

How to Manage Body, Mind and Spirit?

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Abstract

Most developmental biologists accept the need for a holistic or integrative conception. Spiritual evolution is integrative process and it can be achieved with simple, persistent approaches such as:

1. Mantra
2. Yoga breathing exercises. When breath wanders irregular, the mind is also unsteady, but when the breath is still, so is the mind.
3. Proper focus for fasting rejuvenates the body and makes the mind concentrated. A complete fast of 24 h gives the body rest.
4. Balanced diet.
5. Ayurveda believes in five great elements- earth, water, fire, air and space, forming the universe, including the human body.

Keywords Yoga; Siromani; Bhaskara; Breathing; Nutrition; Healing; Mantra; Fasting; Nature; Water; Earth; Fire; Air; Mind; Prana; Thoughts; Stress; Self-healing

Introduction

The yoga system is holistic in that it takes into consideration, while discussing the well-being of an individual, the human body, the human mind and even the human soul. Yoga processes aim at nervous control for purification and coordination. According to Yogic thinking the human mind creates its own diseases. "The study found that practicing just 25 min of Hatha yoga or mindfulness meditation per day can boost the brain's executive functions, cognitive abilities linked to goal-directed behaviour and the ability to control knee-jerk emotional responses, habitual thinking patterns and actions" [1].

Yoga enjoins knowledge of the working of the body, mind and spirit. We are so ignorant about our body, our emotions and our habits. Until one develops sickness such as asthma or breathlessness it is then that we try to breathe deeply and learn of the breathing exercises. No doubt, with right exercises, breathing, relaxation, routine, diet and attitudes much relief can come to diseases. "Higher ventilation rate in children makes particles move faster along the respiratory tract and spend less time in any designated area of the lung" [2].

Stress, these days, is the body's automatic response to any demand made upon it. So any demands or changes in our work life, family life or day-to-day living can bring about stress. To prevent stress from overpowering you it is necessary to learn how to relax. It is impossible to relax one part of your body if other parts of your body are tensed [3].

Breathing and Prana

Abdominal breathing is healthier than chest breathing. If we practice abdominal breathing we will eventually learn to respond to emotional stress and hyperventilation by breathing this way rather than going into a panic reaction.

"Diaphragmatic breathing was found to significantly lower oxidative stress by reducing body mass index, waist-hip ratio, fasting and post prandial plasma glucose, glycated haemoglobin, and improving antioxidant levels" [4].

"What was in the morning is not at mid-day, what was at mid-day is not in the evening, what was in the evening is not at night, what was at night is not at mid-night, for all things are transitory. Why should I be attached to anything when nothing is permanent and everything is changeable?" [5].

Prana is an electronic impulse in our body. Various nerves come and go through the chakras. They are not physical nerves, but astral. In the physical body, the places where these nerves gather at the spinal cord are called plexuses. These plexuses correspond to the chakras. This is where the energy is stored up like a condenser, altered like a transformer and acted upon by resistors. When there is tremendous amount of impurity, it acts as a resistor. Their resistors are automatically controlled by our thoughts as well as diet. Everything is controlled by thought. According to our nature of our thought, our impurities will increase or decrease. Yogis go directly into the mind to change the pattern. According to the nature of the pattern of our thought, the voltage will be increased or reduced. If the voltage increases, then the energy goes to higher chakras. If we reduce the voltage (make our thought very gross with only sensual and sexual thoughts), then the energy goes only to the lower chakras because the voltage is not sufficient to lift to the higher chakras. The human energy field is a vital energy that is a continuous whole and is recognized by its

unique pattern; it is dynamic, creative, non-linear, unpredictable and flows in lower and higher frequencies [6].

For every problem the solution is in our mind, personality, and attitude. Once a person is in the right state of mind, it is solvable. Clarity helps us in facing life. Solution of any problem should lead to a higher understanding of life. To do our duty with a sense of dedication and yet not be involved is what leads to a balanced state of mind. The ancient practice promotes growth in brain regions for self-awareness. We have a duty towards ourselves first, our own health, our own full growth. After this there comes our other priority towards our family and for those whom we care. Later on comes our duty towards our work and sources of livelihood, the duty towards our friends, neighbours, society, nation and humanity. What is needed here is a balanced perspective. So, the first attempt in Yoga is to calm oneself so that one sees things clearly. Calmness creates enough clarity to throw up essential queries. A large fraction of actions people perform each day come from habits, not from deliberate decision making [7].

