



P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (RJIF): 5.38
IJPESH 2022; 9(5): 174-177
© 2022 IJPESH
www.kheljournal.com
Received: 22-08-2022
Accepted: 24-09-2022

Y Pakkiraiah

Ph.D. Scholar, Department of
Physical Education and Sports
Sciences, Yogi Vemana
University, Vemanapuram,
Kadapa, Yrs. (Dist.), Andhra
Pradesh, India

Dr. K Rama Subba Reddy

Deputy Director, Head,
Secretary Sports Board,
Research Supervisor, Yogi
Vemana University,
Vemanapuram, Kadapa, Ysr
(Dist), Andhra Pradesh, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. K Rama Subba Reddy

Deputy Director, Head,
Secretary Sports Board,
Research Supervisor, Yogi
Vemana University,
Vemanapuram, Kadapa, Ysr
(Dist), Andhra Pradesh, India

International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

Is yoga religion or science?

Y Pakkiraiah and Dr. K Rama Subba Reddy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22271/kheljournal.2022.v9.i5c.2646>

Abstract

I have seen and heard so many arguments around this topic recently. It can be a real hot button issue in certain circles. Schools, Churches, and other organizations have banned yoga from their buildings because they think the yoga is a religion. It is not true yoga is a way of life and it is an integrated system of education for the body, mind and inner spirit. This art of right living was imbibed and practiced in India thousands of years ago, science yoga deals with the universal truth, its teachings are as valid today as they were in ancient times. Yoga is a practical aid, not a religion and its techniques may be practiced by Hindus, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Atheists alike. Yoga is a science common to all and whole humanity in its true nature of efficacy. Asha Vijaykumar Bengal (2005). Yoga gurus and Research Scholar have proved already with emphatical evidences by the practicing of yoga with numerous adaptations on physical, physiological, psychological and Body composition parameters. Based on the existing research documents the scholars strongly opines that the science of yoga is a corner stone for the science and spirituality. Have the yoga is not a religion but yoga is true science.

Keywords: Yoga, religion, sciences

Introduction

I have seen and heard so many arguments around this topic recently! It can be a real hot button issue in certain circles. Schools, churches, and other organizations have banned yoga from their buildings because they think of it as a religion. People are told by friends or family members that they shouldn't practice yoga because they're worshiping "other Gods when they do, So many lies and misconceptions are keeping people from reaping the benefits of the amazing practice. Yoga is not a religion in and of itself. Yoga is a practice designed to help unify body, mind, and spirit. Yoga is a way of life. The word Yoga means "to yoke" or "to join". While yoga is a spiritual practice it does not belong to any one of the religious.

According to Gary Kraftsow and Phil catalfo (2007) ^[13] The big issue is how you define the terms yoga a religion? The origins of the of Hinduism, Buddhism, and yoga are Vedic, which predates the kind of formulation of what we call "modern Hinduism". I think that, although the sources of Hinduism and yoga are the same, yoga as a tradition predates the formulation of what modern Hindus think of as their religion. "Yoga is not a religion and should not affiliate with any religion".

Yoga is Hindu just the way gravity is Christian. Just because the law of gravity was propounded by sir Isaac Newton, who lived in a Christian culture, does it make gravity Christian? Yoga is a technology. Anybody who is willing to make use of it can make use of it. It is ridiculous to even think that there could be a religious tinge to yoga. Sadguru says religion has nothing to do with it. Instead, yoga is a technology, a way to improve your life through very precise practices. Sadguru (2013) ^[15]. The practice of yoga has been adopted, developed, and refined by people of many creeds and cultures all around the world during its evolution. Yoga has ties to Hinduism and Buddhism, which have incorporated the practices of yoga, but you do not need to belong to either of those religions to practice yoga. I believe the practice of yoga can support any belief system you choose. [www. brettlarkin.com](http://www.brettlarkin.com)

Today's the practice of yoga has become so controversial and confounding. People all over the world are divided on the subject. So, is yoga a religion? No, it is not a religion in itself. However, it is connected to religion and originates historically from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. India is known to be the birthplace of yoga. The practice of yoga is also a major part of Buddhism and its meditation practices.

This is the reason why many people from other religions think that yoga is too Hindu and practicing it is like ignoring their religious sentiments. But that is not true! Yoga can be practiced as a way to feel closer to any higher power you believe in.

