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Lecture Title
Ashtanga Yoga - 1

Welcome to the lecture of Physical Education. Students in this lecture I will be talking about Ashtanga Yoga

The influence of the mind on the body is far more profound than the influence of the body on the mind. The physical training in yoga will give the desired result only when it is backed up by mental training through the cultivation of correct psychological attitudes. This is exactly why in Yoga, Yama and Niyam are placed as the first and second items correspondingly in the yogic curriculum and has assigned asana the third place.

The goal of yoga can be achieved only through the physical and mental discipline. Morality of higher order is essential, mainly because the human mind is full of hatred, dishonesty, deception, sensuality possessiveness and many other voices. And as long as these emotional disturbances continue to effect mind, it is useless to undertake the advanced practice of yoga.

Regarding the constituents of yoga the teachers are of different opinions. Daksha Samriti only mentions six constituents of yoga. i.e Pranayama, Pratyabhar Dharana, Dhayan, Trataka & Samadh.

Vishanu Purana also mentions only Six Constituents i.e Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyan & Samadhi.

In Gheranda Samhita there are Seven constituents and they are-shatkarmas, Asanas, Mudra-Bandha, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhyanana & Samadhi.

In Ashtanga Yoga, eight limbs or eight constituents are described, i.e. Yama, Niyama, asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana & Samadhi.

Actually there is no ~~any~~ rule that yoga must have a certain number of limbs.

In Hathyoga Pradeepika of yogi Swatmaran, four limbs of yoga are given.

The Yama & Niyama were originally a part of the yog sutras, which are a series of short sentences of wisdom through which sage patanjali conveys his teachings. Patanjali explains the steps through which even an ordinary person can realize God. According to yog sutras the Yama & Niyam are the first two steps in the eight fold path of yoga. The Yama & Niyam are ~~the~~ eternal and can be applied in people's lives always.

The Yama & Niayama are the self-disciplinary qualities that everyone should have and observe for their own spiritual development.

They are the code of conduct for anyone seeking spiritual development.

It would not be beneficial to practice the other steps of ashtanga yoga without mastering the Yama & Niyam simultaneously, as they are the base of the ladder leading to self-realization.

One may practice Asana and have a fit body. One may practice Pranayama and balance the Pranic energy in the Nadis. One may practice Pratyabhara and Dhayans reach deeper states of consciousness, but it result with no use without the practice of Yama & Niyam. The Yama & Niyama create a fit & Balanced mind. Most of all they establish a mental & physical Sanyam in our mind, actions & behavior.

Through the practice of yama & niyama, one is also awakening the Kundalini shakti. Hatha Yoga does not place much emphasis on yama and niyama must be practiced before commencing hatha yoga

2. Yama

The Yama are mainly qualities that a spiritual aspirant should have in order to communicate and interact with the outside world and people in it. They are also self restraints from performing actions of the weaker lower mind.

Yama are also known as the great universal because they are not limited by class, country, time and circumstances.

According to raja yoga and maharishi patanjali there are five types of yama:-

“ahimsaa- Satyaasteya- Brahmacharyaa-Parigrahaa yamaah”

The five moral rules of social conduct are:-

- Ahimsa (Non- Violence)
- Satya (Truthfulness)
- Asteya (Non- Stealing or Honesty)
- Brahmacharya (Continence)
- Aparigraha (Non- possessiveness)

Ahimsa (Non- Violence)

Yoga philosophy is based on the doctrine of unity of life and life should not be given pain in any way.

Ahimsa, non-violence not only means ~~not~~ causing harm or pain to any creature in thoughts, word or action, but also not having a hint of aggression within your being.

~~The practice of the vow of non-violence is first law-giver of human race, has considered ahimsa to be the highest means of liberation.~~ According to him, study of the Vedas, knowledge of self, control of senses, non-violence and service of guru are the best means of attaining liberation.

Ahimsa means not acting with the will to violate anything, even the atmosphere.

Harmony and serenity have to be maintained. In India, Jain sect is very firm in this code of conduct. ~~It~~ is a process of self-control, self awareness and awareness of everything that is around

you. If you harm another person intentionally, and you loose control of your mind and action you are creating an inbalance in yourself. Ahimsa means coming closure to the pure spirit. Mahatama Gandhi was a living example of this doctrine.

