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PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS AND YOGIC REMEDIES

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Abstract

Human life is not free from problems. Each and every person has to face difficulties during his life time because of his existence. We go to doctors, psychologists and counsellors or even astrologers to get rid of above problems. But in fact many of our problems can be overcome by becoming conscious of those and coordinating with the inside natural forces within us with the outer world nature. There are both positive and negative forces in us. Faith, love, confidence, endurance, patience etc are positive or constructive forces whereas fear, hostile attitude, inferiority and guilt feelings are the negative forces which may cause psychological problems. Where there is a problem, there is a solution. So for every problem of our life, we must correct the cause to eliminate the difficulties. To achieve this, we need absolute control and mental discipline, i.e., we should try to train our mind totally aware of our thought, speech and action. This is what, that has been explained in ancient yogic texts and practice of Asana and Pranayama will help to attain success in our path.

Keywords:-Yoga, Hatha Yogic techniques, Tension. Patanjali's eight steps or Astanga yoga, Samskaras, Asana, Pranayama, Mudra, Bandha, Yama, Niyama, Pratyahara, Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), Samadhi (sublime equanimity), Physical tension, Constant nervous tension, Neuro-muscular tension, Mental tension, Emotional Reaction Patterns, Bahiranga Yoga, Defence mechanism.

I. Yoga an Introduction

Yoga is not just a system of physical postures or breathing exercises, but an art of living harmoniously and creatively on the basis of complete experience of the whole being. The creative inspiration inside the human psyche gets unlocked by the practice of yoga. Yoga forms a strong foundation for higher self-development and a deeper consciousness of self, by removing the unwanted psychological blockages in the path our self transformation.

One can follow following three main points in course of his attempt.

- (I) The negative states of consciousness are to be completely eliminated.
- (II) Positive and constructive mental attitudes are to be cultured.
- (III) Asanas and Pranayama are to be practiced.

II. Effects of Yoga

Effects of different Hatha Yogic techniques like asana, pranayama, mudra, bandha and various meditation techniques have been observed through clinical and other scientific tests, procedures and observations. It has been established that the yogic practices have curative as well as preventive effects. The physiological, physical and chemical basis of these yogic methods have given them wide publicity and acceptability everywhere in the world.

The primary object of Yoga is to restrain the mental modifications says sage Panjalil.

Yoga practice eliminates the bad samskaras. The analysis, removal and sublimation of different types of samskaras or complexes helps restoring balance and equilibrium in individual personality and educates the mind for attainment of higher psychic and spiritual experiences by the way of practices. As described by Swami Satyananda Saraswati, "Yoga is a science of consciousness". Elaborating further, Swamiji tells that Yoga practice provides mastery and control over all the stages of consciousness thereby making one the spectators of own life. Freud had postulated that there existed three levels of mind such as conscious, subconscious and unconscious. But long before Freud's explanation, sage Patanjali had explained the structure, function and control of mind in his Yoga Sutra. The different stages of consciousness were clearly explained and it was stated that only a small fraction or fragment of the mind (mental faculty) was conscious whereas its larger portion was not revealed and unknown.

Patanjali's eight steps or Astanga yoga of Raja Yoga bears testimony to the integral approach of self development. The first four i.e. yama, niyama, asana and pranayama, are meant to serve for preparatory practices the true Yogic practices. The practice of fifth step, pratyahara means withdrawal of senses from worldly perceptions and control over them. Pratyahara. The next three steps of Patanjali's Raja Yoga are dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (sublime equanimity) and these are basically psychological in nature. So in the eight steps of Raja Yoga the practices at the physical and psychological levels of body, mind and existence are counterbalanced. They integrate beautifully the physiological aspect of Yogasana with the psychological aspect of meditation. Truly speaking, Asana can never be weighed as a mere physical exercise but a practice with full awareness in coordination with the breath, which gives rise to an integrated functioning of the body, mind and prana (energy).

III. Tension, cause and varieties

Tension appears to be the root cause of sickness which may be either physical or mental. The nerves are unable to relax as they have fixed grip on the muscles and the muscles also fail to relax since the nerves are tense.

