.S.: 2.48). This brings the stability and the balance, *Samatva*.

So, Yoga starts working from the physical level and moves towards subtler level – the mind. It starts from the body level and moves towards muscular level, then the breathing level, the mind or emotional level to maintain the balance and calmness of mind. By so doing, one achieves the ideal state of body and mind.

Let us now try to understand the various sequencing of āsanas. How do we sequence āsanas? Generally, they are sequenced as Standing postures, Sitting postures, Prone postures and Supine postures, apart from the topsy-turvy postures. All those *Yogāsanas* which are done while standing come under the standing postures and similarly the āsanas which are done in the sitting posture fall under the category of sitting postures and āsanas done by lying down on the abdomen are the prone postures. The āsanas done by lying down on the back are the supine postures. For example, the standing postures include: *Ardhakaṭi cakrāsana*, *Pādahastāsana*, *Ardha cakrāsana*, *Parivratā Trikoṇāsana* etc. In this standing posture, one does the side bending, backward and forward bending, etc. And the sitting postures include: *Vajrāsana*, *Paścimottānāsana*, *Ardhamatsyendrāsana* etc. In the prone postures we have *Śalabhāsana*, *Bhujāṅgāsana*, *Dhanurāsana* etc.

Classification of āsanas

Āsanas can be classified as Cultural, Relaxational and Meditative postures. The *Śavāsana*, the *Makarāsana* (the crocodile postures), *Śītala Tāḍāsana* and *Śītala Dhanurāsana* are called Relaxation postures. While the *Padmāsana*, *Siddhāsana*, the *Vajrāsana* and the *Sukhāsana* are known as the meditative postures. All the remaining postures are called cultural postures. These postures are meant essentially to culture our personality. For example, there are people (B-type) who are very shy and their shoulders droop forward and they have shrunken faces. To bring confidence, to shatter the shyness and to become bold and dynamic, the best prescription is to practise the Cultural Āsanas the back bending postures or the *Cakrāsana*, *Bhujāṅgāsana* (the cobra postures), the *Ardhacakrāsana* (standing bending backward) and *Suptavajrāsana*. On the other hand, there are people who are born A-type – very egoistic and go-getters. And these people always have their shoulders back and heads up and for such people, humility has to be brought in and the front bending postures like *Paścimottānāsana*, *Śaśāṅkāsana*, front bending *Pādahastāsana* are prescribed to overcome the egotistic characters and to develop

the pleasing and blossoming personality. Therefore, every cultural Āsana has been designed to build the personality.

These are some of the basic classification of the *Āsanas* or Yogic postures.

• *Pranayama*

According to Patañjali:

‘*Tasmin sati Āsāpṛāṇayāmaḥ prāṇāyāmaḥ.* (P.Y.S.:2.49)

i.e., to cut the speed of inhalation and exhalation is Prāṇāyāma. Prāṇa is related to breathing and when one starts controlling the breathing rate, one starts Prāṇāyāma. The respiratory system acts voluntarily and as well as involuntarily. When it is voluntary in nature, the breathing is done according to one’s wish. But, when one is not conscious of it, breathing goes on automatically at a particular speed. The normal speed is 15 to 18 breaths (inhalation together with exhalation) per minute. What one does in Prāṇāyāma is to use the voluntary mode to reduce the breathing rate and also to balance the breath between the two nostrils.

Cleansing is the pre-requisite for Prāṇāyāma. There are six cleansing processes mentioned in Haṭha Yoga and recommended to practise before Prāṇāyāma, if there is disharmony in *Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*. These practices help to purify the nāḍīs, channels carrying *prāṇa*, the vital energy. It is very necessary to see that our respiratory system comes under our control.

The next step is **normalizing the breath**. It is done with the practice of sectional breathing. **The process of inhalation and exhalation makes one cycle of breathing**. The normal breathing rate is 15 to 18 per minute. But certain people have shallow breath due to wrong habits and in most of the people suffering from respiratory problems; it is found that the breathing **rate is very fast**.

The simplest Prāṇāyāma is to sit relaxed in any meditative position and breathe in and out slowly. This is *Sulabha Prāṇāyāma*. To progress, feel the cool air entering in and the warm air coming out. Feeling the whole body getting energised while we breathe in and relaxation of the whole body while we exhale slowly helps in further progress. This Prāṇāyāma can be done in standing, sitting or lying down positions and at any time of the day.

Different types of Prāṇāyāma can be classified into four main categories:

1. Balancing Prāṇāyāma
2. Sensitizing Prāṇāyāma
3. Cooling and awareness developing Prāṇāyāma
4. Resonance and laya Prāṇāyāma

In *Nāḍīsuddhi* Prāṇāyāma, inhalation is done slowly through left nostril and exhalation through the right nostril; the next inhalation is done through the right nostril and exhalation now through the left nostril. This makes one cycle. This practice brings balance in the prāṇa and cleanses the prāṇic channels. The Upaniṣads indicate that there are 7.2 million nāḍīs in the body through which the prāṇa flows. One of the five major prāṇas called Vyāna goes through all the 7.2 million nāḍīs. Any imbalance in the prāṇic flow is shown as imbalance between *Idā* (left nostril) and *Piṅgalā* (right nostril). Nāḍīsuddhi Prāṇāyāma brings balance between these two. Therefore, it is also called as the **Balancing** Prāṇāyāma

The next practice is the *Ujjāy / Prāṇāyāma* It is a sensitizing practice. It consists of

partially closing the epiglottis and allowing the air to scrub through the trachea and the wind pipe producing a hissing, frictional sound of scrubbing (as opposed to any vocal sound). It *sensitizes* the region around throat.

The next category of **Cooling Prāṇāyāma** consists of three classical procedures: Śitalī, Sitakārī and Sadanta. In Śitalī Prāṇāyāma, the tongue is folded and protrudes out of the mouth like a beak of a crow. The inhalation is through this beak and exhalation is through the nostrils. One can easily feel the cool air going in and the warm air flowing out. Under the Sitakārī Prāṇāyāma, the tongue is folded backwards into the mouth so that the tip touches the upper palate. Inhalation is done through both sides of the tongue and exhalation is through the nostrils. In Sadanta, the teeth are gently clenched with the tip of the tongue touching the back of the teeth. The inhalation is done through the crevices of the teeth and exhalation through the nostrils.

The next category of **Resonance Prāṇāyāma** starts with Bhrāmarī Prāṇāyāma. Here, inhalation is normal through the nostrils but the sound of a female honey bee is produced while exhaling. It produces a resonance throughout the body bringing a soothing effect and calming the mind. It can be practised by all and in any position: even severe cancer patients can do this while lying down.

• **Pratyāhāra**

The essence of *Pratyāhāra* is to use the senses to gain mastery over the mind. *Pratyāhāra* consists of two words prati and āhāra meaning denying the senses of their food viz., controlling senses from rushing towards their objects and thereby control the mind.

• **Dhāraṇā**

Initially there were several subjects with indefinitely many thoughts floating in the mind. With concentration it is reduced to one subject with several thoughts and then it is brought to one subject and to a single thought. This is the stage of Dhāraṇā. Patañjali says, *Deśabandhaścittasya dhāraṇā* (PYS:3.1) which is binding the mind on a single thought. In this connection we can profitably see the procedure of Trāṭaka. Keeping a burning candle at eye level and concentrating by focussing on the single thought of the tip of the wick of the candle. This is dhāraṇā.

• **Dhyāna**

The next step to Dhāraṇā is Dhyāna or meditation. If Dhāraṇā is focussing, then Dhyāna is de-focussing. Patañjali gives us the concept of Dhyāna as an effortless Dhāraṇā. As opposed to the focussing under Dhāraṇā, there is total de-focussing under Dhyāna effortlessly. This is the seventh limb of Patañjali's aṣṭāṅga Yoga.

• **Samādhi**

The mind in grossest form with a host of random thoughts is brought into a state of *Dhyāna*, first by concentration and then by *Dhāraṇā* (focussing) and then by *Dhyāna* (de-focussing). From here, one goes to the eighth limb called the *Samādhi*: *Samyak ādhīyate iti samādhiḥ* i.e., deep absorption or super-consciousness

Aims and objectives of Yoga

• To remove ignorance (*avidyā* or lack of awareness of reality) from life, egoism (*asmitā*), attachment-detachment (*rāgadvēṣa*), fear of death (*abhīniveśa*), elimination

of the 5 afflictions from life.

- To enter into a state of highest consciousness that manifests in life as *Satya* (Truth), *Bodha* (Pure Consciousness), *Jñāna* (Absolute Knowledge), *Ānanda* (Bliss), and *Prema* (Love).
- Awakening to the real Self.

Yogic practices: Do's and Don'ts

Haṭha Yoga practices bring certain powers (such as clairvoyance and clairaudience) called *siddhis*, about which Svātmārāma cautions the aspirant, that if she/he does not practice with the proper attitude, there is danger that she/he will misuse these powers. (Patañjali calls the *siddhis* worthless and a hindrance to the true goal of Self-realization). Svātmārāma says that practice has to be done without thinking of its fruits, but with steadfast attention, living a chaste life and moderation of food. One should avoid "bad company, proximity to fire, sexual relations, long trips, and cold baths in the early morning, fasting, and heavy physical work". Yoga cannot be experienced "by wearing Yoga garments, or by conversation about Yoga, but only through tireless practice". Through the practice of *Haṭha Yoga*, the body and the mind are refined and purified, and the disciple becomes worthy of acceptance by the master, to be freed from bondages. Ensnared by the results, one may start over-doing Yoga practices. Deep sensitivities may sometimes increase the selfishness of man. Unless precautions are followed, one may end up in disasters. Yoga could become hazardous.

‘*Na haṭhāt na balāt*’, ‘Not by excessive brutal pursuits, not by force’ is the formula for quick progress. It is an intelligent management, a skilful process that hastens growth. This is the guideline in Yoga.

The streams of Yoga

The human personality can be divided broadly into four fundamental categories: emotional, active, intuitive and volitional. Patañjali has clearly understood this fact that each person has a different temperament and inclinations according to predominance of one or more of these categories. He therefore knew that the yogic path had to be designed to suit the specific characteristics of an individual. Therefore, he suggests: *Bhakti Yoga* for those who are emotionally and devotionally inclined (refer to 1:23; 2:1; 2:23, 2:45; etc.).

Jñāna Yoga for those who are intuitive by nature. He recommends reflection and enquiry into the real meaning of AUM (1:27-29) and also explains much of Sāṅkhya philosophy (2:20, 21 etc.) as a means to higher realization. He also makes it clear that all mental knowledge is limited.

Rāja Yoga or *Pātañjala Yoga* for those with strong willpower; this is the theme of the entire scripture.

Karma Yoga for those who are active by nature, though is not particularly mentioned, but certainly it is implicit in many Sūtras. For example, the *yamas* and *niyamas* signify the karma Yoga in daily actions and duties. Karma Yoga is also implicit in the verses on bhakti Yoga.

Patañjali knew that success in Bhakti Yoga leads automatically to success in Rāja Yoga; Jñāna Yoga leads to perfection of Rāja Yoga, and so forth. He knew that a person on the

path of Yoga must integrate his whole being. Petty-mindedness and egoism have to be removed by any available method. All negative and limiting functions of the mind have to be erased.

The stopping of the *vṛttis* (mental modifications) can be achieved by *vairāgya* (detachment) and *abhyāsa* (practice of Yoga). (1:12)

This statement includes all paths and techniques of Yoga. None are excluded. They all lead to success in Yoga.

Karma Yoga

The 4 major laws of *Karma Yoga* are described in Bhagavadgītā so that you can enjoy every moment of your work totally free from all stresses.

- a) work with a sense of duty;
- b) work without getting intensely attached (focussed attention) to the work;
- c) never allow the anxieties about the results interfere with your mind during the currency of the job;
- d) accept failure and success with equanimity.

Using these techniques of *Karma Yoga* we learn the art of ‘working in relaxation’ with total ‘Awareness in Action’. Not losing sight of the innate bliss and poise, the path of work teaches us to interact in society judiciously and effectively. To retain this objectivity and attunement to a clearer and more subtle state of mind, as a judge does while hearing the powerful arguments of both the parties, is the trick of karma Yoga. The

regular release of stress & tension helps us to spread the insight throughout the action phase. Application of the *Karma Yoga* techniques help to reduce the accumulation of tension and stress and thus makes the possibility of a tension free life, a reality.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti signifies both devotion and loving attachment to the Divine. Strictly the word denotes 'participation' (from the verbal root *bhaj* "to participate, to partake"). The yogi on the devotional path literally participates in the Divine through surrender, devotion, service, worship and finally is drawn into mystical union with the Divine.

Bhakti has been an all-pervasive concept in the philosophical and religious traditions of India. Nārada Bhakti Sūtra (NBS) is a premier treatise on the nature of bhakti that emphasizes the connection between bhakti and prema and treats the age-old enigma about the nature of love in an original fashion.

Bhakti softens the heart and removes jealousy, hatred, lust, anger, egoism, pride and arrogance. It infuses joy, divine ecstasy, bliss, peace and knowledge. All cares, worries and anxieties, fears, mental torments and tribulations entirely vanish. The devotee is freed from the wheel of births and deaths. He attains the immortal abode of everlasting peace, bliss and knowledge.

The path of *bhakti* is prevalent in this entire universe and it is for all the souls of this universe. It remains the same in all times and it is directly related to the Soul and the Super Soul, it is above caste, creed, sect and nationality. Bhakti is the pure love of your heart that longs to meet the Divine beloved of your Soul in this very lifetime.

Rāja Yoga

We all possess that “will” power as a manifestation of that freedom at the mind level.

‘*Man is the maker of his own destiny*’ . In today’s time if we are suffering from various problems, suffering from ill health, tensions and stresses; these are of our own making. Therefore, it is for us to change ourselves; to overcome these miseries and grow to reach higher states of bliss, creativity and freedom.

When we recognize this freedom within us and make a resolve to develop ourselves towards higher levels of consciousness, the journey begins. As we journey further difficulties and hurdles crop up at every step. Techniques needed to systematically channelize our will-power to solve these problems form the core of *Rāja Yoga*. The steps are discussed in detail under *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*.

Jñāna Yoga

Jñāna Yoga is the path of intellect and the path of analysis. This is also the Yoga of wisdom and has its own methodology. The methodology centers around hearing called as *śravaṇa*, recalling & analyzing called as *manana*, dwelling & meditating is *nididhyāsana*. The age of science has made man a rational being. Intellectual sharpness is imminent. Analysis forms the tool. The path of **philosophy** (*Jñāna Yoga*) is apt for the keen intellectuals and is centered around the analysis of ‘happiness’, the vital contribution of the Upaniṣads.

The contemplation start dwelling on those truths which has been enunciated and which is logically accepted, this is *sādhanā* or deep meditation. This is also the deep contemplation of the *Jñāna Yoga*. As we go deeper and deeper into the meditation, we

start unravelling higher and higher dimensions and we come to that conclusion that ‘I am that blissful awareness’ or infinite consciousness’. This is *Jñāna* or realization.

The two schools of Yoga: Rāja Yoga and Haṭha Yoga

Patañjali’s Yoga is *Aṣṭāṅga – Yoga* or *Yoga* with eight limbs. This *Yoga* deals with the discipline of the mind and its psychic powers. *Haṭha Yoga* emphasises the methods of bodily control and regulations of breath.

The culmination of *Haṭha Yoga* is *Rāja Yoga*. A progressive *Sādhanā* (self-effort; spiritual practice) in *Haṭha Yoga* leads to the accomplishment of *Rāja Yoga*. *Haṭha Yoga* is a ladder to ascend to the stage or summit of *Rāja Yoga*.

Purification of the body and control of breath is the direct aim of *Haṭha Yoga*. The *ṣaṭ-karmas* or six acts of purification of the body are *Dhauti* (cleansing of the stomach), *Basti* (natural form of enema), *Neti* (Cleansing of the nostrils), *Trāṭaka* (unwinkingly gazing at some object), *Nauli* (churning of the belly) and *Kapālabhāti* (removal of the phlegm through a certain kind of *Prāṇāyāma*). [*Prāṇāyāma* = regulation and restraint of breath]. The body is rendered healthy, light, strong and steady by the practice of *Āsanas*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Bandhas* and *Mudrās*. The achievement of physical fitness and worldly power, is a method to prepare the student for the rigors of *Rāja Yoga*.

Yogic practices for healthy living

We may sum up the true nature of Yoga as under:

- *Yoga* is science and art of realizing the Absolute i.e. the ultimate reality or supreme consciousness.

- Holistic living i.e. physical, mental, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual wellbeing.
- Science of health, harmony and happiness i.e. (“HHH”), where health, harmony and happiness denote.

Health (*Holistic Health*) – Physical, emotional, mental, intellectual, social and spiritual well-being.

Harmony – Inner harmony (body, mind and emotion) and outer harmony (social, professional)

Bliss – Permanent state of happiness or the state of bliss or the ānandamaya koṣa – this is the stage of self-realization.

We have understood that *Yoga* in its general methodology for the growth of man to divine heights includes techniques useful for therapeutic applications in making man healthier.

Yoga is a process of all round personality development by

- i) deep relaxation at muscular level brought out by *āsanas*,
- ii) slowing down of breath and maintaining balance at prāṇic level brought out by *Prāṇāyāma* and breathing practices,
- iii) increasing creative and will powers at mental level brought about by meditation,
- iv) sharpening the intellect and calming down the mind at intellectual level by notional correction and listening to discourses (*Jñāna Yoga*),
- v) enhancing the happiness in life and equipoise at emotional level brought about by *bhajanās*, *dhūnās* and devotional sessions (*Bhakti Yoga*),
- vi) manifesting the innate divinity in man in all aspects of life brought about by following the rules of *Karma Yoga*.

Integrated Yoga Module for Healthy Living (60 mins.)

Practice Practice Rounds Duration

No.

Breathing Practice

Hands stretch breathing 3×3 2 min.

Ankle stretch breathing 5 1 min.

Rabbit breathing 5 1 min.

Śaśāṅkāsana breathing 5 1 min.

Instant Relaxation Technique

(IRT) - 1 min.

Loosening Exercises

Jogging - 2 min.

Forward and backward bending 10 20 sec.

Side bending 10 20 sec.

Twisting 10 20 sec.

Pavanamuktāsana Kriyā 5×2+10+10 2 min.

Quick Relaxation Technique

(QRT) - 2 min.

Sūryanamaskāra 3 2 min.

Yogāsana

Standing Postures

Ardhakati Cakrāsana both sides 1+1 min.

Trikonāsana both sides 1+1 min.
Pārivṛtta Trikoṇāsana both sides 30 sec. each

Sitting Postures

Paścimottānāsana - 1 min.

Uṣṭrāsana - 1 min.

Vakrāsana or both sides 1+1 min.

Ardha Matsyendrāsana

Prone Postures

Bhujāṅgāsana 1 min.

Śalabhāsana 1 min.

Supine Postures

Halāsana - 30 sec.

Cakrāsana - 30 sec.

Deep Relaxation Technique (DRT) - 7 min.

Preparatory Practices for Prāṇāyāma

Cleansing breath 40-100 1 min.

(Kapālabhāti Kriyā)

Vibhāgīya Prāṇāyāma 3×4 2 min.

Prāṇāyāma

Sūrya Anuloma Viloma Prāṇāyāma 5 1½ min.

Nāḍīsuddhi Prāṇāyāma 5 3 min.

Śīṭali or Sadanta Prāṇāyāma 5 1.5 min.

Bhrāmarī Prāṇāyāma - 1.5 min.

Nādānusāndhāna Prāṇāyāma 3×4 3.5 min.

Devotional Songs - 5 min.

Meditation - 5 min.

Total 60 minutes

Āsanas

• ***Sarvaṅgāṣana***

Source: Source is unknown but tradition is old.

This is a further improvement of

Viparītakaraṅga.

Technique in brief

Take supine position. Raise both the legs together slowly, reaching upto 90 degree, maintain for a while. Take legs towards the head by pressing the hands on the ground and lifting the buttocks. Balance and lift the hands to support the buttocks. Slowly push the buttock and the back with hands in order to bring the legs, back and shoulders in one line. Continue the support of hands at

the back. Finally, the chin should be placed at the jugular notch. Come back in the reverse order, slowly.

Do's and Don'ts

Avoid undue pressure on the palms and don't give jerk to raise the body.

Not to do beyond the capacity if one is suffering from cardiac complaints.

Benefits

Promotes enriched amount of blood circulation in the head.

