

A comparison of Yoga darshana and Ayurveda : with special emphasis on suitability of Asanas to constitutional types of Ayurvedic diagnosis

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Abstract

Yoga darshana and *Ayurveda* being contemporary sciences have influenced and complemented each other. The concepts of *Yoga Darshana* are selectively incorporated in *Ayurveda* to suit its objectives viz., '*SwasthyaRakshana*' and '*RogaPrashamana*'. Most of the concepts of yoga are accepted as such, some are modified for the medical science. Application of the concepts of yoga in conjunction with Ayurveda enhances the therapeutic application of both the contemporary systems of healing. Ayurveda provides the appropriate life style recommendations for Yoga practice, as well as the background to unfold the full healing potential of all aspects of Yoga.

It is important to integrate Yoga and Ayurveda in order to bring out a complete holistic healing system. Integrating Yoga with Ayurveda adds a spiritual and psychocological dimension to Ayurvedic treatment modalities, without which Ayurveda tends to become a mere physical model devoid of spiritual and Vedic healing powers.

Ayurveda focuses on individual's constitution or body type which is referred to as *prakriti*. It is defined as expression of a person in context to morphology, physiology, behavior and relation to ecology. The application of *tattvas* of *yogadarshana* in *Ayurveda* finds similarity in some contexts and dissimilarity in others, which are elaborated in the article and along with this **Yoga asanas according to the specific constitution of an individual is cited in this article.**

Introduction

The influence of *Darshanas* on Ayurveda is evident in classical literatures. The concepts of *Yoga Darshana* are selectively incorporated in Ayurveda to suit its objectives viz., '*SwasthyaRakshana*' and '*Roga Prashamana*'.

Ayurveda deals with the health of the body and mind³, while Yoga deals with health of the mind and purity of consciousness², but in reality they complement and embrace each other. These ancient sister Vedic sciences have been united for thousands of years for the sake of healing body, mind and

consciousness. Yoga clubbed together with Ayurveda will produce positive effects on health. Both comprehensively illuminate the basic laws and principles governing life on earth.

As a holistic system, Ayurveda does not generalize the principles and states that each aspect should be individualized according to the season and individual constitution to avoid any derangement of *doshas* and promote or restore health⁴. Ayurveda and Yoga complement each other for an overall balanced and healthy lifestyle. Yoga rests upon Ayurvedic medicine for its health implications. Ayurveda rests upon Yoga for its mental and spiritual dimensions.

Analysis of concepts of Yoga Darshana and Ayurveda in relation with each other

Definition Of Yoga

The definition of 'Yoga' according to Yoga darshanais '*yogachittavrtti nirodhah*²'.

A state of cessation of mental modifications or *chittavrtti* due to mind, intellect and ego is yoga.

'*Samyoge yoga ithyukthojeevatmaparamatmano*'

Yoga is the union of *jeevatma* with *paramatma*.

In Ayurveda the term 'Yoga' is defined as '*sukhadukhaanarambhadatmastheemanasi sthire* 5'.

When *manasi sthirain atm* thereby there is no production of *sukha* and *dukha*, *vashitva* of *shareerain atma* is attained which itself is Yoga.

Chittavrttis- Pramana, Viparyaya, Vikalpa, Smriti and Nidra⁶

In Yoga *satyajnanais* gained through *pratyaksha, anumana, agama pramanas*⁷. In Ayurveda *pramanais* the tool for *roga* and *rogipareeksha*⁸. *Pratyaksha, anumana* and *aptopadesha* are accepted as valid examination procedures in Ayurvedic science. *Viparyaya* in Yoga *darshana* means *mithyajyana*⁹ whereas in Ayurveda it is the reversed opinion or contradiction of the statement which is accepted. In Ayurveda *Smriti* is enumerated as one of the *lakshanas* of *atma* and also *satva*. If there is loss of *smriti*, along with *dhi, dhriti*, then person does *prajnaparadha*¹⁰. To examine *smritiacharyas* have said that the 'memory is to be inferred by recollection'. In Yoga *darshana*, *nidra* is responsible for the *abhava* of *samanyajnana* and in Ayurveda it results in increase of strength, longevity etc¹¹. If person doesn't sleep properly, he will suffer from disease, loss of strength and even he may get death¹².

Nirodha of Chitta Vrtti

In Yoga, *nirodha* of *chittavrtti* is attained through *abhyasa* (trying to be in the *stithi* of *chitta*) and *vairagya*. In Ayurveda *abhyasais sheelanamsatatakriya* (continuous practise).

Panchaklesha – Avidya, Asmita, Raga, Dvesha, Abhinivesha

In Yoga- *Avidya* is the basic cause for all *kleshas*. Understanding of *nitya* as *anitya*, *sukha* as *ashuci* and *sukha* as *dukha*. *Raga* is *lobha* or greed towards *sukhotpadakavastu*. *Dvesha* is the

experience of *dukhain* the form of *virodha* and *krodha*. *Abhinivesha* is fear of death and attachment towards life. In Ayurveda *vidyais* considered as one of the *vaidyaguna*. Acharyas have mentioned *ragaas kama, dweshaas apriti* and *tiraskara, abhinivesaas nischaya*.

Application of Ashtangas of Yoga

Yama and *Niyamas* are mentioned in Ayurveda in the context of *Sadvrutta* and *Achararasayanain* order to improve the mental health.

While describing about the ways of getting salvation, it has been told that one should have confidence in Yogic practices¹³. *Asanas* are adopted in Ayurveda for different treatment procedures that which is *sukhai*. i.e comfortable postures. Here the explanation

Sthiram Sukham Asanam mentioned for practicing Pranayama has not been adopted and elaborate descriptions of each *asanas* is not given much importance. In Ayurveda, *pranayama* is mentioned as a treatment for respiratory ailments¹⁴.

