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Yoga in relation to human consciousness

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Abstract

Yoga deals with the evolution and development of the human personality. The word yoga means a process of uniting the different phases of our personality. Although in many texts yoga is defined as union of the individual self with the higher self, when we look at the classical teachings, we find the system described is a very practical approach to knowing oneself.

Human beings are composed of two forces: prana, the cosmic energy, and consciousness, the evolving energy. Energy is dynamic, but consciousness is static. It is like a blind person and a lame person. One cannot see but can move, the other can see but cannot move. What will they do? The lame person will sit on the blind person's shoulders and act as the guide. This is exactly the concept of consciousness and energy in yoga. Energy is dynamic, but it does not have cognition, awareness, or consciousness. Consciousness can see everything, but is unable to move without the help of energy. These two forces govern our body and mind, emotions and feelings.

Keywords: Yoga, Consciousness and Prana

1. Introduction

The word yoga comes from ancient Sanskrit. Yoga-the ultimate union of mind body of soul there are many yoga styles that can create many levels of inner peace. On the other hand meditation is the quintessential respite to calm the mind from sensory over load technically speaking, meditation is an increased concentration and awareness/ a process of living in the present moment to produced and enjoy a tranquil state of mind. Shakespeare once "the eyes are the windows of the soul". When our minds are over loaded with information, concentration is compromised. Meditation is a tool to unclutter the mind and bring about mental homeostasis. In terms of information technology (I.T.), meditation increases the bandwidth of human consciousness.

Meditation: Became popular in United States during the 1960's by way of the Beatles, whose music and life styles included meditation, thus influencing many people (Woo, 2008). One researcher Jose Silva, has taken the concept meditation one step further by integrating it in to a technique to enhance what he calls personal mind control. In the Silva method meditation use to access grade thinking power memory function (Silva and Miele, 1975). The medical profession has now adopted mediation as behavior modification technique to combat rising mobility and mortality from stress related heart disease. Meditation promotes physical calmness as well as inner peace, the American Heart Association now advocates it as a preventive health measure in conjunction with proper diet and aerobic exercise to reduced modifiable risk factors for coronary heart disease. The National Institutes of Health advocates meditation for the mental and emotional relief of cancer. Eastern and Western cultures became more closely integrating the basic concept of meditation as a relaxation technique will become even more readily accepted for achieving both mental and physical homeostasis.

From the sets of eastern philosophy, meditation grew on to distinct branches of meditation: exclusive are restrictive meditation and inclusive or opening / up meditation. Exclusive meditation also known as concentration meditation involves the, restriction of consciousness to focus, single thought (e.g. mantra, tratak). A mantra can also be a short positive phrase for e.g. I feel good, I am worthy of love or my body is calm and relaxed, to reinforced positive self-esteem. The word Om is believed to access the highest level of concentration helps in releasing "blocked energy" impeding mental homeostasis. Chanting the word Om is thought

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to produce a vibration that draws the body's rhythm in to synchrony with the earth's magnetic field, thus evoking a feeling of oneness with nature. Western philosophy suggested that the vibration from any one word can have a calming effect. Exclusive meditation includes Mantra, tratak, Mandala, Nadam. Particularly in restrictive meditation correct body position is essential. Perhaps the most recognized posture is lotus is the position. There are several types of restrictive meditation. Transcendental Meditation and the relaxation response are two example. Medical researches headed by Robert Keith, Wallace and Herbert Benson (1972) investigated the effects of transcendental meditation. In result they found that it quite effective for chronic stress. The another type of meditation is inclusive meditation. It is also referred to as access meditation, insightful meditation and mindfulness. In the practice of inclusive meditation of, the mind is free to accept all thoughts; no emotional reaction can be connected with these

thoughts. In effect, the mind becomes a movie screen with thoughts projected as images and the individual observe without judgment or analysis. By detaching yourself from your emotions, the process of inclusive meditation allows barriers of the ego to dissolve. This detached observation maintains a sense of mental equilibrium.

Insomnia and meditation: meditation id a bible antidote for insomnia studies revile that people who mediate on a regular bases achieve the (theta brain wave) state of consciousness, which is closes to the delta wave pattern observed when sleeping insomnia studies reveal that subjects who lay awake at night or who repeatedly wake up show an alpha and beta pattern indicative of a busy mind. The effects of meditation groom the minds ability to decreased mental activity for a good night's sleep.