This posture improves the functional activities of the thyroid and the Para-thyroid by increasing the blood circulation to this organ. In turn, these glands promote the normal functioning of many vital organs of the body and stabilize /regulate the metabolic process.

• *Dhanurasana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā II:18 and H.P.I:25

Technique in brief

Lie prone on the floor chin resting on the floor and arms placed all along the body. Fold the legs at the knee and catch the ankles, slowly raise the thigh, simultaneously, raise the head, chest while resting the body on the abdomen. Retain the position for a few seconds then come down to original position and relax.

Do's and Don'ts

Try to imitate the shape of a bow.

Initially knees can be kept apart.

Don't give a jerk.

Benefits

This posture is helps to makes the spine and back muscles flexible.

It is also beneficial to removes Constipation, Digestive system disorders.

• *Bhadrasana*

Source: Haṭha Pradipika I:53

Technique in brief

Sit in *Daṭṭhasana*, stretching both the legs together in front, hands by the side of the body, palms resting

on the ground. Backbone should be erect.

Fold both the legs (first right and then left) slowly at knees and join both the soles with each other under the scrotum. Form a finger lock and grasp the fingers around the toes. Legs should reach under the perineum and lower the knees gently until they touch the floor.

Do's and Don'ts

Waist and neck should remain erect. Stretching in root of the inner thighs is important.

Benefits

- It helps to bring about remarkable flexibility of the hip, knee and ankle joints and thus helps prevent injuries.
- It relieves tension in the sacral and coccygeal regions of the spine.
- This is very good posture for lumbar region and for an enhanced flexibility in hip, knee and ankle joints.

- Muscles of thighs, pelvic and groin have a good stretch and hence become healthy.
- This pose expands the tissues, nerves of the pelvic region.
- *Bhadrasana* strengthens the muscles of the groin and the pelvis.

• Padmasana

Source: Hathapradīpikā I:45

This is a meditative posture.

Technique in brief

Take a sitting position in Dandāsana. Fold right leg at knee and with the help of hands catch the right ankle and place the foot firmly on the left thigh. Similarly, fold the left leg at the knee and place the foot on the right thigh.

Hands should be in *Jyesthina Mudra* on the respective knees while eyes remaining closed.

Do's and Don'ts

In the final posture spine must be erect. Before practicing Padmāsana it is advisable to practice Ardhapadmāsana.

Do not apply undue force to take the posture.

Do not practice if stiff pain.

Benefits

Pelvic blood supply is promoted affecting beneficially the organs of that area. This posture helps to promote better concentration due to the triangular base.

• ***SiAhasana***

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā – I:51, 52

Technique in brief

Sit in Vajrāsana, little by little lift the buttocks and place the legs crosswise like a scissor and sit on it. Place both the hands on the respective knees and spread the fingers. Take out the tongue, as much as, possible with exhalation from the mouth and gaze in between the eyebrows. Maintain the posture for a while and release the posture in a reverse order.

Do's and Don'ts

Keep the hands straight and take out the tongue, as much as, possible.

Benefits

It is highly beneficial in the tonsillitis condition. It also helps to remove sluggish nature of the tongue.

• ***Supta-vajrāsana***

Source: Unknown, but traditional is old.

Technique in brief

Sit in Vajrāsana. Recline slowly back from the waist with the help of elbows till the head, shoulders and back touches on the floor. While making the arms crossed make a pillow and place it under the head. Keep the knees together on the floor.

Do's and Don'ts

Perform slowly in case of stiff ankles and knee joints problem. Avoid this practice in slip disc case and in knee-pain. Don't perform beyond your capacity. Special care is to be taken of the ankles as they are strained intensely during the asana.

Benefits

This posture is very useful in Asthma and other respiratory problems. Due to a stretch

on the front portion of the thoracic region, the chest muscles become healthy, strong and flexible.

Mobilization of hips and back improves.

A great stretch is applied in the front portion of the body, especially on recti muscles and the abdominal wall. It also affects the visceral organs in a positive way.

Breaks the belt of fats around the abdomen. The waist becomes slim.

Helps to improve the peristaltic movement of the intestine.

• *Jānuśīrāsana*

Source: Unknown, this is simple and preparatory practice of Paścimottānāsana.

Technique in brief

Sit straight, stretching the legs in front. Bend the right knee and keep the right heel against the perineum. Keep right sole inside the left thigh. While stretching the spine, slowly bend forward. Catch hold of the left big toe with both the arms. Extend the hands further and finally catch the wrist of one hand.

Bend forward from the lower spine with exhalation. Try to touch the chin or chest to the knee. Do the same with the other side.

Do's and Don'ts

Open the chest maximum.

Do not bend the knee.

Do not bend forward from the upper spine.

Benefits

This posture helps to strengthen abdominal muscles, hence, relieves constipation, Dyspepsia, as well as, tones up liver and spleen.

Removes possibility of Sciatica.

Tones and activates kidneys.

Good for people suffering from prostate enlargement.

• *Pādahastāsana*

Source: Not known but this asana has come through tradition.

Technique in brief

Stand erect, while keeping legs together and hands by the sides of the thighs.

Slowly, bend forward and try to place the palms, with fingers pointing forward, on the floor or either side of the legs.

Place the forehead between the knees.

Do's and Don'ts

One suffering from heart complaints, acidity should not practice it.

Benefits

It is beneficial in indigestion, stiffness of spine and hip joints.

Bandha

• ***Uḍḍīyāna***

Source: Haṭṭhapradīpikā III: 56

Technique in brief

Uḍḍīyāna is a Yogic exercise for raising the Diaphragm. This practice is called Uḍḍīyāna because the Diaphragm is made to fly up from its original position and held very high in the Thoracic cavity.

Stand upright with heels a foot apart from each others. Feet are turned a little outward and legs are slightly bent in the knee-joint. Rest hands on the knees and bend forward. Completely relax the muscles and proceed to give an upward push to the whole trunk

Do's and Don'ts

Uḍḍīyāna is always to be practised with an empty stomach.

A beginner should not make more than three attempts a day.

As this practice puts a high pressure on the heart, people suffering from heart complaints should not take to it.

Benefits

It tones up the spinal column, back muscles and recti muscles. This pull on the back side is supplemented on the abdominal side by an upward and inward push of the rectus abdomens.

The goal of all Yogic teaching is, how to concentrate the mind, how to discover its hidden facets, how to awaken the inner spiritual faculties.

Kriyās (Satkarma)

Śuddhi or 'Śodhana' is a very important concept in *Yoga* viz- *Śauca*, *Nāḍīśuddhi*, *Ghaṭāśuddhi*, *Cittaśuddhi* are some of the well-known terms used for representing the concept of 'Śodhana'. Literally translated 'Śodhana' means an internal cleansing or a purification. But in a wider sense of the term it also includes conditioning or strengthening.

This idea of *śodhana* is very well expressed in *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhita* as follows:

“Just as an unbaked earthen pot disintegrates in water, so also is the case of the body. Therefore, bake the body in the fire of Yoga so that it is purified and strengthened” .

Benefits

Ṣaṭ Kriyās have powerful effects within both the physical and energetic bodies (*Koṣas*) and have a dynamic impact on the *Doṣas* – (*Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*). “Practitioners of *Prāṇāyāma* resort to *ṣaṭkarmas*.”

If one suffering from the imbalance of *tridoṣa* (*Fat*, *Mucus* and *Vāta*) should undergo

purification of the body by resorting to the cleansing processes. As per the *Haṭhapradīpikā* the text recommends that if three *doṣas* (*tridoṣa*) are in a state of equilibrium then there is no need to practice them.

- ***Vamana dhauti***

Source: *Haṭha Pradīpikā* declares this practice as ‘*Gajakaraṇī*’. *Vamana Dhauti* is similar like ‘*Gajakaraṇī*’. (H.P.II:26)

Technique in brief

Take one liter of lukewarm water, add one spoon of salt. While sitting properly, drink the lukewarm salty water fast about four or five glasses of water till it comes up to the throat. Then lean forward, while keeping the body, as horizontal as, possible and insert the middle and index fingers of the right hand as far back into the throat, until, all the water is got out of the stomach.

Do's and Don'ts

One suffering from high blood pressure should avoid this practice.

Benefits

Vamana process brings out the impurities in the upper alimentary canal and the stomach i.e. acid, phlegm and bile.

- ***Trāṭaka***

Source: *Haṭhapradīpikā* II:32

Technique in brief

In *Trāṭaka* one's has to sit at least one meter apart and gaze at the static flame continuously until there are tears in the eyes. Don't blink the eyes. On an average it takes 5-7 mins. to evidence tears. Gently, close the eyes after tears appear.

Do's and Don'ts

Do not give much effort and strain to eyes.

Do not practice in front of bright sunlight. It can damage retina.

Avoid an over practice of *Trāṭaka*. Do not be too insistent on tears.

Benefits

The eyes become clear and bright. This practice also helps to calms, stills and focuses the mind, developing concentration and will power.

Prāṇāyāma

- ***Sūryabhedana Prāṇāyāma***

Source: *Haṭhapradīpikā* II:49

Technique in brief

Inhale as per the technique of *Prāṇāyāma* through the right nostril and exhale through the left nostril.

Do's and Don'ts

In *Sūryabhedana Prāṇāyāma*, inhalation is always through the right nostrils followed by exhalation through left nostrils. Should be preferably practised during winter season only.

Benefits

It brings about a homeostatic equilibrium and a humoral balance within the body, thus influencing all Psycho-physiological functions favourably.

• ***Candrabhedana Prāṇāyāma***

Technique in brief

Inhale, as per the technique of *Prāṇāyāma*, through the left nostril and exhale through the right.

Do's and Don'ts

In *Candrabhedana Prāṇāyāma*, inhalation is always through the left nostril, followed by exhalation through the right. It should be, preferably, practiced during summer season only.

Benefits

It helps to bring a homeostatic equilibrium and a humoral balance within the body.

• ***Bhrāmarī Prāṇāyāma***

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II:68

Technique in brief

In this *Prāṇāyāma*, while inhaling a sound is to be produced like the humming of a male bee, while exhaling, a sound should be like that of humming of a female bee. Inhalation and exhalation both are to be done through both the nostril.

Do's and Don'ts

Follow general hints for *Prāṇāyāma*.

Benefits

This *Prāṇāyāma* helps to eliminate horrific thought or wave from the brain and give effective calmness to the mind and nervous system. The function of the thyroid gland improves. While practicing this *Prāṇāyāma* heart gets gladness and joy.

• ***Bhasrikā Prāṇāyāma***

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II:67

Technique in brief

According to tradition, first go for 20 strokes of forceful Kapalabhāti, and then immediately after that, one round of *Sūryabhedana Prāṇāyāma* with *Kumbhaka*. This becomes one round of *Bhasrikā Prāṇāyāma*.

(**Note:** *Kumbhaka* is a very advance practices in *Prāṇāyāma*, hence, avoid the *Kumbhaka* phase).

Do's and Don'ts

Sit straight and open the chest for proper strokes.

Do not go beyond the capacity.

Benefits

Improves heart and lungs capacity, so good for bronchial asthma.

Improves blood circulation throughout the body.

Tones up the abdominal muscles, removes lethargy.

Śitalī Prāṇāyāma (tongue hissing)

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II: 57

Technique in brief

During inhalation, curl up both edges of the tongue so that it forms a kind of tube.

Breathe in through this tube.

Do's and Don'ts

Do the practice only in the summer season?

Benefits

This *Prāṇāyāma* helps to destroy diseases like glandular enlargement, helps in disorders of the spleen, liver, and bile. It also helps to regulate hunger and thirst

Unit 2: Introduction to Yogic Texts

Historicity of Yoga as a discipline

Though Yoga as a subject of study seems one subject, but in fact it has huge proliferations and trends developed over a long period of time in the spiritual history of India, for example, *Rāja Yoga* or *Astanga Yoga*, *Ha tha Yoga*, *Bhakti Yoga*, *Japa Yoga*, *Karma Yoga*, *Jñāna Yoga*, *Laya Yoga* and the like. There could be certain points of difference among them in application of a method of practice, yet the sole objectives remain identical. It is predominantly a spiritual system. Despite this, it does not overlook the mundane realities of human life and his place in the society and environment, that is, the surroundings. More importantly, it accepts quite well the need of a human being to remain healthy at both mental as well as physical planes.

In the present times there is a strong surge for the demand of Yoga all across the globe. It is so because of various reasons. Most prominent being stress. Excessive level of stress has negative bearing on the health of an individual. To resolve the issue of stress and its bad impact, large number of people is turning towards Yoga.

Therefore, it will be of great help to know what the original texts of Yoga have to say about Yoga as a science. What is its world-view? How does it view a human being in the midst of the ever-changing circumstances? What suggestions does it offer for building up a safe life style? What code of conduct will bring personal peace and social harmony?

To know about all such issues and many more, one need to study the traditional texts of Yoga. Some of the published texts of Yoga are noted below along with a brief outline on each of them.

Classification of Yoga and Yogic texts

On a broader scale of classification, Yoga is of two varieties. One, the *Yoga of Patañjali* as discussed in his *Yogasūtra* and the other, the *Haṭha Yoga* on which there are many texts.

Yogasūtra of Patañjali

It is authored by the sage Patañjali. It is in the form of Sūtras (most condensed form of literature, a rare ancient Indian style of writing). It has 196 *Sūtras* (aphorisms) divided in four *Pādas* (chapters). In this most precised form, the sage Patañjali puts forth the essential philosophical ideals and principles of Yoga. In its style of presentation, it is a marvel. Yoga Sūtra of Patañjali stands alone as the most authoritative book on Yoga. The four Pādas are: *Samādhi Pāda*, *Sādhana Pāda*, *Vibhūti Pāda* and *Kaivalya Pāda*. The first section deals with the fundamental nature of Yoga and some of its techniques. It tries to answer the question, ‘What is Yoga?’ The state of *Samādhi* forms the essence of Yoga. Therefore, the discussion of this section culminates in *Samādhi*. This chapter also turns the spotlight on the nature of human mind (*citta*) and all its fluctuating states (*vṛttis*).

The second chapter initiates a discussion on the nature of *Kleśas* (afflictions) and makes an effort to find a solution to human sufferings. It raises a question, ‘Why should one

practise Yoga?’ It provides a masterly analysis of human life and its conditions. In this section of this book eight *Aṅgas* (components) or set of practices are presented which are *Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. The first five of these eight components are called as *Bahiraṅga Yoga* or Yoga of external nature. These five may be known as preparatory in nature. The last three components make the *Antaraṅga Yoga* since they deal with the core of self. Practice of *Bahiraṅga* makes one ready to take up *Antaraṅga Yoga* wherein *Samādhi* is included. This chapter prepares an aspirant on such grounds as mental, physical, emotional and moral.

The third section is *Vibhūti Pāda*, the first part of which presents elaboration on *Antaraṅga Yoga*, the last three components of *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*. These higher techniques unfold the mysteries of Yogic life. Supernatural Powers (*Vibhūtis* or *Siddhis*) are realized. Second part of this *Pāda* gives details on *Siddhis*.

Kaivalya Pāda is the last chapter of this book. It delves deep into the philosophical problems related to study and practice of Yoga. It also deals with essential nature of mind, perception of the world, nature of human desire and how the desires cause conditioning and bondage. How the state of liberation (*Kaivalya*) may be realized and also what may arise out of such a state of Pure Consciousness are also made clear. Study of Yoga Sūtra makes a demanding one. It obviously caters to highly elevated mindset. A great lot of focus and unwavering perseverance are primary prerequisites. Therefore, one is advised to take up one or two *Sūtras* for repeated study. Commentaries available in modern languages are quite helpful. Grasping of the essence of the *Sūtras* at a time is important rather than speeding up for completing the book.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

yama-niyama-āsana-prāṇāyāma-pratyāhāra-dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhayo ’ ṣṭāvaṅgāni
P.Y.S. 2.29

Here follows a brief understanding on each of the eight components of Yoga. For a comprehensive view of these limbs component you can refer to section 2.5 of this unit:

i) Yama: It has *Ahimsā, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha* as its components.

Ahimsā: non-violence, not to cause harm to anyone by deed, speech or even thought.

Satya: truthfulness, sincerity in all kinds of dealings.

Asteya: non-stealing, not to take a thing which does not belong to oneself. It means honesty in all human conduct and behaviour also.

Brahmacharya: sexual continence and devotion to Brahma.

Aparigraha: attitude of non-hoarding. To avoid all intention of overpossessiveness.

These are to be really implemented in life to create a strong moral foundation for further yogic training. *Yamas* are practices of self-restraint. These are also called as *Mahāvratas*, the great universal vows.

ii) Niyama: It includes *Śauca, Santoṣa, Tapah, Svādhyāya* and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*.

Śauca: purity, cleanliness, both internal and external.

Santoṣa: contentment, overcoming greed and avarice.

Tapah: austerity, self-discipline, both physical and mental. It also stands for various tough practices of Yoga and asceticism which result into inner purity.
Svādhyāya: study of the sacred scriptures and contemplate on the contents therein. It also may mean deep contemplation or to enquire into the questions such as ‘who am I’, ‘what I am here for?’, ‘where am I heading towards?’.
Īśvarapraṇidhāna: surrender to the will of the Supreme Self – God

iii) Āsana: It refers to practice of physical postures to bring about stability of the body and mind.

iv) Prāṇāyāma is related to techniques of breathing so as to gain stability of breathing and also to render breathing subtle and prolonged.

v) Pratyāhāra: It means willful withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects.

vi) Dhāraṇā: This practice is concerned with to concentrating the mind on one object for desirable length of time in order to develop good one-pointedness.

vii) Dhyāna: It means uninterrupted focus of mind towards a given object in contemplation for quite a long duration.

viii) Samādhi: It means merging in the state of pure consciousness or to transcend the differences of seer, seen and seeing (*draṣṭā, dṛśya* and *darśana*).

Hatha Yoga texts

In the following section we will narrate some of the significant classical texts on Haṭha Yoga:

1) Haṭhapradīpikā

There are a few versions of *Haṭhapradīpikā* in content as well as extent if we go by manuscripts under the authorship of *Svātmārāma*. However, there are two prominent published versions available.

a) *Haṭhapradīpikā* published by *Kaivalyadhama*, Lonavla. It has about 400 verses spread over 5 chapters.

b) *Haṭhapradīpikā* published by The Lonavla Yoga Institute, 2011. It has ten chapters. It has about 650 verses. It has additional chapters which discuss the topics of *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna*, *RājaYoga*, *Kālañjāna* and *Videhamukti*. This seems to be a comprehensive text.

The book is full of host of techniques of Yoga for practice. It is one of the most widely read text on *HaṭhaYoga*. A few aspects of Yoga as mentioned in *Haṭhapradīpikā* are given below:

According to Siddha Yogis of Nātha cult, human body is made of five basic elements viz. pṛthvī, ākāśa, vāyu, agni, and jala. It emphasizes six Aṅgas (limbs) of Haṭha Yoga, which are: *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyāhāra*, *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*, and recommended and non-recommended food for Yogi is also given.

Āsanas such as *Siddha*, *Padma*, *Matsyendra* etc. as physical postures for physical

wellbeing are described.

Ṣaṭkarmas namely *Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trāṭaka, Nauli* and *Kapālabhāṭi* are described for cleansing away the toxins of the body.

For further purification of the Nāḍīs, various techniques of breathing are described.

These are eight **Kumbhakas**: *Sūryabhedana, Ujjāyī, Śītkāra, Śīṭalī, Bhasrikā, Bhrāmarī, Mūrchā* and *Kevala*.

According to this text, there are ten *Mudrās* such as *Mahāmudrā, Mahābandha* etc.

It describes three Bandhas which are *Jālandhara, Uḍḍīyāna* and *Mūla*.

Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, and human traits (positive and negative emotions) are also described.

Then comes *RājaYoga* which is a discipline leading to technique of *Samādhi*. It is union of *Jīvātmā* and *Paramātmā*. It is attained through practice of higher techniques of *Prāṇāyāma*. For this *Śāmbhavī* or *Khecarī Mudrā* are also practiced.

Nādānusandhāna or hearing of mystical internal sound is described for achieving the state of *Laya*. Hearing of various internal mystical or non-frictional sounds decides the four states (Avasthās) of Yoga which are *Āraṃbha, Ghaṭa, Paricaya* and *Nispatti*.

Kālajñāna: There are certain typical indications in the forces of nature which may foretell the ensuing time of a Yogī's passing away. By knowing this, he can decide to leave the body.

Mukti (spiritual liberation) can be of two types, *Jīvan Mukti* (attainment of liberation while living) and *Videha Mukti* (liberation after death).

