



## Yogic intervention (Abhyas & Vairagya) for the modern lifestyle disorders: A descriptive study

Vaid Manisha and Pal Ajay ✉

Received: 05.09.2019

Revised: 20.10.2019

Accepted: 24.10.2019

### Abstract

Abhyas and Vairagya, the core principles of Yoga, set the stage for other practices that lead to control of the mind and Self-realization. Together, the principles take one through the right path to achieve the ultimate goal of realizing the Self. We saw so many things in our surrounding that do misguide us to our main goal of our life (Kaivalya). These obstacles can remove with help of Abhyas & Vairagya. As in Patanjali Yoga Sutra Maharshi Patanjali said that *abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ*. Researches around the world show that high rates of obesity, low levels of physical activity and poor dietary intake are highly prevalent for ill health. In modern era we see that so much of people are suffering from lifestyle disorders like stress, diabetes, asthma, hypertension, anxiety, musculoskeletal disorder and so much many problems. Here in this research we are going to study about Yogic Management of these problems. Yogic Practices are very useful regarding lifestyle disorders. Initial studies suggest that Yoga has a positive impact on health, including tentative evidence of benefits for weight-management, and related factors such as disordered eating, physical fitness, sleep, mood, and stress. The traditional Yoga methods of inward focus, body awareness, and physical empowerment may promote a positive body image and support health more holistically than traditional weight management interventions (e.g. exercise programs). Practitioners know about Abhyas & Vairagya are part of Yoga. Yoga is rooted in Indian Philosophy has been part of Indian Spiritual practice for millennia, Yoga has been adopted for use in complementary and alternative medicine in Western Society. In the latter setting, Yoga is most often associated with Physical Postures, Breathe Control and Meditation; and different Yoga School have emerged that put varying focus on physical practices, practices such as Asanas, Pranayama, Yog Nidra are parts of Abhyas and in Vairagya - Dhyana and Selflessness (Niskamkarma) promotes physical wellbeing and mental calmness. In Shreemadbhagavadgeeta Lord Krishna said that *abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha grihyate* means that by Practice and Detachment, mind can be controlled. Attachment leads towards sorrow and vice versa. Therefore Vairagya should be practiced in daily life. It is said in Amritbindupnihad that *Man eva manushyanam karanam bandh mokshayoh* means that Mind is the cause of renunciation and bondages. Mind is considered as twofold: - pure and impure. It is impure with the resolve of personal desire. It is pure when devoid of all selfish desires. Through Abhyas (Practices) and Vairagya (Detachment) one can become physically fit, mentally sound and can cope with daily stressors.

**Key words:** *Abhyas, Vairagya, Yoga, Lifestyle Disorders, Asana, Pranayama, Dhyana, Yog Nidra.*

### Introduction

Lifestyle disorders are defined as diseases linked with the way people live their life. This is commonly caused by alcohol, drug, smoking abuse as well as lack of physical activity and unhealthy eating. Diseases that impact on are lifestyle is heart disease, stroke, obesity etc. High rates of obesity, low levels of physical activity and poor dietary intake are highly prevalent around the world (Crawford *et al.*, 2010). Yoga is rooted in Indian philosophy and has been a part of traditional Indian Spiritual practice for millennia (Iyengar, 1966). Regardless of its spiritual origins, yoga has

become a popular route to physical and mental well-being (Iyengar, 1966; Feuerstein, 1988) and has been adapted for use in complementary and alternative medicine in Western society (De Michaelis, 2005). In the latter setting, yoga is most often associated with physical postures, breath control and meditation; and different Yoga Schools have emerged that put varying focus on physical and mental practices (Feuerstein, 1988). Yoga Practices are associated with a relatively favorable risk/benefit profile (Cramer *et al.*, 2015; Fishbein *et al.*, 2014, Cramer *et al.*, 2013) and are easily adapted for a wide range of practitioners—including frail seniors and individuals with medical problems for whom other physical activity may be

### Author's Address

Department of Yoga, Himalayan Garhwal University, Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India  
E-mail: [manishavaid528@gmail.com](mailto:manishavaid528@gmail.com)



difficult. The American public uses Yoga not only to maintain wellness, and but also to treat specific health conditions (Saper *et al.*, 2004, Birdee *et al.*, 2008, Upchurch *et al.*, 2010, Holden *et al.*, 2015, Stussman *et al.*, 2012, Cramer *et al.*, 2015).

