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**Dr. Dev Raj Attri**  
Associate Professor, Akal College of  
Physical education Mastuana sahib  
Sangrur, Punjab, India.

## Mental health and Yogic science

**Dr. Dev Raj Attri**

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Mental health is a burning topic of modern society in a electronic media, newspapers etc. and a common man has been realizing the increasing trend in social crimes, sexual crime, economical crime, suicidal tendencies, strained family relations due to unhealthy mental status of modern man. **Methodology:** Most probably, it has been the resultant effect of fast, mechanized and self-cantered life style of modern living. The human values have been deteriorated to its highest level to cause various psychological & psychosomatic disorders at personal level and chaos in family and social life. So, the need of the hour is to change and develop correct mental attitude for perfect health of mental faculties. In this regard, Yoga has been playing curative, preventive and promoting role for perfect mental health of a person.

**Conclusion:** In this way, it can be concluded that the various healthy norms of Yogic life style as well as Hath yogic practices contribute a lot for development and maintenance of holistic personality of a human being.

**Keywords:** Health, Psychosomatic, Tendencies, Holistics.

### Introduction

Yoga has been providing holistic approach to Health instead of merely a physically well-being. It has been well recognized all over the world for management of Life-style related psychosomatic disorders like Hypertension, Asthma, Arthritis, Diabetes, Gastric acidity etc. Maharishi Shushrut has exclusively included the efficient functioning of mental faculties of a human being along with physical aspects of Tridoshas, Dhatus, Agnis and excretion of waste products.

### Concept of Mental health

Mental Health is a concept that refers to the psychological and emotional well-being of a person. Being mentally healthy generally means that we are able to use our emotional capabilities to function well in society and go through everyday life with little or no difficulty. Some factors that can affect our mental health are our family life, social life, and life at work. Having negative experiences in any of the said areas can deteriorate the condition of our mental health. Conclusively, mental health can be defined as the mental state where a person is capable of using various mental faculties; viz. mind, sense organs etc. efficiently and maintaining homeostatic balance between +ve& -ve emotions in face of various external factors of environment, society, family, personal desires etc. and keeps organized status of personality.

### Yoga and mental health

Mental health is a burning topic of modern society in a electronic media, newspapers etc. and a common man has been realizing the increasing trend in social crimes, sexual crime, economical crime, suicidal tendencies, strained family relations due to unhealthy mental status of modern man. Most probably, it has been the resultant effect of fast, mechanized and self-cantered life style of modern living. The human values have been deteriorated to its highest level to cause various psychological & psychosomatic disorders at personal level and chaos in family and social life. So, the need of the hour is to change and develop correct mental attitude for perfect health of mental faculties. In this regard, Yoga has been playing curative preventive and promoting role for perfect mental health of a person.

**Correspondence**  
**Dr. Dev Raj Attri**  
Associate Professor, Akal College of  
Physical education Mastuana sahib  
Sangrur, Punjab, India.

Now-a-days, the yoga has been well recognized in terms of Yogic practices of Hath Yoga viz. Asana, Pranayama, Meditation etc. for its healthful & therapeutic activities, but it has also various dimensions including behavioural norms in form of soul & ethical values, practical guidelines for correcting attitude, dietary instructions, practical approach for controlling senses etc. In view of limitations of this paper, some of the important behavioural norms & role of Yogic practices are briefly highlighted for their use in correcting erratic & defective life style of a modern man:-

### **Healthy Norms of Yogic Life Style for Mental, Emotional and Social aspects of Mental Health**

1. The Hathpradipika in 16<sup>th</sup> verse of 1<sup>st</sup> chapter has laid emphasis on development of positive attitudes through six basic element of success

### **Utsahat-sahsad-dharyat-tatvagyan nachh-nischayat, jansangh-parityagat-sadbhiryogahprasadhyati** (Hatpradipika-1/16)

These are not only described for hathyogic Sadhana but can also be used in day-today accomplishment of tasks. These mental attributes are:-

- (A) Zeal
- (B) Courage
- (C) Patience
- (D) Righteous practical and theoretical knowledge
- (E) Firm determination
- (F) Undue contact with general public.

Similarly, the negative mental attitudes (Hath Pradipica-1\15) which are to be avoided are

### **Atyaharah-prayasch-prajalpo-niyamagrah, jansangs ch-laulyam-ch-sadbhiryogo-vinasyati** (Hatpradipika-1/15)

- (A) Over-eating
- (B) Excessive physical labour beyond one's capacity
- (C) Excessive and useless talking
- (D) Undue follow-up of rules
- (E) Excessive public contact
- (F) Unstability of mind.

2. Maharshi Patanjali also emphasises not to observe the causative factors of mental distractions viz. Dullness, laziness, illusion, hankering after

### **Vyadhi-styana-samsaya-pramadalsaya-virati-bhranti-darsanalabdhabhumikatvanavasthitatvani citta-viksepaste' ntarayah** (Patanjali yogsutras-1/30)

Worldly objects, doubt, carelessness etc. so as to avoid agony, depression, nervousness and difficult breathing.

3. The Maharshi Patanjali have described the practical approach for positive behaviour to counteract mental distractions;

### **Maitri-karuna-muditopeksanam sukha-dukhha-punyapunya-visayanambhavanatas citta-prasadanam** (Patanjali yogsutras-1/33)

One should cultivate attitude of friendliness, compassion, gladness, indifference respectively towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice.

Moreover, he stresses for contemplation on positive thoughts towards any thoughts of the negative attitude; viz. Thoughts of violence,

### **Vitarka-badhane pratipaksa-bhavanam.**

(Patanjali yogsutras-2/33)

Lies, theft, sexual thoughts, acts of possessiveness of worldly objects.

