

## VEDANTA AND YOGA

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#### **Introduction of Vedanta**

History of Vedanta Philosophy can be dated back to thousands of centuries ago. In the medieval period the word Vedanta meant the school of philosophy that interpreted the Upanishads. The traditional Vedanta considers scriptural evidence as the genuine means of knowledge. The philosophy of Vedanta was systematized into one rational treatise that was undertaken by Badarayana in the Vedanta Sutra. This was composed around 200 BCE. Several names have been assigned to Vedanta Sutra and they include Brahma sutra, Sariraka, Vyasa-sutra, Badarayana sutra, Uttaramimamsa and Vedanta-darsana. The enigmatic aphorisms of Vedanta Sutras have been interpreted in various ways by many saints. This has resulted in the formation of abundant Vedanta schools. Each of these schools has construed the texts in its own manner. This has led to various sub commentaries. All these school interpreted the texts in its own way thereby producing its own sub-commentaries. However an individual's quest for truth through meditation has been consistent throughout Vedanta. All sects of Hinduism have been influenced by the thought systems that have been developed by Vedantic thinkers. The principles of Vedanta speak of unity of all existence and the universality of spiritual truth.

Etymologically, Vedanta means the end or the conclusion of the Vedas. Thus the last portions of the Vedas-the Upanishads and the principles or philosophy propounded in them-are called Vedanta. In fact, Vedanta is a system of philosophy, which forms the basis of Hinduism. There are different interpretations of the Upanishads based on which there are various schools of Vedanta like Dvaita, Visistadvaita and Advaita. Generally, the Advaita philosophy as propounded by Sankaracarya is equated with Vedanta.

The primary source of Vedanta is the Upanishad. However certain portions of Vedanta have been derived from some of the earlier aranyakas. The main principle of Vedanta is the absolute reality that has been termed as Brahman. Sage Vyasa was one of the major proponents of this philosophy. Most schools of Vedanta believe in the concept of Brahman - the eternal, self existent and inspiring Supreme and Ultimate Reality which is the divine ground of all Being. There are six interpretations of these source texts. Among these six three (Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita) are well-

known. These Vedanta schools of thought were founded by Shri Adi Shankara, Shri Ramanuja and Shri Madhvacharya. Bhagavad Gita has also played a major role in Vedantic thought. All teachers of Vedanta have completely attested to the importance of Gita to the development of Vedantic thought and practice. Vedanta is not restricted to one book, thus it has no single source.

### **Principles of Vedanta**

Vedanta says that Brahmn is ultimate reality. All other beings and things are unreal. Swami Sivananda upholds that Brahmn is paripoorna, full, because all desires melt there. Brahmn to him 'is something, after seeing which there is nothing more to be seen, after becoming which there is nothing more to become, after knowing which there remains nothing to be known'. Brahmn is that which is all-pervading, which surrounds us from all sides – around, above and below. It is satchidananda or existence, knowledge and bliss. It is that which has no other. It is without a second, endless, eternal, one and one alone. It is everlasting, the one continuous experience-whole.

Brahmn has six attributes: 'jnana (divine wisdom), vairagya (dispassion), aishwarya, power (bala, strength), sri (wealth); and kirti (fame)'.

Advaitins believe that suffering is due to Maya (also known as Mithya or Vaitathya), and only knowledge (called Jnana) of Brahman can destroy Maya. When Maya is removed, there exists ultimately no difference between the Jiva and Brahman (Isvara). Such a state of bliss when achieved while living is called Jivanmukta. While one is in the pragmatic level, one can worship God in any way and in any form, like Krishna or Ayyappa as he wishes; Adi Shankara himself was a proponent of devotional worship or Bhakti. But Adi Shankara taught that while Vedic sacrifices, puja and devotional worship can lead one in the direction of jnana (true knowledge) they cannot lead one directly to moksha. At best, they can serve as means to obtain moksha via shukla gati.

He is nitya (eternal), ananta (infinite), and ananda (supreme bliss). He is unchanging amidst changing phenomena. He is permanent amidst the impermanent, and imperishable amidst the perishable. He is what the Gita calls "Jyotishamapi tat jyoti, Light of all lights" He is the Adhithana or support of the phenomenal world. Brahmn is the sutradhara, string-puller of all bodies of beings. He is the antaryamin, inner ruler of all beings. He is in you and you are in Him. Each of the five primary elements is a manifestation of His qualities.