### Abhyas and Vairagya

Literally the two words translate to "practice" and "non-attachment" respectively. In another literal translation "Abhyas" means "Passion" and "Vairagya" means "Dispassion", but both the words have much deeper meaning in the Hindu Philosophy of Yoga. These are the two core principles on which the whole system of Yoga is based on. It is through these two principles that a person can control over his body and mind and realize his true self.

Abhyas and Vairagya, the core principles of Yoga, set the stage for other practices that lead to control of the mind and Self-realization. Together, the principles take one through the right path to achieve the ultimate goal of realizing the Self. We saw so many things in our surrounding that do misguide us to our main goal of our life (Kaivalya). These obstacles can remove with help of Abhyas & Vairagya. As in Patanjali Yoga Sutra Maharshi Patanjali said that *abhyāsa vairāgyābhyām tannirodhaḥ* and maharshi vya said that the mind riverlike flows both ways; it flows for good, and it flows for evil. That which flows towards the heights of Isolation through the valley of Discrimination is said to 'flows for good'; while that which flows towards the birth and rebirth, through the valley of Non-discrimination is said to 'flow for evil'. Dispassion serves to attenuate the flow through worldly object and the Practice of Discrimination serves to enliven the flow through Discriminative Wisdom. In this way the 'inhibition of the functions of the mind' is dependent upon both Practice and Dispassion (Gupta, 2015).

Now let's understand the two principles --  
1) **Abhyas**: Abhyas means persistent effort to attain and maintain a state of physical, mental and spiritual tranquility. To become well established, this needs to be done for a long period of time regularly. Abhyas means action that is done without interruption, without feeling bored or dispassion. This is applicable not only during the Yoga Asana/Pranayama Practice, but to everyday action that you do.

Abhyas also means to be mindful of our actions. It reminds us that for our Practice to be effective, we must always be intensely present and passionate to what we're doing and not do it half-heartedly. Eventually, such resolute, vigilant enterprise while doing Yoga will reflect in everything we do in daily life and we will become more focussed and effective in our daily life.

2) **Vairagya**: Vairagya means letting go of things like too much materialistic attachments, fear, paranoia, ego, false sense of superiority or inferiority, revenge or things that are beyond human control. This isn't to say we have to abandon our possessions, friends, or beliefs; we just have to recognize their transitory (non-permanent) nature and be ready to surrender them at the appropriate time.

### Life-Style

By definition, life-style is about a way of living of individuals, families (households), and societies, which they manifest in coping with their physical, psychological, social and economic environments on a day-to-day basis (Definition of Lifestyle. [<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/lifestyle.html>], Tol *et al.*, 2011). The quality of life-style has a great impact on the daily function of a person. Health experts believe that healthy life-style is fundamental for health promotion of communities (Tol *et al.*, 2011).

Practitioners know about Abhyas & Vairagya are part of Yoga. Yoga is rooted in Indian Philosophy has been part of Indian Spritual practice for millennia; Yoga has been adopted for use in complementary and alternative medicine in Western Society. In the latter setting, Yoga is must often associated with Physical Postures, Breathe Control and Meditation; and different Yoga school have emerged that put varying focus on physical practices, practices such as Asanas, Pranayama, Yog Nidra are parts of Abhyas and in Vairagya - Dhyana and selflessness (Niskamkarma) promotes physical wellbeing and mental calmness. In Shreemadbhagavadgeeta Lord Krishana said that *abhyāsenā tu kaunteya vairāgyeṇa cha gṛīhyate* means that by Practice and Detachment, mind can be controlled. Attachment leads towards sorrow and vice versa. Therefore Vairagya should be practiced in daily life. It is said in Amritbindupnishad that *Man eva manushyanam karanam bandh mokshayoh* means that Mind is the cause of renunciation and



## Yogic intervention (Abhyas & Vairagya) for the modern lifestyle

bondages. Mind is considered as twofold: - pure and impure. It is impure with the resolve of personal desire. It is pure when devoid of all selfish desires. Through Abhyas (Practices) and Vairagya (Detachment) one can become physically fit, mentally sound and can cope with daily stressors.