The sense faculties to be concentrated in the mind, the mind in soul, and the self in himself (*Niyamanam indriyanam cetasi, cetasa atmani*). Avoidance of attachment and hatred towards the objects of senses (*Indriyartheshuanuragopatapahah*). This stands for *pratyahara, dharana* and *samadhi*. *Samadhi* is explained as one of the *manasarogachikitsa*.

Yoga and its relationship with Ayurveda

Yoga and Ayurveda give us the tools to live according to our unique nature and its

particular capacities. Both are designed to bring your individual constitution, both physically and psychologically, into balance and harmony. Vedic principles indicate that it is best to eat and exercise based on your particular constitution. Therefore *Asana* is best practised and designed based on individual needs. Ayurveda focuses on the individual's constitution or body type which is referred to as *Dosha Prakriti*.

Features of individuals from various Dosha Prakriti and imbalances in their mental temperament are discussed below in brief:

*Vata Prakriti*¹⁵

On the psychological level *Vata* constitution individuals will be easily susceptible to happiness, sorrow, grief, restless, active. They are emotionally sensitive and prone to fear and anxiety, fluctuating moods and opinions. With regard to Yoga, this constitution individuals like energy practices, like doing things, keep things moving, like to change things.

*Pitta Prakriti*¹⁵

They are moderately active and cannot endure stressful activities, tendency to be angry on slight provocation, intelligent, strong opinions. This type individual's are often attracted to meditation and working on their mind. They are natural seekers and mentally strong.

*Kapha Prakriti*¹⁵

People of this constitution type are not as active as *Vata* and *Pitta*, has a good endurance to stress, emotional but with

steady strong feelings, calm, loyal, contented and consistent. Can become and suffer from too much attachment.

Yogasanas as per various prakriti

Yoga postures for Vata Constitution

Vata predominant individuals should emphasize on calming, grounding, steady, strengthening, and balancing while doing their practice. *Vinyasa* or flow styles of yoga tend to move quickly from one pose to the next and can aggravate the hyper mobile quality of Vata. Vata people require gentle yoga procedures that do not exhaust them. They should follow any movement Asanas with longer periods of sitting postures. To control Vata they should practice Pranayama and meditation in those postures.

*Asanas – Siddhasana, Vajrasana, Virasana, Vrksasana, Virabhadrasana, Paschimottasana, Kurmasana, Naukasana*¹⁶.

Yoga postures for Pitta Constitution

Pitta individuals should maintain a calm, cool and relaxed state of mind while doing Asanas. Asana practice tends to generate heat in the body, it is best to do them at cooling times of the day. *Pittas* should perform Asanas in a way that is cooling, nurturing, expansive and relaxing. *Pittas* are benefited by postures that aim at releasing tension from the mid abdomen, where *Pitta* accumulates. Forward bends are generally good for pitta because they bring more energy to the mid abdomen and have a cooling effect if done in gentle manner.

Asanas – Trikonasana, Ardha chandrasana, Upavistha konasana, Kurmasana,

*Paschimottasana, Ardhamatsyendrasana, Marichyasana*¹⁶.

Yoga postures for Kapha Constitution

***Kapha* types tend to be sedentary and seldom are physically active unless stimulated or prodded to do so. More active exercise is required for them, stimulating their metabolism and increasing circulation.** Their practice should be energetic, warming, lightening, and stimulating. *Vinyasa* or flow style yoga is good for *Kapha* individuals because it is dynamic and moves quickly from one pose to the next though not vigorous.

*Asanas - Virabhadrasana, Utthita hasta padangushthasana, Ardha chandrasana, Adho mukha svanasana, Urdha mukha svanasana, Adho mukhavrksasana, Ustrasana, Mayurasana*¹⁶.

Discussion

Yoga Darshana and Ayurveda both have their own principles governing the body. Ayurveda considers the *Tridoshas* (*Vata, Pitta, Kapha*) as the regulators of body and mind. *Yoga Darshana* though considers the *Tridosha* theory of Ayurveda, stresses on the fact that it is the *Trigunas* (*Satva, Rajas, Tamas*) which regulate each and every actions of the body inturn influencing *Tridoshas* also. *Yoga Asanas* and *Pranayama* are advocated for physical and mental health and thereby contribute to *Tridosha* balance ensuring a healthy life. For meeting the objective *swasthyarakshana* and *vikaraprashama*, *sthirtva* of *shareera* and *manas* is needed which can be achieved by the practice of

asanas and pranayama along with adopting *yama, niyama* for a complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing. Common psychological features associated with various constitution types described in Ayurveda and the role of specific *yogasanas* in regulating the psychology of an individual is discussed below.

Conclusion

Yoga and Ayurveda aims at moksha praptiby atyantadukhanivrutti. As they are contemporary sciences the influence of Yoga is much seen in Ayurveda and it is also directly mentioned by Acharya Charaka. The thoughts of yogic philosophies are considered fundamental steps to raise to the height of super consciousness when all miseries vanish. Most of the concepts of Yoga are accepted as such some are modified for the medical science.

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It is important to integrate Yoga and Ayurveda in order to bring out a complete holistic healing system. Integrating Yoga with Ayurveda adds a spiritual and psycoclogical dimension to Ayurvedic treatment modalities, without which Ayurveda tends to become a mere physical model devoid of spiritual and Vedic healing powers.

Application of the concepts of yoga in conjunction with Ayurveda enhances the therapeutic application of both the contemporary systems of healing. . Ayurveda provides the appropriate life style recommendations for Yoga practice, as well as the background to unfold the full healing potential of all aspects of Yoga. Yoga provides the spiritual and psychological basis for Ayurveda and its higher applications.

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