

Definitions of Yoga as per scriptures and Misconceptions & Contra-indications



Evolution of Yoga

Pre-Classical period	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before 3000 BC: Depictions of Yoga postures in Harappa & Mohanjodaro• 3000 BC- 800 BC: Vedic period, yoga was done to develop concentration. The rituals were different with aim to attain union with God.• 800 BC- 250 BC: Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagwad Gita, Yog Vashishta contain many references. Yoga was more of lifestyle
Classical period	Patanjali compiled and systematized the knowledge in 195 aphorisms and gave Ashtanga yoga for attaining samadhi. He didn't mention any asana or pranayama.
Post Classical period	Gheranda and Swatmarama introduced asanas, kriyas, pranayama for cleansing body and mind, also introduced classical postures and bandha.
Modern period	Vivekananda, Yogananda, Ramanna Mahirshi influenced the western world to accept yoga as a universal spiritual practice. Recently, BKS Iyengar, Shivananda, Swami Rama, Aurobindo, Osho have contributed to Yoga.

Why Yoga

- Science solved problems of all materialistic world with inventions but couldn't solve the root of psychosomatic disorders. They searched outside and made tremendous progress in the gross world.
- However, Ancient Sages/Rishis realized in their deep intuition state that this false linking of the self with body-mind complex was the root of all suffering. Our sages went inside into the subtle world. This state is to be self experienced as this state is beyond the cognition of the senses.
- Our Sages had unlocked the keys of permanent happiness by removing bondage and misery forever.
- Specific techniques were developed and were documented in scriptures.

Etymology of the word Yoga

The word Yoga has been derived from Samskrita root/dhatu word Yuj. It has three meanings as per PaNini dhatupad.

- 1) *Yuj Samadhau*- Yoga means achieving the state of **samadhi** (self-realization). #Sat-Chit-Anand, Full of Consciousness. Advaiti.
- 2) *Yujir Yoge*-Yoga is the **union**^a of the individual soul with the Universal soul. #Layer of ignorance (Vritti/Sanskaras) like water pot in ocean.
- 3) *Yuj Sanyamane*- Yoga is the **censuring** of the thought waves in the mental pond so that we can see the self clearly. #Hatha v/s Raja Yoga

a-This state can be called Viyoga as Yogi has disconnected himself with everything else and resting in his self which is free from superimposition of ignorance and all dualities.

Definitions of Yoga- An Overview of Scriptures

- 1) Yum Prakrityo Viyogepi....(Samkhya Darshana)
- 2) YogaH Chitta Vrutti NirodhaH... (PYS-1.2)
- 3) ManaH Prashamana Upayaha YogaH iti Abhidhiyate... (Yog Vashishta-3.9.32; Mahopanishad-5.40)
- 4) Samsarottarane yuktiH yogasabdena kathyate... (Yog Vashishta-6.1.13.3)
- 5) Samatvam YogaH Uchyate... (BG-2.48)
- 6) YogaH Karmasu Kaushalam... (BG-2.50)
- 7) YuktaHara viharasya... (BG-6.17)
- 8) Tam Vidyaat Dukhasamyoga... (BG-6.23)
- 9) Taam Yogamiti... (Kathopanishad-2.3.11)
- 10) Ijya AcharaH DamaH Ahimsa Danam Swadhyaya Karmanam Ayam Parmo Dharma Yadyogena atmano Darshanam (Yajnavalkiya Smriti-1.8)

Samkhya Darshana (1)

Sage Kapila defined yoga as below-

Yum Prakrityo viyogepi Yoga Ityabhidhiyate | (Samkhya)

Distinguishing clearly between purusha and prakriti, and establishing of purusha in his own pure state is yoga. #Sva+Stha- Established in self

#Matter (Moon) and Consciousness (Sun), Blind & Lame, (Rajju Sarpa Bhranti-Superimposition). #Ayurveda definition of health

Patanjali Yoga Sutras (3)

Sage Patanjali describes the definition/goal in the very first chapter of his epic Patanjali Yoga Sutras as below-

YogaH Chitta Vrutti NirodhaH || (PYS-1.2)

Yog is the cessation and removal of fluctuations in the mind which are responsible for rebirth and suffering.

#Avidya the root - Sara Aadhi, Samanya Aadhi in Manomaya Kosha, Vyadi in Annamaya kosha, Sympathetic overdrive-Car without breaks. #Ashtanga Yog

Yog Vashista (2)

*Samsarottarane yuktiH yogasabdena kathyate |
Tam viddhi dviprakaram tvam chittopasam |
(Yog Vashista-6.1.13.3)*

They call it yoga which is the method by which this cycle of birth and death ceases. It is utter transcendence of the mind and of two types. Self-knowledge (Jnana) is one type, restraint of the life-force (Yoga-Pranayama) is another. However, yoga has come to mean the latter. Yet, both methods lead to the same result. To some, self-knowledge through inquiry is difficult; to others, yoga is difficult. But self knowledge is easily achievable as for pranayama you need have correct combination of desha, kala, asana. But Sadhaka should not think like this as both methods as approved by shastras.

