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## RELEVANCE OF YOGA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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### Abstract:

*This lecture deals with the profound influence that yoga can have in the fields of behavioral transformation, upgrading mental strength, management of time, controlling of flow of emotions and reactions and choice of decision. The literal translation of yoga means “integration” or “union” have come to see yoga as the science which aims to harmonize or unite virtually all aspects of life – the physical, mental, social and spiritual. The most direct and abiding way to achieve this is to integrate yoga into sequential dealings of personal or professional relations to self actualization systems. Our ultimate goal is to see yoga as an inherent part of every curriculum all over the world in the 21st century. I believe that such “integration” would result in populations of students, employees, housewives and entrepreneurs who are more empathetic, self confident and mindful of themselves and one another. The anecdotal and empirical evidence is that those incorporate yoga into their curricula, find that the self management is enhanced through reduced level of stress, improved focus and increased attention span, gained enormous patience and become kind and vegetarian. In many parts of the world people have found that integrating yoga into the personal and professional dealings and transactions has had these profound and abiding effects. However, we find ourselves at a point where yoga is not an integral part of a significant number of educational curricula or day to day activities. More to the point, it could not even realistically be seen as part of a serious agenda on educational reform. Our task is therefore a daunting and formidable one. The first step towards this goal is for the educational, business and yogic community to come together in unity of purpose and clarity of voice to put forth value and relevance of scientific adaptation of yoga in the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** Transformation; Emotions; Yoga; Relations; Transaction; Integral.

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### 1. Introduction

Yoga has its own divine values and ethics which emanate not from any constitutional or legal frame work but are inherent and interwoven in the very nature, philosophy, tradition and objectives of human survival and in the evolving practices of our thought process. In the changing scenario of industrialization, liberalization and globalization our thought, behavior, relationships, transaction, emotion, dealings seem to have gradually drifted from its social

service objectives to market driven or professional considerations. Human lives increasingly incorporating the corporate character and culture of commercialism, consumerism and competition for profit maximization. No doubt, the issue of survival and sustainability, on the face of growing competition and technological changes, necessitate pursuit of profit as essential prerequisite but the crux of the issue is how much profit and what cost ? There is no denying the fact that education system has assumed the form of a better society with twin arm of commercial interests and social responsibility. But the danger and damage to the sacred institution of education in particular and to society as a whole, appear when the profit consideration takes precedence over our social concerns. There should be balance which can be attained and sustained when we engage ourselves in some kind and degree of yoga that enables self introspection, self restraint and self regulation not to sacrifice core social values, concerns and sensitivity at the alter of greater corporate profitability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yoga is committed to the cause of moral and spiritual uplift of mankind. Its impacts are philanthropic and it should be taught to all irrespective of caste, creed, colour, community, nationality, race and religion.

## 2. Literature Review

In McCall (2007) yoga journal reviewing that yoga teaches that the more you have certain thoughts, or certain kinds of ideas, the more likely you are to have them in the forth coming days. These are mental sanskaras and modern science is confirming the truth of ancient yogic insight with new understanding of neuroplasticity (McCall, 2007). Scientists now understand that the more you think or do something intensely, the stronger the neural pathways become that connect the specific brain cells (neurons) involved (McCall, 2007). Thus the more you beat yourself up emotionally, for example, the more likely you are to do it over and over again (McCall, 2007). It is not always possible for people having psychological problems to meditate, meditation is the most powerful yogic tool for studying the mind, and in the long run it often proves to be the most useful path for dealing with psychological problems (McCall, 2007). McCall (2016) has been publishing a list of health conditions that have been demonstrated in scientific studies to be benefited by yoga. There has been so much growth in yoga research that are now up to 101 conditions (McCall, 2016). More profound view I include as by nature in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we want success, wealth and fame over night by sacrificing character, morality, humanity and divinity.