2) *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā*

Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā is another valuable book of Haṭha Yoga, which describes many techniques of Haṭha Yoga practices.

Unlike *Haṭhapradīpikā* wherein *HaṭhaYoga* is advocated, this text does not use the word HaṭhaYoga instead 'Ghaṭastha Yoga'. It is in the form of a talk between *Gheraṇḍa* the Master with his student *Chañḍakapāli*. It is also called Saptang Yoga.

The seven organs of Ghaṭastha Yoga are: -

- Ṣaṭ karma
- Āsana
- Mudrā
- Pratyāhāra
- Prāṇāyāma
- Dhyāna
- Samādhi

There are six Kriyās forming 13 Dhautis, 2 Bastis, 1 Neti, 1 Trāṭaka, 1 Nauli and 3 Kapālabhāṭis.

There are 32 *Āsanas* described. 25 *Mudrās* appear in this book, 3 techniques of *Pratyāhāra*, 10 practices of *Prāṇāyāma*, 3 *Dhyānas* and 6 *Samādhis*.

Even though it is *Ghaṭastha Yoga* (Yoga through the body) the techniques are to be administered in such a way that the aspirant gradually elevates from physical to transcendental plane.

6 practices for the purification of the body are to be done to hear the mystical *Anāhata* sound, to achieve perfection in *Khecarī* and *Śāmbhavī* so as to develop *Dīvyadr̥ṣṭi*.

Techniques of *Dhauti* are quite elaborate which ensure purification of the physique.

3) *Siddha-siddhānta-paddhati*

This is perhaps the only book elaborating on the philosophical doctrine on which the *Haṭha cult* of the *Nātha Yogis* is built. Therefore, this assumes significance.

It is a very systematically written text having 350 verses distributed over six chapters. Authorship of this book goes to *Gorakṣanātha*.

- The first chapter describes the process of evolution originating from *Anāmā* (the nameless).
- The second chapter discusses the human body which has *Cakras*, *Ādhāras* etc.
- A deep insight into the human body is developed in the third chapter. It is said that body is a replica of the macrocosm the cosmos.
- The fourth chapter talks about the support of the body or *Piṇḍādhāra* and also of the universe. *Śakti* is substratum.
- The fifth chapter describes the process by which the individual self can strike an equipoise with the Absolute.
- The sixth chapter discusses the nature and characteristics of an *Avadhūtayogī* and much more on the similar line.

4) *Gorakṣa Śataka*

It is a small book on *Haṭha Yoga* extending to approximately hundred verses. It speaks of *Yoga* of six components (*ṣaḍaṅga Yoga*) while omitting *Yama* and *Niyama*. It follows the *Upaniṣadic* ideal of unity (*Advaita*) and suggests means to achieve such an objective.

It gives emphasis on *Sidhāsana* and *Kamalāsana* (*Padmāsana*) among all the eightyfour *Āsanas*.

Cakras, *Nāḍīs*, various *Prāṇas* are described well. Certain techniques of *Prāṇāyāma* are elaborated upon. Process of *Prāṇa* to be raised to *Mahāpadma* (*Sahasrāra*) through the passage of *Suṣumnā* is described.

One of its special features is a lucid description of five *Dhāraṇās* practised on five basic elements with visualisation, *Bīja*, *Yantra* etc. so that one can gain control on these elements.

5) *Kumbhakapaddhati*

This is authored by *Raghuvīra* who was a resident of *Kāśī*.

It is devoted to featuring a host of techniques of *Prāṇāyāma* and various levels of consciousness that a spiritual aspirant would pass through during his inbound journey. There are about 72 techniques of *Prāṇāyāma* many of which are hitherto unknown. Most of them are unique in nature. Names of these techniques are not

found in any other of the published texts of *Haṭha Yoga*. *Kumbhaka* has been divided into two segments, one *Meru Kumbhaka* (may be compared to *Kevala Kumbhaka*) and the other *Ameru Kumbhaka*. There is another classification, *Antaḥ Kumbhaka*

(internal *Kumbhaka*), *Bāhya Kumbhaka* (external *Kumbhaka*) and *Stambhavṛtti* (*Kevala Kumbhaka*).

6) *Haṭharatnāvalī*

It is authored by Śrīnivāsayogī. This book is not as popular as *Haṭhapradīpikā*. It is also known as *HaṭhaYogaratanasāraṇī* or *Ratnāvalī*. The contents are divided into four chapters. The distribution of various topics is as follows:

1st chapter: *Mantra*, *Laya*, *Rāja* and *Haṭha Yoga* are described under *Mahā Yoga*. Eight processes of purification are described (instead of usual six). These are to purify not only fat and toxins but also the *Cakras*.

2nd chapter: elaborate description of nine *Kumbhakas* is provided; the additional ninth *Kumbhaka* is *Bhujāṅgīkaraṇa*.

3rd chapter: In this chapter we get a complete list and description of eighty-four *Āsanas*.

4th chapter: *Samādhi* is described in this chapter along with *Nādānusandhāna*. Four progressive states of *Haṭha* such as *Ārambha*, *Ghaṭa*, *Paricaya* and *Niṣpatti* are the topics of this chapter.

The characteristic feature of the commentary is its language and style which is clear, and flowing as if he is explaining the contents to a common man.

The explanation about the topics discussed reflects on his experience and rational outlook.

7) *Haṭhatatvakaumudī*

It is perhaps the largest compendium on Yoga available in published form which spans over 56 chapters. Author of this voluminous text of Yoga is one Sundaradeva who was living in Kaśī (Banaras). Almost all information on *Haṭha Yoga* techniques are available in this book. There are plenty of original quotations cited by the author to support his viewpoint. Most of the quotations are taken from classical authentic sources. This lends value to this work.

8) *Śiva Samhitā*

This is one more work on *HaṭhaYoga*.

In addition to these above mentioned texts, there are many more classical texts on *Haṭha Yoga* critically edited and published by many Yoga institutions. Most of these works are brought to the Yoga fraternity for the first time and many of these are also rare books. Those who want to go to the further depth on the subject may study the same.

Some of these are:

1. *Yuktabhavadēva* of Bhavadēva Mishra
2. Critical Edition of Selected *Yogopaniṣads*
3. *Maṅdalabrāhmaṇopaniṣad* and *nādabindūpaniṣad*
4. *AmanaskaYogaḥ* a treatise on Laya Yoga
5. *Amṛtavākyam*
6. *Dattātreya Yogaśāstram*
7. *Śivasvarodaya*

Understanding Astanga Yoga of Patañjali

The *Astanga Yoga* as discussed in PYS 2.29 comprises eight limbs and hence it is known as *Astanga Yoga*. These limbs are briefly mentioned in the following paragraphs. These constitute the essence of Pātañjal Yoga. It is a means to the spiritual upliftment of man in a progressive way.

i) **Yama:** It has *Ahiṁsā*, *Satya*, *Asteya*, *Brahmacarya* and *Aparigraha*.

- *Ahiṁsā*: Non-violence, not to cause harm to anyone by deed, speech or even thought.

You are walking on the lane in your locality. You see a lousy small dog. You give a kick. Kind of being brave! Huh! Is it being brave? Think again. What you have gained out of this. Hurting a hapless and innocent dog which has not done any harm to you!

This seems to be small thing. But it is not small. It comes from deep-seated tendency to harming others who are weaker than you. You won't do such a thing to a stronger animal like a wild buffalo or the like.

Be kind to all animals.

How would you feel if someone physically hurts you and without any reason, just out of fun? Very bad indeed!

Animals also have similar feelings like you have. It is just that they are unable to express their feelings in the way human beings can.

Patañjali has given long details on *Ahiṁsā*. We shall give you all those details sometimes later.

- *Satya*: truthfulness, sincerity in all kinds of dealing. To speak the truth is a personal and social virtue. But speaking the truth could be a tricky one. One may choose carefully.

a) You are walking on the street. Street is deserted. It is late in the evening. Suddenly you see a young lady running desperately. From a distance, three boys are chasing her for obvious reasons. She takes a turn and hides herself and you notice this. The boys come to you and ask for her. Now you have two choices. To speak the truth. But this will put the lady in danger. Another choice is to tell a lie and misdirect the boys. This would save the lady in danger. You certainly decide to tell a lie and save the life of the young lady.

b) You are walking on the street. It is evening time. Suddenly you see a thief with a stolen bag on the shoulders running for cover. And he hides himself in the dark corner of the lanes. There are some policemen following him and they ask you about him. What would you do? If you speak the truth, the thief will be caught and be punished which could be quite painful. You can speak the lie and misdirect the policemen. This will save the thief from painful punishment. Yet you chose to direct the police towards the thief.

c) Take another example. You are just married. You are trained to speak the truth always. Before marriage, you had certain affairs. You want to be honest with your wife so that there remains no misunderstanding between

you two. This way you feel that you can win her trust forever. You can

prove to her how nice you are. But this could also make her furious. Coming from an orthodox background, she might not digest the thought that her husband could have affairs. Thus, it is very much possible that speaking the truth and opening out your entire heart could very much infuriate her sentiments. And your newly married life can very much come to a sudden and shocking end.

It is, therefore, essential to know when, how, in what situation one should speak or not speak the truth.

- *Asteya*: non-stealing, not to take a thing which does not belong to oneself. It means honesty in all human behaviour and conduct.

Let us try to understand it with the help of following examples.

a) It is a nice mall at the central part of the city. You go for shopping in one of the shops in the mall. This you visit frequently. After an hour of picking up the choicest of the items from the shop racks and putting all commodities, cloths, toiletries etc. in your basket. You think that for the day it is done. And you decide to head for the counter at the main entrance of the shop. The lady at the counter is quite busy settling with the shoppers waiting in the queue. After a while, it is your turn. You pay the cash. You have been billed for Rs. 29,540/-. You hand over Rs. 30,000/-. The lady in a hurry returns the balance. The notes are crisp. They got stuck. You check and find there is an extra note of Rs. 500/-. You have two thoughts in the mind. To be honest and return the extra note. You also have a thought that if you do not hand over the extra note, the lady will have to pay the same from her pocket. Another thought comes. 'I shall make way for the door with the money'. But somebody within your depth tells as if whisperingly, 'this does not belong to you. So return it to the lady. This is not right to do. In fact it is stealing'.

'I would not lay my hands on something that is not owned by me'. You hand over the money to the lady. This is '*A-steya*', non-stealing. She has a broad smile on her face and thanks you generously. Deep inside you feel very light and comfortable. As if a heavy load has been removed from over your heart.

b) Take another instance. Inside the lanes in the shop, at one corner you find a mobile lying on the floor. There is none around. It is a smart phone. And a good one. You feel like picking up. But wait. There is a second thought.

'This is not mine'. Take it and declare it to the Manager. Or call up the owner. Give the phone back. You go for the second option. You manage to call the owner. The person is extremely happy. Comes back quickly and thanks you with a big smile. Inside you, you feel deeply satisfied. A deep sense of comfort makes you happy. This is practice of '*A-steya*'.

Asteya (non-stealing) is one of the five of *Yamas*. Practice of *Asteya* will remove corruption.

- *Brahmacarya*: Sexual continence or devotion to Brahma. Both interpretations find support.

According to the guidelines of Yoga, one should refrain from all illegal physical interaction with the opposite gender. Of course, if one is married, one can have physical contact but in a controlled manner.

One can think of *Brahma* alone at all times.

Aparigraha: Attitude of non-hoarding and non-covetousness. To avoid all intentions of possessiveness of material property or wealth more than what one actually needs.

a) You already have two expensive mobile phones. And you are quite happy. Your close friend has just bought the latest model and at a very high price too. He is showing it to all friends with great pomp. You feel low. Your happiness is dashed. You have money. You feel like buying a more expensive one than what your friend has so that you could put your friend down. Again with this thought you have almost a lot of mental peace. And you think that you can satisfy your ego. Now you have a choice. You can keep calm. Not to fall a prey to false ego. Think twice. The other day another friend of yours will buy a still pricy handset. And then on another day yet another friend. This keeps on happening endlessly. How long can you sustain this process of buying a new handset every other day? Is that necessary? Certainly not! Please also note that if you buy without feeling a genuine need, it is possible that somebody who needs a handset quite genuinely will be deprived of the same. Good sense prevails on you and you keep peace of mind. You decide not to spend unnecessarily. Rather save the money for better use in future.

Think that this rush of over-possessiveness is the sole cause of desperation in the society.

ii) Niyamas: include *Śauca*, *Santoṣa*, *Tapah*, *Svādhyāya* and *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*.

• *Śauca*: purity, cleanliness, both internal and external.

Have you taken bath? Are your cloths clean? Is your room tidy and clean? Are things in the room right in place? Is your surroundings clean?

Śauca is all about cleanliness in all areas of life. This is a healthy habit.

• *Santoṣa*: contentment, overcoming greed and avarice.

To be happy with whatever one has at the moment. If you are not happy this moment, you perhaps will never be happy in future. You are procrastinating happiness. Don't do this. Do you have a Maruti 800? Enjoy the drive, wholeheartedly. At the same time strive to progress. If you are not contented with Maruti 800, you will not be happy even though get a Benz.

• *Tapah*: austerity, self-discipline, both physical and also mental. It also stands for various tough practices of Yoga and asceticism which results into inner purity.

Hard work. Work hard in your studies. There is no short cut. For none. It was never, it will never be.

• *Svādhyāya*: Study of the sacred scriptures and contemplation on the contents therein. It also may mean deep contemplation or even enquire into the questions such as 'who am I', 'what I am here for?', 'where am I heading towards?'.

a) So take some time off from regular chores of life. Sit in a corner of your room. Maintain the stillness of your body. Don't move any part of the body. Do some cycles of breathing? Then peep into the space of the mind. See what your mind is doing. Watch your thoughts from a distance. As if you are

watching a film. Watch the thoughts appearing from nowhere and disappearing into nowhere. It is a never-ending line of thoughts just like a line of ants. As soon as one thought appears on the screen of the mind, then it disappears. Then another comes up to be lost quite soon.

Watch closely. Is there a gap between two thoughts? Yes, there is one, very small. At one small fraction of a moment, there is no thinking taking place. This gap is pure, non-thinking. Pure Consciousness. Your pure self. Blissful Self.

Thoughts are coming from your exposure to the world. Your desires. Your upbringing. Your education. These are not your 'true self'. These are acquired. They keep you busy, restless. You hardly get peace out of these thoughts.

Through practice, you will have a glimpse of your true self between two thoughts. As the practice advances, the gap will become bigger. That means extended time of bliss.

Is not this a great idea? Sure it is.

b) Another way to do this. Study these thoughts objectively. Are they negative or positive? If positive, can you enhance them? Yes, you can. If negative, can you taper them down? Yes, you can. How? Through strong resolve. You may fail in doing so. But that failure will make you stronger.

• *Īśvarapraṇidhāna*: surrender to the will of the Supreme Self.

Sit in the corner of the room. Say in the mind, 'O Lord! May thy Will be done'.

This brings lot of peace in the mind.

iii) Āsana: Practice of psycho physical postures to bring about stability of the body. For detailed description on the techniques of different Āsanas, you may refer to Guidelines for Practicum (Unit 4).

iv) Prāṇāyāma: To do techniques of breathing so as to gain stability of breathing. And also to render breathing subtle and prolonged.

Some description on Prāṇāyāma is presented below and also in **Practicum** (Unit 4). Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi: The Yogasūtra provides the fundamental principles governing these techniques of AṣṭāṅgaYoga. However, Yogasūtras don't give the different practices. Haṭha tradition does. For the Āsanas and Prāṇāyāma we have to look towards Haṭha texts. What exactly one may have to do so that it will be called the practice of Pratyāhāra. Thus it will not be wrong to say that Haṭha texts are practice books on the subject of Yoga.

v) Pratyāhāra: Willful withdrawal of the senses from their respective objects.

A couple of the techniques of *Pratyāhāra* as given in *Haṭhapradīpikā*-6.4-5 (Lonavala Yoga Institute) are as follows:

Whatever favorable or unfavorable a Yogī listens through the ears, he withdraws from all of them considering them as the Self.

Whatever hot or cold is touched by the skin, the eminent Yogī withdraws from it knowing it as Self.

vi) Dhāraṇā: To concentrate the mind on one object for desirable length of time. To

develop good one-pointedness.

vii) Dhyāna: Uninterrupted focus of mind towards a given object in contemplation for considerably long period of time.

Dhyāna is said to be the technique which frees the mind from all the thoughts.

Practice of unwavering concentration of the thoughts, on any of the elements, is defined as dhyāna.

Dhyāna is of two types, *saguna* and *nirguna*.

- *Saguna dhyāna:* As per Haṭhapradīpikā.6.20 (Lonavala Yoga Institute) it is practised on each of the five elements. Thus there can be five *Saguna Dhyānas*. For such practice of *Dhyāna* one takes the attributes (guṇas, qualities) of that particular element into account.

For example, Dhyāna on water element:

Water, which is like nectar overflowing and flooding the three worlds, should be held in the heart. Doing so, one does not have fear from liquids (water)

(Haṭhapradīpikā.6.25, Lonavala Yoga Institute).

- *Nirguna dhyāna:* This is done without any attribute or *guṇas*. So this is abstract or absolute form of *Dhyāna*. It is difficult to differentiate it from *Samādhi*.

viii) Samādhi: This is also known as *Rāja Yoga*, to merge in the state of pure Consciousness. It implies to transcend the differences of seer, seen and seeing. On attaining the state of *Samādhi*, the *Yogī* does not remain aware of sensation of smell, taste, appearance, touch, breath and himself or others (Haṭhapradīpikā.7.6, Lonavala Yoga Institute).

Obviously, the last four components are not quite easy to grasp and practice

Hatha Yogic practices

There is a large number of practices suggested in the *Haṭha Yogic* texts. We are presenting a brief description on the major groups of these practices below:

Āsanās

Haṭha Yoga considers that *Āsanās* are the fore runners of the practices of Yoga.

Āsanās are body postures adopted consciously, held for some time and then coming to the original position. Certain *Āsanās* such as *Sukhāṣana*, *Siddhāṣana* etc. can be maintained for a long time.

There are hundreds of such *Āsanās*. Some of these could be difficult to adopt and maintain. Some are easier. Practice of *Āsanās* make the body supple and energetic. Mind feels relaxed. Breathing flows smoothly.

Most of the *Haṭha texts* mentioned above do give some description of *Āsanās*. It is commonly held that *Āsanās* are eighty-four in number. The text of *Haṭharatnāvalī* mentions the name of all eighty-four *Āsanās*. This list seems to be a complete one.

Prāṇāyāma, eight kumbhakas

Haṭha Yoga assigns a great lot of emphasis on the practice of Prāṇāyāma. Cleansing of the Nāḍīs, relaxing the mind, managing emotions, managing various physical ailments, withdrawal of senses, entering into the state of meditation, doing Dhāraṇā, undertaking

Pratyāhāra, practicing Dhyāna and achieving the state of Samādhi, Haṭha Yoga says that Prāṇāyāma is the practice basic to reaching the stage of Samādhi.

There are more than seventy techniques of Prāṇāyāma described in the book of Kumbhaka. Such a large number is not seen in any book of Yoga. Haṭhapradīpikā gives a set of eight techniques of breathing which are known as Kumbhakas.

There are two broad sections of Prāṇāyāma (Kumbhaka), one *Sahita* and the other *Kevala*. Kevala Kumbhaka is the natural outcome of Sahita Kumbhaka. Kevala Kumbhaka is equated with the state of Samādhi.

However, purification of the Nāḍīs (Nāḍīsudhi) forms the prerequisite for all advanced methods of Prāṇāyāma.

One more significant aspect of Prāṇāyāma is to send the flow of Prāṇa through the central passage of Suṣumnā and to take it to the top of the head known as Sahasrāra Cakra, the seat of Pure Consciousness.

Thus Prāṇāyāma serves a sublime purpose.