Brahmn is swatantra or independent. He has satkama (good desires) and satsankalpa (pure will). Since karmas are jada or insentient, on their own

they cannot yield fruits, so it is Brahmn who dispenses fruits of actions of jivas. He is all merciful; quenching the thirst of jivas. He satiates our hunger. He dispenses justice to all. The five activities of God are: srishti (creation), sthiti (preservation) samhara (destruction) tirodhana or tirobhava (veiling) and anugraha (grace). Brahmn is beyond the reach of the senses and mind that is why its existence cannot be proved by scientific experimentation. It is purely a question of faith and refers to the intuitive side of man. However, His existence can be inferred by certain empirical facts or common experiences in daily life.

### **Modern Relevance of Vedanta**

Vedanta is as old as the Vedas and is the basis of the various Indian philosophical systems. Although Vedanta had always been a practical scheme of life as well for modern times Swami Vivekananda has given it a new interpretation called Practical Vedanta. From the above analysis it will also be evident that although Jainism may differ philosophically and empirically from traditional Hinduism there are more similarities than differences between Jainism and Vedanta especially Swamiji's Practical Vedanta. Besides, Swamiji's definition of Vedanta is very wide all comprehensive and all-inclusive. According to it Religion is Vedanta, which includes all the different religions like Jainism Buddhism and Hinduism Even if one may not accept this definition of Vedanta one would find a lot of similarities between Jainism and Vedanta. Not only this, the two systems can help and enrich each other-as it should be. Vedanta can gain something from Jainism and Jainism too can benefit from Vedanta without in any way compromising their special features or originality.

Self-enquiry is greatly emphasized in Vedanta, where it is called tvam-pada-sodhana. When one asks the questions, Who am I? What is my real nature? And seeks answers to such questions one ultimately realizes one's real pure conscious nature-the Atman free from adjuncts like body mind ego and intellect. There is no difference between Vedanta and Jainism as far as the process of inquiry is concerned.

Today we need to follow the footsteps of Swami Vivekananda, one of whose missions was to remove the culls from the oft-projected picture of Hinduism and give an invigorating message of Vedanta to both the East and the West. **When our religion is thus made comprehensible to the modern man, when the practices incompatible with Vedanta are purged, when our education is spiritualized through de-secularization, when our nation gets united by the application of Vedanta, only then will Hindus be able to impress the world outside.** Only then can our acaryas deliver what is expected of them – showing how to have the correct attitude to solve

modern and ultra-modern problems: pollution, population explosion, escalating terrorism, ecological imbalance, unprecedented pauperization of man, 'genetic bomb' etc. Only then the song of the Puranic ballad will have significance today : The residents of the celestial sphere sing, and the theme of their song is the following: 'Blessed are those that live in the territory of 'Bharata.' Let us, by our act and deed, justify our love for 'Bharata' which may mean rata, or addicted, to bha, or enlightenment.

### **Definition of Yoga**

Yoga is a science as well as an art of healthy living. It is no way limited by race, age, sex, religion, caste, creed and any other boundaries and can be practiced by those who seek an education on better living and those who want to have a more meaningful life. **Yoga is the surest way of complete health. Yoga is the science of life and the art of living.** It is India's oldest scientific, perfect spiritual discipline. Yoga is a method of training the mind and body for discovering spiritual truths. Yoga is science of life, it offers us simple, easy remedies, techniques and methods of health and hygiene to assure physical and mental fitness with a minimum of time, effort and expense. **Yoga is neither a sect nor an ideology but a practical training of mind and body. Yoga is also a technique for achieving purest form of self-awareness, devoid of all thoughts.**

Integral Yoga equips us with the right tools to handle life's uncertainties in a remarkable calm manner. It is nothing mystical-just a practical and scientific guide to an improved way of life. It is the science that harmonizes the mind body connection most effectively. It is a power tool for facing life's challenges with an attitude that will delight us. It has four major tools which are well meshed into one another :

- (i) Postures (Asanas) for physical exercise.
- (ii) Meditation for mind exercise.
- (iii) Breathing (Pranayam) for channeling energy correctly.
- (iv) Deep relaxation.