Vivekananda (2007) asserted that the misery of hunger can be satisfied by eating, but it comes back and makes life miserable again, but when we are satisfied beyond all wants then no hunger, no distress, no sorrow would move us and which tends to make us strong spiritually is the highest. Vivekananda was visionary man that's why he had imagined the importance of yoga in future, his philosophy has inspired millions to practice yoga. Certainly the relevance of yoga in 21<sup>st</sup> century would bring us relief when we provide priority to yoga practice to a certain degree to practice to control the illegitimate demands of sense organs through mind rather let our mind being driven by them. Unless we change our nature miseries of world can not be diminished by physical help only because physical needs always arise so miseries will always be felt and the only solution to this problem is to make mankind pure through over coming ignorance which is the mother of all the evil and misery we see (Vivekananda, 2007, P.27). I feel this ignorance can be over come through yoga that thrusts out darkness of vices we are engrossed to. Yoga kindles our strength and kindness to love humans, animals and nature and bound us with moral rules and

helps us to attain purity in every transaction we do. Purity is the key to higher consciousness and virtuous existence (Anonymous, 2017).

“Spiritual Purity”, (2011, General Discussion section, para.16) article says It is an eternal and nearly incomprehensible shame that humanity has become more interested in what their culture, schooling, parents and television told them was real, the jobs, the things people make, the interactions of ego, and all the nonsense they confuse for life, than they are in the direct realisation of the fundamental nature of life, of consciousness and of the immense profundity and sacredness of it all, the universe, reality as it is before thoughts kill it. Not psychically, not entheogenically, not intellectually, but directly, simply as that choice (“Spiritual Purity”, 2011, General Discussion section, para.16). I relate such scenario visible in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and certainly yoga will be the only path to identify the goal of fundamental nature of life that is to become spiritually pure. Spiritual purity is the call to live with a great conscience that acknowledges the knowledge that every thought, action, perspective and word, matters exist for eternity, bringing implications and consequences we cannot escape as they ripple inwards and outwards through the tapestry of life. (“Spiritual Purity”, 2011, General Discussion section, para.40). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century we are unaware about others, much more self centered and vigorously love to fulfill the flavor that tongue wants even some times forgetting immeasurable pain of a little chicken or innocent lamb and eventually the consequences like a chain reaction latter come back to us in the form of diseases or sleeplessness or irrelevant problems and agony and repentance. Einstein, (1935/2007) states that “the man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life” (p.1). This is why yoga that can minimize the distance of love between human and animals and nature. Satisfaction of felt needs and the desire to be free from pain are the inevitable source for everything that the human race has done and thought (Einstein, 1935/2007). Religious experience is kind of cosmic religious feeling and it very difficult to explain to anyone who is entirely without it, especially as there is no anthropomorphic conception of God corresponding to it (Einstein, 1935/2007, p 26). It is the most important function of art and science to awaken this cosmic religious feeling (Einstein, 1935/2007). I believe this cosmic religious feeling is nothing but the feeling of being in union with the Supreme-Almighty, and barely I can explain His power or infinity neither through words nor by any means accept appealing every one to be in flow of imperceptible bliss with Him through yoga. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear and punishment and hope of reward after death (Einstein, n.d., p. 21). Therefore, yoga should be practiced unconditionally without thinking past or future and punishments or rewards as being detached doer. The destiny of civilized humanity depends over moral forces it is capable of generating (Einstein, n.d., p. 32). My view that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century moral forces of man can be strengthened through yoga. Yoga is required because individual destination can have positive or negative impact over society therefore destination as whole signifies the emergence of one common faith and practice which ultimately reduce the impact of evil thoughts over actions and reaction of man . In ordinary way man may not differentiate between his imagination and the real world and even good thoughts and evil thoughts either. Self control in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is major challenge to human beings. We rush after passion and seek happiness through it. Passion is something which man seek through sensual pleasure that are appeared like nectar at the beginning but become poison at the end the very nature of passion (Williams, 2001, p.96). Williams (2001) asserted that “The yogi should then...practice yoga by controlling the mind and the senses, purifying the heart and fixing the mind on one point....Thus