A few of the practices such as Nāḍīsodhana Prāṇāyāma, Ujjāyī and Sūryabhedana are quite popular and widely practised. Here are the techniques:

- **Nāḍīsodhana prāṇāyāma:** One inhales through the left nostril, holds it and exhales through the other (after retention) and again inhales through the right nostril and holds the breath before exhalation. Consistently and frequently following this technique through alternate nostrils, one gets his/her nāḍīs purified in three months.
- **Ujjāyī:** Close the mouth. Inhale through both nostrils fully with frictional sound felt from the throat to the chest. Hold the breath and then exhale through left nostril. This is *Ujjāyī Kumbhaka*. This should be practised all the time.
- **Sūryabhedana:** One sits comfortably in Padmāsana, slowly draws the external air in through the right nostril and retains it as long as the sensations are felt at the tips of the hair and nails. Thereafter, (to the fullest of capacity) slowly exhales through the left nostril. This *Sūrya-Bhedana* should be practised quite frequently.
- **Eight kumbhakas of haṭha tradition are:** *Sūrya-bhedana, Ujjāyī, Śītkārī, Śītalī, Bhasrikā, Bhrāmarī, Mūrcchā* and *Kevala*

Dhāraṇā on five elements

Dhāraṇā make advanced techniques. The text of Haṭhapradīpikā gives the description on five Dhāraṇās on five elements which are as follows:

- **Bhuvo-dhāraṇā:** The earth element which has deep golden yellow colour, having 'la' (as the bīja), and is presided over by Brahmā as the deity, having four corners, placed in the heart, one should concentrate upon with the prāṇa raised there and retained for five ghaṭikās. This is *bhuvo-dhāraṇā*, which brings restraint and by which one conquers earth element.
- **Vāriṇī-dhāraṇā:** The water element, which is as white as crescent moon and kunda flower (jasmine) is located in the throat, having 'vā' as bīja and is presided over by Viṣṇu as deity. One should take the prāṇa there and hold it for five ghaṭikās with one-pointed mind. This is *Vāriṇī-Dhāraṇā*, which digests even severe poisons.
- **Vaiṣvānarī-dhāraṇā:** The fire element, which is located in the palate and is as deep red as indra-gopa insect (cochineal), having three shining corners, 'ra' as bīja, as brightly red as coral, which is presided over by rudra as deity. One should take the

prāṇa there and hold it for five ghaṭikās with rapt attention. This is Vaiṣvāṇarī-Dhāraṇā, by which one controls fire element.

- **Vāyavī-dhāraṇā:** The element of air is situated between the two eye-brows, bright like a heap of collyrium, round in shape, consisting of vāyu and associated with the letter ‘ya’ (as *bīja*) and *Īśvara* as presiding deity. One should bring the prāṇa there and maintain it for five *ghaṭikās* with one-pointed mind. This Vāyavī-Dhāraṇā enables a Yogī to move in the space.
- **Nabho-dhāraṇā:** The ākāśa element, which is placed in the *brahma-randhra*, which is as pure as water. It bears that *anāhata* (unheard) *nāda*, having *Sadāśiva* as presiding deity and embedded with ‘ha’ (as *bīja*). One should take the prāṇa there accompanied accompanied with mind for five *ghaṭikās*. This *Nabho-Dhāraṇā* brings liberation to the Yogīs.

Mudrās and bandhas

Mudrās: There seems to have been great influence of Mudrās in the literature of medieval times.

Limiting our discussion only on the Mudrās of HaṭhaYoga, we find that Haṭhapradīpikā describes ten Mudrās. Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā speaks of 25 *Mudrās*. In all these texts *Mudrās* occupy a larger space for description.

The purpose of *Mudrās*, according to Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā, is to establish equilibrium or ‘*sthiratā*’, while according to Haṭhapradīpikā is ‘awakening of *kuṇḍalinī Śakti*’.

Ten Mudrās of Haṭhapradīpikā are:

Mahāmudrā, Mahābandha, Mahāvedha, Khecaṛī, Uḍḍīyāna, Mūlabandha, Jālandharabandha, Viparīta-karaṇī, Vajrolī and *Śakti-cālana*.

We describe only *Uḍḍīyāna* and *Mūlabandha* below:

Uḍḍīyāna (it is also a Mudrā): Retract the abdomen above the navel towards the back. This is *Uḍḍīyāna*, which overcomes death, like a lion killing an elephant.

Mūlabandha (it is also a Mudrā): Press the perineum with the heel, contract the anus and raise the *apāna* upwards. This is called *Mūla-bandha*.

Bandhas: These are essentially Mudrās and are very few in number. They are usually practised as an essential part of the *Prāṇāyāma* in Haṭhayogic tradition. Some of them are otherwise practised independently. We may say that those Mudrās practiced in the technique of *Prāṇāyāma* are called *Bandhas*, because they bind the current of *Prāṇa* in a particular region and channelize the *prāṇika* currents in a particular direction. The commonly practiced *Bandhas* and their locations are as under:

Bandha location

- i. Jālandhara throat
- ii. Uḍḍīyāna abdomen
- iii. Mūlabandha anus
- iv. Jihvā mouth

All the above *bandhas* are applied during the performance of *ābhyantara kumbhaka*, meaning holding the breath inside. Use of *bandhas* during *Prāṇāyāma* seems to be a special technique of *Haṭhayogika Prāṇāyāma*. The idea behind this seems to be to intensify the sensations of *prāṇika* currents through the channel of *Suṣumnā* by increasing the pressure in the middle path. The total effect of the application of the three

bandhas is to regulate the working of *Idā* and *Piṅgalā* and to activate *Suṣumnā nāḍī*.

Satkarma, the set of six cleansing techniques

These techniques of cleansing the body from inside form a special feature of *Haṭha*. For this purpose, various odd methods are applied. Some of the *Haṭha* texts consider these to be pre-requisites for undertaking the practice of *Prāṇāyāma*. It is so because by application of such practices, the body is rendered free of excess fat and toxicity. Thus *Prāṇa* can be easily and smoothly channelized through *Nāḍīs*, especially through *Suṣumnā*. If *nāḍīs* are not pure, how can *Prāṇa* flow through the central canal to reach the *Brahmarandhra*? And without this happening, how can one experience the state of non-mind (*Unmanī Bhāva*)?

Based on such rationale, *Haṭha* tradition suggests *ṣaṭkarmas*.

The set of *ṣaṭ-karmas* are *Dhautī*, *Bastī*, *Netī*, *Trāṭaka*, *Naulī* and *Kapālabhātī*.

Here we indicate the techniques of *Netī* and *Kapālabhātī*:

Netī: One inserts a smooth sheaf of cotton, measuring (approximately) 23cms. in length, in the nose and pulls it out through the mouth. This is *netī*.

Kapālabhātī: One imitates the movements of the bellows of a blacksmith, using the left and right nostrils. This famous *Kapālabhātī* removes phlegmatic disorders.

Relationship between Patañjala Yoga and Haṭha Yoga

In modern times, the texts like *Haṭhapradīpikā* and *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā* have given a much more practical touch to the *Haṭha Yoga* discipline through their emphasis on tangible, unambiguous, easy and circumscribed Yoga practices. The practices of *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Mudrā*, *Nadānusandhāna* and bodily purificatory processes (*Śuddhi Kriyā* or *ṣaṭkriyā*), by virtue of their leading to verifiable psycho-neuro-endocrinal implications, have caught the attention of modern medical scientists. Papers on Yoga are now being accepted in International conferences on sports, health, medicine, psychology and physical education in a far more receptive manner than ever before.

Though the educated mind is impressed by the *Haṭha Yoga* system, more than any other form of Yoga, the importance of *Patañjali's* Yoga has never been underrated. *Patañjali* gives a whole range of Yoga practices to suit the temperament of almost all types of *Sādhakas*. *Patañjali* speaks of '*Abhyāsa*' and '*Vairāgya*' for the cessation of modifications of mind leading one to the state of *draṣṭā* or the Yogic 'seer principle'.

Citta, generally an outwardly directed consciousness, as described in all Indian *Darśanas*, must be stilled and made free from all kinds of aberrations before the *Self* (a '*self-existent*' consciousness, considered as all-pervasive basic principle of existence, in Indian thought) is '*established in its true nature*'. The *Citta*, as a concept, etymologically

encompassing 'mind', intellect, and 'ego', is made inwardly directed and blissful by various simple psychological techniques (*P.Y.S.* I.21, II.23, I.28, I.33-39) in conjunction with such advanced practices as *Prāṇava japa* (known to remove impediments in one's progress in Yoga), *Kriyā Yoga* (a means of alleviation of *Kleśas* or inborn afflictions and thus being helpful in attaining *Samādhi*) and *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* (a systematic 'flow chart' for a gradual and sure progress in Yoga) culminating into Self-illumination.

Svātmārāma has indicated that a control on flow of *Prāṇa* results in a control of *Citta*, and vice versa, the control of *Citta* results in a control on *prāṇa*. Thus, in a way, both the systems of Yoga are interdependent. *Pātañjala Yoga* has two broad stages, namely *Bahiraṅga* and *Antaraṅga*. By virtue of its functioning on the level of sense organs and being ‘behavioural’ in nature the *Bahiraṅga* state can be equated with beginning stages of *Haṭha Yoga*. Though both *Pātañjala Yoga* and *Haṭha Yoga*, have *Samādhi*, the total liberation, as their ultimate goal, it is only *Haṭha Yoga* that has provided an array of ‘manual like’ methodologies in the form of tangible practices of *Āsana*, *Kriyā*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Mudrā*, and *Nādānusandhāna*, without an insistence on the practice of *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Vairāgya* (detachment), *Cittaśuddhi* (a mental catharsis) and *Cittaprasādanam*. *Mudrā*, as a state, leads the practitioner to *Samādhi*, through *Mudrā*, as a process. *Nādānusandhāna*, by itself is the beginning state of *Samādhi*. In short, *Haṭha Yoga* is an easy and short-cut methodology initiated on the grosser body level,

while *Pātañjala Yoga* starts directly on the subtler body of *Citta* or mind. However, both of these culminate into the *Samādhi* state.

It should, however, be noted that in advanced stages of one’s yogic pursuit, *Haṭha Yoga* also touches the innermost recesses of one’s psychic world. It has a premise that if *Prāṇa* goes astray, while practising Yoga wrongly, somatic and psychosomatic ailments result. Therefore, on the whole, the philosophy and the practice of *Haṭhayogic* therapy are based on tackling the mind through correction, control and smooth management of *Prāṇa* throughout the body. Patañjali’s emphasis, however, is on purification of mind and control on one’s mental processes. According to *Svātmārāma* a smoother flow of *Prāṇa*, throughout the body, ensures a perfect health. Should there arise any obstructions in its flow or when *Prāṇa* starts flowing through ‘wrong’ channels, there result ‘*Prāṇika*’ disturbances, causing mental and physical disorders. Specific Yogic practices have been recommended by *Svātmārāma* for such ailments (H.P.V:1-25). Even though *Yama* and *Niyama* have not been insisted upon in *Haṭha Yoga* the way we find in *Pātañjala Yoga*, yet “least public contact” and “refraining from undue insistence on rules” are some of the important tenets of *Haṭha Yoga* that go very close to the concepts of *Yama* and *Niyama*. In summary, it can be concluded that while *Haṭha Yoga* lays an emphasis on the canalization of *Prāṇa* through ‘body telling mind’ principle, *Pātañjala Yoga* works on the principle of ‘mind telling body.’ However, it is just in the beginning stage that we find this difference which slowly blurs away as we advance towards subtler and more experiential practices of Yoga. Significantly, Lachnit and Bhogal (2006) have found that the meditation group showed a significantly favourable change in their meditative experiences following their *Haṭha Yoga* practice sessions as compared to the *Haṭha Yoga* group, over a period of time. It supports the hypothesis that *Haṭha Yoga* practices are conducive to meditative experiences.

Meditational processes in Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra

Yoga meditation (i.e. *Dhyāna*) is much more than the term meditation conveys, in that the former is non-intentional and transcendental unlike the latter, which is intentional and phenomenal in nature. *Dhyāna*, the seventh limb in Patañjali’s *Aṅgā Yoga*, has been defined as, “A continuous and unbroken flow of consciousness (P.Y.S. III:2). *Dhyāna* is preceded by *Dhāraṇā* which is defined (P.Y.S. III:1) as, “Attention localized within or

without the body.” However, Karambelkar (1987), Shastri (1960) and some other authorities on Yoga hold that in *Dhāraṇā* the attention should necessarily be glued to some space within the body itself, and not outside the body. According to *Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra*, *Dhāraṇā* is preceded by *Samāpattis* that are of four types viz. *Vitarka*, *Nirvitarka*, *Savicāra* and *Nirvicāra*. Our consciousness is increasingly getting ‘purified’ as we transcend these *samāpattis* one by one. In *Dhyāna*, though consciousness is ‘purified’ to quite an extent, there remains the distinction amongst *Dhyetā* (meditator), *Dhyeya* (object of meditation) and *Dhyāna* (meditational process). In *Samādhi*, however (*P.Y.S. III:3*), only the meaning of the object shines forth. By virtue of getting influenced fully by the object of meditation, the consciousness appears to be akin to a void-like state.

In the state of *Dhyāna* our consciousness becomes all encompassing and thereby our basic need of knowledge is fulfilled. This state, signifying non-judgemental and nonreactive awareness, remains transcendental. According to *Bhagavadgītā*, in such a Yoga state, all miseries are vanished and the Yogic Joy (*Prasāda*) effuses forth. The *Sādhaka* becomes devoid of all mental and physical problems and can ultimately attain Selfrealization, the perfect psycho-physiologically balanced state.

Unit 3: Yoga and health

Need of Yoga for positive health

The fast-paced and competition-oriented modern life style tends to overtax the psychosomatic homeostasis of human organism, resulting into stress-related disorders, coupled with erosion of the age-old humane values. This has rendered the modern man sorely prone to psychosomatic disorders like *Diabetes* and *Hypertension*, amidst overwhelming environmental demands, whereby he has to play ever-changing roles to get going in a work-a-day life.

Modern therapeutic interventions, based on reductionist principles of *modern physiology*, have proved to be largely ineffective, particularly in the case of psychic and psychosomatic disorders. Modern interventions, at best, can give only a symptomatic relief from such disorders. Though, these methods work on anatomic-physiological level, yet the cure eludes these therapeutic measures because these methods are not possibly equipped to treat the very *substrate* of the psycho-physiological phenomenon.

Inarguably, man is a *complex* psycho-neuro-immuno-endocrinological phenomenon and, therefore, needs only a holistic approach towards solving his existential problems.

Traditional therapeutic interventions, being through and through *natively holistic*, may hold the key in such a scenario. Yoga, a time tested and research-supported practical science of the ancient lore, warrants a serious attention in the present context indeed!

Yogic *neurophysiology* of Traditional *Yoga*--with its principles of *Prāṇa* (the prime energy dynamics operating within the body, creating the psycho-physiological substrate), as well as, with its subtle *experience-awareness-transcendence* phenomenon--seems to hold a great promise for the modern man, thanks to the textual claims which have been, amply, supported by empirical research into *Yoga* practices.

The health related significance of *Yoga* has been perceived by Swami Kuvalayānanda, as early as in 1924: “... *The physical side is only a minor aspect of Yoga which is chiefly mental and spiritual.*”

Yoga has always held a holistic view of Health, encompassing the mind-body-spirit complex, if we have a cursory glance at *Yoga Darśana* and *Yoga* practices, be it related to *Pātañjala Yoga* or *Haṭha Yoga*. *Āyurveda* too emphasizes the mind-body interdependence: “*a particular type of body goes with a particular type of mind and, conversely, a particular type of mind with a particular type of body (Caraka Saṃhitā IV: 36)*”.

Role of mind in positive health as per ancient Yogic literature

Though, the mind has been referred to as ‘disturbance oriented entity’ (*Bhagavadgītā* II: 60, 67; *Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra*: I: 2, 5), it has its significant role in one’s Yogic pursuit.

An absent minded person expresses his inability to hear or see or perceive a stimulus without an intervention of the mind. Thus, the mind takes up the attributes of the concerned objects. If the object is *Sāttvika* (i.e. pleasant and wisdom evoking) the mind too acquires the same attribute. It follows that there is no other way than to be virtuous, kind-hearted and spiritually enlightened if one wants a tranquil state of mind. Therefore, mind is mind! It can neither be healthy nor unhealthy. It can at best be tranquil so that it

can be employed by *buddhi* for constructive activities. For this reason, in all spiritual practices, worldwide, the mind is directed to the objects that are essentially peaceful, serene and transcendental. The same mind becomes serene when invested in a stimulus that exudes serenity. As well, it becomes disturbed when invested in arousal evoking (*Rājasika*) stimulus and becomes dull, lethargic and evil-oriented when invested in 'darkness and evil evoking (*Tāmasika*)' stimulus. Yoga, being *Sāttvika* essentially, helps our mind to become emotionally stable, conscientious and tranquil.

In main, if we aspire for positive health we must make our mind inward and invest the same into *Sāttvika* objects initially, so that in due course of time the mind itself is transcended and we find ourselves into the transcendental (Yogic) state, signifying Yogic Health. Good news is that even if we are not able to achieve the transcendental state (Yogic health), we have a tranquil state of the mind slowly giving way to Positive Health, anyway.

In all Indian scriptures the mind has been conceived as an essentially unstable entity, because normally it continues to get influenced by worldly stimuli, which by nature are unstable and activity oriented. Moreover, the sense organs are always in a flux and rarely are in tranquil state. The mind becomes active or disturbed in varying degrees depending upon the nature of the object it gets associated with, through a particular state of sense organs. According to Yogic metaphysics, only when the intellect (*buddhi*) is having its dictate over the mind, the mental activities are contained and managed fruitfully to the same extent. Melzack (1961) has established that one's value system influences one's physiological pain perception. Thus, the cerebral cortex can exercise a profound control over the mind and thus can change one's cognitions and alter his/her attributions, rendering senses calm and controlled. In all Yogic scriptures the *Buddhi* is considered as discriminative and decision making entity and is recommended to be made powerful through Yogic practices, *mantras* etc. so that it can exercise a desirable control over mental activities.

According to P.Y.S. the *Citta* (Mind, ego and intellect) has five states or substrata viz. *Mūḍha* (fraught with ignorance), *Kḷipta* (totally disturbed akin to psychotics), *Vikḷipta* (partly disturbed akin to neurotics), *Ekāgra* (concentrated) and *Niruddha* (transcendental). The *Ekāgra* state, being *Sāttvika*, signifies Positive health and is considered as forerunner to the state of transcendence (*Niruddha* state) signifying Yogic health.

Concept of health, healing and disease: Yogic perspectives

The term health, literally, means restoring back to one's normal state of psychophysiology. It is, therefore, in order to know as to why at all we get derailed from the normal state of psychophysiology

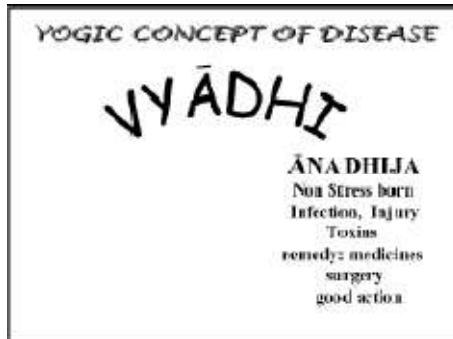
Concept of health and diseases

In this section of the unit we will discuss the basic concept of health and disease. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) the state of health is defined as a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual well being and not merely an absence of disease or infirmity. It is clear from this definition that health and ill-health are not two discrete entities as commonly understood but health should be conceived as a continuous function indicating the state of well being.

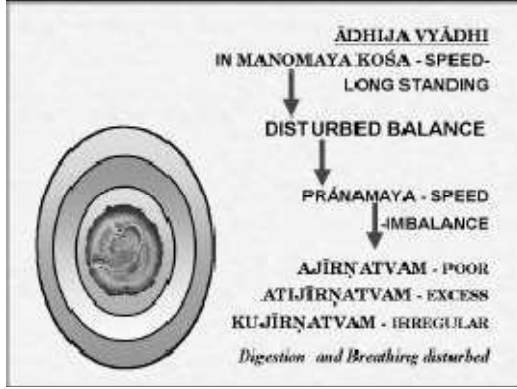
In the diagram, the 3rd quadrant ‘the region of ill-health’ represents what normally we designate as ‘Sickness’. Below this, man acts instinctively and is akin to animal man. Coming to the first quadrant, the region of ‘normal health’ the state of normal man is indicated. As he moves along the line further up, he becomes healthier featured by the dormant faculties expressing more vividly in man. This is shown as the region of ‘positive health’, the next region after the human spectrum. In this state, the limitations of normal man namely the strong urges of thirst, hunger, fear and sex are reduced greatly and are fully under control. In the concept of Sri Aurobindo, the new faculties of deeper perceptions of the world beyond the five senses emerge in this phase of superhuman existence. Further growth leads man to unfold even deeper layers of consciousness and widen the spectrum of his knowledge to move towards divinity or ‘perfection’. In this march towards perfection, Yoga is a systematic conscious process for accelerating the growth of a human being from his animal level leading ultimately to divinity. It is a systematic methodology for an all-round personality development-physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual components of man. Thus, Yoga in its general methodology for the growth of man to divine heights includes techniques useful for therapeutic applications in making man healthier.