Yoga is believed to have originated thousands of years ago in India and was later adapted in different countries in several ways. The origins of yoga could be traced to some 5000 years ago in Northern India. The word "yoga" first found its mention in the ancient Hindu texts called Rig Veda. Rig Veda is one of the earliest sacred texts among the set of four and contains over a thousand hymns and mantras and was used by the priests of the Vedic Age. The Bhagwat Gita is a scripture of yogic philosophy that was written between 400 BC and 200 BC. It is a sacred text that focuses mainly on the practice of yoga. Urvashi Gosain (2021) [21]. The classical tradition of Yoga represents a valuable gift from India to the world, yoga can be used selectively with benefit by people of different religious and philosophical understandings. Georg Feuerstein (2018) [6]. Modern-day yoga has echoes of these religious beliefs - Natarajasana, or dance pose for example is a representation of Hindu god Shiva, and sun salutations may also reflect earlier beliefs. "In the Vedas [ancient Indian texts], the Sun is a god, so you could argue that sun salutations are religious to some extent," suggested Mallinson.

Live science

The science of yoga is the scientific basis of modern yoga has exercise in human science such as anatomy, physiology, and psychology. Yoga's effects are to some extent shared with other forms of exercise though it differs in the amount of stretching involved, and because of its frequent use of long holds and relaxation, in its ability to reduce stress. Yoga is here treated separately from meditation which has effects of its own, though yoga and meditation are combined in some schools of yoga. Yoga, however, took on new meanings in the late colonial period, becoming a mental, physical, and ethical discipline to aid in the struggle for an independent Indian; a scientific, evidence-based practice to improve health and well-being; and a template for the evolution of an individual as well as humanity as a whole. At the same time, yoga kept an association with liberation and the realization of the ultimate nature of reality. Newcombe, Suzanne (2017) [11]

Anthropologist Joseph S. Alter fruitfully explains vyayam through its relationship to yoga: "As with yoga, a key concept in vyayam is the holistic, regulated control of the body. In yoga, however, the body is manipulated through the practice of relatively static postures. Vyayam disciplines the body through strenuous, patterned, repetitive movement." In actuality, strength training, like yogasana (the practice of yogic postures to maintain or improve fitness and health), has little effect on maintaining good health or it primarily provides a key aspect of fitness: the strength to perform everyday activities involving lifting, lowering, pulling, and pushing with ease (yogasana provides the flexibility to perform everyday activities involving bending forward, backward, and sideways and twisting with ease). It's this "natural organic harmony." present at yoga's very inception, be argued, that makes yoga scientific. "For every part of the body and for every important physiological organ within, Yoga had to devise methods of exercise, purification and control which are to keep the body in uniform good health both within and without. The practices, thus, effecting all parts of the body within and without constitute, what may be rightly termed, the art and science of yoga health and hygiene

Pant said about B. K. S. Iyengar, the renowned yoga. "Yoga is to join the limited to the unlimited, the finite to the infinite. The human consciousness when it is circumscribed and limited is full of contradictions, confusion and sorrow. To release human consciousness from this confinement is the task of Yoga. No one can do it better than Mr. Iyengar and B. L Taraporewala (1978) [3]. In accordance with the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Krishnamacharya also argued that practicing asanas is necessary to supplement meditation in seated asanas because from the conditioning asanas one "gains strength of the body". Achieves a condition wherein "the various parts of the body function at the perfect, ultimate level," and acquires a "healthy body and good health"

According to Swami Vivekananda's lecturer on Vedanta philosophy declared raja yoga to be a science like any other. The science of raja yoga, he reasted, it has a method for accessing the divine. Swami Abhedananda, successor to Swami Vivekananda has expressed through "How to be a yogi" (1920) at the Vedanta Society of New York, hatha yoga too is a science. Hatha Yoga a branch of Science of Yoga which teaches how to conquer hunger, thirst, and sleep, how to overcome the effects of heat and cold; how to gain perfect health and cure diseases without using drugs; how to arrest the untimely decay of the body resulting from the waste of vital energy; how to preserve youth even at the age of one hundred without having a single hair turn grey, and how thus to prolong life in this body for an indefinite period. Anyone who practices it will in the course of time acquire marvellous powers; powers indeed, which must dumb found a psychologist or anatomist. Abhedananda and others at the turn of the century believed that hatha yogin's acquired these powers through using asana and pranayama "to gain control over the involuntary muscles of the body, which is impossible to the ordinary man. We all possess this power latent within us, but the Hatha Yogis were the first to discover a scientific method by which it could be developed". Hatha yoga as the science of preserving good health through maintaining the wellbeing of (not supernatural control over) the vital organs. They strenuously argued that Hatha yoga was not only exercise, but also it is a kind of medical treatment that prevents and cures disease not by medication or surgery but by natural means: kriyas, mudras, and bandhas. In contrasting Hatha yoga to the calisthenics exercises recommended by that American upstart (as Sundaram thought of him) Bernarr Macfadden, the self-proclaimed "father of physical culture," Sundaram exalted the contributions of the rishis (sages) of ancient India.

