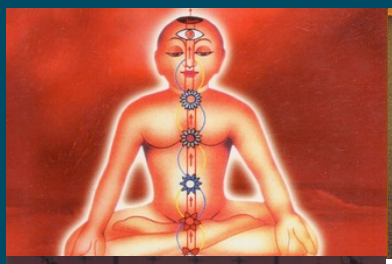
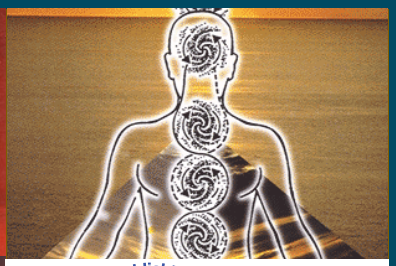
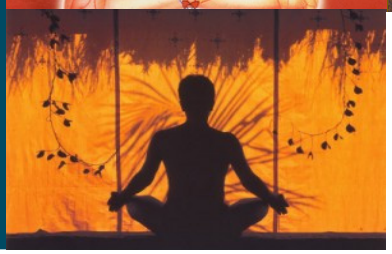
The Journal of Yoga & Physical Therapy welcomes contributions from researchers and yoga practitioners exploring the philosophy & historical development of yoga, science of meditation, traditional medicine and spiritual phenomenology for global peace & health.

Being an open access journal, the research is freely available to the public & creates awareness in the readers of various categories i.e., scientists, research scholars, administrators, extension workers, organizations about the potential benefi ts of Yoga in various health disorders.







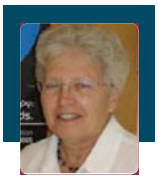
ISSN: 2157-7595

Journal of Yoga & Physical Therapy

Open Access

Editors & Editorial Board

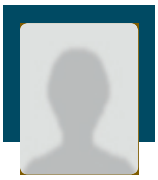
http://www.omicsonline.org/jypthome.php



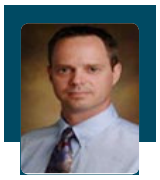
E L Bukowski
The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, USA

Janet L. Poole
University of New Mexico, USA

Tiffany Field
University of Miami Medical School, USA

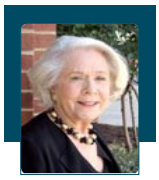


Morton Kissen
Adelphi University USA

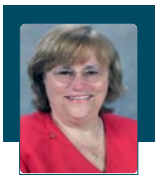


M T. Whitehead
Arkansas State University, USA

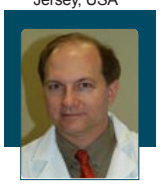
T D. Micklebough
Indiana University USA



Ann Gill Taylor
University of Virginia USA



Ruth McCaffrey
Florida Atlantic University, USA



Timothy R. Koch
Washington Hospital Center, USA

S Benavides
Nova Southeastern University College of Pharmacy, USA

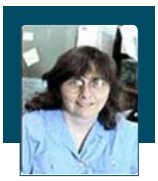
E D R J. Klika
Aspen Cancer Survivor Centere USA

Lindy Rossow
University of Oklahoma, USA

B Amirlak
University of Texas USA

B W Craig
Tibet House, USA

A R Jiménez
Autonomous University of Ciudad Juarez, USA



C E Brodbeck
Chapman University USA

Miyoung Lee
Oregon State University, USA

Bruce M. Becker
Department of Emergency Medicine, USA

C Booth LaForce
University of Washington, USA

Arlene A. Schmid
Indiana University USA

Amy E. Beddoe
Walden University USA

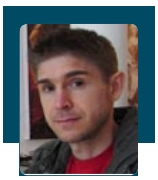
Dalia Zwick
The Program for People with Physical Disability, USA