Naturopathy is a philosophy of balancing the energy system of the body-physical emotional and spiritual using the natural methods, prevent stress and distress on the organs and promotes overall well-being and rejuvenation.

### **Ancient Science : Yoga**

Yoga is a practical science. Indian psychology with its ideology and technology : as a holistic system for promoting harmony at physical, mental, emotional, social and lastly at spiritual level. When this balance is disturbed by accident, illness, disorder or the stress created by any illness : physical or

mental. Yoga can help restore it, and help cure or manage the illness. Yoga therapy is the adaptation of Yoga practices for people with health problems. Although ordinary Yoga classes can improve general health and resolve mild complaints but they may be ineffective or can be even harmful for serious conditions. In such cases, yoga therapy can help people by tailoring yoga lifestyle to their individual needs, taking in account their health problems, flexibility, capacity, capability, habits, constitution and circumstances.

If we go just through the medium of the mind alone to recondition yourself, we never have power. This is because the part of our mind that is in control works according to neuro-glandular functions of the past. These patterns can be dissolved through the practice of Yoga Nidra, Third eye meditation, physical postures, diet, pranayam if we are consciously engaged. We then alter the karmic patterns and disintegrate their power through meditative awareness. By moving past the medium of the mind with the technique of yoga nidra, we are able to directly address the source cause, and remove the root of our habit patterns. Instead of using our life energy to struggle with a multitude of effect, we are able to directly resolve a single cause, which instantaneously and automatically eliminates the multitudes of effects. Yoga Nidra is a powerful technique which takes us into the forth dimension, where all of these shifts can happen spontaneously and effortlessly.

With the popularity of yoga in the country, its true depth has been diminished. In many cases, it has just a form of vigorous application of yoga postures for exercise. The focus on the physical aspect of Hath yoga has definitely had a powerful and beneficial impact. Today's practice may provide the breadth but certainly not the depth of authentic yoga. Purpose of the practice of yoga is the same as the meaning of the word yoga. Yoga means integration of the fragmented forces of our being that shows us as tension in the body, restlessness in mind, and emotional reaction. Regardless of what Asans, Pranayam or other technique we practice, it must be aimed at regaining harmony of body, mind, heart and soul.

The spirit of yoga is manifest at a formless level. Yoga is incomplete without the internal, invisible component. The internal part of yoga represents the subtler form that must be brought into synchronicity through the external form. When inner and outer, external and internal, come together in harmony, our practice make a quantum leap to a whole new level. During our practice, the most important principles to apply are : Intention, meditative inward focus, and the posture of Consciousness. As a

result, the posture of consciousness we cultivate on the yoga mat is automatically available in our interpersonal relationships. It bleeds into everyone of our daily life activities. Whatever we do outside becomes internalized; what is inside becomes externalized. There is no difference for the posture of consciousness – it is inside out and outside in.

### **Yoga and Prana**

According to yogic point of view, the body is made up of 5 elements ether, air, fire, water and earth. All these are associated with the 5 prana Vayus. The five prana Vayus are like the limbs of a man which comprise the one body. It is the prana which moves in the body like energy waves and can be likened to an electromagnetic field where the energy is in constant motion. Prana is the basis of life and can be controlled through breath. It is through the breath that prana and consciousness are essentially linked. From the time of conception up till 4 months, the fetus services on mother's prana. After 4 months it is said that the prana enters the fetus and then its bodily functions are active and an individual life begins. However the child becomes independent only when death occurs the physical body dies, the mind dies, but not the soul. Death is a process of disintegration in which all 5 elements go back to their original source-water to water, earth to earth etc. When prana leaves the body there is no force to animate it. On death when prana leaves, the consciousness departs; the magnetic force which held the body together deteriorates and hence the body dies. It is yoga which works on this vital life force 'the prana' to bring harmony into our lives. Yoga works through the physical body, by working on the pranic movements.

