

Yoga and Well-being: A Philosophical Analysis of Holistic Lifestyle

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Abstract: This research paper basically focused upon how Well-being of an individual with a holistic lifestyle in universe can be sustained through understanding and practicing of yoga. In ancient Indian Philosophical tradition, such as Gita, Yoga Philosophy, and Integral Philosophy of Aurobindo emphasis upon yoga as one of the important paths of realization the reality and union with it, to harmony oneself among different aspects within. Further, in 21st century yoga can help to control emotions, desires, will, thoughts, and it can help to balance one's life in the society. One can balance holistic lifestyle, being a well-being and attain moksa through yoga.

Key words: Well-being, Holistic Lifestyle Yoga, Reality, Moksa

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I. Introduction

Life is very simple but mysterious. It is not only phenomenal physical body, rather totality of material body, spiritual soul, will, thoughts, desires, emotions, potentialities, social aspect, environmental aspect and universal aspect etc. So well-being does not mean physical well-being or physical comfortable, rather it implies that a holistic well-being or sound of all of above with harmony to each other. It implies that union or harmony among aforesaid different aspects of an individual life. In this purpose the concept and practice of yoga comes to existence. Yoga is a physical, mental and spiritual discipline originating in ancient India around 2000 years ago. It is essentially a spiritual discipline based upon an extremely subtle science which focuses on bringing harmony between mind and body. It is an art and science of healthy living. Etymologically Yoga means union. It is the union of individual consciousness with that of the universal consciousness, indicating a perfect harmony between the mind and body, man and nature. One who experiences this oneness of existence is said to be in yoga and is termed as a yogi, having attained to a state of freedom referred to as moksa. To understand life and importance of yoga we should go through Sankhya-Yoga and Aurobindo's Integral Philosophy.

Sankhya and Yoga: Sankhya and Yoga are two allied vedic systems of Indian philosophy. According to Sankhya, Purusa and Prakriti are two distinct and independent realities. Unlike Purusa Prakriti is the uncaused cause of the material world or Prakriti is the root of the world. Multiplicity of the world is nothing else but evolution of the Prakriti. In other word the world is only manifestation of it. In Sankhya-Yoga, Chitta is the first evolute of Prakriti and has the predominance of Sattva over rajas and tamas. It implies the three internal organs of Sankhya-buddhi or intellect, ahaṅkāra or ego and manas or mind. Chitta itself, it is identical with mahat or buddhi which includes ahaṅkāra and manas. Though itself it is unconscious, but being finest and nearest to Puruṣa, it has the power to reflect the Puruṣa and therefore appears as if it is conscious. Chitta is the phenomenal ego or Jiva, which

is subject to birth and death and transmigration and to all painful or pleasurable experiences, and which imagines itself as the agent and the enjoyer. When Chitta gets related to any object, it assumes the 'form' of that object. It is called Chittavriti. So Vritti implies the modification of Chitta. The modifications of the Chitta are of five kinds:

- (1) Right cognition (pramāṇa)
- (2) Wrong cognition (viparyaya)
- (3) Verbal cognition or imagination (vikalpa)
- (4) Absence of cognition or sleep (nidra) and
- (5) Memory (smṛti)

Chitta is the physical medium to manifest Purusa itself. Such derives consciousness from Purusa is known as Jnana. Upon such reflection purusa wrongly identifies itself and owns such modification. Jivas suffer from five different kinds of sufferings or klesha, such as-

- (1) Ignorance (avidyā)
- (2) Egoism (asmitā)
- (3) Attachment (taga)
- (4) Aversion (dvesa) and
- (5) Clinging to life and instinctive fear of death (abhinivesha).

This stage of purusa is called bondage. When the Puruṣa realizes that it is completely isolated and is only a passive spectator, beyond the play of Prakriti, it ceases to identify itself with its reflection in the Chitta with the result that the light is withdrawn and the modifications of the Chitta fall to the ground. This cessation of the modifications of the Chittavriti is elucidated as Chittavritiniroda i.e. Moksa or Liberation. Moksa can be attained through proper discrimination between Puruṣa and Prakriti and the consequent cessation of the mental modifications. It is possible only through meditation, which is called 'Yoga'.

Patanjali is the founder of Yoga Philosophy who is the author of Yoga-sutra; which is a collection of 195 sutras and is believed to be a compiled philosophical work around 2000 years ago. In Patanjala Yoga-sutra, Yoga is defined as the cessation of the modifications of chitta. Such cessation through meditation or

concentration is also called Yoga or yoga samādhih. Here Purusa return to its original perfection.