Everly and Rosenfeld's meditation continuum illustrates the cognitive stages that occur during restrictive or inclusive meditation;

Meditation Begins	Boredom	Distracting thoughts	Deep relaxation	Detached observation	Supraconsciousness (enlightenment)
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It is extremely challenging to try to divorce your emotions from your thought. Everly and Rosenfeld (2002) explained this meditation continuum highlighting the entire range of mental consciousness during the meditative process. As the mind continues to observe, a state of supraconsciousness in which there is increased awareness of one's inner self begins to manifest. At this stage of meditation, the individual may feel almost euphoric, with sensation of enlightenment and connectedness with incorporeal surrounding - in essence, feeling one with the universe.

The vast majority of studies observed an impressive direct influence of meditation on mood states (Carlson *et al.*, 2004; Shamini, 2007), immune function (kim, 2005), sleep (Bootzin and Stevens, 2005), chronic pain (Morone *et al.*, 2007) and various aspect of mental, emotional and physical well being (Raustra *et al.*, 2006). The efficacy of mediation have investigated the effects of mindfulness meditation on every thing. One study looked at how mindfulness meditation affected the quality of life in breast and prostate cancer patient. Findings showed favorable results, including reduced levels of pituitary-adrenal-mediated stress (Carlson *et al.*, 2004). Research by Richard Davidson, at the University of Wisconsin- Madison, using Tibetan Monks reviled that mediation appears to reorient the bran from a mood of stress to a sense of acceptance of contentment (Land, 2003). It appears that regular mediation causes neurons to adapt to less sensory information by activating frontal lobe brain tissue that is responsible for- present moment awareness. Best application of mediation is the mind craves homeostasis just as a the body does. Given the cacophony of sensory bombardment found in nearly all corners of the global village, taking time to quiet the mind is no longer a luxury but a necessity to maintain a sense of mental equilibrium. Unequivocally, meditation can be classified as a technique to help prevent to help prevent the heightened, sustained arousal of stress it might be best used as a technique to quell the fires of fear. With practice, you will find that meditation has many layers and can create many profound effects of relaxation.

Yoga the ultimate union of the mind, body and soul the development and practice of yoga are deeply rooted in the philosophy of spiritual enlightenment. There are many yoga

style and practice can create many levels of inner peace. The hatha yoga style places special emphasis on physical postures, which are integrated with Pranayama or breathing control. The word hatha comes from two Sanskrit words, ha, meaning "sun" and tha meaning "moon". The symbolic meaning of these words is the balance of universal life forces (Iyengar, 1981; Rosen 2002). Hatha yoga certainly is proven to decrease stress levels (Smith *et al.*, 2007). Hatha yoga is now recognized as a suitable complimentary healing modality for many chronic healths related issues as well as a multimodal approached to stress management. Studies by Austin (1982) and Agne and Paolucci (1982) indicate that hatha yoga combined with other relaxation techniques including diaphragmatic breathing, biofeedback, aerobic exercise and recreational pursuits is effective in the treatment of chemical dependency and alcoholism.

Currently the hatha yoga as a bonafide treatment for insomnia is being studied through a grant from the national instate of health specific poses that are used to promote a good night's sleep include the Mountain brook pose, supported child's pose, legs up the wall pose and Shavasana (corpse pose). Hatha yoga and chronic pain, back pain is one of the most common maladies to afflict people older than the age of 25. Poor setting and standing posture, poor shoe support, week stomach muscles and less athletic activities contributing to chronic lower back pain (Baxter, 2003). Yoga has also been found to be help full for a variety of health related problems, including carpal tunnel syndrome (Garfinkel *et al.*, 1998).

2. Discussion & Conclusion

The ultimate goal of all aspects of yoga is to lower the walls of the conscious mind-the ego. If you approach it with a competitive attitude, there is no chance for the union of mind, body and spirit. The best application of hatha yoga is as a relaxation technique, it is best employed to unleash the stress and frustration that for whatever reason had to be resolved. Researches indicates that yoga helps decrease anxiety and maintain a sense of emotional balance, reinforcing the mind body connection that the promise of yoga promotes. Those who teach hatha yoga recognized that the union of mind, body and spirit is solidified by self

acceptance, self love and the absence of anger and fear in one's life. The inner peace derived from practicing yoga is credited with keeping people emotionally well balance during unexpected in counters of the stress full kind.

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