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Script

Introduction

Hello friends

Welcome to the fitness world of physical education. Today we will be discussing about the Education Value of Yoga

What is Yoga? Where did it come from? What is it all about and what good is it anyway ? These are questions which any intelligent enquirer may ask. These and many more besides will be answered by the end of the session.

First, let us take the word ‘yoga’ and see what it means.

The word has its roots in the ancient Hindu sacred writings, which have a language; all their own called ‘Sanskrit’. Originally it was practically a secret language, taught only to the priests, neophytes and higher castes, and in the early days, the teachings of yoga were mainly handed down by word of mouth from Guru (teacher or master) to Chela (student or neophyte).

Nowadays, however, the language is taught quite openly, many books in Sanskrit have been widely publishes, and primers in Sanskrit can be readily obtained. Schools of yoga and Sanskrit are now well established in many parts of India, whilst the sincere seeker is welcomed in any and all of the ashrams controlled by various yogi masters.

The reason for the original secrecy was that much of the yogi teaching was (and is) of an occult nature, and can do a great deal of harm if used in the wrong way. Every effort was therefore taken to protect the teachings and teachers, and to prevent the former falling into the wrong hands.

The word Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' which means to 'Join' or to 'Yoke'. This leads us to the definition that Yoga is a means of joining one thing to another, or of yoking two things together. It is exactly that.

Simply expressed, yoga is the 'joining' or 'yoking' of the individual soul to the universal soul, the union of the personal spirit to god. This may sound rather an extravagant claim at first sight, but when one remembers that the basic aim of Christianity is the ultimate union of the spirit with God, the statement becomes more reasonable. The main difference between the Christian statement and the yogi statement is that the former teachers union after death of the body, whereas yoga teachers that by rigorous training and observances, conscious union can be achieved whilst the spirit is still in the flesh, in other words, whilst one is still in this world.

We are going to learn how this may be achieved.

It must not be thought that the Christian Church denies the possibility of such spiritual union during this life, for many Christian saints have achieved this state of ecstasy(joy), and one is reminded of St Paul, St Francis, St Therasa, and many others whom history recorded as having advance to this stage.

As to the origins of yoga, its history goes back many years even to the beginning of India itself. Archaeologists tell us that they have been able to trace the existence of habitation in India to a period about five thousand years ago, when the great valley of the Indus was already inhabited by the Harappa civilization.

This about two thousand Yoga teaches, however, that any individual, even a normal householder, can achieve this state of spiritual advancement, if he leads the right kind of life, and studies and practices assiduously the means whereby such accomplishment may be attained.years B.C (that is, about four thousand years ago), tribes of Aryans migrated from Persia and some areas of southern Russia, down into the Indus Valley and Some Northern Areas of India.

The original Aryans from whom these tribes migrated were the ancestors of most of the European races as we now know them. The Teutons, the latins, the kelts, the Slave, all are said to have their ancestry in the ancient Aryans, and India too has her racial roots in the same soil.

The word Aryans literally means Noble and the original Aryans was a proud people, with pride of race and veneration of nobility in all its forms.

From all the clear that yoga is a way of life which can be practiced by any human being regardless of age, condition of health, religion or nationality, for it is based on general physical and spiritual laws which operate on all mankind alike.

Yoga is sometimes referred to erroneously as a religion. If we profess a particular religion, then our beliefs, our code of behavior, our morals and ethics, are bounded by the canons of that particular religion to the exclusion of all others, which are generally looked upon as being incorrect or in disagreement with our own to some extent. But yoga, on the other hand, welcomes people of all races, religions and creeds. Its teachings being so basic and fundamental, there is practically no religion or creed to which its aims and objects are contradictory or antagonistic, and indeed, adherents to any religions, or even those who have no religious beliefs at all, can find benefit and profit by yoga.

It is also erroneously stated sometimes that yoga is a cult of asceticism, whereby self-denial, self-mortification and self-abnegation lead one to spiritual consciousness. This also is far from the truth. The true Yogi lives a life full and joyful, enjoying the fruits of earth and of spirit, living a life of direction and power, with inner harmony and peace, physical and mental health, in simplicity and happiness.

The yogi ideal could be summarized as 'having a fit and healthy body, strong in all its parts, under the control of an informed and cultured mind and a masterful will, animated by the highest ideals'.