Although yoga practices have a rehabilitative effect on the body's physiological systems and improve aerobic capacity (through controlling heart rate, respiration, or metabolism). Hatha yoga's capacity to make the musculoskeletal system more flexible and aligned excels. In taking up yoga, people around the world have discovered a way to alleviate lower back pain and joint stiffness and facilitate standing tall. The first to recognize yoga's matchless salutary effect in these areas, Kunalayananda customized the hatha yoga routine to maximize its effectiveness in providing critical elements of musculoskeletal fitness.

Surya namaskar is a series of positions (mistakenly thought to be adapted from yoga postures) performed at a fairly fast pace with fluid transitional movements accompanied by rhythmic breathing. The series is repeated for a length of time, say, ten minutes, becoming a form of vigorous yet graceful and seemingly relaxed cardiorespiratory exercise. In "The Best Exercise" chapter of Surya Namaskars, Bhavanarao

enumerated in great detail which muscles are strengthened in each position.

The science of yoga helps to maintain bone strength, joint mobility, and joint stability. It improves posture, muscle strength, coordination, and confidence, in turn reducing the risk of injury and bone fracture. As it is generally slow and conducted with awareness, it may be safer than many other sports; but some postures such as headstand, shoulder stand, and lotus posture have been reported as causes of injury. Yoga is also used directly as therapy, especially for psychological conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorders. Novella Steven (2013)^[10]. Ann Swanson offers three reasons why yoga may be safer than many sports, namely that it is often slow it encourages awareness in the movement and it stresses doing no harm (ahimsa). Swanson (2019)^[19].

Impact on muscles

Yoga involves both isotonic activities, the shortening of muscles under load, and (unlike many forms of exercise) also a substantial amount of isometric activity, holding still under load, as in any asana which is held for a period. Isometric exercise builds muscle strength. Coulter (2007)^[4]. One of the applications of science of yoga is the provision of detailed knowledge of the anatomy as it relates to yoga asanas. Swanson (2019)^[19]

Impact on breathing

Breathing and posture affect each other, especially through their effects on the diaphragm. Breathing also affects the autonomic nervous system; quiet breathing slows the heart and reduces blood pressure. Together, these produce a feeling of calmness and relaxation. One way to do this is used in one form of yoga breathing (pranayama); the exhalation is counted to be twice as long as the inhalation, say inhale to a count of 3 and exhale to a count of 6. Breathing can equally be used to energise the body. The pranayama method of bhastrika and the sat karma purification of kapalabhati both energise the body with vigorous abdominal breathing, using the diaphragm to make the abdomen move in and out. Coulter (2007)^[4] There was a trend toward modestly reduced body fat for yoga participants after training compared with control subjects. Resting blood pressure, maximal aerobic capacity, and handgrip strength were unchanged in yoga and control subjects.

Impact on cardio-respiratory efficiency

Madanmohan *et al.* (2008)^[22] have reported that yoga training of six weeks duration attenuates the sweating response to step test and produces a marked increase in respiratory pressures and endurance in 40 mmHg test in both male and female subjects. In another study, they reported that 12 weeks of yoga practice results in significant increase in maximum expiratory pressure, maximum inspiratory pressure, breath holding time after expiration, breath holding time after inspiration, and hand grip strength Madanmohan (1992)^[23], Kumar K (2013)^[24] shows in his study that there was a Significance of Nadi Sodhana and Kapalabhati on forced ventilation capacity (FVC), maximum voluntary ventilation (MVV) and picks expiratory flow rate (PEFR). Joshi *et al.* (1992)^[25] have also demonstrated that six weeks of pranayama breathing course resulted in improved ventilatory functions in the form of lowered respiratory rate, and increases in the forced vital capacity, forced expiratory volume at the end of first, second, maximum voluntary ventilation, peak expiratory

flow rate, and prolongation of breath holding time. Similar beneficial effects were observed by Makwana *et al.* (1988)^[26] after 10 weeks of yoga practice.

Practice of Yoga stops the uncontrolled and uninterrupted thoughts. So the set of Asana and Pranayama in combination plays a vital role for anxiety. Kumar Kamakhya (2008)^[27] in the practice of yoga, especially during shavasana and breath awareness, the mind is relaxed, thereby releasing the mental tensions. In this way, through the regular and sincere practice of yoga, tensions at the physical, and anxiety at mental level can be minimized. Matthew, RJ (1981)^[28] reported that yoga is a successful therapy for both recent and long-standing psychological disturbances of all kinds, especially high anxiety levels and neurotic behaviour patterns.