It is the aim of Yoga to bring about this result. There are five levels of mental life (chittabhūmi). The differences in the levels are due to the predominance of the different guṇas. Such as-

1. Ksipta or restless, 2. Mūḍha or torpid, 3. Viksipta or distracted, 4. Ekagra or one-pointed, and 5. Niruddha or restricted.
2. So the Sanskrit scriptures discuss thoroughly on the eight pillars of yoga as sole path to attain moksa. They are-
3. Yama (restrains or abstinences): It implies abstention from injury through thought, action, word (ahimsā), from falsehood (satya), from stealing (asteya), from passions and lust (brahmacharya), and from avarice (aparigraha).
4. Niyama: It is self-culture and includes external and internal purification (shaucha), contentment (santosa), austerity (tapas), study (svādhyāya) and devotion to God (Ishvara- pranidhāna).
5. Asana: It means steady and comfortable posture. There are various kinds of postures which are a physical help to meditation. This is the discipline of the body.
6. Prāṇāyāma: It means control of breath and deals with regulation of inhalation, retention and exhalation of breath. It is beneficial to health and is highly conducive to the concentration of the mind. But it must be performed under expert guidance otherwise it may have bad after-effects.
7. Pratyāhāra: It is control of the senses and consists in with- drawing the senses from their objects. Our senses have a natural tendency to go to outward objects. They must be checked and directed towards the internal goal. It is the process of introversion. These five are called external aids to Yoga (bahiranga sadhana), while the remaining three which follow are called internal aids (antaranga sādhanā).
8. Dharana: It is fixing the mind on the object of meditation like the tip of the nose or the mid-point of the eyebrows or the lotus of the heart or the image of the deity. The mind must be steadfast like the unflickering flame of a lamp.
9. Dhyana: It means meditation and consists in the undisturbed flow of thought round the object of meditation (pratyayaika- tātana). It is the steadfast contemplation without any break.
10. Samādhi: It means concentration. This is the final step in Yoga. Here the mind is completely absorbed in the object of meditation. In dhyāna the act of meditation and the object of meditation remain separate. But here they become one. It is the highest means to realize the cessation of mental modifications which is the end. It is the ecstatic state in which the connection with the external world is broken and through which one has to pass before obtaining liberation.

Aurobindo: Practical idealist Aurobindo. He is one of the prominent figures of Contemporary Indian Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's concept of man transcending to a higher being of gnostic existence. For him, there is something in man which is mysterious and transcendent. It is this reality which constitutes the mystery of his life. The entire evolutionary process of nature is inwardly directed towards the revelation of this mystery. The present realm of the process of evolution is mind. It is not the end, itself it is preparing to ascent to the next realm i.e. supermind. To expedite such process of evolution the concept and practice of yoga comes in Aurobindo's Integral Philosophy.

The transformation of mind into its culmination or into the greater stage, here practice of yoga comes. Aurobindo teaches that a decent of the higher principle and reverse of the process i.e. from lower to higher is possible which will not merely release spiritual self out of the world, but release within the world, replace the mind's ignorance by supramental Truth-Consciousness which will be sufficient instrument of the inner self and make it possible for the human being to find himself grow out of his limitations into a divine race. Here he emphasizes on importance of Yoga which is an emotional education, leading to the awakening of the soul within us. For him yoga expedites the process of Divinization.

Aurobindo's Purna-Yoga concerns with complete transformation of human's being ennobling and refining him to attain the divine status. Aurobindo states, "the outer apparent man, an ephemeral being subject to the constraints of his material embodiment and imprisoned in a limited mentality, has to become the inner real Man, Master of himself and his environment and universal in his being."

For him not only a liberation from the bonds of material coil, but also an integral transformation of man's mental, emotional and physical nature is effected by means of yoga that's why it is called 'integral' (Purna). Aurobindo denies the idea common to many mystics of his time that matter is an illusion; to the contrary, elevates it to the container of an ultimate physical and spiritual transformation by means of yoga. Each and every performance of human is performance toward the realization of unity. That's why Aurobindo stated, whole life is yoga. Techniques of concentration and meditation as in the classical raja yoga or jnana yoga, aimed at calming the mind is a basic requisite here too. The purpose is to reach an inner spiritual realization that transcends the ordinary states of consciousness emerging into the Ultimate Reality, which is the 'One without second'. This is the point which differentiates his vision from the other thinkers'. Visions are the concept of the existence of a spiritual evolution and progress in man and also in nature or the material world through 'yoga'. So, it may be pointed out that such are the effects of yoga on the material world that the very presence of a *yogi* in the world exalts the world. Hence Aurobindo says, "Yoga implies not only the realization

of God, an entire consecration and change of the inner and outer life till it is fit to manifest a divine consciousness and become part of a divine work.” 4

Aurobindo clearly states that man's Divinity starts with Pure Existence as the first expression of the Absolute which is concrete. Existence, Consciousness and Bliss are but inseparable aspects of the most concrete and integral Reality. Again It is not only harmony of the static and the dynamic, unity and the multiplicity etc.; it is beyond the mutable, immutable, and is therefore ineffable too. The only thing that can be asserted about it is that it is above and beyond all that is thinkable or conceivable. But from the point of view of human consciousness it can be said that Reality has a threefold character. It is a triune principle of Existence, Consciousness and Bliss. So, it is referred to the 'Sacchidananda'.