Yog Vashista-Mahopanishad (3)

Manah prashamana upayah Yoga Iti Abhidhiyate |

(Yog Vashishta 3.9.32; Mahopanishad 5.40)

Yog is the technique to Pacify the mind.

#Mana Eva Manushyanam Bandhnam Karana MokshyayoH (BG-6.5)

Mind is the cause of liberation or confinement. #Manasa-Vacha-Karmana

Bhagwad Gita (2)

Krishna says to Arjuna in Bhagwad Gita-

*Yogastha Kuru Karmani sangam tyaktva dhananjaya |
Siddhyasiddhyo samo bhutva samatvam yoga uchyate | (BG-2.48)*

O Arjuna, You remain fixed in Yoga and then do all the actions, abandon attachment, be equal in success and failures, as Yoga means equanimity.

#Eligibility for action (Karma) only not on results (Phala), Karma
Akarma- Akarma-Karma

Bhagwad Gita (3)

Krishna says to Arjuna in Bhagwad Gita

*Buddhiyukto jahatiha ubhe sukritadushkrite |
Tasmaatyogaaya yujyasva yogaH karmasu kaushalam | (BG-2.50)*

A wise man refrains from performing both good and bad actions in this world. Thus, engage in yoga, as yoga is the best of all activities.

#Harmony between head, heart and hands- Sivananda

Bhagwad Gita (3)

Krishna says to Arjuna in Bhagwad Gita

*Yuktaahara viharasya yuktacheShTasya karmasu |
Yuktasvapnaava bodhasya yogo bhavati dukhahaa | (BG-6.17)*

For one who is moderate in eating and recreation, temperate in actions, regulated in sleep and wakefulness, yoga becomes the destroyer of pain.

#Moderation + awareness + introspection= YOGA
#Atma Manasa Samyujyate Manaha Indriyena
Indriyam Arthena, #Pratyahara, #Pratipaksha Bhavanam

Bhagwad Gita (2)

Krishna says to Arjuna in Bhagwad Gita

*Tam Vidyaat Dukhasamyogaviyogam yogasangyitam |
Sa Nishchayena yuktavyo yagonirviNNachetasa | (BG-6.23)*

Let this disconnection from union with pain be known by the name of yoga. This yoga should be practised with determination and with an undistracted mind.

#Steadfastness, #Consistency, #Systematic, #Boiling milk

Bhagwat Gita (3)

*Shrutivipratipanna te yada sthaasyati nishchala |
Samaadhaavachalaa buddhistadaa yoagamavaapsyasi | (Gita-2.53)*

When your mind will remain stable even after hearing confusing and conflicting statements, then you will attain the state of Yoga- samadhi.

#Yoga is a state of great steadiness at emotional level, balance of concentration and detachment at mental level and homeostasis at body level.

Yajnavalkiya Smriti (2)

*Ijya AcharaH DamaH Ahimsa Danam Swadhyaya Karmanam Ayam
Parmo Dharma Yadyogena atmano Darshanam | (Yajnavalkiya Smriti-
1.8)*

Sacrifice, Ceremonial, self-control, Non-violence, donation, study of the vedas, and other acts than sacrifice have been separately mentioned. Among these perception of the real self by yoga is the highest dharma.

#Trigunas, Both beastly and divine tendencies are present in a human. By contemplating on self, beastly tendencies are removed and Individual becomes divine.

Kathopanishad (3)

*Taam Yogamiti manyante sthiramindriyadharanam |
Apramatastadaa bhavati yogo hi prabhavaapyayo |
(Kathopanishad-2.3.11)*

Stable and balanced state of body, mind and intellect is yoga. With firm control of senses, mind fixed in atman through meditation, the yogi is careful and vigilant. Here the Yoga is either acquired or lost. When the five senses stabilize with mind, intellect and get detached from various subjects then the person achieves Paramagati.