### **Yoga Therapy**

Yoga, the origin of Indian health care practices have crossed its boundaries in the past due to its authenticity and practical positive results which have been approved by allopathic practitioners from ages and to the date. Yoga therapy practitioners are qualified yoga teachers with further training in human physiology, anatomy and applications of yoga to medical conditions. Yoga therapy utilizes practices from India, which date back thousands of years and are part of traditional Indian health care system. Critical research trials show that yoga therapy practices are among the most effective known methods for managing the psychosomatic diseases and disorders, stress related conditions, which are so common today. This is because Yoga bridges the gap between body and mind, ranging across the whole spectrum from physical to mental from gross to subtle.

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patterns can be dissolved through the practice of Yoga Nidra, Third eye meditation, physical postures, diet, pranayam if we are consciously engaged. We then alter the karmic patterns and disintegrate their power through meditative awareness. By moving past the medium of the mind with the technique of yoga nidra, we are able to directly address the source cause, and remove the root of our habit patterns. Instead of using our life energy to struggle with a multitude of effect, we are able to directly resolve a single cause, which instantaneously and automatically eliminates the multitudes of effects. Yoga Nidra is a powerful technique which takes us into the forth dimension, where all of these shifts can happen spontaneously and effortlessly.

Yoga therapy is more effective than other therapies. The allopathic science has only two tools with them to fight back with any disease or disorder : medicine and surgery. Medicines masks the symptoms and surgery removes the problem temporarily but chances are of redeveloping. Even medical sciences are also non-specific when it comes to its effectiveness. After all men have invented all these sciences, so it cannot be as perfect as nature yoga - the science is based on the laws of the nature. We all accept that human mind cannot be comparable with Mother Nature. After all its mother nature who makes and creates the man. So there are always limitations in man's discovery. Yoga offers variety of tools. They are suitable to individual needs, conditions, capacity and capability. It offers poses, breathing techniques, Mudras, Bandhas, cleansing techniques, Relaxation techniques. It provides physical as well as mental training through its five major branches - namely – Astanga Yoga, Hath Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Karma Yoga. Person can practice in any positions : standing, sitting and laying. It offers every thing, and a total package covering human life from 'womb to tomb' – birth to death. It deals with the root cause of the problem and helps in removing the cause not just symptoms. Certain conditions those are not curable, it helps patients to manage the problem and helps in maintaining the conditions so it does not go from bad to worst.

### **Harmony with Cosmos by Naturopathy**

Naturopathy is a philosophy of balancing the energy system of the body- physical, emotional and spiritual using the natural methods, prevent stress and distress on the organs and promotes overall well-being and rejuvenation.

We have to understand the word Sanatan Dharma in order to understand Religion. Sanatan means eternal, the one, which does not have

beginning or end and Dharma means 'duty and discipline'. Very clearly Lord Krishna has explained this in Bhagavad Gita as "Manav Dharma". How to live a disciplined life by performing one's duty as human by following various paths of Yoga. Sanatan Dharma is not established by any one God or prophet but completely based on the laws of Mother Nature : the five natural elements : air, fire, water, earth, ether. On earth it covers all creatures and nature in all forms. Indian Philosophies or schools of thoughts are completely based on it. Yoga is one of these schools. So naturally it is based on the laws of Mother Nature. It has nothing to do with any particular "faith or religion" as per the modern meaning of term. Yoga practically is a way of life and a healthy life style. To use five natural elements : air, fire, water, earth, ether for sustaining one's health or for curing diseases arose due to imbalance of these elements is called Naturopathy. So harmony of these five natural elements is Naturopathy. With the help of Naturopathy we can have harmony with cosmos or say Mother Nature.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century and Life-Style**

We are living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Man today is scaling new heights of development. New inventions are being made everyday. Man has measured the depth of the sea and the distance of the moon but the tragedy is that he is getting away from his own existence. We do not try to learn about ourselves. All our energy and efforts are being wasted on external and physical objects.

The world is too much with us. We are always busy earning and spending. We have no time to peep into our hearts and souls. The result is that we have lost sight of the philosophy of life and are getting increasingly involved in stress and confusion. We are adopting an artificial, unnatural life style and are spoiling our valuable health. We ourselves are inviting diseases, gloom and troubles. The whole atmosphere is getting vicious and affecting the family, society and the whole nation adversely. In such an atmosphere, how can the youth remain untouched and unaffected. The zeal, enthusiasm, energy and health of the young men of the country are deteriorating rapidly. A calm, cool and peaceful environment is required for study and to lead a healthy, happy and peaceful life. The seeds of development are sewn in the young age only.