IV. Physical tension

In such tensions the muscles are always in a constricted state either at work or play, restricting in joint flexibility and in breathing also, poor circulation of blood, pain and irritability. As a result some physio-chemical changes happen resulting from hyper activity of organs.

V. Constant nervous tension

In the present day, there appears constant nervous tension whose source is mind and it gets expressed through our nervous system. The mind has a vicious grip on the body. It does not allow muscular and physical relaxation. Because of lack of emotional stability we may be pushed around because of worry, anxiety, agitation and conflict etc.

We can differentiate tension as **neuro-muscular and mental tension**.

Shri Yogendraji has given following view on relaxation practices.

"We call the more relaxing practices, psychosomatic practices. These practices will bring about a state of neuro-muscular relaxation with an increase in the energy content in the body, in the shortest possible time. They relieve us of psychosomatic disturbances and give us a feeling of freshness, provide energy, physical rest and mental poise. It quickly recuperates, reinvigorates the nerve centres, collects the scattered forces, and reinvigorates the whole body."—Shri Yogendraji

Our emotional states also affect our body's defence mechanism to defend the disease creating forces.

Our individual personality is complex in nature in meeting any stressful situation creating within a reaction pattern in terms of worry, anxiety, fear, depression etc resulting a Stress **condition** of differing **intensity** dependent on personality of the individual. Stress generates its effect on body through pituitary and adrenal glands as they equip the body the task of fight or flight. Research and studies show that emotions acting through our body can affect (i) the nervous system (ii) the hormone system (iii) the immunological responses.

This changes the person's susceptibility and vulnerability to a series of organic illnesses.

Dr.George F.Solmon,University of California was a known psychiatrist in 17th century who told that 'Mind and Body are inseparable.'

Since then,a strong body-mind relationship has been proved once for all situations to come which has put rest the Christian dichotomy that had separated the body and mind.

VI. Emotion and personality

There is a wide spectrum of **Emotional Reaction Patterns** ranging from Revolt to Depression-the two extremes as expressed by Sri Aurobindo. He says,"Any desire not satisfied, any impulse that knocks against an obstacle, any unpleasant contact with outside ,creates very easily and very spontaneously a revolt or depression, because it is the normal state of things-normal in present life."

Type A reactions –Revolt (if one is strong)

Anxiety and Tension, Fear, Irritability, Resentment, Anger, Jealousy

Type B reactions-Depression (if one is weak)

Gloominess and Melancholy, Helplessness, Hopelessness, Despair.

All these emotional reactions emanate from the mind because of mental afflictions known as *kleshas*..

Patanjali's system of astanga yoga or eight fold path is a great contribution for overall relief of stress and a whole some individual transformation.

Let us examine the psychosomatic approach.

External or Bahiranga Yoga is the first five steps of the eight fold path.

According to yoga, the five yamas protect and guard us against the pitfalls .These five yamas are

Ahimsa-Non-violence, Satya-Truth, Asteya-Non-stealing, Brahmacharya-Non indulgence in sex, Aparigraha-Non-covetousness,

Similarly there are five niyamas which are as follows:

Saucha-Absolute purity, Santosha-Contentment, Tapa-Fortitude, Svdhyaya-Self-study, Isvarapranidhana-Resignation to the will of the absolute

Others in the series are Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Different Psychological Disorders and Their Yogic Remedies

Anxiety

Causes

Tension, fear, pessimism, egocentricity.

Attitudes to be adopted

Think of others, relax, optimism, faith.

Pranayama

Kapalabhati, Nadi sodhana, Kumbhaka.

Asana

Supta-Vajrasana, Ardha-Matsyendrasana, Trikonasana, Dhanurasana, Sarvangasana, Savasana.

Depression

Causes

Overwork, nervousness, anxiety, pessimism, unfulfilled desires.

Attitudes to be adopted

Rest, calm, optimism, faith, fulfillment.

Pranayama

Rhythmic breathing, Surya-bhedana, Bhastika.

Asana

Vakrasana, Bhujangasana, Salabhasana, Halasana, Paschimottanasana, Sarvangasana, Savasana.

Fatigue

Causes-

Useless conflicts, lifes style disorder, agitation, tension, nervousness, overwork.