Concept of disease

In Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha which is one of the best texts on Yoga, the essence of Yoga is beautifully portrayed thus, ‘*manaḥpraśamanopāyaḥ Yoga ityabhidhīyate*’ – *Yoga is called a skilful technique to calm down the mind.* It is (Upāyaḥ), a skilful subtle process and not a brutal, mechanical gross effort to stop the thoughts in the mind.



In *Ānandamaya koṣa* a man is healthiest with perfect harmony and balance of all his faculties. At *Vijñānamaya koṣa* there are movements but they are channelized in the right direction. As such, it is in the *Manomaya* level the imbalances start, say the Yoga texts. Likes and dislikes have come to play at this level. The liking of Gulab Jamun in a diabetic may lure him to eat the same against the doctor’s advice. Thus going against what is right causes imbalances. These imbalances amplify themselves resulting in mental illnesses called ‘*ādhis*’ – at this stage there are no symptoms at the physical level. Prompted by the perpetual growth of desires these mental diseases concealed in us, begin to manifest themselves externally and gradually they percolate to the physical frame. Preponderance of *Ajñāna* (Ignorance about one’s real state of bliss) leads one to perform wrong actions such as eating of unwholesome food, living in unhealthy dwellings, association with wicked, evil thoughts, inflict injuries etc. These breed physical diseases called *Vyādhis* or the secondary diseases.



The *Ādhis* (primary diseases) are two-fold *Sāmānya* (ordinary) and *Sāra* (essential). The former includes the diseases incidental to the body while the latter is responsible for rebirth to which all men are subject. The *Sāmānya* are normally produced during the interactions with the world. These may be termed as psychosomatic ailments. When dealt with by suitable techniques and congenial atmosphere, *ādhis* of the ordinary type will vanish. Along with it are destroyed the physical ailments i.e. the *vyādhis* caused by these *ādhis* is *ādhiya vyādhayaḥ*. The subtler *ādhis* of the essential type (*Sāra*) which cause the birth of the physical body can be destroyed only by the realization of the causal states of mind and a corresponding ability to live in *Vijñānamaya Kośa* and *Ānandamaya Kośa*. In that state, man transcends the cycles of birth and death. The second category of ailments are *anādhiya vyādhayaḥ* – those not originated from mind. These would probably include the infectious and contagious diseases. The text says that *anādhiya vyādhis* can be handled through conventional medicines (the chemotherapy of modern medicine and *Āyurveda*), Mantras with their natural vibrational characteristics) and good actions. These bring about the purity of mind, the *Prāṇa* flowing freely in the body and the food getting digested better and assimilated properly allowing the diseases to vanish.

Psychosomatic illness

Among the two types of *ādhis* described the *Sāmānya* (ordinary) type corresponds to the modern psychosomatic ailments. When the mind is agitated during the interactions with the world at large, the physical body also follows in its wake. These agitations cause violent fluctuations in the flow of *prāṇa* in the *nāḍīs*. The *prāṇa* flows in wrong paths flying from one to the other without rhythm and harmony. The *nāḍīs* can no longer, in this condition, maintain stability and steadiness, but quiver. Due to these disturbances of the *prāṇa* and unsteadiness in the *nāḍīs* the food does not get properly digested. These arise *kujīrṇatvam* (wrong digestion), *atijīrṇatvam* (over-digestion) and *ajīrṇatvam* (non-digestion). When this improperly digested food settles down in the body amidst such commotion it results in ailments of the psychosomatic type. Contained in this process of generation of psychosomatic ailments is the method for treating such ailments.

Genesis of ill health according to Pātanjala Yoga Sūtra

Genesis of existential disorders (Ill Health) in modern medicine and that in *Pātanjala Yoga Sūtra* has remarkable similarities. Only when predisposing factors (one's hereditary characteristics) interact with precipitating factors (critical incidences taking place in one's life) the existential disorders arise. This is the reason why anyone of the

two sets of factors cannot create any disorders, singly. For example, hereditary characteristics, howsoever impactful, cannot produce a psychosomatic disorder even if both the parents have been afflicted by the same particular disorder, unless these hereditary characteristics are coupled with critical incidences. As well, even if critical incidences befall a person, he may not show any ill-effect of the same, so long he has a sound hereditary constitution. Great men in human history have refused to cave-in to great many sufferings and critical incidences taking place in their life. In the *Patañjali's* metaphysics, *Kleśas* are considered as hereditary in nature while *Environment* denotes the occurrence of critical incidences in one's life. *Cittavṛttis* denote aberrant mental functions, arising out of an interaction between predisposing factors and precipitating factors.

Kleśas (afflictions) are considered as the very root cause of all existential disorders, in general, and that of psychosomatic disorders, in particular. *Kleśas*, in interaction with internal environment (psychophysical strengths and weaknesses) and external environment (acquired mental complexes prejudices and temperamental aberrations), produce *cittavṛttis*, the mental functions of pathological nature. If one starts identifying himself/herself with these *cittavṛttis*, the *psychic stage* of stress starts getting expressed. If no remedial measures are adopted, one goes to the *psychosomatic stage* of stress. Here, enduring impact of newly developed psychosomatic disorders is exhibited. If remedial measures are not availed, the next stage of stress namely *somatic stage* ensues.

Samsakāras (impressions) get established further if further aggravation is not arrested. Thus, the *organic stage* of stress is reached. The treatment approach for stress-borne disorders, therefore, should include (i) adopting positive life style changes (Environment) and (ii) adopting appropriate Yoga practices like *Kriyā Yoga* (P.Y.S.II:1) and *Omkāraṃ Āmīn/Āmen* would be helpful immensely. Best treatment effects are seen at the *psychic stage*, next best effects are evidenced at *psychosomatic stage* and the least but sure impact is seen at the *somatic* and *organic stages* of stress if Yoga practices are adopted and practiced regularly.

Concepts of triṣṇa and pañcakṣa vis-à-vis holistic health

• Concept of triṣṇa

Human beings have always striven to achieve a total health and an invincible personality, bereft of any disturbances and aberrations whatsoever. There seems to be a compartmentalized approach to personality in psychology: Freud emphasizes childhood experiences as the basis of personality development an individual. Adler, Fromm and Harney speak about the social determinants as vital for one's personality. Erikson and Allport advocate achieving certain abilities. Maslow speaks of need hierarchy while Rogers speaks of one's movement from *true self* to *ideal self* in developing individual personality. Being holistic itself Yoga has a holistic view on personality.

Sāṃkhya Darśana, popularly known as theoretical Yoga, has conceived the idea of three bodies viz. Gross (*Sthūla śarīra*), Subtle (*Sūkṣma śarīra*) and Causal (*Kāraṇa śarīra*). Yoga has a premise that whatever affects gross body also 'affects' subtle body and causal body. Therefore, a balanced & meaningful material life may lead one to spiritual life. Systematic Yogic pursuits are available as per one's personality make-up. *Rājasika* person can opt for *Karma Yoga*, *Sāttvika* person can go for *Bhakti*

Yoga and Tāmasika person can opt for Karma Yoga and Jñāna Yoga. One can work with one's Tamas guṇa so as to transcend the same towards Rajas guṇa and then

towards Sattva guṇa, so as to ultimately go beyond all guṇas before reaching out to the guṇātīta/niruddha state.

Dr. Indrasen (1960) has said, “*Indian concept of personality analyses its normal make-up, discovering and devising the conditions of its growth and delineating the quality and character of its highest growth. In simple words, it speaks about what man is, what he can become and how he can become that.*”

Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, however, conceives the concept of five body-sheaths:

i) *Annamaya koṣa* (gross body-sheath), ii) *Prāṇamaya koṣa* (functional body-sheath), iii) *Manomaya koṣa* (emotional body-sheath, iv) *Vijñānamaya koṣa* (intellect body-sheath), and v) *Ānandamaya koṣa* (Bliss body-sheath). All these body-sheaths coexist in a perfect interdependence amongst themselves with a complete harmony in a perfectly healthy individual.

According to *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, one has to do a complete justice with all these *Koṣas* through appropriate practices. The *Pañcakoṣa* concept holds a human individual as a composite whole with all five *koṣas* as being coherent in a perfect harmony, in a truly healthy individual. All *koṣas* are needed to be nourished by adopting a holistic approach to Yoga practice. *Aṣṭāṅga* Yoga, practiced in its holistic spirit, would nourish all the *koṣas* holistically endowing us with a holistic personality in the process.

It is only in the case of therapeutic setting that we try to perceive the disturbance in one or more particular *koṣas* and recommend practices to be practiced predominantly for the particular *koṣas*. For instance, for treating disturbances at *Annamaya koṣa*, we can recommend *Āsana*, *Yuktāhāra* (proper and balanced *Sāttvika* food) etc.; for disturbances at *Prāṇamaya koṣa*, *Prāṇāyāma* and other such practices are recommended; for treating problem of *Manomaya koṣa*, the practices prescribed are *Pratyāhāra* and experiential way of Yoga practices; for disturbance at the *Vijñānamaya koṣa* the practices of *Dhāranā* & *Dhyāna* can be recommended and for *Ānandamaya koṣa*, *Dhyāna* techniques of transcendental nature, may be practiced.

• **Concept of pañcakoṣa and positive health**

Taittirīya Upaniṣad gives the concept of *Pañcakoṣas* and their development. *Koṣa* means layer of existence. The existence of human beings has been described in *Ānanda Vallī* of *Taittirīyopaniṣad* having five layers in *Brahmānanda*. It says that starting from *Annamaya koṣa* and reaching the *Ānandamaya koṣa*, our existence has 5 layers or sheaths called *koṣas* (see Figure 3.1).



The gross body that we see is *Annamayakoṣa*. The subtler body made of *prāṇika* energy is called as *Prāṇamayakoṣa* or vital sheath. The third *koṣa* is *Manomayakoṣa* or mental sheath which comprises one's feelings and emotions. The fourth one is *Vi jñānamayakoṣa*. The *Vi jñānamayakoṣa* is the highest state of *buddhi* or *viveka*. It is the perfect discriminatory knowledge or understanding. It does not prove anything on the basis of logic or empirical evidence, but through insightful discrimination. The fifth is *ānandmayakoṣa* or sheath of bliss. Its characteristics are creativity, joy and bliss. Let us examine these sheaths in detail.

1) Annamayakoṣa: the food sheath

Literal meaning of 'Anna' is food. However, as the lowest level of existence, *Annamayakoṣa* refers to the world of physical existence. Everything that we experience through our *Indriyas* (sense organs) is part of physical layer. Physical layer is complete in itself. Beings in their physical world consume food. Ultimately, the physical existence of beings gets devoured by the matter itself. The physical body, the outer most part of our existence is termed as the *Annamayakoṣa* or Food Sheath. It has emerged from the essence of food assimilated by the father and nourished in the womb by the food taken by the mother. It continues to exist because of food consumed and ultimately, after death, goes back to fertilize the earth and becomes food. The substance of the physical structure, rising from food, existing in food and going back to become food, is naturally and most appropriately termed the food sheath. The food we eat gets transformed into muscles, veins, nerves, blood and bones. If proper exercise and proper diet is given the *Annamayakoṣa* develops well. The signs of healthy development are fitness, agility, stamina and endurance. A person having these qualities can easily master motor skills and has good eye hand co-ordination. Food taken is transformed into various nutritious elements and makes us grow physically. Regular eating habits, right kind of food, all types of exercises and games, jogging, running, walking and *āsanas* facilitate the development of *Annamayakoṣa*.

2) Prāṇamayakoṣa: the vital sheath

The *Pañca Prāṇas*, which are corresponding to the five physiological systems described in *Āyurveda*, represent the vital sheath. These activities which support the body take place as a result of the air that we breathe in. As long as this vital principle exists in the organisms, life continues. *Prāṇāyāma* and breathing exercises improve the quality of *Prāṇamayakoṣa*. Hence it is termed as the vital sheath. The five *Prāṇas* that comprise this sheath include the following:

- i) *Prāṇa* (related to faculty of perception): It controls the perceptions of the fivefold stimuli received from the external environment through the five sense organs.
- ii) *Apāna* (the faculty of excretion): All things thrown out of body or rejected by the body such as septum, perspiration, urine, faeces, etc. are expressions of *apāna*.
- iii) *Samāna* (the faculty of digestion): Digests the food collected in the stomach.
- iv) *Vyāna* (the faculty of circulation): The power by which the nutrients resulting from the digested food are properly conveyed to the various limbs of the body through the blood stream.
- v) *Udāna* (the faculty of thinking): The capacity in an individual to raise his thoughts from their present level so as to conceive a possibility of or appreciate a new principle or idea-the capacity of self-education. These five faculties gradually weaken as people advance in age. The Vital Sheath controls and

regulates the food sheath. When the *prāṇas* do not function properly, the physical body is affected. The signs of healthy development of *Prāṇamayakoṣa* are enthusiasm, ability to use voice effectively, suppleness of body, perseverance, leadership, discipline, honesty and nobility.

3) Manomayakoṣa: the mind sheath

Manomaya is composed of *manas* or mind. It includes thinking, feeling and willing. The mind along with the five sensory organs tastes, (tongue), smell (nose), vision (eyes), hearing (ear), and touch (skin), is said to constitute the *Manomayakoṣa* or “mind-sheath”. It is the cause of diversity. Man’s bondage is caused by the mind, and liberation, too, is caused by that alone. The *Manomayakoṣa* is the mental faculty that receives all the sensory inputs, interprets them as good or bad and desires the good. This *koṣa* is much more powerful than the preceding two *koṣas* and governs them and is, in turn, governed by the two *koṣas* superior to it. It is thus central to human existence. Many modalities of treatment like aroma, music, colour, placebo therapy, shamanism work in this *koṣa*. Homeopathic medicines in the higher potencies also influence this *koṣa*. The mind regulates the *Prāṇamayakoṣa* or Vital Sheath. For example, when the mind is upset due to some shock, the functions of *prāṇas* and the body are affected. Mind interprets the impressions of sense organs. It stores good and bad memories of the past. It is possible to increase the strength of mind by regular prayer, making resolutions and keeping them up. There is a deep relationship between mind, intellect and body. For the development of *Manomayakoṣa* study of good literature including poems, novels, essays and articles is useful.

4) Vijñānamayakoṣa: the intellect sheath

Vi jñānamaya is composed of *Vi jñāna*, or intellect, the faculty which discriminates, determines or wills. It is the sheath composed of more intellection, associated with the organs of perception. This intellect sheath cannot be the supreme Self for the following reasons; it is subject to change, it is insentient, it is a limited thing, it is not constantly present.

The mind (*manas*) is that which receives the external stimuli through sense organs and communicates the responses to the organs of action. Though the stimuli received through the five sense organs are distinct and different from one another, an integrated experience of them is brought about by the mind. The intellect (*buddhi*) is the discriminating and discerning process which examines and judges the stimuli received. It also communicates to the mind its decision about the type of responses to be executed. The mind associates the impressions with pleasantness or unpleasantness based on memory. The intellect however, with its capacity to think, takes a rational decision which may not be liked by the mind but is ultimately beneficial to the person. The mind is the storehouse of all memories and knowledge. This storehouse of experience is the guiding factor in man's actions. The mind can also be described as the seat of emotions and the intellect is to examine the areas in which they operate. The mind has the capacity to travel only to the 'realms known' but the intellect, besides remaining in the realms known, can further penetrate into the 'realms unknown' to investigate, contemplate and comprehend new discoveries.

5) Ānandamayakoṣa: the bliss sheath

It is considered blissful, because, whatever be the condition in which we are in our waking and dream states, once we reach, all of us experience relatively the same undisturbed peace and bliss due to the cessation of agitation experienced by us when we are awake or dreaming. The Bliss Sheath controls the intellect. When all the other

koṣas are well developed we experience harmony between the inner Self and the outer world. This harmony gives us a sense of joy and bliss. The five sheaths are like the layers of clothes worn by a person which are totally different from the wearer. So too, the *Ātmā* or the real Self is distinct and separate from the five outer layers.

Laghu Yoga Vāsīṣṭha on health and diseases

Laghu Yoga Vāsīṣṭha, a *HaṭhaYogic* treatise, says that in the event of a disturbed *Manomayakoṣa* (mind) the *Prāṇamayakoṣa* gets disturbed. Consequently, the *Nāḍīs*, through which *prāṇa* flows, get disturbed. It results into *prāṇa* getting more and more disturbed. The food taken in such a disturbed state would get turned into 'poison' for want of various digestive juices getting depleted due to the ensuing stress. There arise three types of problems, viz. indigestion, non-digestion and over digestion. The remedies recommended are service to the sages, chanting of mantras, not keeping late hours at night and such other measures that help mind becoming calm and *prāṇa* getting restored to its normal function.

Pañca-koṣa Viveka of *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* denotes the holistic view of human organism wherein the inter-dependence of body, *prāṇa*, mind, intellect and inner bliss has been

indicated. One has to transcend all these levels of existence, through certain Yoga practices, before attaining the Self realization.

Potential causes of ill health

According to Yoga, causes of sickness or ill health are generally noted as impurities on the level of mind, body and speech. Your own speech can create distress in you as well as other people around you. Even distress or discomfort should be treated as an illness. Body, mind and spirit are like a tripod – even if one aspect isn't functioning properly, our life will not be balanced and that will lead to ill health. Yoga (a component of *Āyurveda*) is that link which creates a harmony by aligning all the three components (body, mind and spirit) into one. This harmony, in turn exists to support life.

Pātañjala Yoga Sūtras reflect that root cause of ill health is mostly mental. The *sūtra* PYS-I: 31 indicates – *Duḥkha-daurmanasya-aṅgamejayatva-śvāsa-prasvāsa-vikṣepasahabhavaḥ* (P.Y.S., 1.31). This means pain and misery, mental depression, tremors of the body parts and disturbances of inhalation and exhalation are the accompaniments of disturbances of *Citta*. The disturbances of *Citta* are internal and many of these are not easily perceptible. But their presence can be inferred from accompanying external symptoms. These are enumerated in the present *sūtra*. One or more of these will always be present. When any *Citta-vikṣepa* is there, the presence and even intensity of the latter can be adjudged from the degree of activity of these external concomitant symptoms. Since these *sahabhavaḥ* (accompaniments) are the results of *Citta-vikṣepas*, certain techniques, which can control the former, will be helpful in removing latter also. The first two *sahabhavaḥ* are somewhat mental, yet they will have effect on the body, which would, therefore, serve as easy means for the detection of the hidden and subtler *Cittavikṣepas*. The latter two are direct changes occurring in the body and easily noticeable.

Duḥkha means both physical pain as well as mental misery. The latter may often produce the former or at least lead to physical discomfort. Such bodily pains or discomforts can be easily detected by gestures of very frequent readjustment of posture of the person.

Vyādhi (physical disease) is considered as one of the nine obstacles (*antarāya*) to integrative oneness of Yoga (*samādhi*). Maharṣi Patañjali (Yoga Sūtra 1.30) enumerates manifest symptoms such as *duḥkha* (mental or physical pain), *daurmanasya* (sadness or dejection), *aṅgamejayatva* (anxious tremor) and *śvāsa-prasvasah* (respiratory irregularities) as concomitant expressions of mental disturbances (Yoga Sūtra 1.31).

These *antarāyas* are one of the major causes of disintegration (*vyādhi*) according to Gharote, an eminent Yoga expert of Kaivalyadhāma. He has described *Samādhi* as the ideal state of health which is disturbed by the *cittavikṣepa* (disturbances in mind) due to the *kleṣas* and *antarāyas*. He has further stated that mind is responsible for bondage and liberation as well as happiness and unhappiness. According to him the purpose of Yoga is to lessen the impact of these factors (*kleśatanukaraṇam*) and promote the state of integration (*Samādhi bhavanam*). Maharṣi Patañjali gives us a clue to control the mental agitation by advising us to concentrate on slow and deep flow of respiration to still the mind (*pracchardana-vidhāraṇābhyaṃ-vā prāṇasya* – Yoga Sūtra 1.34). He also advises concentration on a painless inner state of luminosity to produce stability and tranquillity (*viśokā vā jyotiṣmatī* – Yoga Sūtra 1.36).