### Conclusion

Yoga is more effective than other therapy in improving quality of life and reducing fatigue and sleep disturbances. Yoga is better for reducing depression, anxiety and fatigue in people when compared with psychosocial or educational interventions such as counseling.

### References

- Birdee, G. S., Legedza, A. T., Saper, R. B., Bertisch, S. M., Eisenberg, D. M. and Phillips, R. S. 2008. Characteristics of Yoga Users: Results of a National Survey. *J Gen Intern Med.* 23: 1653–1658. 10.1007/s11606-008-0735-5
- Cramer, H., Krucoff, C. and Dobos, G. 2013. Adverse Events Associated with Yoga: A Systematic Review of Published Case Reports and Case Series. Acott TS, editor. PLoS ONE.;8: e75515 10.1371/journal.pone.0075515
- Cramer, H., Ward, L., Saper, R., Fishbein, D., Dobos, G. and Lauche, R. 2015. The Safety of Yoga: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Am J Epidemiol.* 182: 281–293. 10.1093/aje/kwv071
- Cramer, H., Ward, L., Steel, A., Lauche, R., Dobos, G. and Zhang, Y. 2015. Prevalence, Patterns, and Predictors of Yoga Use. *Am J Prev Med.*
- Crawford, D., Jeffery, R. W. and Ball, K. 2010. Obesity epidemiology: from Aetiology to public health. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press;
- De Michaelis, E. A History of Modern Yoga: Patanjali and Western Esotericism. London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group;
- Definition of Lifestyle. Business Directory. Available at: [http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/lifestyle.html.]
- Feuerstein, G. 2005.. The Yoga Tradition. Prescott: Hohm Press; 1998.
- Fishbein, D., Barrett, L., Teranishi, R., Saper, R. and Kruger, J. 2014. Is Yoga Really Dangerous? A Systematic Review of Adverse Events Reported in the Medical Literature. *J Altern Complement Med.* 20: A21–A21.
- Gupta, A. K. 2015. The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali by Ganganath Jha revised & edited by Chaukhambha Orientalia, A House of Ayurvedic & Indological Books, DELHI(INDIA)
- Holden, S. C., Gardiner, P., Birdee, G., Davis, R. B. and Yeh, G. Y. 2015. Complementary and Alternative Medicine Use Among Women During Pregnancy and Childbearing Years. *Birth.*;42: 261–269. 10.1111/birt.12177
- Iyengar, B. K. S. 1966. Light on Yoga. New York: Schocken Books;
- Saper, R. B., Eisenberg, D. M., Davis, R. B., Culpepper, L. and Phillips, R. S. 2004. Prevalence and patterns of adult yoga use in the United States: results of a national survey. *Altern Ther Health Med.*10: 44–49.
- Stussman, B. J., Black, L. I., Barnes, P. M., Clarke, T. C. and Nahin, R. L. 2012. Wellness-related Use of Common Complementary Health Approaches Among Adults: United States, *Natl Health Stat Rep.* 2015; 1–12.
- Tol, A., Tavassoli, E., Sharifirad, G. R. and Shojaezadeh, D. 2011. The Relation between Health-Promoting Lifestyle and Quality of Life in Undergraduate Students at School of Health, Isfahan University of Medical Sciences, Iran. *J Health Sys Res.* 7: 442–448.
- Upchurch, D. M., Dye, C. E., Chyu, L., Gold, E. B. and Greendale, G. A. 2002. Demographic, Behavioral, and Health Correlates of Complementary and Alternative Medicine and Prayer Use among Midlife Women: *J Womens Health.* 19: 23–30.