Yoga as Therapy

There are enough strong evidences to initiate the beneficial effects of yoga as an additional therapy on low back pain and to some extent for psychological conditions such as Stress and Depression. Nguyen-Feng *et al.* (2019)^[29]

Yoga improves the immunity

Physical movement, such as yoga is a great way to get your lymph flowing Certain yoga postures, such as inversions affect gravity. (When your head is below the heart). This helps lymph move into your respiratory organs, where germs and infections often enter the body. When you return upright, gravity drains the lymph and cleanses out your system. This improves your immunity and strengthens your ability to fight against disease. With a regular practice of Yoga relaxation technique, one is able to improve his immunity. Kumar K & Joshi B (2009)^[30].

With all the above empirical evidences the scholar strongly opines that the yoga is a science and that can be used as supplementary, complimentary aid to balance the systems of human body. Hence, the science of yoga is not a religious but it is a holistic scientific approach to lead the life with fullest Joy. The best living example is celebrating yoga international day by all people in the world after thoroughly accepted by the UNO.

References

1. Abhedananda Swami, 1902, How to Be a Yogi, New York: Vedanta Society, "Indra Devi's Legacy Hinduism Today, October November/December, 2002, 52-54.
2. Asha Vijay Kumar Bengal. yoga nutrition on physical fitness for children, Lakshmi book publications, Solapur, Maharashtra, 2005, pp 20-30.
3. Tanporewala BI. Body the Shrine, Yoga Thy Light, Bombay, 1978.
4. Coulter H. David. Anatomy of Hatha Yoga: A Manual for Students, Teachers, and Practitioners, 2007.
5. Cramer *et al.* Asystematic review of yoga for major depressive disorder. Journal of Affective Disorders. 2017;213:70-77.
6. Georg pant Feuerstein. Cristian practicing of yoga, 2018.
7. Dent JM & Sons. Introduction to the Ten Point Way to Health, by Bhavanarao Pratinidhi, London, 1938, p, 7-16.
8. Jayasinghe SR. Yoga in cardiac health (A Review), European Journal of Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation, 2004;11(5):369-375.
9. Live science
10. Nevele Steven. Yoga Woo, science-based medicine, 2013.
11. Newcombe, Suzanne. The Revival of Yoga in

- Contemporary India, In Barton, John ed. Oxford Research Encyclopaedias, Religion Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017.
12. Joseph S. Alter, yoga in modern India, social sciences, 2021, pp 1-109.
 13. Gary Kraftsow and Phil catalfo. Is yoga a religion, 2007.
 14. Pratinidhi Bhavanarao Pant. Foreword to Encyclopaedia of Indian Physical Culture, edited by D. C. Mujumdar, xii-xiv. Baroda, India: Good Companions, 1950.
 15. Sadhguru, yoga is a Religion? Sadguru. Org. 2013.
 16. Sundaram S. Yogic Physical Culture or the Secret of Happiness, Bangalore, India.
 17. Gurukula Svatmarama Swami. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Translated by Pancham Sinh. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1981. First published in 1915.
 18. Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries. Vol. 5, A New Gospel, part 1. 3rd.
 19. Swanson, Ann. Science of Yoga understand the anatomy and physiology to perfect your practice. DK Publishing, 2019, p. 6-202.
 20. Urvashi Gosain. is yoga religion? Is yoga related to Hinduism? 2021.
 21. www.brettlarkin.com
 22. Madanmohan *et al.* effects of six weeks training on weight loss following step test, respiratory pressures, handgrip strength and hand grip endurance in young healthy subjects, 2008.
 23. Madanmohan. effects of yoga training on reaction time, respiratory endurance and muscle strength. 1992;36(4):229-233.
 24. Kumar K. A study of the effects of yogic intervention on blood uric acid level in gout patient, international journal of yoga and allied sciences. 2013;2:104-108.
 25. Joshi *et al.* effects of short term pranayama practice on breathing rate and ventilatory function of lung, Indian J physical pharmacol. 1992;36(2):105-108.
 26. Makwana *et al.* effects of short term yoga practice on ventilatory function tests, Indian journal of physiology and pharmacology. 1988;32(3):202-208.
 27. Kumar Kamakhya. a study on the impact on stress and anxiety through yoga nidra. 2008;7(3):401-404.
 28. Matthew RJ. Anxiety and platelet MAO levels after relaxation training. 1981;138(3):371-373.
 29. Nguyen Feng, *et al.* yoga as an intervention for psychological symptoms following trauma, a systematic review and quantitative synthesis, psychological service. 2019;16(3):513-523.
 30. Kumar K, Joshi B. study on the effects of pranakarshan pranayama and yoga nidra on alpha EEG and GSR, Indian journal of traditional knowledge. 2009;8:3.