Neither thought nor prana are in the physical body. They are in the astral body and according to the nature of our thought, the prana flows in the physical body. When our thought is very gross, then the prana or electrons coming to the physical body will be lessened since there is too much resistance. The nervous system that is impure cannot transmit high voltage. Too much resistance will cause everything to blow up. This is the source of our stress, anger, and all negative emotions. Purity of thoughts is very important it is the root of our manifestations. Thought can change our breathing rhythm as well as our heartbeat.

Yogic breathing is that part of Pranayama which attempts to control the physical manifestation of prana in the physical body. Yoga seems to bestow mental benefits, such as a calmer, more relaxed mind [8]. As the student progresses in the spiritual path, he is taught to control the prana manifested as mental power, which can be controlled by mental means. Breathing should be deep, abdominal, through the nose. Inhale: abdomen up, exhale: abdomen down. We control the prana (life force) that is intimately connected with the mind. The breathing during meditation will be slow or in some cases suspended. When the mind is affected by the negative emotions of lust, anger, sorrow, etc., it will be seen that the breathing becomes irregular and unsteady. This is completely opposite to the slow, smooth flow of breath when the mind is calm.

Nature has given us this ability to escape from dangerous situations. This extra stimulation activates the adrenal gland which pumps adrenaline into the blood stream. The heart gets a fast kick for a short time that can pump more oxygen to the muscles. This is the reason why running, hiking, and other sport's activities are prevention for any cardiovascular diseases.

The quality of life matters. It would include pain-free times, attitudinal changes towards a more positive outlook, meaningful interpersonal relationships, being free of unhealthy self-defeating habits like smoking, drinking, etc. It would also relate to work and recreation – the balance between the two. A humane caring human being besides being in the world would care to think of the larger and the higher—a spiritual perspective.

Yoga helps in giving direction to human activities and consequently activities, which are integral to human conditions, would lead not to confusion and depression but to the joy of fulfilment. The science of Yoga submits that man lives at various planes of life: physical, material, mental, intellectual, a spiritual. This is done simultaneously. If yoga is

the science that enables him to fulfil himself as a well-adjusted personality then it has to have its feet firm on the ground. This is the reason why the initial lessons in Yoga start with the physical aspects or the body of man. "Pranayama breathing has been shown to positively affect immune function, hypertension, asthma, autonomic nervous system imbalances, and psychological or stress-related disorders [9].

Much of the affairs of our life are governed by a sense of false identification and illusions. We imagine and impute things where there is no such justification and we emotionally get attached to it and as a result, fail to distinguish an event or happening from our own true self. In a philosophical sense it is truly said, that what really happens is that our mind gets charged in such conditions and acts against our own interests. Such a charged mind thinks and acts in an erroneous way. In fact our mind is not the true self, but rather it is an instrument of pure consciousness.

Mantras

Getting to the ancient root of it all, mantra, at its core, is the basis of all religious traditions, scriptures, and prayers. It is one of the ways to purify the mind. In several studies, MRI scans are used to visually measure the significant changes mindfulness meditation can achieve (Figure 1) [10].

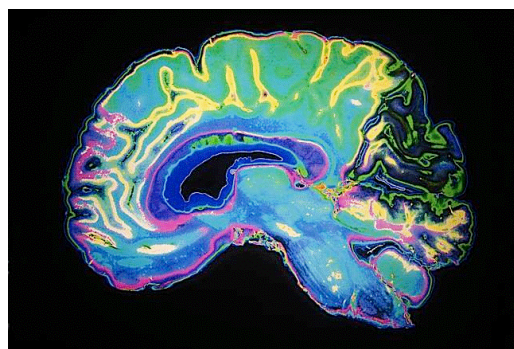


Figure 1: MRI scan.

Similar effects are seen with Mantra recitation (Figure 2) [10].



Figure 2: Plants grow better when exposed to either classical music or classical mantras.

A mantra is a sacred utterance, a numinous sound, a syllable, a word or group of words. Sounds are vibrations. Vocal repetition progresses through mental repetition and to pure thought. With practice, duality disappears and there is no awareness of meaning. Each sound produces a form in the invisible world. The illusion of a duality or a polarity between mind and matter arises purely from language [11].