Patañjali has also explained the primary causation of stress based disorders through concept of *pañcakleśa* (psychological afflictions). These are *avidyā* (ignorance of the

ultimate reality leading to bodily identification), *asmī tā* (a false sense of identification), *rāga-dveṣa* (addiction and aversion), *abhīniveśa* (clinging on to life for fear of death), (*avidyāsmī tārāgadveśābhīniveśāḥ kleśāḥ* – Yoga Sūtra II.3). *Avidyā* as the root cause enables other *kleśas* to manifest in different forms from time to time. They may be

dormant, attenuated, manifest, or overpowering in their causation of pain and suffering. (*avidyā kṣetram-uttareṣāṃ prasuptatanu-vicchinodārāṇām* – Yoga Sūtra II.4). From the Yogic viewpoint of disease, it can be seen that psychosomatic, stress related disorders appear to progress through four distinct phases. These can be understood as follows:

- **Psychic Phase:** This phase is marked by mild but persistent psychological and behavioral symptoms of stress like irritability, disturbed sleep and other minor symptoms. This phase can be correlated with *Vijñānamaya* and *Manomayakoṣas*. Yoga as a therapy is very effective in this phase.
- **Psychosomatic Phase:** If the stress continues there is an increase in symptoms, along with the appearance of generalized physiological symptoms such as occasional hypertension and tremors. This phase can be correlated with *manomaya* and *prāṇamayakoṣas*. Yoga as a therapy is very effective in this phase.
- **Somatic Phase:** This phase is marked by disturbed function of organs, particularly the target, or involved organ. At this stage one begins to identify the diseased state. This phase can be correlated with *prāṇamaya* and *annamayakoṣas*. Yoga as a therapy is less effective in this phase and may need to be used in conjunction with other methods of treatment.
- **Organic Phase:** This phase is marked by full manifestation of the diseased state, with pathological changes such as an ulcerated stomach or chronic hypertension, becoming manifest in their totality with their resultant complications. This phase can be correlated with the *annamayakoṣa* because the disease has become fixed in the physical body. Yoga as a therapy has a palliative and quality of life improving effect in this phase. It does also produce positive emotional and psychological effects even in terminal and end of life situations. Often, however, the early stages of the disease process are overlooked and the final stage is seen as an entity unto itself, having little relationship to one's living habits and patterns. This is because modern medicine only looks at the physical aspects and neglects effects of *pañcakōṣa* and *trīśarīra* on health and disease.

One of the major Indian concepts of disease causation is the imbalances of *tridoṣa*. This is found in numerous classical texts of Yoga and *Āyurveda* like *Śiva Svarodaya*, *Suśruta Saṁhitā*, *Caraka Saṁhitā* and *Tirumandiram*. According to the Dravidian poet-saint Tiruvaluvar, disease results from *tridoṣa* (*vāta*, *pitta*, *kapha*) imbalance. *Vāta* is the energy of the body that moves like the wind and causes flow in the body. It may be related to the nervous system as well as joints that enable us to move. *Pitta* is related to bilious secretion and is the cause of heat in the body. It is the energy of catabolism that is essential for digestion. *Kapha* is the glue that holds everything together and is the energy of anabolism helping generative and regenerative processes. As they move out of balance, they affect particular areas of our bodies in characteristic ways. When *vāta* is out of balance—typically in excess—we are prone to diseases of the large intestines, like

constipation and gas, along with diseases of nervous system, immune system, and joints. When pitta is in excess, we are prone to diseases of the small intestines, like diarrhoea, along with diseases of the liver, spleen, thyroid, blood, skin, and eyes. When *kapha* is in excess, we are prone to diseases of the stomach and lungs, most notably mucous conditions, along with diseases of water metabolism, such as swelling. Practice of Yoga at dusk relieves *kapha*, practice at noon relieves *vāta* and practice in morning relieves *pitta* disorders. (anjanampondrudalaiyarumandiyilevanjaga vathamaramaddiyaanatthirsenjirukaalaiyirseithidirpittarumnanjarasonnomnaraithirainaas ame–Tirumandiram 727).

According to *Śivasvarodaya*, a classical text on *Svara Yoga*, disease develops when *svara* (smooth and regular air flow) in the nostrils do not adhere to their fixed timings and days. Normally *svara* flows in the nostrils in a certain pattern according to phases of the lunar cycle. It is also said that in case a disease develops due to erroneous functioning of *svara*, then a correction of that malfunctioning can cure that disease. The use of different techniques is also advocated for changing *svara* to eliminate various disorders. Yoga Vāsiṣṭha, a great text of Yoga describes causation and manifestation of disease in a very logical way. It attributes all psychic disturbances and physical ailments to the fivefold elements (*pañca mahābhūta*) in a manner similar to other systems of Indian medicine. *Sāmānya ādhi javyādhi* are described as those arising from day-today causes while *Sārādhijavyādhi* is the essential disease of being caught in the birth – rebirth cycle that can be understood in modern terms as congenital diseases. The former can be corrected by day-to-day remedial measures such as medicines and surgery whereas the *Sārādhijavyādhi* doesn't cease until knowledge of the Self (*atmajñāna*) is attained. The Guru Stotra from the *Viśvasāra Tantra* also takes a similar view in saying that the ultimate 'wisdom of the Self' gained through the Guru destroys karmic bondages from many births (*aneka-janma-samprāpta-karma-bandha-vidhāyine ātmajñānapradānena tasmai śrigurave namaḥ*: Guru Stotra, verse 9).

Yoga Vāsiṣṭha gives an elaborate description of the mechanism by which psychosomatic disorders occur. Mental confusion leads to agitation of *prāṇa* (life force) and haphazard flow along *nāḍis* resulting in depletion of energy and / or clogging up of these channels of vital energy. This leads to disturbance in the physical body with disturbances of metabolism, excessive appetite and improper functioning of the entire digestive system. Natural movement of food through the digestive tract is arrested giving rise to numerous physical ailments. We need to remember that this text is many thousands of years old whereas the concept of psychosomatic disorders in modern medicine has only been realized and accepted in recent times. Our ancient seers had great inner vision and it is up to us to coin their dreams and understand the great message they have left for humanity.

Yoga Maharṣi Swami Gitananda Giri, founder of Ānanda Āshram at Pondicherry has written extensively about the relationship between health and disease. He says, "Yoga views the vast proliferation of psychosomatic diseases as a natural outcome of stress and strain created by desire fostered by modern propaganda and abuse of the body condoned on all sides even by religion, science, and philosophy. Add to this the synthetic "junk food" diet of modern society and you have the possibility of endless disorders developing...even the extinction of man by his own ignorance and misdeeds". He explains the root cause of disease as follows. "Yoga, a holistic, unified concept of

oneness, is *advaitam* or non-dual in nature. It suggests happiness, harmony and ease. Disease is created when duality or *dvaitam* arises in the human mind. This false concept of duality has produced all conflicts of human mind and the vast list of human disorders. Duality (disease) is the primary cause of man's downfall.

Tiruvalluvar has emphasized the link between overeating and disease by saying, "the one who eats on an empty stomach gets health while with the greedy glutton abides illhealth" (*izhivuarindhuunbaankaninbampolnirkumkazhiperiraiyaankannoi*- Tirukkural 946). He also warns us that those who eat beyond the level of hunger will suffer from untold hardships (*theeyalavuandriththeriyaanperithuunninnoialavuindrippadum*- Tirukkural 947). He advises all doctors to look for the disease, then look for its root cause and finally search the remedy for the underlying cause.

(*noinaadinoimudhalnaadiathuthanikkumvaainaadivaippachcheyal*-Tirukkural 948).

Yoga understands that physical ailments that are not of a psychosomatic nature can be easily managed with surgery, medication, prayers, and lifestyle modifications as required. Various Yoga techniques may also be used to help correct the physical ailments and restore health with regeneration, recuperation and rehabilitation as necessary.

Accident prevention is an important benefit of a Yoga life, for better alertness, reflexes and physical condition enables one to prevent accidents as well as avoid getting traumatized both physically and mentally by such occurrences. In addition to its preventive and restorative capabilities, Yoga also aims at promoting positive health that will help us to tide over health challenges that occur during our lifetime. Just as we save money in a bank to tide over financial crisis, so also we can build up our positive health balance to help us manage unforeseen health challenges with faster recovery and recuperation. This concept of positive health is one of Yoga's unique contributions to modern health care 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.

Yogic principles of healthy living (āhāra, vihāra, ācāra, vicāra)

"Health is wealth" is an established fact. To live a healthy life entails to do healthy things and follow a healthy lifestyle. The modern world is facing a pandemic of lifestyle disorders that require changes to be made consciously by individuals themselves. Yoga places great importance on a proper and healthy lifestyle. Its main components are:

1. *Ācāra-better mental health through right ācāra (daily routines)* – Yoga stresses the importance of healthy activities such as exercise and recommends āsana, prāṇāyāma and kriyās on a regular basis. "It is advisable to keep up with the right routines. It is of utmost importance to stick to timing of work, meals, exercise and sleep. Sun is a good example of Ācāra. Cardio respiratory health is one of the main by-products of such healthy activities.

2. *Vicāra-better intellectual health through right vicāra (thoughts)*. –Right thoughts and right attitude towards life is vital for our well-being. A balanced state of mind is obtained by following the moral restraints and ethical observances (yama-niyama). As Mahatma Gandhi said, "there is enough in this world for everyone's need but not enough for any one person's greed".

3. *Āhāra* – "Annam Brahma" – Food is Brahman. Yoga emphasizes need for a healthy,

nourishing diet that has an adequate intake of fresh water along with a well-balanced intake of fresh food, green salads, sprouts, unrefined cereals and fresh fruits. It is important to be aware of the need for a **sāttvika** diet, prepared and served with love and affection.

When to eat?

Ancient literature says one should break one's night long fast at the time of sunrise and end one's last main meal at the time of sunset.

- Eat breakfast like a king: Whatever we eat in the morning is absorbed and assimilated to the maximum. So morning food should be full of nutrition.
 - Lunch like a prince: Food taken during lunch should be easily digestible.
 - Evening snacks: Food of any taste – whatever one likes – can be taken at this time.
 - Dinner like a Pauper: Dinner should be the lightest meal of the day.
- What to Eat? “As is the food, so is the mind; as is the mind, so is the man”.
- Sāttvika Food – Eating easily digestible food, brings relaxation and a feeling of peace.
 - Rājasika Food – This food is high energy giving difficult to digest and leaves one in a disturbed state of mind. It should be avoided.
 - Tāmasika Food – Stale and cooked over long periods make a person feel dull, inert, lazy, and lethargic. It should be avoided.

4. Vih@ra – “better emotional health through vih@ra” Proper recreational activities to relax body and mind are essential for good health. This includes proper relaxation, maintaining quietude of action speech- thoughts and group activities wherein one loses the sense of individuality. Karma Yoga is an excellent method for losing the sense of individuality and gaining a sense of universality. Active creative hobbies release pent up emotions and recharges the mind. Activities such as gardening, playing a musical instrument, singing songs or poetry, drawing and painting or hobbies which one likes would help create joy. Nature walks to garden, sea shore, near a lake or river side or a hill top in the morning or evening time in sunshine could also rejuvenate body, mind and soul. Simple playful activities like playing or throwing ball/ring to each other or play dough ball where laughing and giggling may happen playing such games regularly could also help rejuvenate body and mind and soul. Playing with children or involving in children's activities can also help relax and rejuvenate. After long and hard physical and mental work conscious relaxation practices of Haṭha Yoga including śavāsana or nispandabhāva would help relax and rejuvenate oneself. Conscious relaxation would also include good quality of sleep where body should be able to comfortably relax and mind should be **quiet and calm.**

Integrated approach of Yoga for management of health

The disturbances in the *Manomayako* □a percolates into the physical layer (*Annamayako* □a) through the *Prāñamayako* □a. Hence, in the treatment of these psychosomatic ailments it becomes mandatory to work at all these levels of our existence to bring about the quickest results. The integrated approach, thus, consists in not only dealing with physical sheath, the relief of which could at best be temporary as is

happening with the drugs used in modern medicine to treat diseases of the psychosomatic type like asthma, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, etc. it also includes using techniques to operate on different sheaths of our existence. The large number of Yoga practices available in the texts of Yoga and *Upaniṣads* are adopted to balance and harmonise the disturbances at each of the five *koṣas* and tackle this type of complex psychosomatic ailments. Each activities relating to different *Koṣas* are given below which can be used to ensure an integrated personality management.

A. Practices at Annamayakoṣa (the physical layer)

A healthy Yogic diet, *kriyās*, loosening exercises and *Yogāsanas* are used to operate at the *Annamayakoṣa* level and to remove the physical symptoms of the ailments.

i) *Kriyās* – These are Yogic processes described in Haṭha Yoga to cleanse the inner organs of our body. They bring about the following effects (a) Activating and revitalising the organs, (b) Toning up their functions, (c) Desensitization, and (d) Development of deep internal awareness. Among the major *kriyās* enumerated in the texts of Yoga, simplified versions of a few *kriyās* like catheter *neti*, *jala neti*, *kapālabhāti*, *agnisāra*, *vamanadhauti* (*kuñjal kriyā*), etc. are used extensively.

ii) *Physical exercises and movements – śithilīkaraṇa vyāyāma*

Very simple physical movements to mobilise and activate the affected parts of the body are used. Some easy physical exercises are adopted to fulfil the needs of the particular ailments to (a) loosen the joints (b) stretch and relax the muscles, (c) improve the power, and (d) develop stamina.

iii) *Yogāsanas – postures*

Yogāsanas are physical postures often imitating the natural positions of the animals meant to make the mind tranquil. Through these postures, the physical revitalization and deep relaxation and mental calmness are achieved.

B. Practices at Prāṇamayakoṣa (the layer of prāṇa)

Prāṇa is the basic life principle. *Prāṇāyāma* is a process for gaining control over *Prāṇa*. The five manifestations of *Prāṇa* and the corresponding most comprehensive definition of *Prāṇāyāma* in the human system are described in *Prāṇopaniṣad*. Also the conventional *Prāṇāyāma* through regulation of breath is described therein.

Through the practice of proper breathing, *Kriyās* and *Prāṇāyāma* we start operating on the *Prāṇamayakoṣa*. Suitable types of *Prāṇāyāma* and breathing help to remove the random agitations in *prāṇika* flows in the *Prāṇamayakoṣa*. Thus, the ailments are handled at this *Prāṇamayakoṣa* level.

C. Practices at Manomayakoṣa (The mental layer)

i) *Dhāraṇā and dhyāna*

A direct operation on this level is made possible by the last three limbs of *Aṣṭāṅga* Yoga of Patañjali – *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi*. The culturing of mind is accomplished by focusing the mind (*Dhāraṇā*) initially on some object

or image, followed by relaxed dwelling of the mind in a single thought (*Dhyāna*) for longer and longer durations leading ultimately to super-consciousness (*Samādhi*). A progressive habituation allows the mind to remain relaxed during the period of meditation (*Dhyāna*). The benefits of Transcendental Meditation, a simple standardised technique, are numerous, interesting and noteworthy. Its application to treat many psychosomatic ailments has become popular.

ii) *Emotion culture*

To handle and gain control over the basic cause for mental agitations, we use the Yoga techniques that control our emotions.

A devotional session containing Prayers, Chants, Bhajanas, Nāmāvalis, Dhunas, Stotras etc., help to build a congenial atmosphere to evoke, recognise, attenuate and dissipate the emotions. Thus, control over emotions is obtained through the devotional session. The emotional imbalances and upsurges are eliminated by such control.

D. Practices at Vijñānamayoḥa (The layer of wisdom)

As Bhṛgu reports to Varuṇa about this wonderful discovery, the master is happy but he says “Please move on. You have just a few steps to go ahead, you are in the right direction.” Now through intense long tapas, Bhṛgu realises that it is all the *Vijñāna* (knowledge) from which the entire creation has happened and that could be the final reality.

Vijñānamayoḥa is the fourth layer of our existence. We all have two minds. For e.g., when the *Manomayoḥa* said that "It is a beautiful rose, I want to have it" and you started instructing your hands to pick up the flower, the inner mind said "Sorry, you cannot pluck that flower; it does not belong to you; it is from the neighbour's garden" and you stopped the action. This conscience within that continuously guides us to do a thing or not to do a thing is the *Vijñānamayoḥa*. It is this component of the mind that has developed in human race greatly that differentiates man from animals.

Bhartṛhari brings out this point as to how the higher faculty, the *Vijñānamayoḥa* continuously guides the *Manomayoḥa* to get mastery over the basic instincts which are eating, mating, fearing and sleeping. Hence in man we know that, even these basic instincts are all psychological. For example, we have lost the cyclical behaviour as in animals who get into reflex oestrus cycles (heat) for sexual behaviour. This freedom element which is inbuilt in a human being, guides him to discriminate what is “good and bad”, “right and wrong”, “useful and not useful” to move towards long term *sukha* (happiness). Thus, *Vijñānamayoḥa* is the discriminating faculty.

A basic understanding is the key to operate from *Vijñānamayoḥa*. *Upaniṣads* are the treasury of such knowledge which is the redeemer of all miseries and obsessions. It is the lack of that inner *Jñāna* which is responsible for many wrong habits, agitations, etc. The Happiness Analysis – *Ānanda Mīmāṃsā* of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* handles the most fundamental problem relevant to all living creatures. The analysis systematically leads the reader to that substratum from which *Prāṇa*

and mind emerge – the *Ānandamayakoṣa*. It helps the person to change his attitude of greed and deep attachment to material possessions and enjoyments towards the realisation that happiness is within and ‘each one of us’ in our causal state is ‘*ānanda*’ embodied. As a result, man’s outlook in life changes. Knowledge burns the strong attachments, obsessions, likes and dislikes which are the basic reasons for the agitations of mind. The *sāra* type of *ādhis* can only be removed by this knowledge (*ātma-jñāna* or *Self-realisation*).

E. Practices at Ānandamayakoṣa (the layer of bliss)

Varuṇa now directs the son to go back to tapas and this time Bhṛgu never returns. The master goes to check why the son has not come back. He was surprised to see that Bhṛgu is completely engrossed in deep *Ānanda* (bliss). There is no individual 'I' of the *Vi-jñāna* or *Manomayakoṣa* that can report to the father about his realisation. Bhṛgu is now established in the knowledge of the final truth that *Ānanda* is the basic stuff of this universe from which everything has been created.

This is called *Ānandamayakoṣa* – the bliss layer of our existence. This is the most subtle aspect of our existence which is devoid of any form of emotions; a state of total silence – a state of complete harmony, and perfect health.

While in *Manomayakoṣa* the creative power predominates, in *Vi-jñānamayakoṣa* it is the power to discern and discriminate. Bliss is embodied in *Ānandamayakoṣa*, the highest stage of evolution in the manifested existence. It is the subtlest among the five layers of existence. In his journey towards the Ultimate, man crosses these koṣas of existence one by one. Through analysis called ‘*Pañcakoṣa-viveka*’ (knowing through experience, one’s five *koṣas* of existence) and the associated practices called ‘*tapas*’ man transforms himself by gradually getting relieved from the bondages and constrictions of each *koṣa*. This is one of the methods of reaching the ultimate goal enumerated and described in the *Upaniṣads*.

To bring the bliss of our causal body (*Kāraṇa śarīra*) called *Ānandamayakoṣa* in all our actions is the key for a very happy and healthy life. This also brings our innate healing powers to effect, a complete cure of our ailments. The techniques used come under the heading *Karma Yoga*, the secret of action.

The secret lies in maintaining an inner silence, equipoise at the mental level as we perform all our actions. Normally we get upset, or excited over things which we do not like or we like. But we have to learn to maintain equipoise (*samatva*). The next step is to have a deep silence and a blissful awareness in the inner subtler layers of our mind while we are in action.

This is accomplished by self awareness, constant drive to change oneself and autosuggestions.

To recognise that ‘I am getting tensed’ is the first step. Correct by withdrawing to the inner compartment of total bliss, peace and rest. Remember this by repeated inner silence several times in the day. Retain a smiling relaxed face during all the Yoga practices.

Koṣa Stage Actions

Annamayakoṣa Organic body Download movies, Upload family pictures to facebook,

parties on weekends

Prāṇamayakoṣa Energy body, vitality Sports, Attend Yoga

workshops for health purpose

Manomayakoṣa Psychic body, thoughts
and feelings

Help people, participate in
social activities (not parties)

Vi jñānamayakoṣa Intellectual body,
spiritual discrimination
and wisdom

Seeking knowledge

Ānandamayakoṣa Body of joy, pure
consciousness and bliss

State of blissful being, Body
is still within awareness.