Human body is a wonderful creation of nature. It is not merely a mass of flesh and bones, it contains a wonderful net work of intellect. Harmony in the functions of all the systems of the body is absolutely essential. Perfect harmony in respiratory, digestive and excretory systems helps in the development of an ideal life style. The possibility of the end of disease and gloom increases if there is such harmony. It can be found only in the state of



total health. It also prepares the background of the development of various concepts of the progress and development of life.

Chances of living a meaningful life increase immensely if life is controlled and regulated in early student life. Thinking in the context of modern age, an ideal life style can be developed if the different breathing exercises and body postures are practiced along with right conduct, right behaviour, right thinking and right habits. With such a life style, not only personal health but health of the whole family, social and national health can also be achieved. By developing and adopting such a life style, diseases of the modern civilization – obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, stress, sleeplessness, depression and the ailments of joints can be cured and controlled.

### **Irregular Routine of the Day and even of Life**

Life should be balanced and controlled so that four qualities – equanimity, compassion, humility and efficiency may be developed. But because of the wrong habits mentioned below, values of life and health of the people are deteriorating instead of developing :-

#### **(1) Eating habits**

Western civilization has attacked every walk of life. Our language, education, health, culture, thinking and eating habits – all are being highly influenced by western civilization. With the result that the younger generation has drifted away from its goal. Take food and eating habits, for example. Food is the basis of life. The whole life revolves around it. Lord Krishna says, “annadi bhavanti bhutani”(The existence of each and every creature depends on food). Food brings about a great change in our behaviour, and thinking. In the blind race of being called ‘modern’ and ‘civilized’ we are taking more and more to the fast and junk food which are destroying not only the health of the people but also our culture and traditions. This is an issue which need deep thinking and consideration.

Modern physicians too are of the opinion that our vitality will be as strong and forceful as the subtle internal bio – atmosphere and environment and intestinal microbiocological environment is. Then only we can remain healthy. The subtle internal bio- environmental atmosphere gets polluted because of our wrong eating habits. The so –called fast food, that has no nutritional value plays a great role in spoiling the digestive system.

The junk food, that the ignorant people eat with great pleasure, thinking it to be very tasty, is poisoning the lives of the common people and causing various diseases. Berger, hot – dog, noodles, candy, pastry, pizza, sweet draf, bread, toffee and synthetic cold drinks are being used in the name of fast food. All these things are alluring, intoxicating and tasty

poison. For a balanced and healthy life, one should avoid fast food and take nutritious food, conducive to health.

### **(2) Wrong ways of movement**

With the advent of modern civilization, we have adopted some such habits which take us away from an ideal life style. We ourselves are preparing the background for the development of defects, faults and diseases. For instance, we move in a wrong way with the result that our joints, muscles and even the form of the body are affected adversely and thus we invite ailments and diseases. We all know that all parts of body are directly or indirectly connected with backbone but because of wrong postures, backbone is affected. It comes to lose its natural and normal form and diseases related to it are caused and our health is affected.

### **(3) Irregular sleep**

Sleep is very, very necessary to keep us healthy. We have to go to bed in time and get up early in the morning. There goes the proverb, "early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise". But unfortunately, in this so called advanced 21<sup>st</sup> century, we do not observe this golden rule whereas sleep is 'gold' in the true sense of the word. When we have a sound sleep, our brain gets 'alfa state of mind'. The process of expelling foreign toxins by the kidneys is accelerated while we sleep. The heat that is not required by the body is also brought out and in this way, our body temperature and blood pressure are kept under control. The energy and the vitality which have been exhausted are restored and the body is refreshed and ready for more work. Sound sleep is really a boon to us.

### **(4) Irregularities regarding the intake of water**

1/3 part of the body is made of water. The body of a male contains 65-75% and that of a female, 55-65 % of water. Blood contains 83 %, bones 22 %, brain and muscles 75 % of water. Thus we can say that the body of a normal person contains 33-55 litres of water. 98 % of the water that is consumed, expels the foreign toxins from the body. 40 % of the toxins are expelled through urine, 35% through sweat, 20% through respiration and 3% through excreta and sputum. 2% of water helps in the proper functioning of the different parts of the body. It is clear from this account that we should consume plenty of water.