with an unagitated, subdued mind, devoid of fear, completely free from sex life, one should meditate upon Me within the heart and make Me the ultimate goal of life” (pp.42-43). My view that yoga begins from this concept of highest faith over Supreme soul as until some one over comes the pleasure of senses will never recognize the eternal bliss. Capra (1975) asserted that Modern physics has shown us that movement and rhythm are essential properties of matter; that all matter, whether here on Earth or in outer space, is involved in a continual cosmic dance.... The metaphor of the cosmic dance has found its most profound and beautiful expression in Hinduism in the image of the dancing god Shiva (pp.241-242). Shiva who appears among his many incarnation as king of dancer being oldest and popular Indian gods and Shiva’s dance symbolizes a great rhythmic process of creation and destruction as well as death and rebirth that goes on in endless cycles according to Hinduism (Capra,1975, p.242). Brahma Kumaris (n.d.) found that the root of conquest lies is not just in the subject of Yoga but in subject of soul consciousness; the soul being stabilized for long period in the awareness of its own self. (Conquest of the senses, para.4).Here the concept of Raja Yoga gets implemented eventually which is not only connected to the 21<sup>st</sup> century but connected with every century since an indefinite period. Raja yoga needs to be rediscovered within that required untiring practice. When I admire the wonders of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in the worship of the creator (Gandhi.n.d.). Such view of Gandhi is definitely connected to the broadness of human hearts that can be developed and divinely guided through yoga in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### 3. Discussion

In McCall (2007) yoga journal it is said that certain kind of thoughts or ideas you inculcate over and over there will be chance of those to have been converted to real. But it does not signify anything solid that whether yoga can be utilized for such purpose to work with particular sort of thoughts which can be more fruitful to a yoga practitioner. It is also difficult to understand the neuroplasticity where subjectivity and objectivity and in their center consciousness, which has simultaneously a neurobiological substrate with neuronal and biochemical correlates but this is hard to identify. McCall (2016) have done so many research for eclectic approach, justified by science and a strong foundation of proper alignment and mindful breathing, energetically alive, psychologically balanced and spiritually attuned to reap the intangible benefits of yoga, it helps to be humble and to realize that yoga is meant to be practiced, not perfected. It is of course noncompetitive activity.

Vivekananda (2007) does not differentiate between hunger and misery, sorrow and distress but these physical and emotional demands are very natural and biological so here is limitation when we don’t get rid of inbuilt biological system of this perishable body. Vivekananda (2007) also talked about ignorance that derives only the adverse meaning but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century because regardless of our reasoning, we have a right to choose ignorance. But allowing that choice to drive public policy I think constitutes a serious threat to economic, scientific, social, and development. I believe people have a right to be ignorant. Just as we can choose to damage our health by smoking cigarettes, overeating, and neglecting to take prescribed medications etc, we can also choose to remain uninformed on policy issues. Very funny but this is also limitation.

“Spiritual Purity” (2011) says humanity has become more interested in attraction of artificial world and beauty and all the nonsense they confuse for life but we should not forget that it is the fast growing era the 21<sup>st</sup> century very general that to feed family we go out and become confused to chose the right or the wrong, hardly think morally and that make us beast rather than a king of fate or destiny.

Einstein, (1935/2007) states that the man who regards his own life and that of his fellow-creatures as meaningless, they unfortunate and therefore disqualify for life this is true and its most important example is growing animal agriculture. Just because of taste not because of hunger because of trade because of amusement we torture animals and enjoy their blood, bones and flesh lavishly like we enjoy chicken the most abused animals in the world forgetting our kindness or mercy. That’s why in the 21<sup>st</sup> century people should belong to the world of meditation or yoga or Raja yoga. That’s why Einstein (1935/2007) mentioned it is the important function of both the art and science to awaken cosmic religious feeling so that man can differentiate the difference between anthropomorphic God and real God through this cosmic religious feeling and that is yoga but world fails to accept it that’s why the 21<sup>st</sup> century is age of cruelty, stress, corruption, deception etc.