Erik J. Groessl
University of California-San Diego, USA

A C Ross
Unity Woods Yoga Studio, USA

John T. Harrigan
University of Medicine & Dentistry of Newjersy, USA

Ashraf S. Gorgey
Virginia Common wealth University, USA



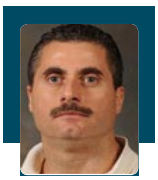
Lipnicki DM
Charité Medical University Berlin Germany

Andreas Michalsen
Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Berlin

K-M Chen
Kaohsiung Medical University, Taiwan

Ozlem Ulger
Hacettepe University Turkey

Sat Bir S. Khalsa
Harvard Medical School



John Caruso
University of Tulsa USA

F Cecchi
University of Skhodra Europe

David Sibbritt
University of New-castle, Australia

N V Yağlı
Hacettepe University Turkey

PaulHendrick
University of Otago New Zealand

shirley telles
Patanjali Yogpeeth India

S.N. OMKAR
Indian Institute of Science, India

Vikas Dhikav
Indraprastha Univer-sity, India

Journal of Yoga & Physical Therapy - Open Access using online manuscript submission, review and tracking systems of Editorial Manager® for quality nd quick review processing.
Submit your manuscript at http://www.omicsonline.org/submission

OMICS Publishing Group
5716 Corsa Ave., Suite 110, Westlake, Los Angeles, CA 91362-7354, USA, Phone: +1- 650-268-9744, Fax: +1-650-618-1414, Toll free: +1-800-216-6499

Bhavanani, 1:1
http://dx.doi.org/10.4172/scientificreports.123

Open Access Scientific Reports

Case Report Open Access

Concepts of Health in Dravidian Yogic Treatises

Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani*

International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (ICYER), Ananda Ashram, India

Abstract

The Dravidian culture of South India has contributed greatly to the history and development of Yoga. The great Dravidian Yogi Tirumoolar emphasizes the importance of not only eating the right type of food, but also the right amount and with the right attitude. Tirumoolar has given numerous references to therapeutic benefits of Yoga for attaining and maintaining health in his monumental Tirumandiram. One of the major Indian concepts of disease causation is the imbalances of Tridosha. This is found in numerous classical texts of Yoga and Ayurveda like Shiva Swarodaya, Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita and Tirumandiram. This article also details with concepts from the Tirukural of Tiruvalluvar.

Introduction

The Dravidian culture of South India has contributed greatly to the history and development of Yoga. The great Dravidian Yogi Tirumoolar is said to be either a contemporary of Patanjali or Patanjali himself. He authored the 3000 versed Tirumandiram that explains Yoga in a holistic manner. It is said that he composed each of the verses during a year of meditative awareness and then gave one verse a year for three thousand years! [1].

The Tirumandiram teaches ***Attanga Yoga***, that is the same as the ***Ashtanga Yoga*** of Maharishi Patanjali. It also explains numerous concepts of ***Saiva Siddantha*** as well as deals with nadis, chakras and Hatha Yoga in great detail. Numerous asanas, pranayama are also described. Bhakti for the Lord is extolled in the form of Shiva and he says, "***Anbe Sivam***", the Lord is love and love is the divine [1].

Other important teachings have come from Tiruvalluvar, the great poet-saint of Tamil Nadu. Through his Tirukkural having 1330 verses he gives clear guidance for right living in tune with ***Aram*** (righteous living in tune with the divine law)**,** ***Porul*** (proper acquisition and use of material aspects of life)**,** ***Inbam*** (right-use-ness of emotional aspects of human nature for fulfilment) that may be correlated to ***dharma, Artha*** and ***Kama*** in the ***Chaturvida Purusharta*** **[2].** He doesn't mention ***Moksha*** implying thereby that when the first three are lived properly, the fourth occurs automatically!.