Christ, Krishana, Rama, Prophet Mohammed, Budha and all other saints were great followers of ahimsa

There are three aspects of ahimsa:-

- Ahimsa in thoughts (Intellectual non- violence)
- Ahimsa in words (non –violence of speech)
- Ahimsa in action (Physical non – violence)

- **Ahimsa In Thoughts**

Thoughts play a vital role in life. They are the products of thinking process which takes place in mind. They reflect the kind of thinking that takes place in mind. Every change in thoughts is accompanied by mental vibrations. Creative, peaceful and helpful thoughts bring harmony in the body and the yoga-practitioner should first of all have to practice good thoughts. Hence, complete renunciation of violation in thoughts, speech and body is perfect non- violence. When yogi realizes that all is self, he become fully established in non- violence.

- **Ahimsa In Words:-**

Thoughts are expressed through words. Words have very powerful force to affect others behavior and conduct. Injurious words produce retaliation and the whole relationship is disturbed by them. Violence of speech is practiced by bad abusive words, by speaking angrily permitting injury to someone and advising someone to harm another. Harmful, pain giving, negative emotions arousing words should not be spoken by the yoga practitioner.

The methods of getting rid of such habits of violence are to speak sweetly and softly without hypocrisy and to observe silence according to one's circumstances and capacity. One should use such type of words and language that do not show any pride and that may produce peaceful and soothing effect on others as also on the speaker. It is a familiar experience to all that everyone is hurt by harsh words. A wound caused by a weapon can heal in course of time, but one caused by bitter words lasts till death, and there is a best example of this quote is found in the Mahabhart. When draupadi remarked to duryodhan "the sons of the blind are also blind" in order to avenge this insult, later on, duryodhan dragged her to the open court and attempted to undress her. So in the last we can only say, one should speak lovingly, gently and softly or he should remain quite. Silence fulfils all purposes. Silence prevents violence caused by speech.

c. Ahimsa in action

Nobody can ever remain, even for an instant, without performing action. Action is the insignia of life in an organism. So long as we live and breathe in our bodies, we have to act and work. Our action should not in any way harm others because harmful actions generate destructive thoughts and instability in mind.

So the practitioner who wishes to perfect himself in the practice of ahimsa should keep a strict watch over his mind, emotions and actions. As he succeeds in putting his ideals into practice, the cruelties and injustices involved in his thoughts, actions or words will gradually be eliminated and his vision will be clear.

3. II Satya :- (Truthfulness)

Satya, or truth is the second yama, and also a very important qualification. Satya means factual expression of what actually exists in reality. Swami Sivananda says "God is truth, and he can be realized by observing the truth in thought, word and deed."

According to him there are so many forms of truth: truthfulness, equality, self-control, absence of jealousy, forgiveness, thoughtfulness and self-possession. Satya is not merely abstinence from telling lies, but also the ability to see the truth, to be aware of the truth behind everything. The

characteristics of truth are thus described: the words that are meant to impart wisdom to another person without any intention of deluding him are truthful. Such words should conduce to the happiness of all creatures. The words that harm living being are not truthful but sinful. So, one should examine the words before they are spoken and utter them if they are for the good of all beings. When a person thinks over a matter in his mind, expresses it in his speech and in the end acts according to it, he is considered perfectly truthful. Under certain circumstances, telling a lie to produce immense good is also regarded as truth.

Honesty is something we rarely find in this modern world of corruption. If you make a habit of fooling or cheating others, you start to believe the lies yourself, you are only being dishonest with yourself. Basically, honesty means being truthful with yourself and not aiming to cheat others for your own personal gain or to discredit them. Truthfulness is essential for yoga practitioner because it helps in concentrating the mind. Untruthfulness is a circular process. Usually one lie requires a number of other lies for its support. In spite of all efforts, sooner or later, a lie gets exposed. Efforts to keep up falsehoods and false appearances cause much stress and strain in the sub-conscious mind and provide solid ground for all kinds of emotional disturbances. A person, who starts practicing yoga without first acquiring the habit of uttering truth, is like a man going for fishing without net.

Truthfulness unfolds budhi which helps in solving many known and unknown problems or we can say satya helps in overcoming the petty mind.

A person, observing the vow of truthfulness, should always remember that he should speak truthfully and cautiously and whatever he speaks should be for the good of others. One should speak the truth not speak unpleasant truth, nor pleasant falsehood. For example, it is also truth to call a thief a thief. But truth should be courteous, hence a blind man is addressed as Surdas, a great blind saint, prajnachakshu, a possessor of the eye of wisdom etc. In shantiparva of mahabharata it is said- “which helps all being is the truth” it is well known fact that one who speaks truth is respected at all places, by all people of all sects.