Williams (2011) mentioned that yogi should meditate upon Him the almighty should make him the object of life. But human first need to be educated about the general vision and divine existence of the Supreme Soul Shiva whose dance symbolizes a great rhythmic process of creation and destruction (Capra 1975).

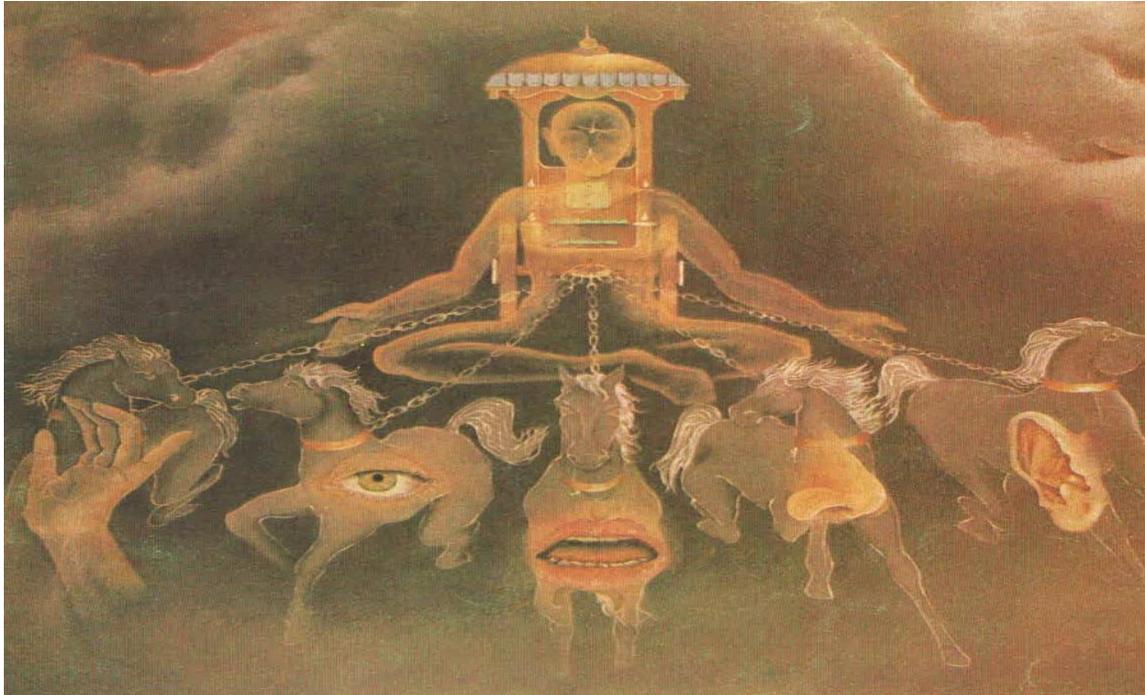


Figure 1: Raja yoga leads to victory over the senses and bring total peace on 3.14. K, Brahma. (n.d.). Reprinted from *Correspondence course*. Mount Abu,Rajasthan: Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University. Copyright 2004 by Brahma Kumaris. Reprinted with permission as per verbal communication

#### 4. Conclusions and Future Study

In order to gain a complete understanding of the Yoga and its relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is necessary to conduct more committed study. Through the practice of meditation or Raja Yoga, it is possible to experience the peace, power, purity and the supreme Soul Shiva. When there is link of yoga with body and minds that cures diseases simultaneously pursuing elevated thoughts can also be helpful to overcome emotional challenges and allow us to lead prosperous lives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And this elevated thought itself depicts the connection between soul and supreme soul. Without this imperceptible spiritual and super natural bondage of human soul and Supreme soul the relentless trying to keep society peaceful and crime free would not be achieved effectively.

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