### **(5) Cut-throat competition**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is an age of keen and cut throat competition. Every body is running a blind race to attain material prosperity and to go ahead of others, without realizing his/her capacity and competence. And when one does not attain what one desires, one is frustrated and highly disappointed.

This frustration gives rise to the feeling of failure and pessimism. Frustrated persons are an easy prey to mental disorders.

#### **(6) Negative thinking**

Positive attitude toward life motivates man to make efforts for progress, development and attainments undaunted by difficulties and obstacles whereas negative attitude discourages him. Running after success does not make one successful. To get success, one has to work very hard and prove oneself to be deserving success. And to get health, happiness, prosperity and success in life one must give up negative thinking and develop positive thinking. Envy, anger, selfishness and greed etc. are negative feels which render man selfish, narrow-minded, aggressive and superstitious. If we want to achieve our goal, we have to renounce our negative thinking and adopt an optimistic outlook.

#### **(7) Use of drugs**

Every body knows that alcohol is injurious to health. It affects all the vital parts of the body-brain, liver and spleen very adversely. Those, who drink, contract cirrhosis of liver which is a fatal disease. They also develop Korsakow syndrome, acute deficiency of vitamin – B or thiamin, loss of memory, confusion and the shrinking of brain. Cigarette is another evil that contains one hundred kinds of toxins– nicotine, pyridine, pyrolysin, kolydin, margosin, synonin, perforel, ammonia, carbonic acid, uric acid, carbon-mono-oxide, acholine and azoline etc.

19 kinds of toxins like perforel and polonium are produced by the burning of the cigarette. These toxins affect brain tissues very adversely. Pyrolysin causes dryness, cancer and anemia. Smoking also causes acute and chronic cough, asthma, skin diseases, dyspepsia, paralysis, insanity, sleeplessness, loss of sight, cataract, difficulty in breathing, heart – diseases and loss of the capacity of procreation etc. ‘Biri’ is even more dangerous than cigarette as tobacco causes cancer of the lips. Unfortunately the youths of today are taking to these drugs more and more. Their doing so is harmful not only to themselves but to the whole nation also.

#### **Biological Clock and Human Body**

Biological clock has a great effect on the mental and emotional level of man. Irregularity in life affects this biological clock and health of man adversely. Late nights, watching T.V. for long periods, lying in bed even when awake, keeping awake when it is time to go to bed and going to bed when it is time to get up, not taking food in time, always being in a tearing hurry and in a state of anxiety disturb biological clock. We can make progress in life only by regulating and controlling our lives. We should take

to the natural ways of living so that biological clock may go on functioning properly.

### **Diseases of the Modern Life- Style**

Health of man has greatly deteriorated because of modern life – style. The number of physical and mental diseases is increasing very rapidly. A large part of the population is suffering from the diseases of modern life style. High blood pressure, stress, sleeplessness, diabetes, ailments of joints asthma, obesity, anxiety and depression are some of them. To make the matter worse, no proper remedies of these maladies are known to the medical science. When we think over all these things, it becomes clear that by taking to right eating habits, regular routine, refraining from drugs and practicing breathing exercises and body postures, we can get relief from most of these diseases. Total health can be attained by making the public aware of Yoga and yogic practices. Only by observing the maxim ‘ simple living and high thinking’ we can make progress in life, can develop our personality and achieve our desired goals.

### **Yogic Lifestyle Management**

The most appropriate method to attain optimum health naturally is the system and science of yoga. Yoga is not only a series of physical postures or meditative practices. It is a lifestyle which can be lived by everyone, not necessarily those who are sanyasis, sadus or renunciates. It is a form of understanding, of realizing our interactions in life, trying to improve them, trying to understand the needs of the body, the needs of the mind and also the needs of the spirit. This is the concept of yogic life-style : living according to the laws of the body and the laws of the nature.