In addition to this, the yoga sutras have been laying stress for observance of social and personal ethical values like Non-violence, Truthfulness, Theft, Incontinence and non-possessiveness, Physical purity, Contentment, Austerity, Self-study /analysis and self-surrender to God. The observance of all these ethical norms helps an individual to develop positive mental, emotional and social faculties of one's personality.

### **Norms of Sleep and Rest**

Gita as well as Swara yoga has been emphasizing the norms of proper sleep to maintain zeal, vigour, courage & determination in day-today accomplishment of tasks. According to Shrimad Bhagwad Gita (6\16)

### **Atikhaveatithorakhaye, atisoaveatijagarpaye; Yehaswabhavrakheyadikoy, us kayogsidh ne hoye.**

(Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, 6/16)

The success in yogic path cannot be achieved by excessive or very little sleep and thus, the moderation in sleep has been emphasized.

Moreover, the Swara yoga stresses for having sleep in active phase of surya swara for maintenance of prolonged life by keeping one's head in South/south-east/South west direction. As the sleeping state causes the operation of 30 angulas long breaths as compared to 10-12 angulas normal breath and thereby causing loss of pranic energy and prolonged life.

In order to counteract the physical fatigue, one should have operation of Chandra swara in lying position; whereas for mental fatigue, one should rest in operative phase of Surya swara in lying position.

### **Norms of Diet**

The personality of a person also depends upon one's dietary habits of a person. The mental faculties develop according to the type food intake, as well as its way of consumption. Therefore, the Yoga as well as Gita have been emphasizing the dietary habits as well as quality of food. The important dietary norms for positive holistic personality are:-

- 1) Eat to live don't live to eat.
- 2) Observe the rule of moderation in diet i.e. Mitahara.

### **Khaveannvicharke, khota khara sambhar; vaisa hi man hot hai, jaisa karea har. Komal bhojan kijiye, adhi akhiyeb hookh; pawan base such saunjahan, tanna pave dukh. Sudh, madhuralp, snigdha, sadhak le ahah; Bad heumang sphurti, ghatealasya vicar.**

(Gyan Swarodaya)

- 3) Try to have balanced food with respect to dietary components; viz. Carbohydrates, fats, protein, water, minerals, vitamins; occupational requirement, seasonal availability and requirement, places time, age etc.
- 4) Try to have major meals in operative phase of Surya swara or get the Surya swara operated artificially for proper digestion.

### **Dayenswarbhojankare, bayen pave neer; Bayen karvat soven Karen, to sukh pave jeev.**

Try to prefer cold potency & solid food intake Surya swara and exclusive hot potency & liquid intake in Chandra swara.

- 5) Observe punctuality & regularity in meal in calm & peaceful environment.

- 6) Observe the sequence of intake food as sweet first, sour & saline food article in middle and bitter/pungent/astringent article in the last for health maintenance.
- 7) Don't drink excessive water just after meal.
- 8) Have hygienic food intake; avoid stale, reheated, dry and fast food.
- 9) Avoid mental stress & negative emotions either by self of by watching TV, reading newspapers, magazines etc. while taking meals.

#### **Norms of Undertaking Tasks:**

According to Patanjali Yoga darshan (1/14),

#### **Satudirgha-kala-nairantarya-satkarasevitodrdha-bhumih** (Patanjali yogsutras-1/14)

One should be having attitude of reverent devotion & continued efforts for long term duration for getting success. Moreover, one should be one-pointed towards the goal of the task.

#### **Role of yogic practices**

##### **Shatkarmas**

One should have learnt the various practical shatkarmas to maintain the proper pranic flow at physical, mental, emotional and intellectual levels. One should undergo the overhauling practice of Varisar Dhauti for two times a year to maintain the balance of the physical doshas with respect to seasonal change. The shatkarma practice will also help internal purification of bodily organs for proper functioning of mental, emotional & intellectual faculties of personality.

##### **Asanas**

Physical expressions of a person is an important aspect of holistic personality. This can be developed and maintained by the practice of Surya Namaskar, practice of balanced schedule of asanas involving holistic aspect of body with standard norms & methodology. This will help in overcoming conflicts at physical, physiological & psychological levels and thereby providing physical & mental stability.

##### **Pranayama**

The mental, emotional and intellectual faculties of a person can be developed & maintained by the proper practice of Pranayama. As per Swara yogic norms, the pranic energy as Manasshakti is available during operative phase of Chandra swara. Various creative abilities, rational, logical and mental tasks can be improved by balanced flow of Chandra swara through the practice of Chandra bheda Pranayama or artificial operation of Chandra swara. The nerve channels can be purified by Anulom-Vilom/NadiShodhana Pranayama as well as by the proper practice of Bhastrika Pranayama. The beautification of skin can be improved by the practice of Shitali/Shitkari Pranayama. The overall mental and emotional stability can be improved by the practice of Pranayamas. The negative effects of stress & strain can also be counteracted by Pranayamic practices.

##### **Relaxative & Meditative practices**

These practices also play a vital role in maintaining balanced functioning of mental, emotional and intellectual faculties of a holistic personality. The practice of Yoga Nidra, Shavasana, Preksha Dhyana, Antah Trataka, Ajapa Japa provides relaxation from physical and mental fatigue to counteract day-to-day stress and strain of job work and thereby rejuvenating the physical, mental and intellectual faculties for

accomplishment of tasks.

The 30-60 minutes meditative/spiritual practices through Mantras, Transcendental meditation, Vipasana meditation etc. also revitalizes the body, mind and spirit for development and maintenance of holistic personality.

In this way, it can be concluded that the various healthy norms of Yogic life style as well as Hath yogic practices contribute a lot for development and maintenance of holistic personality of a human being.

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