Yoga is sometimes said to be dangerous to western people, but this is not so if it is applied with caution and with common sense.

Yoga offers a great deal, but it insists that the neophyte takes from it only as much as he is prepared for and that immediately any sign of strain appears, whether physical or mental development has prepared him for further progress.

In this respect yoga differs from orthodox western methods of physical culture, where emphasis is usually placed upon the acquisition of muscular and gymnastic powers. Current trends of thought are now finding that this method leads to a muscle-bound body sheathed in fat, with stiffened joints which have been strained beyond their natural state. The practice of yoga, on the other hand, stresses gentle and rhythmic movement, and by applying knowledge of the physiology aspects of the body, that applying knowledge of the physiological aspects of the body, that is

the glands and supple young and in full vigour of health long beyond the normal span, always a fit machine to serve the needs of mind and spirit.

Having dealt with the origins of yoga, its aims and its objects, we can now see the education value which one might expect to gain from its study and practice.

It must be emphasized, however, that it is not sufficient merely to study yoga, for this would be an intellectual pursuit only, and though the academic knowledge gained thereby may be of great interest, it would not be of any practical and educational value. In order to bring yoga to life and to really profit by it, one must take it to heart in every sense of the word, and live it as an essential part of one's daily life.

Educational Value of Yoga

We can now summaries the educational value of yoga as follows:

1. Yoga teaches one how to develop one's latent powers both mental and physical.
2. Yoga develops strong will power and through this, control of emotions, resistance to all unworthy desires.
3. Yoga expands the intellect, develops spiritual consciousness and by the development of discrimination and self-control, establishes one in serenity, peace and happiness.
4. Yoga promotes long life, happiness and unity.

Now let us see how yoga is applied and taught.

If we lived in India, we would seek out a Guru or Self-Realized yogi who might be prepared to take us into his household as a Chela or student.

Lacking this facility we are compelled to reply upon literature for our guidance. Of this there is now a plentiful abundance although, alas, not all of it is authentic. One must beware of the 'travelogue' type of writer, who spends a brief period travelling through the country, picks up en route a certain amount of superficial information, and goes back home to write an apparently authoritative book on the subject. It is a fact that this type of enquirer does not receive much sympathy from the yogi, who will frequently. Refuse to see or discuss matters with such people, knowing refuse to see or discuss matter with such people, knowing them to be seeking sensation rather than knowledge. So the disgruntled writer carries home a rather than

knowledge. So the disgruntled writer carries home a rather distorted picture of the yogi which a more sincere approach would have prevented.

As yoga is intended for every type of man, woman and child ever likely to exist, and as no two people on the world are exactly alike in the matter of mental physical, several different schools of yoga have been developed, each with its own particular aspect, so that all types are catered for, and nobody can come away saying that yoga could not apply to them. Nevertheless, all forms of yoga have a common aim, which is self-improvement and self-realization. The various schools of yoga are variously presented by different writers, but in his book Tibetan Yoga and Secret doctrine, Evanswentz has set these out so clearly and concisely, that we cannot do better than to reproduce them here:

Evans-Wentz sets them out as follows:

Schools or aspects	Gives mastery over	Leading to control of
Hatha yoga	Breath	Physical body and vitality
Laya yoga	Will	power of mind
• Bhakti yoga	Love	Power of devotion
• Shakti yoga	Energy	Power over energizing forces of nature
• Mantra yoga	Sound	Power of sound vibrations
• Yantra yoga	Form	Power of geometric form
Dhyana yoga	Thought	Power of thought processes
Raja yoga	Method	Power of discrimination
• Jnana yoga	Knowledge	Power of intellect
• Karma yoga	Activity	Power of action
• Kundalini yoga	Kundalini	Power of psychic and nerve force
• Samadhi yoga	Self	Power of ecstasy

Because of our way life, in the hustle and bustle of the materialistic world in which we live, we have very little opportunity to sit in the sun in contemplation for hours on end. Nor can we spend many hours a day in the physical cleansing processes

and exercises which are a necessary part of little to the serious Chela if he would become a full-blown yogi.