#Ratha Kalpana- Jeeva as Passenger, Driver is intelligence, Mind as reins, Senses as horses, Ratha as body,

Misconceptions of Yoga

Bhrantya Bahumat Adhvante Rajayogam Ajanatam (HYP-1.3)

Lot of misconceptions about Raja yoga as per Svatmarama

1. Yoga is only for Hindus. ✘
2. Yoga is only asana and it is for body only. ✘
3. Purpose of yoga is therapy only. ✘
4. To do yoga we must be flexible. ✘
5. Yoga is only for the young. ✘
6. Yoga is dangerous or too easy. ✘
7. To do yoga, you must be vegetarian. ✘
8. Yoga is only for people who renounce world. ✘
9. Yoga can be taught by anybody. ✘

Contraindications of Yoga 1

*Hatha Vidya param gopya yogina siddhimichataam |
Bhavetviriyavati gupta nirvirya tu prakashitaa | (HYP-1.11)*

Hatha yoga is the greatest secret of the yogis who wish to attain perfection (Siddhi). To be fruitful, it must be kept a secret, if revealed it becomes powerless.

Contraindications of Yoga 2

*AtyahaaraH prayasasch prajalpo niyamgrahaH |
Janasangasch laulyaM cha Shadbhiryogo vinaShyati | (HYP-1.15)*

Overeating, overexertion, excessive talking, too much rigid adherence to rules, being in the company of common people and wavering mind are six obstacles which destroy the progress in yoga.

Contraindications of Yoga 3

*Pranayamena yuktena sarvarogakshyo bhavet |
Ayuktabhyasayogena sarvarogasamudbhavaH |*

By proper practice of pranayama, all diseases are eradicated. However, through improper practice all diseases can arise.

#Unsystematic irregular Incorrect, Not following rules or sequence, without teacher. E.g practicing on full stomach.

Contraindications of Yoga 4

- 1)Over straining during yoga instead of as per the capacity. ✘
- 2)Performing yoga without meal gap of at-least 3 hours. ✘
- 3)Performing difficult practices during mensuration & pregnancy (especially which impact abdomen). ✘
- 4)Doing yoga without awareness. ✘
- 5)Comparing your progress with others. ✘
- 6)Regretting as unable to do any practice due to condition. ✘
- 7)Doing yoga during fever. ✘
- 8)Eating diet which doesn't overheat the body. ✘
- 9)Not following Yama (Social discipline) and Niyama (Individual rules) ✘
- 10)Not modifying the postures as per the ability. ✘

Adverse Events Associated with Yoga: A Systematic Review of Published Case Reports and Case Series (Cramer, Krucoff, Dobos, 2013)

76 cases were taken. Ten cases had medical preconditions, mainly glaucoma and osteopenia. Mostly below were practiced.

- 1) Pranayama (forceful breathing)
 - 2) Hatha yoga and Bikram yoga (headstand, shoulder stand, lotus position)
- Yoga should be practiced carefully under the guidance of a qualified instructor.
 - Beginners should avoid extreme practices such as headstand, lotus position and forceful breathing. Individuals with medical preconditions should work with their physician and yoga teacher to appropriately adapt postures;
 - Patients with glaucoma should avoid inversions
 - Patients with compromised bone should avoid forceful yoga practices.

Description	No.	%
Musculoskeletal system	27	35%
Nervous system	14	18.4%
Eyes	9	11.8%
Full recovery	15	19.7%
Partial recovery	9	11.35
No recovery	1	1.3%
Died	1	1.3%
Total	76	100%

Yoga-Related Injuries in the United States From 2001 to 2014
(Swain & Mcgwain,2016)

A 13-year descriptive study was conducted from 2001 to 2014 were used to estimate the incidence and type of yoga-associated injuries. There were 29,590 yoga-related injuries seen in hospital emergency departments from 2001 to 2014.

Injury in yoga asana practice: Assessment of the risks (Wiese et.al, 2018)

2620 participants completed a survey using convenient sampling (79% were between ages 31 and 60 and 84% were female)

- 1) 45% of participants reported experiencing no injuries during the time they had been practicing yoga.
- 2) 28% experienced mild injury in asana practice (e.g., sprains or non-specific pains not requiring a medical procedure, with symptoms lasting less than 6 months).
- 3) 63% were moderate (e.g., sprains or non-specific pains not requiring a medical procedure, with symptoms lasting from 6 months to 1 year).
- 4) Only 9% of those reporting injuries (4% of the total sample) had a severe injury.

Greater number of years of practice ($p < .0001$) and teaching yoga ($p = .0177$) were associated with increased risk of injury.

Number of injuries reported by yoga participants per years of practice exposure to be low and the occurrence of serious injuries in yoga to be infrequent compared to other physical

References

- 1) Bhagwad Gita
- 2) Samkhya Karika
- 3) Hatha Yoga Pradeepika
- 4) Yog Vashishta
- 5) Kathopanishad
- 6) Yajnavalkiya
- 7) Mahopanishad
- 8) Patanjali Yog Sutras

References