Attitudes to be adopted

Appeasement, order, tranquility, relaxation, calmness

Pranayama

Rhythmic breathing, Nadi sodhana, Ujjayi.

Asana

Halasana, Paschimottanasana, Ardha-Matscyendrasana, Sarvangasana, Sirsasana, Savasana.

Nervousness

Causes-

Disorder, rushing and hurrying, agitation, tension, insecurity, irritationability, anxiety

Attitudes to be adopted

Order and organization, calmness, poise, relaxation, confidence, serenity, peace.

Pranayama

Rythmic breathing, Nadi-Sodhana

Asana

Yoga-Mudra, Vakrasana, Salabhasana, Halasans, Mayurasana, Viparitakarini, Savasana.

Indecision

Causes

Timorous attitude,absent mindedness,lack of purpose and ideals,inability to concentrate,lack of assurance,sloth and lack of initiative

Attitudes to be adopted

Courage,firmness,willpower, ideals,disciplined thought,self confidence,initiative

Pranayama

Rhythmic breathing,Nadi Sodhana,Kumbhaka

Asana

Yoga-Mudra,Uddiyana bandha,Supta Vajrasana,Vakrasana,Bhujangasana,Viparitakarani,Savasana

Haste

Causes

Impatience,lack of organization,disorder,nervousness

Attitudes to be adopted

Patience,organization,order,calm

Pranayama

Rhythmic breathing,Kapalabhati,Nadi sodhana

Asana

Vakrasana,Supta-Vajrasana,Dhanurasana,Mayurasana,Sarvangasana,Sirshasana,Savasana

Nightmares

Causes

Fear,guilt,depression,anxiety,lack of self confidence,tension

Attitudes to be adopted

Faith,serenity,calm and peace,self-confidence,relaxation

Pranayama

Kapalabhati,Ujjayi,Bhastrika

Asana

Supta Vajrasana,Mayurasana,Paschimottanasana,Viparitarani,Sirshasana,Savasana,Uddiyana bandha

Melancholy

Causes

Lack of sense of humour,fear,moroseness,negative attitude,pessimism,depression

Attitudes to be adopted

Sense of humour,faith,positive attitude,optimism,liveliness and enthusiasm

Pranayama

Nadi sodhana,Bhastrika

Asana

Supta Vajrasana,Trikonasana,Ardha-Matsyendrasana,Halasana,Sarvangasana,Sirshasana,Savasana

Frustration

Causes

Lack of interest,narrow mindedness,excessive reserve,lack of courage,inhibitions,selfishness

Attitudes to be adopted

Enthusiasm,interest in life,open mindedness,interest in others,fulfillment,selflessness

Pranayama

Rhythmic brathing,Nadi-Sodhana,purification breathings

Asana

Baddha Konasana, Halasana, Vakrasana, Sarvangasana, Savasana

Conclusion

The problem of man lies within himself. The mind is a bundle of samskaras or root potentials and tendencies. According to yogic concept when mind becomes calm, steady and quiet, clarity of mind is achieved. Ultimately an individual becomes more aware of disturbing forces. A strong minded person tackles the situation in a better manner irrespective of the presence of the hostile environmental forces. Yoga has laid down psychosomatic ways through various psycho-physiological processes for dealing with the body-mind complex interactions with the external world. Yoga tries to bring harmony and coordination in interaction of human personality with the outerworld at all levels and stages of life. A noted Buddhist Monk, G.K. Gyatso has told, 'All the fearful aspects of Samsara from the greatest down to the smallest arise from the self cherishing attitudes.' Here lies the crux of all the problems we face. The protection of self-image is of much importance to us. In addition, we tend to protect our ego at all costs. The mechanism generally employed by us to protect our ego is known as 'defence mechanism' in terms of psychology. These are normally adjustive reactions of us which distort our perception of the reality. In addition lack of introspection and self awareness results in non recognition of the exact nature of problems. Lack of courage to face a situation generates avoidance behavior which may temporarily cease the problem but in course of time it weakens our inner mental strength.

Yoga has come to help the human being in this time of juncture. By assimilating different yogic practices one can better control of his mind and improve his personality and performance in material as well as spiritual achievements.

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