In the way of the west, however, we can take from those parts best suited to our own needs; and make the best use of them for our development and good. It is generally agreed that those schools or sections of yoga to which this applies are:

1. Hatha yoga for general development of physical fitness and health
2. Karma yoga, which is the yoga of cause and effect, the yoga of action, perhaps most suited to our way of life.
3. Bhakti yoga, the yoga of devotion which all good Christians practice in their daily prayers and devotions at church.
4. Janna yoga, the knowledge of yoga is pursued by all who work with their minds, the engineers, the scientists, the doctors, and all seekers after true knowledge.

We shall discuss all these forms of yoga in the course of this chapter, and will see how we can derive educational value, peace and happiness from their study and practice.

Physical Exercise Through Yoga

The following should be practiced each morning before breakfast, and in a well-aired room. A stuffy atmosphere will do more harm than good.

1. Stand erect with hands on hips, feet apart, and the body relaxed. Take a normal breath, and then blow this out forcefully until the lungs are quite emptied. Now slowly breathe in starting from the bottom of the lungs, feel the chest expand, and slightly raise the shoulder to get air into the upper spaces of the lungs. When a full breath has been taken, hold the breath and then breathe in sharply, and you will find that although you have already taken a full breath in the normal way, there is still room in the lungs for yet more air. Hold the breath a moment and then let it out slowly. Repeat the exercise three times, but stop immediately the slightest giddiness is felt. You will find that your capacity will increase with practice.
2. With hands on hips, keep the body relaxed, and then bend loosely forward from the waist. Now swing the body slowly and easily round in a circle first, bending from the waist and keeping the legs straight, circle first to the left and then to the right, repeating the whole action three times.

3. With hands on hips, bend the knees, then, when the knees are fully bent and you are sitting on your heels, takes a deep breath, at the same time straightening the legs and pushing the arms up straight above the head. You will thus finish up standing on tiptoe, arms above the head, and with the lungs full of air. This is a stimulating exercise when properly carried out and one almost gets the sensations of flying. Repeat three times.
4. Proper carriage and posture are essential to health and fitness, and also react upon one's mental condition, and the following exercise is most useful in this respect.

First stand to attention, then raise the arms over the head with palms facing outwards and forward. Now lower the arms sideways until the little fingers touch the legs. Relax and hold this position, for the spine and head will now be held erect and in a straight line. The chest should be lifted slightly forward, but not strained, and if you will always remember to carry yourself in this way, you will always have graceful carriage, cure a lot of small pains and discomforts caused by bad posture, and the erect carriage will react beneficially upon your mental condition.

Mental Exercise Through Yoga

1. Sit relaxed in a chair, close your eyes and imagine yourself walking down the local high street. Now try to recall the exact sequence of shops on each side of the street, their names, trades and general decor.
2. Each time you go out, make an effort to extend your topographical knowledge in this way, and try to develop an awareness of what is going on all around you.
3. Place a number of small and different articles on a tray, look closely at them for about three minutes, making an effort to retain a mental picture of everything on the tray and their relatives' positions. Now cover up the tray to write down the entire article on the tray and decrease the times spent looking at them.
4. The preceding exercise can also be carried out with a pack of playing cards or dominoes. First place a number of them face up wards on the table, then turn them over and try to name each one, varying the numbers and the time as before.

Relaxation

This is such an important subject that a special note is here appended. If you are not properly relaxed, both mind and body are in a state of tension, good health and serenity are impossible, so also is any kind of study. Many psycho-somatic troubles are caused solely by stress and strain and this condition can be overcome or prevented when one knows the way.

The following should be practiced at least once per day and during the day also if one is under stress.

Lie flat on your back on the floor, with head resting on a small cushion and arms straight down by the sides. Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and with the expulsion of breath imagine yourself becoming heavy and lax, pushing all your weight into the floor.

Now, starting with toes, command each and all of your limbs to relax. It is a good idea to give each and all of your limbs to relax. It is a good idea to give each little shake as if to shake out the tension. Fix your mind first on the toes, wriggle them and relax them. Then fix your mind on the legs, a little shake and then relax them and so on all over the body. Be careful to avoid that frown of concentration, for the face too must be fully relaxed.

Conclusion

Now you should feel completely relaxed all over, take long, slow, gentle breaths, and remain so for fifteen minutes. You will get up feeling refreshed, calm and poised, and if this exercise is practiced daily, or when under stress, you never suffer from strain or worry again.

That's all for today.

Thank you have a nice day.