There are three aspects of truth or Satya also:-

- Satya in Thoughts

- Satya in Words
- Satya in Action

So truth must be same in all these three aspects.

III. Asteya :- (Non- Stealing)

Asteya or Non- stealing is the third constituents of yama. Theft means unauthorized possession. To give up theft in thought, word and deed is non-stealing. Asteya is commonly known as honesty. To be able to follow Asteya, we must be satisfied with what we have, our personal belongings, our way of thinking, what we do, where we are, who we are etc. in other words, we must not be greedy and should try to be contented. We steal things because we desire them. To be able or to be strong enough to resist the temptation to steal the object that one desires, one's mind must be strong. Hence, through mastering Asteya, one purifies the mind of desires and verities. Asteya makes the mind pure, like a mirror in which your divine mind is reflected. The very thought of gain through theft should not arise in the mind, because constant desire for objects not belonging to one self is actual theft. According to yoga – if you need something and it is truly essential, somehow it will come to you.

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Let us continue with Ashtanga Yoga friends, in previous lecture we discussed about Ashtanga Yoga and its first step Yama, five types of yama. In this lecture we will continue with the types of YAMA.

There are three aspects of Asteya or non-stealing also:-

- Intellectual non-stealing
- Theft of Speech
- Physical Theft

Nor even to think of appropriating against the injunctions of scriptures, who belongs to others is non-stealing. the idea of stealing first originates in mind. It is defined as not even to think of wrongly appropriating things like food, clothes, money, property, land, women and even knowledge. One should not think of stealing these things even in a dream. What one has not earned, what has not been presented to him, is not his. The idea of stealing arises from deeds. The saints who lead a life of self-mortification become free from this productivity, but even householders will get more or less free from this evil if they are not greedy. If the idea of theft is eradicated from the mind, then it will not take the form of action. If due to greed, jealousy and attachment one conceals truth, knowledge or science, it is mental theft.

One should never induce anybody by words to commit theft or dacoit. This is non-stealing.

A man may keep his thoughts secret and when questioned about it may say that it is nothing, then it is mental theft. He should express as he knows for as he has heard and should not conceal anything. such behavior is mental non-stealing. complete silence is very helpful in observing mental non-stealing.

As in the case of mental and vocal, so also in the case of physical theft; one should neither commit theft or looting nor cause anyone else to do so. This is defined as bodily or physical non-stealing

To appropriate by deceit, intrigue or force things belonging to others, without their permissions, is clearly a despicable act of theft, and when a man is established in the virtue of non-stealing, nobody steals what belongs to him. yoga acquired this virtue his property would never be stolen. Vedas further say that a man should enjoy what has been vouchsafed to him by god or what he has inherited from his parents or what others have willingly given to him.

He should never **couet** what is not his. it is only powerful greed which induce him to commit sin and offence. So one should cultivate and follow the virtue of non-stealing in every respect.

IV.Brahamacharya:- (celibacy)

The fourth constituent of yama is very important. It is brahamacharya. Barahamacharya is usually depicted in books, discourses, scriptures etc. as celibacy.

But brahama literally means the “divine consciousness” and charya in this ease means “living”. Therefore, Brahmacharya means “Living in divine consciousness”, or “being established in the higher mind.

Sex is life but it is also a source of sending one in hell. one may not be required to give up sex life at once but he has to give it up completely before he starts the serious practice of higher yog.

The other meaning of the brahamacharya is the logical control over all types of indriyas (senses) is needed on the part of yoga practitioner. If any indriya is even slightly loosened, mind gets filled immediately with many voices. So the practice of higher yoga requires complete abstinence from sex life. It does not mean only from sexual indulgence but freedom from craving for all kinds of sensual enjoyment. A person who allows himself to be attracted by sensuous pleasure, cannot hope to be free from worries, anxieties, tensions and mental conflicts.

According to the scriptures, the sadhak should control not only genital organs but all the organs. For a brahamachari it is essential to discipline all his organs. Without it the brahamacharya is not complete. While observing discipline he should continue the practice the Asana, breathing exercises, meditation and concentration.