Sensory feedback phenomenon in Yoga for psychophysiological health

Our sensory nerves bring impulses, associated with (i) outside world, as well as, (ii) from within the body itself, through all sensory organs and make these impulses available to the higher centres of the brain. Exteroceptive impulses are implicated with our environment, outside the body, and interoceptive impulses are implicated with the changes taking place in internal body functions. Interoceptive impulses are of two types: proprioceptive (concerning movements in the joints, body positions and a general awareness associated with muscular system) and viscerosensitive (impulses are associated with our visceral organs). Significantly, to a larger extent, the interoceptive impulses do not enter into the sphere of our consciousness because of reflex actions and autonomic functions being associated with lower centres of the nervous system. Yoga practices, if practised in the classical manner, bring these internal sensations to the conscious level. The ensuing sensory feedback phenomenon brings a far better conscious control on all our internal activities. Yoga techniques increase our field of comprehensive awareness, including even the subtle-most internal activities, by virtue of the enhanced inward awareness. Thus, a Yoga practitioner achieves an ability to control and regulate the functioning of the internal organs to a significant level. Psycho-physiological effects of **Yoga, claimed in Hatha Yogic texts, point toward these phenomena quite convincingly.**

Stress management through Yoga and Yogic dietary considerations

Stress is a maladaptive response pattern, characteristic to the individual concerned, to his

perceived and overpowering psycho-physiological, psycho-social and bio-ecological demands.

The stress, according to *Pātañjala Yoga Sūtra (P.S.Y.)*, can be defined as “a state of psycho-physiological imbalance experienced due to identification with one’s modifications of mind emanating from our existential afflictions (termed as *Kleśas*) and precipitated by social environments and psycho-physiological response patterns.”

How stress is alleviated through Yoga?

Yoga does not subscribe to the *eustress-distress* dichotomy. It believes that mental

dynamics can be calmed down completely (*P.Y.S. I.2*) so as to realize one's Transcendental Self here and now (*P.Y.S. I.3*). This transcendental state of consciousness is considered in Yogic literature as creative and far above the mundane stresses of life and living. To whatever extent we realize the transcendental state, we move away from our identification with modifications of mind to that extent. It follows that whatever progress we make in our Yoga practice we are bound to get corresponding psychophysiological balance. This brings about an equanimity (*Bhagvadgītā 2:47*) wherein all our actions become skilful and creative (*Bhagvadgītā 2:49*). Thus, a positive health, devoid of all vitiated mental dynamics and endowed with a continual sense of growth and fulfilment, can be realized by the Yoga practitioner. Thus, the stresses are *no more* perceived as overpowering by the Yoga *sādhaka*, due to his changed attitude & perception towards the stresses, as an effect of Yoga practices.

Prāna-samīyamana (canalization of energy dynamics) through dietary considerations

Haṭha Pradīpikā (II: 2) says the *citta* and *prāṇa* are interdependent. Correction in one leads to correction in another. *Prāṇa* forms the base for all physiological functions and all physiological functions are predominantly governed by nervous system, respiratory system and digestive system. Abnormal functioning of these systems, therefore, affects adversely the functional substance of human organism indicating an abnormal functioning of *Prāṇa*. Disturbed *Prāṇa* known as *Viśūci Prāṇa* also vitiates the functioning of mind. This vicious cycle may render human being fully prone to baser feelings, thinking, and behaviour. For this reason, too salty, sour, pungent, hot and spicy food should be avoided as they stimulate and irritate the nervous system. Non-vegetarian food items, as a general rule, for the same reason, need to be shunned altogether. Almost all Yogic scriptures subscribe to the premise that a conscious calming-down of psychophysiological

functions would only make the *Prāṇa* a function optimally in our way to Positive Health. *Pātāñjala Yoga*, through *Yama* and *Niyama*, as well as, *Haṭha Yoga*, through its advice to 'keep away from too intimate public contact, have the same message to convey. A meaningfully moderate social life and a harmonious social

adjustment are pre-requisites to keeping our psychophysiology on a right keel. It spells an ideal *Prāṇa* functioning within human body.

Dietetic considerations can amply contribute to purifying our mind-stuff and would, in the process, make us transcend our enduring mental complexes, as claimed in *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* (VI: 28) below:

"From the purity of food follows the purity of the internal organs. From the purification of the internal organs comes unfailing memory of the infinite. Achievement of memory results in falling asunder all the knots/disorders of one's psycho-physiology" (*Cha. Up. VII. 26-2*).

Regarding dietetic considerations, *Bhagvadgītā*, *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā* and *Haṭhapradīpikā* are in a perfect agreement in the following respect:

"Foods that augment life, firmness of mind, strength, health and happiness; which are

succulent, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable are dear to one endowed with *Sattva guṇa* (*Bhagvadgītā* (XVII: 8))”.

Rationale of Yogic diet

Yoga practices involve increased sensory input signifying high level of sensory activity in the nervous system making it sensitive and delicate at certain stages of the practices. This influences our overall feeling-thinking-behavioural pattern, directing it towards deeper states of consciousness. Naturally, in the face of internal stimulation of the nervous system one must withdraw irritating factors like salts, condiments, wines, meat, egg and fish, smoking, and eating very hot and very cold food articles. Non-vegetarian food items contain sodium that irritates nervous system. A mild polyunsaturated fatty acid in cow's milk, butter and ghee, myelinates nerve fibres with lipid deposition, facilitating a better nerve conduction, and at the same time keeps the nervous systems tranquil and healthy.

It is interesting to note that neuro-transmitters are in micro quantity. Also, electrical energy at synapses is in milli-volts. It conforms to the scriptural claim in *Śiva Samhitā* (V.23) that says that the finest extract of the food goes to nourish the subtle body. Even *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* has the same assertion (*Cha. Up.* 6:51).

During the suspended breathing in *Prāṇāyāma* and too slow breathing in meditative practices, the nervous system loses its contact, at least partially, with the periphery in respect of motor activity, giving rise to stasis of food in Gastro-Intestinal Tract. Therefore, food items, prone to putrefaction and gas production as well as bulky food, that produce colic pain due to over-stretching of intestine and colon, should be avoided. In summary, it is quite discernible that all above mentioned Yogic methods, as well as, Yogic dietary considerations, essentially, pre-empt all personal, as well as, interpersonal conflicts and maladjustment. This indeed would spell a sound positive health.

Unit 4: Guidelines for Practicum

General guidelines for performance of the practice of Yoga for the beginners

The following are general and specific guidelines for Yogika kriyās:

1. Breathing should be as normal / natural as possible. It is not required to manipulate it. It should be allowed to get expressed in a natural way, except when you are specifically instructed to manipulate it, such as in *Kapālabhāti*, *Anuloma-Viloma*, *Ujjāyī* with specific instructions.
 2. There should not be any competitive attitude while practicing Yoga.
 3. It is also important to regulate our food, sleep, and environment. While taking meals, leave half stomach empty for water and air. This saves us from many unforeseen diseases or troubles.
 4. Females should avoid Yoga practices during menstruation or advanced stage of pregnancy.
 5. It is to your advantage to inform your teacher if you are suffering from any problems, before the start of a Yoga session.
 6. Practice in well ventilated room with a clean carpet underneath. A double folded oversized thick and moderately soft blanket, covered with a white sheet, forms an ideal āsana/seat for Yoga practice.
 7. Requirements in the case of beginners (for *Āsanas*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Mudrās* and *Bandhas*).
- For practicing any of the Yoga technique, one requires the following:
- A comfortable mat of approximately 4'x7'.
 - A calm and serene place, where fresh air is available.
 - A guide who can be a Yoga teacher, or any adept practitioner.
- For *Ṣaṭkriyās* the requirements are given with their description in this unit.

Guidelines for the practice of ṣaṭ kriyās

There are six cleansing processes described in Haṭha Yogic texts. These are *Neti*, *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Trāṭaka*, *Nauli* and *Kapālabhāti*, which require the use of water, air and manipulation of certain organs of the body.

1. *These kriyās* should be done with an empty stomach. Therefore, they should be done preferably in the morning.
2. Lukewarm water and salt should be used for *vamana dhauti* and *jala neti*.

Guidelines for the practice of āsanas

1. Broadly, the practice sequence of *Āsanas* should be standing, sitting, prone, and supine position followed by breathing practices, *Bandhas*, *Mudrās*, relaxation and meditation.
2. *Āsanas* must not be practiced in haste or by applying any sort of undue force and under an urgency.
3. Attain the final position gradually step by step and maintain the same with closed eyes for an inward awareness within the whole body.

4. Relax in between two postures while keep attending to your breathing.
5. The maintenance time of Āsana should be increased gradually.
6. Practice according to your own body limitations whereby an utmost care must be taken in increasing the extent and time of the maintenance of Āsanas.
7. Do not attempt to attain a final position right in the beginning, especially when your body is not ready sufficiently for the same.
8. Maintenance of the final posture in Āsana according to one's own conditions and in a relaxed way is more important, necessary and beneficial.
9. Body starts listening to your command only after a gradual and diligent training for a sufficient period of time.
10. During maintenance phase of Āsana there should, ideally, be no tremors or any type of discomfort.
11. Do not alter the breathing voluntarily during Āsana. Body will adjust with the breathing as per the posture being practiced
12. The practitioner has to follow instructions sincerely and practice them with an optimal attention.
13. By continuing the practice uninterruptedly after a few days one will be positively able to experience the effect of Yoga practice, at the level of mind-body complex. If, however, due to some reasons the regularity is disturbed then one should resume the practice with minimum of maintenance time.
14. Yogic practices involve de-conditioning and re-conditioning processes and therefore, initially, one may feel little fatigued after the practice but within a few days body and mind get attuned and one starts experiencing a feeling of well-being and happiness within a few days again.

Guidelines for the practice of prāṇāyāma

1. *Prāṇāyāma* is related with the most important and delicate system of the body, i.e. respiratory system and cardiovascular system.
2. *Prāṇāyāma* is a special *Haṭha Yogic* practice in which we are working with our respiration and manipulate, control and prolong the same. *Haṭhapradīpikā* declares that control over respiration results into control over mind (*Haṭhapradīpikā*, Lesson II, Verse No. 2).
3. *Haṭha* texts caution “Just as a wild animal like tiger, lion or an elephant is tamed gradually, similarly the respiration should be controlled gradually” (*Haṭhapradīpikā*, Lesson II, Verse No. 23).
4. *Prāṇāyāma* should be done preferably after the practice of *Āsanas*.
5. In the beginning one should be aware about the natural flow of the breathing.
6. Make inhalation and exhalation prolonged gradually.
7. While observing breathing attend to your abdominal movement which bulges a bit during inhalation and goes in a bit during exhalation.
8. Traditionally *Prāṇāyāma* has three phases. They are known as:
Pūraka (P) – Controlled Inhalation
Kumbhaka (K) – Controlled Retention
Recaka (R) – Controlled Exhalation
9. In the beginning stage learn to maintain 1:2 ratio of breathing which means

exhalation time should be double that of the inhalation.

10. After a prolonged practice of the 1:2 ratio, one should learn the retention of breath under the guidance of a competent teacher.

11. However, while practicing *Prāṇāyāma*, do not make haste in resorting to any of the above mentioned ideal ratio.

12. The ideal ratio according to tradition is 1(P):4(K):2(R), time unit is traditionally known as *Mātrā*. *Kumbhaka* must not be resorted to unless one has undergone sufficient practice of 1:2 ratio

13. The ideal *Mātrā* for P : K : R is

20 : 80 : 40 (for highest / best type)

16 : 64 : 32 (for average type)

12 : 48 : 24 (for lowest type)

14. *Kumbhaka* should be practiced with the application of the three Bandhas known as *Mūla Bandha*, *Jālandhara Bandha* and *Uḍḍīyāna Bandha*.

15. For the maintenance of health practicing *kumbhaka* is not necessary. As per scientific investigations the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* without *kumbhaka* is the practice of *Prāṇāyāma* with 'safety valve opened.'

16. However, one wishing to advance on the spiritual path may practice *kumbhaka* under the able guidance of a competent Yoga teacher.

Guidelines for the practice of *kriyā* Yoga

Kriyā Yoga of Kaivalyadhāma Tradition constitutes 10 or 20 rounds each of *Anuloma Viloma Prāṇāyāma*, *Om̐kāra* chanting and *Gāyatrī* mantra recitation in that order. Care should be taken to recite *Om̐kāra* or *Ameen* in such a way that recitation is in low pitch and low tone.

Guidelines for the practice of meditation

1. Practice of *Āsanās* and *Prāṇāyāma* will help in developing ability to sit in one position for a considerable period of time in meditation.

2. Select a peaceful calm and quiet place for the practice of meditation

3. Close your eyes gently to enter into an inner awareness.

4. In the first stage, sit comfortably, in a meditative posture, with head, neck and trunk properly aligned. The body should not bend forward or backward.

5. Observe your natural flow of breath with a mindfulness continued towards the touch of air within the nose walls and on the tip of nostrils.

6. As you continue with this process for some time, you may evidence an abstract and a non specific awareness of the whole body. Now continue with the whole body awareness. In the case of any difficulties, go back to the breathing awareness.

In the beginning it is generally difficult to observe the breath, if mind wanders, do not feel guilty. Slowly yet firmly focus your attention on your breath.

Select Yoga practices for persons of average health for practical Yoga sessions

Following is a recommended pool of Yoga practices out of which one can select ten or

twelve core *Āsanas* and a few other core practices for a daily practice schedule. One or two other practices can be added to the core practices, rotation-wise in such a way that the total time of the practice remains constant. Generally, the total time could be 30 min. to 45 minutes daily.

Standing position

• *Taḍāsana*

Source: This is a traditional posture.

Brief technique

Stand upright with toes together, hands by the sides of the body.

Raise both the hands up to shoulder level, maintaining the distance of hands, raise both the hands up towards sky/ ceiling. Slowly raise the heels and stand on toes and then stretch the hands upward along with the whole body.

Slowly come back in such a way that the heels are first brought on the floor before the hands are drawn back.

Do's and don'ts

Being a balancing *Āsana*, do it slowly. In the beginning legs can be kept apart.

Benefit

Helps improve height, makes spine flexible.

Works effectively against stress.

• *Vṛkṣāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā II:36.

Technique in brief

Stand upright with toes together, hands by the sides of the body.

Fold one leg at the knee and place the heel against the thigh of the other leg.

Fold both hands and adopt *Namaskāra Mudrā*.

Maintain in posture at your comfort level for sometimes, and release the pose with reverse way.

Do's and don'ts

Practice it from both the legs one by one. This is a balancing pose, therefore, do it slowly. Initially do not close eyes; else you may lose your balance.

Benefits

This improves body-mind co-ordination and general balancing mechanism of the body.

• *Lateral bending Cakrāsana*

Source: Traditionally *Cakrāsana* is a backward bending *Āsana*. Swami *Kuvalayānanda* has developed it, so as, to provide a lateral bend to the spine.

Technique in brief

Stand upright, with legs and toes together and hands by the sides of the thighs. Raise right hand up to the shoulder level, the palm facing downward. Turn the direction of palm toward ceiling and raise the hand upward until the arm touch the ear. Stretch the hand a little and start bending laterally towards other side. Maintain the posture for a while and come back to the original position.

Do's and don'ts

While bending on one side, keep the other side stretched.

Don't bend forward or backward.

Don't practice if suffering from back complaints.

Benefits

Makes the spine flexible and prevents displacement of the disc.

This posture helps to bring flexibility of spine, it tones-up nerves and side muscles.

• *Trikonāsana*

Source: Not known but this *Āsana* has come through tradition.

Technique in brief

Take the sufficient distance between both the legs. Raise both the arms straight sideways parallel to the shoulder level. While exhaling, twist the trunk laterally, bending downwards and touching the right leg with left hand. The right hand should be kept facing the sky with a relaxed gaze towards the raised hand.

Do's and don'ts

Don't bend the legs at the knee.

Benefits

Increases the flexibility of waist and hip joints.

It helps to alleviate the sciatica, backache, neck pain etc.

It helps to give a massage to the abdominal and pelvic organs.

Uḍḍīyāna

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā III : 56

This Āsana can be done in Padmāsana posture also.

Technique in brief

Uḍḍīyāna is a Yogic exercise for raising the diaphragm. This practice is called *Uḍḍīyāna* because the diaphragm is made to fly up from its original position and held very high in the thoracic cavity.

Stand upright with heels a foot apart from each others. Feet are turned a little outward and legs are slightly bent in the knee-joint. Rest hands on the knees and bend forward. Completely relax the muscles and proceed to give an upward push to the whole trunk.

Do's and don'ts

Uḍḍīyāna is always to be practised with an empty stomach.

A beginner should not make more than three attempts a day.

As this practice puts a high pressure on the heart, people suffering from heart-complaints should not take to it.

Benefits

It tones up the spinal column, back muscles and recti muscles. This pull on the back side is supplemented on the abdominal side by an upward and inward push of the rectus abdomens.

Sitting position

• *Danḍāsana*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture.

Technique in brief

Sit straight. Stretch the legs in front, toes pointing forward. Place the palms by the side of the hips on the floor, fingers pointing forward. Stretch the hands straight and keep the back erect.

Do's and don'ts

Keep the knees straight.

Contract the abdominal muscles.

Open the chest maximally.

Do not bend forward.

Do not bend the elbows.

Benefits

This posture is good for those who are having bloating sensation in the abdomen due to gases.

Reduces fats around the waist

Tones the kidneys.

It is good to stretch hamstring

.

• *Ardha Padmāsana*

Technique in brief

Take a sitting position in *Dandāsana*.
Now place the right foot in the left groin and make right heel touch the abdomen. Place hands on the knee in *Jñāna Mudrā*/ *Droṇa Mudrā*.

Do's and don'ts

In the final posture spine must be erect. Before practicing *Padmāsana* it is advisable to practice *Ardha Padmāsana*.

Do not apply undue force to take the posture.

Do not practice if stiff pain.

Benefits

Pelvic blood supply is promoted affecting beneficially the organs of that area.

This posture helps to promote better concentration due to the triangular base.

• *Parvatāsana*

Source: This *Āsana* has come through tradition.

Technique in brief

Sit in *Padmāsana*, raise both the hands parallel, straight towards sky.

Join the palms and stretch hands upward as if whole body is being lifted up.

Maintain the posture for sometimes and come back to previous position.

Do's and don'ts

Do not overstretch.

Those who cannot perform *Padmāsana*, can practice this *Āsana* in *Vajrāsana* also.

Benefits

It provides a natural traction to the spinal column. It prevents spondylitic conditions of spinal joints.

Svastikāsana (the auspicious posture)

Source: Haṭha Pradīpikā I:19

Technique in brief

Sit in *Dandāsana* with the body erect.

Stretch out both the legs in front, both the arms by the side of body.

Palms should be resting on the ground, fingers together pointing forward.

Fold the (i.e. right leg) at the knee and put it against the (left) groin, keeping the sole inside.

Fold the (left) leg at the knee and put it near the joint of the (right) thigh. Insert the toes of the (right) foot between the left thigh and calf. The big toe should project a little, visible

from outside. Left toes lie on the right leg calf. Sit in *Jñāna Mudrā*. Remain in the posture at your comfort level, and then release the posture with reverse manner. (Do similarly with left leg).

Do's and don'ts

Don't lean towards any side in the final posture. Don't cross the ankle joints to come one over the other.

Benefits

This is a meditative posture to be maintained for a long time with comfort to get concentration of mind, and breath. This posture is also good for the *Prāṇāyāma*. Ankle joints become healthy and pliant. This posture helps to supply a large amount of blood to tone-up the sacral nerves.

• *Yoga mudrā*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture.

Technique in brief

Sit in *Padmāsana*, bring both the arms back of the body.

Catch the right wrist by left palm, now bend forward from hip-joint, take trunk & head downward till the forehead touches the floor.

Do's and don'ts

Don't give jerks to the spinal column.

Don't allow the buttock to be lifted from the floor.

Benefits

The Lumbosacral Nerves and also the entire nervous system are toned-up.

Spine gets strengthened due to the stretch of the spine along with the release of tensions, particularly in the dorsal cervical areas; consequently, the spinal nerves are toned-up.

Vajrāsana

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā II:12

Brief technique

Take long sitting position in *Dandāsana*. Fold the right leg at the knee and place it below the right buttock, toes pointing inward. Similarly, fold the left leg and place it on the left buttock, hands resting on the respective knees.

Do's and don'ts

Heels will remain outside whereas toes pointing inward.

Do not sit on the heels.

Don't practice, if one is having stiff knee joint and ankle joints.