Fasting

I had been fasting over 40 years: each year at least one month. I also lived on prana for 5 months and have wide experiences with fasting. It increases energy, extends life, slow down aging, heals the body. The fast is often the beginning of a physical and spiritual awakening, compelling people to ensure their future health by turning their lives around, adopting positive habits and living closer to nature. Fasting has long been used as a preventive measure and as a cure and to purge the body of impurities or toxins. Living organisms, particularly human are exposed to chemical substances or toxins at least once during the lifetime and it are not without any consequences. When the body becomes clean, the mind becomes clear. Ideally, it is practiced in silence: no eating, no talking. Fasting will cleanse the bloodstream, tissues and cells for deep, fundamental healing. Animals naturally fast when they are sick. Ancient practitioners of yoga incorporated fasting firmly into the principles of yogic diet. With detoxification, fasting helps expunge the toxins stored in your fat cells. It influences everything from the immune system to mental health to weight loss. Longevity research has entered the main stream. Significant calorie reduction improves long-term health over specific period of time. The clinical trial reveals that cutting back on food for just 5 days a month could help prevent or treat age-related illnesses like diabetes and cardiovascular disease [12].

Function of the Mind

How we can see? First, we take a look at the object. This information via the retina of the eye is carried through the optic nerve to the brain. From the brain it is taken up by the mind. Mind starts thinking and doubting whether the object is a flower or an animal or perhaps a piece of paper. In order to reach a proper conclusion about the nature of the object, it must be analysed further. We use intellect, but the intellect cannot directly come to any final conclusion without comparing with the submerged experiences lying within the subconscious mind. After diving deep within the subconscious and comparing these experiences with thousands stored in the mind, intellect comes to conclusion; there is no more doubting, no more thinking, no more analysing. It is so important to purify the mind. If thoughts are not pure we get lost in illusions. Psychoanalysis is based on the concept that individuals are unaware of the many factors that cause their behaviour and emotions [13].

The mind is a powerful thing. Wherever the mind goes, the body will follow. The power of our mind is so powerful and yet very few of us actually use its power to shape our self-image and to create perfect health. It takes deep understanding of us and it takes time. We all have bad habits we need to break. Find out your bad habits and begin to remove them one at a time. You are the best judge in this direction. When the mind is saturated with selfishness and desires, it is difficult to understand. It is the essence of love that glues the molecular structure of all expression harmoniously together. Next time you feel in judgment or anger, move beyond and look for the spark of divine expression in their eyes, and in their soul, and in their heart.

How can Water, Air, Fire and Earth, Heal Me?

No disease can live in an alkaline environment. We would never be ill if we will have enough minerals in our bodies. Raw food diet is the only alkalizing diet available because cooking destroys minerals. Most of us know that our bodies are comprised more than 3/4th of water. Ancient people have known for centuries that water purifies our energetic fields. Taking a shower is also purifying and refreshing. Fire is an element we can recognize as a greater healer and purifier as well. It burns negative energy off of our being. It's very healing. Air is main source of our body's energy. Clean air full of oxygen is essential to vital health. Approximately 60% of our energy comes from the oxygen.

Nutrition

Our ideal food would: taste great raw and unseasoned, be easy to digest, be easy to find, nourish our body and supply it with enough vitamins and other nutrients and have enough calories. Acid foods and dark emotions not released cause acid in the body, with cooked protein.

In *Death by Diet*, by Robert Padfoot it is stated that one of the 1940's Nobel Prizes was awarded for evidence that no disease can live in an alkaline environment. It is acidic conditions in the body causing the disease. All of our food or sustenance comes from the earth. By eating green vegetables we are absorbing great amounts of minerals and vitamins that are the bones of the earth, which form our bones in our bodies. The earth itself, the soil, mud baths are healing.

It is wonderful to connect with nature itself. Hugging the trees, noticing the beauty, enjoying gardening is a healing. Lie out on grass and feel the rhythm of the earth for a few minutes. Walk barefoot on the grass or on the beach. Open up to the love of nature and it will love you.

We call the earth our mother because it provides all nourishment for us. Purify yourself with water, fire, air and earth and you will notice you feel more centred, energetic, connected, present and happy to be alive. Energy is like light, it is pure, and it is clean. Impurities in our system either physically or energetically, block the flow of energy in us. Cleansing or purifying ourselves is the way we regain health, vitality and energy. Take the time to love yourself each day and remember that to truly love another you must love yourself. Peace is with you.

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