Aurobindo states of the three steps involved in the process of yoga. These are three aspects of the threefold process of transformation such as 'Psychic change', 'Spiritual change' and 'Supramental change'.

Psychic change: Psychic change consists in the removal of the veil which hides our psyche or soul. The psyche is the ever-pure flame of the divinity in things which remains unpolluted and undimmed through all the experiences of our life. It is to be noted that the light of the inner being is not confined to itself but it floods the whole of our being and permeates life, mind and matter within us. This is accomplished through a psychic change that involves the use of *purna yoga*. Yoga is such an education that leads to the awakening of our soul within us.

Spiritual change: Spiritual change supplements the psychic change. This is the descent of a higher light into our being. This permeates the growth of psychic being beyond the sphere of matter, life and mind. The psychic transformation helps the spiritual but cannot be a substitute for it. The psychic evolving brings in man glimpses of the Infinite. But such transient and fleeting visions have to be elevated to spiritual change to break down the limitations in man, to have an abiding sense of the Infinite. He speaks, "The close presence of the Divine Being, His rule of the world and our self and natural members, His force working in us and everywhere, the peace and joy of the Infinite are concrete and constant in the being; in all sights and forms one sees the Eternal; in all sounds one hears it, in all touches one feels it." the all-encompassing effect of the spiritual change enables him to experience joy and to experience an abiding sense of the Infinite, with an enlarged nature; with an extended awareness of the inner core, one can rise above the physical layers of existence. For such a man immortality becomes a normal awareness.

Supramentalization: The Divinity on the earth completed with the third transformation, i.e. Supramentalization, where consciousness is full divinized. All disunity and duality are superseded. Finally complete unity emerges. Supramentalization

carries two types of changes namely Universalization and Transcendentalization. Former is expansion of consciousness and later one implies nothing but knowledge of the identity of Divine.

Relevance: relevance of yoga for well-being it can be said that Patanjali's Yoga-sutras and Aurobindo's PurnaYoga offer a complete framework for spiritual growth and individual empowerment our physical and mental health. It is absolutely like a road-map to connect the mind and body of an individual and of course helps to connect with the greater sense of community and the universe. Though yoga is an ancient practice that originated thousands of years ago in India, it is relevant and beneficial in this 21st century. In the context of aforesaid statement regarding the beneficial approach of yoga to both physical and mental health. It can be considered that the utility of yoga for well-being is a complementary therapy to conventional medical care. Therefore the effect of the practice of yoga is found on the functional capacity as well as on the state of the well-being in the individuals. Moreover, yoga has a great impact in modern psychology also. The function of yoga psychology prepares the mind to catch a glimpse of the resplendent atman. As such the functioning yoga prepares us to appreciate the real status and undying glory of the absolute. Yoga therefore contribute immensely to our well-being by disclosing the secret of the bringing under control the vibration or distracted modifications of the mind and thus helps us to concentrate and meditated upon the transcendental atman, which is the fountainhead of knowledge, intelligence and bliss. Yoga is therefore 'neither an accidental discovered royal road to spiritual experience nor the secret treasure house of some magically effective methods for gaining supernatural psychical powers'. to quote sage Greranda has visualized yoga 'in the form of energy and through this energy short comings of life can be eradicated, because by its force the whole personality, the body, mind, intellect, thought, emotions and behaviour can be brought under control, moderated and balanced.

II. Conclusion

Therefore in today's time spiritual dimension is very important for living a healthy life and here functioning yoga creates pragmatic value in the life of the individual. This is yoga and well-being. Thus in order to enlighten the inner being and to achieve spiritual health, everyone must do some spiritual exercise like prayer, fasting, yoga meditation and like as such. According to K. N. Udapa, the director of medical science at Banaras Hindu University, "practicing yoga is a health promotive, preventive and curative". It is scientifically proved. For the promotion of both physical and mental well-being, yoga and meditation play a vital role. K. N. Udapa concludes that 'yoga for promotive universal health and happiness'.

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