Lifestyle is the keyword for well-being. From the yogic perspective, health does not just mean a disease free body. This ancient science believes in a holistic approach to health of which the body, mind and the spirit are integral and independent parts. Yoga claims to endow perfect physical, mental and social well being even under stressful conditions. Thus the yogic meaning of well being is more than just psychological. It means physical fitness, mental aligity and spiritual verve. This psychosomatic spiritual approach emphasizes that we cannot think of sound health by only caring for one or two components of body, mind and ignoring the other. This results in an imbalance due to which harmony of personality is lost and the person suffers from psychological and psychosomatic problems. The rise in mental health problems in developed societies of the world is mainly due to ignoring the spiritual dimension of health and living an individualistic lifestyle. So yogic lifestyle aims at the evolution of mind. It talks of the

journey from gross to most subtle. This is conceived in yogic literature as the journey from Annamaya Kosha to Anandamaya Kosha.

### **(a) Training of mind**

Yoga says that there are certain methods to extricate yourself from the sticky side of the mind. In order to again harmonize and balance ourselves, we need to develop certain qualities aspects of our nature, beginning with the ability to release the tensions through the process of relaxation. Relaxation is a systematic approach to letting go of the accumulated blockages, not only in the mind but also in the body. After we are able to relax physically, mentally and emotionally, we are instructed through yoga to develop personal awareness, Sajagta, in order to witness ourself interacting with the world, society, family and with our own limitations, ambitions and aspirations. Awareness is the result of leading a yogic lifestyle. Afterwards, with awareness, we have to develop a sense of positivism towards ourselves. When positive expressions are developed through the practices of reflection, concentration and introspection, which in common language is known as meditation, then we are able to harmonize the inner personality. We need to realize that there are ways to regulate our lifestyle. Regulation of lifestyle is the keyword here for the well being of the human personality.

### **(b) Attaining life force with Bandhas**

Energy or life force flows through us, to keep us alive. It is the flow of this energy, which regulates our bodily and mind functions. Irregularity in this flow or pattern leads to various ailments and mental tensions. Life force is like water, it has to flow through our body and provide a certain amount of energy to each of our cells. Sometimes, due to our lifestyle or thinking, these flows get disturbed, certain parts of our body get either too much or too less of energy. The energy may not be reaching some places and at other parts there may be stagnation of energy. Such imbalances lead to headaches, backaches, constipation, sexual disorders, stomach ailments or any other disorder depending on one's imbalance.

Besides Pranayam, Bandh is another yogic practice to regulate this life force. Bandha in Sanskrit means to “lock or tighten”. In Bandha practices, the breath is locked or concentrated in a particular area of the body. The body is tightened to retain the energy in that part some time. This locking of life force has a lot of beneficial effects. Bandhas help in massaging of the internal organs and removal of stagnant blood. Besides, the practice of Bandhas regulates the nervous system, delays aging, increase

vitality and leads to spiritual development. Bandhas help to release the psychic knots. Psychic knots are like whirlpools of energy created in the wrong areas of our body, over yours because of our lifestyle. These knots prevent the natural flow of energy, leading to imbalances.

## **Conclusion**

Vedanta says that Brahmn is ultimate reality. All other beings and things are unreal. Swami Sivananda upholds that Brahmn is paripoorna, full, because all desires melt there. Brahmn to him ‘is something, after seeing which there is nothing more to be seen, after becoming which there is nothing more to become, after knowing which there remains nothing to be known’. Brahmn is that which is all-pervading, which surrounds us from all sides – around, above and below. It is satchidananda or existence, knowledge and bliss. It is that which has no other. It is without a second, endless, eternal, one and one alone. It is everlasting, the one continuous experience-whole.

Brahmn has six attributes: ‘jnana (divine wisdom), vairagya (dispassion), aishwarya, power (bala, strength), sri (wealth); and kirti (fame)’.

By taking to controlled and disciplined life style, we can make progress in life, develop our personality and scale great heights of success. By including Yoga postures, breathing exercises and nutritious diet in our daily routine. We can get rid of the troubles and diseases of the modern life-style. Life is a wonderful gift of God. Those, who are healthy and have right thinking can lead a meaningful life. Nature has its own eternal and universal law. Ideal life style is nothing else but following this law of nature. The different aspects and parts of Yoga play a very significant role in providing a model of ideal life style. Living life in accordance with Yoga, observing basic vows, restraints, body postures, breathing exercises, retention, meditation, retreat and concentration and taking yogic diet are some of them.

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