Concept of Evolution

The concept of human life as a non-stop process of evolution from the lowest to the highest is found in the ***Shivapuranam*** that is part of the ***Dravidian Bhakti Yoga*** culture. This verse describes the evolutionary journey from the non-moving state of rocks, grass, small plants and trees to the moving state of worms, various animals, birds and snakes up to the human state and finally ending at the divine state of sages and celestial beings (*pullaagip poodaay puzhuvaay maramaagip pal virugamagip paravaiyaayp paambaagik kallaay manidharaayp peyaayk kananggalaay val asuraragi munivaraayth thevaraayc cellaa nindra iththaavara sanggamaththul ellap pirappum pirandhu ilaiththen emberumaan -Sivapuranam verse 30)*[3].

Relationship Between Food And Health

Yoga emphasizes the importance of not only eating the right type of food but also the right amount and with the right attitude. Importance of not eating alone, as well as preparation and serving of food with love are brought out in the Yogic scheme of right living. ***Guna*** (inherent nature) of food is taken into consideration to attain and maintain good health. Modern dietary science of diet can learn a lot from this ancient concept of classification of food according to inherent nature as it is a totally neglected aspect of modern diet. We are what we eat!

Tiruvalluvar offers sane advice on right eating when he says, "He who eats after the previous meal has been digested, needs not any medicine." (*marunthuena vaendaavaam yaakkaikku arundiyathu atrathu poatri unnin-Tirukkural 942)* [2]. This makes a lot of sense but is not followed in the modern world where common sense is not so common! Overloading of the digestive and eliminative processes is one of the major causes behind all lifestyle disorders that are found threatening to humankind today.

He also says that life in the body becomes a pleasure if we eat food to digestive measure (*attraal alavuarinthu unga aghduudambu pettraan nedithu uikkum aaru-Tirukkural 943*) [2]. The concept of ***Santhosha*** is well brought out in this statement that reiterates Mahatma Gandhi's words that, "there is enough for everyone's need but not enough for anyone's greed"! When there is contentment in appeasing hunger it will percolate into all aspects of life producing happiness, harmony and health.

He also invokes the Yogic concept of ***Mitahara*** by advising that "eating medium quantity of agreeable foods produces health and wellbeing" (*maarupaaduillaatha undi marutthuunnin oorupaadu illai uyirkku -Tirukkural 943)* [2]. This is very similar to the Hathayoga tradition and the Bhagavad Gita concepts of right eating [4].

Tiruvalluvar has emphasized the link between overeating and disease by saying, "the one who eats on an empty stomach gets health while with the greedy glutton abides ill-health" (*izhivu arindhu unbaankan inbampol nirkum kazhiper iraiyaankan noi- Tirukkural 946)* [2]. Overeating is a direct cause of obesity that may be linked with diabetes, hypertension, musculoskeletal problems and their antecedent complications of the nervous system, heart, eyes and kidneys too [4].

***Corresponding author:** Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani, International Centre for Yoga Education and Research (ICYER), Ananda Ashram, India, E-mail: yognat@gmail.com

Received June 22, 2012; **Published** June 29, 2012

Citation: Bhavanani AB (2012) Concepts of Health in Dravidian Yogic Treatises. 1: 123. doi:10.4172/scientificreports.123

Copyright: © 2012 Bhavanani AB . This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

He also warns us that those who eat beyond the level of hunger will suffer from untold hardships (*theeyalavu andrith theriyaan perithu unnin noialavu indrip padum- Tirukkural 947)* [2]. Wish we could all listen to this advice for truer words were never spoken for when health is lost all is lost!

Attaining and Maintaining Good Health

Tirumoolar has given numerous references to therapeutic benefits of Yoga for attaining and maintaining health in his monumental Tirumandiram. He emphasizes ***Swara Yoga*** concepts when he says, "If breath flow dominates in left nostril on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays no bodily harm can occur" (*velliven thingal vilangum budanmoondrun thalli idatthe tayangume yaamaagil olliya kaayatthuk koona milaiyendru- Tirumandiram* 791) [4]. He also goes on to describe the effects due to the different flows that are in tune with swara yoga concepts.