According to Maharishi Patanjali- “brahamacharya Pratishtayam Viryalabh”

On being firmly established in sexual continence or abstinence, vigour (virya) is gained. Virya does not mean only sexual energy but it includes whole body and vitality of life. It is vital energy which is enhanced and due to that all weaknesses and laxity disappear and every cell of the body is filled up with new strength and energy.

In a book named “gorakhsha-paddhati”.It is said that if a man preserves his seminal fluid, his body becomes brilliant and fragrant. Seminal fluid is really the support of life. In the philosophy of the yoga also it is said when brahmacharya is established, the man acquires super natural

qualities. The body of the brahmachari is radiant, handsome and agile. He is so healthy that his countenance beams with vigour, joy and fearlessness.

According to sushruti –

Brahmacharya has also three aspects;-

- Intellectual Brahmacharya
- Brahmacharya in speech
- Bodily Brahmacharya

As sexuality is associated with women. Sushruti says that to dwell on her memory, to indulge in talk with her, to gaze at her repeatedly or share entertainment with her leads to desire her company and to avoid all these actions completely is Brahmacharya. So man should always be intellectually watchful.

A Brahmachari should have control over his speech as well.

A observance of bodily Brahmacharya is not quite so difficult for those who practice it in mind and speech. One who is observing physical Brahmacharya should control his genital organs. He should not touch or enjoy the company of a woman. A Brahmachari should not unnecessarily touch his genital organ or stop to masturbation. He should always take a easily digestible and nourishing food.

Generally, Brahmacharya is considered to be abstention from sexual involvement or relationships. Some people even go as far as having absolutely no contact with the opposite sex, neither talking nor looking at a woman or man. However, this is not the true meaning of Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the combination of two words : Brahman and charya.

V. Aparigraha :- (non-greed)

Aparigraha, is the fifth and the last yama. The literal meaning of aparigraha is non-accumulation of worldly objects, caused by greed and attachment. It is also known as the non-possessiveness or abstinence from greed. It is actually complete freedom from greed, and non-greed is attained by remaining detached from the enjoyment of sense objects.

Possession of wealth in the form of money or matter is considered the real source of happiness today. The tendency to accumulate wealth is so strong that it is protected and fulfilled at every cost. To have essential goods and facilities is not considered harmful for the concentration of mind but when it crosses the limit, it becomes a cause of worry and anxiety. There is no limit to our desire for wealth and material things, and therefore, no satisfaction at any stage. This then leads him to commit Himsa in one way or the other. So the feeling of detachment is essential for yoga practitioners. When aparigraha is fully confirmed, one is able to know the mysteries of life and death.

4. Aparigraha Has Three Aspects:-

- Intellectual Non greed
- Verbal non- greed
- Material non- greed

The memories and habits of possessing objects must be first washed away from the mind, and only then you can start a new life. If even one of the organs feels drawn towards its objects, the understanding of the men begin to decline like water escaping through a small hole in a pot. A yogi should control his mind and sense-organs. But he should not needlessly cause pain to his body. He should keep his mind fixed on the desired aim. He should not feel pleasure when he gets what he desires, nor should he feel aversion when anything undesirable takes place. By doing so he will make continuous progress on the path of non-attachment.

Next is the verbal non-greed.it means that one should not indulge in falsehood, should not use harsh words, should not speak ill of others and should not be too talkative. Speech should not be abused under the influence of greed, anger, attachment or evil desires at any time or in any place. No one should be encouraged by words to indulge in sense objects. So silence is very helpful in attaining verbal non-attachment.

The third aspect is the material non-greed which means that we should not accumulate wealth more than what is absolutely necessary. Our own earned property should be used only to the extent necessary for the maintenance of our family and should not reach the stage of luxury.

If persons in all the four stages of life practice non-greed the world would be considerably happier. A man should first determine what he wants and enjoy nothing more than that. Then the present hellish world would be converted into a heaven.

The noble way of life is to feel satisfaction by what one has acquired through his honest labour. A person should not feel jealous if he sees others in a prosperous condition. Yoga –sutra says that the man who is firmly established in non- greed begins to understand what he is and what he was and what he is likely to be his next birth.

5. Conclusion: Today, we discussed about the first part of the Ashtang Yog that is Yam and its five parts i.e. ahimsa, satya, asteya, brahmacharya, aparigraha. we discussed about the benefits, its use in our daily life and how it plays an important part for all of us.