YOGA: AN ANCIENT LIFE STYLE SUITABLE FOR MODERN MAN

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The word Yoga has firmly entrenched itself in the global vocabulary. From Pretoria to Moscow, from Beijing to Rio de Janeiro, mention the word “Yoga” and people’s eyes light up with recognition and a dim awareness that Yoga is indeed something of great value.

But what is the value of Yoga? And what values have become associated with this ancient Sanskrit word? The majority believe Yoga is valuable because it cures or prevents disease, making it a superb keep fit exercise. Others will only value its effectiveness in weight reduction. Some, a few, will concede that Yoga practice bestows peace of mind and a feeling of well being, even of increased energy levels. Of course no one will deny that Yoga does indeed produce all these good things. But! This is not and never has been the goal of Yoga. All these results are merely side benefits. The real purpose of Yoga was, is and shall always be Moksha, liberation, the achievement of the Highest Goal of Human Life, oneness with the Universal Self.

Yoga is a methodology that has developed over millennia of experimentation by the great Rishis of India aimed at achieving the ultimate perfection of the human spirit. Yoga transforms the lower animal nature to a human one, and the human nature to a God-like Being, radiating Sat (Reality) Chit (Consciousness) and Anandam (Bliss).

Yoga is not a magic pill. It is not a technique, a trick, a convenient button which can be pressed to accomplish a mundane goal. Yoga is a Way of Life, Yoga is the lifestyle of the Rishis of India who “Saw Reality” and who
were compassionate enough to return to lower levels of consciousness to show a path to these less developed themselves, enabling them to achieve the same pinnacle of unfoldment of spirit.

Yoga is a \textit{wholistic way of life} that encompasses all aspects of human existence: physical, mental, moral, ethical, emotional, material and spiritual. Yoga shows us how the human incarnation may be lived according to \textit{Dharma}, the Cosmic Law.

Yoga is the \textit{Science of Right – Use – Ness}: a methodology for using body, mind and emotions in the right manner. This involves a whole way of moving, non-moving, thinking, non-thinking, feeling, emoting, speaking, eating, working, sleeping, contemplating and even breathing. Yoga teaches us the correct manner to use all these aspects of our human life.

Yoga is a lifestyle which evolved in the hermitages of the \textit{Rishis} of Bharat. Yet, it is pertinent even today. It is a lifestyle rooted in restraint of the animal impulses (\textit{Yama}) and cultivation of humane virtues (\textit{Niyama}). It is discipline of body (\textit{Asana}) and control of breath / Prana movement (\textit{Pranayama}). Yoga advocates conscious use (not misuse) of the sensory organs both the Jnanendriyas as well as the Karmendriyas (\textit{Pratyahara}). It teaches the correct use of mind in a non-personal, objective, positive, directed manner (\textit{Dharana}). All these aspects of controlled living are woven into a natural, non-harmful, non-acquisitive, sensitive, simple, regulated life style which is guided by the high ideas of \textit{Dharma} and \textit{Moksha}.

\textit{Yoga}, that most popular modern word, is a sound like an atomic bomb, which when penetrated deeply releases energy powerful enough to lift all its practitioners into higher realms of consciousness, propelling the Jiva far, far beyond the puny personality into the grand vision and life style of a true \textit{Universality}.