Benefits

This posture strengthens thighs and calf muscles.

Sitting in *Vajrāsana* after meals promotes a better digestion.

• *Yoga mudrāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā II:12

Technique in brief

Sit in *Vajrāsana*, make the fists and place it aside navel region.

While exhaling, bend forward from the hip joint until the forehead touches on the floor.

Do's and don'ts

Don't allow the buttock to be lifted.

Don't perform in the stomach ache situation.

Benefits

This posture strengthens thigh muscles and calf muscles. The *Vajrāsana*, conditions pelvic muscles and brings awareness to posture.

This posture helps to remove the possibility of gout, rheumatism, and arthritis in lower limbs.

This posture also tones up endocrine glands viz. adrenal gland, pancreas and ovaries.

• *Śaśāṅkāsana (the rabbit pose)*

Source: Unknown, but the traditional is old.

Technique in brief

Sit in *Vajrāsana*, while inhaling slowly raise the arms over the head. Then while exhaling slowly bend forward and stretch the palms on the floor with abdomen pressing against the thighs. Release the pose to an upright position, by reverse manner.

Do's and don'ts

Don't lift the buttock up.

Benefits

This is excellent *Āsana* for the digestive organs and visceral. It helps to strengthen the leg, thighs and back muscles. It also helps to tone up the spinal nerves.

• *Maṇḍūkāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā II:34

Technique in brief

This *Āsana* is named after the pose of a frog. The arrangement of legs resembles the hind legs of the frog.

Sit in *Vajrāsana*. The knees are taken apart to such an extent that the dorsal feet touch the ground. The toes of both the feet come face to face and touch each other. The head, neck and trunk are kept erect and the hands are rested on the respective knees. The eyes are either closed or kept open.

Do's and don'ts

Don't practice in stiff pelvic joints.

Benefits

The *Āsana* acts especially on the joints of the knees and ankles improving coordination and fluidity of movement. It benefits people suffering from constipation, diabetes and digestive disorders.

• *Uttāna Maṇḍūkāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā II:35

Technique in brief

Assuming the *Maṇḍūkāsana*, hold the head by the elbows. This frog-like uplifted position is called *Uttāna Maṇḍūkāsana*. The head surrounded by the elbows gives an appearance of the head of the frog.

Do's and don'ts

Persons suffering from backache, heartrelated problems and severe pain in the leg joints should avoid performing this posture.

Benefits

It benefits people suffering from constipation, diabetes and digestive disorders.

It improves the lung capacity, circulation in the walls of the chest and abdomen and also tones up the abdominal and

shoulder muscles. It improves the medical condition of sciatica.

- *Vakrāsana*

Source: *Āsana* was developed by Swami Kuvalayānanda. This is a simplified form of *Matsyendrāsana*.

Technique in brief

Take a long sitting position, Hands by the side of the body and palms resting on the floor. Fold right leg at the knee and place the sole on the floor by the side of left knee. Folded knee should point upward. Take right hand backward and place the palm on the floor line of spine. Take left hand towards the right side of the right knee and place the palm on the floor. Pushing the right knee towards the left side one should twist the head towards the backside. Maintain the posture for sometimes and release the posture in the reverse order

Do's and don'ts

The hand, to be placed backside, should be of the side where the leg is folded.

Benefits

This posture removes constipation, flatulence. reduces rigidity of spine and get more elasticity and flexibility.

- *The Mārjārāsana (the cat pose)*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture.

Technique in brief

Sit in *Vajrāsana*. Slowly, stand on the knees. Lean forward and place the palms flat on the floor. While inhaling raise the head and lower the spine (i.e. concave shape). Hold the pose for a while. While releasing the pose, lower the head and draw out the spine upward (Convex shape).

Do's and don'ts

The hands should be in the line of the knees. Don't bend the arms at the elbows.

Benefits

This *Āsana* helps to improve the flexibility of the spine, tones up the back and the abdominal muscles.

Prone position

- *Makarāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Samhitā II/40

Technique in brief

Take prone lying position. Keep the legs at a comfortable distance with heels inside and

toes pointing outwardly. Fold left hand at elbows, and on the right shoulder and the right hand on the left shoulder. Place the head on the cushion of the arms.

Do's and don'ts

Both elbows can be kept slightly apart if found difficult to put one above the other. Having complaint of obesity, Cardiac problems should avoid this practice.

Benefits

Traditionally, it is a relaxative posture.

It is beneficial in almost all psychosomatic disorders.

It is beneficial for respiratory organs, as well as, digestive organs.

• *Nirālambāsana*

Source: This is a modified simpler form of *Bhujāṅgāsana*.

Technique in brief

Lie flat on the stomach with toes and heels kept together and forehead on the ground.

Now raise your head

upwards allowing it

to bend backwards

gradually in the

process. Now bend

the arms at the

elbows and placing

the palms below the

cheeks for support.

The neck and

shoulders get lifted.

Remain aware towards the whole body. Keep adjusting the elbows so that tension is evenly spread out between the neck and the lower back.

Do's and don'ts

Breathe easy and close the eyes with ease.

Practice *Āsana* as per the optimal capacity without any discomfort. Avoid practicing this *Āsana* in the case of back-ache and waist pain.

Benefits

It helps in removing pain of the neck and jaws.

This posture gives rest to the body and keeps the spine and neck pliant and healthy.

It is very useful in spondylitis of lumbar region. It also maintains flexibility of backbone and gives exercise to the nerves attached to the spine. Sciatica is helped significantly.

It is very useful in asthma.

It helps attain better relaxation of mind and body.

Ardha Śalabhāsana

Source: This is a modified simpler form of *Śalabhāsana*.

Technique in brief

Lie prone on the

ground, hands by the

side of the body, chin

touching the floor.

Clench fists by the side of the body or by placing them under the groins. Press them against the ground.

Now raise one of the legs upwards after maintaining the

position for a few seconds, slowly place the upraised leg on the floor and relax. Repeat the same with the other leg.

One can assume this *Āsana* after a full inhalation and release the breath while coming back to the initial relaxed position in *Makarāsana*, if one wishes to improve upon one's lung capacity.

Do's and don'ts

A natural breath pattern is desirable during the practice

Do not tilt pelvis while raising legs.

• *Śalabhāsana*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā – II&39.

Technique in brief

Traditionally, the *Āsana* is practiced in the following way:

Palms should be placed on the either side of the chest, slowly raise both the legs together, simultaneously, head from the floor.

or

Take prone lying position with chin on the floor and fists clenched gently.

Raise both the legs together slowly about 10 to 15 inches above the floor.

Do's and don'ts

In the beginning, half clenched fists can be placed under the thighs to facilitate raising of the legs. Don't bend legs at knees.

Benefits

It strengthens the muscle of lower abdomen. Beneficial in digestion and removes constipation.

Supine position

- *Śavāsana (the dead body posture)*

Source: *Haṭhapradīpikā* I: 32 and *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā* II: 19

Brief technique

Lying supine on the floor, legs apart at a comfortable distance and hands kept at a distance of about six inches from the body, palms upwards, fingers naturally flexed and eyes closed.

Do's and don'ts

No tension in any part of the body, hence, loosen entire frame of the body. Continue awareness on natural breathing. Let the breathing be as natural as possible with attention to the abdominal movements and also on the sensations of the touch of air within the nose walls.

Benefits

It is beneficial in all psychosomatic conditions, anxiety neurosis, insomnia, and fatigue – both mental and physical.

- *Lying supine Tāḍāsana (supine palm pose)*

Brief technique

Lie on the back
in such a way
that the toes and
the heels are
kept together and
the hands placed
by the side of the
thighs. Slowly
raise the hands
straight up
beyond the head with the palms inward. Interlock the fingers and slowly stretch the body, almost passively, as much possible. Return to the original position gently.

Do's and don'ts

Do not make haste.

Avoid getting a jerk. The stretching should remain passive.

Benefits

It improves height and corrects posture as the spine becomes flexible.

It improves respiration.

It removes pain in the backbone.

It tones up the leg muscles and strengthens knees, ankles and thighs.

- *Merudaṇḍāsana (crocodile practices)*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture.

Practice 1 Practice 2

Practice 3

Technique in brief

Practice 1

Keep both the legs together, palms resting on the ground, hands by the side of the body. Spread both the hands at the shoulder level. Place the left heel in between the big toe and second toe of the right foot. Bring both the feet to the right side till left toe touches the ground. Take the head and neck towards left side. One should repeat the same on the right side.

Practice 2

Spread both the hands at the shoulder level. Fold the left leg and place ankle joint at the knee level. Bring the left leg to the right side till left leg knee touches the ground. Take the head and neck towards left side. One should repeat the same on the other side.

Practice 3

Spread both the hands at shoulder level. Raise left leg, as much as, possible upto 90° and take it to the right. Simultaneously, take the head and neck towards the left. One should repeat the same on the other side.

Do's and don'ts

Both legs should move in a synchronized manner with respect to toes and knees kept exactly side by side.

In stiff back or any complaint of back, should not be practiced.

Benefits

It is very beneficial to maintain flexibility of backbone helping in the medical conditions like spondylitis of lumbar region.

This posture is also beneficial to tone up lowers and upper extremities.

• *Uttānapādāsana*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture. This posture viewed as a preparatory practice for inverted postures like (*Ardha Halāsana*, *Viparītakarṇī*, *Sarvāṅgāsana* and *Halāsana*).

Technique in brief

Ek-pāda uttānapādāsana

Lie supine with legs together, hands by the side of the body, palms placed on floor. Raise slowly the left leg upto 60-degree angle and maintain the posture for a while. Release the posture slowly and come back to previous posture. Do with right leg similarly.

Do's and don'ts

It causes pressure and contraction at the lower abdomen; hence practice carefully.

Do not bend legs at knees while raising them upward.

Benefits

Beneficial in constipation, indigestion, nervous weakness and diabetes, It strengthens the abdominal muscles.

- *Ardha Halāsana (half plough pose)*

As in *Uttānapādāsana* raise both legs and reach upto 90 degree without bending at knees and also stopping and maintaining at 45 degree and 60 degree angles. While reaching upto 90 degree, maintain the posture for a while and slowly come back as in

Uttānapādāsana.

Do's and don'ts

Reach upto 90 degree but do not cross your own body limitation.

It should be practiced before

Viparītakaraṇī, Sarvāṅgāsana and Halāsana.

Benefits

This facilitates *Viparītakaraṇī* etc.

- *Setubandhāsana*

Source: Not exactly known.

Technique in brief

Lie supine with legs together and arms by the side of the body, palm resting on the floor. Fold both the legs at the knee; sole of the feet are on the floor and heels should be closer to the buttock. Place both the arms near to heels or hold up both the ankle joints firmly. Raise the loins and the thighs upward, as high as, comfortably possible. Keep the neck and the shoulders firmly on the floor. Maintain the posture at your comfort level and release the posture slowly.

Do's and don'ts

Do not practice if suffering from any back problems.

Benefits

It helps to cure the muscular diseases of the loins and the thighs.

It is beneficial to strengthen the lower back and abdominal muscles and opens the chest.

Relieves the tension and stiffness of the muscles through restoring their proper tone, in the process.

- *Pavanamuktāsana*

Source: Unknown, but this is a traditional posture.

Technique in brief

Lie supine with legs together and hands kept by the side of the body, palms resting on the floor. Fold both the legs at the knee over the belly.

Hold the knee by both the hands with the interlocked

fingers and press it on the belly. While exhaling, raise the head and let it touch the knee.

Do's and don'ts

It causes pressure and contraction at the lower abdomen, hence practice it carefully. Do not practice, if suffering from back complaints, visceral complaints or ailments.

Benefits

This *Āsana* helps to increase digestive power and help to release gastrointestinal problems like upset stomach and constipation by stimulating the abdominal region.

• *Viparītakaraṇī*

Source: Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā III: 31

Technique in brief

Take supine position. Raise both the legs together slowly reaching up to 90°.

Maintain for a while.

Take legs towards head by pressing the hands on the ground, lift the buttocks.

Balance and lift your hands to support the buttocks. Keep the legs straight.

While coming back, take legs little towards head, place hands on ground and slowly place buttocks on the ground.

Do's and don'ts

Practice *Uttanapādāsana* sufficiently before taking up the practice of

Viparītakaraṇī.

Don't give jerk while raising the legs and buttocks up or while coming back.

Avoid undue pressure on the palms.

Benefits

Useful in Visceroptosis, Dyspepsia.

Promotes better blood circulation in the head.

• *Ardha matsyāsana*

Lie down flat on your back – knees straight, legs and feet together.

Hands by the side of thighs, palms

downward, keep your elbows and forearms tucked-in close to the

sides of your torso,
pressing them firmly
against the floor. Lift
your chest and head
away from the floor;
arch your chest until you are sitting halfway up. Then, release your head back onto the
floor. Be sure to keep your legs straight

Kriyās

The goal of all Yogic teaching is, how to concentrate the mind, how to discover its hidden facets, how to awaken the inner spiritual faculties.

• **Śuddhi**

Śuddhi or ‘*Śodhana*’ is a very important concept in Yoga viz. *Śauca*, *Nāḍīśuddhi*, *Ghataśuddhi*, *Cittaśuddhi* are some of the well-known terms used for representing the concept of ‘*Śodhana*’. Literally translated ‘*Śodhana*’ means an internal cleansing or a purification. But in a wider sense of the term it also includes conditioning or strengthening.

This idea of *śodhana* is very well expressed in *Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā* as follows:

“Just as an unbaked earthen pot disintegrates in water, so also is the case of the body. Therefore, bake the body in the fire of Yoga so that it is purified and strengthened” .

Benefits

Ṣaṭ Kriyās have powerful effects within both the physical and energy bodies (*Koṣas*) and have a dynamic impact on the *Doṣas* (*Vāta*, *Pitta* and *Kapha*). “Practitioners of *Prāṇāyāma* resort to *Ṣaṭ karmas*.”

If one is suffering from the imbalance of humours (Fat, Mucus and *Vāta*) should undergo purification of the body by resorting to the cleansing processes. As per the *Haṭha Pradīpikā* if three humours are in a state of equilibrium one need not practice them.

• *Jala Neti*

Source: This is a *Haṭha* Yogic practice, comes through tradition.

Technique in brief

A clean *Neti* pot, filled with salty water, should be kept ready. Keep the mouth wide open so that one can breathe without an interruption. Insert the nozzle of the pot into a nostril and tilt the head while raising the pot so that the water flows in through one nostril and out through the other. After 30 seconds or so put down the pot and clear the nose. Repeat for the other nostril. Clear the nose by *Kapālabhāti* practice.

Do’s and don’ts

Jala Neti is followed by *Kapālabhāti* to dry the nose.

First breathe with one nostril closed, then the other, and then with both open.

Benefits

Jala Neti helps to remove the breeding ground for germs in the olfactory zone. It is effective in insomania and tiredness, the conditions of sinusitis, inflammation of the adenoids, eyes, throat, tonsillitis, catarrh, headaches. *Jala Neti* also has importance to improve all other ailments of the respiratory system such as asthma, bronchitis and

pneumonia etc.

- *Sūtra Neti*

Source: Traditionally this was done with a bundle of cotton threads carefully twisted and soaked in beeswax. But now a thin rubber catheter is used. *Sūtra Neti* could be done once a week followed by *Jala Neti*.

Technique in brief

Very gently insert the *sūtra* (thread/catheter) into the left nostril until it is felt at the back of the throat. Then, Insert the fingers and reach into the throat and pull it out through the mouth. Gently pull the *sūtra* back and forward 5 to 10 times before removing it. Repeat for the other nostril.

Benefits

This practice greatly assists in balancing the airflow of the two nostrils. Through the frictional massage of the air pathways the membranes are strengthened and able to work more efficiently, to clean, warm, humidity and disinfect the air before it reaches the lungs, so that the air entering the lungs is in optimum condition.

- *Kapālabhāti*

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II: 236

Technique in brief

Sit straight. Take deep breath. Exhale forcefully such that the lower abdomen is contracted to expel out the air. Air will enter the body through passive inhalation. This is one stroke of *Kapālabhāti*. Begin with 20 to 30 strokes at a time at a rate of 1 or 2 strokes per second. Gradually increase the strokes to 120 a round. One can practice one to three rounds in a practical session.

Do's and don'ts

Do active exhalation and passive inhalation.

Do not move the chest /shoulders during exhalation.

Contraction of the face should be avoided.

Benefits

Improves heart and lungs capacity and therefore good for bronchial asthma. Improves blood circulation throughout the body. Tones up the abdominal muscles. Removes lethargy.

Mudrās

- *Brahma mudrā*

Source: Not known but its tradition is old. Four faces of Brahmā – the Creator, are imitated in this practice.

Technique in brief

Sit in *Padmāsana* or any comfortable position with erect spine. Look in front with neck

straight. Slowly, turn the face towards the right and try to bring the chin near the right shoulder without moving shoulders. Bring the face in front after maintaining it for some time. Similarly, turn the face towards the left. After this, slowly take the head backward. Again, after coming back for a while now slowly, take the face downwards and let the chin touch the jugular notch. Slowly, come back.

Do's and don'ts

Persons suffering from cervical spondylitis should avoid forward bending of the head.

Benefits

It removes neck and back pain and is highly effective against stress.

Prāṇāyāmas

- *Anuloma Viloma Prāṇāyāma*

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II: 7-10

Technique in brief

According to Yoga, in order to maintain a sound health both the nostrils should work optimally and should remain open in an equal manner. Usually, in most persons it is not evident unless they are trained so. Yoga prescribes a *Prāṇāyāma*, popularly known as 'Alternate Breathing Exercise' or, in popular Yogic jargon, known as "*Anuloma-Viloma*". This *Prāṇāyāma* is supposed to bring about a homeostatic equilibrium in the body. It is also called '*Nāḍī Śodhaka*' or '*Mala Śodhaka*'. Mala means impurities and this *Prāṇāyāma* is supposed to remove all factors that give rise to the humoral imbalance. It has the following three phases:

Pūraka – In *anuloma-viloma prāṇāyāma* the practitioner starts drawing in the air through left nostril. While drawing in the air, the work is to be done by the chest. The student is to expand the chest during controlled inhalation.

Recaka – The *pūraka* is followed by expiration through the right nostril. At no stage during the expiration the practitioner should lose his control over his lungs.

Pūraka – This controlled expiration is followed by inspiration from the same nostril i.e. the nostril used for expiration. *Pūraka* is to be done in the same manner as described earlier.

Recaka – The controlled inspiration is followed by controlled expiration from the left nostril without losing the control over lungs.

This is declared as one round of *anuloma-viloma*. While practicing this one should remember tha

1. The inhalation will start from the left nostril.
2. The nostril used for the inhalation should not be used for exhalation.
3. The nostril used for exhalation, should be used for inhalation again.

Do's and don'ts

Follow general hints for *Prāṇāyāma*.

Benefits

This *Prāṇāyāma* helps to purify all the blood vessels – the *Nāḍīs*. The respiratory passage gets clean, thereby breathing becomes easy and elongated. It also helps to clean and rejuvenate vital channels of energy. Practicing this *Prāṇāyāma*, mind becomes calm and quite and mental weakness and fear get cured.

• *Ujjāyī Prāṇāyāma*

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II : 51,52

Technique in brief

Pūraka – Every *pūraka* including the first is to start with the complete exhalation. In *Ujjāyī*, the breath is to be drawn in through both the nostrils. In drawing – in the air, the work is to be done by the chest. The student is to expand the chest during controlled inhalation. Throughout the inhalation the glottis is to be partially closed. The partial closure of the glottis will produce a continuous hissing sound in the throat. The whole course of inhalation and exhalation must be smooth and uniform.

Recaka – In *Ujjāyī* the expiration is to be done through the left nostril. At no stage during *recaka* the practitioner should lose his control over the lungs. The glottis should, all along, remain partially closed and the frictional sound should be of a low but uniform pitch.

Do's and Don'ts

Sound should be smooth and uninterrupted.

Benefits

As per the text it destroys all the diseases, arising out of an imbalance in the *Dhātus*.

• *Sītakārī Prāṇāyāma (teeth hissing)*

Source: Haṭhapradīpikā II : 54

Technique in brief

Sītakārī pertains to the sound made by drawing air in through the front teeth either tightly closed or very slightly opened with the tongue tip regulating the air pressure and sound. This technique pertains only to inhaling, Exhalation, however, is through both the nostrils.

Do's and don'ts

Do the practice only in the summer season.

Benefits

It gives an overall cooling effect. It counters sloth and laziness