He has further described the human body as the temple of the divine and stresses on the proper preservation of the body with reverence and care. (*udambinai munnam izhukken drirunden udambinuk kulle yuruporul kanden udambule uttaman koilkon daan endru udambinai yaanirun thombugin drene –Tirumandiram 725)* [1]. This is an important attitude that helps us to view the physical body with reverence and take care of it in a proper manner. When we have reverence for the body and take care of it with right lifestyle, health is attained and maintained automatically.

Tirumoolar emphasise the proper purification of internal organs to attain an imperishable body with perfect health (*chuzhattrik kodukkave chuttik kazhiyunj chuzhattri malatthaik kamalatthaip poorithu uzhattrik kodukkum ubayam arivaarkku azhattrith thavirththudal anjana mame- Tirumandiram 726)* [1]. This is similar to the concepts of cleansing practices (shat karma) found in texts of the Hatha Yoga tradition like Gheranda Samhita and Hathayoga Pradipika [4].

Concepts of Disease

One of the major Indian concepts of disease causation is the imbalances of ***tridosha***. This is found in numerous classical texts of Yoga and Ayurveda like *Shiva Swarodaya, Sushruta Samhita, Charaka Samhita* and *Tirumandiram* [3,4].

According to Tiruvalluvar, disease results from ***tridosha*** imbalance *(miginum kuraiyinum noiseyyum noolor valimudhalaa enniya moondru -Tirukkural 941)* [1]. According to Mark Halpern, Founder-Director, California College of Ayurveda, USA the ***tridosha*** fluctuate constantly. As they move out of balance, they affect particular areas of our bodies in characteristic ways. When ***vata*** is out of balance—typically in excess—we are prone to diseases of the large intestines, like constipation and gas, along with diseases of nervous system, immune system, and joints. When ***pitta*** is in excess, we are prone to diseases of the small intestines, like diarrhoea, along with diseases of the liver, spleen, thyroid, blood, skin, and eyes. When ***kapha*** is in excess, we are prone to diseases of the stomach and lungs, most notably mucous conditions, along with diseases of water metabolism, such as swelling [3].

Tirumandiram of Tirumoolar has prescribed the practice of Yoga at different times of day to relieve disorders arising from ***tridosha*** imbalances. According to him, practice of Yoga at dusk relieves ***kapha***, practice at noon relieves ***vata*** and practice in morning relieves ***pitta*** disorders. (*anjanam pondruda laiyaru mandiyile vanjaga vatha marumaddi yaanatthir senjiru kaalaiyir seithidir pittarum nanjara sonnom naraithirai naasame –Tirumandiram 727)* [1,3].

It is interesting to note that traditional Indian thought views the very occurrence of birth on this planet as a disease and a source of suffering! Tiruvalluvar reiterates this when he says, "It is knowledge of the ultimate truth that removes the folly of birth" (*pirappu ennum pedaimai neenga chirappu ennum chem porul kaanbadhu arivu- Tirukkural 35)* [2].

He advises all doctors to look for the disease, then look for its root cause and finally search the remedy for the underlying cause *(noinaadi noimudhal naadi athuthanikkum vaai naadi vaippach cheyal- Tirukkural 948*) [2,3]. Wish all the modern doctors and yoga therapist would do this as we all seem to be covering up the symptoms using either medications or meditation! If the Yoga therapist doesn't look for the cause and set it right, it is not longer Yoga Chikitsa (yoga as a therapy) but only Yogopathy! [5].

References

1. Natarajan TB, Math R (2006)Tirumandiram: A Tamil Scriptural Classic.
2. Ramanathan M (2007) Thiruvalluvar on Yogic Concepts.
3. Bhavanani A B (2007) Yoga Therapy Notes.
4. Bhavanani AB (2008) A Primer of Yoga Theory.
5. Bhavanani AB (2011) Are we practicing yoga therapy or yogopathy? Yoga Therapy Today 7: 26-28.